

The book of
JACK BYRNE · JIM CARROLL
dissertations
EMMA FITZPATRICK · MARTIN
by third year
LENNON · SINÉAD LONG
students of
NIAMH LYNCH · STEPHANIE
the School of
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The book of dissertations

This volume includes all History and Theory dissertations written by the Third Year students of SAUL in the academic year 2010-2011.

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**School of Architecture
University of Limerick**

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Outposts of Progress

Humanitarian Aid and the Hidden Topography of Spontaneous Settlement



Jim Carroll

“Culture and civilisation are the two aspects of society. Man’s material progress has moved steadily forward since man’s beginning. But it is highly questionable whether this material progress has always been accompanied by spiritual progress. The concept of progress, so dear to science, tends to confuse culture with civilisation. They are not synonymous. Culture is the spiritual expression of a people; civilisation, the material one.”¹

The conservation of societies.

Often unique and fragile societies, made more fragile by circumstance, come into contact with the wider outside world through the organisations charged with providing them with humanitarian aid. Almost always this in this type of situation the humanitarian aid will carry within it the provision of some form of shelter, emergency, temporary and increasingly, in recent years, permanent settlement. Where this happens, a western approach to size and layout has always prevailed. This thesis aims to show how this template became established, the effect this can have on society and the importance of finding an alternative.

The last century has witnessed the unprecedented loss to the world of unique cultures and societies; conquest, missionary zeal or political upheaval, have all contributed greatly to this loss. This process has often been brutal and bloody, but in the last fifty years, it could be said to be something more gradual, administrative and seemingly an inevitable surrender to the forces of progress. Almost silently, societies and cultures that have survived for thousands of years are slipping away un-noticed; dismantled and assimilated into post-independence developing nations. This process is sometimes tragically accelerated by famine, war

or natural disaster, humanitarian aid agencies working in incredibly difficult situations must prioritise their intervention to help the most vulnerable, we are all familiar with this process as it is beamed into our lives, pictures of famine and distress, war and malnutrition, though the plight of the individual may be the focus of their attention, the consequences to a society or a community are often overlooked. These consequences are all the more important where the society in question may never be given the opportunity to return to its original form; and is in fact a loss to the world of another ancient way of life.

In the last decades of the 20th century, post-independence Africa seemed to begin to fall apart; Biafra, Ethiopia, Somalia and Southern Sudan, a seemingly un-ending story, of tragedy upon tragedy. Necessary interventions by such organisations as the United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, became staples of the nightly news.

A multitude of Non-Governmental Organisations, (NGO's) such as Oxfam, Care and MSF were also founded, created from a genuine need to respond to tragedy and the foot dragging responses of first world governments. These NGOs sprang up at each new disaster; they struggled through immense difficulties, often heroically, away from the media and in terrible conditions, driven by genuine feeling toward their fellow man. If they as an organisation, managed to survive

their particular crisis they would suddenly find themselves regarded as the experienced relief agencies, becoming funded and flying off to the next crisis, then the next and the next.

Due to the spontaneous nature of these emergencies and the spontaneous nature of the response, there had always been an element of re-inventing the wheel at the onset of each crisis, but by the middle of the nineteen nineties, the disasters had begun to overlap, the problems became familiar and defined. NGO's themselves began to specialise in specific problem areas such as health and nutrition or water and sanitation. However the larger funding agencies soon found that different NGO's were producing markedly different results, lessons were not being learnt and knowledge was not being properly passed on, a basic set of minimum standards needed to be established.

In the year 2000, a collaboration of NGO's

and Humanitarian agencies, compiled the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, the SPHERE project. A set of guidelines that would target the work being carried out by NGO's and others into a cohesive set of goals. Amongst these were minimum standards for the provision of Shelter. As we will see in the following chapters, these minimum standards were arrived at after a great deal of trial and error. The standards were calculated to provide for adequate shelter and other needs in any given situation.²

The need for these minimum standards, as we will see, had become very necessary, the guidelines would act as an anchor, something to aim for, in the often overwhelming situations faced in the initial, critical days of any emergency. NGO's and charities would be free from agonizing over many planning decisions. However, by solely following the guidelines something else began to happen, traditional

typologies of housing were being forgotten and replaced by western housing types. The physical formation of a society's villages reflects the society as a whole. The physical construct becomes a repository of knowledge and tradition around which tradition is re-enacted. Modern humanitarian interventions have sometimes been guilty of underestimating or at least ignoring the physical structures of fragile cultures especially if they are made from mud or twigs, or appear to be at odds with western ideas of privacy and the individual.

The Disappearing World.

In colonial times, the prevailing view was that simple societies were primitive and savage, waiting to be changed by Christianity or commerce. This simple bias still prevails, though now the west believes, as the world believes that the immersion of societies is perhaps only the inevitable result of progress.

In the “Histories”, written in 250bc, Herodotus describes his world; the people in it and around its edges. Minute differences in dress and culture come under his scrutiny. He also includes a great deal of legend and hearsay, an avid reporter of stories he repeats many he’s heard second hand, which he qualifies as things he himself finds improbable or probable. For example he talks of people he has heard of far to the north who live in a world of ice clothed in furs and skins, he also recounts the story of a prince of Libya who journeyed with companions south across the desert till they reached a great forest where they were captured by black skinned men, the height of children, who brought them to a village built from mud and sticks.³

It is likely, although the story of the prince is perhaps an embellishment that he is talking of Pygmy or Twa tribes still living today in the rain forests of Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic republic of Congo. If this is the case, then this snapshot of life in the forest would indicate that it had remained unchanged for the two thousand years it took for European explorers and colonisers

to reach it again. The Pygmy and Twa then ‘discovered’ like many others.

In his novel, “The Heart of Darkness” Conrad’s narrator, Marlowe, is travelling in a steamboat up the uncharted Congo River and recounts,

“We could have fancied ourselves the first of men taking possession of an accursed inheritance, to be subdued at the cost of profound anguish and excessive toil.”⁴

Conrad’s tale was a critique of European colonial power, greed and genocide, yet it still reinforces the view that the humanity found in the heart of the forest is prehistoric and needs to be changed. Conrad and perhaps even Herodotus, two thousand years before both see this simple way of life, of buildings of sticks and mud as an anomaly, a curiosity that would benefit from modern ways of doing things. They have raised no monuments or cities of stone, they have no written word, they have no history, so there they remain in a prehistoric world only beginning, waiting to be rescued by inevitable progress.

This view persists, perhaps in more politically correct language, but the patronising

approach to other societies is a habit that seems to be very hard to break. The Khartoum government of Sudan, like many other governments in Africa, is also guilty of a patronising attitude to tribal traditions. Traditions, that may be simple in form but have been around for longer than the pyramids. The German photographer Leni Reifentahl visited a host of tribes from northern Kenya to central Sudan during the 1960's and 70's, the photographs, now only four decades old could perhaps have been taken any time in the last five thousand years, but sadly can never be taken again as her images have captured the last days of societies that have lived unchanged, in close proximity

to nature for tens of thousands of years. Her photographs may perhaps prove to be the documents that mark the definitive end of an ancient way of life. In the book "AFRICA, Leni Riefentahl" she recalls in an interview, her last trip to visit the Nuba tribe of southern Sudan. "After five years absence, when I came back they were suddenly all dressed in rags. They were forced to; the Sudanese government brought them clothing. They weren't allowed to go about naked anymore."⁵. As we will see in the following chapters this prudishness was part of a patronisation that would become far more deliberate and far more deadly.



Photo of Nuba huts, used to store harvest above summer flood waters
Leni Reifenstahl.

Crisis on the edges of the world.

Western contact with tribes and societies that have survived the colonial age and into independence is often through humanitarian aid. In this chapter we will look at the evolution of humanitarian aid, and the arrival at a standardised response.

The Biafra war in Nigeria in 1967 prompted perhaps the first modern humanitarian famine relief. This was in response to massive numbers of civilian casualties where, by the end of the conflict there were an estimated two million people from the Ibo tribe dead, mainly from starvation. Many NGO's and relief agencies were created during this crisis. The continuous civil war in Eritrea in Ethiopia prompted a breakdown of infrastructure which led to the famine of 1984. This disaster prompted a media led humanitarian effort but also reinforced the idea of an Africa forever at war with itself lurching from one disaster to another. Somalia, Southern Sudan, Rwanda, Zaire, each emergency overlapping the next.

These wars and famines often find their roots in colonial divisions of large territories, the global exploitation of natural resources, a direct extension of the Conradian vision of western imperialism, replaced now by global corporations, vested interest exploiting tribal divisions and living easily with chronic corruption, but this was rarely mentioned in the portrayal of a continent lost and in need of good shepherds.

Media coverage was constant, the problems

of food clothing and shelter ubiquitous. In 2000 a steering group of UN Agencies and NGO's draughted the Humanitarian handbook SPHERE, a charter of minimum standards to be used in any future emergency.

“Programmes that meet the needs of disaster-affected populations must be based on a clear understanding of the context... No single sector can be considered in isolation from the others, or in isolation from economics, religious and traditional beliefs, social practices, political and security factors, coping mechanisms or anticipated future developments...”⁶.

These are laudable goals, and the above paragraph encapsulates the type of contextual response needed to safeguard the rights of an individual and the rights of the society or culture to which they belong. Unfortunately the implementation of these goals in regard to the provision of shelter, often follow a model based on western preconceptions of how people belonging to other cultures should live or would benefit from western ideas, of privacy, space and society.

The SPHERE charter, when dealing with shelter in collective settlements; one of the

biggest problems facing humanitarian interventions, stress the minimum guideline of 45m² per person living in the camp. This number includes roads, administration, schools, health care etc. and is meant as a rule of thumb guide for population to camp size. Further the charter also stipulates a minimum of 3.5m² covered area for each

person. Again these are laudable goals; the numbers arrived at from hard lessons learnt in the past. However the guidelines, where they have been fortunate enough to have been implemented have led to the creation of a template of large rectangular gridded camps very similar to modern, western suburban towns.



Refugee camp, Ngara Tanzania, Google Earth photo

Learning the Lesson.

The rectangular grid template of the previous chapter is easy to envisage, easy to manage and relatively easy to construct. In this chapter we will see that the grid evolved as a response to the type of massive sprawl that was the hallmark of the refugee camps that grew overnight, particularly in the immense settlements that formed along the borders of the countries neighbouring Rwanda in the summer of 1994.

An estimated three million refugees had poured over the border into Zaire, mainly through the Zairian town of Goma in May and June of 1994, swamping any infrastructure and hampering any effort to bring humanitarian assistance.

These camps, built by the refugees themselves at the beginning of the emergency were of hastily made shelters built around available water sources and food distribution areas, and were the catalyst for the spread of waterborne diseases such as dysentery and cholera, an outbreak of which took the lives of over 50,000 people in 1994.

New camps were demarked north and west of the town, but throughout the emergency no new infrastructure could hope to control such massive numbers, the shelter component was eventually limited to the distribution of plastic sheeting, which was draped across weak timber frames erected from twigs and branches cut from the nearby forests. These camps remained in this condition till their eventual violent abandonment at the

end of 1996.

Across the border of eastern Rwanda, refugee camps in Tanzania underwent a different evolution, around a half a million people had fled there from the war, their initial camp of Benaco, like Goma, was built around food and water distribution sites, however after the cholera outbreaks in Zaire, the Tanzanian Government quickly provided land around the nearby town of Ngara for the construction of new camps.

The clean straight lines of Ngara were the epitome of good planning and standards; wide avenues, fire breaks, designated water and food distribution sites, Schools and hospitals. The infrastructure was built around the organizing principle of housing. The houses themselves, small huts of mud walls, with roofs of plastic or corrugated iron sheets, when available, and set in small garden plots or “Shambas” for growing food. Camp management was orderly as was the eventual return to Rwanda of the majority of refugees.

Here were then some of the lessons to be learnt at the heart of the future humanitarian interventions. The model of Ngara and elsewhere versus the disastrous and dangerous camps of eastern Zaire was underlined and held up to be copied in future crises. The subsequent resettlement of returning refugees inside Rwanda from 1996 onwards meant that new “villages” had to be built to accommodate people who had lost their homes in the war. These new settlements were built

according to the principles learnt in places like Ngara, however many of these “Shelter programme” settlements were built only to be abandoned, as they were considered unsafe to live in by their intended beneficiaries, who looted their new homes for their doors and roofing materials and took them off to build a house somewhere else, this reaction to the artificiality of many new housing projects was ignored and resettlement was often through bullying by the local government.



Kibumba refugee camp, Goma Zaire, (DRC) March 1995.

The Conflict in Darfur.

The genesis of the conflict in Darfur, and the deliberate destruction of a way of life. The physical plan of life lived in fear and the expectations of the grid.

If conflict over land and resources was one of the major factors in the bloody genocide carried out in Rwanda in 1994, it was also the government driven catalyst for the genocide carried out in Darfur in Western Sudan less than a decade later.

In 1990 conflict began to increase between settled African tribes and nomadic Arabic tribes over access to water and land around the fertile Jebel Marra area of central Darfur. There had been a massive increase in population in this area, despite being under developed; the way of life still centred on small farms and livestock, but the population had grown fivefold in less than fifty years, the census of 1955 putting the population at 1.12 million growing to an estimated 6.5 million in 2002.

From the early seventies the Khartoum government had begun to “modernize” or dismantle traditional tribal authorities, throughout the country, these were seen as primitive, undemocratic and corrupt. New government appointed authorities were created to replace traditional methods of settling land dispute. These new authorities, underfunded and unmotivated, failed to manage the increasingly violent conflicts. Government troops, mainly from

the Arab north were seen to side with the nomadic Arab tribes of the south in the growing disputes. In response to increasing attacks, African self-defence militias soon formed together into larger military groups, and in 2003 began attacking Sudanese military bases in the region.⁷

The Khartoum government’s retaliation is now another notorious episode in Africa’s post-colonial history. The government’s policy was not retribution or attacks on the tribal military structure, but a brutal attack on the civilian population, the goal to kill rape and loot the African population, to drive them away, the aim, the total destruction of the tribal way of life.

In his book “Sudan, Darfur and the failure of an African state.” Richard Cockett quotes an Arab militia commander.

“When we attack a village, the purpose of attacking a village was to completely eliminate any ability for people to come back. When we would cut the trees, it was to prevent them from coming back. When we would bury the sand inside the wells of whatever, it was to make sure that the people had no chance to come back...”⁸

The importance of tribal African structures as a repository of a way of life is not lost on their enemies.



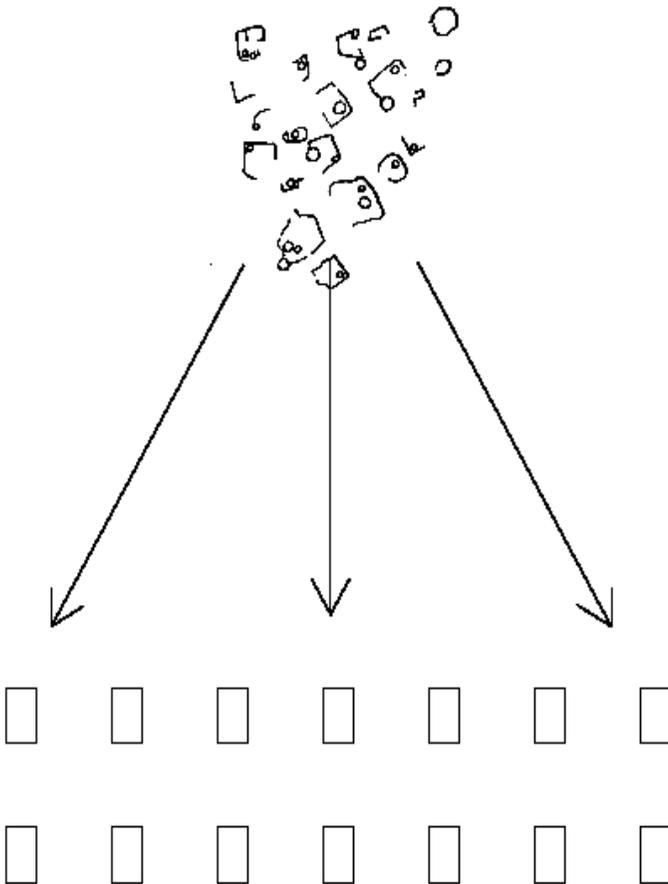
Refugee camp, Nyala Darfur, Sudan.

Despite a lack of physical constraints on the site, the refugees of the Nyala camp have grouped together extremely closely and densely, this is clearly a defensive response, a protective foetal position of a society under immense pressure. The informal template of a tribal African village is lost amongst the

sea of plastic sheets, no longer discernable to the eye, especially the eye at ground level, but beneath this blanket of blue is the hidden topography of a society. A society, whose buildings and traditions have been razed to the ground. If this camp and camps like it are connected physically and spiritually to the

burnt out villages their populations came from, then what kind of eventual permanent housing could we expect to see replace them?

In the next chapter we will see how humanitarian efforts to replace homes destroyed in a natural disaster, failed to fulfil their potential.



Tracing of burnt out village from the outskirts of the city of Nyala, Darfur Sudan and the SPHERE grid.

“in all cultures of the world, architectural form is an expression of the philosophical interaction of the forces of mass and space, which in turn, reflects the relationship between a man and nature and man and the universe.” 9.

Tsunami.

Disaster in South East Asia, and the application of the western grid.

The South East Asian Tsunami of the 26th of Dec 2004 killed an estimated 250000 people in a few short hours; the devastation in the region affected many millions more.

In Sri Lanka the situation in the east of the country was exacerbated by a 20 year civil war between mainly Hindu Tamil people from south India and the majority Buddhist Sri Lankan population, though at the time the country was currently experiencing a lull in hostilities due to a recently signed Memorandum of Understanding, (MOU) between the two warring parties.

It had however, long been the Colombo government policy to remove people from valuable coastal land. The Tsunami and the loss of many homes gave the excuse to resettle whole towns and villages inland'

The world response to the disaster had been unprecedented; aid money had flowed into the affected countries from public donations via NGO's and Humanitarian organisations; who soon found themselves in competition with each other to find things to spend the money on. Many organisations became compelled by the Colombo government to implement it's controversial policy towards

coastal settlement into clearing people away from the coast and overseeing the building of new permanent towns inland, much to the dismay of villagers who earned their livelihood from the sea.

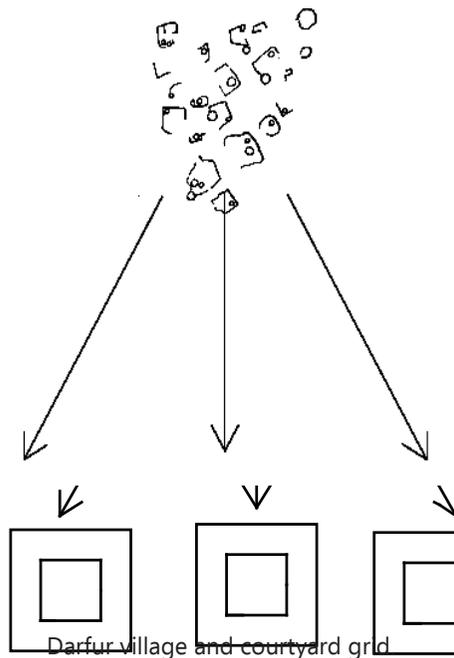
Although care had been taken to respect local traditions concerning layout of rooms and religious beliefs the physical layout of the new settlements was far from considered. From the air it would be easy, even for a layman, to see the artificiality of the towns either as part of the landscape or as part of traditional culture.

From this we may perhaps conclude that humanitarian response has become physically too systemic, the reliance on the grid structure too ingrained, and that being the case we should return to first principles. To repeat the quote from the humanitarian charter, "No single sector can be considered in isolation from the others, or in isolation from economics, religious and traditional beliefs, social practices, political and security factors, coping mechanisms or anticipated future developments..."

The humanitarian charter is really looking for a more flexible response than the one it has itself evolved.

The text suggests a need for variability and fluidity, neither of which is easy to plan for or to quickly respond to. In view of the experience in Rwanda and Sri Lanka it could be said that this flexible response is not being properly sought, work has been done, especially in places like Sri Lanka, where there was ample funding, strong infrastructure and willingness to adapt to local needs, to find

the proper typology of a house, but not the typology of a village or community. The solution may perhaps be to find some encompassing template that can adjust through time, a planned solution to the problems created by spontaneous settlement that can work as well as the grid in organisation, but can carry within it the topography of individual societies.



Alternatives.

Responding to spontaneous settlement using a rational plan; within which women, children and the vulnerable can be protected; where society feels less threatened and where quantifiable repeatable modules can be quickly and easily constructed and perhaps just as importantly, where the needs of community can be read.

Using the most basic images of the villages around Nyala in Darfur, we can see that these communities are made up from inter-related groups of fifty to one hundred people living together in small villages, the rearing of children, livestock, cooking, farming were shared amongst everyone. The refugee camps in Darfur and neighbouring Chad are in fact a collection of rural villages artificially brought together under great stress to form what in other situations could be classed as a city. This is not a unique situation, and has been experienced before. In the 19th century European city planners were faced with the problem of providing urban dwellings for immigrant rural poor, The industrial revolution had brought about an unprecedented increase in rural to urban migration, cities burst at the seams, infrastructure was overwhelmed, many of the same diseases and problems that would face refugee camps in the twentieth century; cholera, dysentery and tuberculosis would have been familiar scourges in north Europe two hundred years earlier. Few cities were

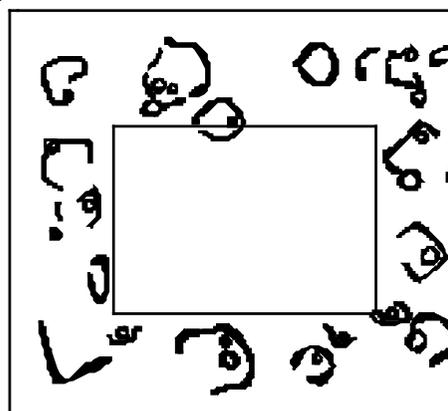
capable of assimilating the huge numbers of immigrants successfully.

In Scotland, 19th century Glasgow was experiencing one of the sharpest increases in population of any industrial city so far. The population growing from 170,000 to 1.6 million in less than a century. The make-up of the immigrant population was a difficult one and potentially divisive; Catholics from Ireland, Protestants from the Scottish countryside and Jewish migrant workers from Poland and Russia.

The city, looking to other urban models, notably Haussmann's Paris, adopted a courtyard housing typology, where homes would form a perimeter block around a shared communal area, the perimeter providing a protective wall and a homogenous street façade. The building style was particular to Glasgow regarding materials and design, but the perimeter and courtyard provided the protection and gender segregation needed for rural cultures suddenly thrust into a metropolis full of danger and the unfamiliar.

This typology is in marked contrast to the response of other British cities at the time. The perimeter façade acting as a barrier to the outside world, the insulation of values and rural traditions that adapted through time to the city. 10. Could this housing typology be part of the solution for mass settlement problems, could a 19th century north European model be suitable for sub-Saharan African tribal societies? Could spontaneous settlements be rehoused within a courtyard framework more quickly and more efficiently than the SPHERE grid? As a shelter the courtyard is immediately understood, negating the need for densely packed clusters of people. If the courtyard model was erected as open space beneath a homogenous roof, it would allow for immediate shelter, and still be able

to evolve further through time into an intricate negotiated living space. The communal courtyard should eventually contain shared washing and cooking facilities. The large roof area could provide for more efficient rainwater collection and storage. The surrounding perimeter could either be street or communal kitchen gardens. More importantly the proximity and interdependency of various family groups from a common society, would help to foster, nurture and repair community. Looking again at the society clinging to the edges of the desert and city of Nyala, could the courtyard typology be a plausible stepping stone between the original village arrangement and society and the eventual permanent housing solution we may hope that one day will be applied?



Darfur village protected within the courtyard grid, The intricacies of a society reform within the homogeneous shelter.

Conclusion.

The importance of housing and shelter as an extension of cultural and societal identity is well recognised by NGOs and United Nations humanitarian agencies. However standard, rectangular temporary shelter typology seems to have become the default template for every shelter and housing situation; whether it be emergency, temporary or permanent.

This typology, we have seen, has evolved from dealing with the problems created by large scale spontaneous settlement. However the template also contains very western attitudes towards the house, both as an aspirational object and a commodity with value. Despite a great deal of research being carried out over the years to understand the value of the arrangement of religious and traditional; regarding planning, hierarchy of rooms and gender zoning for example, individual houses are placed within an easily managed and repeated grid, which has more in common with western suburban planning than a measured response to a specific cultural need.

Aid Agencies have been given a unique opportunity to re-interpret housing needs as a tool of conservation of traditional values and society. As was mentioned in relation to Sri Lanka, work has begun to re-assess the western house typology in relation to tradition and religion, however these agencies have failed to advocate for proper planning for communities as a social structure against central government policies in relation to re-settlement. Aid agencies have naively linked

housing needs to western practice. Following the history so far of housing interventions, we can expect that at some point, the people living in the camps we have seen in Sudan, will one day be re-housed in homes funded by donor agencies and built by specialist NGO's, this may be a thankful release from the conditions experienced at the moment, but how can any interpretation of the original settlements and the subsequent spontaneous camp possibly be answered by suburban typologies?

How have NGO's failed to understand the topography of societies? In what way can the physical housing need be adequately assessed, could a courtyard framework also be used as an interpretive tool?

Shelter and Home providers are perfectly capable of providing an intricate and integrated series of structures more in keeping with the way small scale farmers in Sudan or Hindu fishermen in eastern Sri Lanka would normally live, but this is possibly seen as a complication too far for most agencies, and an obstacle to progress and policy for host administrations.

Permanent housing from aid agencies comes at the end of a long process that likely began in tragic disaster; this process, its tragedy and consequences acts as a buffer between the original settlement and the final housing strategy.

For the agencies themselves the first intervention involves the distribution of materials needed for immediate shelter from the elements. In most cases the ubiquitous blue and white plastic sheeting of UNHCR. These sheets can be transported quickly to almost any disaster situation and quickly become the recognisable fabric of spontaneous settlement throughout the world. Introducing the courtyard framework at this early stage would allow for a more efficient use of materials, problems of overcrowding could be

better managed, and the simple form allow for rapid expansion.

Free now from the suburban grid, the future designers of more permanent homes may benefit from being able to experience first-hand, and respond to, the architecture in which a particular culture is held. The courtyard shelter may not be the solution to housing problems, but it could form the template in which a more ecological and just solution can be found, so that a damaged society can come together, protected, temporarily isolated from the outside world, where it can repair itself and prepare to move on. Finding a way back for a society should be one of the primary goals of any humanitarian intervention.

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AMERICAN

DREAM

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE AMERICAN DREAM?

By Patrick Mooney

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WHAT IS THE AMERICAN DREAM?

Is it large cities brimming with celebrities and success with opportunity around every corner? Or is it about the average person, the middle class, the pursuit of happiness and the ephemeral setting of spacious suburban houses with rolling lawns and gardens, picket fence boundaries and cul-de-sac blocks in neighbourhoods. The American dream as presented to my generation is an idealized context into which the everyday hard working American can anchor themselves for the rest of their lives.

THE AMERICAN DREAM IS THE NATIONAL ETHOS OF THE UNITED STATES, IN WHICH PROSPERITY, SUCCESS AND FREEDOM ARE THE SINGLE GREATEST RIGHTS FOR EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD.

The phrase the American dream was first coined by James Truslow Adams in 1931 he believed that “life should be better richer and fuller for everyone, with the opportunity for each according to ability or achievement”¹ without the influence of social class or circumstances of birth.

These ideals are not created by Adams he merely interpreted them as they have existed for as long as the United States themselves. In 1776 with the founding of the United States and the signing of the Declaration of Independence which states that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.”² The second line of the Declaration is the inspiration of Adams philosophy and the corner stone of the American Dream.

Political Pressure for Home Ownership.

At some point in American history the free standing suburban house became the iconic symbol for the American Dream. Freedom and prosperity were its corner stone but the walls, roof and garden made it yours and achievable. This is not just the image portrayed to the masses beyond American soil, it is also the storey told to its own citizens. Political leaders of the United States have tirelessly promoted the positive effects of homeownership for years. People such as President Hoover and George H.W. Bush made it part of their policy to increase the number of homeowners living in America, as others like Franklin Roosevelt believed that a country of homeowners was “unconquerable”.

There was such belief in homeownership that the American government have spent more than \$100 billion a year in the last decade on tax breaks and subsidies to encourage people to move from the rental market and into permanent homeownership. There is a belief in America that owning the house you lived in creates better houses, streets and neighbourhoods, people become more involved in the local community kids are safer and receive better educations in their schools. Essentially homeownership created areas of social and financial stability. Homeownership had become the American dream.

Homeownership idealisation and the Downsides of Homeownership.

Since the mid nineteen-thirties, government policy was orientated around making home buying easier and cheaper. They had reason to do this home ownership has huge social benefits as was said earlier, but there are also economic benefits too. Homeownership acts as a forced savings scheme that allows people to control their incomes and build wealth.

IT CREATES FINANCIAL STABILITY AND HELPS FUEL A POWERFUL NATION AND ECONOMY.

The collapse of state backed financial institutions such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac has crumbled the pedestal under homeownership. The years of easy lending stimulated by the pursuit of happiness that is the American Dream may well be the root of the financial crisis and now the downsides to buying a home are becoming all too apparent. With the recession of global economies many middle class Americans have lost their jobs causing massive foreclosures and empty properties along with plummeting house prices and land falling into negative equity. This doesn't begin to cover the problems caused by homeownership before the economic collapse. Cities were hollowed out as people moved to the suburbs, it helped feed America's overuse of fossil fuels and it made it very difficult for people to move around the country in search of work, which would later become ironic given how many people now need to find new jobs but are held back by the plot of land into which they have invested everything.

**THE AMERICAN DREAM IS THAT
DREAM OF A LAND IN WHICH
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IT IS A DIFFICULT DREAM FOR THE EUROPEAN
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RECOGNIZED BY OTHERS FOR WHAT THEY ARE,
REGARDLESS OF THE FORTUITOUS CIRCUM-
STANCES OF BIRTH OR POSITION.

JAMES TRUSLOW ADAMS

THE BIRTH OF HOMEOWNERSHIP AND THE AMERICAN DREAM.

HISTORY OF A DREAM.

Owning a home is something that has existed in American culture for as long as it can remember. It was once that anyone with the resources could head out to the Wild West and claim some land and a homestead. Until recently there was a similar attitude, if you could obtain a 30 year mortgage then you could leave the concrete jungle and explore the wilderness of suburban real estate looking for your modern homestead. Owning a home is the American Dream, but how did it become this.

The American Dream was born with the conceptualisation of the United States. America was the New World, a place where one could live there life and pursue there goals unburdened by European societies set ideas of class, race, and social hierarchy. These ideals were founded in the Independence of the United States from British rule; the Declaration passed by congress on the 4th of July 1776 compelled the upper classes to put the common man on an equal footing where human rights and freedom are concerned. The grander ideas of the Declaration, such as, “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights”³ were lost to most people until the twentieth century and Adams interpretation of the American Dream.

Two years after Adams dubbed the great American ideals as the American Dream Franklin D. Roosevelt was sworn into office and began implementing the New Deal. A “better and richer and fuller”⁴ life was no longer just what America promised its hardworking citizens; it was an ideal toward which these citizens were now obligated to strive toward together. In 1935 the Social Security Act put this theory into practice. It meant that workers and their employers would now contribute, through taxes, to trust funds controlled by Washington that paid out pensions to retirees thereby creating a country that had “safe old age” with built-in protection from impoverishment.

In Roosevelt’s 1941 State of the Union address, he readied America for war by describing the “four essential human freedoms”⁵ that the U.S. would be fighting for: “freedom of speech and expression”; “freedom of every person to worship God in his own way”; “freedom from fear” and “freedom from want.” Roosevelt was upholding the American way of life as a global advertisement to the world, tempting them to follow suit. Roosevelt presented the four freedoms not as laws or principles of a superior race but as the simple, values of a good, hardworking, people.

With the ending of the war came the beginning of a new era in American history, an era of suburbanisation. William J. Levitt was a member of one of the Construction Battalions (CBs) of the U.S. Navy. His job during the war was to construct airfields as quickly and cheaply as possible. Before the war Levitt had worked for his father's construction company, and he partly owned a thousand acres of potato fields in Hempstead, New York, out on Long Island. At the wars end Levitt returned with his newly acquired speed-building skills and a vision of all those returning veterans needing homes, he immediately began turning those potato fields into the first Levittown, the first suburbia. Levitt had been fortunate to begin construction when he did. The G.I. Bill, passed in 1944, at the tail end of the Roosevelt's tenure, offered returning veterans and army personnel low-interest loans with zero percent finance to purchase a house. This was an ideal scenario; the returning war hero's created a severe housing shortage and a boom in young families, led to the rapid-fire development of suburbia.

Levitt played a leading role in making homeownership a new ideal of the American Dream, Levitt possessed a Henry Ford like expertise for mass production especially as he expanded his business to other states. In the early stages of the twentieth century from 1900 to 1940, the homeownership levels stayed around 45 percent. However by 1950 there was a massive increase in people who lived in homes they owned, the figure now stood at 55 percent, this continued to rise to 62 percent in 1960.

AMERICA WAS DOING WELL IN POST-WAR TIMES, THE END OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND THE BEGINNING OF THE HOUSING BOOM CREATED OPTIMISM AND PROSPERITY. SO MUCH SO IT BEGAN TO CHANGE THE FUNDAMENTAL IDEALS OF THE AMERICAN DREAM.

The dream now translated into a specific set of goals unlike Adam's loosely outlined aspirations for a country as a whole. Number one on this list was home ownership, but, depending on the dreamer, other goals could include car ownership, refrigerator ownership, television ownership, and the intent to send one's kids to college. America had not yet become the consumer driven society of today, in fact most people lived very modest lives in the post war period. This was however the first generation of American citizens who believed that they had or would obtain the dream.



SUBURBANISAT



ION

Even so there were some social and economic critics who were worried about the security of American families and public amenities. There was a belief that average American families had reached a point of unsustainable affluence because they owned a single home, one car, and one TV. Some even openly criticised Americans saying they had “lost a sense of their priorities, focusing on consumerism at the expense of public sector needs like parks, schools, and infrastructure maintenance. At the same time, they had lost their parents’ Depression-era sense of thrift, blithely taking out personal loans or enrolling in instalment plans to buy their cars and refrigerators.”⁶

Mostly these claims were disregarded as the surging economy and employment rates blinded most people including federal offices in Washington to the downsides of homeownership. However these concerns would prove to be prophetic in a way, yet they did not nearly come close to estimating the spending power of the average American household, nor did they anticipate those rates to grow. And grow they did for the very same year as these worries were made public did the Bank of America introduce its BankAmericard, the parent car to the Visa, with reduced inhibitions to money lending the stage was set for an economic crash when the liberal-spending citizens of America were introduced to free credit.

What happened in the next fifty years could only be described as the greatest standard of living increase that the country and perhaps the world had ever seen. This massive economic change was powered by the middle class’s introduction to personal finance via credit cards, low interest loans, and zero percent mortgages and their willingness to take on debt. Debt and consumer credit were sky rocketing in the post war period from \$2.6 billion in 1945 to \$45 billion in 1960; and this soared again to \$105 billion by 1970. “It was as if the entire middle class was betting that tomorrow would be better than today,”⁷ as the financial writer Joe Nocera put it in his 1994 book, *A Piece of the Action: How the Middle Class Joined the Money Class*.

“THUS DID AMERICANS BEGIN TO SPEND MONEY THEY DIDN’T YET HAVE; THUS DID THE UNAFFORDABLE BECOME AFFORDABLE. AND THUS, IT MUST BE SAID, DID THE ECONOMY GROW.”⁸

It was in 1970 with consumer debt sitting neatly on \$105 billion dollars, that for the first time, at least half of all American households used at least one credit card. However usage was still conservative, relative to

current levels of course; just over 22 percent of all cardholders were carrying balances over from one statement to the next. The 80s saw this figure rise to into the 30s where it stayed for most of that generation still low compared to 56 percent today. It was in the 80s however that the American Dream became an image of social and political success along with vast amounts of wealth even for the average family. This is an all together different image than that of freedom and the pursuit of happiness painted by Adam's fifty years earlier. The massive change in the persona of the American dream can be contributed to the deregulation of banks and energy companies during the Reagan years.

THIS NEWEST VERSION OF THE AMERICAN DREAM HAD BECOME DETACHED FROM THE IDEA OF COMMON GOOD AND, MORE PORTENTOUSLY, FROM THE CONCEPTS OF WORKING HARD AND LIMITING OR CONTROLLING ONE'S EXPECTATIONS.

"You only had to walk as far as your mailbox to discover that you'd been "pre-approved" for six new credit cards, and that the credit limits on your existing cards had been raised without your even asking."⁹ Money had never been freer, and to many it appeared as if money was free, making it almost guiltless and seemingly consequence-less to acquire debt, not only at a personal or household level but also at institutional levels too. \$1 trillion was added to the national debt by President Reagan, and in 1986, the United States, once the world's largest creditor nation had become the world's biggest debtor nation. Perhaps guilt free debt was the American Dream.

The turning of the millennium brought with it a surging economy bolstered by the continuation of easy credit and high investments, covering over the coming collapse with strong quarterly figures and high dividend returns. The American Dream now more than ever should have been within reach of most citizens, for the dream had been realized by more people now than ever before. Yet it was in the decade of the greatest affluence that a CNN poll taken in 2006 discovered that at least 54 percent, over half those surveyed, believed the American Dream was beyond their reach. Those surveyed insisted the American dream in the past 10 years, had become harder to achieve and a full three quarters believed that it would be harder still in the next ten years. These fears were entirely true just not for the reasons they expected.

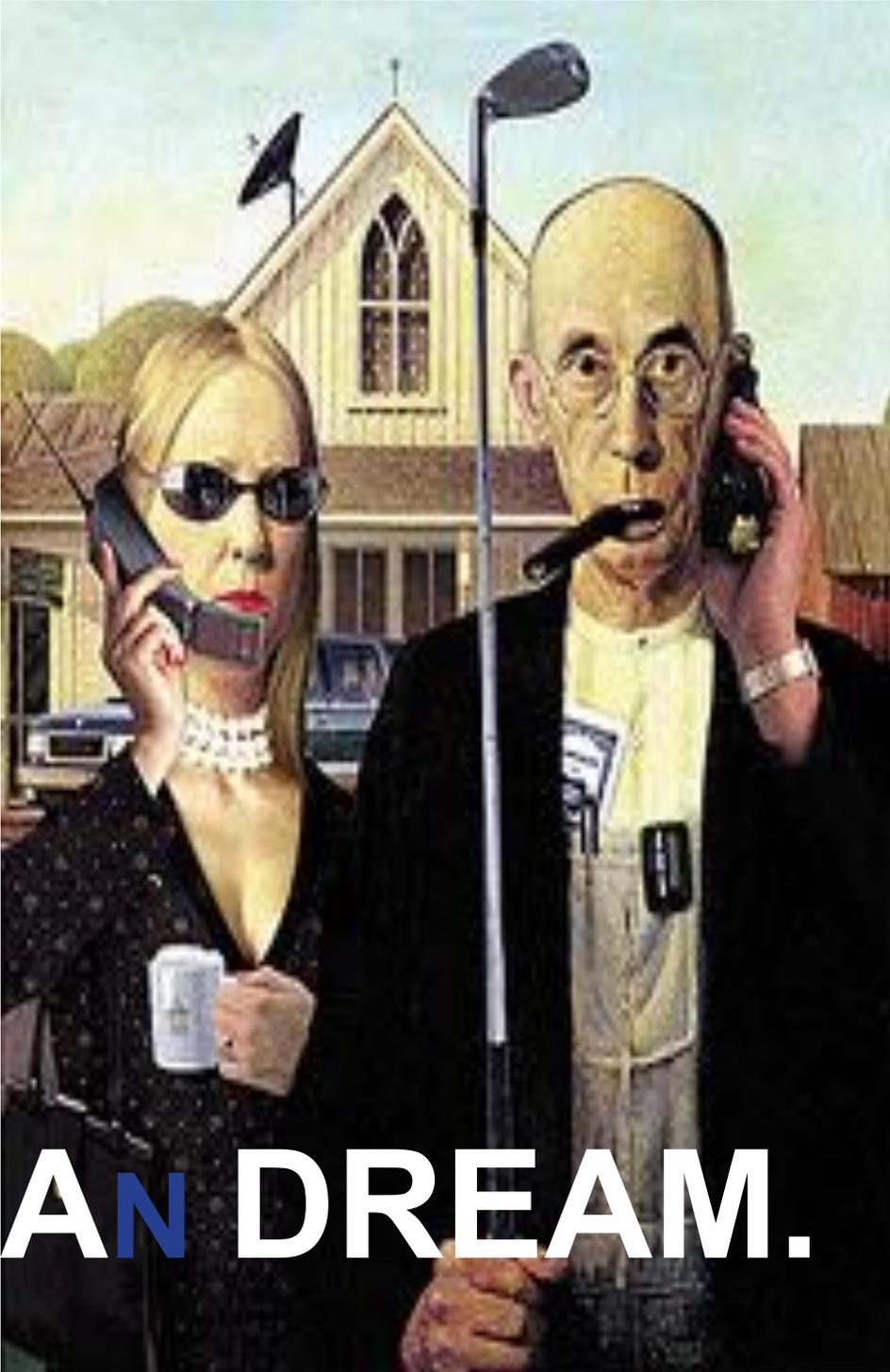
We are reminded by James Truslow Adams that to live in America is still a good thing. To live a life in which you have freedom of choice and the

ability to live as you choose is fortunate even in this economy. However the ideals of the American Dream need to be re-thought. The middle class is not a bad place to spend your life. In fact most hardworking Americans will end up in the middle class, provided they don't overstretch themselves or their budgets. The Dream is not about success and wealth it's not about every generation living better than the last the Dream is about freedom, equality and prosperity for the country as a whole. The American middle class must look towards a sustainable way of living, where the standard of living remains the same from one generation to the next.

The American Dream should require hard work, but not broken families, the Dream should entail a top rated education system for all children, but still allow for the enjoyment of a childhood. The Dream should incorporate the goal of homeownership, without imposing a life long burden of debt.

THE AMERICAN DREAM SHOULD BE SEEN AS A SET OF UNIQUE POSSIBILITIES FOR ALL CITIZENS SO THAT THEY MAY ACHIEVE WHAT THEY WISH, NOT WHAT THEY THINK THEY HAVE TO.

THE NEW AMERI



ICAN DREAM.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW OF THE SUBURBAN SETTING.

SUBURBIA IS THE AMERICAN DREAM.

Since World War II Washington has invested much of America's new-found wealth in suburbia. It has promised a sense of space, affordability, family life, social security and upward mobility. As the population of the suburban landscape has exploded in the last 50 years, so too has the suburban way of life become embedded in the American consciousness. Suburbia, and all it promises, has become the American Dream.

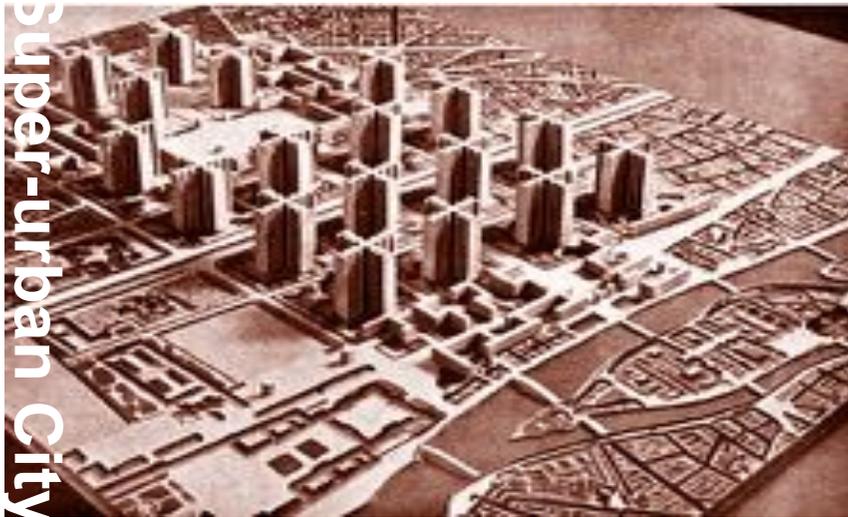
William J. Levitt is credited with the creation of one of the first real suburbs on Long Island, New York. Levittown first built as a prototype rapidly spread across North America and in the 1950's more people lived in suburbs than there were in cities, this was due to the development of skyscrapers and the dramatic rise in real estate values in city centres, thus forcing potential homeowners outside of the metropolitan area.

Suburbia as an idea was supported and broadly re-interpreted by architect and designer Frank Lloyd Wright. This reimagining of suburbia shaped much of Wright's career and was finally presented as the Broadacre City in 1932 in his book *The Disappearing City*. A few years after the publication of this book he revealed a detailed twelve foot by twelve foot scale model representing a hypothetical four square mile community.

Wright worked on the idea of the Broadacre City for most of his life, some of the house designs shown in the city plans were re-interpretations of his earlier works, however it was between 1930 and 1932 that Wright began working in earnest on the Broadacre City. After two years with no commissions Wright's career was damaged. The Great Depression left little work for Architects and critics had deemed him to be out of touch and out of date. Wright had expressed great dislike for cities during the Depression he viewed the centralised cities as being overbuilt, congested and demoralising to the common man.

SUBURBIA WAS BECOMING THE AMERICAN DREAM AND THE BROADACRE CITY WAS BECOMING SUBURBIA.

In 1922 Le Corbusier set the ball in motion for Wright's revival. Corbusier released plans in a publication for a city called 'Ville Contemporaine'; it was to inhabit three million people in high rise blocks surrounded by green belts and infrastructure. The ideas Le Corbusier was formulating were clear, the city was to be dense with gardens and green strips for relief, the city would be rational and organised on bands of infrastructure and public amenities, in other words the city was super-urban (relative to the typology of early twentieth century cities).



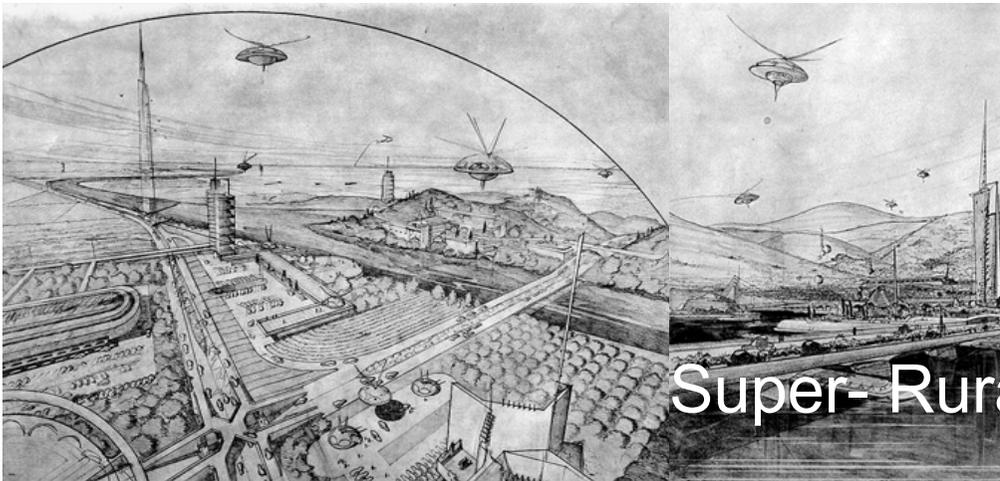
Wright produced an answering project ten years later, just as radical as Corbusier's yet it was the polar opposite of the centralised urban city. The Broadacre as referred to by Wright was not just a city it was a landscape to be beautifully crafted by hand. It would be decentralised in its organisation and self-sufficient in supply of food, material and fuel, populated by automobile using residents and republican in constitution. Broadacre City was the antithesis of the city and the apotheosis of suburbia. This was a two-fold plan as a socio-political scheme and a new method of planning by which American families would be distributed a one acre plot of land from government controlled holdings, this would suffice for a modest home and arable land to provide food or agricultural produce to ensure self-sufficiency. This is the exact opposite of Corbusier's and most of the western world's ideas for a modern city.

Broadacre was formed loosely around the rising themes of suburbia, only most of these were exaggerated to create a super-suburbia that was, in the mind of Frank Lloyd Wright meant to blanket the entire country in an unrelenting geometric grid. The main aspects of the Broadacre plan are formed around each family owning at least one acre of land

for a homestead and cultivation. These houses would be stand alone single family dwellings much like those of modern suburbia. Zoning in Broadacres also bears many similarities to existing suburbs; the landscape is divided into regions of housing, movement and infrastructure, work, education, worship, recreation, government and administration buildings. Nothing would be within walking distance as the automotive citizen could simply consume massive amounts of natural resources every time they needed to visit the shops or strip malls. These zones of usage would be served by super-highways (at least 6 lanes wide) which feed into progressively smaller roadways, the size of which would be determined by the use of the associated units zoned for that area. These could often be narrow residential streets designed to end in cul-de-sac, much like the hierarchy of road networks that the suburbs of today work off of.

REPUBLICAN IN ITS CONSTITUTION AND DEMOCRATIC BY ITS VERY NATURE THE BROADACRE WOULD BE A BEACON OF AMERICAN FREEDOM AND PROSPERITY.

The control of the vast tracks of suburban landscape would be outside the power of bureaucrats however, there would be no administration, as there would only be the Architect. A suburban overlord, who would plan the cities roads and property lines and arrange who owned what to prevent confusion, theft or congestion. Wright proposed an end to unemployment as everyone would work for themselves and for their own interests, construction of house and farm would be done DIY to encour-



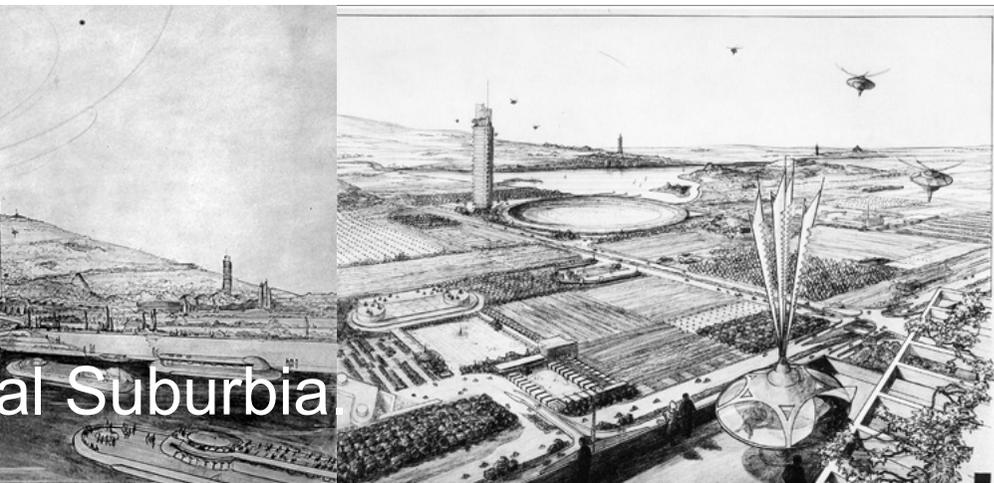
Super- Rural

age a more agrarian society, and this would lead to a community devoid of expert trade skills as everyone would work for their own projects individually.

The Broadacre was meant to be a continuous metropolitan region of low density housing fed by underground services, such as water, gas and electricity. Areas zoned to serve a variety of similar functions would be allocated parallel along major traffic routes such as highways and train lines. Wright sought to create a city of urban scale that responded to the needs of humans and the natural world. By employing his organic style of architecture he tried to solve this by placing his focus on harmonizing environment, structure, objects, out fittings, and inhabitants inside the Broadacre.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT AND THE BROADACRE CITY HAD ITS DETRACTORS. MANY CRITICISED THE PLAN AS BEING IRRELEVANT AND UNACHIEVABLE.

In John Sergeant's book Usonian Houses Norris Kelly Smith is quoted as saying that "To the practical and ordinary citizen Broadacres has meant less than nothing. Judged by the pragmatic standards of the workaday world, it is so irrelevant that it has simply been ignored – for the realization of Broadacre City would require the abrogation of the Constitution of the United States, the elimination of thousands of governmental bodies from the make-up of the state, the confiscation of all lands by right of eminent domain but without compensation, the demolition of all cities and therewith the obliteration of every evidence of the countries history, the re-housing of the entire population, the retrain-



ing of millions of persons so as to enable them to be self-sustaining farmers, and other difficulties too numerous to mention.”¹⁰ Smith sees the imminent impossibilities with recreating the entire countries image, ethos and political system to one single homogenous plan.

**I FIND MYSELF AGREEING WITH SMITH THIS USONI-
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OLOGIES OF THE AMERICAN DREAM.**

The overuse of fossil fuels would only worsen to support a complete suburban nation, an entire generation of semi/unskilled labourers would down grade an already failing education system, not to mention the flaws currently apparent in establishing an economy based largely around real estate and land prices. Broadacre city is a fascinating piece of urban typological study, which is mirrored heavily in today’s suburban setting and the ideals of the American Dream. Given that the suburban housing market can be placed as the base root of the current global economic crisis and the Death of the American Dream, it is frightening to think of the cataclysmic failure of a world wide banking system that would have occurred had the Broadacre been realised on a continental scale.



THE DEATH AND RE-BIRTH OF THE AMERICAN DREAM.

THE DREAM IS HISTORY.

The American Dream for too long has been represented by the suburban house and its lush green garden. The quiet streets of suburbia spoke of safety, financial security, a good place to raise your kids along with the opportunities for a good education and an excellent lifestyle. The sub-prime mortgage crash exposed an inefficient government and unsustainable economic structure that has burst the housing bubble and with it the American Dream.

Now is the time to ask is the American Dream History or can it be reclaimed? To identify solutions you must first observe some of the problems Washington established an economy based around never ending borrowing, tax breaks and incentives for people to spend money. In other words America used debt to pay for its everyday expenses, never once planning for a stable economic future. The feeling in the US now is that they need job creation to restore faith in the American Dream. Many college educated professionals are now calling for an end to free trade and the installation of a protectionist plan to safeguard American jobs from strong global competition. Protectionism would promote job growth in America however in the long run it would be far more damaging to the economy and to businesses as zero competition from foreign markets would only create greater inefficiencies and larger company deficits.

THE BEST SOLUTIONS ARE THOSE THAT WILL REQUIRE THE GREATEST AMOUNT OF WORK BY BOTH POLITICIANS AND AMERICAN LABOURERS.

These solutions require change to government, personal spending habits, companies and most importantly the root ideals from which the American Dream is based off. Many generations of politicians and business men have refused to make these changes as Washington covered over massive foreign debts with impressive economic expansion figures. Yet now these ideas are being called out for on both the left and right side of American politics, even so they are still proving difficult to enact as the political system in congress allows for a single senator to block democratic reform without so much as a reason for doing so.

Right now there is much discussion over whether or not another government stimulus is a good idea. Since no one else is doing much spending it would be beneficial in preventing a double dip recession, but what happens after this? Will consumers still be afraid to spend money, will Washington have to bail out banks and business again with another stimulus, can the country afford for people to return to their old spending habits, or do they simply return to the housing bubble?

NO AMERICA CANNOT SUPPORT ANOTHER HOUSING BOOM AND THE SUBSEQUENT COLLAPSE. THE ONLY WAY FORWARD IS IN JOB CREATION AND STABILIZING THE ECONOMY, THIS CAN ONLY HAPPEN BY SUPPORTING AND DEVELOPING BUSINESSES FROM WITHIN THE COUNTRY AS OPPOSED TO GOVERNMENT BAILOUTS AND GUARANTEES.

The biggest step for American citizens and government bodies is to move from spending to investing. Most people agree that the simplest way to create new jobs in the US is to create new industries and businesses and to innovate inside old ones. For this to happen it means that less money should be wasted on an over active health care system and large investments made into research, technology and development. As a country this needs to become one of the new aims of the American Dream to establish a country with innovative new businesses and jobs that lead the way in global enterprise and trade.

The Obama administration is increasing investments into research and development however it is not spending as much as a percentage of its GDP as did the federal government in the 1950s. Despite the fact that it was in the 50s when major decisions regarding the economy and the countries future were being made by governments who were looking at the long term picture for the continual growth of the countries economy. Right now there are no long term solutions or plans being made to save or re-establish the middle class of America. If the middle class fails then suburbia will become a crime ridden wasteland that will seal the coffin on the American Dream.

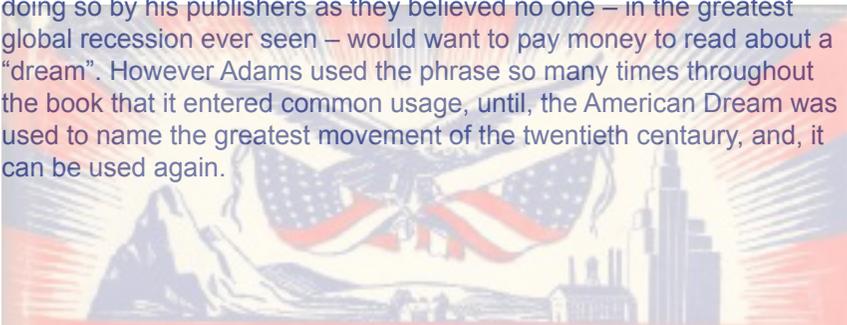
To save the American Dream the government needs to up its current levels of expenditure on investment and development. An investment aspect that is often overlooked is that of people. Training and educating people is the first step towards a better more efficient and innovative work force. To gain the greatest benefits from such efforts would require

a massive government initiative which would involve federal funding, an education system that teaches and industries that hire; this would have to be enacted on the scale of the G.I bill to have an overall effect on the economy.

First and foremost the government would have to re-order its fiscal policies. Money is haemorrhaged from the Federal Reserve each year through state run programs such as health care and social protection. Health care and state pensions cost the US governments billions of dollars more than they should each year through inefficient organisation and bureaucratic red tape, controlling these expenditures will automatically streamline more money into R+D without so much as having to raise or create new taxes. By spending more money on developing new industries and improving old ones the US government will in turn create new jobs which will raise more taxes that can be spent strengthening the countries infrastructure and education systems, which themselves will put forward better educated graduates and apprentices along with roads and services networks capable of sustaining new companies and industries hiring citizens thanks to Federal spending on innovation and development.

THE AMERICAN DREAM IS GONE, BUT IT IS NOT DEAD FOREVER, IT CAN BE REVIVED THROUGH CAREFUL ECONOMICAL REFORM AND HARD LABOUR.

Perhaps through reforming the countries political systems the ideals governing the American Dream for the past sixty years can also be overhauled. By re-investing in the future of America's middle class the government can re-instil new hope and belief in the American Dream, not the old Dream but a new one which reverts to the original ideas of James Truslow Adams who coined the phrase during the Great Depression. Adams published a book *The Epic of America* in a society with a sense of despair that was greater than today's. Originally Adams wanted to call the book *The American Dream*, but was prevented from doing so by his publishers as they believed no one – in the greatest global recession ever seen – would want to pay money to read about a "dream". However Adams used the phrase so many times throughout the book that it entered common usage, until, the American Dream was used to name the greatest movement of the twentieth century, and, it can be used again.



U.S. NEWS

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GOVERNMENT CUTS OR REALISM?

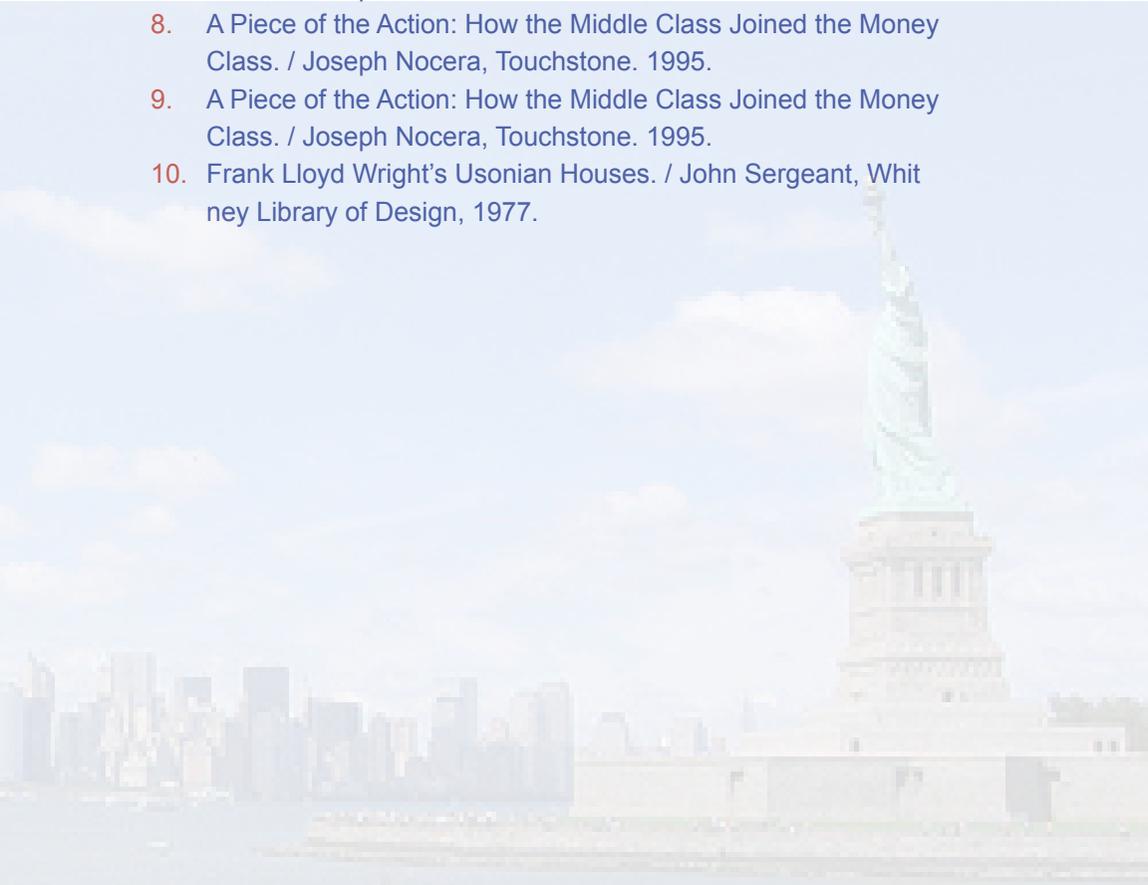
...1 percent nationwide at the highest rate since late 1980 and permits dropped ...
...on Friday. Layoffs continued as the year-old recession moved more towards ...
... The banking industry continues to struggle as banks for Citicorp, one of ...
... levels not seen in 5 years. The housing market has additionally ...
... these administrations has produced ...
... the jobs toward the rate ...

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Life

Liberty

And The

Pursuit of

Happiness.

LEARNING FROM THE POOR

Sinéad Long

“ALL THE EARTH IS FULL OF CRUEL HABITATIONS”

The purpose of this essay is to highlight the necessity of slum housing, whether it was in England during the Industrial Revolution, or a shanty-town in Brazil, and the consequences and conditions in which they came about. Driven by social segregation, the lower working class formed tight-knit communities based around inadequate housing conditions and poverty. These people lived in a housing monopoly, controlled and dominated by elite groups. Pride, social status, a need for ownership and belonging, and also detachment fused these people's lives together and was the foundation for some of the most successful, unintentional community-housing schemes. The importance of sustainable architecture in the 21st century has been recognised to a greater extent in the last decade. A world constrained by customs and by economics, we fail to see the simple solution to a treacherous problem. Slum housing, a technique which is out dated, and which portrays minimalistic architecture, may hold the answer to our fate. When striped back to the basics, a number of fundamental characteristics and concerns are revealed which are often neglected in slum housing; heat, water, ventilation, light, sanitation, health, equality. Slum housing has achieved what both modern and contemporary architecture strive for: a united community within a housing scheme, so perhaps too, architects can learn from slum housing as how to produce a successful prototype of sustainable living.

The definition of the word slum has been much disputed to this day. Yes, we understand it to represent a settlement in which mortals of small stature live in unendurable filth and stench, but where did the word originate? The writers of the Encyclopaedia of Urban Planning believe it 'is of comparatively modern origin (1912), possibly a contraction of "slump", meaning to fall or sink...' If this is true we can conclude that 'Slum' refers to a 'decline or deterioration in standards'. But this is a dispassionate response. Slums are coloured in too sharp a light of contrast to grand town houses and country villas. People see what is directly in front of their eyes, they are subjective, and often are reluctant to look no further in fear of what they may find 'some looked only for evidence of immortality. A few noticed the poverty and wondered about their diet. Not as many as one would wish took note of the size and number of rooms, or the materials of construction'. But what if what they find goes completely against the grain of predictable and obvious. There are only too many descriptions of the worst. In this essay I would like to bring forward the positive. I

A Solidarity

B Propinquity

C Economy



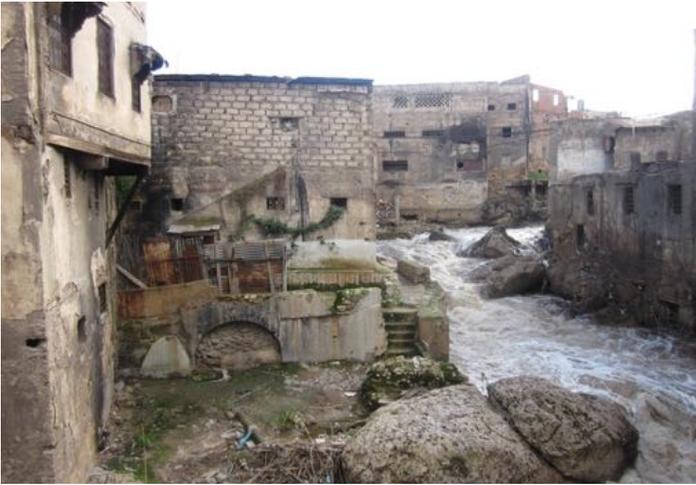
would like to portray slums and shanty towns in a new light, and perhaps open up people's eyes to the world, past, present and, most importantly, the future.

In a modern day constructional frenzy, where architects bid to out-do each other on extravagant, once-off, monumental buildings, have the fundamental concerns over housing crisis, and indeed the curiosity and creative planning of community housing systems, urban planning and intelligent infrastructure in the western world, fallen to the wayside? Slums and shanty towns do not represent the beautiful to most. People's vision is influenced and mutilated by the suggested misery due to poor sanitary conditions and almost complete non-existence of services. Gone unnoticed is the intricacy of the urban geography, an organic unfolding of walls, shacks and huts, alley-ways and door-ways, which neatly and expertly wrap around one another creating a meshed art work of colour, integrity and above all a sense of unity and strength. Could it be that duress, imprisonment due to poverty and oppression, could be the source of the most successful, unintentional, community housing schemes which in turn have spiralling effects on the development of our urban fabric? It is often said the less we have the happier we are. This also induces a sense of charity and giving, traits which were prosperous in slums, and which knitted families together. A loyalty formed through ill-circumstance and harshness which paradoxically bound these communities together. Successful, modern day, communal housing schemes are just that, successful, due to a common interest or interests. Although western families and individuals are not forced to live in these schemes, it is often the same characteristics which bring them together and make them a success- work, social class, social character, common beliefs, affordability.

SOLIDARITY

“Populated by fantastic characters- bootleggers, gangsters, prophets, Rastafarians, gun dealers and marijuana czars, plus almost a million ordinary working people” [Rian Malan]

Demography is defined as the study of population dynamics. It encompasses many components such as the study of size, structure, and distribution of populations and how certain human populations change over time due to births, deaths, migration and aging. In Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* we can begin to understand the progression of various populations worldwide, the cause and reasons influencing population explosion and population stability. According to Oscar Lewis' studies, in Mexico, the culture of poverty includes at least the lower third of the rural and urban population. This population is characterised by a relatively higher death-rate, a lower life-expectancy, a higher proportion of individuals in the younger age-groups, and, because of child labour and working women, a higher proportion of gainfully employed. Following the life



of Jesús Sanchez and his children in Lewis' book *The Children of Sanchez* one can begin to understand the factors and restraints that condemn communities to such poverty.

In the heart of Mexico City during the mid 20th century, one did not fear the gangs or the drug Lords, one feared their father or their husband. Total male superiority among the population eliminated gender equality within communities and caused severe relationship and dependency issues within households. Growing up in an addicted family, not necessarily addicted to alcohol (although this was a major problem) but perhaps addicted to tradition or formality, creates a host of interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts. One of the most common, yet complex conflicts acquired in an addicted family is the intrapersonal conflict over the need for dependence and independence. This is clear in following the lives of both Manuel and Roberto Sanchez, the eldest two sons of Jesús. The strain that family relationship causes in each of their lives is significant in shaping them as men and as human beings. They were subject to detrimental abuse from their father growing up as punishment for misbehaving, as was the case in every household. This also forced emphasis on knowing one's place and self-abnegation. The boys in turn punished their sisters, often with their best intentions at heart, as this was what they were taught being raised in the tradition of authoritarianism and male supremacy. However, they regarded their father with the utmost respect as he was the sole provider for the household and provided them with everything they had ever needed growing up. In their minds the beatings were justified, they always knew when they had been disobedient and grew to expect the physical violence. Children are dependent on the physical and emotional resources of the family and growing up in a family where signs of love and affection were rare and unaccustomed left both the male and female children craving a fond word or gesture from their parents. The child grows up knowing that they cannot depend on others to have their needs met. They learn to be independent and to rely on themselves in some ways. Yet as a family suffering from these kinds of social problems, their ability to live within such close proximity to one another successfully is quite an accomplishment. However strained relationships became within the Sánchez family, they were still exactly that, a family, united through hardship and society.

The role of the woman in the community is primarily as mother. In a society subject to very early initiation into sex women become pregnant and are often married at a young age. However, there is a high incidence of the abandonment of mothers and children, resulting in complicated family ties as each man may have children with two or more women. For this reason, perhaps, families tend to be centred toward the mother figure, form a much closer bond and have a much greater knowledge of maternal relatives. It is also the role of the mother which dominates in the community. She is a social figure and much of her daily routine is spent surrounded by her neighbours. Due to a lack of education and also to ignorance, birth rates were high among women. However the infant mortality rate was also high and miscarriages were common. They were not ignorant to the fact of sexually transmitted infections and the men were particularly aware of unclean women, such as those who worked in the whore house. Disease and illness were prone but due to a severe shortage of cash visits to the doctor were seldom and instead were treated at home with herbal remedies. Housewives relied on one another to mind children, particularly when they were ill or indeed in the case of single father households where the mother has passed away, and offered their services to neighbours as cleaners or cooks.

The day to day constant struggle for survival makes it impossible to climb the social ladder. Unemployment, under-employment, low wages, child labour, the absence of saving and the desperate shortage of cash shows nothing but a desolate future. It's a vicious circle; people resolved to unskilled occupations due to lack of or no education. Children dropped out of school at a young age to get work to bring money into the household, often earning half of what their father would for the same work. Often in the case of Roberto and Manuel, on a Saturday they would have to chase after their employers demanding their weeks' wages, quite often coming away with less than half of or nothing at all. Yet this didn't stop them, as children, being able to dream of bigger and better things. In one instance Roberto, a wild child at heart, played games on the roof tops of the tenements, swinging from ropes and from poles imagining that he could fly. That was his airplane "That was one of my dreams." Whenever a plane flew by, even to this day, I keep watching it, longing to fly one someday." He dreamt of fast cars and motors, he dreamt of being something in life. But without the means and the support, these dreams were crushed and fizzled from his mind

"I always wanted to be something in life, to do whatever I felt like and not have to take orders from anyone. I wanted to make a kite of my life and fly it in any field."

Jesús Sánchez believed in education and wanted his children to make something of their lives, more so than he did, but he could never communicate this to his children or show encouragement having been emotionally stunted and hardened from his upbringing as a child. Jesús was a man of hard work, having struggled to survive all his life. He had no childhood. He worked hard for every penny he earned and expected his children to do the same and it often made him angry when it came to greed over money or to just general laziness

“there I was back in the same situation, going hungry. That’s why I sometimes scold my children, because I’ve always given them food and a roof over their heads.”

When it came to money you could not trust anyone, not your family, and certainly not your employers or neighbours. But larger sums of money were a concern for few. In times of need and desperation, when food and income were scarce they would pull together and not expect a thing in return “lots of people would tell me to sit down to eat first, and then they wouldn’t let me do anything for them.” There is intensity in the readiness to share what little they possess.

PROPINQUITY

Social solidarity in the slums is infused through the imbrications of buildings and space. Although density and shortage of space are discerning problems in slum areas there is still a sharp line between public and private space, a threshold which is respectfully acknowledged by all in each respective district or community. Through following the lives of the Sanchez family, who live in an area in Mexico City where living standards are low but by no means are they the worst, a strong sense of place becomes a reoccurring need or longing in the children’s lives. In the slums in Mexico City communities were divided by their districts or vecindads. Each vecindad differed in size, elegance and architecture and bestowed a sense of belonging into people’s lives.

In comparing two vecindads from Lewis’s book it is possible to see the differences that distinguish one from the other and put them into two different classes of elegance. Jesús Sanchez lived in many different districts when his children were growing up. Each street was colourfully identified by name. As was the case in medieval times, the street was often identified by trade or profession, such as Street of the Painters, Street of the Tinsmiths or Street of the Bakers. These streets separated vecindads and were often used instead of vecindad walls or boundary walls to enclose communities. In the Panaderos vecindad, a small vecindad, rent was substantially cheaper

“a single row of twelve windowless one-room apartments which lie exposed to the view of passers-by, with no enclosing walls, no gate and only a dirt yard.... there are no inside toilets and no piped water. Two public washbasins and two dilapidated toilets of crumbling brick and adobe, curtained by pieces of torn bur-lap, serve the eighty-six inhabitants”

Unlike the Panaderos vecindad, the Casa Grande presented a sharp contrast on the poverty scale. The Casa Grande was a larger, more secluded district which had the luxury of a private toilet and wash facilities in each of the apartments. The apartments varied in size, ranging from one room low-rise to two storey apartments. To the north and south of this vecindad two large concrete walls lay heavy on the boundaries while to the east and west access was restricted by street rows with only a gate through each allowing people in and out. These gates were closed and locked every night, perhaps with the intent on creating an air of safety in the vecindad and to combat acts of criminal mentality. Internally, the vecindad follows a coherent layout in which rooms are spaced at approximately twelve foot intervals around four courtyards. Again like Panaderos, each apartment was windowless, with just door after door, coloured red, fighting a violent contrast against the walls. Privacy was highly valued, each adult wanting to keep their family life private. It was customary to knock and wait to be invited into a neighbours' house and often visiting and socialising retreated to the comfort of the courtyard, away from the home. The courtyard was an energetic place, busied with mothers and their children as well as animals and buckets for water. It underwent daily rituals; in the morning it was accustomed to the chit-chat of mothers, women shouting playful riff-raff at one another across the roof tops as they attended to their laundry, the joyful squeals of toddlers (and the occasional pig) as they played amongst one another. Like clockwork, in the evenings the courtyards would become dominated by the vecindad boys who played vicious games of soccer, pounding the ball off the reverberating walls, cries and yells as goals were scored against their comrades. In the evening time, often on a Sunday, a dance would be held in the courtyard where the community would gather and enjoy a night of good music, food and dancing. The courtyard was an important focal point in the vecindad and encompassed many services such as a crèche, market, playground and sports hall in that one small space. It is similar in a lot of instances to the community hall which we would be familiar with today. The Sanchez family, even when quite young, were familiar with what it meant to live somewhere nice and with a little stature. Constantly having to move from vecindad to vecindad due to changing family circumstances, the children were sensitively aware of their surroundings and had quite an opinion of what they liked, what they didn't like, and also what it meant for them on the social scale to live in a certain apartment. Although their apartment may have been no bigger than others they took pride in cleanliness, a trait passed down from their father, and also in its furnishings. It often pained them, even though they wouldn't say, to move from one apartment into another with less prestige

“we moved to a two-storey tenement on Orlando Street. Of all the houses I have lived in, that was the only one I liked. I was delighted that it had windows. It looked pretty to me.”

As children they were not only concerned with prominence, but they were also concerned with the new territory that came hand in hand with a new vecindad. A sense of community is quite strong within the vecindad, particularly among young people growing up. Gang initiation was of highest importance, especially if you were a young boy, and which often led to life-long friendships.

Although standards are low in these vecindads there has been much improvement from the British slums of the 19th century; improvement in architecture and in space, improvement in water and hygiene, improvement in how people think. In many slums today, perhaps not so much in the vecindads in Mexico City, there appears to be a total absence of formal street grids. Clusters of tenement shacks erected on the outskirts of cities unguided by urban planning. In some cases, such as the Casa Grande vecindad, the complex used to belong to a wealthy upper class family before being divided up into one room apartments and rented out to poor tenants where additions of self build were added to the outside spaces mutilating form and recognisable space. Due to complex grids and street mapping (where any), services and resources are below standard and disorganised, often unable to reach many parts of the slums leaving them without a reputable sewage system, electricity and sometimes running water. In all modern day slums and shanties recycling is literally a way of life. Materials are often salvaged from scrap heaps and reused. Nothing is wasted or unwanted. Self-build shacks and add-ons cling to one another for support and stability, creating a meshed living space where everything seems to behave and act as one. Through this system maximum density is gained but with the sacrifice of open space and light. This is not necessarily a bad thing as many slums and shanties are refined to warmer climates where shade and shadow and overall thermal insulation (the system as an envelope) are highly valued. As well as recycling materials, water and space are also recycled. Rain water is collected and stored in cisterns on the roof. The roof space of many of these slums is quite a valued space. It is used to its full intensity for storage, washing lines, animal huts, TV/radio antennae. On a day to day basis minimum energy is used. Transport is either by foot or bicycle, cooking is done on a little kerosene hob, bread is cooked at a public oven or bought at the market, and washing is done in the public baths. However what is severely lacked in these neighbourhoods are schools, health clinics and any means for employment or work.

It is clear that industrialization and demography are closely related in history. The parts of the world today which tackle the constant problem of overcrowding and density related issues are all areas mostly untouched by industrialization such as South and Central America, India and Eastern Asia. Without the wealth and political independence induced by a boom in innovative industry these countries suffered an unequal distribution of wealth driven by the minority. As the unemployed population continued to flock to cities they had no choice but to squat on the outskirts as little or no money was available to them. With no economic improvement, the populations in these areas continued to multiply due to both a continuous intake of migrants and a very high birth rate. These people learned to survive life by adaption, not innovation which was/is the case in western society. These areas are controlled not by local authorities but dictated by gangs, drug lords, crime and disease. The architecture in these mutilated housing forms is rich in integrity and life without ever having being intended.





ECONOMICS

It is clear that economics have a major role to play today in the housing crisis today. It has also a major role to play in sustainability, not a good one perhaps. The more money a family has the lazier they become, especially as regards energy. We in the western world are guilty of this. We see fit to waste endless amounts of electricity and heat, to waste endless amounts of materials or to discard without thought of afterlife. And paradoxically this is putting even further strain on our pockets in the long run.

“Anything we find inconvenient will not endure.”

Eliminating unpleasant conditions appears to have been one of the main causes of innovation and change throughout history. But what if inconveniency It is clear that economics have a major role to play today in the housing crisis today. It has also a major role to play in sustainability, not a good one perhaps. The more money a family has the lazier they become, especially as regards energy. We in the western world are guilty of this. We see fit to waste endless amounts of electricity and heat, to waste endless amounts of materials or to discard without thought of afterlife. And paradoxically this is putting even further strain on our pockets in the long run.

“Anything we find inconvenient will not endure.”

Eliminating unpleasant conditions appears to have been one of the main causes of innovation and change throughout history. But what if inconvenience is a necessity? We are told we need an energy change, but what if what we have is sufficient. We have the infrastructure, the power plants; what we need is an energy change-over, an adaption to the systems we already have in place to incorporate smart, accessible, non-depletable resources. It is clear we need to re-think and refresh our methods of conventional heating and energy and for this to succeed a seed must be planted into the social mind-frame. Should one start at the bottom and concentrate on housing, or does one jump straight into the big time and tackle the urban fabric as a whole. Whether it is one or the other the problem lies that our current tendency is to tackle one – one house, one office block, one building, rather than a system at large.

It is clear we can make more with less. We have so many prototypes of sustainable living at our finger-tips surely the matter of a sustainable future can be resolved. From Jean Prouve’s manufactured prototype to Buckminster Fuller’s dymaxion house we see that the ideas and visionaries are there, they just need to be adapted and put in place. One key issue or problem with these designs was that they were suitable for any site or environment. As a manufactured product they were easily shipped and assembled all over the world but the prototypes did not meet the need of varying climates and changing geographical environments. A major part of sustainability in architecture today revolves around designing for climate and location specifically as to make the most of the natural energy resources available to them such as sun, wind, wave and even geothermal energy. The favelas in Brazil, for example, take so much into consideration without even realising it; form, density, functional relationships, geography, climate, wasted sites, wasted space, wasted materials, wasted resources. The favelas in Rio de Janeiro adhere to the form and sprawl of the mountains, apartments over-

DYMAXION



CONCLUSION

Could it be that a 'culture of poverty' as coined by Oscar Lewis in *La Vita* needs to be reinstated in our lives today to draw us back to the basic comforts of life which are taken for granted. Similarly, does a movement similar to the *Arte Povera* 'poor art' need to be revived, but as a culture or social mind-frame rather than a mere art movement, associating itself with wider and more important issues such as simplistic, ecological living, breathing, thinking. As our future on this planet grows unsure- natural disasters wreaking havoc, holes in the ozone layer causing a rapid rise in temperatures, fossil fuels quickly depleting; perhaps we could learn to appreciate ingredients such as water, light, air, energy and heat and exercise sustainability in our lives and our architecture. Too many buildings are erected on a short-term, no-need-to-last basis and materials seem to be never ending. But this is not the case. In a time of economic struggle, perhaps those less well off could lead the way to a more sustainable future, who driven by lack of funds, are forced to turn to more creative, educated planning to cope with the struggle of the future.

“The crumbling structure of their homes, the shortage of water, the lack of incentive and the poverty pushed many a woman over the edge into slovenliness when she had lived and bred her children in the slums; but a strong puritan tradition of cleanliness survived among the working classes ready to show itself when the nearest chance of more comfortable living occurred.”

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Industrial process' effects on our way of life and housing

Mathieu Roche



Introduction

Industrial process' effects on our way of life and housing

In the last century, our way of live and housing have been radically changed. A succession of events, of innovation, of architects and designers, contributed to create a new environment of living. The 20s century was full of cultural and material exchanges. That process, which can be link to globalization, changed our way of life but also our way of thinking. New needs created new way of housing and new way of life. I will expose some elements which contributed to create a global way to live and to house. Industrialization, modernization and consummation took an important place in that evolution. With some examples from architecture and non-architecture history, I will express the role of architecture during that period. Naturally, I want to link this with the role of architects and show when they rode that modernization process and when they were overtaken by the globalization progression.

Part 1:

An industrial architecture story: European cases

In Europe, one of the most important figures in modern architecture and industrial elements use for housing is Le Corbusier. His real name was Charles-Edouard Janneret, working all around the world he was, before the other architects, a global architect. In 1914, he was the first in Europe to propose the idea of a mass produced element. The Dom-ino house was a linear concrete block of three flat floors supported by six columns and linked by a concrete stair. That basic element was supposed to be bring on the site and constitute de skeleton of the house. The rest of the house would be prefabricated and make cheaper as possible; walls included standard widows and door. The result is a really easy and flexible way to house people. Nevertheless that way of building housing unit like car wasn't really in phase with minds of the beginning of the twenty century.

The second prototype of standardized house made by Le Corbusier is the maison Citrohan (1920). The name of Citrohan looks really like the car-constructor's name Citroën. That is for show that this housing unit is also destined to be mass-produced in a factory. Le Corbusier draws a lot of different version on that prototype. The envelope (a box) and the plan are really basic; he took off all rustics elements of a traditional house. That plainness suggests the beginning of a new way of live and a new method of house production. That industrialization of building creates a rationalization of buildings and components

but maintaining a basic strong structure. For Le Corbusier, industrial production can produce beautiful objects (objets-types) which you can easily use. That prototype: the maison Citrohan will be reused in Le Corbusier's next productions during the next 30 years. Le pavillon de l'esprit nouveau at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris in 1925 was a collective adaptation of the maison Citrohan. Using mass-production that proposition was a good answer to the individual houses' need in this time. Nevertheless that wasn't a cheap answer and it was much more expensive than the other pavilions in the exposition. In 1929, basic elements of the maison Citrohan were rationalized and used to create houses at Pessac, France. Nevertheless, these houses were built mostly in brick, and the relation with the maison Citrohan seems to be purely aesthetic. That house was created for workers but no one wanted to live in. That population's way of life wasn't still in phase with that housing proposition, and ironically the maison Citrohan was liked by intellectual bourgeoisie whom expected a new way of life; common spaces, opening to the outside, decrease of services area ...



The maison Citrohan, Le Corbusier (1920)

Le Corbusier succeeded in realizing that idea of a new living space in the famous Unité d'habitation. He included Citrohan's aspect in the Unité d'habitation's plan (Open spaces, opening...). At the beginning of the project, in the 50s, all flats were supposed to be mass-produced in a factory and put on a concrete structural frame. But at last, all flats were built di-

rectly on the frame and in concrete too. The industrial innovation of that building is more in the furniture creation. The Unité d'habitation is a test for really simple and industrial furniture. That was successful. Le Corbusier, helped by Charlotte Perriand and Jean Prouvé, created mass production furniture to fill the flat of the Unité d'habitation. Even if Le Corbusier didn't really succeed to create prefabricated housing, he succeeded to rationalize living space and extend it in a mass-productive way.

In the 20s all the European building sector became more industrial and more rationalized. In fact the First World War was the first industrial war. Architects weren't really active during the First War; most of the innovations of that time were made by Engineers. Architects joined that movement at the end of the war. Metal and electrical sector made a lot of progress. Factories were modern with a well organized management. They used to facilitate military production by mass production according the Taylor system. The war's innovation permitted industries to produce what they want quite fast by mass-productive industries. Now architects had an easy way to built prefabricated elements. They used this background and applied industrial system to architectural conception and construction.

In the 20s that idea of standardization had powerful effects on architecture and modern movement. Architects, like Ernst Neufert in the 40s, dreamed of a total industrialization of building and housing. He thought to a way to rebuild a part of Berlin which was destroying during the war. He didn't propose to bring prefabricated elements from factories to the building site, but to bring the factories on the building site and built it "in situ" with industrial process. That Hausbaumaschine, named like that by Neufert, is a mobile machine able to build a five-storey concrete building. It would permit to build several apartments really faster and easier as a traditional way. It's the perfect transposition of car's modern industry to housing developed. Despite his efficient production facilities, and certainly because of the difficulties to get a machine like that working, Neufert's Hausbaumaschine was never built. At this time, even if architects full used industrial process, they didn't success to create a total industrialized mass-building housing.

The last European case I want to talk about is Jean Prouvé's Work. I already mentioned him for his work with Le Corbusier in the Unité d'habitation's furniture. French architect-designer, he began his career as a designer and worked in collaboration with several architects. He designed and made really technical architectural furniture, using complicated industrial process. In 1935 He designed a prefabricated metallic holiday house. That easy transportable housing (small and light) was intended for mass production. Nevertheless that



Jean Prouvé's furniture

small prefabricated house stayed a single prototype. During the German occupation he created emergency accommodation for soldiers. That's industrial prefabricated huts-like could be erected by three men in one hour. That emergency need of housing showed that small housing could completely be prefabricated and mass-produced. After the liberation the minister of reconstruction realized that. They ask Prouvé to built 800 temporary houses for homeless. The building principle of these houses was the same that the soldiers one. They were intended to be temporary but we didn't know what really appended to them. People say that some samples still exist and are in good condition. So, does that mean it would be able to consider an industrial mass-produced house as potentially a sustainable way of housing? In the 50s Jean Prouvé managed a huge team of people working on the conception and the production of furniture and architectural elements. It's the beginning of a semi-industrial production of objects accessible to the large public.

Part 2:

An industrial architecture story: American cases

I want now to speak about American cases, in practically Californian housing development. Cities in that area, like Los Angeles, are really low and wide. Cars are really important in that population way of life. Housing development in California is really link to the car. Those cities are composed of a huge number of simple individual single-storey houses. We can observe that that typology would be positive to a prefabricated mass-produced housing development. In fact, most of those realizations were designed with the intention of putting them into mass-production.

After the Second World War, America needs to increase its number of housing because of soldiers return and European immigration. At this time, mass-produced houses seem to be the perfect answer. "House must be capable of duplication and in no sense be an individual performance"; that was the announcement of the Case Study Houses program which ran from 1945 until 1966. It was an experimental program who major architects, including Richard Neutra, Pierre Koenig, Craig Ellwood..., designed and built inexpensive and efficient model homes with available modern plans. The program planed 36 prototype homes easily and cheaply constructed during the postwar building boom. It was really important that the best material be used and the best possible way to used it. Thant includes the idea to must find the "good solution" of each problem. Architects joined that idea of living with industri-

alization and rationalization of architecture. They used brut materials; cheap elements take from industry and pre-fabricated structure and elements. Most of the cases study houses are single-storey, flat-roofed, open plan, and timber or steel-frame.

The most representative image of the program is probably the famous picture by night of the Case Study House n°22. Made by Pierre Koenig that house overhangs Los Angeles. It defined Koenig's style and brought him great attention. So the public inauguration attracted a lot of people and the house was furnished in the way of that "new mind". Case Study House n°22 became quickly the perfect manifestation of modernity in Los Angeles and the perfect representation of that new way of life in post-war America in general. During his long years of career in architecture, Pierre Koenig never forgot the principle and the quality he gave to the firsts houses. He always believed that he could make people's lives better through architecture. The 60s started in a modern wave, which that house was really representative. One on the most representative element



Case study house n°22,
Pierre Koenig (1960)

of that new way of life and housing is the presence of larges widow and patio in each project. Houses are open to outside and in relation with it (water, vegetation...). I think that philosophy of living is very close to Le Corbusier's proposition. Certainly because of the time but also because of American people's modernity, that new prototype of living seduced the middle class and also quite all the population. People loved mass-production

and industrial-like houses; they looked modern. Finely most of these houses which could be prefabricating never been mass-produced and stayed like demonstration pieces. Cases study houses program showed and proved that mass production and prefabrication can be use in the housing production system. The possibility to build efficient, sane and durable houses by cheap and mass-production system was demonstrate. Nevertheless the program ended without accomplish its purpose; the cases studies houses stayed prototype. But that experience and its popularity showed that people changed their mind about housing and they were ready for chage, and expected a new way of living. That feeling gained Europe and started to spread all around the world. Since the time industrialization and rationalization entered in housing production, modernity boom started to modify our way of live. Lower price and innovation created new needs and desires.



Case study house n°8,
Charles and Ray Eames
(1949)

One successful example we can give about space rationalization and beginning of consumerism and mass production is the Eames' work. Charles and Ray Eames actually worked on cases studies house projects too. In particular the number 8; which they lived in. But I think that the remarkable part of their work is the design of modern furniture. The Eames' used in first innovative technologies; like the fiberglass, plastic resin and plywood for chairs work. The Eames' fiberglass chair solved the problem of how to make a seat out of a single body-fitting shell. The progressive quality and the simplicity of plastic made that the Eames preferred to use it than plywood or

metal. Fiberglass had been used during the war to reinforce plastic on airplane. The Eames re-conceptualized the use of the material and created one of the first one-piece plastic chairs. It was one of the first plastic designed furniture ever made. They began mass-producing fiberglass armchairs in 1950 for the Herman Miller Furniture Company. The couple represents the West Coast's modernity and the global expansion of American culture. Their evolution from furniture designers to cultural ambassadors show their talents of adaptation and the influence they had on people mind. The Eames partnered with the government and some country's businesses to lead the charge to modernize postwar America. And in the same way, even if most of Ray's work was assigned to Charles, they modernized the couple's vision in America.

Part 3:

Industrialization and minimalism: futurist experiences

I can't speak about rationalism's origins and consumer business around houses, without speak about Archigram. Archigram was an avant-garde architectural group formed in the 1960s. Their drawings were futurist, most of the time pro-consumerist and aspirate from technology. They were hypothetical projects representative of a new fake reality. The main members of the group were Peter Cook, Warren Chalk, Ron Herron, Dennis Crompton, Michael Webb and David Greene. The group experimented new technology ("high tech" culture), mobile living spaces, space capsules and representation of a mass-consumer world. Their works offered a seductive vision of possible way to future; however, social and environmental issues were most of the time left aside. Archigram work could be a great example of this time ideology; need of novelty and need of complete freedom in design in conception; especially feminism and ecology. Archigram show a version of the sixties which did not really exist in that period. It's a vision more apolitical rather than engaged, more technologic rather than anarchic, more individualist rather than "hippie".

At the beginning of the 1960s the architects group declare that "the house is a consumer product". They looked for a new way to make a durable architecture. To be durable, Architecture needs to be self-contained, transportable, interchangeable and, the main purpose, consumable. That point of view would architecture become more like a refrigerator, a car,

or a kind of furniture that a big immovable and unchangeable object. Archigram found architectural potential in each technology and mass-produced dwelling was an important theme. They were the first to use words like “capsule” or “pod” rather than “house” or “home”. One of the best-known project is Plug-in-city. It's an industrial megastructure of hundreds storeys high with thousand living pods. That creates a nightmare vision of an industrial and consumer city. In that prototype the capsules look more believable. That mass-produced unit contains all the living needs in a small area. In spite of their work about consumer society, Archigram failed in business and market place. That shows that there is a gap between idea and image. The idea of mobility and renew is really important in Archigram's world. The two notions about move are; the ambition to transcend all social convention, and the care of right and exactitude. Archigram place that system at the service at that modern and “nomad” lifestyle.



Megastructure city, Archigram

About nomad lifestyle and women emancipation, Toyo Ito's installation, named “a dwelling for Tokyo nomad woman”, could be a good example. This installation was focused on temporality and the question of spatiality. This installation took place in 1985. It kept in mind the increase of a global conscience and networks, and of courses the new needs of women. In this period, Toyo Ito did extensive research about the transformation of private space. He worked most of the time on the most living and minimalist space with answer needs (sleep, diner, wash, communicate...). That prototype was design like

a skin-extension. Its forms are smooth and the same material was use for the furniture and the exterior's covering. In that prototype, the prototype itself and the furniture are both as important. The furniture is the house. There is tree type of smart furniture, answering tree needs: communication, appearance and meal. This project is a new type of house for a new type of women's lifestyle. The new woman is independent and nomad in an urban world. She doesn't need a conventional house anymore, just a place to do the elementary functions of her life. This prefabricated, industrial look, "smart furniture" is a really modern and minimalist answer to women's new lifestyle. But it show that architecture has been change by lifestyle and mod-

Part 4

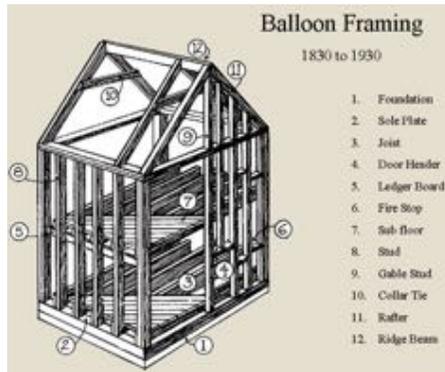
An industrial business story

So, who succeed in market place? What was the successful business industrial house? Most of my examples seemed to be canonized by architectural history as successful prefabricated houses. But they weren't a commercial success. These architects, their programs and prototypes showed how to make cheap and practical houses using new technologies and industrial innovation. That searches permitted the emergence of a new model of living. This popularity of prefab and minimalism housing created a new business around anything related housing.

Since the revolution of American's industry by the "Fordism", business industries have the capacity to produce quite everything in high quantity by mass produced system. Henry Ford is the founder of the development of the assembly line technique of mass production. Ford had a global vision of the world; he thought that consumerism was the key to peace and the best way to future. He always tried to lowering costs; that created many technical and business innovations, and a global dispersion of that industrial object. In *My Life and Work* ford predicted that lifestyle and society have to change. He wondered that economic and technological development will change that new-colonial society and that consummation will bring more freedom to people. This idea in the book is quite vague, but that show he saw that industrialization could influence lifestyle, and afterward; housing. The propagation of a new

model of living and the easier industrial's use caused that Architecture becomes gradually a business for industries. It's the beginning of globalization.

Balloon frame
(1830-1930)



That non-architecture history about prefabricated housing started really early with the “balloon frame”. That basic technology was popular in North America, Northern Europe, Australia and Japan. Traditionally the walls were timber frames. When the framing is finished, the full structure is covered with “clapboard” wood covering. That “architecture” without architects was the most popular and the easier to adapt to an industrial and economic system. That process created housings which were very fast, very cheap, and contrary to all expectation; durable. They were so durable that some houses were several time dismantle and re-erected on new site. In the early 19th century they were just that American town needed. The business potential of that process was quickly realized. Prefabrication production looked easy to use. This kind of accommodation was plenty use in American west cities and in Britain to answer the houses needs of war and colonies. They replaced the tents in Australia and Africa, and gave a better way of life to the colonists. That easy way to built permitted to reinforce the colonial power and to settle colonizers’ authority really fast. In 1830, the first advertisement to sell prefabricated houses to emigrants appeared in Australia. John Manning sold full prefabricated elements to erect a house in a few hours. From that time, the “Manning cottage” became famous in colonialism’s

world. This house could be disassemble and move to different sites and it didn't need really specific tool. Other man modified and ameliorated the "Manning cottage". His competitors included new technologies like iron. They transformed the house and made it stronger, lighter, perfectly waterproof and more durable. Colonist's quality of life continued to increases to tend to the cities we know today, in Australia and South Africa.

In the beginning of the 20th century several companies grew up in America and offered to buy several houses in catalogue. The most famous and the bigger company was Sear Roebuck. A sears Roebuck house kit was several precut timber frame with secondary components like windows, doors... The house was delivered by rail in two boxcars. The company claimed that buying a house in kit form saved around 40 per cent of a normal house price. So, the highlight of the company was the attractive prices. Sears Roebuck praised the simplicity and the accessibility of his houses: "Our plans are more complete and simple than you can get from ordinary architects." That business system worked and quickly, Sears Roebuck Company wasn't the only one to benefit from that business sector. Competition and fame permitted a fast development of prefabrication industries in housing process. In that period, big businesses were taking interest in prefabricated housing because they saw a new growth area for investment, business and employment.

The modernist idea at this time was to adapt car business to housing business. All houses and furniture could be in different components and made by different companies. All the different pieces could be assembled on the building site. Looking for profits, these companies were the first to exploit technical progress and increases invalidity of cheap manufactured boards. Nowadays we use a lot these boards, which are plasterboard, fiberboard, plywood... This production was boost after the second world wars. The housing needs increased the production and there were about 100 prefabricated firms in production in America in the early 40s. They really succeed to adapt this production system to housing industries but unfortunately, this production didn't created "architectural houses", but more living plywood cubes.

What kind of house we create if we make it like a car? And what can we expect from it? That question started to be the aim of that business' development. They started to include architects in their projects. The prefabrication process had to include more prefabricated element, like the furniture which can be fix. The Airoh house was one of the first to include full bathroom and full kitchen (included a cooker and a refrigerator) in the program. Including all the plumbing, all the elements were prefabricated and install in factory. The house was constructed by blocs and non in several pieces. They were bolted together in the site. That system permitted to facilitate the technical design. That design freedom permit to make the prefabricated houses better looking and more "home like". The prefab house become, with its American look; simple storey, generous garden, high standard equipment, became the symbol of the happy post-war family life. That business experience created a craze for prefabricated housing. The companies link that to a new lifestyle image, with a view to earn much money. But that craze tends to increase prefabricated houses' price and they become less competitive in a business point of view.



Mobil home park

Some of them became more expensive that a permanent house. In the late 60s, with the end of the housing boom, the prefabrication house industry seemed to decline and a conventional building became more competitive. Since that experience architects and businessmen kept in mind prefabrication's advantage and the facilities to create business, exchanges and employment around it. Those three elements are favorable to a mind change of a society. They actually contributed to tend to a modernism and consumerist way of life.

One other commercial success showing a new lifestyle is the development of the Mobil home. That inexpensive house is representative of freedom and mobility. The Mobil home is hall produced and assembled in Industry; in one piece, with technical elements and furniture. Moreover that housing type is completely link to on industrial process because se Mobil home is calibrate by a truck dimensions. Indeed, the standard size of a Mobil home fit on a truck's back. A parallel business started to develop around the Mobil home when Mobil home parks began to emerge. Those parks included a high quantity of services; clubhouse, swimming pool, golf courses... and began to attract all people classes. Mobil home was a commercial success and concept show the possibility of a "living pod" which will be developed by architects (like Archigram).

Furniture area was change by industrial process and new people' needs too. The 20th century produced a number of furniture styles. This was due not only to the variety of new materials that had become available, such as plastic, plywood, steel, aluminum, and fiberglass, but also to the fact that furniture was almost exclusively mass-produced. I exposed that the Eames where the first to had a successful furniture industrial production in the 50s. Other projects by several designer and business firms followed the experience. They start to produce modern furniture and its steel and glass design it became famous around the world. There was a demand for lightweight. The mix of American and Scandinavian influences tended to create an international style. That international style, in first present in public place (like offices) became to move into houses and created a need of quality and quantity. That fame is due in fist part to cheap travel, which for the first time permitted thousands of Europeans to see and imitate the art of furniture of other countries. The second point is that that international style was wide popularized by weekly magazines and television.

The mass production in a consumer society transformed furniture as a product subject to rapid change of fashion. Furniture became to be designed for manufacture in large number at a low price. The demand people made it change. And the furniture often changes several times in the owner lifetime. The quantity and variety of furniture, as well as its comfort, in-

creased in the last century. Furniture became to have simple means, people wanted functional, mobile and replaceable. Designers have tended to simplify the look of a room by reducing the impressive furniture in it. Simple living spaces, simple and well designed furniture permitted to place the man in center of his house (the center of his world); that a modernism point of view. So, the car production model was applied to furniture too. The creation and the furniture's style began universal; designers create now for impersonal market sectors. That process creates a standardization of our dwellings' space; now an apartment in Shanghai could be quite the same that one in New York or London. House became a consumable object in that new global world. There was a new relationship between productive firm and customers. Furniture companies took the position to guide their consumers and sometime create new needs. They created and produced a lot thing their customers would never thing. They created consumers' surprise and excitement to boost their consumption. That business needs huge means of production, that's the face of globalization we know; delocalization, cheap and abundant production.

Part 5

Nowadays lifestyle: example and conclusion

What do we have now in heritage from those experiences? Today consumerist society is comfortably installed in our way of life. House business is widely developed all around the world. Housing and furniture companies control that business and its production. We can mention the constructor company Bouygues. That French companies is present in several sectors: construction, Medias, telecommunication, energy and transport. The company develops itself after the second World Wars 2 and the housing need. It started producing industrial prefabricated house and enlarged its activities to public work (road, stadium...) and traditional construction. Of courses this famous development couldn't be done without architects. The company is present in 80 countries and creates a wide quantity of employ. They adapt the industrial and mass productive system to a traditional way to build. The company has an intense build activity. We can reproach it nowadays to favor profit and to create some weak and spiritless architecture.

In furniture production the most successful company is, without doubt, the furniture's leader: Ikea. The Ikea's product's success in the industry and business world can be attributed to the vast experience of the company in the retail market, product differentiation, and cost leadership. Their products are different compared to the conventional ones already in the market. They created furniture with simple design and developed their own relation and their own market around it. They implanted shops all around the world. Their shops are like

“house temple”: customers can find in the same place all they need to furnish their home; Ikea sells plants, living room furniture, bedroom furniture, toys, frying pans, whole kitchens... It is quite a consumer incentive politic. The lower price is the fundament of the company, but it is also a consumer incentive politic. And the customers help too. They have to do all by themselves. They pick the furniture at the warehouse, they transport it to home and assemble it themselves. Today the market is open to China, and more customers keep the prices low. The low price strategy in industry can't be possible without globalization and high consumption.



IKEA, China
Present everywhere

The consumer system gave a new a vision and a new symbolic to the house. During last century, capitalism industrialization created both the factory and the home we have habit now to live with. Befor the 20th century, many productive activities took place at home. The industrialization gave an end to that system. All the productive activities were concentrated in industries. The house becomes a place of something else; a non-working place. That touches domesticity and owner representation. The house lost in utility and became a place of comfort and representation; an ideal place for show-off and to spend money for. The modernist lifestyle's need perturbed social arrangement in the house. The kitchen became one of the most important rooms in the house and the center of activities. It's the more modern and industrialized place in the house. The height production of objects created a proliferation of objects

in the house. A consumer attitude (mostly due to advertized) give a wide importance to furniture and objects. That objects, as a house, acquire sensitive and representative qualities to their owner. The high production permits an interior generalization of your house. Most of furniture companies sell the same kind of objects. That contributes to fell at home in every house you are; like in a hotel. The consumerist society tends to make you believe that you can personalize it and make it unique buying mass-produced objects.

Even if some aspects of that business could be seem like an evil manipulator process, I think that industrialization could give more freedom to people. Today a lot of people are mobile (especially the single people); the globalization of our living space permitted to move without lost our marks. We could feel at home everywhere. Because of the cheap and impersonal furniture, but as well the expensive flat's rent, we observe in big cities that mobile people live in full furnished apartment. The industrialization and the mass production create a global housing where everyone can live.



Container House, Adam Kalkin

Nowadays some architects try to concretize the “pod way of life” of Archigram. It’s true that our society incite to develop housing in that way: more self-contained, fuller furnished, interchangeable, and anyway; consumable. That includes a simple way to built and a simple way of life. A “pod” I basically a box.

A box is really minimalist object and use for putting things in and carrying things around. A container is a simply steel box use for world's transport. It's really representative of the globalization and consumers exchange. So it's a pod, several containers had in multistory can create Archigram's megastructured city. It's a readymade directly from industry and business, and it's easy to carry by truck or boat. Can container be architecture orb use for it? Some architects, like Nicolas Lacey or Adam Kalkin included it in architecture. They designed artists' studios and house. Both didn't use it like a finish architectural object but more like a minimalist living space. The simplicity of the container permits to play with composition, opening, access ...

These are experimental realization, but finally, all kind of prefabricated, box-like buildings are adaptations of containers. That model become to be use a lot for student accommodations, council flat, or rehabilitation projects. Industrial process tried sometime to leave architects and designers behind. Architects use to exploit industrial elements reuse to try to produce an exciting new type of humane and eco-conscious architecture. Even if industrialization and globalization participated to the architecture's modernization, architects show that the most successful architecture is made when industry applies to Architecture, and not when architecture applies to industrial business.

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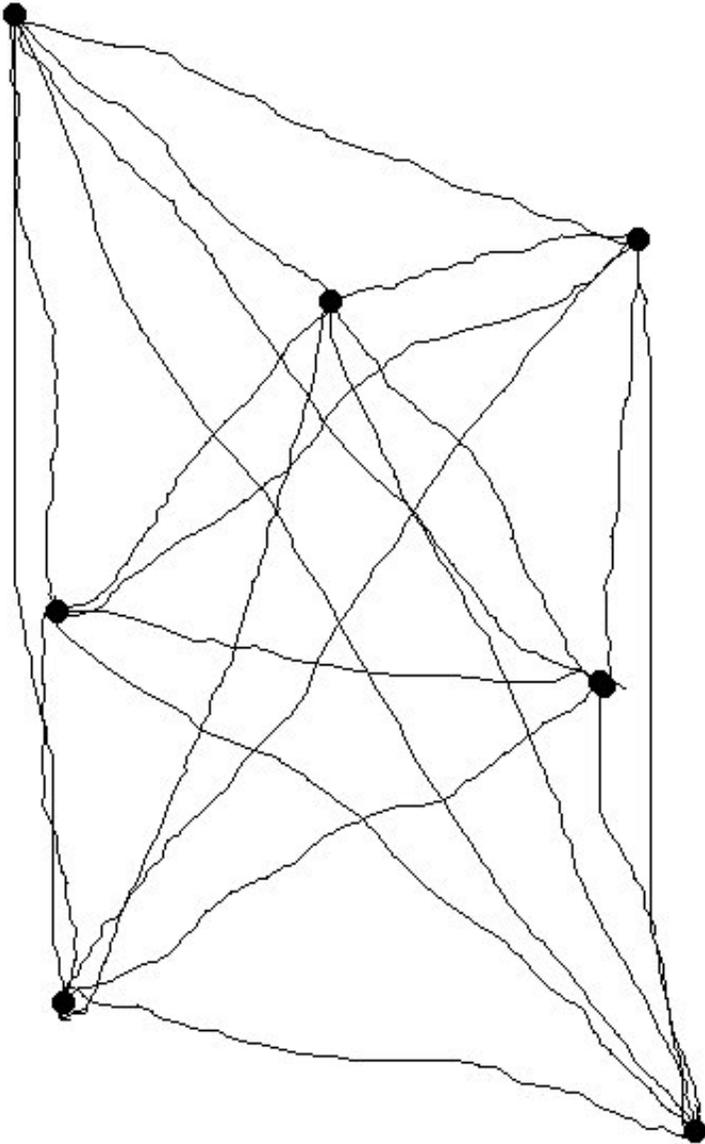


The increasing relevance of nomadic architecture in the global village

Christopher McDonnell

Decentralized network

This image represent the world of the global village.



Introduction

The nomadic lifestyle is making a reappearance in society and architecture needs to evolve to accommodate this new dynamic. This dissertation deals with nomadism in terms of dwellings and what the nomad requires in order to maintain the nomadic lifestyle.

The first part of this text deals with the global village phenomenon of the world becoming smaller and more connected due to the development of electronic communications and how this is leading to an increasingly mobile and nomadic global population.

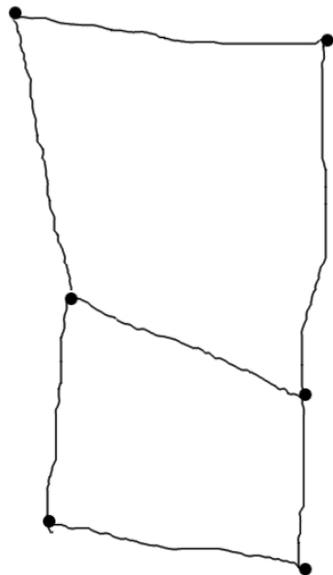
David Greene of Archigram was among the first architects to notice this trend in the nineteen sixties. His idea of the living pod proposes a nomadic lifestyle where one travels with the pod and plugs into the city for logistical support; for example the city would provide electricity and an outlet for waste.

The Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology describes how nomads do not wander aimlessly but select strategic migratory routes leading to places that could support a population and offered protection from any enemies. Nomads travelled along a network and stopped at specific nodes.¹

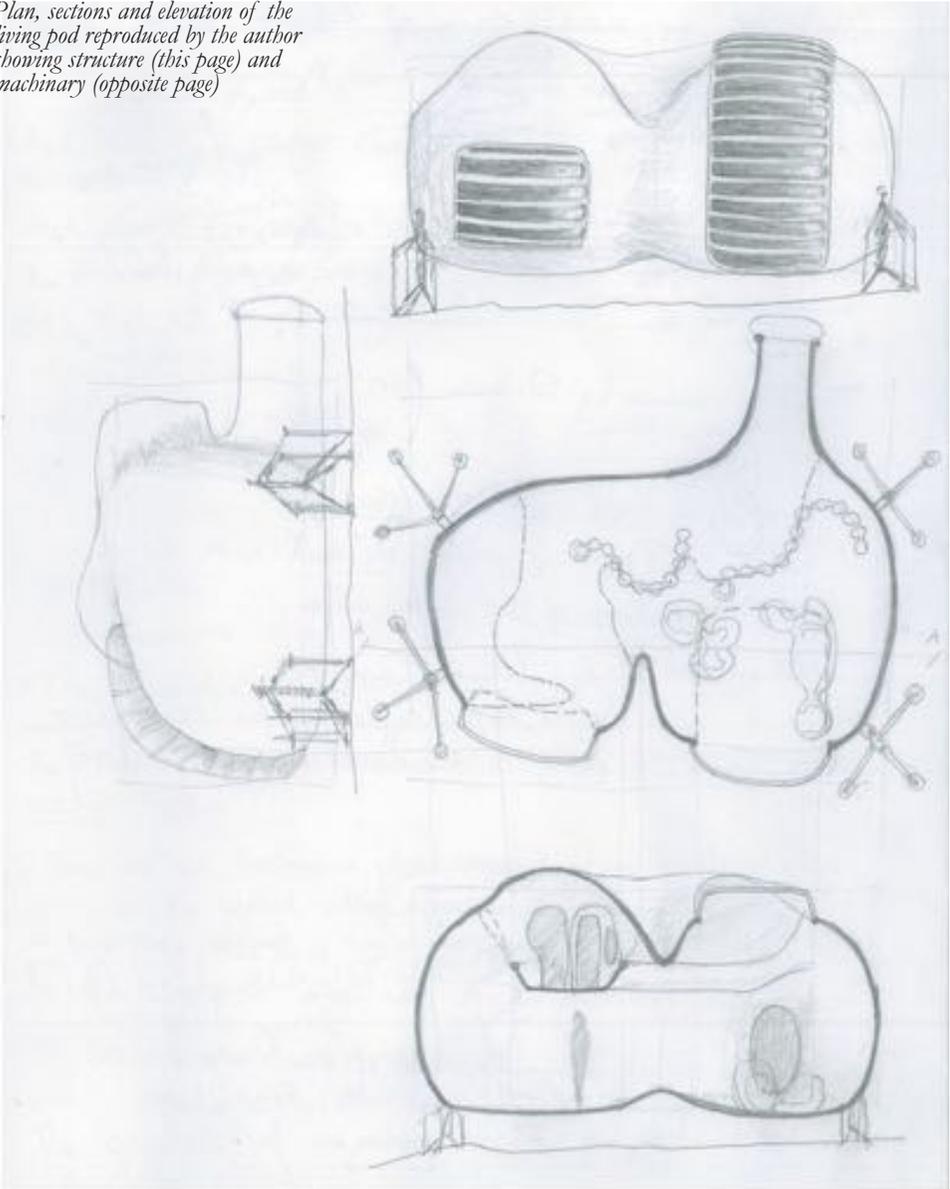
The second part of this text explores a historic precedent in the form of the Native American tipi which is a classic example of nomadic architecture. It has all the qualities one should aspire to in designing nomadic architecture; it is easy to transport and assemble and it has a strong connection with its environment in terms of material use and shelter providing properties.

Centralized network

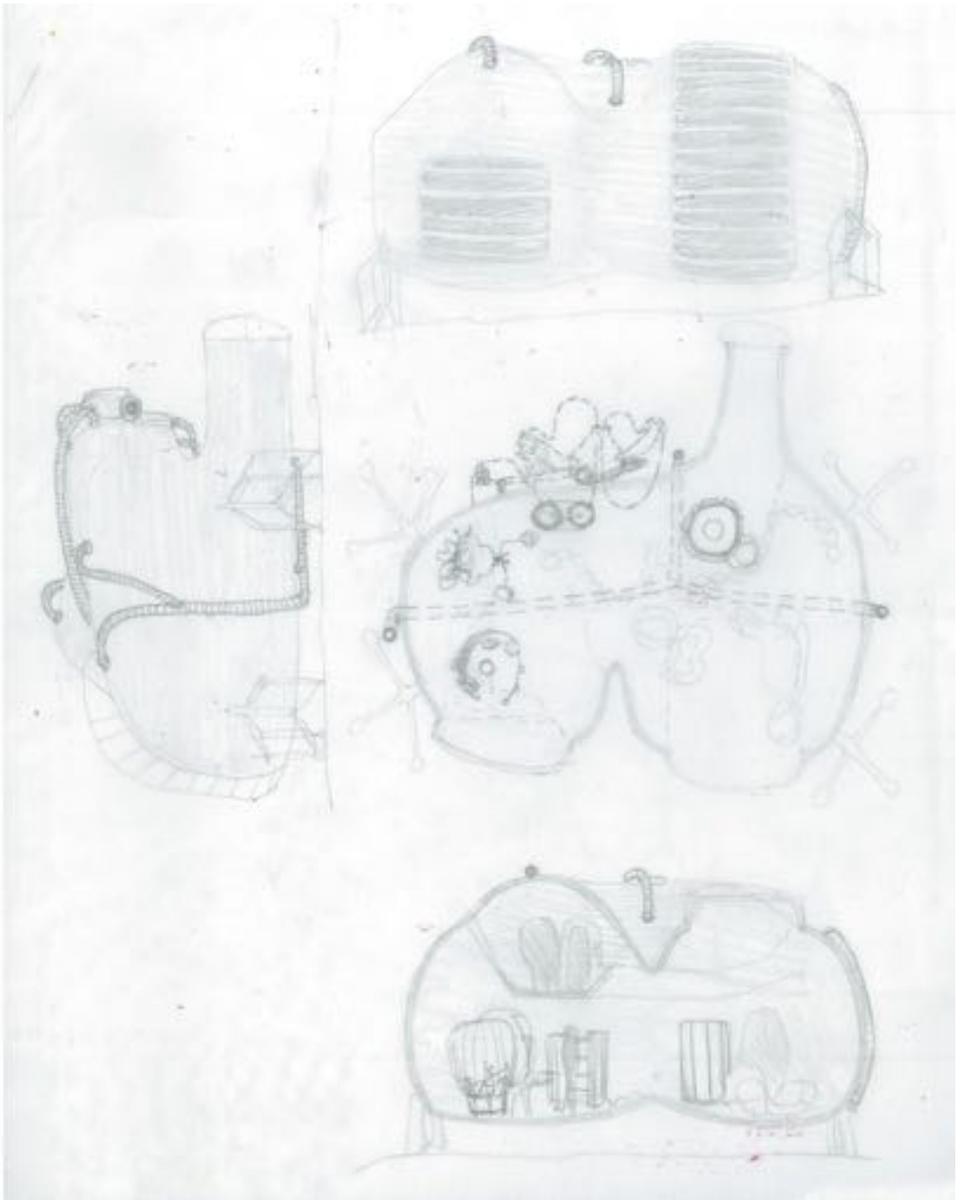
This image represents the old way of living.



Plan, sections and elevation of the living pod reproduced by the author showing structure (this page) and machinery (opposite page)



Part 1: Nomads of the Global Village and Living Pods



Nomadism is once again becoming an important part of society and its relevance is on the increase in architecture. It is said that the world has become a global village without borders and many people are able to move about a lot more freely. This trend was noticed among certain academics and architects in the 1960's, in particular by Professor Marshall McLuhan and the London

based architecture group Archigram. The living pod, a concept proposed by David Greene of Archigram, was one of the first architectural concepts to deal with nomadism in the age of the global village and there have been many more designs in recent times which share its ideas on nomadism; that of a pod plugging into a network.

Professor Marshall McLuhan, a leading academic in the study of media, coined the term global village. In his book *Understanding Media*, McLuhan describes how the twentieth century speed up in communications is not an explosion slowing moving outward from centre to the peripheral but an instant implosion blurring the boundaries between spaces and functions. This is due to technology creating new forms of media; radio, television, and more recently mobile phones and the internet. Electronic data can travel much faster than any messenger and this has created centres in the communication network everywhere. The world has become decentralised and peripheral backwaters no longer exist. Through these new media individuals are more connected with one another and peoples roles are becoming more generalised, a person can do a certain job in a certain place or they can go elsewhere and do something else. This means the population is becoming increasingly mobile. As professor McLuhan puts it, “this is the new world of the global village”.²

As a result of this decentralised global communications network cities are no longer the important connection points that they used to be. Marshall McLuhan describes, in another book of his entitled *Counterblast*, how “the city no longer exists except as a cultural ghost for tourists. Any highway eatery with its TV sets, newspaper and magazine is as cosmopolitan as New York or Paris”.³

It doesn't matter where one is in the world if one is connected to the communications grid (i.e. the internet, TV, Radio, or telephone) one is always at the centre of things, because the centre is everywhere at once. It is because of the rise of instantaneous electronic communications and the internet that the nomadic way of life is returning. A nomad is not obliged to

remain in one place in order to sustain themselves or pursue a certain activity. As long as he or she is connected to the electronic network changing location is easy. The network is the new horse and bison for the new nomad, it is a social and economic anchor.; one can obtain news from radio and TV, connect with family and friends through the telephone, and look for work, purchase tickets and book accommodation online. The nomads of the global village may include backpackers, students studying away from home and returning at weekends, business people who travel a lot to establish new business contacts, the homeless, refugees, natural disaster victims, foreign aid workers and so on. The list is endless, in the age of the global village anyone can become a nomad because ones geographical location is no longer as important as it used to be, if one is on the network one is within talking distance of everyone else.

Herbert Girardet states how “the impact of the information revolution seems set to become as large as that of the industrial revolution, profoundly changing the way we live, work, learn, and recreate. Due to internet technology, networks are replacing communities, with virtual meeting places, forums and markets that have no rootedness in place. In a world of social networks, the virtual equivalents of the Greek agora, the Roman forum, the village green and the town square are beginning to emerge as websites and internet chatrooms. A global do-it-yourself, interactive information society is transcending communities based on location and shared experience.”⁴

David Greene of the London based architecture group Archigram was among the first architects to realize the significance of this trend towards nomadism. In his Living Pod concept in 1965 he understood that architecture had to embrace new technologies and global village ideals by becoming lightweight, compact, and transportable. Greene designed the Living Pod for the nomads of the Global Village.

His statement that “the house is a machine to bring with you and a city is a machine where you come to plug in” draws parallels with the tipi of the nomads of the American Plains in the sense that the tipi went with the people wherever they went and was perfectly suited to life anywhere in the plains. The tipi plugged into the plains in a similar sense that the living pod plugs into the city, both require a support network to function but it does not matter where one is in the network.⁵

The Living Pod

*Photograph of model by David Greene (c.1965)
taken from Archigram's official website
www.archigram.net*

The Living Pod is composed of two main parts. The first part is defines the space, an empty shell structure made of of different layers including insulation and finish, there are openings in this single moulded structure for services, windows, and the entrance. There is also a multi-purpose inflatable floor which covers forty five per cent of the surface area, its functions include couches to sit on, sleeping mats, and inflatable screens for privacy and climate control.

The second part is machinery which allows the pod to lived in; four adjustable tripod legs that can deal with a maximum forty degree slope or five feet of water, transparent sliding window and entrance covers with motors and hydraulics, two wash capsules, two clothes silos, a rubbish bin, a vertical body hoist to reach the upper level, an air conditioning unit for climate control which also connects to inflatable elements, a cooking machine, and most importantly a media machine so the user can connect to the network and organise his or her life.⁶





Native American child in tipi

Photograph of a Crow chief's daughter wearing a beaded buckskin dress taken by Edward S. Curtis in Montana, USA in the year 1910.

The great plains region of North America stretches over an area of over one million square miles. These iconic grasslands extend from the Mississippi river in the east to the snow capped Rocky mountains in the west, and from subarctic central Canada in the north to the Rio Grande river in sun baked Texas. The climate of the great plains is typically characterised by cold winters where there is snow and hot summers where there can be draught. The average annual rainfall is less than twenty inches and this fluctuates dramatically each year, as a result the vegetation consists mainly of short grass steppe which takes on various hues of green and brown depending on the moisture content of the soil. Trees and shrubs can also be found in this region but are quite scarce and usually tend to be found near a water source. Here agriculture was impossible, but this region was perfect for the great herds of buffalo who roamed from water source

Part 2: The Plains nomads and the Tipi

to water source eating the grass along the way. The vast expanses of grasslands was ideal habitat for these herbivores as there was a lack of cover for predators and plenty of room for large herds to stick together. In this land lived the nomadic plains people whose culture was dependant on the buffalo for survival and their way of life thrived in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.⁷

The native people of the plains had been hunting the buffalo herds for thousands of years but it was not until the re-introduction of horses by Europeans (horses had previously existed in North America but became locally extinct during the ice age) that made following the great herds an attractive lifestyle choice. Prior to the introduction of the horse, tribes of the plains were required to follow the bison on foot, making long and exhausting treks from water source to water source where the large animals gathered in large numbers. As a consequence it was only possible to carry the bare essentials and life was tough. Horses improved the quality of life dramatically; it became easier to move camp and follow the bison and more effective and safer hunting techniques could be utilised. The horse also gave the people who had them an advantage over their neighbours and this was often exploited, especially against the many

more settled farming peoples who also inhabited the plains, in places where agriculture may have been possible. These people were easy prey for surprise horseback raids and this was a good way for nomads to acquire resources that they would otherwise have no access to, such as corn and vegetables. The amount of possessions people owned increased due to ownership of horses and they themselves were measures of wealth, the more a person owned the better. Tipi poles and heavy loads were easier to transport and the disabled and elderly were no longer a burden.

Mustangs (descended from escaped Spanish horses that became wild) thrived in plains alongside the buffalo. This changed everything, the plains were no longer considered wasteland but were viewed as a land of opportunity by native Americans. The region was like a magnet, tribes migrated there from the North, South, East and West; attracted by the nomadic way of life. The Cheyenne people, for example, were traditionally farming people who lived in the woodlands to the east, they left their farms behind and began to follow the buffalo. Other tribes, such as the Comanche

who came from the South-west, were driven into the plains due to increasing pressure from the expanding European colonies in the seventeenth century. The Sarcee tribe migrated from the subarctic forests of Canada. By the eighteenth century the plains, which had previously been inhabited by a small number of groups who travelled on foot, were transformed into a cultural melting pot made possible by the large numbers of buffalo and horses in the region.⁸ Within a couple of generations life changed dramatically for many people. A Cheyenne woman named Iron Teeth described how when her grandmother was young “the people themselves had to walk. In [those] times they did not travel far nor often. But when they got horses, they could move more easily from place to place. Then they could kill more of the buffalo and other animals, and so they got more meat for food and gathered more skins for lodges and clothing.”⁹ Life improved on every level for these nomadic people.

The nomads of the great plains depended on the buffalo for nearly everything that they needed. When a buffalo was killed nearly everything was used: the flesh and tongue were eaten; the hide was used for

North American Buffalo

Photograph of a buffalo mother and calf taken in Yellowstone National Park, USA by Robert Winslow, 2009.



clothing, robes, bags, cradles, and tipi covers; the rawhide was used to make shields, buckets, moccasins, rattles, drums, bullboats, ropes, splints, thongs, and containers; the hair was used to make headdresses, ornaments, and rope; tails were used to make brushes; the beard was used for ornamentation; the skull was used for rituals; the horns became cups, ladles and fire carriers, the hooves were used to make glue and rattles; the scrotum was used for rattles; the bladder was used for sinews, pouches, and bags; the paunch was used for the lining of cups; the stomach for medicines and the lining of containers; the bones were used for clubs, game dice, knives, scrapers, awls, digging sticks, and many other tools; even the dung was dried and used a fuel since timber was hard to find.¹⁰

Trade increased significantly across the plains with the advent of horses. Across the plains trading posts were established for the exchange of goods and information. These places were considered neutral ground and even enemies maintained peace in the trading posts.¹¹ To aid communication between different tribes a common sign language evolved as the peoples of the plains spoke

Fig. 1

Fig. 1 to 16 are images of a model made by the author in order to understand the tipi as much as possible.

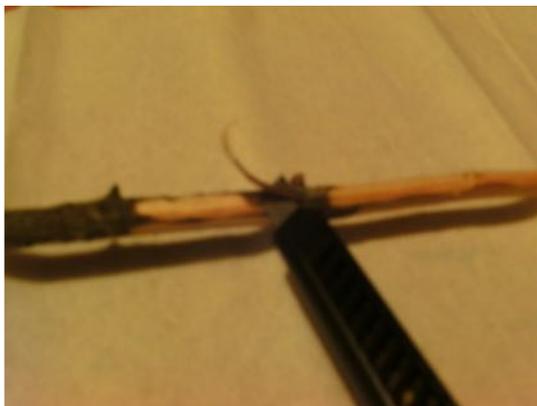


Fig. 2



many dialects belonging to many different language families.¹² Trade allowed nomadic groups to gain access to materials and products that they would not have been able to produce on their own, such as metal, canvas, knives, and guns. With horses and guns especially, the nomadic horseback riders were able to hunt and kill buffalo in increasingly effective ways and this culture blossomed.

The tipi (a conical structure made from poles which leaned against each other and was covered) was the home of choice for the nomads of the plains and its design was influenced by their way of life; it had to be easy to assemble, relatively lightweight, and easily transportable, as well as providing shelter from both the freezing cold winters and scorching hot summers.

Only the longest and straightest tree trunks were chosen to make tipi poles, these were usually from Lodgepole pine trees but sometimes red cedar was used. When the tree was felled it was stripped of all its bark and any protruding edges or knots were removed as these would possibly snag on the tipi cover thus compromising its shelter providing properties (fig. 1). Sometimes these poles were transported from site to site but if the people were in a hurry or if they didn't have the means to

carry the poles then new poles would have been chosen. Going with the natural taper of the tree trunk the thick end would be the base and the thinner end would point towards the sky. To stop the poles from pushing outwards the ground ends would have been sharpened to points and stuck into the ground like stakes.

To assemble the tipi three poles were selected and lashed together near their tips (fig. 2). These would then be erected and pulled apart to make a tripod. One pole was always left a bit longer to allow the shelter to lean to one side (towards the prevailing

Fig. 3



North-westerly wind) (fig. 3). The tipi was not a true cone; the steep side faced the wind and braced the structure while the shallower side with the entrance faced East. This allowed the rising Sun to be the occupiers first site each morning and also gave a greater profile to its rays allowing the space inside the tipi to be heated up as quickly as possible. Another benefit of not being a true cone meant that the tipi's smoke hole was directly above the fireplace which was always placed in the centre of the shelter; this was both symbolic as fire was of spir-

itual significance (being the provider of heat and light) and practical as being in the centre allowed it to heat up the lodge in the most effective way. Some tribes, especially those in the North, used a four pole system of assembly but the end result was effectively the same.

The rope (made from buffalo products as mentioned earlier) was left long and allowed to hang down to the ground in the interior of the tent. In strong winds this was pulled taught by the occupier and staked into the ground providing a firm anchor in the centre of the tipi which can resist even

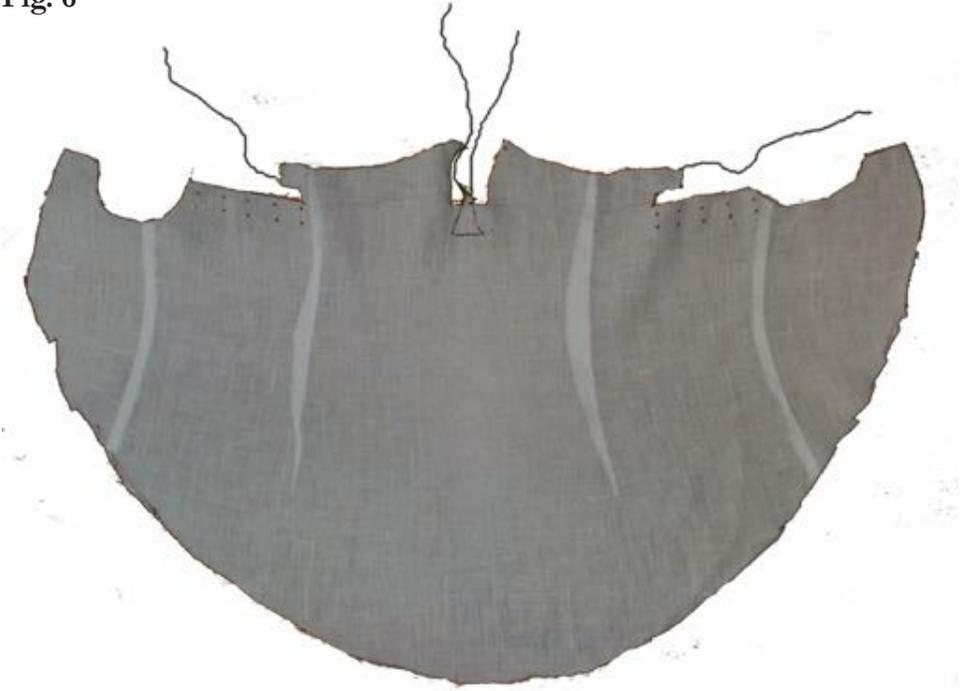
Fig. 4



the strongest of wind forces. The conical shape of the structure is naturally very efficient at resisting the wind as its curvature makes it hard for the wind to gain purchase. The cone shape was very important in the great plains as the region was often prone to storms.

Over a dozen and sometimes as many as twenty poles would then be leaned against the base structure in sequence forming an egg shaped plan which would taper towards the entrance on the east side (fig. 4 & fig. 5). The number of poles used would always

Fig. 6



vary and this would determine the size of the tipi; for example the Hidatsa people in the North-east would use around seven poles leaning on a four pole base, whereas the Sioux who lived not far to the South of them would lean twelve poles against a tripod base. Each tribe had their own unique twist on the design; the Blackfeet people of the North-west (who constructed the largest tipis) would use very long poles that would overextend beyond the apex of the cone to create a symbolic link between heaven and earth, the poles would represent prayer trails. They would also hang colourful streamers from the tips of these poles and they would flap around beautifully in the wind.

Originally lodge (tipi) covers would have been made from buffalo hides (up to twenty) carefully sewn together with sinew, but as trade with Europeans and colonial Americans increased it became more convenient to make them from canvas. Using canvas or hide was up to the woman who

owned the the tipi (a man lived in a tipi with his spouses permission and could be told to leave should he disrespected her); buffalo hide was much more readily available but took quite a lot of time to prepare and was quite heavier, canvas was quicker to prepare and lighter but was expensive. The cover was semicircular in shape with two smoke flaps extending from the centre of the straight edge (fig. 6). Some tribes, mainly those of the Northern plains such as the Crow and the Assiniboin, would tailor an elliptical entrance hole into the cloth, while

Fig. 5



Fig. 7



others would simply fold up the corners to create an entrance in the shape of an inverted letter V. There were also variations in the smoke flaps or ears as they were also called.

Tipi's were sometimes painted with scenes depicting visions, acts of bravery, or acts of generosity and it was the men who painted them. They were a record of a households history and often these images were believed to have special powers, such as healing or fortune. As a result painting ones tipi was considered a great privilege which had to be earned, it was a rite of passage. Also the people who painted them had intellectual property over the image and if somebody wanted to reproduce a particular pattern they had to ask permission first.¹³ About one in twenty tipi covers were painted in such a manner and the rest would have been left plain. The example in fig. 7 is a cover belonging to the Blackfeet tribe; the yellow dots represent stars and the red bumps around the base represent important

prayer or fasting places. The various stripes and dots represent different aspects of spiritual significance but a very important image is the arrow which runs down the throat of the deer, this represents its soul. Native Americans believed animals had souls just like people and this shows how much they valued the animals they lived off. The plains people followed animals, especially the buffalo, to survive and they believed they had to respect to animal spirits or they would be punished, in other words they would be unsuccessful in hunting. To paint this on their home is a visual statement of their nomadic way of life.

The next stage in the assembly of the tipi required lashing the cover to the rear pole which is not erected until last. The cover is laid flat on the ground and the pole is placed on top and tied to it (fig. 8). It is then picked up and leaned against the rear of the conical assembly (fig. 9). The cover is then wrapped around the structure like a garment. The poles are then adjusted accordingly

to make sure that the cover is taught, this stops it from flapping in the wind and creating a draught. This layer usually provided enough shade from the Sun and insulation from cold weather. The ends of the tipi are then pegged together with wooden rods through specially tailored holes, this is similar in the way in which a shirt is buttoned (fig. 10).

A separate door was then attached over the opening; there were a few ways in which this was done. The Sioux, for

example, stretched a strip of canvas (or hide) over two horizontal timber poles to create a panel of fabric which was then pegged above the entrance in a similar manner as described

in the previous paragraph (fig. 11). The entrance was traditionally left open as a sign of hospitality and a closed door usually meant that the occupier wanted privacy. In order to gain entrance to a closed tipi it was

Fig. 11



deemed polite to make a coughing sound.

Two additional poles were used to control the smoke flaps from the outside, being attached to the upper-

most part of the flaps in a few different ways such as pockets and loops (see figs. 12 & 13).¹⁴ This allowed the smoke flap at the top of the tipi to be left open, closed, or angled to deflect the wind; this added an extra

Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



dimension of climate control and comfort making it more than just a shelter but a home.

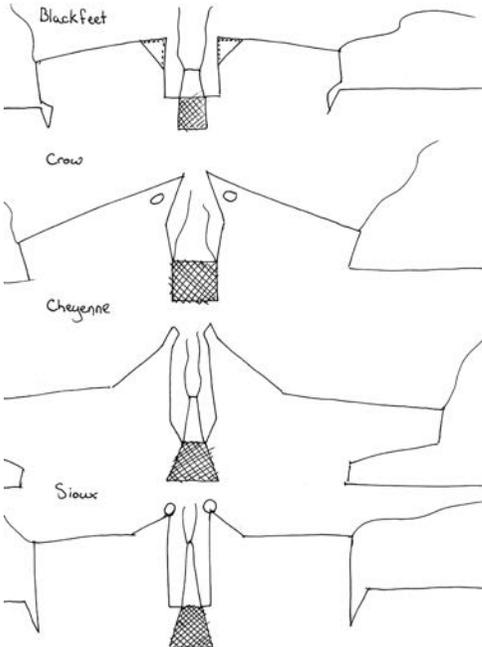
To make it a little more airtight and increase its insulation properties the hem of the tipi was either pegged to the ground or weighed down with stones tied to specially tailored loops (fig. 14). In warm weather the ground pegs were removed and the sides of the tipi would have been folded up to create a cooling cross ventilation while still giving shade (fig. 15). Sometimes the pegs would be taken from the ends and they would be folded back to open up the tipi completely, the cover then acted as a parasol providing shade but the allowing the occupiers to be out in the open. In cold weather an extra

Fig. 12



sheet of fabric was hung about five feet up from the tipi poles on the inside, this created an extra insulated layer and helped draw smoke up the chimney (fig. 16). It also stopped dew which inevitably dripped down the pole from the apex onto people

Fig. 13



sleeping in their beds, hence the name dew cloth. In extremely cold weather the cavity in between the dew cloth and the cover was stuffed with straw to provide maximum insulation.

The interior of the tipi was arranged in quite a practical manner; in the centre was the hearth which provided heat and light, the northern side of the tipi was reserved for its male occupants while the southern side was for the women. The eldest male occupied the western side of the tipi at the rear and it was considered rude to pass directly between him and the hearth, one had to go around. Cooking utensils and other tools were usually kept near the door for easy access and hygiene, in fact cooking was usually done outside and was a community experience. Personal belongings were stored in that particular persons section and clothes were usually hung from the poles on rope like a washing line, medicine bundles were hung from tripods. For further comfort special backrests were made which were wicker mats that leaned against a tripod structure, they could be rolled up when not in use. Nomads were highly organised in their daily routine and every part of the tipi was utilised, when not in use things could be rolled up or disassembled with ease and

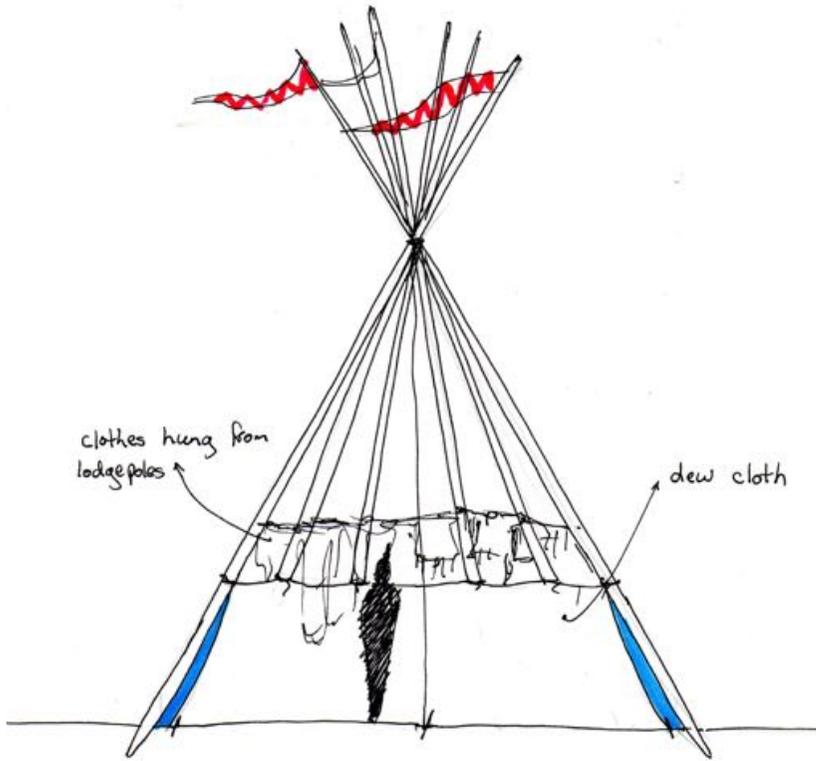
Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16



hung from a pole. Such a great variety and density of functions in such a small space is what makes the tipi a nomadic architecture masterpiece.¹

The golden age of the tipi dwelling nomads was short lived however. No more than a century after it had started to evolve, war and disease led to a decline in population. The nomadic culture finally collapsed in 1885 when the last wild buffalo herds were slaughtered by white hunters. According to chief Sitting Bull of the Sioux tribe, “a cold wind swept over the prairie when the last buffalo fell. [This was] a wind of death for my people”.¹⁶

However, their culture lives on in the tipi. It has become a symbol of harmony between man and the environment; limited resources and extreme weather conditions coupled with the added pressure of being nomadic forced the people to be as creative as possible and the tipi was the result.

Conclusion

The tipi was a nomadic architecture classic because it was perfectly adapted to both its environment and the nomadic way of life. It used the materials that were available in an effective and creative manner.

For architecture to successfully serve the nomads of today it must aspire to these qualities.

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Poverty and It's Culture of Design

A Look into Dynamics and Design
of Third World Slum Settlements

Stephanie Maloney

Unstoppable Cities

“When you look at a city, it’s like reading the hopes, aspirations and pride of everyone who built it.”

–Hugh Newell Jacobsen

As we enter 2011, world population is edging ever closer to the 7 billion mark.¹ Global population is increasing, despite economic downturns, natural disasters and extreme Third World poverty. By 2050 it is expected to peak at approximately 10 billion.² For the first time ever, urban population has equalled, if not already exceeded, (due to discrepancies in Third World census information) global rural population and this trend is expected to continue.³ Meanwhile, world rural population has already peaked, and is forecasted to reduce in size after 2020.⁴ Therefore, this forecasted population growth will occur almost entirely in cities and, furthermore, 95% of these cities will be located in the Third World.⁵ This population boom will amount to nearly 4 billion people in the next 20 to 30 years.⁶

We are in the era of the city and urban life has taken over. According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 86 cities were on record, worldwide in 1950.⁷ It is estimated that by 2015 there will be at least 550.⁸ Cities of the second millennium now need typologies to describe them. Villages and small rural towns have evolved into cities in their own right. Cities

1 “World Population Clock”, last modified March 21st, 2011 at 21:11 UTC (EST+5), <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/popclockworld.html>

2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 Davis, Mike. *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006).

have become ‘megacities’, supporting populations exceeding 8 million and furthermore, ‘hypercities’, residing more than 20 million inhabitants. As these metropolises grow at breakneck speed, often one city engulfs another and boundaries merge becoming non-existent, creating an urban belt, as has happened in Mexico.⁹ This also seems to be the case in Brazil and China.

Unstoppable, suburbs become new cities, the peripheries become indistinguishable and what used to be rural is now in-between. People no longer need to migrate, the cities come to them, whether they want to be a part of it or not. In this manner, rural traditions, characteristics and ways of life have been destroyed, no longer possible in this new form of metropolis, and often this includes the livelihoods like that of farmers or fishermen who have depended on this rural way of life for generations. Uncertain and often helpless to this new urban life, these rural people have been forced to adapt quickly or die. In Singapore, this has resulted in poor fishermen being forced to send their daughters to work in sweat shops, following the construction of a large scale bypass that cut their village off from the ocean.¹⁰ This marked the end to a traditional way of life that had sustained generations before having been mercilessly consumed by urbanism.

9 Davis, Mike. *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006).

10 Hardoy, Jorge E and David Satterthwaite. *Squatter Citizen: Life in the Urban Third World* (London: Earthscan Publications Limited, 1989).

Slum Planet

*“Slum, semi-slum, and super slum...
to this has come the evolution of cities.”*

-Patrick Geddes

Just as cities grow and merge so to do slums. “Megaslums” come into being when squatter towns expand and spread, joining together to create one large band of poverty. This is the same principle as “hypercities” and the land in-between. These form large continuous areas of illegal, impoverished survival

Barrios, inquilinatos, bustees, chawls, favelas, gecekondu; there are estimated to be over 200,000 identifiable slum communities on the face of the earth.¹¹ These can be anywhere from a couple hundred to well over a million in occupancy. While amounting to only 6% of First World city populations, slum dwellers make up a staggering 78.2% of urban population in the world's most under developed countries.¹² Everything taken into account, this means that at least one third of the world's urban population reside in slum conditions.

These figures are a world average. Figures for individual countries show that slum dwelling can be far more extensive. Ethiopia has 99.4% living in slums, Chad 99.4% and Afghanistan 98.5%.¹³ Bombay, although not claiming the highest percentage of slum dwellers with regards to overall urban population, is however, the slum capital of the world with an estimated 10

11, 12, 13 & 14
2006).

Davis, Mike. *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso,



to 12 millionsquatters.¹⁴ However, it should be noted that not all poor are slum dwellers. “The Challenge of the Slums”, a global report on human settlements published by the United Nations, highlights that in some of the world’s cities the majority of the poor in fact do not live in slums.¹⁵ Therefore, the number of urban poor is considerably higher than that of urban slum dwellers: 33.3% live in slums while over half are defined as poor; one quarter survive on \$1 or less each day.¹⁶

Always keeping in mind the inaccuracies of these figures, the reality is undoubtedly much worse. Official statistics from the governments of these countries are often incredibly incorrect, undercounting slum dwellers and poverty levels to create a better

14 UN-HABITAT. *Challenge of Slums: A Global Report on Human Settlements 2003* (UK: Earthscan Publications Ltd., 2003).

15, 17 & 18 Davis, Mike. *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006).



image to the First World and neighbouring countries. For example, in Jakarta, according to its government, slum dwellers make up less than 5% of urban population, while in reality the figure is somewhere closer to 25%.¹⁷ These poverty statistics also fail to take into account the higher cost of living in a municipal core.¹⁸

The Culture of Poverty: A Review

Oscar Lewis's autobiography, 'The Children of Sanchez', follows the lives of Jesús Sanchez and his four children, Manuel, Roberto, Consuelo and Marta, from childhood to adulthood while residing in Mexican slums. A distinct outlook on life becomes evident to the reader, and while all four children have wildly, opposing personalities, this outlook is common to all in their telling of their life accounts. It is also common to all friends, relatives and acquaintances that feature in their accounts. Lewis identifies it as a 'Culture of Poverty'.¹⁹ It is unquestionable that this culture leaves its mark on nearly every page, repeated continuously throughout the story because it is so bound up in the lives of the children; it shapes their thoughts and translates into their actions.

Lewis describes this as a culture like no other because it is not a shared culture, although it is one of the most widespread and common cultures known to humanity.²⁰ This is because it is in a way a culture of isolation and although it is brought on from a life of poverty, it is not caused entirely by poverty itself. This is further explained by Lewis in that, some people who experience poverty do not share in this culture, for example "primitive peoples who's backwardness is as a result of their isolation and undeveloped technology

19, 20 & 21 Lewis, Oscar. *The Children of Sanchez* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Limited, 1961).



and whose society for the most part is not class stratified”.²¹

Lewis continues to explain that this kind of poverty has “a relatively integrated, satisfying and self-sufficient culture” and so does not share in the culture of poverty.²² It only exists among the lowest of the lowest, the poorest people on the bottom of any socio-economic scale. These people are aware that they are at the bottom level of their society and suffer in many ways because of it.

21 & 22 Lewis, Oscar. *The Children of Sanchez* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Limited, 1961).

The traits, characteristics and mindsets of the culture of poverty are extremely visible in each person's account of their life, although each member of the family has enormously different personalities and characteristics themselves. Economically, no person uses financial institutions such as banks, but borrows from local, informal pools called 'tandas' or frequent moneylenders. One member comments that savings are a waste of time, and remarks "Sometimes I even believe that saving brings on illness!"²³ Clothes and furniture is usually bought second hand and paid for in instalments. Goods are pawned without the intension of getting them back. There is a clear sense that they do not know how to manage money and finances, one brother tries to open a shoe shop but spends more on materials than on the sale price and keeps no records of expenses and so goes into debt. Another comes into a large sum of money after being extremely poor for a long period of time. He describes how he used the money, "I blew it all. I wasted it on my friends, on running around with women, and on drinking. I got into the habit of throwing away my money."²⁴ They seem to have no appreciation of money even though they are constantly short of funds. Child labour is common to all members of the family. Unemployment and low wages are also frequent and there is no mention of workers unions despite unfair employers.

Lewis identifies some of the social characteristics, such as living in cramped, crowded quarters. In all accounts there have been several generations and couples living together in one room, which also leads to lack of privacy. Violence is prevalent in the home; used to settle arguments, discipline

23 & 24 Lewis, Oscar. *The Children of Sanchez* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Limited, 1961).



children and domestic violence towards women are all widely accepted. Alcoholism is quiet common and sometimes drug use. Very young experience and introduction to sex, along with no methods or knowledge of birth control leads to unplanned, teenage pregnancies and abandonment of mothers and children. In the accounts, men often have several children and/or families with multiple women. Adultery is ordinary and almost expected. There is a double standard towards women; men are seen as superior although most families are centred towards the mother, usually due to the absent presence of the father. Legal marriages are practically unheard of and a family member explains that there is no practicality to civil or religious marriages because there is no need to have legal heirs;there is nothing to pass down after one dies.²⁵ Instead, ‘marriages’

25 Lewis, Oscar. *The Children of Sanchez* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Limited, 1961).

consist simply of a man and woman moving in together.

There is a distrust of the government because the government has failed to help these people and in some cases causes destruction and displacement of many slums, resulting in to tearing apart of long-term communities. There are instances of police brutality and injustice, leading to a common dislike of law enforcement. Many are too poor to afford proper medical care and often use home remedies to cure ailments. Although in many cases there is a strong religious belief, they rarely go to church services. Instead, there are many references to pilgrimages being taken every year, lasting many days often with many risks to ones health. Votive lights and shrines are common features in homes. Possibly a characteristic of Mexico rather than that of the culture of poverty, they are very superstitious, believing in witchcraft and ghosts.

It is perhaps fair to say that the psychological effects of the culture of poverty are the most destructive to the individual. In all cases there is an overwhelming sense that the individuals feel they are alone in their struggles, even feelings of martyrdom. Each member describes numerous events where they firmly believe that they are nobodies who cannot amount to anything.²⁶ Perhaps only a result of their father's authoritarian nature, all children feel unloved and often jealous of one another, competing for affection that they rarely receive.²⁷ This reinforces this feeling of isolation because there is no closeness between siblings and they often put each other down to the point of depression. However, they all highly respect, fear and idolise their father,

26 & 27 Lewis, Oscar. *The Children of Sanchez* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Limited, 1961).



despite his often unfair treatment, physical violence and harsh words. Consuelo especially has high expectations and morals in life, particularly at a younger age that never materialise.²⁸ Although they were quite within her reach, she lacked the self-confidence and belief in her abilities, and like the others, gave up, and accepted her lot in life. All children lack the ambition to better themselves, giving up early in life, and so, become stuck in the cycle of the culture. Roberto comments, “...I firmly believe that some of us are born to be poor and remain that way no matter how hard we struggle and pull this way and that”.²⁹

Many of them make the same mistakes and often point out that no one warned them in advance. There is a lack of communication and closeness within the family. Instead of supporting one another, they frequently argue and insult each other. This stems from the feelings of isolation, which, despite the fact that there are always many people living under one roof there is a sense that they are all alone in their own troubles. Each person tells of a time where

28, 29 & 30 Lewis, Oscar. *The Children of Sanchez* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Limited, 1961).

they cried silently at night when no one could see them.³⁰

Perhaps one of the more interesting aspects of these accounts is the fact that their father does not share in this culture. He has managed to pull himself out, to better himself and although is often harsh towards his children he never deserts them and always supports them financially. He has a steady job, which although is not enough to sustain the household he finds other ways to supplement his income and by the end of the book he is funding children from numerous wives as well as his grandchildren when the Sanchez children cannot manage to do it themselves. Part of this may be because he was not raised in the city slums but in the country and so was not surrounded by this culture at a young age.³¹ His life however was just as tough as his children's with regards to poverty, perhaps even more so because he did not have family to finance him, but he had the determination and sense to better himself drastically. A lot of this seems to be down to taking responsibility and lack of self pity; where his children always see themselves as worse off, always getting the short end of things when in reality it is quite the opposite.

'Wasteland', a documentary directed by Lucy Walker follows native Brazilian artist Vik Muniz as he spends three years in the world's largest landfill site, located on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro.³² Originally setting out with the objective of painting portraits of the lowest ranking people on the social scale, self-designated recyclable waste pickers, informally

31 Lewis, Oscar. *The Children of Sanchez* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Limited, 1961).

32 Muniz, Vik. *Wasteland*, (directed by Lucy Walker, 2009).

known as ‘catadores’. The documentary however reveals much more than it was originally expected to, as it delves into the lives of the ‘catadores’ it becomes much more human and elements of the culture of poverty are recognisable in them.

It is relevant to point out that in the beginning of the documentary the majority of these people claim to be happy with their life here, picking through mountains of the city’s waste, earning an honest wage while coming across any manner of gruesome scenes, often putting themselves at risk of injury or death. Women as well as men, many working at the dump since they were children, having no other choice to help support their families, admit that they are looked down on by others in society, and that perhaps one of Brazil’s biggest problems is the stratification of classes.³³

After being a part of something together, making ‘a work of art’ and spending time with people that they see as superior to themselves, they start reimagining their lives realising that they can change their future. They begin to come apart from the culture of poverty, a culture that they had previously accepted and realise now that they were never happy picking garbage, but in denial, accepting that this was undisputedly their future. In a mere three years, the difference it has made to many of their lives is striking. The confidence that they have gained enables them to pull themselves out of their old mindset and on to something better. Many plan for the future, setting up businesses, one woman leaves her husband who was abusive after gaining the confidence to see that

33 Muniz, Vik. *Wasteland*, (directed by Lucy Walker, 2009)



she did not have to accept this way of life.³⁴ Another woman comments that she dislikes the garbage picking, not because of the stigma attached to it or the work itself, but because “...there is no future in it”.³⁵ The ‘catadores’ themselves are an extremely tight knit community who have started to organise themselves, set up work unions and recycling centres out of their own initiatives. It is an example of people who were once susceptible to this culture of poverty but who overcome it.

34 & 35

Muniz, Vik. *Wasteland*, (directed by Lucy Walker, 2009).

The Role of the Architect

Inevitably, it has come that we must question to what extent does the role of architecture and design play in all of this. With relatively few success stories to date, many architectural attempts at improving the standards of living in these slums, although executed with the best of intentions, have sadly failed to alleviate the problem and in many cases, have only made matters worse. With millions of dollars of foreign aid funding going into large-scale projects each year to try to end world poverty and inequality, where is it all going wrong?³⁶ The answer to this lies in many areas and includes class prejudices, ignorance of the Western society, corrupt governments, and also lies in design.

One of the most obvious reasons that it will not work is that often, architecture for the poor can be tied up in politics of the rich. This may happen in that the government hires an architect to propose a plan to eradicate or improve slum living, where neither the architect nor the government have any experience or understanding of the people who live there and their ways of life. Without a deep understanding of the social dynamics of a slum, and each slum community is different, one cannot begin to design for these people. What often occurs is that an experimental solution is proposed, usually based on a western model that has no relevance to a third world countries culture, and is insensitive to the climate and ways of life. The people therefore cannot

36 *Good Fortune*, directed by Landon Van Soest (Transient Pictures, 2010).



relate to the building and it fails. Experimental solutions are non-consensual experiments with people's lives.

Another form of this problem is investors and large, multi-million organisations attempting to improve the lives of these slum dwellers by doing what they think is right based on western cultures and ideologies. Invading these peoples' lives, demolishing shantytowns or slums without any means of rehousing such large quantities of people, wiping out communities, businesses and ways of life. They unknowingly cause these people to lose what little they had because they do not give value to such attributes. This ignorance on the part of the wealthy or those from the First World only adds to the problems because ultimately, it is the problem.

To force upon someone you do not understand something that you, based on an entirely different set of values and experiences, feel they are missing is prejudice in itself. Who is one person to evaluate another's way of life that they do no



attempt to understand in the first place. This is often what happens in these redevelopment projects, misunderstanding and ignorance being the primary reasons for failure. William R. Polk writes that, “development occurs in the minds and hearts of men or it does not occur at all.”³⁷ Forced from one home and into another, often with higher or unaffordable rents, the result is a loss of territorial identification and neighbourhood bonds, which leads to a disrespect and disassociation with the new home. Physically, it is a better standard of slum; socially it suffers greatly from a neglected, isolated community environment and has much higher rates of crime.³⁸

‘Good Fortune’, the 2010 documentary directed and produced by Landon Van Soest, highlights this very problem.³⁹ Design with good intension and money but no understanding is

37 & 38 Polk, William R. *An Architecture for the People: Complete Works of Hassan Fathy* (Broadway, NY: Whitney Library of Design, 1997).

more destructive than doing nothing. This documentary follows two Kenyans fighting to keep their homes and ways of life, which for them is a means of survival. One is rallying against an American investor who has plans to create a multi-million dollar rice farm to provide employment for the people, while flooding hundreds of acres of land, including homes, farms, schools, clinics and roads in the process.⁴⁰ Another is protesting against the United Nations, which plans to demolish a large shantytown as part of Phase Two of a slum-upgrading project.⁴¹ Phase one, which saw hundreds of people displaced from their homes and businesses, was then sold off as luxury apartments.⁴²

For the reason that most slums are created illegally by the slum dwellers in the first place, lack of urban planning is a major problem, along with lack of municipal services such as running water and sewage facilities.⁴³ Sometimes these services are eventually provided by the government but often they are not adequate to satisfy the demands of the number of people.⁴⁴ These two problems combined together are a recipe for the widespread likelihood of disease.

The only way for architecture to improve the lives of these people is to let the people act as the architect. While this is usually not entirely possible, it is the first step to include the people in the design process. There are many advantages to this. Firstly, it is their way of life and so they best understand what it is they need. They are given a choice instead of being told what

39, 40, 41 & 42
Pictures, 2010).

Good Fortune, directed by Landon Van Soest (Transient

43 & 44 Hardoy, Jorge E., Sandy Cairncross, David Satterthwaite ed. *The Poor Die Young: Housing and Health in Third World Cities* (London: Earthscan Publications Limited, 1990).

to do and this eliminates the segregation of social classes; they are made to feel valued. Small gradual changes seem to have more of a lasting positive effect than large-scale demolition and reconstruction of slums and shantytowns. Secondly, when they are included in the process they learn building techniques and planning methods that can sustain the community in the future.

Similar to the documentary, 'Wasteland', if these marginalised people are included and opinions taken into account, they have the opportunity to create something long-term for themselves and their families.⁴⁵ They are given the choice to decide for themselves what they want or how they want it, instead of forcing an irrelevant western style apartment block on them. It provides a degree of personalisation as well as a sense of accomplishment. This can then possibly start the cogs turning, causing them to question what they are capable of in using their own opinions and initiatives, and contribute to solving the problem of the culture of poverty as well as poverty itself.

It seems that more often than not, slum dwellers are generally happy with their surrounding social environment; strong bonds of community form over generations and they have their own systems and ways of dealing with situations, that is unique to each slum.⁴⁶ Once a developer comes in and tears a community apart it cannot be put back together under a new structure. Kowloon Walled City is one such example; 6.5 acres of solid building rising as high as 15 stories housed

45 Muniz, Vik. *Wasteland*, (directed by Lucy Walker, 2009).

46 Greg Girard and Ian Lambert, *City of Darkness: Life in Kowloon Walled City* (Chiddingfold: Watermark, 1993).



over 35,000 people.⁴⁷ After it was announced in 1987 that the city was to be pulled down, residents did not want to move out to make way for demolition, regardless of the cramped conditions and illegal nature of their residences.⁴⁸ Despite having been offered a rehousing and compensation package, many still refused to vacate their premises and in the end, were forcibly removed.⁴⁹ Often as many as three generations lived in harmony together and it had been an extremely tight knit community. Many family businesses and medical practises had set up within the walls and had proved to be successful. Following the destruction of the Walled City, many of these practises were no longer able to operate.⁵⁰

47, 48, 49 & 50 Greg Girard and Ian Lambert, *City of Darkness: Life in Kowloon Walled City* (Chiddingfold: Watermark, 1993).

51 Fathy, Hassan. *Architecture for the Poor: An Experiment in Rural Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).

“...sprawling, dirty and overcrowded to such an extent that the outside observer sees little more than chaos, are often delicate and sensitive expressions of social organisation...”⁵¹, often these overcrowded, congested hives of apparent randomness have dynamics of their own, known only to their residents. Sometimes it is not this dynamic that needs to be changed but the nature or services of it.

However, this does not mean that all architectural attempts at improving the lives of the poor were ineffective. Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy was successful in his works because he understood the relationship that had to be developed with those he would be building for.⁵² In his book, ‘Architecture for the Poor’ he describes from beginning to end the creation of a new village, New Gourna, and the relocation of a tightly bound society from their former territory to New Gourna.⁵³ It is indeed architecture for the poor, built solely from mud bricks, the only material readily available to the poor and forms traditional Egyptian architectural designs.⁵⁴

Fathy recognises the architect’s role in this project and realises that it is fundamental to the success of the new village. He also explains that although sanitation, affordability and space are important factors in the making of shelters for the poor, so too is beauty.⁵⁵ Remarking on various attempts at similar projects worldwide, where all basic physical necessities are provided for, save aesthetics and the projects, “...fail to strike a spark and so fail utterly.”⁵⁶ He proposes a new union between the architect and the people;

52, 53, 54, 55, 56 & 57 Fathy, Hassan. *Architecture for the Poor: An Experiment in Rural Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).



the people give what they have to offer, which is labour.⁵⁷

Where it is possible, materials are taken freely from the ground to form mud bricks. With these two elements, labour and materials, people can technically help themselves. And so, enter the architect, to guide the people in a new twist on a self-help project. The architect is there to show them how to build roofs from bricks and how to build beautifully, how to overcome the technical problems and teach them so that they are able to repeat the process themselves in the future.⁵⁸

A theory of Turner, shared by Gandhi, is the essentiality of vernacular architecture in order for any slum housing to be successful.⁵⁹ All materials were to be sourced inside an 8km

58 Fathy, Hassan. *Architecture for the Poor: An Experiment in Rural Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).

radius.⁶⁰ If in the future the housing needs to be extended and for people to work for themselves this is vital. Giving these people a sense of value, that their opinions are valid, and the skills to make their own house the way they want it to be makes for a better life long term and may quieten the culture of poverty within them. In the slums every scrap and piece of material is put to use, creating a self made and self sufficient society that are more likely to work together to help themselves, like that of the Kowloon Walled City.

“Development without self help is an impossibility.”⁶¹ However, self-help without experienced guidance is also impossible. The architect needs to design with the people instead of just on behalf of the people. It needs to be a joint effort; without the architect, the buildings will not be suitable in practicality or aesthetics, while without the people, they will be structures instead of homes, “...sterile, unloved...”⁶² This corresponds with Turners theory, “When dwellers control the major decisions and are free to make their own contributions in the design, construction, or management of their housing, both this process and the environmental produced stimulate individual and social well-being. When people have no control over nor responsibility for key decisions in the housing process, on the other hand, dwelling environments may instead become a barrier to personal fulfilment and a burden on the economy.”⁶³

61 & 62 Fathy, Hassan. *Architecture for the Poor: An Experiment in Rural Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).

63 Girardet, Herbert. *The GAIA Atlas of Cities: New Directions for Sustainable Urban Living* (London: GAIA Books Limited, 1992).

Conclusion

Now more than ever, as global population is coming to an all time high, and pressure is put on the already bursting cities of the Third World, something must be done. As the urban belts expand along the globe, consuming everything in their paths, megaslums arise becoming more and more crowded, unsanitary and unsustainable. A change must take place, as this way of life will soon become exhausted, the implications unthinkable to human existence. Each year we waste millions of dollars of aid funds, squandered, misused and spent without success. The evidence speaks clearly for itself, we have the methods and means we only need to apply them. No more experimental housing projects, disassociated from slum dwellers, and architecture without a human scale. High-rise blocks have been disproved and we must now follow in the footsteps of the success stories: Gandhi, Turner and Fathy.

To include the people is now a necessary component in designing for the people. Although to eradicate poverty will not necessarily eradicate its culture, depending on the methods used it may be lifted in the process. To give the people the knowledge and guidance to build their own homes, how they want, using a ready and cheap source of material, is the only sustainable option. By giving power to the people one does not threaten to undermine the very fabrics by which they live but nurture these cultures and traditions and building something with which they can relate. To do so sensitively and with understanding

the architect can create beautiful and appropriate buildings cheaply using natural materials, through the people, for perhaps generations to come, sustaining a way of living with more dignity and comfort than slum life offered them previously.

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Niamh Lynch

Preface:

In this essay, one will journey through the idea of the monument, as a 'propelling' object, (one that entitles its surroundings to beneficial use), and the monument as a 'pathological' object, (one that inhibits growth, and isolates its surroundings). In the words of Aldo Rossi in relation to the monument in the city, *'those elements which can both retard and accelerate the process of urbanization in a city.'*¹ In order to make this journey, one must investigate the origins of the monument. For what reason did the past built to last? And on deciding these reasons, one will decide the significance of the monument in our modern times, in relation to its original purpose. If the original function does not remain, then can one put a claim forward that a functionless artefact can present to us a depth of historical knowledge? For after all as Rossi himself put it, *'History exists so long as an object is in use; that is so long as a form relates to its original function.'*² For after all, it is one's own ability to imagine and to create false memories that allows one to experience this functionless space. But one could apply this idea to all architecture, *'architecture existing largely in the mind or the eye of the beholder.'*³

In this investigation, one will conclude whether monuments can be integrated into our constantly evolving world, or whether they must remain a constant, to be preserved as they began, and to isolate themselves from the changing face of reality? The paradox is, *'The past fertilizes the present, or cascading violently into it, exerts an immobilizing curse.'*⁴ The difficulty is in deciding how to allow the monument to be manipulated to suit current need, but simultaneously maintaining its historical properties. The reality is, our world evolves, time brings change, advances and deprecations, it is not possible to isolate and freeze ideas in time, and continue to immortalise in solid form forever, as inevitably, we would run out of space. One must decide whether the propelling benefits of monuments, are great enough to justify their preservation, and the continuation of this mode of historical recording. Even though architecture has the unique ability to physically take the beholder into it, completely submerging one's self in its experience, in certain instances, it can sometimes become malignant. As Robert Harbison sees it, *'..in a special sense of architecture, which has the unusual power to get in the way.'*⁵

1 The Architecture of The City, Aldo Rossi, Opposition Books, USA, (1984), page 6

2 The Architecture of The City, Aldo Rossi, Opposition Books, USA, (1984) page 6

3 The Built, the Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable, In Pursuit of Architectural Meaning, Robert Harbison, Thames and Hudson, England, (1991) page 10

4 The Built, the Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable, In Pursuit of Architectural Meaning, Robert Harbison, Thames and Hudson, England, (1991) page 10

5 Travels in the History of Architecture, Robert Harbison, Reaktion Books, London, UK, (2009) page 265

6 Travels in the History of Architecture, Robert Harbison, Reaktion Books, London, UK, (2009) page 265



Density; 'inevitably, we would run out of space':
Aerial View of Lower Manhattan

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Chapter 1:

Introduction to the meaning of the monument.

For as long as can be remembered, man has made his mark on the earth. From cave paintings, to megalithic tombs, colossal temples, to great pyramids, heaven high cathedrals, to towers of steel, time has not forgotten man. Man has etched its existence into the skin of our world. We have proof of our ancestors, from the monuments they have left to us. They allow us to paint a picture of our history, and our advances in technology, with each new monument we discover. They impart onto us a physical presence, with which we can identify in our minds, as a symbol of such civilisations. Historical monuments are of great value to our modern world, without them, we would miss many vital pages of our heritage as a race. In order to advance, one must look to the knowledge and accomplishments of the ancients, and learn from them. Without monuments, we would not have concrete evidence, as an informative resource, or reference.

'They may be silly heights, but monuments inhabit pinnacles of symbolizing energy from which one can only descend to other topics and other types of construction' 6

7 The Architecture of The City, Aldo Rossi, Opposition Books, USA, (1984) page 60

8 The Built, the Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable, In Pursuit of Architectural Meaning, Robert Harbison, Thames and Hudson, England, (1991) page 9

9 The Built, the Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable, In Pursuit of Architectural Meaning, Robert Harbison, Thames and Hudson, England, (1991) page 60

10 The Built, the Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable, In Pursuit of Architectural Meaning, Robert Harbison, Thames and Hudson, England, (1991) page 11



Stonehenge, Wiltshire, England



The Parthenon, Acropolis, Athens



Cathedral--Kölner Dom, Cologne, Germany



The Eiffel tower, Paris

We know of the historical role of monuments in our current time, but what value had they at the time of construction? Were they purely designed for the educational benefit of the children of tomorrow? Or was there a less pure motive involved in some cases? Was the desire to immortalize themselves, just a way of a civilisation portraying they're power over a dynasty, or time? And in any case, is there a necessity, to construct some of these 'educational mediums', at such a monstrously enormous scale? Not only does it convey greed of the earth's plane, but also a gross over indulgence of natural resources. Can this be justified as a means to an end? Was it that there were no other means of guaranteeing immortality, than building in the largest scale possible, with the most durable material available to them; stone?

Is it the desire of immortality, that drives the human race to physically preserve their ideals and beliefs? Was it the want of being remembered long after they're mortal lives had ceased? Are these man-made mountains just scars on the earth? Monuments, erected to serve no purpose other than to exist, and to be admired, in the hope that one might catch a glance at this artificial landmark, allow the image to penetrate into one's mind, and ponder the people that brought it into being. Erected, consciously or not, to stand as immortal creatures, eternally. To keep they're creator's spirit alive forever in the minds of all who witness these great spectacles. Is this not a fair reason? Is the want of permanence alone, not a strong enough justification, to steal the gifts nature hands us, and pile them in a mound so high, that it is visible for all to see? Must we have an ulterior motive, or dual function associated with our lavish constructions, in order to justify their existence? Must we think now of the long term problems that may be consequential of our over development?

What makes an object a monument?

There have been many discoveries and un-coverings of artefacts from the past, some of which describe a civilisation much more completely than a building or statue ever could. For example, the pyramids at Giza, they are recognisable constructions, with which we always associate with Egypt. But what is it they tell us about the ancient Egyptian civilisation? They were learned in structural technology, they honoured their dead in an extravagant fashion, they were extremely talented astronomers, and they were obedient to they're ruler; the pharaoh. But is this a sufficient summary of the ancient civilisation's culture and religion? Do the tools they used to engrave elaborate drawings and stories onto the walls of their tombs and temples not tell us a deeper story about the individual craftsman and builder? And the stories themselves, why should they not be considered a monument? They are physical representations of the past, they teach us about the history of these people, they even give us insight into their world of rituals, sacrifices, and offererings to their many animal headed deities. They have survived through

time, and they have been guarded and preserved, for educational benefit. So what is it that forms the typology of the monument? Rossi believes, *'... that persistence in an urban artefact often causes it to become identified as a monument, and that a monument persists in theory both symbolically and physically.'*⁷

Is it the provision of fruit for thought, that causes an object to be allowed persist? Who then is to say what is interesting and what is not? What is worth saving and maintaining, and what is allowed to disintegrate? Is it symbolic content that drives those that behold it, to worship it, to regard it and to preserve it? If this is the case in how the decision is made whether the object is regarded monumental or not, then why is there so many contradictions in this example? Ruins are one model of monument that comprise a large amount of our historical records, but they hold no mysticism. They had no dual function, no symbolic significance, many forts were built with one function in mind; protection.

*'Fortifications can be seen as the maximum of monumental masonry with the minimum of symbolic content, a practical preventive device on which the monument is the post-operative commentary.'*⁸

But the irony is that, the fort's original function was to keep people out, and now its historical value just attracts more people in.

Do objects need a reason to be monuments? Is it just they're existence that causes one to regard them, whether they like them or not? Is it the lack of knowledge one has about a certain, people, culture, era, or construction, that drives one to want to experience and ponder it?

*'The Eiffel tower is the skeleton of a tower,...It has come to symbolise Paris, but in what way? For it was of course regarded as an eyesore at first and as something which should be taken down. Like a mountain it is symbolic just because it is there.'*⁹

Or is it a deeper profound reasoning that attracts one to beautiful, strange things? Is it just the curiosity of man that attracts him to these mythical sites of the unknown and the extinct?

*'Yet there are certain effects, like the dome of St Paul's, which however long they were around, however exceeded in size by later buildings, will continue to astonish, for reasons which have more to do with the construction of the human mind than with the technical feats on which they are based.'*¹⁰

Whatever the reasons behind the human brain recognising and appreciating, things of beauty and of wonder, it seems there is no one, pure typology of the monument. There are numerous different reasons for each particular object that makes it become something worthy of speculation, but no criteria for which one can judge whether an object is justified as a monument, or therefore justified to be preserved. Historical records, constructional knowledge, symbolic meaning, religious meaning, sheer existence, aesthetic admiration, all plausible criteria. But there is one factor that is evident in the case of all known monuments, and objects of monumental quality; survival, persistence. Is it then justifiable to preserve in the same reverie of the monument, all that survives past its era?

The 'propelling' monument versus the 'pathological' monument.

The importance of the monument is obvious, even more so in the city. It offers a place of reflection, of escape and meditation, in a world of constant activity. For example, the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin, Eisenman architects, is a 19,000 meters squared site, comprising of paths and 2711 stone cubes of different dimensions. It offers the city a place of 'groundlessness, instability and distortion', where one can completely detach oneself from hectic city life. This is an example of the 'propelling' properties of the monument, when the monument adds to, and enhances its site by offering some form of functionality and integration. *"The dynamic of a city tends more to evolution than preservation, and that in evolution, monuments are not only preserved but act as propelling elements of development."* 11

But monument and place integration, is not always the case. In many occurrences, the monument can completely disconnect its self from its surroundings, by becoming an idle shadow of its former being. How can one fight to protect a monument, when all that remains is an empty shell of form? A monument is meant to commemorate some person, or ideal, so when it's true purpose is lost there are no dedications left. Then how so can one call, that without original function, a monument? *"...like an embalmed body; it gives only the appearance of being alive."* 12

In many occasions, there exists vast expanses of restricted building areas, where monuments or sacred sites become problematic. *"But one enters large cities, and has more difficulty arguing that large stretches of useable land should be turned over to nothing but reminders, stimuli to the historic imagination."* 13

11 The Architecture of The City, Aldo Rossi, Opposition Books, USA, (1984) page 60

12 The Architecture of The City, Aldo Rossi, Opposition Books, USA, (1984) page 6

13 The Built, the Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable, In Pursuit of Architectural Meaning, Robert Harbison, Thames and Hudson, England, (1991) page 10

14 The Built, the Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable, In Pursuit of Architectural Meaning, Robert Harbison, Thames and Hudson, England, (1991) page 57

15 The Built, the Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable, In Pursuit of Architectural Meaning, Robert Harbison, Thames and Hudson, England, (1991) page 48

16 Travels in the History of Architecture, Robert Harbison, Reaktion Books, London, UK, (2009) page 265

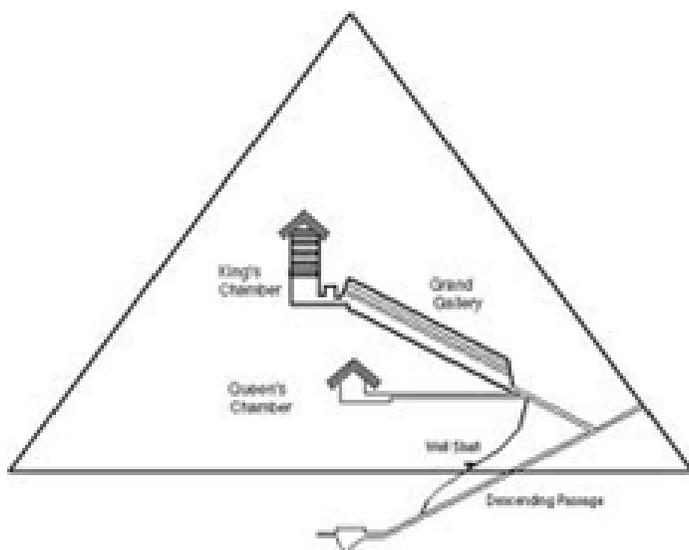
Chapter 2:

The investigation of the origin of the monument; The pyramids at Giza, Egypt.

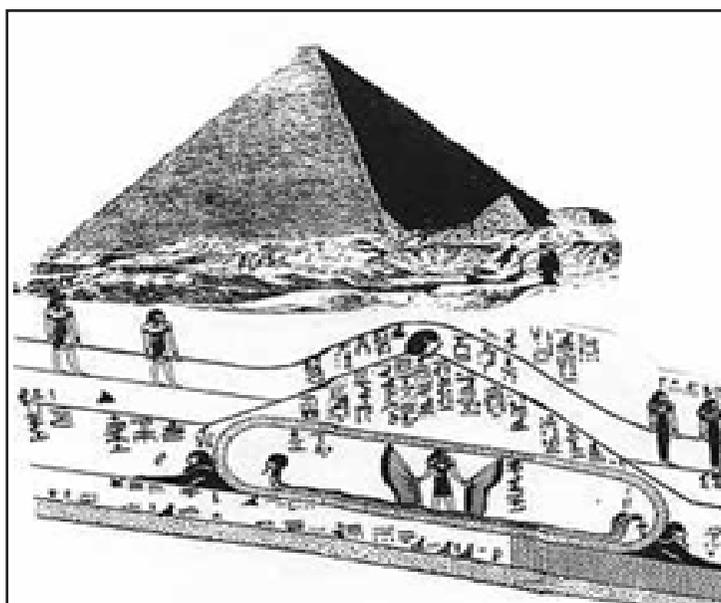
Were the pyramids at Giza, just an extravagant, amplification of a man's power over an entire dynasty? Or was there a more profound notion undermining their design? The ancient city of Egypt was remarkable even to the ancients. Temples and monuments, overwhelming in scale, shadowing visitors with their awesome presence. Built to honour the many gods and deities of the ancient world, proving their loyalty and devotion, they were constructed with such care and deliberation, it would not be impractical to assume they were intended to last. Taking the pyramids as an example, it has long been pondered of the significance of their colossal scale. Could it be that they were designed to articulate the immense control of the pharaoh? A self-indulgent portrayal of accomplishment and wealth. Or could it be that they were designed to act as more than a tomb, more than a monument to immortalise the dead, of remembrance and honour, but as a vehicle of knowledge. A way to pass down through the generations, the technology and discoveries of an ancient time. This may very well be the case, but does a means of construction technology education, justify the construction of the pyramids at such an immense scale? Could size be more significant than it seems, in the continuation of the ancient Egyptian's knowledge and beliefs? Could it be that the pyramids themselves were modelled on the mythical parallel universe of the Duat, consisting of mazes of corridors and rising galleries, not unlike the layout of the pyramids. Since the soul was believed by the ancient Egyptians, to travel to the Duat in the afterlife, and to be judged in a rigorous series of tests upon entering, the pyramids could have acted as a way to preserve this belief, but also as a place of preparation to the Egyptians or maybe even the Pharaoh himself, where one could learn and practice how to ensure their acceptance into heaven.



Pyramids of Giza, Egypt



The inside of the pyramid of Khufu



Fifth division of Duat

Megalomania, or the passing on of knowledge?

Is it the desire of immortality, that drives the human race to physically preserve their ideals and beliefs? Are these man-made mountains just scars on the earth? Monuments, erected to serve no purpose other than to exist, and to be admired, in the hope that one might catch a glance at this artificial landmark, allow the image to penetrate into one's mind, and ponder the people that brought it into being. Erected, consciously or not, to stand as immortal creatures, eternally. To keep they're creator's spirit alive forever in the minds of all who witness these great spectacles.

Whether it be a quest of preservation, of self glorification, or of maintenance and growth of knowledge, that led many cultures to ensure immortality at sometimes unconceivable scales, whether they are constructed superficially, or with the intention of serving a function, all monuments, tombs, statues, and buildings act as a portal through which ancient knowledge can be accessed. They actualise the past. They remind us of our ancestors. Of the past's perseverance's. Of their accomplishments, triumphs and defeats. They tell a story of events we could not witness. They bring to light ideas that could be lost, forgotten without them.

Chapter 3:

Evolution, decay, and regeneration, versus preservation, stagnation, and immobilization.

We know of the historical role of monuments in our current time, but what value had they at the time of construction? Were they purely designed for the educational benefit of the children of tomorrow? Or was there a less pure motive involved in some cases? Was the desire to immortalize themselves, just a way of a civilisation portraying they're power over a dynasty, or time? As an example, Bartolomeo Colleoni, a warlord, had his statue erected in Venice after he passed on, to immortalise himself, with little or no attempt to ensure that the history of his conquests, were preserved, ***'But the point is to survive in bronze, not to be understood or appreciated.'*** 14

Is this not a fair reason? Is the want of permanence alone, not a strong enough justification, to steal the gifts nature hands us, and pile them in a mound so high, that it is visible for all to see? Must we have an ulterior motive, or dual function associated with our lavish constructions, in order to justify their existence? Must we think now of the long term problems that may be consequential of our over development?

Chapter 4:

Physical historical records versus intangible preservation.

Physical historical records have been of great benefit to our modern society. Very little informative resources, have such a deeply resonating impact on the psyche. But in any case, is there a necessity, to construct some of these 'educational mediums', at such a monstrously enormous scale? Not only does it convey greed of the earth's plane, but also a gross over indulgence of natural resources. Can this be justified as a means to an end? It is true that, in relation to ancient cultures, there were no other means of guaranteeing immortality, than building in the largest scale possible, with the most durable material available to them; stone.

As our world progresses, so does our findings as a race, and if we were to do as our ancestors did and use physical means to convey our civilisations, we would inevitably completely consume the earth's true face. We would deplete our natural resources and rip our world of its fruit. But with our advances technology, we now can access the 'non-space', (the internet), where we can store and preserve our knowledge and accomplishments forever. The difference is the experience. The architecture of the monument is so special because it exists before us, even when we aren't looking for it. In the words of Robert Harbison, *"...a world in which we suffer our monuments, which will mean more if they are inconvenient and engage thus with the rest of life rather than standing apart from it."* 15



Cyberspace; the non-space

The ecological monument.

Although the physical presence of past monuments, have been beneficial, and instrumental to our progression of knowledge, do we need concrete evidence of our existence to pass on our secrets? It is vital to pass on our conclusions, beliefs and assumptions to our children, and to theirs in turn, but must we immortalise ourselves so obviously, that we may not be ignored? With the knowledge we have today, we have learned of the earth's need to be preserved. But yet we still build to last, as though we are trying to prove our right to place here. As though we are building bigger and taller than our grandfather's in some kind of competition of strengths. We can immortalise ourselves and our ideals in a much less drastic manner, a much kinder manner to our home. But the question seems to lie... who's immortality are we most concerned with, the earth's, or our own?

Our monuments do not have to be made in stone. They do not have engulf they're sites with large scale construction. They no longer need to be idolised, separate from they're surroundings. For a monument to excel through time, it must be functional, and offer a use to its beholders. The monument can become an organic object. Something which grows and evolves in coherence with its context. After the French Revolution, some villages planted a tree in their main village square, as a monumental representative of growth and regeneration; L'arbres de la Liberte. These ecological monuments represented nature and the human institution in the one totality. In Sweden, the idea of the monument to the departed evolved into an ecological grave. In accordance with the idea of the mound, there is a protrusion on the hillside, *"..where clumps of trees speak faintly of those buried beneath,"*¹⁶



Propelling the monument; allowing function to evolve in accordance to need.

In relation to new constructions, we now must build with sensitivity to ecological preservation. Maybe one can immortalize a frame that is flexible and can be warped over time, but is monumental by maintaining the mutated idea of preserving evolution?

In order to retain the benefits of the physical monument, its imposing presence and its contribution to our depth of constructional knowledge, one must consider the possibility of recycling. Although a monument which is inactive of its original purpose cannot be perceived as an object of pure historical recording, it can still be a vehicle of architectural information. If a monument becomes dormant, and is anticipated to be persevered for whatever justified reason, it should be open for re-use. For in this mode of recycling, the object, monument, or ruin can become a 'propelling' artefact, integrating with its surroundings, allowing for development and evolution take precedence. In embracing reality, and accepting that, *'decay is a part of life'* 16, one can begin to imagine, letting go of some of our past, by endorsing an architecture of evolution, one that can adhere to the current, future, and possible needs of an ever changing world.

Preservation or Stagnation?
Venice/Limerick



Jim Murphy

Introduction

In the 1960's, the 'Conservation Movement' as it has become to be known today, was born. Worldwide attention was drawn towards the crumbling entity that was Venice, and concern over what may be lost, both culturally and physically, skyrocketed. Governmental and non-governmental agencies, both national and international, sprang into action with the aim of rescuing and 'fixing' the built environment of the historically important lagoon city, which demonstrated just how much importance people placed on it, importance that transcends national pride, identity and even economy. Questions arise ; Why is Venice so important to the global consciousness? And what is it about Venice that sparked a worldwide phenomenon and movement regarding the conservation of the built heritage and environment, particularly of our cities?

Since then, wide debate has ensued regarding conservation. Some argue for militant protection, others for wiping the slate clean and starting afresh. Most agree that in theory it is a force for good, but varying levels of involvement are committed to. Local practices, needs and economic realities dictate just how high on the agenda of local government the conservation issue really appears, and ultimately it is government that has

control over such matters.

Conservation is of particular interest in Ireland, a culturally ancient place. In a country that relies heavily on tourism as an economic generator, it is perhaps surprising that conserving the built environment and landscape has not been higher in the public consciousness. It is perhaps an opportune time to take advantage of the catastrophic melt-down of the construction industry and the virtual halt to building and to take a step back, analysing just what has happened in this country over the past few decades as we went from bust to boom and back again, with a view to examining how we should continue to shape our built environment in order to fulfill our wants and needs.

It is the aim of this piece to broadly look at the issue of conservation, where its origins lie and where it has brought us so far, looking at the positives and negatives associated with it. Particular note will be taken of Venice (arguably the most aggressively conserved place in Europe, and the ignition source for the conservation movement) and Limerick, and an attempt will be made to provide parallels and compare the realities facing these two mediaeval cities.

Preservation and Nostalgia

It is perhaps appropriate to begin discussing conservation by looking at William Morris and his philosophy, and the effect that he has had on shaping public views and opinions on aesthetical importance within wider culture. Morris came from an extremely privileged background, the result of which he was ultimately a man of leisure. Left to his own devices, and undoubtedly an extremely creative and intelligent man, he did much to elevate the importance of beauty and aesthetic values amongst his peers. Idealistic and romantic, Morris is inextricably intertwined with the conception of the idea of conservation.

Published in weekly installments in 1890, *News from Nowhere* was Morris's last large body of writing, and offers a synopsis of many of his ideas. In particular what comes across is an idea about the uselessness of most everyday work, about art and lifes separation, and the evils of a system dominated by capital. While it may be argued that he indeed has a legitimate point regarding these matters, it could also be argued that Morris is approaching these topics from an unpractical viewpoint. His uncommon views, shaped by his inherited affluence are often quite contradictory. The

basis of much of his work seems to imply that his own personal utopia would be a place where all men should be capable of living like him, a kind of warped socialism if you will.

*'Morris's view of a future perfection is presented through an idealised image of the past.'*¹¹

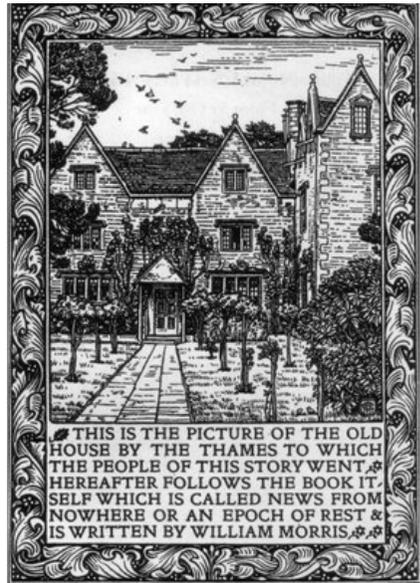


Fig. 2

This socialist utopian idea is undoubtedly a concept which would not have been possible without the background that he was lucky enough to find himself in. Despite this, however, Morris seemed to prophesy many issues that arise today. Architectural and natural difficulties are foreseen and he recognised that property taints relations between individuals. He also understood that money

undermines simple pleasures in work. There is a definite attempt to quantify and recognise what it is that makes life worthwhile in his work, and this is to be applauded, but there are still practical issues of day to day life for the majority that are difficult to fit into this nostalgic and romantic view of the world, a view that most people are not in the position to have.

We went into the Court and straight into the great hall, so well remembered, where there were tables spread for dinner, and everything arranged much as in Hammersmith Guest Hall. Dinner over, we sauntered through the ancient rooms, where the pictures and tapestry were still preserved, and nothing was much changed, except that the people whom we met there had an indefinable look of being at home and at ease, which communicated itself to me, so that I felt that the beautiful old place was mine in the best sense of the word ; and my pleasure of past days seemed to add itself to that of today, and filled my whole soul with content.²

Venice

*“Venice is a Zeropolis. It is a place without history, or rather whose history has been fused into an element of pure appearance.”*³

Until its fall at the hands of a malicious Napoleon Bonaparte, Venice had enjoyed more than a thousand year reign as an independant republic that existed autonomously within Europe, protected by the sea and bridging the divide between East and West. Operating as the richest and most prosperous commercial centre in the civilised world, the arts flourished as never seen before. Painting, sculpture, architecture and music all reached dizzying heights of mastery and appreciation, and it is undoubtedly this cultural legacy that has contributed greatly to the romanticism associated with the place. Straddling the great divide like it does, it was influenced substantially by Greece and has generally looked Eastwards for inspiration, resulting in a unique



Fig. 3

and special character that has become world renowned. Add to this the rise of the Grand Tour in the 18th Century, the immortalisation of the place by heavyweight historians like Ruskin, and the lack of cars in the historic centre (leading to even the untrained novice or casual tourist being capable of dreaming and romanticising what it must have been like in the past), there is no surprise that Venice is a city that seems to reside in the hearts of people across all nationalities and political persuasions. It is claimed that at its height *“Nowhere did men live more happily, nowhere did they enjoy more freedom from fear.”*⁴ High praise indeed for a city in Europe, albeit on its fringes, that was regularly and viciously torn apart by the war, rebellion and invasion of feudal times.

*“It was the age of the Grand Tour – the age, indeed, when tourism might be said to have been invented, when not only young English noblemen but the whole aristocracy of Europe was, at some time or another, to be seen in the loveliest and most magical of all cities.”*⁵

Today Venice, as is repeatedly pointed out, is a city and region in crisis. With costs of living driven skyward by the tourism industry, the labour force is forced to live outside, and eighty thousand cars pour towards the historic heart

of the city every day leaving local infrastructure in a state of distress.

*“Today the territory is characterised by a fragmented, endlessly repetitive stream of residential areas, industrial zones and shopping strips with no recognisable distinctions between city centres. Direct consequences are the destruction of the natural landscape, the lack of infrastructure and services instrumental to daily life, and permanent traffic congestion like nowhere else in Europe.”*⁶

The reality is that the most beautiful city in the world is destroying the surrounding landscape, while still retaining a precarious place on the precipice of obsolescence. There are still significant problems regarding subsidence (due in no small part to the polluting industrialisation of the region in the 1970s that has since been hugely downscaled due to the polluting nature of the industries located there). Common sense tells us that alternatives to tourism are needed.

*“At the national and local levels Venice is also a place to live and work that needs to remain open to shopping and attractive to industrial enterprise”*⁷

Conservation is an ongoing process in Venice due to the fragility of the place, perched on fragile wooden stilts in the middle of the lagoon. Unfortunately the

expense of preservation is often times prohibitive, and difficulty is faced when trying to maintain integrity within the historic core. Tourism is by far the biggest economic generator in the region, whose revenue streams are the most direct and available to those who wish to conserve the legacy of the city. Venice seems to be in a ‘Catch 22’ situation, desperately paddling against the flow of time and reality with an oar that will eventually drown it under its weight. Perhaps it is telling when Angela Vettese, a Chairperson sitting on the Venice City Council, speculates that *“Perhaps it would be better to let Venice drift away with the tide, with the ebb and flow of its own commercial speculation, which sells off both the property and the management of the greatest Palazzzi, unable to meet the costs of maintenance.”*⁸ While this is undoubtedly not what is wished for by most people, it provides a legitimate argument for moving forward and embracing the future,

and if controversial, is a practical approach to the present difficulties faced. She goes on to argue that this need not be seen as a negative move, depending on the attitudes and approach of the people involved, because it is the citizens who ultimately have control over what happens, whether they currently realise it or not.

*There’s no point complaining that there are fewer and fewer residents, that the nature of the city is changing or that the method of hanging out laundry by size and colour amidst the ‘Calli di Castello’ is a dying practice. There are other things to be gained. If only we could try to believe that the transformation of a place, particularly this place and at this time, by no means signifies its death, but rather an opportunity for its rebirth.”*⁹

In order for any such rebirth to take place, however, austere romanticism of the type expounded by Morris and co. will need to be re-evaluated. Venice



Fig. 4

has traditionally been more than simply the built city. It was a cultural centre where it is now a museum, and where it was previously the place to be, it is now a place to merely visit. In order to survive, it seems it will need to regain some of the vitality and effervescence that it possessed in the past.

Limerick

Throughout history, Limerick has espoused a gritty functionality, provided initially by its strategic position militarily, and as it has passed through Viking, Norman, English and Irish rule, and evolved through war, rebellion, peace, growth and decline, one could argue that it is slightly confused and difficult to understand. Limerick has a strong identity, but just what that identity is proves more difficult to define. Ironically, in some ways Limerick's indefinability itself is what defines

it.

Whatever that identity is, it is not always fully embraced by its citizens. Limerick is rarely thought of romantically or with nostalgia, although there exists a grudging respect and pride involved, perhaps due to the hard and tough image that has been projected over the years. People admit to loving Limerick, but it is more like a troublesome love affair than love-at-first-sight bliss.

In 'Theorizing the City', Gary McDonogh argues the importance of the built fabric within a city, particularly how it is managed in transitional periods of its development.

"The city is a sign of identity, a historic testimony of social and economic transformation and a demonstration of the production of culture."¹⁰



If this statement is true, then Limerick city is a place that is surviving, but fading. The nostalgia and romanticism associated with other medieval cities in Europe, even in Ireland (such as Kilkenny) doesn't seem to be present, and much of the historical and walled English Town and Irish Town is obliterated or in ruins, the only legacy which still clearly exist being the street layout, and perhaps street heights. Monuments and pieces exist within the fabric, but many times they are just unsupported fragments of a historical legacy, snapshots without context, floating in a sea of confusion.

*"Adrift and in a sea of fragments and open horizons, our postmodern position is ambiguous."*¹¹

Limerick is a city that has density issues. Walking around the city in the evenings, the hustle and bustle normally associated with town centres is noticeably absent, and many people point out the sparsity of dwellings suitable for city living. Pockets of apartments and flats exist, such as near the river in Steamboat Quay and Riverpoint, and a certain amount of housing exists such as those on King's Island, but the general perception is that there is a certain lack of quality to this housing, providing no incentive for a population of certain means to inhabit the urban

areas. Development and 'progress' over the past few decades has seen the population move out to the suburbs, leaving behind what is seen as an undesirable location to live or raise a family. Questions abound as to why this is. In many other cities, the urban centre is a desirable place to live, with high rents and prestigious connotations, yet this is not the case in Limerick.

Something is preventing the growth of city life, and it is perhaps the antiquated and rigid policies of conservation that are stunting opportunities for revitalisation and growth. In the city centre, it is quite apparent that large parts of the fabric fall under the 'listed' or 'protected structures' category. Much of the Georgian quarter is intact, although not inhabited as originally intended. Offices mainly occupy these fine townhouses,



Fig. 5

many times just at ground level, compounding the density issues so noticeable in the city. Yet at least the fabric survives relatively well, with rather pleasing streetscapes still in existence. When comparing the different parts of Limerick, however, it is difficult not to notice the disjointed and sometimes confused physical fabric. Mediaeval, Georgian, Edwardian and ‘modern’ buildings are often found within yards of each other in other areas, and large swathes of the city fall victim to the unsettling effects of such conglomeration. A coherent and legitimate plan of development does not seem to have been followed over the years, to the detriment of the character of Limerick as a whole.

“City architecture is architecture which deals, not with single buildings or groups of buildings, but with all the buildings

which make up a city. It is concerned with the relation of the parts to each other and with the relation of each part to the city as a whole. Its objective is the creative use of the material elements of the city. Its goal is to create an optical order adequate to the city’s physical order. City architecture has but limited means for the realisation of such aims. Yet it is true that the more clearly these limitations are recognised, the more effectively can the means be used in particular tasks.”²

King’s Island, historically known as Englishtown, is a good case study for examining the degree that preservation has played a role in shaping the city, as it is the oldest quarter of Limerick, and one would think, would have the most apparent motivation to be conserved. This has not been the case however.



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

‘The shameful neglect of the island site, known as Kings Island on a 17th century plan, is a matter to be bemoaned because it was here that the city struck its earliest roots.’¹³

While it is generally the implementation of local governance that dictates the extent to which the built environment is preserved, it should not be naively thought that conservation is the cure for all the ills of a city.

In ‘The Tourist Historic City’, authors Ashworth and Tunbridge provide an objective view of conservation and the role it plays in modern cities. While recognising that conservation is generally a force for good in that it maintains a certain built integrity and legacy, they also warn of the dangers that hardcore and militant conservation can have on a city.

‘The logic of preserving the total built environment leads ultimately to a complete halt in development and change; it fossilises the physical fabric and structure of the city.’¹⁴

This fact presents an awkward reality to local government. Just where the line is drawn in the sand as to what should, or even must, be conserved is very subjective and open to manipulation and opinion. It also has the unfortunate effect of needing strong and clear

decision making regarding the implementation of guidelines, something which Irish politics has not convincingly proven itself to possess over the last number of decades. This confusion tends to encourage not confronting the issues, and a policy of ‘leaving things alone’ for fear of making mistakes prevails. Limerick City, and particularly King’s Island, is suffering as a result. Throughout the uncelebrated fabric of the area, there are tentative steps taken towards recognising the historical legacy of the place, yet it is almost apologetic in manner. Tourist orientated signs are grubby and difficult to find. Points of interest are either forgotten or ignored, and



fragments of once important places and objects are slowly crumbling or disappearing behind weeds, yet there still exists strangling regulation of much development in the area, preventing moving forward, which for a place that still has quite a high population density and high rates of unemployment (particularly when compared to the rest of the city) is detrimental to progress. But what is progress? Should we even be progressing anywhere, or looking for equilibrium?

“The success of the conservation movement has had a fundamental impact upon the way cities are viewed. Instead of a city being composed of a few special protected buildings or ‘islands’ set in a ‘sea’ of the ‘real’ city where normal urban life continues, the contemporary city, particularly but not only in Europe, now consists of areas that are conserved, that could be conserved and that may be conserved by later generations”¹⁵

While the built environment on the Island could hardly be described as being preserved in totality, there is another form of fossilisation that is happening, perhaps neglectful fossilisation is closer to the mark, and it is an issue that needs attention and debate. At what point is it acceptable to move on from things that seem to be slowly choking the life out of a place? Many schemes have been planned

for the area over the years, but unfortunately questions have been raised as to the appropriateness of development, taking into account the historical importance. Yet this is an area that is home to a socially deprived housing estate built in the 1960’s directly on top of a Cromwellian fort, which points to the hypocritical enforcement of policy within the city.

Conclusion

“The building of cities is one of man’s greatest achievements. The form of his city has always been and always will be a pitiless indicator of the state of civilisation.”¹⁶

While it is important to recognise the importance of history and understand the context of our city, where does Limerick city sit within this statement? Few people would claim that that the slate needs to be wiped clean in order to start afresh, yet it is apparent that a change is needed regarding the implementation of conservation and preservation. While it is undoubtedly important, it is perhaps ineffectual and pointless if it ultimately compounds problems and stunts positive growth. Surely the city moving forward as a whole is more important than a few fragments from the past, yet it seems that these remnants and the policies

controlling them are holding Limerick back, preventing change and effectively poisoning it from within. In his important work 'Collage City', Colin Rowe states that:

*"Architecture must be 'useful, real and densely familiar'. The pretension that human artefacts can be other than what they are must be changed."*¹⁷

Where is the usefulness and familiarity that Rowe places such importance on? Empty and derelict space is evident all over King's Island, and an ancient wall here or an important doorway there does not an appropriate fabric make. While there have undoubtedly been mistakes made, and many decisions taken because of the economic or social factors of particular times, it does not excuse the continued stagnation of one of the oldest cities in the country. While the state of the old town is a sad reflection of our attitudes regarding such important matters as history and legacy, there are still positives to be capitalised on.

*"We are in danger of losing one of the most important concepts of mankind, that the future is what we make it."*¹⁸

Perhaps this concept has been lost in Limerick for some time, which would explain the blasé, perhaps even fatalistic attitude exhibited

by many residents regarding so many issues, not least local politics and the arena within which it is played. Responsibility on a personal level needs to be cultivated in order to encourage change, and it is something within our reach should we choose to place enough importance in it. It is very easy to point fingers and assign blame to other people, wiping our hands of the responsibility because it is easier to do so than actually provide alternatives or solutions, as Philip Ball recognises in his book 'Critical Mass'.

*"There are few easier targets than governmental, regulatory or planning decisions that have had the opposite of their intended effects. In many such cases, these unwanted outcomes can be put down to a failure to appreciate the interconnected and interactive nature of the system concerned."*¹⁹

It is this interconnectedness that must be acknowledged in order for constructive change to occur, be that a full on drive to conserve and celebrate as much about the city as possible, or alternatively, a new direction or beginning that is not held down in the quagmire of local history and regulation. As it stands, the current situation and attitudes are self-destructive and benefit nobody. This is not helped, of course, by governmental revenue streams drying up and

citizens priorities becoming more and more introverted. There is tentative local acknowledgement that actions outside the remit of local government need to be taken, and the Limerick Civic Trust's establishment is the beginning of recognition that local authorities or state agencies can no longer be expected to meet all of society's needs in relation to the protection and enhancement of the environment and heritage. The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidelines on Architectural Heritage Protection state that *'the creative challenge is to find appropriate ways to satisfy the requirements'* regarding conservation and preservation, and while this is undoubtedly true, perhaps a re-examination of those requirements is what is needed. We are not outside the possibility of moving the goal-posts, so to speak, should the citizens desire it and should the conviction hit arise.

In the concluding paragraph of his book *'The Nature of Cities'*, Ludwig Hilbeseimer says much about the magnitude and importance of social responsibility regarding planning and the long term aspect of such goals, yet it is a positive and hopeful conclusion, and one that seems to have faith in the inevitability of things to happen as they should.

*"It would be a wonderful thing if some magician were to perform a miracle and, with one wave of his hand, transform things as they are into things as they ought to be. But there are no magicians. We must ourselves perform the miracle. And we cannot hope to perform it over night. If, however, we recognise that planning is basically the interpretation of the great technical and economic forces of our time, we shall be moving towards that miracle. These forces shaped the regions and their settlements into their present form; they will eventually reshape them. It is our task to plan wisely and in harmony with nature, to use all technical means available, to the end that the region may find again a form suitable to its function in the national life and become capable of fulfilling the needs of its people."*²⁰

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DRAWING TOMORROWS WORLD

PAUL O'SHEA

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INTRODUCTION

What role does drawing have in architecture, in the design process and representation? Architectural drawing is a process to understanding the proposed piece of architecture. What technology should one use to represent and develop their work, should one use more traditional methods that are analogue, which is the craft of physically drawing every line with precision, make a drawing of speed with gesture and concepts, diagrams, perspective drawings of realism or fantasy, all tools for quickly conceiving space, structure and scenarios of architecture. Architectural representation has adapted with technology and computers now offer a new way to represent and design architecture with offering new styles and techniques. Drawing acts as a translator for the imagination to reality, here a person thinks and observes the world around them, manipulates it and then begins to combine ideas and thought and physically represent these thoughts on paper. The ability to think imagine and draw, is a fluid motion from mind , hand to paper, teaching the mind body and eye, fine tuning ability, ideas and experience that comes from the act of doing. Perspective rules of vision give authority to drawings, architecture begins to be defined in drawings and representations before being built, and mankind began to play with shape, form, light and colour in designing our world.

The computer now plays an important role in the conceiving of architecture and its representations, it has helped our understanding of the world, recording and processing data, affecting the way we act in it. How can this new tool benefit the world we design. what are the disadvantages of neglecting the analogue tools, and can drawing play an important role in tomorrow's future.

TRADITION

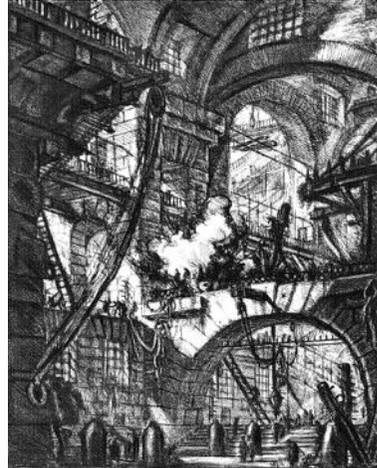
a long-established or inherited way of thinking or acting: The rebellious students wanted to break with tradition.

The origins of what we can refer to as modern architectural understanding, representation, originated in the days of Vitruvius, frescos show mans first perception of reality in perspective drawings. This knowledge or know how disappears after classical antiquity for the period of time, we now know as the dark ages.¹ During this time architecture builds itself, through the knowledge of the master craftsman, ruled by structure and geometry applied on site. this is the gothic era serving humanity with many spectacular churches that inspire man. Vitruvius is later discovered in the birth of the Renaissance (1415), when the knowledge of perspective is rediscovered in a more precise mathematical way. Brunelleschi was not just interpreting reality, but devised a system to control it, order it.² This new know how gave birth to deliberate conceptions that could predetermine the design of architecture. Designers pushed the limits of craftsmen, and imagination flourished, especially in the set designs of Ferdinando's.⁴ Drawing divines concepts into reality, like a stick of magic chalk.

Piranesi's drawings show the mind running wild, trying to render through perspective, a new world under construction. New understandings of reality, powers man to explore and create. These ingravings go beyond existing architecture representations, born in the mind warping the external world and what the eye sees, tickling the soul, createing an image that could be uderstood as reality. These dark arcane images plays with light, shade, depth and exist-ing building technologies. Even at this present day, modern man is inspired by this conceived world, empowered by perspective, witness the power of creation

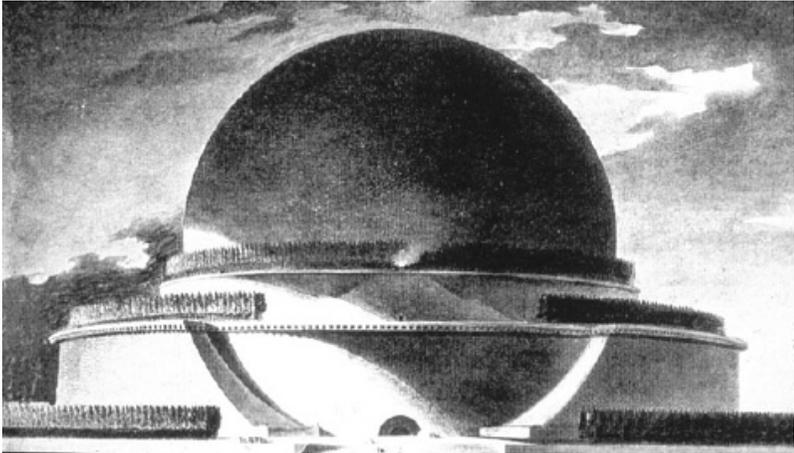


Carceri Plate VII - The Drawbridge.



Carceri Plate VI - The Smoking Fire

Piranesi, perspective gives birth to new realities



Boullée, Cenotaph for Isaac Newton.

Boullée breaks tradition of form.

The creation process started and the next major development on the tracks, for the creation of architecture came with the teachings of the Ecole de Beaux arts. The ethos of architecture within the school was based on freedom, competition and the joyful process that is imagining and creation. Students were given freedom of selection of tutors, course content (atelier), period of time required to achieve a diploma and they were only required to sign up for a design problem once a year. This seems to open up the creative process to self-evaluation and interpretation with tuition coming from all peers including fellow students. This was a highly competitive school pushing students too success, through highly logical processes of thinking about architecture through diagrammatic drawing, developing a project to eventually be judged and graded a pass or fail⁵. The journey from the know how of perspective, to an academic establishment concerned in the conceiving of architecture, acknowledging the power of drawing in the creative process.

BREAKING TRADITION OF FORM

Boullée was an important figure in the school of the Ecole de Beaux arts, and believed in geometrical style of representations rather than the decorative style of the baroque period. Originality of form and technique are displayed breaking tradition, influencing many after him like the early modernist architects, who would push form to follow function, exploring architecture in a new simplistic way. His drawings are of a very high standard of craft, captivating the eye with this return to form and structure, in a highly atmospheric style. This realisation in the importance of form was quite visionary of the time. These type of drawings, section, plans and elevations are the device of these discoveries. The foundations are set for Tradition to be broken once again that will continue too present day. The modernist movement would declare to break tradition using the tools of their predecessors, in creating a new world.

Technology and the production process inspired the birth of the modern movement, with great architects like Frank Lloyd Wright, whose beautiful drawings and great architecture influence so many. We see the architectural representation showing the proposed architecture in a definite way with plans, sections, elevations and the age-old technique of perspective. These are teasing out the architecture to understand it before being built, pushing building technology and creating new architecture. Looking at drawings Broad acre by Wright, we see a more recognisable trait like Piranesi, dealing with the imaginative unreal or potential reality in a drawing, a glimpse of a potential reality in the future, a world conceived in the head of the architect. In the drawing of Falling waters we see the ability of the draftsman to portray a realistic vision of architecture developed by his ideas and career. The representation itself is beautiful from its composition, setting, and the affects created by the hand depicting it. The imagined reality on the other hand depicts a future world with flying machines and a city context unrecognisable to history, similar to Boulees vision for the tomb of Izac



Falling Waters 1935



Broad Acre 1932-59

Frank Lloyd Wright, Architecture and visions of the future

BREAKING TRADITION OF REPRESENTATION

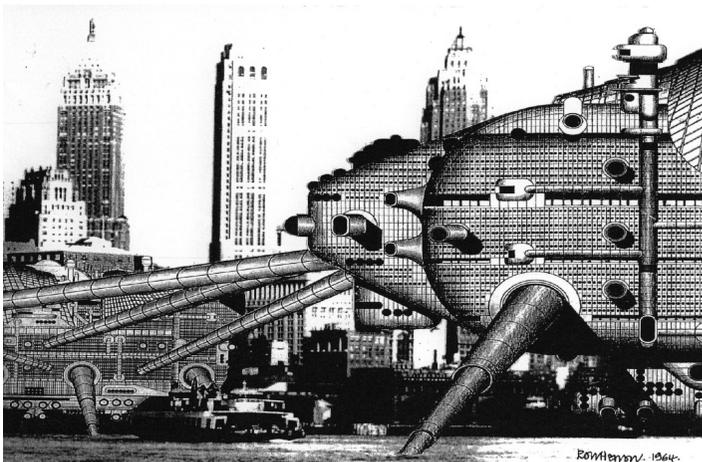
The next change in the way architectural representation is presented involves the collaboration of the camera and print. We witness this with the new form of perspective, offering a new level of control over the vision of the reality. We see images of a proposed architecture drawn directly on to the waiting landscape, in the project Potteries Thinkbelt Staffordshire by Cedric price. Looking at the picture we see a gantry in a railway yard with strong dark lines showing the proposed infrastructure. The infrastructure, a proposed university situated on railway carriages, that are dynamic, an idea abstract from reality of the time. This super imposing on the photo gives a credibility of this happening in time, giving the image power, lacking any visual interpretation of the idea, giving the concept clarity.



Potteries Thinkbelt 1960

Cedric Price, draws directly on to the landscape

Further examples of the advance of technology encouraging, a more precise overlay of the imaginative on reality, Archigram overlay an imaginative set of circumstance in the picture walking city. This image is far from reality but is superimposed onto a print of an existing city. It is hard to perceive the image as perspective but more like an elevation, the literal name walking city, imprints motion to the brain, some motion can be perceived, giving the structure has legs like a spider. Even though the image is super imposed on reality, the image is so far from conceivable reality in many ways, the gates are open for lots of interpretation. Architects of this time had time to question modern architecture, developing ideas, while colour printing became cheaper at the end of the 70's making their images more accessible to be viewed.⁶



Walking City 1960

Archigram collage the unbelievable

The next step in breaking the way we represent ideas of architecture is the computer, and at present it can be used rather than overlay, put by placing into a picture digitally or into a mode the proposed architecture within a digital reality or replica of the existing. Like all that has gone before the ideas can represent something believable or abstract and futuristic. In the image Republic Square, Almaty Kazaxstan, 2006 we see this sectional perspective drawing, technology pasting people cars with in, shades of grey, it does not seem too represent a reality as we see it with its glossy transparency. Architecturally it shows an interesting play of habitable spaces that are not so abstract that they are conceivable.

Computers can also depict a futuristic scene from imagination not depicting reality but an idea or a concept. We see this grotesque, dark image by Samuel White, Chapel of the Corpus, which has as much impact as Piranesi first drawings of imaginative space, showing a nice play of light and shade. This picture is eerie, as the mind recognises the hanging figures as human bodies, it is certainly a sublime image encouraging the mind not to ponder or interpret. Looking at the evolution of architectural image as both conceivable and unrecognisable realities, ideas, concepts and pure imagination, playing with and warping reality as the mind sees it. The option now lies with the level of realism the image will show, the amount of interpretation within the image and its style. The question remains, what is the future of drawing, in the designing and representation of architecture?



Republic Square, Almaty Kazaxstan, 2006

Samuel White, the darkside of digital realism



Chapel of the Corpus

Eric own Moss, the potential of digital representation

WHAT THE DIGITAL TOOL CAN OFFER.

The computer offers a new way of representing architecture, with a play of new forms texture, and process of interaction between the person and the software. The computer is a high-speed machine that can render, at the touch of a button, but it is dependent on programs. Computers are interactive with other computers, which in the scenario of an architectural office has advantages, many people can work at the one drawing were changes are saved and updated to the drawing interactively. This is the equivalent to many architects using tracing paper, in an office before Computer Aided Draughting (CAD) programs, all the analogue tools exist with in the technology, but are used in a faster, seamless way. Information is stored and can be transported by email, anywhere in the world making the computer, essential in today's modern life. Computers for some offer a new medium that can vocalise ideas and concepts in a new way.

NEW FORM

Yael Reisner sees Digital Architecture as a way of redefining architecture to a more aesthetic or beautiful form, others like Bernard Cache an industrial designer who is an important figure with in digital architecture, in the late 1990s sees the architects mode of production becoming more reliant on digital technologies, which he thinks is hostile to random fluid architecture. Reisner writes of the neglect of aesthetics and form with in the modern movement of architecture. The process in which one designs is led by sensibility and nothing to do with visual thinking, Reisner generalises that the opinion is beauty has no position in architecture. The digital age is a means to this new expression, reforming to aesthetics and form ⁷.

Alonso, manipulates form digitally



New Media Design, San Sebastian, Spain

Hernan Diaz Alonso , an architect who is considered at the forefront of digital architecture. Alonso found himself as a young student being very impressed by the early work of Zaha Hadid and COOP HIMMELB(L)AU with their striking analogue architectural representations. The vision of his architecture can be seen in a computer generated image, a design for the New Media Design, San Sebastian, Spain looks organic in structure, with in its dark back rounds, form is reflecting light,

it is an architecture attaching itself to the existing architecture, alien in nature to the existing building it rests on, these differences between the new and existing structures, are amplified by the computers ability to manipulate form, light and shade, these characteristics direct the outcome of the end piece, which are the architects palette for design. Alonso states that this is a way in which he works, and believes that the work should be an expression of himself.⁸ The task in his work is the translation of this image to the reality.

Alonso has pointed out of a change in the approach to Digital Architecture over the past 15 years, from representation to simulation, a generative internal logic that grows into form and what he calls the changing attitude of the architect, one were one, does not ask themselves what the computer can do for the architect, but what the architect can do for the computer. This idea can be associated with perspective drawing and the ability for man to serve technology in a quest for creation.

NEW EXPRESSION

Representing reality in drawing was the goal of perspective, now computers represent form, structure, spaces, and people with realism in a crisp clean way without a need to express oneself in the process of representation. Morphosis , rendering of Phare tower, la defence, Paris, France 2207, is a perspective shot generated by the computer, people of photographic quality walk in the foreground. The architecture form is enveloped in light and shade, reflections and city context blend together, it is like a dream of the future. This is the ultimate representation, requiring no imagination to see the potential reality of the project. This is a beneficial tool for architects too show the intent of the architecture.

Greg Lynn found a new way of expressing ideas from the mind through the computer, Lynn worked under Eisenman and was interested in Eisenman's thoughts to explore a new expression in designing, and new tools of expression.¹⁰ Lynn found the computer crucial for the exploration of form in intricacy using an evolved calculus and geometries. Lynn summarises his interest as a student in complex geometries and form, but finding his abilities to draw, unable to translate these conceptions to representations.¹¹ The computer gives shape to new ideas, and without it, some ideas would never evolve, new expressions and ways of conceiving architecture are ignited with its presence. Lynn's work shows a dependency of the computer for his work, in its production and representation.

Ark of the world museum and visitors centre, San Jose, Costa Rica, 2002, shows the range of interaction between Lynn and the computer. Image A shows the complex geometries involved in the design of the architecture, its organic appearance similar to a flower, rigid grid and play of geometry through calculus are all explored. Image B is a computer rendered 3d model with vibrant colours, light and shadow are amplified with the background, an infinite blackness, which project the image. Images have power, expressed by the computer in the internal logic and systems that govern it, controlled by the user. Image c shows a close up view of the centre organic tower, with its lattice roof of complex geometries, the architecture presented is organic in form and texture, with the insertion of people looking out from a terrace, this image has being replaced with the infinite blackness for a sky and background, this image is a representation showing the human interaction in the project. This image represents a traditional perspective view, and has a language of expression distinct to the computer, with its programmed understanding of physics and mathematics, relating to space light and shadow. New expression and thought can be found in the digital era, to inspiration and belief in the power of the computer as design tool.



Ark of the world museum and visitors centre, San Jose, Costa Rica, 2002

Image B

Greg Lynn, can express new ideas with the computer

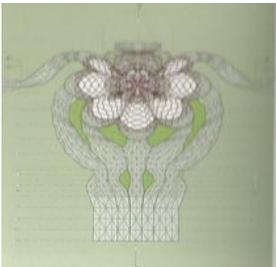


Image A

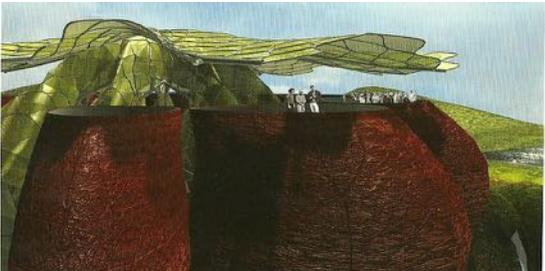


Image C

NEW UNDERSTANDINGS

Brian Mcgrath and Jean Gardner wrote a book about architectural drawing today based on the concept of cinematics. The digital process to date has been disappointing for Gardner and Mcgrath, the fact that architecture is explored and represented in plans sections and perspective being a 600 year old technology. Gardner and Mcgrath are concerned with what happens to the human motor –schema, when we move from the drawing board to the computer. They argue that this jump between technologies, will affect the way we sense the world, which with the aid of the computer, we can record a more accurate and real world, on matter Flux(see whole). This information is different, in the way we conceive the world in a renaissance style lens, where the way we govern the world, see and act in it, is all primarily based on information from the eyes. Bengsons understanding that our world is interconnected on a vibrational level, all matter as one, this can lead from an antonymous architecture, to an architecture that is connected to every thing¹¹.

Thomas Herzog approaches architecture, thinking of the compatibility of nature and technology, conservation of the earth's resources that provide new thinking of design other than form¹². The avant-garde separates himself from context in pursuit of their egotistic ego, associated with all that has passed before, born in the Renaissance. Herzog does not isolate himself as singular creator, but works within a collaborating team of engineers and ecologists, abstaining the creative will on the world, listening to the earths needs, giving up control over nature¹³. Herzog sees the computer as being an essential tool in breaking the perspective tradition of control over nature, serving more than a tool serving our creativity and productive needs, acting as the head of all individuals on the planet connected by the web¹⁴. Computers have the power to help man understand the diverse nature of the world, allowing us to predict our impact on nature and then we can begin to work with it. Buildings can be designed to be more efficient in structure, energy performance allowing a lesser impact on the earth. Ideas of this nature contradict all that has passed before, the computer has altered our perspective and knowing of reality, now we realise, the author is faced now with responsibilities, when letting the mind manipulate the world.



Solar schools

Computers provide new thinking of design other than form

WHAT THE ANALOGUE MEDIUM OFFERS

Thinking about the act of drawing as the physical process of extracting visions and developing logical thinking of what today's world and future world might be. There is a direct relationship between the mind body and medium, observing how much the world has changed since the engaging of perspective with Brunellechi, drives mans ability to mentally grab and physically define visions on paper. The argument that the computer can alter the ability to imagine beyond the pencil is unreal. The computer is an amazing invention with many ways of serving the user through the range of tools programs that can be operated, that come in one package serving as a communications workstation, an essential piece of kit for modern day living. There with in it, is newness for life, it offering new dimensions to reality, but what about envisioning reality. The level in which the computer can enhance the visionary gaze of the architect remains debatable.

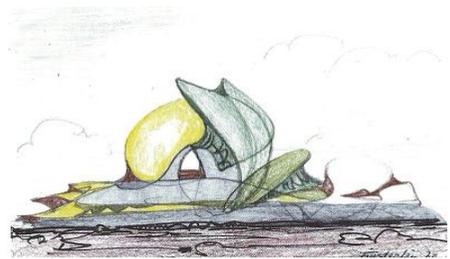
IDEAS AND MEDIUM STICH TIME

Ideas and medium stitch time, looking at a drawing by Hermann Finsterlin, Architektur, 1920. This looks like the type of architecture Hernan Dias Alonso and many digital counterparts explores more than 80 years later, but very distant from reality of man and the city of that time and still this time. The drawing is of organic shape and isolated on a landscape. This ability to break tradition of understanding, imagining and representation is not limited to a time and place but it is vocalised with medium. Drawings by Konrad Wachsmann 1954 show his interest in a universal joint and structural fluidity¹⁵. This mono tone drawing seems infinite in space and plays trickery on the mind, very slick in appearance giving the image a quality similar to a computer generated image. Thinking of fluidity of space, is today a very accepted concept in architecture, showing ideas are not limited to time, but are affected in representation techniques and style.

These links bring to mind a quote by Kahn, "what was has always being , what is has always being, what will be has always being"¹⁶.



Hernan Diaz Alonso



Hermann Finsterlin, Architektur, 1920.

Ideas tich time

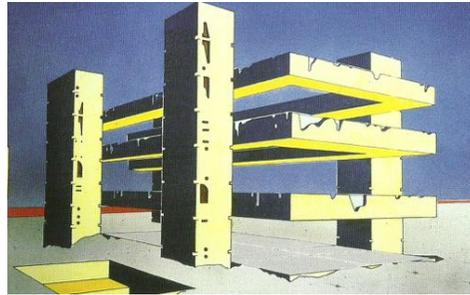


Iakov Chernikov 1933

Ideas stich time



Konrad Wachsmann 1954



Peter cook 1987

Medium stichs time

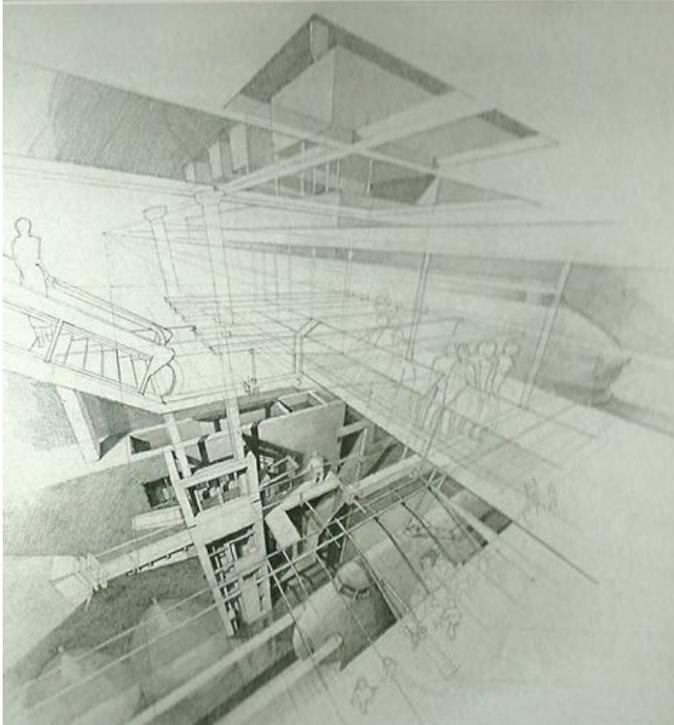
Looking at a drawn by Peter cook 1987 and a drawn by Iakov Chernikov 1933, these are two completely different types of drawings in their structures, scale and two different perspective shots, beautiful images are united by colour of environment and range of expression with in the drawn. The ideas are different but united by medium. These images look distant from reality, we do not see reality in such colours, but it does not take away from the feelings evoked from looking at them, there is room for interpretation, and the architecture is present. This could be the real attractiveness of the computer, being its ability to break such links, new mediums can mimic reality with realism.

PHYSICALLY DRAWING

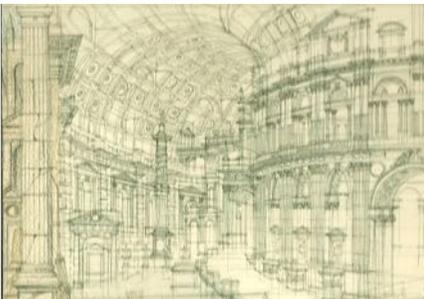
Thinking about what has gone before the introduction of the computer in the designing of architecture, the ideas were just as big, but are united in the tradition of perspective and the tools used by the architect, colour pencils, watercolours acrylics, oils and many other mediums that can be physically explored. The age of the computer stands on all the knowledge before this, programs can perform the task of rendering, shading, line weights, adding realism to architectural representation, giving the computer an opportunity to replace the pencil and all analogue tools. Mankind can push mankind forward with the computers ability to model the real world and the systems that govern it, this can definitely help man realize our place and future, but can it help us imagine beyond our reality. This new world could be putting too much emphasize on the importance of the machines place in our world, as something we will not be able too do with out in the future. The real power is in mankind's mind, to imagine and conceive such realities, extracting them from mind with body and spirit, physically moving in time and space to make the marks on a sheet of paper, this is drawing.

Drawing is a manual action carrying a wide developed knowledge, style, and tradition that is in real danger of being lost, this can be looked at in two ways, so what, the computer can do the job anyway, looking at the situation in a Darwinian way of technological evolution, or we potentially loose a connection with our ancestors, tradition and a way of exploration. This tradition is a 600-year technology, with mankind's quest to create architecture, carried on from generation to generation, influencing others, to carry on the torch. What of the human experiences? What one learns from the act of doing? Think of the person today who records his world, physically drawing the environment and the conditions it has too offer on paper, whilst it would be easier too just take a picture. Does an artist understand the image better because the act of drawing gives him an insight greater than the person who took the picture, does the person looking at the picture have more time too look and analyse, and can they store this information just in memory, or by what means. The person drawing leaves trails on the page with pencil strokes, forced to look and take in the information he wishes too, physically drawing every line, knowing them personally, in the photograph there is a chemical trail of what was there, directly to the film and then the print. The amount of information one absorbs from the picture, needs to be recorded, more than just looking and remembering, Drawing imprints this knowledge on the mind through observing, doing and technique, which all serves memory. Today people can use the computer to create perspective drawings with out understanding this technique and knowledge, the computer can perform many architectural representation techniques as a tool, the human mind no longer has to understand the three dimensional world with perspective, it appears visually on the screen. to perform certain tasks limiting the possibilities of expression.

Drawings by Filippov and Matei show the power of technique, which is perspective, through drawing the mind has to understand, the relationship of every line to one another, the level of intent is evident, and these drawings are not spontaneous. Fillipovs drawings are chaotic with lines of logic consuming the image, where as the drawing by Matei , the lines of understanding are tamed, showing shape, form space and foreshortening, looking and understanding space as the eye sees it, perspective is essential to architecture. Understanding of scale diminishes, when the impression of working at a scale of 1:1, with the computers ability of infinite zoom in and out. New skills of how too use the machine need too be learned, and old skills forgotten, the computer can only be programmed



Matei



Filippov

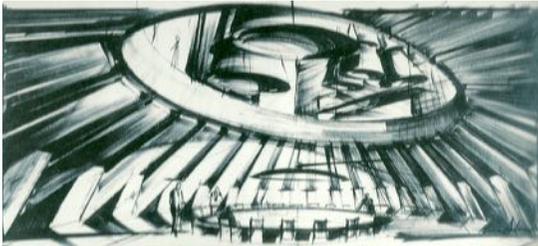
Knowledge of perspective

EXPRESSION

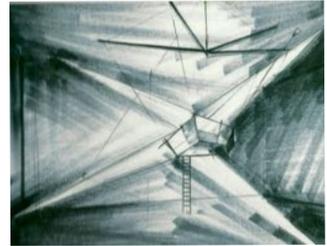
Wolf D Pridx of Hammelud Coop sees the computer as a closed system, with an applied logic, affecting the levels of architecture created and he finds the computer drawings boring.¹⁷ This is a downside when using the computer for representations, the architecture is represented with such realism, that a lot of representations look similar, no traces left by the hand, giving style. There is no room left for interpretation, which could be argued a good thing, allowing one to judge the architecture alone. Drawings then fail to capture the imagination, which is the beginning of architecture. Ranges of expression are wide changing from medium and composition, affecting the final image.

Van De Hoed explores spaces and light in an unrealistic manner, romanticizing reality of light and colour with pencil, pen marker and watercolour. The end result is these extremely dreamy and atmospheric images, far from the realism and logic of the computer, full of expression in colour, the marks left by the tool add to the nuance of the image.

Ken Adams, draws images titled top secret, and uses words like spaceship and Moonwalker in the title of the drawings. These images are highly expressive of the marker and line weight, both working together to define a space, which is dynamic with light and shade. These images show the compatibility of the tool and the creator, with such simplicity of expression creating a 3d space in a 2d medium with effectiveness, such simplicity does not exist with all the computers programs. The list of images and the ranges of expression conceived by analogue means is endless. The technology is suited to the spirit of mankind,



Ken Adams

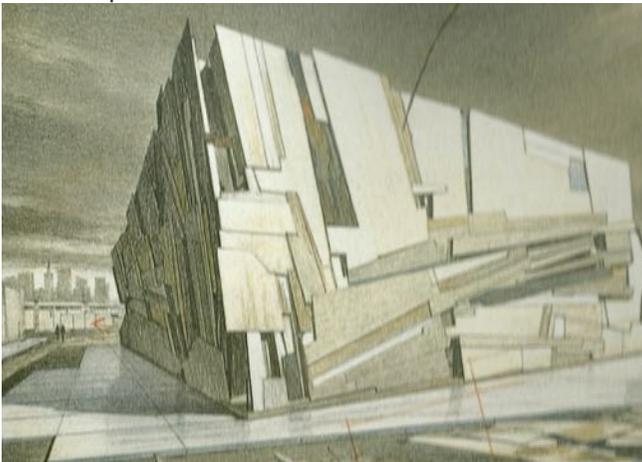


Medium amplifies expression



Van De Hoed

Lebbeus Woods was known for his artistic ability early, so much was asked by cybernetician Heinz von Foster to illustrate some drawing for him. This would influence woods future, taking Heinz view on Radical constructivism, that is we construct our own reality. Woods questioned thinking and architecture, he wishes people to come away from his work asking the same question. Woods does not see the modernist approach to developing a progressive society through technological advance; he sees a society that can do it themselves, not requiring lots of technology . Woods representations definitely convey an idea that is clear in the medium. There is a strong texture in the pencil that lets us know that this person has a strong understanding of the physical world, and has a extremely good skill portraying his ideas, that are exciting in composition, thought and expression. Woods drawings have levels of realism, with his ability and control over the colour pencil, but his ideas and thought serve this technology, by fuelling the need to draw and represent. These drawings are dramatic, chaotic and carry a mood in them, conveyed by colour. It would be hard for a computer to reach this level of expression.



Lebbeus Woods

Dramatic expression



CONCLUSION

Times are a changing, and for the better. Part of the problem, that can be associated with the pencil and analogue means of representation, is the way in which it has helped man evolve and destroy the planet. Pencils did not do this alone, the answer is perspective gave man a feeling of power and control over nature and the cosmos from a renaissance ideal. Technological advance from the industrial revolution helped us destroy the planet and further separate our self from the environment. Now through our observations, technology compound our fears that we as a collective society screwed up. The imagination untamed of reality, is driving all too an unknown end regardless of medium. Technology that came with the computer has helped awaken our conscious and gives some glimmer of hope in retaining our modern life style, whilst helping us solve some of the energy, pollution, and destructive mayhem created by all technologies wake. But it is, this want to hold on too all technology and modern life, that is the real destructive power. We have designed a world that we cannot sustain, but that is changing now, that the mind has being awakened to such realities.

The question of how one represents ideas is an open question, ranging in answers from person to person. For some the computer offers new ways of exploring, designing and representing new ideas. Others feel strongly about the future of analogue technology providing expression and imaginative, spontaneous release of mankind's imagination unhindered by technological processes. The reality of the matter lies in the mind and the ideas it conceives, ideas of realistic and unrealistic realities plague the mind of man, wanting to escape into pre reality, all mediums give such ideas shape, form, place and reason. Images carry power to alter reality, seducing man to neglect our responsibilities to earth our home and our neighbours being everything living. Conceptions are born in the mind and unleashed by medium. The real problem has to be content and not composition, the effect imposed on all reality by ideas. Let the ideas of the future be good ones, for all, and lets not limit the medium of exploration, the more tools on the table the better.

20

Sorkin

Architecture crusts the earth.
Within its depth a billion ecologies must flourish.
The first duty is to do no harm to their futures.
The second is to provide congenial habitats for
all that must be housed.
The third is to maintain in the planetary organism.
The fourth is the fair distribution of global resources.
The fifth is to defend the rights of place, in place
The sixth is to overcome scarcity.
The seventh is to defend cultures of kindness.
The eight is to abet community.
The ninth is to enlarge happiness.

Content, not representation

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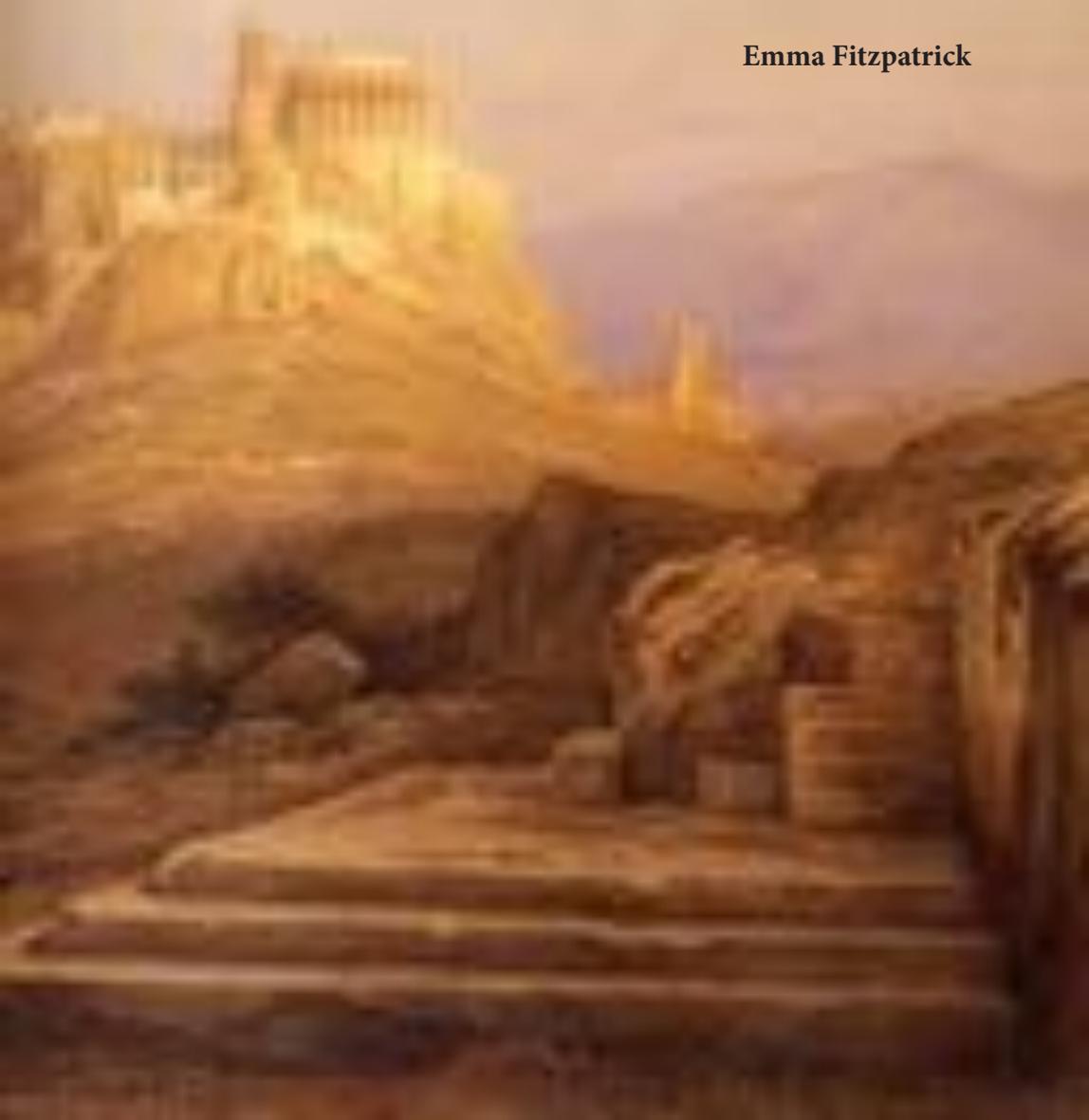
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Creating a Strength with Beauty

The Role of Architecture in Politics

Emma Fitzpatrick



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Preface

Parliamentary Institutions

From the Ancient Greeks, debating and deliberating their affairs at the first parliament in Pnyx, to Indian tribes arguing around a fire, and from the village square to the Capitol House in Washington D.C., the form of a parliament is always related to the organization at a specific time. At the bottom of the idea of parliament is the notion of some form of democracy and, importantly, of public representation. The difficulty is representing the social system truthfully and successfully.

As the 'original' parliament, the first example of Athenian democracy 'could not last except through the incessant labour of all citizens.'¹ Athens had a vast amount of magistrates, from the king, who performed sacrifices, to the agoranomi who looked after the affairs of the markets of the city. Because the offices were yearly, almost every man got a turn to fill a position. Those magistrates that attended to public order were nominated by the laypeople. They seemed to have little prestige and power, but were respected as a result of being elected by the public. It is noted by French historian Fustel that the Athenians had a great ability to submit to authority.²

The Pnyx, meeting place of the assembly, is a small rocky hill with a large flat platform of eroded stone set into its side. This is known as the 'speakers stand',

1 Fustel De Coulanges, *The Ancient City: A study on the religion, laws, and institutions of Greece and Rome* (New York, Doubleday and Company Inc., 1864), 330.

2 Fustel De Coulanges, *The Ancient City: A study on the religion, laws, and institutions of Greece and Rome* (New York, Doubleday and Company Inc., 1864), 330.

and is the material embodiment of the principle of equal speech. The council of people were held in an enclosure made sacred by the priests, who walked around the Pnyx calling down the protection of the gods. The people took their seats on stone benches. Prytanēs, whose occupation it was to attend to the public fire, sat on a platform. In front of these sat proedri, who supervised the assembly.

A herald stated the matters which the assembly were to discuss. After reading a proposed law, the herald asked, “who wishes to speak?”³ Speakers took their place at the ‘speaker’s stand’- the eldest first. Every person listened attentively as, without interruption, the speaker expressed his opinions. The patience of the listening assembly was commendable. Even as opposite views were expressed, no one shouted out in discord. Following this, every speaker was accountable for the advice he had given. This democracy required a lot of work, and personal interests were ‘inseparably united with those of the state.’⁴ The model of government seems the epitome of democracy. Since Pnyx, is representation of the people as direct and effective?



3 Fustel De Coulanges, *The Ancient City: A study on the religion, laws, and institutions of Greece and Rome* (New York, Doubleday and Company Inc., 1864), 332..

4 Fustel De Coulanges, *The Ancient City* (New York, Doubleday and Company Inc., 1864), 335.

As in Pnyx, village affairs were openly discussed in a village square. The participation was certainly direct, and the public were not pushed away from the meeting space. A similar central place of discussion was relied on in Ancient Rome, whereby business men attended the forum daily to consider public affairs. This openness offers a nature of reassurance to the people. They can feel safe in the knowledge that they are able to see and hear the conversation taking place- the conversation that will result in decisions affecting their lives. Undeniably, the success of a democracy lies in the quality of the harmony between the public and its representatives. Similarly, the success of a parliament exists in the quality of the transition from expression to participation. The outdoor space and facade of a parliament should relate to the interior chamber in some way. A disjointed transition from public areas to the chamber points to a threat at the time of the institution.

It follows from this that capitol complex design is undoubtedly a product of the political conditions prevailing at the time of the commission and during construction. Produced by dominant groups who wish to give evidence of dominant political institutions, a parliament building is unlike a hotel, for instance. The parliament building is brought about by forces strongly related to the institution housed within. Lawrence Vale writes that the architecture 'of government buildings is political architecture.'⁵ Regardless of whether or not the architect claims oblivion to politics, many politicians use architecture and urban design as political instruments. Regimes that commission new capitals and capitols predictably will seek to maximise the presence of the part of government most belonging to the people. Thus the challenge for the architect is to find a form for a parliament building that will represent, if not the public, then at least the idea and intention of representing them. Within political architecture lies the predicament of conveying the correct message. This vocation is not often carried out entirely honestly or successfully.

opposite page: fig.1- Pnyx; meeting place of the worlds first democratic legislature

5 Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (Oxford, Routledge, 2008), 67.

History of the site of the building

The situation of the parliament building is of utmost importance. Privileged high ground evinces power and prestige, as the Capitoline Hill of Rome displays. ‘Capitol’ originally alluded to a citadel on a hill, the Greek meaning of the word citadel (acropolis) translating to upper city. As Lawrence Vale notes, the placement of parliament buildings is ‘an exercise in political power, [...] a spatial declaration of political control.’⁶ In Rome, the Capitoline Hill -former site of the Temple of Jupiter- has undergone a series of transformations through the years. A monstrous King Victor Emmanuel monument now cuts harshly into the hill. Such a gigantic monument served to ascertain the authority of the state. Many modern capitols allude to this use of height also, such as architect Louis Kahn, who sited his Dhaka parliament atop a plinth.

A capitol might also be built on a site of historical significance, so as to associate with that time. Mussolini believed in linking Fascist rule with the imperial triumphs of the past. His design for a new (1200 room) national Fascist party headquarters was situated at the end of an avenue linking the Victor Emmanuel monument and the ancient Colosseum. He also requested a balcony to address the crowds from. This was a conscious imitation of the Pope’s balcony outside St. Peter’s Cathedral. This oratorical pulpit, the *arengo* or *arengario*, has many precedents in medieval and Renaissance urban design. Many old

⁶ Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (Oxford, Routledge, 2008), 51.

Italian cities made use of raised platforms or balconies attached to a government building. From here rulers could address the people, decrees could be made, and sentences dealt out. For Mussolini, evoking this past suggested glory.

The history of the site was significant to dictators who wished to use the national past to their advantage, mythologized or concocted where necessary. Italian fascists referred to Ancient Rome. Hitler pointed to the 'racially pure barbarians of the Teutonic forests'⁷, and in Spain, Franco related to the age of victorious Catholic rulers who expelled heretics. Thus the history of the site can be used, and even distorted, for the benefits of the government, alluding to what was, perhaps, a more prosperous time.



fig. 2- Victor Emmanuel monument, Rome

7 Eric Hobsbawn, *Art and Power: Europe under the dictators* (London, Hayward Gallery, 1996), 15.

Placement of the Parliament Building in the City

The relation of the site of the Parliament Assembly to the rest of the city often seems very distant. Is this indicative of the reality of the connection between the government and the public? There are politics and symbolism relating to the location of the capitol in the city. As Vales points out, 'Architecture and urban design are used both to highlight the locus of power and, except in the most open, stable, and democratic of societies, to remove that power from public access.'⁸

The political pedigree of assembly buildings is made manifest in the choice of site. Kahn's Assembly Building in Dhaka was built on a plateau, and surrounded by water. It is sited in an area with vast acreage of empty land around it, thus causing the building to appear even more majestic. In Abuja in Nigeria, the assembly building is placed on an axis which the public cannot traverse. A separate zone for government, known as the Three Arms Zone (which sounds almost threatening in its evocation of military terms), is divided from the rest of the city by distance and topography. Surely this is unsuccessful; this practice whereby the people cannot physically relate to their own government.

Architect Donald Appleyard, during the design of the parliament of Dodoma in Tanzania, stated that "the location and form of [the building] in the urban context should ensure that [it] becomes the key landmark in the image of Dodoma, and that other less important buildings do not dominate and distract attention away from [it]." Perhaps the easiest way out of this desire is to site the

⁸ Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (Oxford, Routledge, 2008), 67.

building away from the city, alone and not competing with any surrounding structures. It may be that the urban design placement of the capitol building is of greater significance than its developed architectural form. The designers of government sponsored cities appear to consider their creations as defensive gestures. Such architecture and urbanism strive to position the government, often quite literally, above challenge.

However the opposite occurs in Canberra, the capital city of Australia. The capitol building is buried in the hill. The public climb above its legislators, which could be viewed as a powerful metaphor. On the other hand, much of what is seemingly free and open in urban design is controlled by legal and political reality. Limitations exist on public gatherings on the building top, such that demonstrations are prohibited. There is a sense that the people are but tourists, allowed to look at the landscape and privileged to be somewhat near the centre of power.



fig. 3- Assembly building in Canberra, over which the public climb

Chandigarh in India is the capital of two states- Punjab and Haryana. Jane Drew pointed out that the plan of the city was almost biological in form, 'Its commanding head the capitol group, its heart the city commercial centre, its hand the industrial area, its brain and intellectual centre in the parkland where museums, the university and library are located.'⁹ Architect Le Corbusier referred to the capitol complex as 'la tête' also. He described the route taken to get to the government buildings- 'reached by way of a wide approach road that allows the capitol complex to radiate its dominance for miles'¹⁰ The design served to emphasise the view beyond the privileged high place. It leads the eye through the capitol complex to the dramatic landscape of Indian Punjab. Unfortunately, Le Corbusier created a detached capitol complex in a segregated city.

In Brasilia, the newly created capital of Brazil in 1953 was designed by architect Lucio Costa for the then leader, Kubitschek. Costa planned a monumental axis, open to the landscape. Whatever the beliefs of equality the architects and planners had with regard to residential areas, the economic and political actualities of this most modern of capitals serve only to promote a common theme of distancing the masses from the seat of power. Brasilia's capitol complex is a privileged sanctuary for government. The need for public transport to reach the complex means the public use of the plaza is based on prior privileges. The capitol is isolated- an administrative head with its head in the clouds!

In 1911 King George designated New Delhi capital of India for the Empire. A new capital complex was designed to be an architectural assertion of the superiority of Western civilisation. A spatial progression of the government buildings appears to have failed dismally. The architect, Edwin Lutyens, desired a grand procession, whereby one would move past the plaza, pass between the massive secretariat buildings, and finally reach the wide steps of the Government House. The building was to be a 200, 000 square foot palace, complete with a dome. The slope of the hill the government buildings were sited on however, worked to terminate an architectural vista and avenue with 'a disappearing target'¹¹ due to the fact that as one climbed higher, less could be

9 Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (Oxford, Routledge, 2008), 107.

10 Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (Oxford, Routledge, 2008), 109.

11 Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (Oxford, Routledge, 2008), 90.

seen of the government house in front of him. The Indian political subservience to the vice regal acropolis of power was made spatially clear by the larger urban context. The empty gesture of a council house for an Anglo-Indian joint administration was sited off to the side of the main axis.

In 1947, a newly independent India meant that New Delhi was the capital of a very different place. A rapidly growing population resulted in dense housing while the centre of New Delhi, with broad avenues, elaborate greenery and sparse buildings, is an overgrown capitol complex. It seems detached from the rest of the fabric of the city. This appears to be the common problem for the capitols just discussed. The disconnection from the city is as dissimilar to a village square situation as possible. The public are immediately discouraged from being involved in the political affairs of the state.

External Space

Of considerable consequence also is the urban design of the space in front of the building. The Piazza Venezia in Rome is essential to the awful Victor Emanuel monument. The spaces become places for pro-government rallies, and dramatic targets for political protest. In the words of Lawrence Vale, 'capitols gain meanings that their sponsors could not possibly have anticipated'¹². A grand tree-lined avenue can become an elaborate processional route. Serving as a setting in both space and time, it ties individuals and groups with events considered vital for the site. This avenue can be used for presidential parades, celebrations and protest marches, for example the Champs Elysees in Paris.

The order of dictatorships' regimes was established using wide avenues and squares lined with imposing structures. Indeed the importance lay 'not so much in the spaces themselves, as to what took place in them.'¹³ Hitler, in collaboration with his architect, Albert Speer, sought to outdo every other urban axis of power in existence with his Berlin Plan. This featured a North-South axis two and a half times the length of the French Champs Elysees. The most famous piece of rally urbanism was the layout of avenues, parks and assembly buildings at Nuremburg to host annual party rallies. The Zeppelinfeld, also designed by Albert Speer, was the built receiver for the culmination of the processions.

12 Lawrence J. Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (Oxford, Routledge, 2008), 67.

13 Eric Hobsbawm, *Art and Power: Europe under the dictators* (London, Hayward Gallery, 1996), 12.

How the capitol relates to the rest of the buildings surrounding it is of key significance. These other buildings may be already present for a time, or might also be in the process of design and construction at the same time as the new parliament- as in the case of a new city. Particularly in the instances of the design of new cities, it frequently seems that the space around the buildings does not work successfully. For instance, a vast open space outside the assembly building in Chandigarh is denoted by Corbusier as 'public space.' However, the bleak stretch of concrete that dwarfed individuals was hardly used. The space between the government buildings was badly measured. Now, because of political tensions- not owing to Le Corbusier of course- the area is surrounded by the army, and the public are banned from the space. In Abuja in Nigeria, Aso Hill is the site of the government buildings and, located on the lower slopes, the space around the buildings is not intended as a place of public gathering. It is a separate zone for government, divided from the rest of the city.

Without a successful public space around the parliament building, the people can feel extremely rejected, and disjointed from the government. This can consequently lead to feelings of mistrust, and lack of empathy with the leaders. A successful assembly building almost always requires a successful external public space.

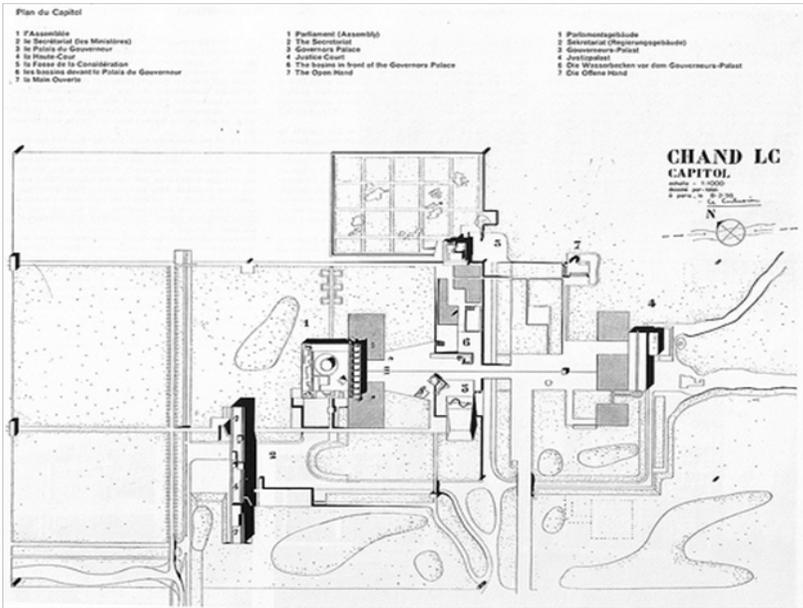


fig. 4- Corbusier's plan for Chandigarh

Place of Assembly

Care is usually taken in the manipulation of spaces regarding how the person approaches and enters the building. A number of seemingly threatening security sets the tone of the government. A long walk for visiting diplomats to the office of a leader possibly allows time for the guest to become anxious. This is surely what Hitler intended in the Reich Chancellery, whereby the route of a visiting diplomat through the building to reach Hitler's office was meticulously arranged such that the guest got 'a taste of the power and grandeur of the German Reich', according to *der führer* himself. A government chamber can appear open to public, with the politicians' seats placed to face the spectators, or very little means of barrier between the public and the government. This openness may or may not be the reality. If it needs to be stressed so much how transparent the goings on in the debating chamber are, perhaps the reverse is closer the truth.

In Canberra, the capitol's central space functions as a Members' Hall, deemed only for use by parliament members. The hall is so important that the general public cannot encroach on it; instead they are merely allowed look down on this space from balconies above. This displays an openness of the parliamentarians, but suggests a political detachment of the government from the people. The people seem not as equals; on a separate level to their leaders. And while the centre of the capitol building is charged with architectural importance, functionally the space remains empty. This space is similar to that of the Capitol

rotunda in Washington, except at least in America the functionless space is the starting point for public tours of the building. Canberra's parliament building contains an empty centre, with possibly another empty gesture above it: the flag, a dispassionate and desperate final effort 'to link the capitol to the capital'¹⁴.

The Assembly Building of Papua New Guinea in Waigani City displays paradoxes between the interior and exterior. Interestingly, the language (English) chosen for the quotations on the mosaic facade of the building contradict the fact that inside the parliament, multi-lingual discussion takes place. This illustrates that an international audience were being chiefly considered. Admittedly, the Papua New Guinea parliament chamber is in use much more than in many other parliament buildings. In this way the building is true to its conveyance of constitutional democratic rule, and independence.

Furthermore, the arrangement of the seating inside the chamber is of significance. In the capital of New Delhi, the seating in the cylindrical council house was inspired to lessen the chance of a two-party government split along religious lines. The three chambers make use of amphitheatre-style seating. The seating plan in the parliament chamber of Papua New Guinea is a fairly common semi-circular arrangement, known as a hemicycle. This arrangement of parliament seating is also the seating plan in Strasbourg for the European Parliament. There is no obvious divide while the politicians face each other, unlike the oppositional rows of benches around the periphery of the room, as in Westminster.

These efforts- ease of entrance, a public gallery, suggestions on the exterior of the parliament building and an encouraging seating arrangement- can belie what goes on inside the debating chamber. However, they are a good indication of how the government wish to be perceived.

14 Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (Oxford, Routledge, 2008), 85.

fig. 5- Parliament chamber in Papua New Guinea



Representation of the People

A newly freed city, or a city in the developing world, and its capitol being built, is a key opportunity to represent the people. The city is a political institution, and the capitol is representative of the politics. In the case of a whole new city being designed, much more effort has to be made to attempt to define what the national culture can be. The pressures of capital symbolism are immense. Designing architecture is a visible symbol of economic development. The building should promote national pride by bringing international recognition. Geertz, the influential American anthropologist, pointed out that the challenge for developing countries is to find a balance 'between cultural self determination and international modernity'.

Developing countries trying to make the world take heed of them will attempt to either follow the internationally popular architecture of the time, or they will conform with the internationally popular and stereotypical image the western world have of the country. While the former solution results in the design of a concrete box that won't portray anything about their culture, politics or national pride; playing up to the latter resolution leads to a cartoon- like design, whereby the flag that stood outside the afore mentioned concrete box will now be the very building itself. It serves as a government issued three- dimensional advertisement of selective aspects of the country's native culture.

If the choice is to design with the native culture of the nation in mind, one must move forward with caution. There are many things to take into account. The whole nation will, of course, be difficult to represent in a single design or symbolic essence. If a particular culture is shown, it may be that it is chosen to appeal to the international image of that state, rather than being true to the present culture of the state itself. Evoking to structures of the past, the aforementioned National Parliament of Papua New Guinea is clear in its celebration of the indigenous culture. However on closer investigation, the sheer density of symbolism could be said to be rather biased and narrow.

The design alludes to the form of a particular style of native dwelling, the *haus tambaran*, or village man's house, from the Maprik area. There are several different types of *haus tambaran* that were used in Papua New Guinea in the past, and it must be questioned why this particular form of *haus tambaran* was chosen to represent the people and their culture. In fact, it is probable that the leader himself had a sway in the decision, due to the Maprik area being his home place. The architect, Hogan, seemed almost consumed with a near literal representative documentation of the art and architectural expression of the country's many cultures, brought together under one roof.

While it is laudable to resist designing yet another internationalist 'box', the parliament, rich in allegory, raises many issues. From above, the building's shape is 'modelled on a spear head flying towards the future'¹⁵, indicating the nation's progress since independence. The building fuses the aforementioned *haus tambaran* with a *raunhaus*, originating in the Papua New Guinea highlands, affixed to one end. Long contentions between highland areas and coastal zones existed in the country. Highland people saw themselves as overlooked members of society. The fact that the *raun haus* is an inferior element in the complete composition may point to the lack of relevance of the highland section of people. Alternatively, the conjunction of the *haus tambaran* with the *raun haus* could be a metaphor, wishing to suggest in architectural terms the desired coalition of rivaling forces is necessary for the building of the nation.

Contrastingly, Kahn's Dhaka parliament building tracks a national identity only at the highest levels of abstraction. In designing the assembly building of Bangladesh, Kahn wanted to find a spatial representation for a philosophical idea. The idea was of architecture's transcendence of politics. This hopeful theme

15 Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (Oxford, Routledge, 2008), 67.



*fig. 6- parliament building, Papua New Guinea
fig. 7- haus tambaran, which the building alludes to*

took abstract forms which, Kahn anticipated, would generate international recognition. Yet, a double perimeter plan suggests the need to protect the politicians from severe opposition, as well as protection from the sunlight. Avoidance of the political reality in the way of abstraction seems almost as misleading as making inaccurate architectural suggestions.

In the parliament building in Canberra, native Australian labour and materials are used. An Aboriginal mosaic on the forecourt leading into the building is intended to denote the gathering of tribes. However, this mosaic is located outside of the building, which is intended to be the 'Meeting Place of the Nation'. A symbolic spatial sequence of the building is designed to signify the "advent of European civilisation"¹⁶. The visitor is led across the forecourt through a detached portico, comprising of a post and lintel structural form.

16 Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (Oxford, Routledge, 2008), 82.

Designers should be mindful of the gap between present and more hopeful future. The use of a form so literally, with little or no rethinking, appears as a direct sign. While the architect Gertz identifies the trick to forging a national identity- ‘to make the nation-state seem indigenous’¹⁷- or perhaps more precisely, the need to make selected features of the native culture seem more like the nation-state- the examples in Papua New Guinea and Bangladesh can lead to prejudiced symbolism and architectural perjury. In Bangladesh, while Kahn appears to ignore the native architecture, there is no denying the allusion to a fortress-like form which is monumental in presence. In Papua New Guinea, village structures are treated as decorative shells in which to house a modern programme that is completely different to the original purposes of a *haus tambaran*. Therefore, the use of this form can be described as a limited version of the cultures it depicts.

It is important to pin point the key thing about the vernacular tradition that is valued, so as to see why it is used in the design. Is the value the measure of the time passed, or is it evidence of some psychological need to remember roots? As mentioned by Vale, “If roots are to be valuable, they must nourish new plants and new growth”. The past must inspire the future.

17 Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (Oxford, Routledge, 2008), 280.

Power of the Leader

A key question is whether the government support the monumentality of a new parliament building as a genuine move towards democracy, or as a form of appeasement, masking the strengthening of administrative power. From the government's point of view, the design of capitol buildings is essentially concerned with promoting and protecting the corporate power of a government. Thus is the true hierarchy of rule made known? Sometimes the Parliament building takes the place of the most important building, when 'a more accurate representation of the country's political realities'¹⁸ would have the offices of the military leader take centre stage, with the National Assembly building shunted off to one side. Therefore, architecture and urban design can have political value as a mask, or as a deliberate form of lie. There are no assurances that any regime will chose to be concerned about the accuracy of its symbolic urban representation of the balance of national and political power.

Certainly an untruth will easily be covered up by a powerful ruler, and what seems like a great achievement of the leader can often be deceptive. Such was the case with the architect Albert Speer's Reich Chancellery. Built in nine months, Hitler praised the swift creation, and omitted the fact that the stone, which had rather amazingly appeared so quickly, had been cut by concentration camp prisoners in Upper Bavaria. Another dictator who mastered illusions, Stalin's

¹⁸ Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (Oxford, Routledge, 2008), 276

regime made effective use of architecture, and by the end of the 1930s Soviet architecture was accepted by the public. A disjunction often occurs between monumental architecture and feeble institutions. While a parliament building remains in place, the meanings associated with it never remain static. The symbolic role of a parliament building can change rapidly, altering with the institution it houses.

There exists a danger that idealization in design will be used not to look forward to some more ideal future order, but to disguise the severe abuses of power in the present. An example of this is in Moscow. The large assembly building in Kremlin (1960) did not mean that a democratically elected parliament would instantly begin to command the major decisions of the country. Nonetheless, perhaps the symbolic presence of a sizable parliament building in the heart of dictatorial rule might, over time, help support a more democratic view of Kremlin functions.

There can be a close personal association of the leader with the building. He will always be remembered for either the success or failure of the state. In this way buildings can become objects of hatred. An example of this is the tearing down of the Bastille prison, targeted despite holding only seven prisoners, none of them in any way political. According to Robert Bevan in 'The Destruction of Memory', the prison was a symbol of state oppression rather than a significant site of the practical exercise of that power. Bevan also noted that buildings are not political, 'but are politicized by why and how they are built, regarded, and destroyed.'

Ian Dunlop notes that the chronicle of Versailles is closely related to 'the growth of power and development of character of the king who built it.'¹⁹ The royal court was out of touch with the world outside. The palace could feel like the only world that existed, such was the building shut away from the people. Dunlop concludes that no single building could symbolise the 'ancien régime' better than Versailles. It is clear, therefore, that a fundamental aspect of architecture is the fact that it is closely tied to the personalities of the people associated with each building.

19 Ian Dunlop, *Versailles* (New York, Taplinger Pub. Co., 1970), 12.



fig. 8- The storming of the Bastille prison, a symbol of power and hatred

A major function of art under power is to organise it as public drama. Ritual and ceremony are fundamental to the political process. During the era of dictatorships, power increasingly became public theatre, with the people as the audience and as organised participants. This was, according to Eric Hobsbawm, 'a special innovation of the era of dictators'.

The architecture can be used to make a clear political assertion. Leaders choose to associate themselves with powerful animals, for example, the eagle. Vale writes that the preferences of those in power 'may yield choices of symbolism' that either exaggerate or ignore the state's history. An example of this would be Turkey's meticulously edited past. The Paris Exposition of 1937 was a clear demonstration of a building used to make a political statement. Karen Fiss writes of the 'Grand Illusion' of Hitler, but the 54 metre high German pavilion,

topped with a 9 metre of the Reich eagle, made the structure a vision of power. A set of huge muscular figural sculptures standing in front of the pavilion evoked the Nazi blood and soil ideology.

It cannot be denied that art and architecture are used to reinforce the power of political leaders and nations. Dictators are not the first to want structures to celebrate their authority and glory. This is true from the time of the Ancient Egyptians. Eric Hobsbawm observes that ‘pomp and gigantism were the face of power’²⁰ that rulers wanted to display. Albert Speer confirms this notion for us, revealing that on walks in the Bavarian Alps with Hitler, the führer “‘frequently admired a beautiful view, but as a rule he was more impressed by the awesomeness of the abysses than by the harmony of a landscape.’”²¹ This telling preference for the massive and the formidable is revealed in Hitler’s own words during a party speech in 1937, whereby he spoke of “‘colossal works... [that would] represent the most sublime justification for the political might of the German nation.’”²² He continued that the Nazi state should “‘not be a power without culture nor a strength without beauty.’”²³

20 Eric Hobsbawm, *Art and Power: Europe under the dictators, 1930-45* (London, Hayward Gallery, 1996.), 12.

21 Gitta Sereny, *Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth* (New York, Random House Inc., 1995), 152.

22 Iain Boyd Whyte, *Art and Power: Europe under the dictators, 1930-45* (London, Hayward Gallery, 1996.), 262.

23 Iain Boyd Whyte, *Art and Power: Europe under the dictators, 1930-45* (London, Hayward Gallery, 1996.), 262.

*Problems of Revolution, Political Ideals
and National Religion*

Sometimes there exists the problem of moving on after a revolution. A different kind of forceful, driven nationalism is necessary for a revolution than that needed after the revolution to pick up the nation's pieces, begin serving the citizens, and start planning for the future. In an attempt to retain an avant-garde force, rationalists in Italy claimed that 'the architecture of the era of Mussolini must respond to the character of masculinity, force and pride of the revolution.'²⁴

However, it may be true that the denial of any conflict in the government is no less of a misrepresentation than the employment of party symbols in the name of national identity. Conversely, Kahn may be proven right if political conditions improve in Bangladesh. The building poses questions effectively, outlining them in a new way.

Political ideas raise issues relating to cultural pluralism. The capitol building may incorporate religion with the parliament. This is usually controversial, omitting opinions of certain parts of society. Illustrative of the dominance of the government, this power can be used to omit parts of history, link other parts in, ignore the public's needs and wishes, and create extravagance at the expense of the ordinary citizens.

In considering the issue of religion, Khan thought it a great idea to expand both the size and importance of the mosque (part of the parliament building design) well beyond what the client had expected. How does one justify this religious

²⁴ Tim Benton, *Art and Power: Europe under the dictators, 1930-45* (London, Hayward Gallery, 1996.), 39.

presence to Bangladesh's twelve million Hindus? The use of the *haus tambaran*, or village man's house, in Papua New Guinea was thought to be a suitable inspiration for accommodating a modern parliament. How is this choice justified to women? Who decides which political ideals are to be pursued? Often the design is compromised by the desire of the government to make progress felt. In Kahn's assembly room in the parliament building of Dhaka in Bangladesh, foundations were poured before a decision of what was to go on top of them was made certain. This resulted in a static and disappointing roof. It seems of a completely different architectural vocabulary from the rest of the building. This is but one example of a political short cut taken to demonstrate rapid growth and show that construction was well under way.

Admittedly, signs of prosperity raise the spirits of the public. In Russia the people were inspired by the false slogans and misled by the impressive apparitions- many of which remained unbuilt. 'They responded to a climate of uplift and idealism'²⁵, and looked forward to a bright and content socialist future. The newly independent Bangladesh, scarce of resources, allowed the project to remain incomplete for some time, and this symbol of unity became an embarrassment to the new nation. The building was a constant reminder of their incapacity to finish it off.

fig. 9- Kahn's Parliament building in Dhaka, plan

25 Igor A. Kazus, *Art and Power: Europe under the dictators, 1930-45* (London, Hayward Gallery, 1996.), 194.

Afterword

A parliament building designed to portray a new way of government and promise a prosperous future might, in actuality, refer to the past. The architecture may well be a pastiche. This is weak architecture, and although the building may be vast and impressive, it harks to a golden era gone by, thus is sentimental. What seems to be a grand gesture of power may be merely an imitation. Instead of looking forward with determination and vision, the leadership are simply burying their heads in the sand when it comes to future goals. Such capitols can reveal far more about the novice nature of the regime than about any genuine notion of democracy.

Many buildings under the era of dictators were never completed, including Speer's hall in Berlin, a congress hall in Nuremburg and the Palazzo del Littorio in Italy. This illustrates, surely, that the collective will is often easier to represent in the person of a single dictator than in the building of an architectural symbol for it. In fact, it is clearly difficult to succeed in creating a modern day Pnyx. It appears that in order to be successful, there needs to be a smooth transition from public spaces to parliamentary chambers, and an inclusion of the public. Designing a form for a parliament building that will represent society is the challenge for the architect. Expressing the truthful intentions of the government is problematic for most architects, and certainly the difficulty lies in creating sincere and successful political architecture.

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Rational Architecture

An Architecture between
Life and Death

By Darren Monahan



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Introduction

Rational Architecture

In the early twentieth century, modern architecture gave way to new ideologies and conditions within the architecture world. From this, an evolution in standardization created a new typology called 'Rational Architecture'.

Fordism had a rippling effect throughout all of the western world in the twentieth century and in particular affected Ernst Neufert, a well known architect of that period and a graduate of the Bauhaus. To most, Neufert is best known for his publication "Bauproduktionslehre" which translates to "Architects Data." This publication, even today, can lay claim to "universal authority whenever there is a dimensional problem in spaces and rooms inhabited and used by human beings."¹ However, it was this book that also influenced the highest powers of the Third Reich. Even Hitler himself stated that he was "very interested in Neufert's studies"² and wished to be updated on his work.

Hitler was responsible for the death of millions of innocent people and his most cruel intentions were realized in the plans of Auschwitz where approximately one million men, women and children were slaughtered. Auschwitz was a place where humans were given extreme and fatal conditions. It was a place where people lived in order to die. People were packed into already full barracks and forced to share cramped bunks. Karl Bischoff, chief architect of Auschwitz-Birkenau II, provides an insight into his approach to the design of the camps when he states that "... they(Prisoners of War) were simply led into nearby fields and told 'graze' like cattle on everything that was edible."³ It was this comparison to "cattle" that generated the constraints and extreme rational thinking of Auschwitz. It was architecture that was functional in providing the means of mass murder.

1. Wolfgang Voigt, Azchis, October 1995, Page 58.

2. Wolfgang Voigt, Azchis, October 1995, Page 63.

3. Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp,(Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1998), 119.

There are also connections between Auschwitz and the Bauhaus in Fritz Ertl who was the S.S architect for Auschwitz and also a graduate from the Bauhaus. Like Neufert, Ertl was lectured by Walter Gropius who incorporated the CIAM manifesto, The Minimal Dwelling, into his teachings. The minimal dwelling was a response to the modern movement where the functions of the home shifted as women started working. Communal, shared spaces with smaller private spaces were proposed for this modern society.

There is a connection between the rational environment of the camp and also the manifesto that CIAM were proposing in that the barriers to private spaces are broken down into greater public, communal spaces. The difference being that Auschwitz had taken this ideology past humanity into torture and slaughter. Perhaps, there is an 'in-between' form from the ideas of CIAM and Auschwitz. But one must be clear on the boundaries of humanity and ask at what point does architecture stop becoming human?



Auschwitz

The Capsule Hotel



Modernism

Modernism and the Bauhaus

"Every adult shall have his own room, small though it may be!"¹

- Stated by Walter Gropius in CIAM
manifesto for the Minimum Dwelling -

It was a set of arguments proposed in the 1920's that partially led to the movement known as "Rational Architecture" and the term Modernism. The Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (International Congress of Modern Architecture) argued that the modern family was losing "its character of self-contained productive unit" and thus its cohesive power "is yielding to the rights of the individual citizen of the state."² Women's equality was increasing in the 1920's and thus began the introduction of women into the working world. The household was altering into a new form that omitted women to being domesticated and dependent on the "man". Gropius argued that "the woman seeks ways of gaining more free time for herself and her children"³ and the desire for more "collective social arrangements" was increasing. Biological considerations would determine the design for minimum dwelling - an "elementary minimum of space, air, light and heat."⁴ Similar discussions were raised by Karl Marx who believed that the family should give way for a "collective domestic economy."⁵ By following these ideas of social gathering spaces, private spaces for sleep, rest, living became constrained and minimal.

Ernst May was a German architect and was involved in the CIAM also. May presented the Frankfurt experiment which was given the theme "Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum" (The minimum subsistence dwelling).

1 . Eric Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960*, (MIT, Massachusetts, 2000), 37,

2 . Eric Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960*, (MIT, Massachusetts, 2000), 39.

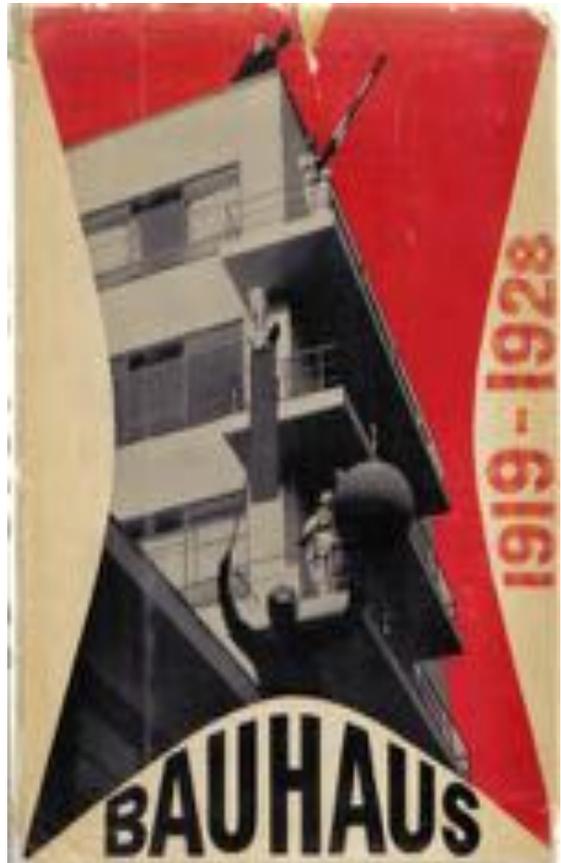
3 Eric Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960*, (MIT, Massachusetts, 2000), 39.

4 . Eric Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960*, (MIT, Massachusetts, 2000), 37.

5 . Eric Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960*, (MIT, Massachusetts, 2000), 37.

The proposal focused on solutions to the problem of high rents for low wage earners. May wanted to create "the minimum dwelling ration" based on "biological" and not "economic requirements" so that housing was designed for society rather than people with large incomes.⁶ The proposal expanded on Gropius' and Marx's arguments but instead, focused on the low wage earners. However, Gropius' influence didn't stop there as he incorporated some of his manifesto into the Bauhaus.

In a Bauhaus Manifesto, Gropius set out to create "the building of the future" where artists and craftsmen worked together with "the ultimate aim of all creative activity"⁷ being the building. Many were attracted by the modern programme and enrolled in the Bauhaus. The manifesto also established the Bauhaus as the main influence of Modernism. Peter Hahn, director of Bauhaus Archiv, describes the Bauhaus as becoming "an abbreviation for the radical modernization of life and its positive and negative side-effects."⁸



6. Eric Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960*, (MIT, Massachusetts, 2000), 42.

7. Magdalena Droste, *Bauhaus 1919-1933*, (Taschen, Berlin, 2002), 17.

8. Magdalena Droste, *Bauhaus 1919-1933*, (Taschen, Berlin, 2002), 6.

Modernism

The Bauhaus and the Nazis

Following the closure of the Bauhaus in April 1933 by the Nazis, the director, Mies van der Rohe, argued that the school was not "interested in politics but merely the aesthetics of technology and industrial development."⁹ and encouraged the Minister of Culture, Alfred Rosenberg to reopen it. The Gestapo allowed Mies to reopen the Bauhaus but it inevitably closed due to financial issues with the state. Mies left for the United States four years later, a decision David Gartman believes was "not the Nazi's politics but their restrictions of artistic autonomy that was decisive."¹⁰ Even Le Corbusier found it difficult to get commissions.

The main reason for the Nazi's decision was to take advantage of the public's opinion that modernism was responsible for industrial rationalization and therefore, unemployment. Otto Wagener, Hitler's economic adviser until 1934, said that Hitler, himself, was anti-modern and believed that the individual "had become enslaved by industrialization, was in bondage to capital and the machine."¹¹ However, Albert Speer and others, persuaded Hitler that the production process of war rearmaments needed to adopt the rationalization of Fordism. Unlike, Henry Ford, however, the Nazis were rationalizing in a "struggle for power", according to Speer.

...Our means had no ideological grounding, but were politically demonstrated: they were inspired by the experience of the political struggle for power.¹²

9 . David Gartman, *From Autos to Architecture: Fordism and Architectural Aesthetics in The Twentieth Century*, (Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 2009), 131.

10 . David Gartman, *From Autos to Architecture: Fordism and Architectural Aesthetics in The Twentieth Century*, (Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 2009), 131.

11 . David Gartman, *From Autos to Architecture: Fordism and Architectural Aesthetics in The Twentieth Century*, (Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 2009), 133.

12 . David Gartman, *From Autos to Architecture: Fordism and Architectural Aesthetics in The Twentieth Century*, (Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 2009), 134.

“The building of the future” was not the intention of the Nazis. Nor was “biological considerations.” What they sought was fear, a demonstration of power. Just like the disassembled autonomy in art and architecture, the autonomy of life was to be challenged.

According to Timothy Synder, the evil not only existed in the rationality of the Nazis, but more generally in the rationality that defines all forms of totalitarian regimes. He states that:

...when one considers the total number of European civilians killed by totalitarian powers in the middle of the twentieth century, one should have in mind three groups of roughly equal size: Jews killed by Germans, non-Jews killed by Germans, and Soviet civilians killed by the Soviet state.¹³

Any totalitarian rationality seemed to put human beings into storage spaces while also working in a slave labour camp. The Soviet’s repressions are evident in Gulag just like the Nazi’s repressions are visible in Auschwitz. However, unlike Auschwitz, most of the thirty million prisoners at Gulag survived the camp. The reason being that Auschwitz was not developed to just contain people but to also exterminate people. Synder adds that “The Holocaust was in considerable measure complete”¹⁴ when Auschwitz was fully operational as a death factory. Yet it shadows other camps such as Treblinka, Be zec and Sobibor because of its documentation from survivors in Auschwitz. The reason being that Auschwitz was a slave labour camp as well as a death camp. The basis for the rationality of the camp was that people lived there in order to die. Rudolf VRBA, a survivor of Auschwitz, said that:

If five thousand dies, they were replaced for the Jewish transport that came in. If one thousand died, only one thousand were replaced. The improvement in the conditions of the concentration camp made a higher death rate with the gas chamber. The improvement of conditions within the concentration camp does not impede the process of mass executions.¹⁵

13 . Timothy Synder, “Holocaust: The Ignored Reality”, The New York Review of Books, July 16, 2009, accessed April 10 2011, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2009/jul/16/holocaust-the-ignored-reality/?page=1>

14 . Timothy Synder, “Holocaust: The Ignored Reality”, The New York Review of Books, July 16, 2009, accessed April 10 2011, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2009/jul/16/holocaust-the-ignored-reality/>

15 . Claude Lanzmann, Shoah 4-DVD Set. Directed by Claude Lanzmann (1985)

Auschwitz

Hierarchy

On the day of 14 June 1940, a train carrying 728 Polish inmates arrived in small town called Birkenau, thirty-seven miles west of Krakow, Poland. They had arrived at a newly formed Prisoner of War camp called Auschwitz ,unaware that in time, this camp would become one of the greatest man-made killing machine in history. By March 1941, the inmate population grew to 10,900.¹

Auschwitz was primarily an extermination camp for the Nazis. However, it also had a secondary function which was the utilization of slave labour. Bruno Bettelheim argues, in his book 'Surviving and other essays', that the concentration camp system spawned a reality in which all the beliefs, values, and norms of behavior adhered to in the world outside the camps were abandoned.²

Within the barracks of Auschwitz, there existed a hierarchy that was created by the German authorities in the camp. Camp authorities created a small but powerful rank of prisoners. Kapos were in charge of the work units. Lagerälteste were in charge of the entire prisoners' camp population, Blockälteste and Stubendienste – the prisoners commanding the blocks- and many positions in the central administration of the camps.³

The officers also divided the prisoner population into ethnic and “racial” groups. This method of cataloging spawned the reality that the camp was a perimeter where exceptions and new rules applied. Charlie Hailey describes the “camps’ as:

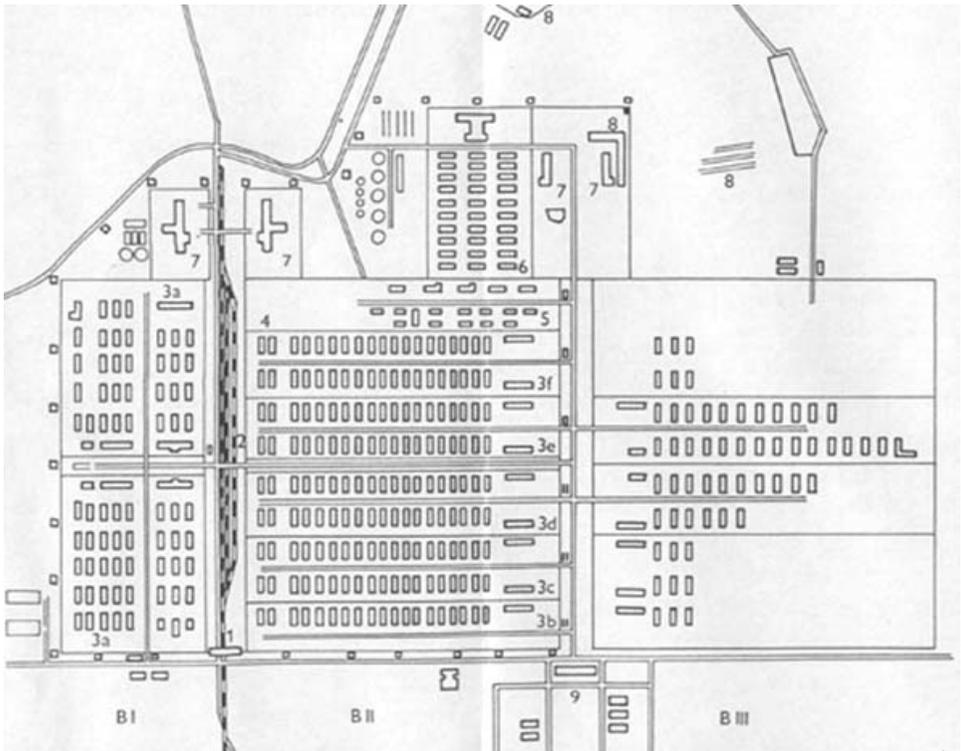
...spaces where states of emergency or legal exception have become the rule.⁴

1 . Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*,(Bloomington, Indiana Univeristy Press, 1998), 10-16.

2 . Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*,(Bloomington, Indiana Univeristy Press, 1998), 22.

3 . Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*,(Bloomington, Indiana Univeristy Press, 1998), 22.

4 . Charlie Hailey, *Camps: a guide to 21st-century space*, (Massachusetts, MIT, 2009), 8.



Plan of Auschwitz Birkenau-II

- 3a. Barracks prisoners - Women's camp
- 3b. Barracks prisoners - Quarantine
- 3c. Barracks prisoners - Family Camp
- 3d. Barracks prisoners - Hungarian camp
- 3e. Barracks prisoners - Men's camp
- 3f. Barracks prisoners - Roma camp and the Sith
- 4. Latrines
- 5. Hospitals
- 7. Gas chambers and crematoria

Bettelheim argues that the mental state of the prisoners had succumbed to the rules and authority of Auschwitz. He believes that their belief in the justice of the law was so strong that they believed they were not being unjustly persecuted. But instead, searched their minds to find some guilt in themselves. In his 'Surviving and other Essays' he states that:

The inner desire to be loved by the superego is extremely strong, and the weaker the ego becomes, the stronger is this desire. Since in the totalitarian system the most powerful superego surrogates are the rules and their representatives-in short the system itself-one can gain approval of the superego surrogates only by going along with the system.⁵

5. Bruno Bettelheim, "Remarks on the Psychological Appeal of Totalitarianism, American Journal of Economics and Sociology Volume 12, Number 1, 94. (October 1952), accessed

Auschwitz

Typical Day in Auschwitz

A typical day in Auschwitz maps out the extent at which totalitarian regime fused with the pure rationale of the camp can lead to this 'cattle-like' behaviour. For all prisoners, the day began at 4.30am. Half an hour was allowed for morning "bathing". After that, a mandatory roll call was held where stood in attention to be counted. After roll call, prisoner labour squads would set off to their places of work. Most were assigned to permanent labour squads. They marched in rows of five past the sign saying "Arbeit Macht Frei" meaning Work Makes One Free.

Most of the work was outdoor in both winter and summer and lasted roughly twelve hours per day with little rest in between. When the shift ended, the prisoners reported to evening roll call. The failure of a single prisoner to appear would result in the rest of the prisoners being forced to wait in formation, sometimes for hours, until the missing prisoner was found. Individual or collective punishments followed the evening roll call until the prisoners were allowed to rest in their living quarters in the "block" where they received their bread rations with very little else and a "watery drink".

Prisoners who had enough energy with meet up with fellow inmates from other blocks until curfew was over three hours later. The same routine was carried out everyday except for Sundays when inmates were only assigned to activities such as cleaning, shaving, showering in groups. Activities that would keep the inmates occupied on their day off.¹

The emphasis, like any other camp, was based on structure and routine. However, the rationality of this camp was different in that people lived there in order to die. A rationale conceived for mass murder.²

1 . Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*,(Bloomington, Indiana Univeristy Press, 1998), 21.

2 . Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*,(Bloomington, Indiana Univeristy Press, 1998), 22.

Auschwitz

Erst Fritzel and the Bauhaus

In March 1941, the orders were given for a new slave labour camp that would hold a hundred thousand people. Its name Auschwitz Birkenau II. The master plan was to develop regional infrastructure, straighten rivers, build dikes and roads, drain marshes, create a network of self-sufficient model farmsteads. The master plan of Birkenau was created by Karl Bischoff, a German architect and his assistant, Fritz Ertl, a graduate of Bauhaus.³

Fritz Ertl was involved in the planning of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Ertl was of a well known family of architects and was also a graduate of Bauhaus. He was drafted into the SS in 1939 and two years later was assigned to the construction bureau at Auschwitz, where he over saw the camp's expansion. He planned the gas chamber that were labeled in the blueprints as “showers for the special needs.”⁴ Ertl was one of the most enthusiastic students of the architect Ludwig Karl Hilberseimer, who was known for his progressive ideas on urban planning. Hilberseimer was a master at the Bauhaus in Dessau from 1929 until July of 1933 where he was forced to leave Germany to America by the Gestapo.

Ernst Neufert was another architect who worked with Gropius and was in close collaboration with him on the new Bauhaus in Dessau. It was claimed that Neufert had a strong influence on Hitler and the Nazis when dealing with Auschwitz. In the Case for Auschwitz, Mr. Irving argued that the crematoria designed in Auschwitz were based on Neufert's Architects Data guidelines. If this was true than surely these guidelines were used in many of the other camp's design.⁵

3. Harold Marcuse, “Architecture and Auschwitz”, *Journal of Architectural Education*, 123. (1995), accessed 13th February, 2010. <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.ul.ie/stable/1425402?seq=1>

4. Robert Jan Pelt, *The case for Auschwitz: Evidence from the Irving Trial*, (Bloomington, Indiana University Print, 2002), 295.

5. Emory University, *Holocaust Denial on Trial*, Trial Transcripts, Day 10: Electronic Edition, Emory University, <http://www.holocaustdenialontrial.org/ar/trial/transcripts/day10/pages171-175>

Neufert and Auschwitz

Destructive Dimensions - Horse Stables

In the Auschwitz I, Block 11 was a prison set up for the inmates who broke camp laws but also to lower the oversized population in the camp. There were many torture methods for these prisoners but in particular there were 0.8 square metre cells known as “Standing Cells” where up to four prisoners were forced to stand.⁶ According to Neufert, the minimum dimensions of a human being standing are 815mm in width x 300mm in depth.⁷ That equates to 0.2445 square metre per person multiplied by four people equals 0.978 square metre. Sitting was not an option for these prisoners, only death.

In the course of the planning phase, SS draftsman prepared hundreds of drawings and plans of the construction sites and various buildings. Most of the buildings in Birkenau II were forty metre long, uniform horse stable barracks that were unfit for human habitation. They did not have efficient drainage systems or insulation. Originally, each hut housed 550 prisoners but was later changed to 744 due to an increase of 25 percent of slave labors.⁸ Neufert states, in the Stables/Horses section, that “It is not practical to attempt to create an 'ideal' stable temperature. Nor is it crucial because, with appropriate preparation and expert care, any horse can withstand winter stable temperature as low as a few degrees below zero.”⁹ Perhaps, the Nazi's intention to denigrate the prisoners of the camp led them to design barracks suitable for “horses” under any “winter stable temperature”.



6. Alan L. Berger and Naomi Berger, *Second Generation Voices: Reflections By Children of Holocaust Survivors and Perpetrators*,(Syracuse University Press, New York, 2001), 193.

7. Ernst Neufert, *Neufert: Architects Data*,(Malden, Blackwell Publishing Company, 2000), 16.

8. Harold Marcuse, “Architecture and Auschwitz”, *Journal of Architectural Education*,123. (1995), accessed 13th February, 2010. <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.ul.ie/stable/1425402?seq=1>

9. Ernst Neufert, *Neufert: Architects Data*,(Malden, Blackwell Publishing Company, 2000), 412.

Neufert and Auschwitz

Living Conditions

According to the Jewish Library, the “interiors were designed to hold fifty-two horses” which were partitioned into “stalls” of three-tier wooden bunk beds.¹⁰ Each tier had three straw mattresses, originally one for each prisoner. However, two or more slept on each mattress resulting in six to nine prisoners on each tier. For example, Block 2 had 234 triple bunks with 1193 prisoners “living” in it. The addition of straw mattress creates the analogy to horses contained in horse stables.

The severe overcrowding in huts led to severe sanitary conditions and also to a high death rate. Neufert recommends that “stables in which the animals are tethered in stalls are not generally suitable for horses which are ridden.”¹¹ In other words, horses which are immobile do not require the same amount of space as horses which are active.

The comparison between the Jewish Library's and Neufert's term “stalls” is poignant as it reveals a slight insight into the Nazi's mentality. Bruno Bettelheim's account of Auschwitz in *Surviving and other essays*, perhaps strengthens this further “all that matters, the only thing that is really important, is life in its crudest, merely biological form.”¹²

Contrasting to Gropius' view to evolve alongside the biological considerations of minimum dwelling, it seems the Nazis wanted prisoners to just exist in unnatural conditions, exist in something past inhumane, past bestial! Neufert also offers guidelines bunk beds for railway sleeping cars. The minimum height for each tier is 750mm and the length for each is 2 metres.¹³ These dimensions are considered for temporary use and not a permanent, life-long use that is evident in Auschwitz.

10 . Jewish Virtual Library, Auschwitz-Birkenau, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/auschbirk.html>

11 . Ernst Neufert, *Neufert: Architects Data*, (Malden, Blackwell Publishing Company, 2000), 412.

12 . Bruno Bettelheim, *Surviving and Other Essays*, (New York, Knopf, 1979), 259.

13 . Ernst Neufert, *Neufert: Architects Data*, (Malden, Blackwell Publishing Company, 2000), 18.

Dwork and van Pelt calculate that each prisoner had a total interior living space of 1.82 x 0.914 x 0.914 metre, "the size of a shallow grave."¹⁴ That is a total of 1.5 cubic metres per person.

The condition of the barracks didn't help matters. Dampness, leaking roofs, and the defecating of straw mattresses and straw by prisoners with diarrhea made the living conditions worse. The barracks were swarmed with vermin and rats. Constant shortage of water, and the poor quality of the sanitary facilities increased such diseases throughout the camp.



A pen and ink by Mieczyslaw Koscielniak capturing the atmosphere in the barracks. Reproduction courtesy of Auschwitz Museum Archive, 1980

14 . Harold Marcuse, "Architecture and Auschwitz", *Journal of Architectural Education*, 123. (1995), accessed 13th February, 2010. <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.ul.ie/stable/1425402?seq=1>

Dwork and van Pelt also uncovered the sanitary conditions that existed in Auschwitz. A 1941 blueprint shows the evolution of latrines, from a barrack with "urinals on the outer walls and lidded seats separated by panels over a ventilated masonry trench",¹⁵ to an open sewer. In his essay Marcuse describes the latrines "

One beam ran longitudinally above the sewer to serve as a backrest for inmates perched at its edge. Planks thrown across the sewer forced inmates to balance in a squatting position." It was calculated that if 150 inmates could defecate into this forty metre pit at the same time, forty-six complete "seatings" was necessary for all of the seven thousand inmates per latrine each morning, which could take a total of ten minutes according to camp rules. The latrine ration was reduced to 66 percent by Auschwitz's architects which resulted in most of the slaves defecating in the land reclamation's during the day.¹⁶



Image of the latrine (http://www.johndclare.net/Nazi_Germany3_Auschwitz.html)

15 . Harold Marcuse, "Architecture and Auschwitz", *Journal of Architectural Education*, 123. (1995), accessed 13th February, 2010. <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.ul.ie/stable/1425402?seq=1>

16 . Harold Marcuse, "Architecture and Auschwitz", *Journal of Architectural Education*, 123. (1995), accessed 13th February, 2010. <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.ul.ie/stable/1425402?>

Conclusion

According to Marcuse, there is a "great deal that architects and planners can learn about the ethics of their profession by studying their(Auschwitz) works."¹⁷ The extreme rational thinking that evolved from Modernism into Auschwitz is a poignant, yet important subject as it shows architects the extent at which architecture stops becoming human. However, the idea of compartmentation and constrained living is still evident in today's society.

The Capsule Hotel

The first Capsule Hotel was designed by a Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa in 1979. The hotel provides a single cell unit, a capsule, which is used primarily for sleeping. The capsules are arranged side by side with a unit top and bottom, almost like a "bunk-bed." However these 2 x 1 x 1.25 metre fiberglass units surpass an average sleeping bunk with facilities to cater for a comfortable stay such as blinds, lights, air conditioning, a table, wireless internet connection and even a T.V. The rest of the services are provided outside of the capsules. The wash rooms are communal and most hotels include restaurants, pools, and other entertainment facilities.

The New York Times state that due to the Japanese economic climate, capsule hotels have become even more popular with some people taking up residence in hotels.¹⁸ A new government law was passed to legally allow permanent residents to state the capsules as a permanent address. The rent is 59,000 (€640) yen a month but is still much cheaper than an apartment with no utility charges and amenities like fresh linens and free use of communal baths and saunas provided. Perhaps, Capsule Hotels are a solution to high density cities. The concept of the capsule strips back the individual's basic needs within a "bunk" while providing greater communal/collective spaces.

17 . Harold Marcuse, "Architecture and Auschwitz", *Journal of Architectural Education*, 123. (1995), accessed 13th February, 2010. <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.ul.ie/stable/1425402?>

18 . Hiroko Tabuchi, "For Some in Japan, Home Is a Tiny Plastic Bunk", *The New York Times*, Jan 1 2010, accessed April 10 2011. http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/02/business/global/02capsule.html?_r=2&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1302455061-pRhWNWJnyM6+RsymseyLiw

Nakagin Capsule Tower

The Nakagin Capsule Tower was designed by the same architect Kisho Kurokawa and was built in 1970. The tower consists of 140 (2.3m x 3.8m x 2.1m) capsules that would be installed into a concrete core with 4 high-tension bolts, making the units detachable and replaceable. The capsules again focused on the individual with the interior appliances and furniture prefabricated off-site. The capsules could be connected by the cores to form larger apartments for families. Again, the focus is on both the individual at a very small scale who is incorporated into a collective.

Le Corbusier's Cabanon

Le Corbusier's Cabanon was built in Roquebrune, Cap Martin in 1952 as a holiday home for two people. The prototype cabin was 15 sqm in size which is larger than the previous two projects. However, Corbusier spent years analyzing essential issues in dwelling such as the relationship between community values and privacy, luxury and asceticism, and culture and nature. The interior compromises of an entrance hall and a wash room on one side of the cabin. On the other side, one room containing two single beds, a table and a washbasin.

Openings to the outside are limited. There are two square windows, two vertical slits for ventilation and a small window to allow light on the table. These form the relationship between privacy and the individual, and the landscape and community. The project is larger than the previous two but the contraction and expansion methods gives the cabin a rational and economical twist to a humble summer dwelling.

These three projects take the idea of minimum dwelling to a particular point in human rationale. Unlike Auschwitz, their rationality stops when humans no longer exist within the architecture. One can only wonder whether facility like Auschwitz, perhaps a less extreme version of it, could exist in a world of today?

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<http://www.lewism.org/2007/05/21/nakagin-capsule-tower/>

Auschwitz images and plan (<http://en.valka.cz/viewtopic.php/t/19193>)

Front and back images by Darren Monahan



Chapter One: Ambience, Atmosphere and Dining :

Social Aspect forming strong link

Components necessary in maintaining a successful atmosphere

The problem of atmosphere

A visit to Restaurant Patrick Guillbaud exemplifies the success of architecture, food and atmosphere.

Chapter Two: The Art of Cooking:

Skill and Passion

The power of three

Material and composition

Chapter Three: Presentation:

Every meal is a message

Systems, exchanges and operations

Contrast in presentation through culture

AN ARCHITECTURE OF TASTE



The world of Dining and cuisine is not often associated with Architecture but I believe in a powerful relationship between the two. Not only do the chef and architect share similar disciplines and creativity but also both endeavor to bring together the whole experience of dining. We also have a conscious awareness of our surroundings in dining and ultimately form the initial response when entering the dining space. In this way it can be said the experience of dining is extended by and enhanced by the architecture. Throughout the study of the dining process and the elements that make dining an experience it becomes evident that the process resembles that of architecture. There is a structure and order to the dining experience as a whole so in a way it could be said that everything in dining is architecture.



AMBIENCE, ATMOSPHERE AND DINING

A social aspect primarily links architecture and cooking. Architecture is an art that creates society, making certain forms of community possible. Eating culture claims and demands community. The action of cooking and eating brings people together and has historically been a time of gathering and reflection. The “urban quality” of eating, as it were, is to be found in this state of affairs. This is also the reason for the quasi-religious significance of a shared meal like the “Last Supper” . Communication enhances enjoyment and is what really turns eating into an experience, because sensuality and sociability come into their own to an equal extent through coming together at the table.

The experience of dining is maintained by a successful ambience or atmosphere. In order to understand and appreciate a successful atmosphere there are key elements or ingredients needed. Like any successful dish as manager Stephane states “the best chef just needs three products” . I believe there is power in three ingredients. People, place and activity are the key components needed to create a colorful and pleasing environment. No architecture would be successful without the interaction and presence of the human being. It is the human response and interaction that stimulates and enhances the atmosphere of a place. In Dining, the interaction between people is what makes the architecture functional. In the world of dining and cuisine people are brought together in the celebration of a meal and the activity of a creative workforce. These measures all contribute to an ambient jostling environment.



The architecture of the place adds a distinctive quality to the atmosphere. The materiality of the building for example is a human and personal expression of how the architecture of dining should be composed. The activity held within a space defines its purpose. The action of the human being allows for the workability of the architecture. In essence the architecture of a restaurant works to allow for the preparation of food, seating of people and circulation of the workforce. If we take these human activities as three zones then each requires carefully examination in the design of the spaces in order for the architecture to be sympathetic to the work that takes place within that zone. And as manager of Chapter One stresses as well as it being visually well designed it also has to work” . The workability and aesthetic quality of the space are the fundamental ingredients in the design of a restaurant.

Dining should be a memorable experience. Dining should be an experience, which is a celebration of food place and people. In order to grasp a full understanding of the dining experience I visit Restaurant Patrick Guillbaud. It is clearly evident upon arrival to Restaurant Patrick Guillbaud that there is a prestige of public display. From the Georgian formality right through to the personal customer care and finesse of cuisine. Restaurant Patrick Guillbaud is a successful example of how architecture should embellish the taste, art and experience of dining. It is true that the place in which you dine is a personal representation of the host. The architecture of the restaurant sets the conditions for you and is the expression of the host, which is represented behind those conditions. Thus, leaves you the guest to experience and interpret those conditions. The strength of these conditions in the Guillbaud restaurant comes down to quality of customer service, quality and standard of cuisine followed by a beautifully serene ambience, all, which creates a memorable dining experience

In the world of dining creating a desirable atmosphere can be a challenge and is often quite problematic. The problem of atmosphere is a complex issue as a desirable atmosphere can be a very subjective thing and is a composition of numerous elements. From speaking to managers of Restaurant Patrick Guillbaud, Chapter One and Thornton's I have concluded with four key elements in creating a desirable atmosphere. The most prominent concern is comfort. As managers their main concern is that the customer is comfortable in his/her environment, feels welcome and is at ease to experience the expression and presentation the restaurant has to offer. It is important especially in a Michelin star restaurant that the atmosphere is not too strict in that people may feel uncomfortable. The aim is to create an atmosphere that is not too strict. It is interesting to think how that level of service can make people uneasy and incapable of enjoying the dining experience. Under the title of comfort falls correct heating in that the room is a comfortable temperature to enjoy a meal and to take into account large volumes of people. Comfortable seating space between is important for the customer to be able to feel at ease. Light is also an important issue when creating a desirable atmosphere and has a key role in the architectural expression of the restaurant. During the day natural light brings freshness and clarity to the dining space of the restaurant however while dining in the evening, dim lights and candlelight create a serene romantic environment. The most prominent noticeable element to the atmosphere created in a restaurant is sound. There is beauty in the jostling buzzing sound of the atmosphere in a restaurant. Through the sound of kitchen clatter, wine glasses clamor and the blare of people's voices that bring the space of the restaurant to life. It is the people, place and all these elements that create a memorable atmosphere beautiful ambience and dining experience.



From the moment you pass the doorway into this seemingly private Georgian house you feel welcomed into in a home. On approach the old Georgian style building is tricking and immediately triggers a response of happiness. The beauty of the Georgian house could not but enhance the dining experience. The rigid formality of the architecture opens a new dimension for dining. The beauty of the Georgian setting is that there is less architecturally imposing features and more decorative functional elements. The small yet elegant lounge is furnished in classical Georgian antique furnishings. The warm green tones of the room are inviting and successfully married with the neutral burgundy tones of the approaching rooms. The décor is classical yet elegantly contemporary, you feel you are seated in the comfort of Patrick Guillbaud's home. The Georgian elegance is brought to new heights with the modern fresh and new-fangled dining room space.

The comfort and luxury felt within a Georgian home comes to the fore when enjoying this five star experience. There are key elements in dining that are to be expected in five star restaurants such as Patrick Guillbaud's. Elements such as Atmosphere, décor, colour, sound, view, privacy and conviviality are what make the dining an experience to be remembered. The change in levels expected in a typical Georgian house, work to the benefit of a restaurant, as a discrete subtle change is made between zones. Whilst sitting in the lounge you can enjoy views of a distinguished bar. Passing this bar entering the main dining room with vault roof, you move from a darker more intimate waiting space through to the open neutral tones of the dining area. Pale neutral tones opens and brightens this space with immediate response being one of fresh elegance and beauty which does not take from the beauty of the setting in the distance. The restaurant has been quoted 'to French decorum with discrete Irish charm' .



In most recent times designers have taken on exotic and adventurous designs that re-interpret the standard required space and challenge material and its workability. An example of an interior designer pushing such boundaries is Phillippe Starch. Phillippe Starch is a well renowned modern designer, designing Le Royal Monceau in Paris, Manin in Tokyo and Teatríz in Madrid. Phillippe talks about how he makes something for the result, designing for its purpose and for the person or people that makes use of it. It is interesting to note how function and ergonomics impact on design and human experience. Phillippe's attitude towards design is quite simple in that he does not think of his product as a shiny beautiful object, he thinks of functionality. I would like to further develop on this theory and relate it back to the design of restaurant furniture and interior design. It is interesting to note how function and ergonomics impact on design and human experience. In this way it can be said the design of spaces and objects uphold meaning and functionality and form.



Even beyond the design of the restaurant and interiors the dressing of tables plays an important role in the presentation. In Patrick Guillbaud's restaurant there is a clarity in the expression of the table settings. The tables are kept in a simplistic yet classical white and silver setting. By doing so it gives a sense of hierarchy to the food. The cuisine brings colour and contrast to the white setting and thus creates greater appeal without distraction from contrasting colours. Not only does the setting of tables contribute to the overall atmosphere but the procession of service and level of professionalism is felt and is an important and noticeable feature to the fine dining experience, furthermore creating an ambient environment for dining.

As shelter and food are two of the three necessities of life I believe in a powerful union and development of the two. Both factors will never taint rather act as a mechanism for development and regret. Creating a powerful place of social gathering. This I believe holds great meaning and potential as no other activity connects people more to their environment than having a meal.



THE ART OF COOKING

Architects and Chef's possess similar skills and ideas. Both professions require imagination and creativity. Like architecture cooking consists of the arrangement of materials for a specific purpose, that of eating. Speaking to top Michelin star chef's is exciting as an architect, as they too strive for perfection and innovative ideas for recipes and designs. The chef is imperative to the working of a restaurant as the food is what brings everything together and gives the space purpose. Like the architect, the chef's job is involved in many processes throughout the work of creating something.. From choosing the best ingredients, designing the recipe, making of the dish, choosing the ware and presenting of the dish. It is important that each process is under control by the chef as like any building requires careful work and precision.



The beauty in the design of a dish is in three elements. And as the saying goes “less is more.” This is particularly true in the culinary world as the best dishes are made with the fewest of ingredients. Finding more than one purpose for an ingredient is where creativity and the inventive nature of the chef come to the fore. Knowing your product is key to the ability needed in order to push the product to new levels and dimensions. This is also true in Architecture in that it is crucial to have an understanding of material; its components and origins. With this knowledge you can begin to re-interpret these elements to create exciting designs in both architecture and food. So the best dishes express a simplicity and purity of material without sacrificing flavors or composition. “With one main ingredient and three things around it you have a successful dish”. Coming back to the fundamental reason as to why people go to restaurants is to enjoy the food, so in this the food is the core from which everything else rotates. “If people do not like the food it is impossible to create a good atmosphere”, the chef therefore is the main instigator of the atmosphere and sets the tone of the dining experience

It is true that many developments or advances would not have been made without the knowledge of basic material or components. In any research I believe many clues lie in those elementary components and these elements are often most powerful. In the case of restaurants, brasseries or cafés those elementary components could include the chairs, tables, cutlery, food and drinks. Elementary zones may include dining space, kitchen space, bar space, toilet space, and circulation space, waiting space. These components are all fundamental in the understanding of the logical composition in response to human behavior and needs. These zones and components require careful examination and understanding, as they will be the cores around which atmosphere, cuisine and décor will rotate. In Patrick Guillbaud, there is I believe a clear distinction and hierarchy of spaces throughout the restaurant. It is a successful amalgamation of an old Georgian Lounge through to a modern sophisticated dining room space.



Throughout years of working in the art of food preparation and composition there are invaluable lessons that can be learned through such skill and experience and are very much applicable to architecture. The folding batter or cake mixture gives the sense of a folding structure. There is a beautiful composition of layers and sections that reveal the purity of the raw material. Immediately I think of the beautifully tiered desserts such as mille feuille. The understanding of material and its components and how these elements combine into a fusion of flavor beauty and balance. There is a feeling of sheer happiness when it is a successful combination to create a dish such as a beautifully risen soufflé. The process of creating that balance is where the chef and the architect strive in their creative minds, where they go through the design journey thus the product being a representation of that journey. It is a fascinating process to go through from the search of the best source of ingredient right through to the end of a beautifully balanced designed and sensual dish. The excitement and flavour of execution relates to the whole bodily feeling experienced in a beautifully built environment. A product that reacts to our senses is a super important thing as it provokes a human response. It becomes something, which provokes real meaning and happiness.

A photograph of two wine glasses on a table. The glasses are partially filled with a light-colored liquid. The word "PRESENTATION" is overlaid in white capital letters on the right glass. The background is dark and out of focus, showing a white plate and a bottle. The lighting is soft, highlighting the glass and the liquid.

PRESENTATION

There is Logic and meaning in the way things are presented to us through dining. Presentation has a dominant role to play in the culture of dining. The way things are presented to us is a representation of the restaurant and it is up to the customer to then interpret this and form a response. In this way the restaurant itself is a presentation to the guest. “If the divine creator has taken pains to give us delicious and exquisite things to eat, the least we can do is prepare them well and serve them with ceremony” .

Every meal is a message and where we eat it is just as important as what we eat in getting that message across. Right across the world we can experience different cuisines in different representations and styles of dining . It is the stark contrast between different cultures of eating that help define and illustrate an architecture of taste. Taking a glimpse at this style of dining opens our eyes to a whole new dimension of architecture and its relationship to food.

The relationship between food and cooking is strengthened by the knowledge and limitations of material and technique. The architecture of cooking is in the action and composition of the cooking process. The architecture of cooking is based on a triangle linking the three basic pieces of equipment –refridgerator, stove and sink. This is based on the idea that the cooks take food from the refridgerator, place it on the heat and then wash up. The authors of a UK government design bulletin in 1972 break down the “Meal Preparation Process” into the sequence “ Prepare, Mix, Cook, Serve, Eat, and wash-up. Under these headings the authors list specialised operations:Unwrapping, Washing, Peeling, Chopping, Mincing, Adding Water,Weighing, Measuring,Mixing, Baking, Boiling, Frying, Grilling, Keeping food and dishes hot ,Putting food onto dishes or plates, table layering, Eating, Clearing away, Disposing of waste, Stacking, Washing, Drying, Putting away. Adding to the complexities of this, nowadays architects cannot help placing this labour in a wider social context as the kitchen activity is brought amongst other activites and in some cases becomes a shared social space and in a way puts cooking and food on public display. This display being a true representation about how we live and work. A presentation of everyday life.

This new shift can be seen in Chapter One Restaurant where the restaurant has spread into the kitchen creating a chef's table where the dining experience is taken to a new environment. There is now a conscious effort to bring people closer to food and gain an understanding to the art and creation of fine cuisine by "carrying the restaurant through into the kitchen" . This new concept of taking the dining experience into the kitchen has proved extremely popular as you dine amongst the wonderfully buzzing creative atmosphere that feels quite surreal. You are immersed in the creative culinary world where the architecture of taste truly comes to life.



The most remarkable and fascinating features of dining and cuisine lie in the disparity between culture and places. One of the most interesting for me is the Japanese culture of cuisine and dining. The theatre of dining in Japanese culture is so diverse it is hard not to make reference to such a unique culture of dining. Dramatization of the food and the dining experience within Japanese culture goes back a long way, it is said “records of the court banquets in the eleventh and twelfth centuries indicate that aristocratic hosts endeavored to create a special atmosphere by contriving to make not only the food itself but the room in which it was served especially attractive” . Japanese culture itself has a very strong relationship to nature, which is reflected, within the architecture in the way that buildings are concerned with their natural surroundings. The building embraces the natural environment not by hiding it with thick walls rather open spaces exposed to the beauty of the natural world. This link to nature is part of the dining experience in Japanese culture and is a fundamental element in the appreciation and ceremony of the meal. Thus, there is a hierarchy in terms of the architecture as dining spaces suddenly face garden and green spaces. In this way our environment and culture reflects on how we construct the activity and use of a space.



Based on the premise that in dining everything is architecture, the architecture in its own right represents to us an idea it represents a meaningful process. In Restaurant Patrick Guillbaud the representation is kept clear, classic and elegant. As Robin himself adds “ people come to Restaurant Patrick Guillbaud for the experience” . When entering the restaurant you are overcome by the splendor of décor and ambience, this is the initial presentation given to you on arrival to the restaurant. You then begin to notice other various aspects of presentation such as table settings. The way in which the table is set is imperative to the presentation of a restaurant . There is a formal setting with every item maintaining a purpose but positioned and assembled to represent an idea or an order as to how things are used. While we may stereotypically think of the plate as round, different plates of different shapes and sizes have different purposes and add to the means of presentation and scheme of décor. An example of different uses for plates is seen through the progression of a meal in terms of the size of the plates and variation of dishes. A noticeable feature in Restaurant Patrick Guillbaud is the absence of cutlery as that becomes part of the service ceremony. As a result the table has a clear simplistic reading and as Robin adds” the best things in life are the most simple things but are the most difficult sometimes” . In terms of dining and at Michelin star level the focus is on the food and there is an expectation for that to shine against a clear background.

The way in which top restaurants are assessed in Ireland comes under the criteria of Michelin Star. The owner of Michelin tyres invented the Michelin Star. It began in 1900 as owner Andre Michelin looked at how his tyre company could provide interesting freebies for motorists and thus created the Michelin guide. The first guides were blue and were free. They listed petrol stations, garages, toilets, accommodation and where to eat for weekend and holiday motorists across France. By 1920 the dining section was so popular that Andre Michelin turned his drive and focus in this direction. A three category rating system was established and is a standard by which all restaurants strive to obtain to this day. It tends to be cautious both to give stars and to take them and outside French cuisine it can be less reliable. Michelin only gives four types of recognition to restaurants, three star (the best), two star, one star and the bib gourmand for places below a star but are good value for money. They also have flirted with the “espoir” or rising star in 2005 for certain places that might one day be promoted. The desire and determination of obtaining a Michelin Star is down to the chef and his creative pursuit. It is this Michelin criteria that sets the standard for top chefs and gains their recognition in the culinary world. The architecture of Dining is now what sets each restaurant as individuals.

The mystery in the specific requirements for Michelin criteria leaves restaurants striving to achieve the highest standard in every aspect of the industry. Michelin offers no notes or descriptions, just the address of the establishment and sometimes a one-liner on any specialties of the chef. However, an anonymous inspector working to an unpublished set of criteria performs determination of a restaurant's rating by Michelin. And as restaurant manager robin explains "nobody knows why you get a star" . The only time an inspector becomes known to the restaurant is when he identifies himself to the chef so that he may inspect the kitchen and other facilities not normally visited by diners. There is much speculation and conclusion as to what the criteria are for a restaurant to obtain one or more stars, but general consensus is that the first star is based on a restaurant's food quality. Additional stars are awarded for incremental increases in quality of service; dining room décor; linen, cutlery and china; extensive selection of chesse; and the size and quality of the wine cellar. It is also interesting to think how the design of the restaurant, food and all the elements begin to become more conscious and architecturally designed in order to meet Michelin criteria.

Food, dining and architecture all combine to create a memorable Dining experience. It is clear from Michelin star level of dining that this recognition and success boils down to the richness of the architecture of both the dining and the space. The architecture of the space as seen in restaurant Patrick Guillbaud compliments and enhances the "architecture of the dining", thus making food and architecture come together to form a strong relationship and connection to environment and place.

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“The peoples” ultimate judgement of a building rests with the eye.

Successful architecture does not always result in popular architecture. Popularity is described by the Oxford English Dictionary as something ‘liked or admired by many people or by a particular person or group’.

In this current age of architecture, a new style has emerged based on the image. This style is helped in no small way by the media. It has given, what Herman Hertzberger called, “all people” access to the domain of architecture, and hence an opinion on architecture. “All people” have the right to free speech and if adapted to the domain of architecture they have the right to accept or reject architecture. The ability for a building to become liked or admired by ‘all people’ has become solely about its image. Its aesthetic.

However when Frank Gehry, a successful architect of many aesthetically popular buildings, famously stated “being accepted isn’t everything” one can’t help but ask the question who has the authority to label a building popular and who has the authority to label a building successful?

Architecture may be for the people but it is conceived by architects. If this is the case, how successful can a building be? There are many architectural critics, practitioners and students very much in opposition to the success of Gehry’s architecture. However what cannot be denied is its popularity amongst “the people”. The beautiful image of his building in publications allows this to be the case. Bold daring structures, clad in beautiful alluring metals strike a chord with people and are aided by the way the mass media projects this world onto ‘all people’, through the image.

The image in architecture itself is hotly debated for its relevance, initially by Steen Eiler Rasmussen and more recently by Juhani Palasmaa. Rasmussen spoke about the power that sight has over the other senses when one simply looks at a piece of architecture, when he said “We receive a total impression of the thing we are looking at and give no thought to the various senses that have contributed to that impression.”¹ Whilst Pallasmaa spoke about images in a different sense when he said “Perception, memory and imagination are in constant interaction: the domain of presence fuses into images of memory and remembrance.”²

Modernist architecture made bold statements about architecture being a social creation. However its ineptitude at appealing to the common man, to “all people” is surely a major failure to its very manifesto. ‘The fact that the modernist idiom has not been able to penetrate the surface of popular taste and popular values seems to stem from its one sided intellectual and visual emphasise.’³

To analyse how architects have appealed to “all people” one must take two architects. Both architects have a similar wish in appealing to ‘all people’, they contrast greatly in their execution of this mandate. Frank Gehry and Herman Herrtzberger are two architects born around the same time (1929 and 1932 respectively). Both have well documented relationships with aiming to appeal to ‘all people’, yet the execution of this has resulted in two completely different types of architecture Gehry wishes to appeal to ‘all people’ by using beautiful artistic forms where by the aesthetic of the building would impart an experience. Hertzberger however wishes to appeal to

'all people' by creating a framework where by its users would contribute to the final building and in so doing creating their own experience.

“If you are an artist your eye starts to make pictures”⁴

Frank Gehry has been described by many of his close friends as an artist. Gehry the architect however produces the most loved and least liked, most popular and least successful, most beautiful and least appealing of buildings. This depends entirely on who you ask, but this constant dichotomy is in itself interesting. It famously prompted Gehry to state “being accepted isn’t everything”.

It is no secret that many of Gehry's close friends are artists. He holds a place in the L.A art scene that has permeated through his work prompting his clients to declare his buildings as beautiful works of art. Gehry's relationships with his clients are well documented. He retains a “rumbled sort of everyman persona”⁵ which serves him well in these relationships. Gehry gets on well with them, and many of them go onto be good friends of his, such as Peter Lewis. Creating beautiful works of art and being an amiable architect, results in popularity for Gehry. He is considered one of ‘all people’ and he believes this leads to his architecture for ‘all people’.

However there is stern opposition from the architectural domain.

One of his harshest critics, Hal Foster, believes that Gehry sometimes delivers too much for his clients. Foster stated that “Gehry had used the expanded world of sculpture which he used to create a building that really functions as a spectacle.”⁶ The building in question is of course the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. Foster continues “he has given the clients too much what they want, sublime space that overawes the viewer and the spectacular image that can circulate through the media and round the world as brand.”⁷ There are many ways to create that sublime

space without the requirement, or necessity, for that audacious image, but in what Gehry has created in architecture as brand, is now possibly woven into the programme of a Gehry building. It is with this critique of optical dependency that the world of architecture seems to be going, lead by Gehry. Here however I will propose that from very early on in his career Gehry was deeply interested in creating an architecture dependent on the image, and hence dependent on the eye in appealing to 'all people'.

The obsession with creating visual forms of beauty could be seen as a way of serving 'all people'. His early work played on ideas of perspective, the eye and how the eye was used as a device for human perception. In his book 'Landscape', John Wylie defines landscape as something seen and a particular 'way of seeing' the world. He argues that landscape today is an expression of the 'visual model of the modern era (...) which we can identify with the Renaissance notions of perspective in the visual arts'.⁸ If a landscape is something that can be seen as well as a 'way of seeing' then Gehry's architecture could be thought of as landscape.

Whether it is intended in Gehry's architecture it is certainly implied, and as a result his architecture can be thought of as optically based. The creation of unusual visual forms of beauty is a successful way to appeal to 'all people', and in a sense is a good example of architecture serving 'all people', but created by an architect. For Gehry, the relationship to 'all people' is

better served by labelling 'all people' as 'his audience'. In terms of Bilbao, Gehry creates a visual spectacle for 'his audience', but similarly in his earlier work there was an importance placed on the visual and the eye. In two important early projects, the O'Neill Hay Barn and Ron Davis house, Gehry experimented with the ideas of perspective, of how a form was seen by 'his audience'. Gehry speaks very modestly about these early projects where he did not have big budgets for his aesthetically pleasing titanium. There was an ad-hocism about the projects too which Gehry tapped into as an expression of the culture around him. On the subject, he stated "we're in a culture made up of fast food and advertising and throw-



THE O'NEILL HAY BARN

Taken from the book Frank Gehry Buildings and Projects. Photo Credit: MARVIN RAND

always and running for airplanes and catching cabs- frenetic. So I think that those ideas about building are more expressive of our culture than something finished is.”⁹

The O’Neill Hay Barn

As part of a master plan for a ranch in San Juan Capistrano, California, Gehry was required to design a hay barn. The building was modest and the materials were limited. This however did not prevent Gehry from being expressive toward his ‘audience’. He said in the documentary ‘Sketches of Frank Gehry’ that material was one way



THE O'NEILL HAY BARN

Taken from the book Frank Gehry Buildings and Projects. Photo Credit: MARVIN RAND

of 'humanising a building without the requirement for decoration'¹⁰. Gehry played with the wall and roof planes turning the form into something of a perspective game.

Telephone poles used as the main structure and around this corrugated metal formed the expressive planes. "The form" as Gehry put it, "could have gone anywhere"¹¹. Gehry tilted the roof of the barn between two opposite corners, which provided an interesting aesthetic result. There was a correlation drawn between the O'Neill Hay Barn and the work of contemporary minimalist sculptors, who aim to exploit the power of the simple and bare. The power of the project lies entirely in its visual unorthodoxy which Gehry exploits by leaving the building unadorned. The result is a heightened sense of proportion as well as the potential to move about the object and gain a variety of perspectives.

The angle the roof coupled with the colour of the material resulted in the barn resembling the hills near which the barn sat. Gehry said of the project that depending on the light on a particular day "the reflections from the sky on the metal make the building disappear sometimes"¹². The lack of visual uniformity that one gets from the different perspectives on show leads to a building that entices movement. The building encourages the audience to have an active role within the building, as one discovers relationships while moving about the object. There are several images one takes from the experience of the building, however with the extreme emphasis placed on the visual, one can only feel that this is exactly what Gehry intended this building to be. For the building itself to keep its

audience at arms length, forcing one to take in its views but never its interior.

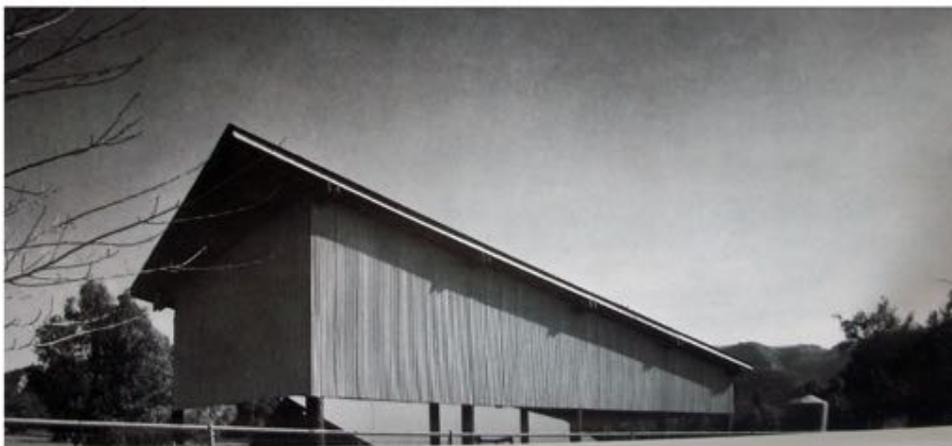
The emphasis is on the eye making pictures, and the challenge to find a beauty has benefitted greatly from the medias new found part in the shaping of a society and in the shaping of an architecture. If the architectural objects primary design is about how one views it then the media can easily transmit this message around the world. The architecture would be as successful on an A4 page as it would be in the flesh. Is this really enough from architecture or do 'all people' deserve more from their architect?

Ron Davis House

Gehry has consistently pursued beyond the satisfaction of the program and budget as he seeks to stimulate and invite 'all people' to encounter his architecture and to share in the pleasure of the visual phenomena. The notion of visual phenomena is not unlike the world of the artist Ron Davis who was a good friend of Gehry. After seeing Gehrys hay barn, Davis commissioned Gehry to work on a house for him. Both men shared a common interest manipulating perceptions of perspective. Gehry developed his optically pleasurable architecture with the visually wacky Davis house.

Gehry set about deciding upon vanishing points for the perspective of the house. A trapezoidal plan was developed and that grew

into a building which, like the O'Neill Hay barn had an angled roof structure. The roof is tilted from a height of 30 feet in one corner to 10 feet in the opposite corner. The trapezoidal plan coupled with this roof has allowed for a strange appearance of the interior. "The architectural object" Gehry said of the project "abandons visual and structural orthodoxy"^{13a}. An important point of note is that the house was intended to serve as home to Davis but also as his studio, where Davis could work. It was initially thought of as a visually skewed shell, with a central core for the water closet and shower. The kitchen was pushed into one corner of the building with a large open plan living/studio space which could be adapted using movable walls as the requirement arose.



THE O'NEILL HAY BARN

Taken from the book Frank Gehry Buildings and Projects. Photo Credit: MARVIN RAND

The interior was not simply left as a shell. Gehry designed it to appear like a series of perspective images taken from the work of Davis' paintings. "This aptitude for fluidity reinforces Gehry's preference for working principally with the visual disorientation of a manufactured space, volume or surface."^{13b} Taking this literal application of a set of images Gehry enters a different territory, as he sets about designing a space in this shell from precedents existing only in Davis' two dimensional paintings. This leads to a realisation of an abstract. "When we stand in an art gallery and look at a landscape painting", as John Wylie puts it, "we commonly have an impression of visual depth, as if we were looking out through a window onto the fields, the mountains, or the city being depicted."¹⁴ Within the Davis house, the audience is treated to the



RON DAVIS HOUSE

Taken from the book Frank Gehry Buildings and Projects. Photo Credit: T. KITAJIMA

real life, un-abstracted creation of this otherwise two dimensional creation. It is almost like 'fake space' if I may coin a phrase. It is something conceived by the eye, brought to realisation by the eye and hence wants to be judged purely by the eye. The landscape paintings one looks at in an art gallery are illusions, hence creating a space based from an illusion seems a little jarring. Speaking about these 'optical and perceptual distortions' in the designing of this space, Gehry said "on the surface the drawing is forced to change- it is examined obsessively, isolated and scrutinised in order



RON DAVIS HOUSE INTERIOR

Taken from the book Frank Gehry Buildings and Projects. Photo Credit: FRANK GEHRY ASSOCIATES

to extract and image that can give meaning to the plan.”^{13c} It is certainly an interesting way to work in terms of designing a space, and in a sense one can relate to the possibility of appealing to an ‘audience’ in such a manner.

Gehrys relationship with all people is in an audience/performer type of role. His buildings are almost making a silent performance and with this performance, people take part through their gaze. He is searching for a new dialectical and contradictory architecture that



PAINTING BY RON DAVIS

gushes from the decomposed and disjoined body, but which is still based on pulsation and on uncontrolled moments of pleasure. He believes architects should be “commentators on the beauty that’s around us”. This type of work is set to grow out of what the eye sees and how the eyes sees it, when he states “if you look at the street atmosphere and you are an artist your eye starts to make pictures and you edit and you find beauty out there”^{13d}

Gehry aims to appeal to ‘all people’ through these moments of pleasure and through the visual phenomena, recognising that for ‘all people’ a building may be judged based on what the eye sees.



PAINTING BY RON DAVIS



RON DAVIS HOUSE INTERIOR

Taken from the book Frank Gehry Buildings and Projects. Photo Credit: T. KITAJIMA

For what can architecture be but for all people?

As a counter argument to Gehry's image based architecture, the work of Herman Hertzberger is less concerned with developing a visually pleasing aesthetic in order to appeal to 'all people'. While Gehry was more concerned with the creation of a setting for the audience to view and appealing to the eye.,Hertzberger was more concerned with the inhabitation of his space and appealing to a more holistic experience.

Hertzberger outlines his architectural manifesto by being critical on the culture of architecture around him. 'When you look at one of the vast number of books on architecture that are being published nowadays" he stated, "and you see all those glossy photographs, taken without exception in perfect weather conditions, you can't help wondering what goes on in the architects' minds, how they see the world; sometimes I think they practice a different profession from mine! For what can architecture be other than concerning



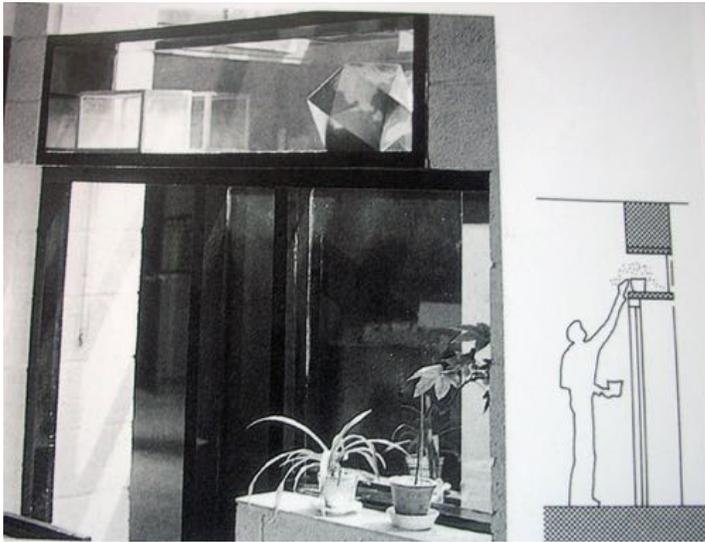
oneself with situations in daily life as served by all people?"¹⁵

Herman Hertzberger believes architecture to be a collaboration between an architect and "all people". He considers the participatory nature in architecture and the exertion of time and energy into a place in which "all people" dwell will ultimately create an architecture that will be will appeal. It is this encouragement to participate with the architecture that will ultimately define a style and a language to the architecture.

Montessori School, Delft

In the Montessori School Hertzberger designed in Delft there are many aspects of the design that require a collaboration between user and architect. For Hertzberger the building is to be thought of as a set of environments which the user of the building inhabit and in so doing alter the environments to there own specific needs and thus create a situation where the user becomes a dweller.

Take for instance the classrooms in the school. Hertzberger thought of these rooms almost as independent homes all served by a communal street, the corridor. To tie into this notion, the teacher and the students together decide upon what the class will look like, and hence what kind of atmosphere it will have. Hertzberger used the standard masonry block as his building module and left it exposed so it could be painted by the user to their specific tastes, helping the user interact with the space and hence become a dweller. There is a provision within the design to make a threshold



A PHOTOGRAPH AND DIAGRAM OF THE DOOR THRESHOLD

Taken from the book *Lessons For Students in Architecture*. Photo Credit: H.HERTZBERGER

between the classroom and communal hall deep enough so the creations of the class can be exhibited. Art can be placed within these thresholds. Flower pots which the children can bring from home can be sat on window cills, door frames and lower space dividing walls. The wall itself which separates the classroom from the communal hall is thought of by Hertzberger as more of a showcase of what goes on behind the wall than just a mere physical threshold separating the space. As he puts it “the exterior of the classroom can then function as a sort of shop window which shows what the class has to offer”¹⁶.

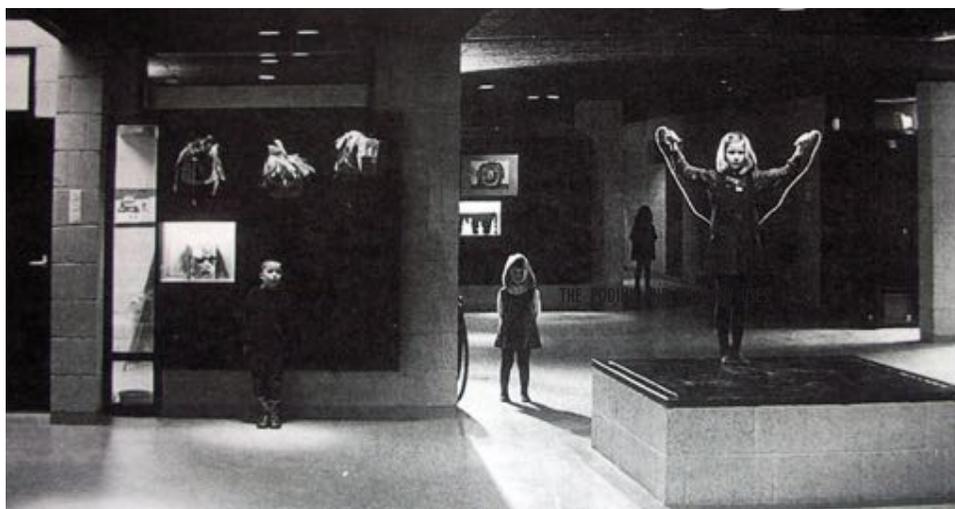
The frame above the door into a classroom is afforded extra depth also and hence becomes a ledge on which the produce from the class can be displayed to the outside world. This threshold is not

seen purely in a physical sense but also in an environmental sense, in that the communal hall is thought to be a different environment to the individual classroom. Hertzberger also creates it as a means of furnishing the space on both sides of the threshold and develops the potential for the atmosphere in the classroom itself to feel more lived in.

Away from the individual communal debate which Hertzberger sets up inside the building in a very deliberate manner, he shows great sensitivity in handling the entrance to the school. Hertzberger feels an entrance to a place like a school should not be merely an opening to enter and exit. The entrance is thought of as a space in itself. Hertzberger recognises the requirement for such a place and acknowledges it to be a place of great social interaction. He says "it should be a place that offers some kind of welcome to the children who came early and to pupils who don't want to go straight home after school!"¹⁷ The low walls allow for children to sit on them with their friends and to inhabit the transition space. The architecture created here is not to over power the 'user', or what Hertzberger may hope for the 'dweller', with an awe inspiring view or even to question how one perceives the space. It is simply a stage on which human life may be facilitated. Hertzberger has tried to harness a potential for social exchange here and it almost feels in this entrance that he as a creator and architect has tried to get out of the way of this social exchange. In providing a habitable transition space between inside and out, the formal regulations in the domain of a school and the informal freedom in the domain of the outside he acknowledges the potential for social exchange between parents who wait for their children. He recognises the

potential conversations between parents as they get to know each other, and organise play dates for their children.

In the way that Hertzberger tried to get out of the way of the social exchange at the entrance, he deliberately creates a social exchange inside the school. In the central point of the school hall lies a brick podium block which is used for formal school assemblies, as well as spontaneous gatherings. Hertzberger had several meetings with the school authorities regarding this specific part of the design. It was felt by the school authorities that the space could have the potential to do more without the podium. However, as Hertzberger argued, the permanence and immobility of the block had an “inescapable presence as a focal point that contains the suggestions and incentives for response in each situation as it arises.”¹⁸ The block contributes to the articulation of space as it harnesses the possibility for a teacher to make a speech from it and the students to gather round to hear. It also allows for a group of students to gather around and compare their work, or read, or simply play games on and around it at their lunch break. Hertzberger



THE PODIUM AND ITS MANY USES
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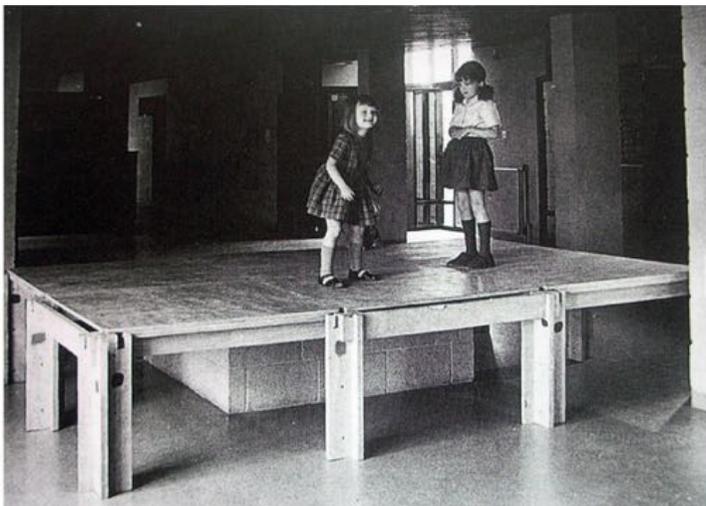
Taken from the book *Lessons For Students in Architecture*. Photo Credit: JOHAN VAN DER KEUKEN



THE PODIUM AND ITS MANY USES

Taken from the book *Lessons For Students in Architecture*. Photo Credit: H.HERTZBERGER

reinforced the potential of the social device by designing a set of wooden sections which could be put together and would extend the area of the podium, thus turning it into a real stage for proper musical or theatrical performances.



THE PODIUM AND ITS MANY USES

Taken from the book *Lessons For Students in Architecture*. Photo Credit: H.HERTZBERGER

Similarly Hertzberger designed a hollow to be placed in the centre of the ground of the kindergarten hall. This depression was to be brought to the level of the ground around it by loose wood blocks, which could be easily lifted out of the hollow and placed around it by the children. The wooden blocks could be used as seating or could be stacked to play games. The hollow could then be inhabited by the children as they played around and in it, as part of their play time.



CHILDREN INHABITING THE HOLLOW

Taken from the book *Lessons for Students in Architecture*. Photo Credit: JOHAN VAN DER KEUKEN

Whilst the formal requirements for a school are satisfied inside, Hertzberger turned his attention to the creation of the playground. At the back of the school, he divided the space into a series of smaller oblong spaces by low masonry walls. The spaces between the walls were intended to be individual gardens or sand pits or

could be alternatively filled in. Hertzberger notes rather sensitively to the brief, that when nursery school children are left to the realm of play, they generally do so in smaller groups. With that in mind Hertzberger allowed this to dictate the dimensions of these smaller spaces. He also harnessed the potential in the social situation by leaving the hollow core blocks exposed. The children could adapt the built form into their play by storing 'mud pies' in them or by putting sticks in them in order to make a tent. It is the sensitivity to the 'potential' that Hertzberger tries to appeal to 'all people', all the time allowing architecture to be for 'all people'.

CHILDREN ADAPTING THE BUILT FORM INTO THEIR PLAY

Taken from the book *Lessons For Students in Architecture*. Photo Credit: AS NOTED



JOHAN VAN DER KEUKEN



H.HERTZBERGER



H.HERTZBERGER



H.HERTZBERGER

For Hertzberger sight and view are part of his architecture but they in no way dictate an aesthetic. He created a difference in the levels in the classroom to accommodate surveillance by the teacher. Whilst one group of students painted or made models in the lower section, another group could continue with work that requires more concentration, all under the watchful eye of one teacher. The eye in Hertzbergers architecture is used to accommodate the other senses and ultimately the self. As one gazes within the architecture of Hertzberger, one experiences the architecture of Hertzberger. It is almost a technique to sit oneself in the social situation which Hertzberger has set up.



THE ABILITY TO SEE WITHIN THE FORM HELPS THE FORM TO BE INHABITED

Taken from the book *Lessons For Students in Architecture*. Photo Credit: H.HERTZBERGER

However Hertzbergers architecture does not totally negate the requirement of image, but to Gehry it's a different use of the human sense. In The Montessori School at Delft, Hertzberger has designed, what Juhani Pallasmaa describes as a series of 'spaces of memory and imagination'. "Perception, memory and imagination are in constant interaction; the domain of presence fuses into images of memory and fantasy"¹⁹ writes Pallasmaa. One recognises the potential in these images created in a school, as the repetition of the spaces would feed into the memory and imagination in aiding the children gain a sense of the spaces that the school possess. In many ways, the spaces could be looked at as a series of interactive environments that 'all people' are forced to interact with and in so doing alter.

Architecture is seen by Herman Hertzberger as a possession. Again it evokes the statement that architecture may be for all people but it is created by an architect. A building is thought of as a structure with social potential instilled by Hertzberger. The structure or framework, in which a person lives and adds to creates the architecture.

The framework, or form created by Hertzberger is a haptic architecture, it requires human touch to make the physical space into something of this world. Sight alone is not enough but through responsive action one creates a dynamic architecture. In speaking about encountering a work of art, Juhani Pallasmaa states "a curious exchange takes place; the work projects its aura, and we project our own emotions and percepts on the work."²⁰ This equal

collaboration between art and a person is seen in Hertzbergers work. This dynamic process in art ultimately leads to us meeting ourselves. The bare unfinished walls are intended to hold life within them, spaces are intended to co-exist with people. They almost cry out to be touched, to be edited and changed as the user sees fit, thus bringing the user into the design of the form. Hertzberger sees the architects job as part of this process, to harness the potential for user interference. He acknowledges 'all people' and their importance in creating an architecture, and he recognises that if they can become 'dwellers', then his architecture will appeal to them.

Hertzberger's 'Form as an instrument', has resulted in his specific style based on a theory that the more influence one can exert on the things around you, the more you will feel emotionally involved with them, thus creating an architecture. "The more involved a person is with the form and content of his surroundings, the more those surroundings become appropriated by him"²¹ This shift in attention to what a form can be to those whom it concerns indirectly raises the question of the relationship between the creator of the form, and the users. The accommodating capacity of the form is its competence, which allows it to be filled with associations of the 'user'. This competence of form brings about a mutual dependency with 'all people', who thus become dwellers of the space, making it a successful architecture.

And so one is back to the question, what makes successful architecture.

It is clear that Gehry and Hertzberger have attempted to appeal to 'all people', in order to be successful. Yes it may be true that the majority of 'all people' will judge a building based upon what they see, but as Juhani Pallasmaa said, 'it is appropriate to challenge the hegemony of vision'.²² Why has this sense received prominence in the creation of architecture? It is surely a question of architectural authority and where does this authority lie today?

The phenomenology of architecture is much more than meets the eye.

Architects in recent years have possibly not done enough with the education they have received and the responsibility they have been given to highlight architecture as something more than a "fine art", which concerns itself with the beautiful, and hence appeals only to the eye. There are greater demands on architecture.

Architecture, in recent years, has been taken over by the media and by 'all people', who appear more like consumers. This is highlighted when Gehry spoke about commissions he received after designing the visually radical Guggenheim Museum. "I get called to do 'Frank Gehry Buildings'. They actually say that to me. We want a 'Frank Gehry'. I run into trouble when I put a design on the table and they say 'Well, that isn't a Gehry building. It doesn't have enough of whatever these buildings are supposed to have yet'."²³

The age of the catalogue stores, such as Ikea, doesn't help the situation either. 'All people' are consumers in this realm. These stores issue catalogues of their products, in a similar manner as architecture is

issued to 'all people'. The images in these catalogues are trying to sell a way of life. If one accumulates all the 'stuff' in this picture it would lead to the lifestyle pictured. It is a freedom afforded to the consumer, where a lifestyle can be chosen out of a catalogue, so long as they can afford it! Even though architecture is being parcelled in a similar manner, it should be something more. An age of radicalisation may be required to break away from architecture as a market commodity. The fear of this student is that as the domain of architecture travels down this path of designing architecture for its visual phenomena, or for the media to use as brand, that one day it will result in an architecture that is purely about appealing to the eye.

So where should architects fit into this, should we take back the architectural authority? In the more recent decades architecture, and architects, have become more cognitively aware and concerned with context and how this results in a piece of architecture. The context in question is more than just the urban grain in which a building is placed into. The context is the physical, the economical, the social, the historical, the governmental, the environmental and even the psychology of 'all people'. These contexts set the parameters for architecture to occur. It is within this parameter of contexts that the architect must work alone, with no outside influences, or even without the requirement to appeal. A good architect will be a philosopher of these contexts. His education should enable him to take a stance on the world around him, and how best he can use his education in order to design. Its almost like a morality that a good architect will develop. This morality will

inform design for him as a whole. Architecture seems to mean something completely different to both Gehry and Hertzberger but this variety adds richness to the realm of architecture.

A complete radicalisation of the architectural domain feels a little strong, however there is a value in learning about the potential for radicalisation. The French philosopher Jean Baudrillard discussed radicalism when he wrote 'we do not oppose the beautiful and the ugly, we seek the ugliest of the ugly: the monstrous. We do not oppose the visible and the hidden, we seek the most hidden of hidden: the secret. We do not seek chance and we do not oppose the fixed and the mobile, we seek the most mobile of mobile: the metamorphosis. We do not distinguish the true from the false, we seek the most false of the false: illusion and appearance.'²⁴

The domain of architecture may learn from Baudrillard as it takes back architectural authority, and asserts greater caution over architecture as a visual phenomena, after all 'appearance may just be an illusion.'

(Endnotes)

- 1 Steen Eiler Rasmussen. *Experiencing Architecture*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1959
- 2 Juhani Pallasmaa. *The Eyes of The Skin: Architecture of the Senses*. Great Britain: Wiley Academy Press, 2005.
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- 4 Peter Arnell and Ted Bickford. *Frank Gehry Buildings and Projects*. New York: Rizzoli, 1985.
- 5 Hal Foster. *Design and Crime (and other diatribes)*. New York: Verso, 2002.
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- 10 Sydney Pollack, director: *True stories, Sketches of Frank Gehry* documentary, 2007.
- 11 Peter Arnell and Ted Bickford. *Frank Gehry Buildings and Projects*. New York: Rizzoli, 1985.
- 12 Peter Arnell and Ted Bickford. *Frank Gehry Buildings and Projects*. New York: Rizzoli, 1985.
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- 14 John Wylie. *Landscape*. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- 15 Herman Hertzberger. *Lessons to students in Architecture*. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1991.

- 16 Herman Hertzberger. *Lessons to students in Architecture*. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1991
- 17 Herman Hertzberger. *Lessons to students in Architecture*. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1991
- 18 Herman Hertzberger. *Lessons to students in Architecture*. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1991
- 19 Juhani Pallasmaa. *The Eyes of The Skin: Architecture of the Senses*. Great Britain: Wiley Academy Press, 2005.
- 20 Juhani Pallasmaa. *The Eyes of The Skin: Architecture of the Senses*. Great Britain: Wiley Academy Press, 2005.
- 21 Herman Hertzberger. *Lessons to students in Architecture*. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1991.
- 22 Juhani Pallasmaa. *The Eyes of The Skin: Architecture of the Senses*. Great Britain: Wiley Academy Press, 2005.
- 23 Sydney Pollack, director: *True stories, Sketches of Frank Gehry* documentary, 2007.
- 24 Peter Arnell and Ted Bickford. *Frank Gehry Buildings and Projects*. New York: Rizzoli, 1985.

[the problematic of japan-ness in architecture]
A STYLE WITHOUT STYLE

Jack Byrne

[in a contemporary world]
TRADITIONAL VALUES



[early 17th century]
KATSURA DETACHED PALACE

The concept of a Japanese national architectural style is problematic. This predicament of style emerged most intensively from the outset of the twentieth century, the critical juncture of the nation's modernisation, at which point through process and adaptation, Japanese architecture was transformed out of all recognition to previous styles. Albeit, the understanding of Japanese style retained today as stereotype rarely goes beyond the notion of the compositional beauty and harmony of which the Katsura Villa exudes; subsequent modernisation of the country made a new kind of architecture necessary and the delicacy of this condition was transformed into an architecture infused with high intensity and collided with Western modes beyond the appearance of stable confrontation. Their spatial sensibilities have crashed harshly to which a new place emerged with resounding potential. This new typology correlates with rapid social change and also major advances in the realm of science and technology which in turn has led to revolutions and radical shifts in the concept of space and the development of new materials. Despite this, it has become increasingly more difficult to define and extract the elements which are quintessentially Japanese, much of which is due to the prolific developments of a formerly insular nation in its adoption of a western standard. It is thus the intention to search for the continuity of tradition linked to the evolutionary process of culture itself and the adaptation of other concepts of habitation which have paved the way for a plural and hybrid architecture which in turn responds to contemporary global necessities. Consequently this pre-

sents an added objective to absolve Japanese sensibilities from its imprisonment in the westerner's museum of the exotic and also to refute the perception that there exists a homogeneous Japanese culture.

The structure of Tokyo retained today is carried over from the city of Edo (the contemporary city's former name). This however, is the manner in which we westerners perceive Japanese space and culture, that of the wooden temples from the ancient period which is recognised to be the quintessence of Japanese taste. The archaic wisdom in which these edifices were laid out paid great attention to their orientation and aspect. They invariably faced south, the direction where, according to tradition, the emperor's gaze was always directed. The main house was always in an elevated position while a small lake collected water in the lower part of the garden. Private roads ran through the parcel connecting the main house with the other volumes scattered around the site. The abode of the aristocrat took up most of the land while the samurais built elongated single story houses and the commoners clustered around the periphery. These groups formed minute neighbourhoods which were easily receptive to fluctuations in density. Above all these temples are substantially centrifugal structures which were characterised by their horizontality expressing architecture of power. Similar ideas are expressed today in which the social stratum of Tokyo is very ambiguous. Land usage is mixed and therefore the residential areas don't possess any corresponding quality. In terms of power, Tokyo is also a very indefinite



[interior space]

KATSURA DETACHED PALACE

city, due to the fragmentary nature it possesses it is difficult to figure out whose power realm the urban public spaces belong. This is anticipated in the contemporary image of the city whose buildings are made up of a mesh of garish poster advertisements which are often bigger than the buildings themselves. 'The true form of this urban architecture in Japan is a product of consumer culture'. The importation of this modernity superficially destroyed the delicacy of their heritage and indeed it would seem accepting novelty entailed a very high price to pay.

Japan's traditional architecture is marked by its subtle colouring obtained in the vertical and horizontal lines of its wood structure by 'assiduous handling of fragile substances, like natural wood, paper and earth; and by the depth achieved through artful arrangement of sequence'. Within it, there is gentleness of the meeting of parts, in the merging of orchestrated views and the transition between inside and outside flows. Things begin to unfold through several transitions, whereby there is a sort of conversation between the parts in which they combine to form a unifying whole in order to achieve a more coherent effect in the distribution of a diverse set of spaces. This notion of space is similar to the essence of the Japanese city. What gives Japanese architecture an ethereal appearance lies in the fact that no Japanese city is analogous to that of a European city. On the whole, the structure is very different. The Japanese condition is supple and flexible following the natural landscape; it spreads extensively over the territory and furthermore it is easily adaptable to

urban growth and the continuous modifications which it brings about. Arata Isozaki observed that European cities reflect the contrast with nature, while in the oriental culture; cities emulate a conglomerate of small villages which have grown naturally from the power of nature. Tokyo, thus, is an 'amoeba city' which undergoes constant change 'with its amorphous sprawl... and demonstrates a physical integrity and capacity for regeneration when damaged'. However, the drastic metamorphosis of the feudal city of Edo into that of modern Tokyo could not erase all remnants of its past. Traces of this are evident in the contemporary city although recognising these facets is met with increasing difficulty year after year. Indeed, some of the city's best parks and gardens descended from ancient dynasty periods, a fraction of the historic framework which is identifiable today. This link which exists between the new contemporary and the old structure of the city is paramount to Japanese ideologies of settlement and culture.

月秋



[interior-external exchangeability]
KATSURA DETACHED PALACE

In the wake of the introduction of modernity, 'Japanese taste represented by the curious eclecticism of the teikan style came to be criticised, and the counter thesis of composition, reinvigorated by rationalism and functionalism gained favour'. With the west reverting to the concept of composition, Japan focused on the same concept with the elimination of taste in favour of universal principles. Thus the search for a democratic monumentality blending Japanese identity and a cosmopolitan vision, preoccupied the generation of Japanese architects who came to maturity in the years of reconstruction after the war. The optimum design solution was to signify an effortless cohesion or a frictionless contact between the two opposing poles. The architects of whom this essay will focus consequently initiated their own design paradigm with a strong basis in modernity and an international vision while some attempt to extract values of Japan's vernacular past. While all of their designs are in no way neo-romantic in their appearance they endeavour to reclaim Japanese architecture from the 'encroachments of technology and consumerism and rehabilitate it on another footing'.

In post World War II Japan when the country launched on a course of rapid economic growth, social alterations to the concentration of information and places of work in cities led to increasingly dense urban and suburban populations making it increasingly difficult to conserve traditional facets of Japanese residential architecture; an intimate connection with nature and openness with the natural world. The architecture of

Tadao Ando seeks to restore this connection between the house and nature which he believes was lost through the process of modernisation. His enigmatic works infuse modern abstraction with that of the traditional house, stressing stillness, withdrawal and silence while also continuing to surprise through the power of its forms and sensuality of its materials of which its most prevailing qualities exude expressions of invisible ideas, which act on the mind and senses as the spectator moves through the space. Ando intellectually manipulates space creating modes of expression alluding to traditional forms and symbols while achieving distance through abstraction and metaphor. The forms he creates give indications of the passing of time and the changing of seasons through connections with the affairs of human life. Nature must be enclosed in order to be experienced, an incisive philosophy with which his practice begins.

[and nature]
SPATIAL COMPOSITION



[tadao ando]
AZUMA HOUSE

The Azuma House (Sumiyoshi Row House) built in 1976 encapsulates a sense of 'yugen' in Japanese poetry, wherein the ineffable makes itself felt, in everyday life, through such simple pleasures as a touch of rain, an unexpected breeze or a growing heaviness in the air. This notion manifests itself in the form of a double height central courtyard which bisects the living spaces. The occupants of the house are thus compelled to traverse an open atrium in all seasons in order to move from the living space to the dining room, or to ascend from the living level to the bedrooms which are connected by means of a bridge. Such a curious arrangement is boldly contrary to the habitual standards of oriental comfort; however, the architect wishes to bring into being a new culture capable of both maintaining and transcending tradition and hence seeks pleasure in discovering what new life patterns can be extracted and developed from living under severe conditions. This form of architecture stems from the type of domesticity which exhibited itself in the traditional dwelling; ranging from the Japanese propensity to live in rooms with a lack of acoustical privacy, or of extremely modest dimensions, or their disciplined predisposition to sleep on relatively hard surfaces. The spatial organisation of the Azuma House is centripetal and by means of this composition the courtyard assures privacy for all four rooms. The role played by the incidental light of the Azuma House, which serves to light the main entrance and the master bedroom by means of skylights indicates there is an affinity here for the under lit interior that is ubiquitous in the evolution of Japanese domes-

ticity. The intensity of the light and its direction vary in accordance with the seasons and the time of day, and, in doing so, they affect the quality of the ambient light within the interior at the point where it is furthest from the fenestration of the atrium. This house is a glimpse at the architect's fascination with rays of sun light penetrating shadows activating the dimly absorbent concrete surfaces as they record with precision the ever changing movement of the sun. It is a spirit in which we find reinterpreted in all Ando's domestic work.

[space over time]
EPHEMERALNESS



[toyo ito]
U HOUSE

In Japanese culture the idea of sustainable and solid architecture, designed to last, does not exist.

Traditionally buildings were constructed of wood and owing to the constant threat of earthquakes were habitually rebuilt after a short timespan. Today's Japanese cities are analogous, constantly altered without ever changing their basic concept of a neutral and fragmentary scheme with no points of contextual reference other than those of the macro infrastructural system. Cities such as Tokyo appear to be undifferentiated systems with neutral and ubiquitous modification to its urban characteristics, which could be extended endlessly in any direction. There is no real and lasting substance akin to European cities which have a design and precise points of reference. With this in mind the work of Toyo Ito can be considered one of the most significant interpretations of the mechanics of the Japanese consumer society and an analysis of its social context. His work has developed the idea of an 'ephemeral architecture as the best way of representing these metropolitan non-contexts', seeking to avoid any kind of solidity.

The White-U (1974), attempts to rise above any formal constraints and progress towards the neutrality of a homogeneous space, without a beginning or an end. The house reacts negatively to its context by bending back on itself creating an introverted architectural solution which adheres to the fragmentary character of the city. The city is segregated by the omission of windows opening onto the street thus breaking any visual link leading to an immaterial abstraction of the build-

ing. 'The negation of form frees the building from the succession of distinct parts and permits the creation of a single fluid system'. The curved geometry of the house denotes an air of ambiguity in which it becomes difficult to anticipate the subsequent space. This curved field of flow is broken by successive light wells which puncture the roof at different points orchestrating a multitude of expressions of light contributing to the flow of the wandering direction of human sight. The graduation of the lighting leads to a soft nuance of the interior space of the horseshoe shaped house which is in direct contrast with the courtyard encapsulated by concrete walls. The single storied house's neutral form allows it to stand in the indifferent urban fluidity that encapsulates it rather than maintaining a solidity and denseness of materiality which upholds a more lasting solution. The fact that it was demolished in the spring of 1998 'seems almost a theatrical epilogue, confirming the symbolic quality of its relationship with the rapid changes of the city'.

A black and white photograph of a modern interior space. The room features thick, textured concrete pillars and beams. A white door is visible on the left, and a white wall with a window is on the right. The ceiling is white and has a sloped section. The overall aesthetic is minimalist and industrial.

[real vs fictional]
MEANINGFUL SPACE

[kazuo shinohara]
HOUSE ON A CURVED ROAD

The 'machine' along with the 'cube' denotes a basic concept of Modernism which was formed in Europe in the twenties and henceforth this became a model to relate form and function. This formative period was aiming at a unified spatial composition according to a system and corresponding to an industrial society. Much was expected of mass production in Japan in which such forms of technology were developing and thus this moved into a position as the main drive for architectural productivity. These new typologies of space and form refute orthodox architectural concepts and shift to incorporate a new dynamic system capable of resonating with the new science and technology. The work of Kazuo Shinohara however, embodies both these principles whereby he continually quotes from tradition as the basis for his design thesis while also adopting the modern context as a platform to further evolve his concepts and structures and transport them to a new place. This method of expression enables him to preserve something of value for the contemporary period by juxtaposing tradition with technology. Dissimilar in his approach to the design process than those of the aforementioned architects his method is infused with his own distinctive and personal approach thus establishing a new mode of architectural expression that is his own.

In the House on a Curved Road (1978) Shinohara succeeded in translating the principles of traditional wooden construction techniques of pillars and beams into concrete. This new method correlated to the technological advances in materials in which he was able

to move away from his 'first style' period which consisted of concrete houses with simple bearing wall structures to more sophisticated methods. The shelter enclosed by the roof, outer walls and floor of the house is made up of a special lattice as a framework supported internally. This is a framework in which the walls descend vertically from the roof pyramid and the load is supported by the two beams at the top of the three dimensional lattice. As the north and west of the site are three metres higher than the road, the ground floor level sits below the road surface within the site. The dwellings form is derived on the basis of a 4.5 metre cube which sits in the centre of the site making up the basement from which three storeys stem above ground level. The three-dimensional lattice emerges from the ridge line of the cube making a shape delimited by a pyramid with sloping planes of 45 and 60 degrees depending on the spectator's orientation on the site. The base of the house emerges from the ground like a ships hull in which the architect achieves verticality to the space around the living and dining room while the machine metaphor also contributes to the horizontality of the space given to the underground study/studio. This approach became Shinohara's 'third style' and gave a freedom of expression to his designs which he previously struggled to incorporate into his buildings.

[non-hierarchical forms]
CLARITY OF SPATIAL ORGANISATION



[kazuo sejima]
HOUSE IN A PLUM GROVE

In the time from the inception of modernity into Japan, the nation has opened itself up to new forms of construction and continues to experiment what remains to be discovered. SANAA lives in this time, where practical necessities have gained a higher precedence than the spiritual essence or Zen philosophy that existed in Japanese society and culture previous to modernism. However, although the partners say they have never quoted, tradition seems to play an unconscious role in all their works, where they try to find the harmony dictated by opposing poles of light and shadow, naturalness and artificiality, exterior and interior. Their apprehension for the human condition in contemporary society has unleashed relentless creativity corresponding with current technology and to unveil new configurations, forms and functions in architecture, to the point where they create new radical domestic behaviours. SANAA's architecture challenges the very essence of the domestic house, questioning concepts of intimacy, new family structures or the very physicality of the structure, by providing what is essential to live with while at the same time generating solutions beyond the realm of convention. Unconsciously extracting historical forms and simplifying them SANAA successfully blend these ideas with their own global architecture.

House in plum grove (2003) is a small single family house designed to feel like a single connected space by making use of complex spatial structures based on the principle of agglomeration. This arrangement of space is very compact and is based on the vertical stacking of spaces of

different heights and proportions contained within a single delineated volume. Habitually residential projects have a fixed correlation between the number of inhabitants and the number of rooms, however, in this project each activity space is defined by its own room as opposed groupings. Albeit these spaces lead to an autonomous existence, through ingenious interplay of visual axes they set out a clever relationship with their surroundings by means of openings and full length glass. While each space is geometrically and functionally distinct they are also fully interconnected made possible by the structural steel walls which are reduced to a thickness of sixteen millimetres so as not to impose themselves as physical objects. The windows cut out of these walls give the impression of virtual transparency. Each opening provides a view into another room but also a view into another place.

[fractal city]
TOKYO



Architecture and technology were synchronized in the 'machine age' in the onset of the twentieth century. Steel, glass, reinforced concrete and aluminium products were elemental in shaping the direction architecture was to take. This period also saw the inception of the development of an urban infrastructure which established new contexts in which architecture would invariably respond. The awareness of the architect to sensitively adapt to these new concepts of space brought about by diversity in modern technology and building materials instigated changes in architectural modes of expression. The process encouraged powerful originality imbued with a delicacy fostered by tradition and the reality of Japan's consumer society. Superior technique was the expression of soaring imagination with a capacity 'to be subtle while bold, real while fictional, public while private, open while enclosed and continued while discontinued'. The diversity of contradiction is an element which contemporary architecture must accommodate in order to liberate Japanese sensibility from its incarceration in the museum of tradition and temper it anew.

Houses are small spaces, in which success is decided entirely by what is initially understood and how it is described; to show the idea clearly, not through figure, shape or form but by the most simple and direct way. Three elements are necessary to crystallise this notion of architecture. 'The first is that of authentic materials that possess substantiality. The second element is a pure geometry, which provides a framework enabling the architecture to have presence and the last element

is nature, one which is chaotic and given order by man'. This kind of architecture acquires power and becomes radiant when these elements are applied. Thinking of these ideals it is now possible to question the transition of a new spatial logic which manifests itself in the aforementioned precedents brought about by Japan's induction into modernity. This architecture is ultimately a question of how one responds to the demands of the land/city.

In old times Japanese people lived very close to the land and to surrounding natural phenomena. They were very sensitive to the geographic and climatic character of a place. In Ando's Azuma House, he 'severed in half a place for daily living composed of austere geometry by inserting an abstract space for the play of light and wind'. Within the project there are echoes of well known historical ideas but there is also a shift, a breaking away from them into terms of modernity. There is a prevalent notion that the Japanese sense of space has no centre of which Katsura is comparable where incident follows incident. There is no real focal point only a diverse relationship between the parts achieving its overall effect. However, Azuma's form is interested in another concept of space which implies centric forms associated more with western traditions. The concrete walls thus act as a framing device for the central void pulling the horizon into the space of the dwelling. The introvertedness of this space is a critical reaction of the architects view to the lack of contemplative places in Japanese cities and hence one can see only the sky.



[chaos and randomness]

TOKYO

The chaotic nature of these commercialised places is overwhelming to the point where one cannot think. This it would seem is the antithesis to Zen philosophy in Japanese culture. Thus, there could be a liaison here with the austere expressiveness of the concrete walls in the courtyard space that is typical in some Zen productions, that of mental spaces for relaxation. The courtyard also acts as a transitional space which suggests hidden possibilities. It is an ambiguous space which exists between inside and outside. One feels this when they stand directly beneath the connection bridge which joins the two sides of the dwelling, there is a sense of the 'engawa', a traditional term roughly meaning veranda. This however is not a uniquely Japanese notion as this interior-exterior exchangeability can also be seen in European spaces.

The work of Ito is different in the fact that he has arrived at his aesthetic through the study of Japan's social reality and not its historical background. His aesthetic is contiguous to that of pop art. His great concern has been the ephemerality of the consumer society. This notion of constant renewal is central to Japanese culture. This however symbolises one essential aspect of Japanese traditional sense of beauty; purification. It is possible to explain this from a simple traditional example in which the wooden structures of the Ise Shrine are reconstructed periodically every twenty years. Ito's architecture thus aspires to lightness. He is endowing things with light characteristics in order to make 'fields of flow'. The result, aesthetically speaking, is

that of an architecture that generates places where people can experience traversing. To Ito this means essentially designing architecture freely with the notion of living freely which is effectively turning its back on past works of modernism and constructing forms which emulate lightness contrasted with the heaviness which affiliates itself with the modern condition. This notion of traversing is applied to the U-House which allows the movement of people in diverse and unique ways. The effectiveness of this is in intellectual planning of a curved geometry or 'curved traversing'. This U-shaped corridor, thus, is reminiscent of the ambiguity which manifests itself in the contemporary Japanese city.

The architecture of the SANAA partners also deals with the issues of lightness although within a completely different realm. The apparent lightness of their buildings is not the result of the use of light materials but rather the dimensional reduction of the constituent components which characterise their structures. This is aimed at 'ensuring the most extreme relationship possible between their dimensions (extreme thinness and slenderness)'. While this is reminiscent of the transparency and lightness expressed in that of traditional culture it is also the antithesis. Conventional structures achieve delicacy because there is an independent frame and hence the walls have no load bearing necessities allowing the partitions to be temporary and moveable. A slender structure therefore is a prerequisite to their designs. The Plum House adheres to these ideals in which the clarity of organisation is clearly visible and one can see the relation-



[amoeba city]

TOKYO

ship between the parts of the structure. This generates a transparent feeling in the space creating fluidity of movement from one room to the next. Fluidity here is achieved through the abolition of hierarchies akin to that of the traditional house where every part of the building had the same weight. The plan is also intrinsic to the design in order to act as a release from a hierarchal system light is able to penetrate through the whole floor area.

One distinctive feature of Tokyo is that there is no big land owner. In cities like London, aristocrats own giant quantities of land, in Amsterdam public housing is the core of living facilities while in China the nation owns everything. One determining factor for this could be Japanese inheritance laws which impose heavy taxes leading to the inevitability that most landlords must sell their lands in order to pay taxes. This imposes radical social alterations as it difficult to retain wealth over three generations. Another seminal characteristic of Tokyo land law is that of no prescribed lot size. This induces continuous fragmentation of land lots. No matter how small the lot is, there still remains to be the possibility for further fragmentation. Also as land prices are invariably high in Tokyo this constitutes to the presence of 'Pet Architecture' as defined by Atelier Bow-Wow. This intensive use of land thus leads to the mass existence of small houses. It would appear then from the analysis of houses in this study that essence of which Japanese space continually manifests itself is preserved in the cuteness of dwellings of modest dimensions. While each of the houses examined here

undoubtedly responds to modernity in their own distinctive manner there are certain spatial influences that are of fundamental concern to a Japanese condition. These residences conversely, are in no way characteristic of the exotic spaces contemplated upon by the western observer, instead are the product of an amalgamation of many traditions which defines itself as an International Style. With the state so actively and passionately promoting the notion of a unique Japanese taste, it is understandable, therefore, to believe that one exists. However, it is now true to say that 'the traditional Japanese house is dead', with its only remnants emerging in allusions made by modernist architects. 'These wooden temples of the Edo period, European architecture brought by the Meiji government; the imperialist buildings built under military government before the war; the integrated transportation networks and modernised architecture under the post war democracy and the ruins from various disasters and renovations throughout history', all contribute to the eclectic style which forms the modern Tokyo we see today.

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THE DEMOCRATIC STREET:

A PLACE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL
AND THE COLLECTIVE

MARTIN LENNON

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Introduction

Ulrich Beck, when speaking about the quest for one's own life states how there must be a fusion of the individual as his or her own entity with the rest of rationalised society.¹ Where the individual can find this ability to integrate and more importantly participate in the rest of society, is nowhere more attainable than in the city. The city, simply through its density provides a desirable place for people to live among other people. However, whether or not the city is successful in establishing its own unique character, and also its appeal to people as a place, is inclusively determined by the streets that knit the city together. The streets are the life and soul of the city. They are, as the anthropologist Clifford Geertz suggests, a "fulfilment of every society's need to narrate a story to itself about itself."² They are far more complex than just physical laneways for hordes of people, they are social places. They are social networks that connect the city and its inhabitants.

Walking through the city's veins you get a sense of life and its idiosyncrasies. The street is an event in many ways, no one individual or group is heralded with complete control, and you are likely to encounter something unexpected as you mosey on through. The

distinguishing feature of a street is its capability of inviting social interaction between people. Whether it be; the curious glance as an unrecognised face passes by, or a full blown conversation between old friends, the degrees of social contact are varied and plentiful. Although the street allows for this shared dialogue and general interaction between city dwellers, it also allows an individual to gather their thoughts and feel at ease with their self while still being surrounded by other individual street walkers. The ability to be alone, while still being in the company of dozens of other people seems contradictory in many ways, but it is a quality that many city streets possess.

The street is the place where society's longing for a social communal destination is realised. When established it becomes a precious city component that warrants protection through its inhabitants. A complex supervision of the streets territory is activated through a common understanding that the street naturally bestows upon the people it hosts. The social ambience that characterises the street is however, in a constantly fragile state that can easily be overpowered by human machines (most frequently the car) that disrupt and blur the scale of the street. If the street is to remain as the social realm it was originally granted to be by society then it must serve its people and not artificial extensions of those people.



The Ramblas at night. Barcelona,.

The Street Dynamic

The Savvy Eye

The street is the social dimension to the city's anatomy. It should be completely considerate of the pedestrian and their needs rather than concerning itself with the facilitation of the vehicle also. City streets are the habitual public forum. They do not exist simply as channels for city dwellers to traverse the urban landscape but rather they are the original social network. The street mixes the city inhabitant with the city excursionist in a crucially subtle way. On the city street you are constantly being approached by fellow city walkers, although personal connections are rare, everyone has a duty that benefits every other stranger on the street. It becomes a self-surveeyed place which sustains itself through the presence of people. It relies heavily on the people that occupy its dimensions because a breakdown in the surveillance that their presence provides can be detrimental to the future success of the street. Jane Jacobs, in "The Death and Life of Great American Cities" explains how one lapse in a streets public surveillance can be unforgiving. The occurrence of an unsavoury or antisocial incident on the street is disconcerting for the people who were, through their occupation of the street, providing a curtain of security. Doubt creeps into the minds of the street dwellers and they decide to use a different route which results in less foot traffic streaming through the street, which in turn means less people to create a safe atmosphere and hence the street in question becomes a vulnerable target for more unpleasantness to infiltrate.³ It is a counterproductive yet natural reaction, which unfortunately can lead to the abandonment of the street.

Although a constant conveyor belt of detached city wanderers lends itself to a sense of safety within a street, it lacks a more tuned knowledge of the street's specific



Amsterdam, workers district, streetlife in the 19th century.

dynamic. The street is physically defined by the buildings that frame it. However, it is these buildings and more precisely the people that occupy them that contribute to the streets safety and hence social quality. Jane Jacobs refers to these individuals as the "natural proprietors" of the street. They have acquired a familiarity with the street and its inhabitants and consequently they provide an informed eye which can recognise when something is wrong in the street.⁴ It is their knowledge of the street as a place and its inhabitants that gives them an integral role in the streets surveillance differing from the average street pedestrian. They are a regular if not constant presence on the street. They reside at street level usually as butchers, locksmiths, storekeepers and so on, not only do they provide the obvious service that they advertise, but also they act as these informed eyes. They become entrusted members of the community. It is a trust that is built up over time through short pieces of social dialogue with the streets inhabitants like "comparing opinions with the customers at the bakery and nodding hello to the boys drinking pop on the stoop".⁵ Through these small snippets of communication, that occur while providing a practical service to the streets people, the proprietor accumulates a trust and knowledge of the people that aids them in their defence of the street.

They really are the street itself and not just a space that leaches from it. The units at street level are extensions off the street that attract outside city walkers into its confines through the goods and services they offer and also provide a savvy eye to its front-line.

The Community Spine

While meandering through the Medina in Fez, Morocco, one witnesses the street in its true role as the glue that holds the city together. The Medina itself is essentially this intricate accumulation of streets which sustain this self regulated organism. The streets serve as the network through which goods and information travel in order to maintain itself sustaining existence. People supply each other with the raw materials they need such as one restaurant providing the food from one stall while the orange juice seems to appear in the hands of a waiter from somewhere else a few dozen paces down the street. Everything is constantly feeding off and providing for everything else. The unrelenting presence of cats insures the plight of any vermin that may dare to make an appearance in public, while the cats themselves live off the scraps from the food markets.



The Medina, Fez, Morocco.



The Medina, Fez, Morocco.



The streets within the Medina are the ultimate version of the “streets with eyes” as described by Jane Jacobs. There is always a dense network of conversations bouncing from one side of the street to the other. It is from these types of cross conversations that relationships are nurtured and hence a tight knit web of security is composed. The petty criminal would find it impossible to escape without capture in such an intimate and socially evolved place as the Medina. There are always people watching from an infinite number of vantage points. Behind every niche and on every rooftop there is the prospect of another set of intrigued eyes. The streets not only carry goods from one end of the Medina to the other but also information.

Each and every turn through the fragmented body of the Medina reveals another surprise. The Medina does not only host a multitude of commentary among the street dwellers but also a plethora of contrasting spaces. One meanders through this charming place passing in and out of light wells, through dense crowds of shoppers and traders, dodging energetic children and men with wheel barrows decked in greenery and there is an overwhelming sense of life and community which is transmitted through its apparently dishevelled streets.

The Medina expresses how a community spirit can flourish off the street because circumstances are so inviting of social contact. However Herman Hertzberger in “Lessons

for Students in Architecture” identifies the factors that in modern society hamper the emergence of a community spirit as: the automobile (which I will address in more detail in due course), a lack of density (which is certainly not a problem for the Medina), economic success (the need for a neighbours help becomes diminished and so contact becomes less frequent) and finally the connection between the private dwelling and the public street.⁶



Crowded Suq at Fez, Morocco

The connection of the private and public realm is crucial to the success of the street as it connects the two worlds of the individual. In family and kinship the authors reveal how the people they interviewed had a strong relationship with their street and the neighbours, but yet rarely would an invitation be extended to enter the private dwelling.⁷ The street was designated for socialising and where relationships with neighbours were established whereas the private space was the individual’s sanctuary. The street in effect acted as the neutral ground for the evolution of the neighbourhood.

Street Definition

In “Variations on a Theme Park” by Michael Sorkin, the author discusses the rise of the “new city”, the dishevelled territory that is suburbia. Suburbia, unlike a good city, is severely lacking coherence within itself. The inner workings of the suburban model read as shattered built urban fragments that are forced together with no consideration towards its sociological implications. Sorkin reveals the deficiency in this place is not the omission or inclusion of any particular urban element that you may encounter whilst city strolling but rather it is the inbetween spaces that are uncontrolled.⁸ The streets that host this place are vague pieces of urban environment. Delineation of public and private space is crucial in establishing clarity of space both physically and psychologically. The formation of the space that eventually employs the social condition of a street must be a precise confinement but yet must exert an obvious feeling of permeability and a way out essentially.

The street is often described as a public room; however, this seems to represent a contrasting urban anatomy to that of which it owns. It is not a public room because rooms are read as singular elements within a wider structure. The street is an aspect of the city that carves through it, sometimes losing its definiteness but fundamentally holding it together. Sorkin states with dismay that “the city has become a theme park”, a sterile place with no expression and character due to a lack of identity and connection. “In the public space of the theme park or the shopping mall, speech itself is restricted: there are no demonstrations in Disneyland.”⁹ The street is relied on in giving the various elements of the city a physical orientation and cohesion so that the people of the city know what domain belongs to them. Allan B Jacobs in “Great Streets” when contemplating definition of streets urges that a street should itself be a place rather than a moment within a place.¹⁰

The Automobile: A Misplaced Resource

It is disturbing to contemplate, but it seems that people are slowly eliminating their opportunities to meet other people. This is melancholically reflected upon by Serge Chermayeff and Christopher Alexander in “Community and Privacy”, where the authors suggest that people have lost their understanding of the “human scale”. People pass one another by in the city in their private cars or you hear a person’s voice over an intercom in the train station and hence the “human scale” becomes confused and undefined.¹¹

The social encounter is slowly being dissolved or transforming, to become something different entirely, something less human. Encounters are less intimate and more obscure. The more artificial devices we place within the process of interaction the more thresholds we have to break in order to establish legitimate human contact. With the capabilities of the cell phone and the internet, connection is frequent and accessible yet still only one dimensional. In contrast the street as it is supposed to exist is a more wholesome experience.

However, this wholesome experience is becoming less and less common for the average city resident. The chances are that you more frequently encounter other people while fully cordoned off by a pane of glass or sheet of metal as you apathetically glide by in a vehicle of some variety. The street is the expanse of the human being. Inclusion of these louder, faster and bulkier machines causes a competition to commence between the pedestrian and such machines, a competition the pedestrian inevitably loses. The social atmosphere of the street is dependent on being able to hear the mutterings of the people that occupy it. If the passing of a car impedes your ability to converse with a person as you amble through a street, then it becomes an antisocial place. The street, as has been conveyed, is a democratic site comprised of individuals that contribute not only their presence but their voice. If this site becomes contaminated with such an inadmissible presence, as these machines, then the democratic architecture of the street is obviously compromised. The street should be a space where communication is rampant and man’s voice, which is indicative of human discourse, is the dominant audible component. However the popular trend within cities now is to reject this idea of the street. Chermayeff and Alexander



O’Connell’s St, Limerick. A lonely pedestrian stranded in no-man’s land around the vehicular traffic.

proclaim that mans “natural voice is hardly ever heard above the din of machinery and mechanical enlargements of natural sounds.” Sequentially man has lost himself.¹²

Steven Johnson, in his book “Emergence”, relays a conversation he had with a friend from California in which the friend astonishingly categorises the passing of low-income areas on the freeway, as class integration.¹³ The scale and intimacy of what now is deemed an encounter is far from the cosy chat on the street. The tragic thing about what Johnson’s friend said, is that the highway in a city like Los Angeles, is one of the few places (if one can call it a place) where various groups of people are mixed. However, this type of integration is purely a measure of proximity rather than social integration. The city’s public space is primarily privatised with the presence of cars. People can travel through supposed public space in their own private bubbles, avoiding, the public and social pulse of the city.

The unyielding pressure that the existence and popularity of the automobile has on the construction and formation of our cities is something that has to cease if the social integrity of the city is to be preserved.”Community and Privacy” describes it as enemy number one.¹⁴ It has become a normal object in the city and the average person sees it as a desirable if not essential tool. With its popularity and with people’s obsessive dependence on them it is becoming more and more difficult to argue that they are detrimental to the social worth of the city. It is something that is now etched in our psyche. As Garreau plainly stated it in “Edge City”, “Americans are in the habit of never walking if they can ride”.¹⁵ Of course this is not just confined to the American race. Garreau also clarifies that the automobile is the most attractive ride of all because it shifts the power of mobility specifically to the individual.¹⁶

With the cars emergence, collective transport would appear irrational, why share the ride with strangers when you can enjoy

it inside your own personal pod. In “AS in DS” by Alison Smithson, the positive qualities of the car are presented as being its flexibility and its immediate availability. The car is “operative in all moods of the European climate”¹⁷ Smithson interprets it as the delicate equilibrium between togetherness and apartness. The ability to change someone’s view and geographical position rapidly acts as a means of plugging out from the social network of the street and into a sheltered realm of spectatorship rather than participation. It appears that the car should not be banished conclusively. It should be accommodated appropriately within the public realm so that it maintains the ability to connect the spaces we inhabit but not obstruct their inner mechanics. The car acts as a getaway system which the individual requires in order to function inside the communal spaces of the city. It creates a balance in that it offers an alternative to the social street and also the private static dwelling because it is dynamic. It allows the individual to escape from the familiar, and so its flexibility serves as a comfort to the individual. Once the democratic character of the public domain is conserved, the car has a viable and beneficial place in the world.



O'Connell's St, Limerick, The presence of cars extinguishes any potential for intimate conversation along the street.

The Concept of the Street

The Permeable Theatre

Richard Sennett in “The Fall of Public Man” when contemplating ones quest for self states, “To know oneself has become his principal burden; to know oneself has become an end, instead of a means through which one knows the world.”¹⁸ This is possibly the mentality that has reduced the priority given to the street in recent times with the ascension of the suburban ethos. Unfortunately there is an idea that self discovery is something that occurs in a sheltered privacy where the only reference is oneself. However, to consider the self in one social dimension, the private, despite it being obvious that it exists through both a public and private domain is misguided. People live in a world that relies on the development of relationships and connections in order for it to evolve and become fruitful. The structure that empowers these relationships to prosper is inherently the public domain; it is a deliberately constructed social network such as the street. As Sennett states, the society we have developed now is placing unjustified trust in the private domain, which leads to a desensitised mind and an under stimulated self which all culminates in the devolution of society. The quest to know oneself is a journey best taken through the public realm.

With this notion that the public sphere is the key to self discovery Sennett compares the street to the stage in that they both present the same problems for the subject who inhabits them. They both require their inhabitant to excite a feeling of belief in their respective audiences. They extend an invitation to the individual to stress the boundaries of what is truly personal and what is contrived.¹⁹ However, if the individual decides to submerge oneself in a

warped projection of their self they must be committed and prepared to accept the consequences of a sceptical audience. The street is a place of free expression but it comes with a responsibility and the street has a pre-existing code of appropriateness which will be deliberated later on.

Sennett speaks about the idea of roles that people play depending on different situations they find themselves a part of. When considering this idea it seems that the individual is contained in different roles while dwelling in the public domain and the private domain. There is a separate code of acceptable behaviour within both realms.²⁰ It is this code of acceptable behaviour that defines appropriateness and informs the individual of what role to play.

The theatre or stage comprises of many roles and actors but fundamentally the aspiration of the theatre is to tell a story which usually subsumes a moral or meaning. The theatre is something experienced as it unfolds in front of you but yet it is considered afterward in another setting. This sequence of experience and thought is something that overlaps with our lives within the public sphere. The happenings within the public domain are not authentically examined until we are back within the private boundary. Our encounters with strangers on the public street are the topics of discussion within our private relations. As Hannah Arendt so eloquently expresses in her book “The Human Condition”; “even the twilight which illuminates our private and intimate lives is ultimately derived from the much harsher light of the public realm”²¹. So possibly the comparison between the street and the theatre goes beyond the idea of roles to include the logistics of both experiences, in other words the sequence through which both reach an social conclusion are similar.

Bernard Rudofsky in “Streets for People” also expresses how the street is a place that was moulded on theatrical performance from the outset. Rudofsky also notes that many of Shakespeare’s classics manifest

themselves on the street. The street was seen as the original canvas of theatrics and so the appropriate backdrop for Shakespeare's work would have to have been the street.²² When one considers the incidents that arouse discussion and debate among the general populace one discovers that they are the dramas that leak through the public forum. The origin of the gossip may not have directly been the street but that is where the story breaks and hence that is where the conversation is perpetuated. Therefore the street is the stage on which the drama is exhibited.

The street is in essence the dynamic stage. The actor and the audience are part of this constantly shifting network where the actor can instantly change to become part of the audience and vice versa. In the 19th century the public sought a truth from the stage because a tangible truth was becoming more difficult to ascertain within the public domain. They wanted an accurate portrayal of the characters that the actors were representing within the theatre. The street was becoming difficult to interpret because the people it harboured were acting out roles rather than conveying a true self.²³ Although one would think that the stage is a place for creativity and abstraction it seems that for the people of the 19th century the streets were already saturated in false impersonations and so the stage and theatre had to act as the street's contraposition. Today the street still accommodates a fictitious dimension but that is the free nature of the street. In it allowing its inhabitants to fib it reveals a far more profound truth than could be discovered within the private realm.

A further extension to the comparison between the street and the stage is the animated dialogue that is spoken by the street proprietor. Rudofsky when remembering the Italian street describes it as "the echo chamber of human passions".²⁴ Retreating back to the thoughts of Sennett, these street vendors are assuming the role of the protagonists in the street, desperately trying to captivate their audience. However, today in western society the street proprietor is

more often than not sheltered from the immediate passerby. The way in which knowledge is passed is a far more visual transaction. Advertisement bill boards rather than verbal proclamations are the preferred means through which potential customers receive their information. However, the streets are not silent but the common prevailing din today is entirely different to that of the street vendor's cry. That din is of course mechanical and more often than not is being produced by the almighty car which is something I addressed more vigorously in a previous chapter.

Although the street vendor's voice may be dwindling into the abyss due to advertising, the street still attracts its performers. Musicians and other types of entertainers use the street as a place of employment. They rely on the generosity of the street walker to sustain them financially. This act in itself is a perfect demonstration of belief in the streets democratic constitution. It offers the opportunity to perform and supplies an audience. However, as I have been accentuating, the street is a democratically governed place and ultimately the street will decide whether the performer is a worthy addition to its dynamic or not. Arendt also considers the presence of a judgement factor within the public sphere when she remarks, "only what is relevant, worthy of being seen or heard, can be tolerated, so that the irrelevant becomes automatically a private matter"²⁵ Rudofsky suggests that in America, street music is viewed as a "throwback to barbarism" but yet there still exists an adjuration for raw unprocessed "vocal product".²⁶ One has to conclude that the reason that the busker and his music settle well in the clutches of the street has to be related to the streets association with the stage. Also the idea of music as an expressive art form is also in tune with (pardon the pun) the streets democratic connotations.



9

O'Connell's St, Limerick. Street musician playing the accordion. as people passed by he would not only PLAY his familiar tune but also engage in conversation with his audience.

The People's Manifesto

Sennett raises the question of expression in the public and private sense. Is there a detectable distinction between expression projected when considering public relations and intimate relations?²⁷ It seems that individual expression and individual personality are two separate entities. The public and private domain does not entice the same expression from the individual. Intimate relations that occur at a private scale involve a knowledge that has been acquired over a sustained period of time. Whereas, within the public territory, there is no previously attained knowledge, and hence the individual's expression is neutral or even acted. The purpose of this showmanship if you will is to protect the democratic integrity of the public realm. There are certain unwritten laws that apply when moving from private to the public space. Public space such as

the street is autonomous, it is self-governed by the components that are consolidated to form it, and this includes the people who inhabit it. These laws are separate; though often coincide, to those imposed by a higher authority. It is a street attitude that is developed through the collaboration of its societal occupants.²⁸ Decorum in the street is something like society that shifts as time passes. The physical edges of the street remain constant but the attitude of the street at any given time is constructed through a democratically resolved process involving the streets population. Each individual develops their own stance on what is acceptable behaviour whilst interacting with the public realm and then collectively and democratically an attitude is established for the street itself. The overall sense of liberation that the street extends to the people who occupy it is ultimately contributed by each of those individual people and their respective behaviour.

The expression of the individual within the

territory of the street should not be invasive. “If the street was an invention, it set out to designate a public domain that would take precedence over individual rights.” Spiro Kostof in “The City Assembled” ensures that the street is a political place and device.²⁹ Whether it was solely created for that purpose is unlikely but it has embraced that entity as it has evolved through history. Politically the street is a place of protest and during the Middle Ages in Rome the street from the *Catel S. Angelo*, which was the beginning of the independent papal quarter of the *Borgo*, to the commune’s centre on the *Campidoglio* was a popular platform for the people to express their disgruntlement against the power possessed by the Bishop of Rome. Also in Rome, the *processo*, which was the procession of a newly elected pope through the city’s streets, was exploited by the people in order to protest against the regime.³⁰ More recently in 2011 the people of Egypt went in search of democracy and they found unity and coherence in the streets. Their grievances with the government were expressed in the streets of Cairo, Alexandria and other Egyptian cities which eventually resulted in the disempowerment of President Hosni Mubarak.³¹ The streets

are the sacred territory of the people, which is to say they belong to the people as a whole but they do not extend the right for any invasive individual to convey an overall dominion over their terrain. If the street allows a preference to be shown to any one individual, that will cast a shadow of doubt over its democratic and balanced reputation. Arendt in “The Human Condition” expresses how everything that appears in public can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity³² It is this complete coverage that the street affords to its inhabitants that gives its democratic integrity. It is the perfect holster of action and rebuttal because it is part of a network that ties a city together. These ties as has been mentioned before are not just physical but also based on the transferral of social ideas. Therefore the street is the natural medium for public protest.

However, the street can and has been manipulated in order to popularise a particular political agenda. The street parades in Soviet Russia were presented as a celebration for and of the people when truly they were trying to instil a political mentality in the public that witnessed them. The main streets



Tahrir Square, Cairo, February 8th 2011. Over 1 million protesters in Tahrir Square only demanding the removal of the regime and for President Mubarak to step down

were also used to deceive the populous into believing a more splendid living condition was soon to arrive through Soviet governance.³³ Gorky Street in Moscow was a prime example where the luxurious street defining buildings were presented as the beginning of what would soon be endemic throughout the Soviet nation.³⁴ The people and the street had a constantly active association with each other, which was based around communication and hence just as the street was the natural medium for public protest in Egypt it was the perfect medium to pollute with the Soviet itinerary. The street was abused because it was the only trusted platform of the people and it was a place that bore no prejudices.

Conclusion

The street is where the city unveils itself to us in its most honest form. The city is a wild theatre where secrets are divulged and exaggerated and where life is unedited. The street is the window into this wilderness where although we are protected we are still immersed in its beating atmosphere. It is a solid presence in that it is tangible or if not tangible it is at least accessible unlike most of a city's sheltered components.

The street is the inbetween which forms a public forum that vast numbers of people share. Yet in this bedlam of emotion and chatter we still remain distinguished individuals. The same physical restraints confine you and the crowd that surrounds you yet one can still feel free from the crowd. What separates everyone from the masses is the unknown. The fellow street walker, although physically visible, is blissfully unidentified. They are faces that arouse no feeling of recognition yet their presence is of comfort. The street dweller is not tied to the stranger that roams the street simultaneously in a way that marks family or friend, but rather

it is a common mindset which states that the street is the territory of the public that births that relationship. It is the democratic bond of a crowd united. The street is a place where your presence demonstrates your support for its principles and participation is what fuels its life and aids its sustainment.

Ultimately the street is a social network with its prime passenger being information. It can be a place that is comprised of individual strangers that do not share anything in common except that they are walking on the same surface yet democratically this place forms a code of conduct for the collective. This is not something that is contrived or planned; it is a resolution that is reached instinctively. The street is not an invention but rather a discovery. There is an ingrained human desire for such a public outlet as the street and this desire must find a home. The condition of a street transcends some city spaces that are not accommodating and hence the street is not a place that is made or invented but rather it blooms where it will survive and flourish as a social and democratic thoroughfare.

Notes

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- 2 Richard Ingersoll, *Streets: Critical Perspectives on Public Space* (California: University of California Press, 1994), 4.
- 3 Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, Inc , 1961), 44.
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- 8 Michael Sorkin, *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the end of Public Space* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992),xii
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- 11 Serge Chermayeff and Christopher Alexander, *Community and Privacy: Towards a New Architecture of Humanism* (USA: Doubleday and Co. Inc, 1963),76
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34 Richard Ingersoll, *Streets: Critical Perspectives on Public Space* (California: University of California Press, 1994), 67.

Image Acknowledgments

1 The Ramblas at night. Barcelona, Martin Lennon, 2011

2 Herman Hertzberger. Amsterdam, workers district, streetlife in the 19th century: quite different from today, but remember how cramped and inadequate housing was in those days.

3 The Medina, Fez. The streets are lined with butchers and other traders who carry out their business as people rush by and the cats scamper under foot. Martin Lennon, 2011.

4 & 5 The Medina, Fez. As you walk along the thin confined streets of this place you are constantly being observed from the skys. Martin Lennon, 2011.

6 The Medina, Fez. People are shoulder to shoulder as they pass along the sometimes fabric covered streets. Martin Lennon 2011.

7 O'Connell's St, Limerick. A lonely pedestrian stranded in no-man's land around the vehicular traffic. Martin Lennon, 2011.

8 O'Connell's St, Limerick, The presence of cars extinguishes any potential for intimate conversation along the street. Martin Lennon, 2011.

9 O'Connell's St, Limerick. Street musician playing the accordion, as people passed by he would not only play his familiar tune but also engage in conversation with his audience. Martin Lennon, 2011.

10 Tahir Square, Cairo, February 8th 2011. Over 1 million protestors in Tahrir Square only demanding the removal of the regime and for Mubarak to step down and there was many millions all over Egypt demanding the same things. Jonathan Rashad.

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Alison Smithson, *As in Ds: an eye on the road* (Baden: Lars Müller, 2001)

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958)

A black and white photograph of a modern architectural courtyard. The scene is dominated by a long, narrow, shallow water channel that runs down the center of a wide, paved plaza. The plaza is flanked by tall, rectangular concrete walls that create a sense of enclosure. The walls have a textured, block-like appearance. In the background, a bright, overcast sky meets a distant horizon line, possibly a body of water. The overall composition is symmetrical and emphasizes geometric forms and light/shadow play.

MODERN **POSTMODERN**

LOUIS I. KAHN

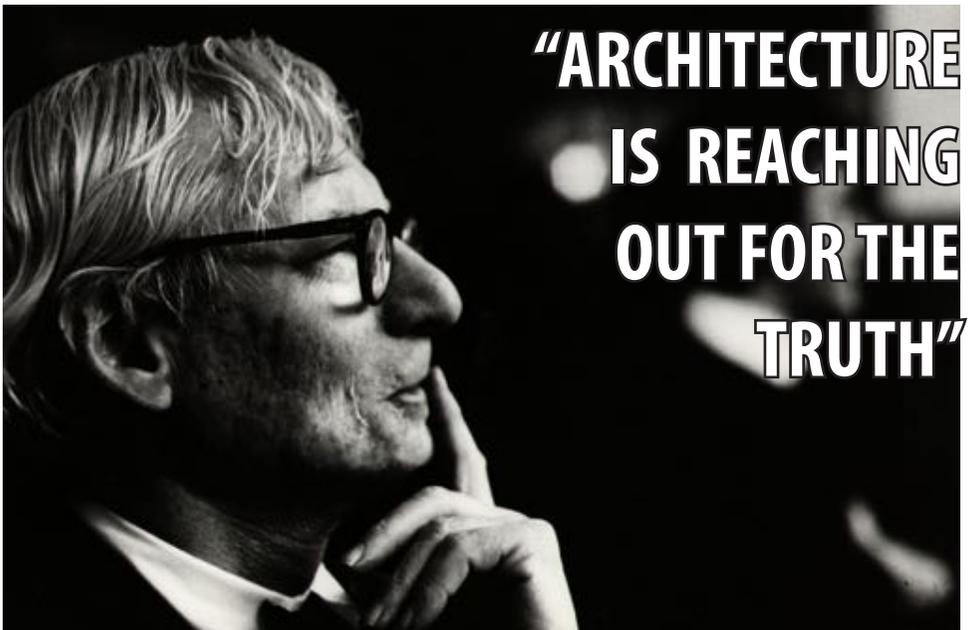
ROBERT VENTURI

DAVID WILLIAMS

KAHN AND VENTURI

Louis I. Kahn and Robert Venturi are both perceived as figureheads of distinct architectural movements - Kahn for the late modern, and Venturi for the postmodern. The common perception of Kahn as the architect-poet and Venturi as the eclectic capitalist presumes little or no common ground between the two, when in fact the opposite is the case. Having first met in 1947, Venturi then worked for Kahn for 9 months in 1956, during which time Kahn became something of a mentor to Venturi, and the two became friends. Kahn was to Venturi “an architectural mother”, as Venturi’s partner Denise Scott Brown wrote.

In the context of the transition of architecture from the modern to the postmodern, Kahn and Venturi are key figures, but they do not stand in direct opposition. An examination of the philosophies and works of either architect would reveal a blurring of the distinctions of the movements to which each is attributed. Kahn eschewed the uniformity of the International style, while Venturi has railed against his own position in the postmodern movement, stating “I am not now nor ever have been a Postmodernist. I unequivocally disavow fatherhood of this architectural movement.” Venturi was to become a polemical figure in the latter half of the 20th century, usually rebuked by modern architects for his supposed eclecticism and lack of a strongly defined ordering system. His buildings however are thoroughly modern, and possess a sensitivity that many works of the international style do not. Over the course of his career, Louis Kahn meanwhile moved from an architecture that was clear modernism to something more culturally sensitive. Both architects have arrived at many of the same conclusions, though often by different means.





Vincent Scully, himself involved in the Pennsylvania architecture scene at the time with Kahn and Venturi, has written about both architects. Scully, unlike most has long championed Venturi's work, and has at varying times given praise to, and been critical of Kahn's. Closely linked to Venturi, (he wrote the introduction to 'Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture' in 1966) he has seen Venturi's work "as opening a new, more humane, and more culturally responsive phase in the evolution of modern architecture"¹

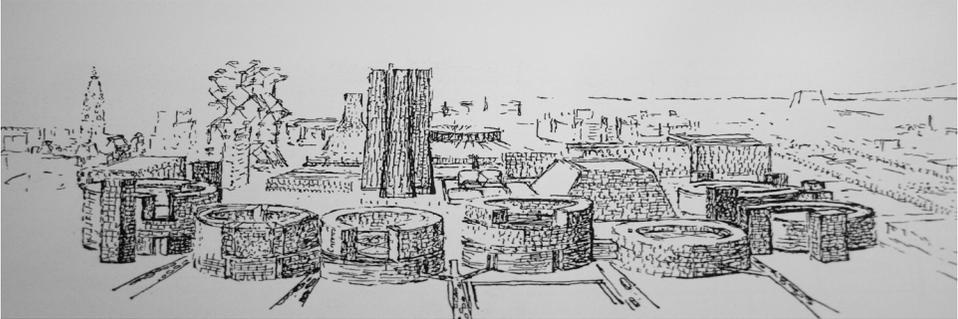
PHILADELPHIA SCHOOL

The state of Pennsylvania, and in particular the city of Philadelphia, is a fitting setting for comparison of the two architects. Kahn was seen as the leader of the emerging 'Philadelphia School' of architectural thought, which was mainly generated by the postwar regeneration of Philadelphia in which Kahn was deeply involved. Venturi served as Kahn's teaching assistant at the University of Pennsylvania and went on to work in Kahn's office in Venturi's native city. Kahn was deeply involved in planning matters in Philadelphia, having proposed schemes for the redevelopment of the city as far back as 1941. Kahn proposed schemes for Philadelphia until 1961 which were thoroughly modernist, his earlier schemes even eliminated much of the city's existing architecture. Later proposals involved monumental parking structures built in a defensive ring around the city, encircling it at a huge scale and essentially closing it off. Vincent Scully has said Kahn's Philadelphia proposals are "grandiose and cataclysmic, like Le Corbuiser's schemes."² While Venturi worked for Kahn in 1956, Kahn was working on a proposal for the city's Civic Centre. None of Kahn's proposed projects were adopted by the city, and at this time Kahn was becoming frustrated with progress. Venturi sent Kahn a note as his friend referring to the

1 Vincent Scully, *Modern Architecture and Other Essays*, (Princeton University Press, 2003)

2 Stanislaus Von Moos, *Venturi, Scott Brown and associates: Buildings and projects, 1986-1997* (Monacelli, 2000)

schemes. “Our country must be lovely. Economism can build a society which is rich, prosperous, powerful, even one which has a reasonably wide diffusion of material wellbeing. It cannot build one which is lovely.”³ Venturi advocated an adaptive approach, opposing Kahn’s tabula rasa schemes at the time, and promoted realism over idealism. Venturi’s disagreement with Kahn was due the entirely rational nature of his work, and the abstracted ordering system behind it. Venturi responded more directly to context. “I seek of complex and contradictory architecture based on the richness and ambiguity of modern experience”.



1960 proposal by Louis Kahn for the redevelopment of Philadelphia

The image persists of Kahn standing strongly as a structural purist, against Venturi as a reviled capitalist, but this is false. In reality Venturi drew from Kahn, particularly in his early work of ‘Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture’ (1966). This was Venturi’s initial “gentle manifesto”, which he has said was influenced by Kahn’s teachings. In it he argued against modernist thought for a “Non straightforward Architecture.” Kahn wished to embody the meaning of architecture with clarity and order. Though Venturi advocated meaning in architecture (he is of course not a reductive or technocratic architect) he immediately departed from Kahn’s modernism derived orders.

COMPLEXITY AND CONTRADICTION

“Architects can no longer afford to be intimidated by the puritanically moral language of orthodox Modern architecture. I like elements which are hybrid rather than “pure,” compromising rather than “clean,” distorted rather than “straightforward,” ambiguous rather than “articulated,” perverse as well as impersonal, boring as well as “interesting,” conventional rather than “designed,” accommodating rather than excluding, redundant rather than simple, vestigial as well as innovating, inconsistent and equivocal rather than direct and clear. I am for messy vitality over obvious unity. I include the non sequitur and proclaim the duality.”⁴ Venturi brought the element of ambiguity back into architecture, having previously been eliminated by the structural purism of the modernists.

3 Stanislaus Von Moos, Venturi, Scott Brown and associates: Buildings and projects, 1986-1997 (Monacelli, 2000)

4 Robert Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, (Harry N. Abrams, 1977)

“The calculated ambiguity of expression is based on the confusion of experience as reflected in the architectural program”.⁵ For Venturi this calculated ambiguity gives rise to a tension that stresses the importance of form and meaning in architecture. The ‘oscillating relationships’ of tension and ambiguity allow the concentration of disparate elements and styles for which Venturi is known. Although potentially explosive, Venturi created with this philosophy a humane, culturally responsive and deeply contextual architecture.

FAIRY TALES AND GOLDEN DUST

In the latter part of Kahn’s career from 1950 to 1974, the years during which he rose to prominence, he became a proponent of an alternative modernism separate from the reductive and assembled mainstream modernism of the second half of the 20th century, which was characterised for the most part by the ideals of Gropius and Van Der Rohe. The 20th century rationalisation of architecture brought with it a technocratic focus, with an increasing priority being given to economy of means and forms. In many cases this new focus brought architecture to the point where it became merely a subset of engineering and the construction industry. Kahn’s later work redressed this balance, using his unique personal philosophy to explore the poetics and expressive potential of architecture - In a sense, to create a physical embodiment of the immeasurable. Though Kahn’s work went beyond the program of modern architecture, he did not eschew it’s values.

“He has gone beyond the schemes of functionalism, but in many instances he utilizes functionalist aesthetics. He has a rationalist’s cult of stereometry, which the thin casings and total transparency of his blocks tend to refute. He has mastered the vital concepts of the organic, but does not share in it’s morphology”⁶

Kahn is often regarded solely as a modern architect in the vein of Mies and Le Corbusier. In many ways this is true, as Kahn’s work throughout his career displays a strong structural rationalism borne of his abstracted principles of order and purity. Modernist proponents of the International Style rejected classicism and the transcendental role of the orders. In his later career Kahn sought an order, but in keeping with modernist thinking it could not be that of the classical orders. The modernists’ attempt to define their own epoch meant the rejection of what came before, and only original ideas were to be thought of as valid in creating a modern architecture.

“If I think what I would do, other than architecture, it would be to write the new fairy tale. From the fairy tale came the airplane, and the locomotive, and the wonderful instruments of our minds”⁷

Kahn’s two most often used phrases are Fairy Tales and Golden Dust, together

5 Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, (Harry N. Abrams, 1977)

6 Enzo Fratelli, *Zodiac 8*, 1960

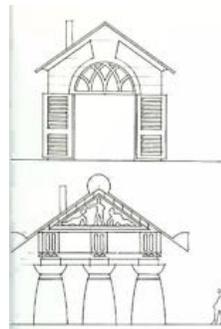
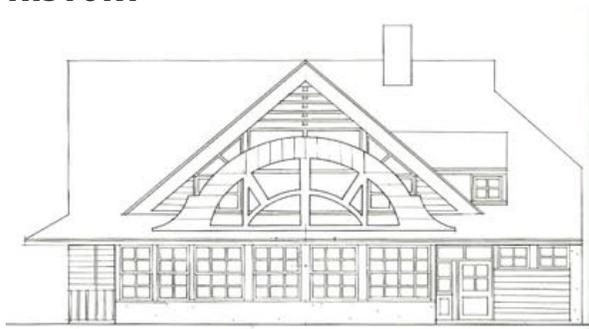
7 David Brownlee, *Louis Kahn: In the Realm of Architecture*, (Rizzoli, 2005)

they go a long way toward explaining his architectural thought. Kahn's understanding of 'fairy tale' is fundamentally future oriented toward fulfilling desire rather than solving immediate problems. The wish of a fairy tale is the thing which drives us forward, not technology- the unmade thing drives us. The fairy tale was the imaginative practice for envisioning the 'not yet'. It is the basis for satisfying the not yet expressed.

“Golden dust’ is a residue of the past blown forward into the future. It is a configuration of tradition lending itself the interpretation because it is not complete- interpretation of it in the present, motivated by the wish of a fairy tale, is how golden dust becomes something new”.⁸ Golden dust is an expression from which you get the essence of the meaning of tradition. Golden dust falling off the past is what gives the architect the power to anticipate, dream and desire. The wish of a fairy tale is a possibility made up from archaic residue.

By the middle of his career Kahn had cemented his philosophies into a personal order, a 'beginning' as he termed it, and he began to depart from the architectural thought of his modernist contemporaries. Though these abstract and utopic ideals were in keeping with the modernist way of doing things, the divergence of Kahn's thought introduced a tension between the modern and the classical in his work. It is at this point in his career, when his work became most interesting, and the perception of him solely as a modern architect becomes invalid.

HISTORY



Flint House, Robert Venturi.

Reconciliation of classical orders with vernacular american architecture

The question of history and historical contact in architecture shows both common ground and the nature of the deviation between the architectures of Kahn and Venturi.

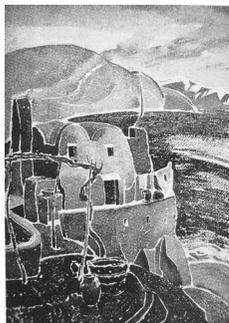
Like Kahn in the latter part of his career, Venturi encouraged an architecture that accommodated human uses and human meaning. This involved a connection with vernacular and cultural traditions. It was, as Vincent Scully says “The renewed connection with the whole of our past which Kahn's mature work had begun”⁹.

Perhaps belying their mutual Beaux-Arts education, Kahn and Venturi were

8 Nathaniel Coleman, *Utopias and Architecture*, (Routledge, 2005)

9 Vincent Scully, *Modern Architecture and Other Essays*, (Princeton University Press,

at differing times in their careers very much influenced by Rome and Roman architecture. Four years after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania, in 1928 Kahn spent a year sketching and painting in Europe, Italy in particular. It is tempting to think that the gestation of Kahn's mature work began here, as his drawings from the time centre on the vernacular architecture of "mass, pure void, and devoid of glass"¹⁰. Having been trained by Paul Cret in the Beaux-Arts tradition, the classical orders and heavy masonry construction of vernacular Italian architecture were "in a sense... the architecture he grew up with"¹¹.



Pencil drawings of vernacular Italian architecture, Louis Kahn

With the 1930's came the increasing trend toward modernism in the United States, but in totalitarian Italy the predominant architecture of the time was modern classicism (which was also to be used by the Nazi's). As Scully says "Politically you couldn't touch it", and so Kahn distanced himself from classicism and turned to the modern movement, now without an order for which he so deeply searched. Kahn as modernist architect was searching for original ideas. As the architecture of eclecticism was unacceptable to him he found his much sought after order in the roots of humanity, the earliest and most powerful human institutions. His mature work came to embody their meaning, and in this way made historical contact with mankind throughout history. While Kahn embraces the intangibles of man, Venturi's contextual architecture directly connects with the extant culture of previous generations. Having studied at the American Academy in Rome from 1954-1955, Venturi came to celebrate the richness and complexity of the classical and vernacular. In 'Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture' (1966) he "extolled the ambiguities, inconsistencies and idiosyncracies of Palladio, Michaelangelo... and glorified Baroque and Mannerist architecture generally"¹²

"Venturi shapes a contemporary architecture that is more wholly modern than that of the international style because it can also engage in a dialogue with the architecture of the past".¹³

10 Sarah Williams Goldhagen, *Louis Kahn's Situated Modernism*, (Yale university press, 2001)

11 Vincent Scully, *Modern Architecture and Other Essays*, (Princeton University Press, 2003)

12 Marian Moffett, Michael W. Fazio, Lawrence Wodehouse, *A World History of Architecture*, (Laurence King Publishing, 2004)

13 Vincent Scully, *Modern Architecture and Other Essays*, (Princeton University Press,



Salk Institute, Louis Kahn

Historical contact for Kahn comes about in a manner befitting his modern search for originality, at the Salk Institute, (La Jolla, California, 1959-65). Kahn's most recognised works are not only a culmination of his philosophies, but are also buildings rooted in human institutions. Kahn's wish to embody the most deeply felt human desires is manifested in the Salk Institute, which is in effect a monastic analogy. It is interesting that monasticism was seen as a historical ideal to Kahn, as it was to Le Corbusier. Corbusier's La Tourette, for example, was profoundly influenced by his multiple visits to the 13th century Carthusian monastery of Ema¹⁴.

As a form of life, monasticism remains a powerful model of how the individual and collective can come together for mutual benefit. Monasteries model a social order based on dedication to a shared purpose. Monasteries possess a resolution between the ideals of the individual and the collective, which is in tension with the experience of modernity. The resolution of this tension brought about at the Salk Institute by returning to Kahn's idea of the immeasurable - to fairy tales and golden dust, and his wish to bring form to human desires. The institute was envisioned from the beginning as a city in and of itself, with separate spaces for working, living and social interaction. From this the appropriateness of the building as a monastic analogy becomes clear. With Kahn's regard for institutions and historicism (though not historical styles) came a cultural responsiveness that had largely been missing from modern architecture up to that point. This cultural responsiveness marks a partial return to the principles of his Beaux-Arts education, principles eschewed by the modernists and derided as rampant eclecticism. As the differences between Kahn and the International Style architects emerge, the issue of the transition between the modern and the post-modern arises, for which it is often thought that Kahn would stand firmly against.

"The closer one gets to the type, to the tradition, the stronger the building is going to be"¹⁵

2003)

14 Nathaniel Coleman, *Utopias and Architecture*, (Routledge, 2005)

15 Vincent Scully, *Modern Architecture and Other Essays*, (Princeton Press, 2003)

As Kahn's idealist views lead him to look at human institutions, Venturi's realist approach lead him to explore tradition, and in particular the so called shingle style. In both his beach house project of 1959 and his Wislocki House of 1971, he adopts this vernacular shingle style. From 1959 to 1964, Venturi designed a house for his mother, the famed Vanna Venturi house. The project went through at least five schemes until the final working drawings were produced, during which time Venturi was also writing his 'gentle manifesto' which would become 'Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture'. The Vanna Venturi house is a clear embodiment of many of the principles he would lay out in his 1966 book.



Vanna Venturi House,
Robert Venturi

The central emphasis of the plan is the hearth, which grows to rise above the house in a great symbolic chimney. This key concept of the house is clearly anti-modernist, as are many other elements; The roof is pitched rather than flat, and a divided pediment comprises the front facade suggesting a return to mannerism. The main axis of the house is perpendicular to the street, with a large gable on the long side, facing the street. The enlarged chimney rises from the centre high above the ridge line of the roof as a pediment. A long driveway connects the street to the flat site, and directly to the large centrally placed entrance, above which a decorative arch is imposed. For Stanislaus von Moos, the facade has clear historical links, recalling Michelangelo's Porta Pia, the back wall is Palladian, and the pediments are those of Moretti.¹⁶ Kahn and Venturi at this point both explored and embodied this cultural connection with the platonic order of the simple geometric shapes of circle, triangle and square. Much can be said of the strength of these simple forms used by both architects likely as an attempt at historical contact.



Venturi created a contemporary architecture that could engage with the architecture of previous epochs, and so it became contextual. The Vanna Venturi house, like the beach house project, is a condensation of elements and representations. It is interesting to note the similarity here between Venturi and the early work of Wright, who for example condensed around the central idea of hearth, and used text as a representational element, just as Venturi did. The representational nature of the facade, and in particular the Platonic triangular front gable is associational with both classical architecture and the vernacular conceptions of what a house should look like. These are “dimensions of meaning that were inaccessible to his friend, mentor and boss Louis I. Kahn”.¹⁷

FORM AND MEANING

In Kahn’s dialectic personal philosophy, form is conceived as immeasurable, a spiritual power common to all mankind. It transcends individual thought, feeling, and convention. Form characterizes the conceptual essence of a project, and thus it is the initial step in the creative process. Design, however, is measurable and takes into consideration the specific circumstances of the program. Practical and functional concerns are contained in design. The union of form and design is realised in the final product, and the building’s symbolic meaning is once again immeasurable.

“Form is what. Design is how. Form is impersonal, but design belongs to the designer. Design is prescribed by circumstances.”¹⁸

His principles of form and design were how Kahn brought light and material together to create his buildings. There is however an interesting correlation with Judaism in Kahn’s work and the representational nature of meaning in Venturi’s work. In 1951 Kahn travelled to Egypt, where he drew the Pyramids at Giza. The pyramids could be considered the essence of the architecture which Kahn wished to embody; Poetic and mystical, all light, shadow and materiality. He wrote of Giza, calling it “The sanctuary of art, of Silence and Light”. Eight years later, when Kahn designed the Trenton Bathhouse as part of a larger plan for the Jewish Community Centre, he created four identical pyramids arranged around a central square, and raised above the ground. The symbolism of course recalls the power of the pyramids at Giza, as Kahn “saw the pyramids as embodying divinity”.¹⁹ It is surely no accident though that Kahn chose this form to constitute the most spiritually important space in a modern Jewish building.

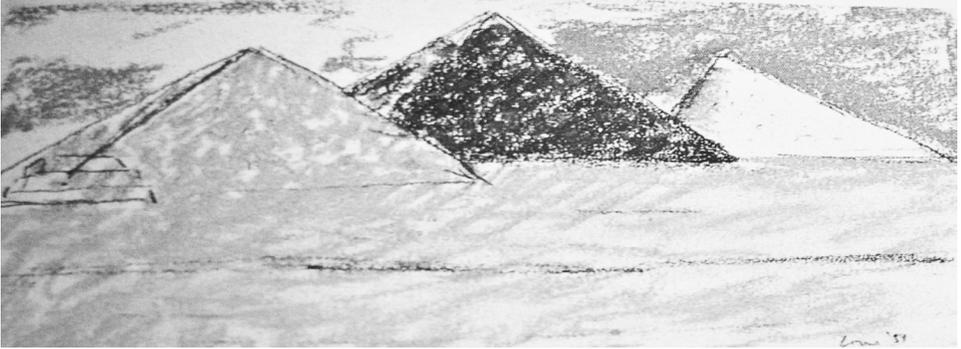
The pyramids at Giza are a historical symbol of the repression and plight of the Jewish people, and Kahn, I feel, chose this representational element to imbue the bathhouse with meaning. It is at once reflective and freeing. The user of the bathhouse inhabits these pyramids, is free to move and and about them for the

17 Vincent Scully, *Modern Architecture and Other Essays*, (Princeton Press, 2003)

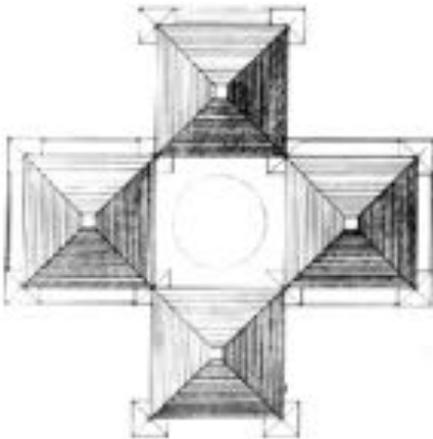
18 John Lobell. *Between Silence and Light: Spirit in The Architecture of Louis Kahn*, (Shambhala 2008)

19 David Brownlee, *Louis Kahn: In the Realm of Architecture*, (Rizzoli, 2005)

purposes of leisure - a triumph of Judaism. Kahn, as a Jewish architect again adopted this representational approach in his Mikveh Isreal Synagogue project of 1961-1972. "He found the shape of his synagogue in a Jewish tradition, the Kabbalah".²⁰ The plan of this scheme, with its series of linked circles, is a direct representation of a renaissance illustration of the tree of the Sefiroth. Form gives meaning, and in these examples Kahn has done so in a manner that seems appropriate to the work of Venturi, albeit in a more mystical way. It moves away from the abstraction of Modernism, and perhaps a move towards the semiotics for which Venturi has been so reviled.



Pastel of the Pyramids at Giza by Louis Kahn



Pyramid forms used at the Trenton Bath House

The issues of form and meaning are central to Venturi's work. Perhaps it is this fact that prevents Venturi from identifying with the postmodern. As Scully says, "he is caught right now between the modernists who will not forgive him and the postmodernists who feel that he does not go far enough". For Venturi, the issue of complexity in architecture is not of ornamentation of surface, but to use complexity and ornamentation to enhance the whole.

MATERIAL

Perhaps the main dividing line between the works of Kahn and Venturi, and so between modern and postmodern, is material. Kahn's work is tectonic in nature, while Venturi focuses on the graphic. At the culmination of his career, Kahn's order and purity had resulted in an architecture of materiality and even monumentality. The driving ideals of his work came from within, and so the expression of his buildings is linked to the kind of structural rationalism that in turn is linked to modernist thought. Tectonically, Kahn's buildings seems to grow outward, where Venturi's work is contracted and pulled together. It is the reconciliation of opposing elements.

With the publication of 'Learning from Las Vegas' (1972), by the time of Kahn's death in 1974 Venturi had begun to take his architecture to realms of semiotics an iconography with which Kahn would surely have disagreed. Take for example Venturi's Guild House project of 1966 in which he subverts the kind of structural power that Kahn utilised in his later works, particularly the National Assembly Building a Dakra, Bangladesh. The Guild House is monumental in massing, with an oversized opening on the front, a form one of Kahn's projects could have taken. The difference is the effect of the facade; At the openings and along the front facing the street, the brick reveals itself to be a thin separate layer imposed upon the structure. The structure itself becomes visible, and so Venturi does not deny the structural elements, but it does not form the surface. The facade is an effect rather than something intrinsic.



Guild House Front Facade

Taking the example of the Guild House, the key difference in the work of Venturi and Kahn is that of materiality - issues of form, meaning and historical recognition overlap greatly. The Guild House appears similar to much of Kahn's work, in particular the Salk institute and the National Assembly Building at Dahka, Bangladesh. It is the divide between the tectonic and the graphic that keeps them apart.

The transition of architectural thought from the modern from the postmodern can often be thought of as a singularly defiant movement, one which has created a rift between the two with no room for overlap. This is false, and many of the perceptions of Kahn and Venturi as the supposed champions of the modern and postmodern respectively, do not hold true. As Kahn and Venturi were not opposing forces, so postmodernism was and is not a negation of the architecture of the first half of the 20th century, but a call for sensitivity and contextual design.

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