

Arquitectura i aprenentatge

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Introducció

Amb aquesta selecció de textos d'arquitectes iniciem una sèrie de publicacions dins de la col·lecció ARQUITE-X-TES amb reculls de reflexions, sobre el valor del projecte arquitectònic dels mateixos arquitectes.

Aquest primer recull té com a tema les relacions entre aprenentatge i el mateix projecte d'arquitectura. Els arquitectes nord-americans d'origen europeu Lars Lerup i Marc Mack ens comuniquen amb gran precisió les seves actituds amb relació al valor cultural de l'arquitectura; i fa el mateix l'excel·lent arquitecte nord-americà Joseph Esherick, malauradament poc conegut en les nostres latituds. Aquests escrits s'han de llegir a poc a poc per trobar-hi raons per estimar la professió d'arquitecte, professió que avui, disortadament, ha entrat en un procés de descomposició intel·lectual, procés del qual els mateixos arquitectes hem estat responsables sempre que hem negat l'estreta relació entre cultura, societat i projecte per instaurar una pretesa llibertat i autonomia de l'arquitectura, que acabarà essent la seva pròpia tomba.

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Three Houses

Lars Lerup

Introduction

The five houses presented here are the result of a decade's assault on the single family house. All of the five houses are discussed briefly; three of them in some depth.

In the first house, *Villa Prima Facie*, the typical single family house plan is erased in order to create a tabula rasa. The second, the *Nofamily House*, disrupts the plan, while the third, the *Love/House*, is the shadow plan, the dark other, the verso of the typical plan. The fourth project, the *Day/Inbetween/Night House*, represents the fundamental plan found below the typical compartmentalized one. The fifth and latest plan, the *Texas Zero*, creates the simulacrum, the house that looks like a house but ultimately denies the typical conventions to leave us with ambiguity.

It is impossible to discuss one's own work objectively, of course. Architectural criticism, analysis, or even simple description is always entangled with ethics. The aesthetic-technical object literally forms a bridge between knowledge (pure reason) and will (practical reason), because the object is a synthesis of both. And since the bridge, or the house in this case, is a synthetic object, both will and knowledge by way of imagination have been amalgamated as in an alloy, whose parts cannot be easily separated. The architect has transformed the purity of geometry and materials for his own purpose, one that is perplexingly absent from the object. The house remains opaque, almost impenetrable.

Acknowledging this eternal dilemma, I have chosen to present the three houses in the light of architectural rhetoric.¹ The revival of the work on architectural rhetoric is in its infancy, a promising one because a formidable wealth of centuries of rhetorical studies immediately apply. In fact, in his *Art of Rhetoric*, Aristotle suggested that rhetoric is not confined to politics and law but extends to all fields in which *persuasion* is communicated through the use of *composition*. He warned also against treating rhetoric as a science, since it is a "combination of the science of logic and the ethical branch of politics,") a practical faculty) and inadvertently we would be destroying its 'true nature'.²

The five houses are assaults on the world of the single family house, and as such are politically inspired. This ethic has been transformed into an architectural one in which the architect has found a correspondence between political strategies and figures of form. I will not attempt to persuade the reader that this correspondence is correct, or even reasonable, but instead will confine myself to the principles of architectural composition. Architectural rhetoric, then, consists of strategies, containing the argument, and composition, amalgamated into form. Attempting to verbalise the strategies and composition brings it back into the world of will and knowledge, indicating how treacherous a field rhetoric is. The essentially analogical nature of rhetoric produces reflections despite complex transformations from one branch of rhetoric to another, also forcing or implying correspondences between intention and object that are at best rhetorical. Thus any escape from responsibility will probably prove futile.

The issue of ideology and architecture is particularly significant in connection with the single family house and the three projects. Underlying the work is an assumption that the single family house is a "disciplinary technology" (morality manifested in form) not quite as apparent as Bentham's Panopticon, but of the same ilk.³ The assignment of rooms, furniture, and equipment, and their relative distribution, is a vehicle of ideology and a behavioral modifier. This argument is possible only because the built form of the single family house is supported by numerous additional structures: everyday life in the form of language and behavior and various texts and image assemblies (from codes of conduct in the daily press to soap operas on television). All branches of rhetoric seem to have descended upon the single family house: politics, law, ceremonial oratory, poetry, and architecture. It is no surprise that it serves as the most effective totem of the American Dream.

Therefore, the houses rely in part on the existence of the rhetorical complex of the single family house. The reader must share with the architect some measure of agreement on the meaning of the typical plan and its various components, be it the front facade or the master bedroom. Simultaneously, and at least as importantly, the houses are an aesthetic play on Modernism (an orientation that has come to typify architecture in the postmodern era. It is perhaps this conscious undermining of dogma, be it Modernism or architecture as a behavioral science, that is the most important inspiration in my work.

Yet the houses are an imaginary overthrow of the complete reign of the single family house, but more positively, architecture always remains an enigma despite its umbilical connections with all kinds of externalities. Therefore, architecture remains open to those of us who choose to see the house as a wilderness rather than simply as a contraption of discipline and morality, or an envelope of behavior.

Five Houses

The archetypal Western house is the most basic *figure* referred to in all of the five projects. The figure of this house, like one in a child's drawing, is always seen from the outside; its inside is hidden and imaginary. The figure is made up of elements: a rectangular box with a pitched roof,

a chimney, windows and a door, in a simple syntax that regulates their placement. This simple but loaded image hovers as the essential referent throughout these projects.

But this figure is relatively static. A *strategy* is needed to produce architecture. In retrospect it is apparent that a complex of three distinct parts has been used in all of the projects. This *tripartite figure* contains the embryo for an architecture. The embryo is a transformational principle (a machine for architecture) in which two house figures separated by a third form are put into motion. Architecture here is the outcome of a transformation from one state to another.

The notion of transformation is a particularly prominent one in Modernism. Its origins are obscure; it is possible that the Beaux Arts *marche* (the regimented route through a building) inspired Corbusier's notion of a *promenade architecturale*, and later the *movement architecturale*, in which architecture rather than the dweller "moves" through a building. The current reinventors of transformation are the group of American Modernists who gathered around Colin Rowe in the 1960s: John Hejduk, Robert Slutzky, and Peter Eisenman. It is the work of Slutzky and Eisenman, the painting and architecture respectively, that has been particularly inspiring for me. It is also clear, however, that the notion of transformation is much older than we think.

Goethe noted in his *Italienische Reise* after encountering Palladio's work that the architect had marvelously managed to create "a third thing" out of the opposition between columns and walls, an architecture that mesmerized him and captured his imagination. In this tripartite figure (column-void-wall) lies the same embryo of architecture that I have discussed above.⁴

Contained in the idea of architecture as a transformational process lies the notion of architecture as a reflective operation, in which a commentary (gloss, over-coding), is made on the object that is transformed; when Palladio makes columns and walls collide, the nature of their opposition becomes apparent. Most fundamentally, then, architecture is *about* building, and in the projects here it is more precisely about the house and its modern version, the single family house. The tripartite figure is propelled by various transformational principles that make up the architecture machine in each of the five houses. The figure only looks like a machine; its logic and rationality is inescapably the product of an architectural rhetoric.

The first house, Villa Prima Facie, consists of a series of walls that are identical in outline (which is a prominent aspect of the figure of the house), but each is constructed from different materials: topiary bush, cement block, brick, glass, ceramic tile, then an additional topiary wall. In a rudimentary fashion the tripartite figure is found in the juxtaposition of two similar yet different walls, separated by a void. The transformation results from the combination of the simple figure of *repetition* and the *opposition* or *difference* that is established through the juxtaposition of soft and dry, dry and hot, hot and hard, hard and wet, wet and soft.

In the Nofamily House, the tripartite figure is quite explicit: two flanking glass houses are separated by a lump of a building. (The collision between the language of family that is

symbolized by the glass houses and the mute lump of architectural form). Two transparencies flank a solid. The opposition of the parts sets the stage for architectural transformation. Again, the "opposition" is rhetorical and willed, it is at best compelling rather than rational or scientific.

In the Love/House the two flanking elements are two houses, an existing one (to the right) and another derived from the existing one through transformation. The void here has a privileged position since it becomes the motor of the transformation.

In its name, the Day/Inbetween/Night House directly reflects the two flanking elements as opposites, separated by a neutral space. Yet the opposites are also the same: both are houses. The Inbetween here is a scaffold, a bridge, rather than the apparatus of transformation. This house is directly related to the Villa Prima Facie, but the wall-figures have become real houses.

In the Texas Zero house the flanking elements are complete houses. Unlike the glass houses of the Nofamily House, in the inbetween lies the new, the unknown, that reaches out beyond the confines of the two houses to a wilderness of opportunity. The transformational principle stems from the symmetry that has been established and an array of subtle rhetorical reversions that bars the completion of the symmetry. This house is the degree zero of the assaults on the single family house, the most subtle, but possibly the most devastating of them all.

The strategy of the tripartite figure relies both on oppositions) solid and void, old and new, transparency and opaqueness, open and closed) and on correspondences) a solid house and a voided house, opposite functions in a similar house, and so on. This strategy stands in contrast to the typical asymmetrical figure of the single family house plan, based on the narrative of family life, a complex of functionalistic and symbolic operations. Making them collide sets the stage for the new houses which are discussed in depth below: Nofamily House, Love/House, and Texas Zero. This process is an overture; additional strategies and associated figures must be added to bring them forth as full-fledged houses.

The Nofamily House

The Beginning: Erasure, Repetition, and Insertion

The site of this project contained, quite accidentally, the impetus for an encounter between the family and architecture) between language and form. The land stretched from a country road to a small creek, from civilization to nature. By the road, a blue one-room house stood romantically in an overgrown garden. Behind, at the edge of the wilderness, halfway to the creek, stood another house, also small and rudimentary but in complete disrepair. Two opposites: good and bad, new and old, prosperous and poor. But they are also connected) since they are both houses the fate of the new and prosperous may soon be the same as the old one. This opposition and correspondence was already a transformation; in it lay the embryo of architecture as a referential and reflexive enterprise) the decrepit house was *about* the new house. The two houses were also discrete and potent symbols of the home) the locus of the family.

The tripartite figure appears as the result of a series of strategies and figures. The first strategy is to *erase* the old decrepit house) to fulfill its destiny and to create a clearing for a new house. The erasure is used here as dramatic and historical gestures; it allows the Modernist to make space for the new, while uncovering the mechanics of the strategy itself.

In the clearing a new house is erected. The outline or figure of the old house is recuperated) history cannot be forgotten despite the erasure) and filled in with glass surfaces. In other words, the trace of the old and decrepit house shapes the glass house. It is not designed but found in the gap between the old house and the non-existent, or "no" house, whose testament is the transparency of the glass.

The rhetorical figure used in this strategy) the turning of a house into a mere-house) is known as a chimerical image conversion. The chimerical or fantastic image is often found in painting and occasionally in architecture. De Chirico's empty plazas and reduced house forms are examples of the chimerical mechanism) reduction and abstraction) and the chimerical nature) an impending tragedy, suspension, or force that exists beyond the picture but controls the scene. Likewise Aldo Rossi's reduced houses, with abstract square rather than anthropomorphically "erect" windows that abstractly mimic the erect body of the viewer, steep roofs, and odd colors, exemplify this "mystical realism."

The second step in the "invention" of the tripartite figure is to repeat the glass house in a symmetrical position at the other edge of the narrow lot. Repetition is one of the most fundamental of all rhetorical figures, and it is used here in the simplest way. Doubling the house does not change the meaning of the glass house but it does open the door to an endless repetition across the suburban landscape.

The third step is to arrest this potential repetition of glass houses by *inserting* a solid lump of building between the two glass houses. Although insertion does not appear in the works on rhetoric it is akin to a family of figures known as *ellipses*, in which a text or narrative is shifted or disrupted. Consequently, among the figures of the house, the lump is an unknown quantity, inserted to serve as a diversion from the narrative of life in the suburban house and its repetition and expansion. Symbolically, the yellow solid lump stands for architecture, its disruptive mission must now be completed by additional strategies and figures.

The invention of the mechanism of the tripartite figure is completed. This is the beginning; it is rhetorical, since there can be no origin but only a way to start.

The Zone of Passion: Rotation and Shift

A blue house, a pink garage, two glass houses, and a rudely inserted yellow lump, propelled by the mythical energy of the family and the diverse tactics of an aesthetic-technical enterprise called architecture. This is the game; now to its completion.

Charged with compositional power, the glass houses *rotate* and *shift* towards each other. The rhetorical connection between these two architectural strategies and the power of the family is as

follows: egocentrically the family turns around itself, ruthlessly it pursues its narrative. This *autoaffection* is translated into a rotation around two epicenters, one in each glass house. The fecundity of the family, its tendency to repeat itself across the landscape) its *heteroaffection*) is translated into a lateral shift, in which the two glass houses attempt to meet and merge with one another. As an architectural strategy both rotation and shift have been used by Modernist architects such as Le Corbusier and Terragni. Here it is more theatrical and fantastic than in Modernist orthodoxy or in late-modern transformations by such architects as Peter Eisenman or John Hejduk.

A zone of passion is created in the collision between the glass houses and the yellow lump of architecture. The glass houses rotate eight degrees and shift a couple of feet before they succumb to the strength of the lump. But the lump is affected: the rotating glass surfaces open gashes in it, but these are in turn covered by new glass surfaces and then a hollow column forms at each of the epicenters of rotation. The columns serve simultaneously as the mark of rotation and as a substitute for the erosion of the load-bearing wall in the lump. Certain fragments of the transformational process are rational as a whole but remain ambiguous and surreal. Not unlike an Eisenmanesque *formal* decomposition, this transformation makes a *figurative* decomposition whose origins cannot be traced from the resulting elements. The orthodox logic of rotation and shift has been "misread" to create a blasphemous result, but the cover-up is complete) both columns and banded windows are elements within Le Corbusier's vocabulary) thus, the transformation has been made incomprehensible despite the logic of each independent element.

As a figure of conversion the process here is quite different from the chimerical image, in that the conversion leads not to somewhat unreal results but to something quite unpredictable, although importantly, resemblances exist between the means and the end which make it possible for an inventive interpreter to make sense of it. Stated differently, the chimerical image here seems to use a metonymic process, in which the result is a fragment of the original form, while this specific surreal image relies on a metaphoric process, whereby the result only resembles the original form. Thus, the glass house and its outline reappear transformed in the gashes, and if we see the rotation as part of the original form, there are certain correspondences between the rotation and a circular tube-column.

The collision between the brittle glass houses and the strongbox of architecture results in additional fissures both inside the "box" and in its immediate vicinity. Like a landscape that has been weakened by an earthquake, the site and some of its elements have been cracked and shifted. The eight-degree rotation and the shift can be found in the driveway, in a topiary bush, in some of the bathroom fixtures, in the stairs, and in the various openings in the floor and roof. Once this is completed, the erosion and accretion come to rest and the violence is replaced by an embrace) the glass houses and the lump are eternally joined. The traces of the transformation, like lines in a face, can be interpreted, but little can be proven.

The Plans

The plans appear quite logical at first, and indeed functionally they provide the necessities of life: shelter, kitchen equipment, bathroom equipment, stairs, some compartmentalization, and space to eat, sleep and entertain. Architecturally there are, however, numerous complexities and several contradictions and ambiguities.

Both floors are laid out on a typical Modernist grid) a *plan libre*, a field of operation free from the demands of the structure that has been confined to the walls and to the two columns. Certain Neo-Plasticist moves are also found: the free cut in the floor and the organic mahogany kitchen counter. But across the free field are placed a series of intersecting walls; even a center is created by the fireplace. This is clearly an intrusion in the neoplasticist paradise. It is the other edge of Modernism, occupied by Constructivism and Dada. The two branches have been brought together to Modernism's ultimate finality: the uneasy union of neo-plasticism and constructivism, between the formal and the functionalistic, between object and process.

But it is also in this union that the gaps and discrepancies of the plan appear.

The Traps

Hand rails are among the most predictable equipment to be found in the single family house. They appear unobtrusively at each point or area where the dweller needs support, as at a stair, or for protection from falling through an opening in a floor or a wall. Barely do we give the handrail a glance as long as it satisfies our touch. The handrail appears in the Nofamily House as expected, at the tip of one's fingers at the bottom of the stairs on the ground floor. On the second floor, however, the handrails begin to move out of their logical domain) they still look like handrails but the syntactic relationship with stair and hand is broken and violated. High above the hand, as a connection between an abruptly-terminated wall and the ceiling, a short piece of handrail appears. At the free-cut in the floor the handrail has taken its own course, dangerously leaving the dweller's hand and foot separated, unsure of which to follow, handrail or crevice. The handrail is no longer a prophylactic device but a trap, or an independent agent on its own errand into an anti-functional world.

The *Liberated Handrail*, the first of several *traps*, set in the Nofamily House, borrows its logic from the figures of *conversions* or *tropes*, particularly those known as *glosemas*, in which the meaning of a word is altered by taking it out of its syntactic context. This figure is a common one in the world of the Dadaists. A prime example is Marcel Duchamp's coat hanger, which becomes a trap when placed on the floor, because on the floor the benevolent hangers for hats and coats have become dangerous fangs ready to entrap the unknowing pedestrian. Here language is "stripped off" the object and the form is seen in a new light. In the terms of Dada the coat hanger is distorted, displaced, defamiliarized, disrupted, nonsensical, contradictory. The ambiguity and openness to change are exposed.

At the top of the stairs on the first floor a door appears, but it makes little sense, since it is placed right next to an opening that allows free entry to the space beyond. This door is completely useless, unlike its predecessor Duchamp's door, which is both open and closed because it serves two openings at the same time. Or can it be used as a rudimentary musical instrument by not greasing its hinges? Will it always be open or always closed? Is it in fact a door? Or has it been forced down the taxonomist's ladder, to a mere lump? And, as Mallarmé writes, "What is speaking is the object itself in its own precarious being."

On the corresponding flared wall, next to the Useless Door, is a window. Placed here between the oddly-shaped hallway and the potential bedroom beyond, it suggests that it has been shamefully misplaced. A window is supposed to show up in a wall between outside and inside; if this one had been used inside, its windowness would have been stripped away to turn it into a plain opening. The *Fresh Window* threatens the domestic scene since it allows children and other kibitzers to watch the goings-on in the bedroom. (The window will most certainly be boarded up once the dwellers have installed themselves). The Fresh Window is an example of the figure of *catachresis*, in which the window is misused and there is a collision of meanings: it is a window yet not a window.

At the Fresh Window, a stair ascends and turns out of sight. Curiously, because of its flaring and the abrupt termination of a flaring wall, it is both inside the hallway and partially inside the "bedroom". In fact, by climbing the stair, turning, and so descending along the angle of the flair, the stair can be used to enter the bedroom. Climbing the stair further up under the roof reveals the last of the traps: a stair that leads nowhere.

The figures of symmetry (one dogleg-stair in each corner of the space) and repetition (two stairs) are disrupted through their connection to the context and a reversion takes place, in which the stair turns in on itself and like a snake at springtime peels off its name. A mere sign, the stair has joined the wilderness beyond the domestic narrative, a place that it will not occupy very long. Surely the dwellers will break through the ceiling to the roof and turn it into a Corbusian toit-jardin.

Facades and Other Externalities

The Nofamily House sits at the break between culture and nature. A wooden deck bridges the house; its back facade has a large picture window, and the wilderness lies beyond. The front facade, the elevation that faces the city, consists of a wall with an array of small square windows that wander across it in two offset bands. The windows continue around the corner on both side facades. Added together and squared they equal the size of the picture window in the back. Repetitions and agglomeration) a kind of automatic writing across the facades; there are no references to human use until you see the large window. Contrary to picture windows in the single family house, this one faces nature rather than the city, an inversion that changes both meaning

and use. The facade is closed towards the city and open towards nature; the sun rather than the neighbor's gaze, is invited into the house.

Predictably, the garage sits at the end of a long driveway, but entry is directly from the garage to the adjacent glass house. There is no front door in the front facade) an example of use over convention.

Opposite the garage grows an angular topiary bush that looks like a ruined wall of a real greenhouse or a thick shadow cast from the bordering glass house. At the edge of the deck a hot-tub straddles civilization and nature, and concludes a series of hinges between the house and nature.

Once inside the glass house, just behind the garage, the dweller walks across the plan of a typical single family house that has been etched on the concrete floor. The shadow of the single family house will never be cast in the Nofamily House, but it will always be there as a foundation.

Love/House

Amorous Figures

The rose-colored house sits in the corner of the fourth and last court, deep inside a block in Paris. She lives in the house and He waits for her, outside in the shadow of her house.

The single family house has no space or place for lovers. Even the discourse of love must live a clandestine existence inside language. As secret figures the lovers must hide in the shadows of more prominent things of the city.

Roland Barthes decided to bring the lovers' discourse, the particular figures of speech used by lovers, into the light, and assembled a collection of *amorous figures* that should be "understood, not in its rhetorical sense, but rather in its gymnastic or choreographic acceptance ...in a much livelier way, the body's gesture caught in action and not contemplated in repose..." The amorous figures are "outlined" in discourse; they become "memorable" and established when we exclaim, "That's so true" I recognize that scene of language."⁵ Yet they have no locus, no place in the house, only in the shadows of the city.

The Love/House is comprised of her existing house, and across the passageway a house for him. It is a concerted effort to make not only a momentary site for the amorous figures but a permanent refuge. It aspires to be a place that mirrors (without direct likeness) and reverberates with the lovers' discourse. Two houses (like amorous figures) have found a site where the lovers can do their work.

Utterly simple, the house is an archetypical Parisian house, smaller than a palace, smaller than the houses in the continuous housing on the boulevards, but made up of the same elements. It is more like a token, a model of an ideal house: cellar, a first floor with a fireplace and kitchen, the second floor with a studio, and on the third floor an attic where she sleeps. The front facade with four windows and shutters and the side facade, that separates hers from his like a wailing wall, completes the figure of the house.

Layers of housing establish the three courts before one comes to the lovers' court. The lovers' court is defined by three walls and two small houses flanking the entry way to the court and inhabited by a widow and a madman respectively. Behind the wall to the left of Her house is a school; the back wall of the court barely screens the voices of the immigrants in the adjacent court. The right side wall, opposite the wall towards the school, hides the unknown, and is inhabited only by darkness and stray cats.

To fill the Love/House with Barthes' "lovers' discourse" is the first step. An array of amorous figures is fastened like speech bubbles in a cartoon through a set of correspondences to the Love Facade, the wall that separates her house from his site. The Love Wall contains four figures: the door, open or closed, the sign of her presence, a window with a grill, preventing forced entry to the kitchen behind (which also symbolises the kitchen as a prison), a window that she erased in order to get more wall space, and a French window with shutters, a typical window in the city. The wall and these elements make up a more inclusive architectural figure and become the site for Barthes' amorous figures. For example, the French window, the epitome of the bourgeois gaze, houses figures such as "Show me Whom to Desire." Barthes writes,

The body which will be loved is in advance selected and manipulated by the *lens* subjected to a kind of *zoom effect* which magnifies it, brings it closer, and leads the subject to press his nose to the *glass*: is it not the scintillating object which a skillful hand causes to shimmer before me and which hypnotizes me, captures me?⁶ (my emphasis).

Lens, zoom effect, nose to the glass, pure coincidence, but the French window shimmers between the lines. Other figures are: "The Informer," and "Jealousy;" the *Imprisoned Window* suggests yet others: "Dependence/dependency," "We are our own Demons," "Love's Languor" ("...such is amorous fatigue: a hunger not to be satisfied, a gaping love.");⁷ *The erased window*: "The Unknowable," "Atopos," "Dark Glasses," "No Answer" ("The loved being becomes a leaden figure, a dream creature who does not speak, and silence, in dreams, in death");⁸ and finally *The Door*: "In the Loving Calm of Your Arms," "The Love Letter," "The Last Leaf," "The Ribbon," "Waiting" ("I have received orders not to move")⁹ Behind this *mur parlante* (talking wall) love may eventually be consummated but since so much of the lovers' life is occupied by "Waiting;" it is this figure that permeates his site, now with the tripartite figure in existence: her house) the void in between) his future house, the transformation can begin. Standing in the court in the depth of the shadow of her house provides the key to his house. The shadow of her house is the most fundamental transformation, converting "her" shadow to a house in which he waits is the thought that motivates the construction.

Transformations

To be like the body and its shadow) inseparable friends. (Aphorism)

A house of shadows, a dream house never to be built, a place of the imagination, such is the scaffold for the waiting lover. The step from the shadow to the dream, and to the construction of dreams according to Sigmund Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, is not far.¹⁰ Freud's dream machine, because indeed it serves as a machine in which consciousness is channelled via rhetorical figures that he calls displacements and condensations, makes a dream. His machine may serve as a model for an architecture machine in which an existing house is channeled via a set of rhetorical figures to form a new house.

Consciousness in the form of her house is therefore separated by a void) or better a gate) that "like a screen stands between consciousness and the unconscious."¹¹ (Freud writes here about the preconscious that serves as the channel through which we are aware of the existence of the unconscious beyond) Once the shadow of her house is erected and shifted and turned to serve as the facade of his house, a screen is placed symmetrically, occupying the corresponding location of the Love Wall. The outlines of the scaffold are established.

The shadow facade is almost by definition a chimeric image conversion because of the shadow's pregnant past in "mystical realism." Erect, black, and reduced, it captures the outline of her facade and roof while also gaining some fantastic qualities) except that the windows are repeated to serve as the axis of the conversion. The shutters are hung on the inside, since in the transformation (erection-turn-shift) the facade has been turned inside-out.

The plans) cellar, first floor, second floor, attic) correspond in location both in "plan" and section, but a series of internal transformations of their form and meaning has taken place.

Her roof has a diagonal break, suggesting that it could be cut in two; this cut is actually performed in his house. The strategy of *cutting* is a common rhetorical device in Modernism; here it is also associated with a pun: the better half of his house is hers and therefore cut away. Half of his house is missing) the part he is waiting for. Furthermore, since his house has no content) all his house is, is a shadow of hers. It is a reversion that has emptied his house of content and severed the "best" half.

The cellar and attic have been radically transformed, playing both with some qualities of her attic and cellar, Bachelard's concept of the ideal house and its cellar and attic, and Le Corbusier's *toit-jardin* or roof terrace.

Her cellar is dank and dark, filled with debris and the smells of the earth of the city. Her attic is light and warm and converted into a bedroom. Bachelard's cellar is dark and dank, filled with the roots and terrors of the past. His attic is the place for reverie and dreams about the future. In Le Corbusier's house, the cellar is erased, the roof is removed, and the floor of the attic has been turned into a roof garden. He has imaginatively supplied a garden in the air to compensate for the

one he has displaced on the ground. Guided by the strategy of the cut, half the cellar is left unexcavated and the corresponding half of the attic is turned into an open-air terrace) in homage to Le Corbusier. In contrast to her dark cellar, the excavated part of his cellar is made light by a glass block floor above, and is made dry by covering the floor of the half-cellar with metal roofing. A reminder of her cellar's dankness, however, occurs every time it rains, because the down-spout from the roof empties over the sloped cellar floor to a drain. The cellar has become an anti-roof. The corresponding attic-half next to the terrace has a sloping roof just as hers does, and the large resulting triangular wall meeting the terrace is made of glass. When he enters out on the cold, wet terrace (critique of Le Corbusier) and looks into the warm attic) a dream come true since he cannot see anything but the light through her small roof-window) there is no floor. The rhetorical work here is complex: first the strategy of the cut, and a series of *figures*; an *ellipsis*, since from whatever point of view) Le Corbusier's, Bachelard's or hers) some part is always missing. But there is also *antithesis* and *inversion* at work in the upside-down play of attic and cellar. Most fundamentally, the basis of all transformation of meaning here is through the use of *analogy*, whether the work is along the metonymical or metaphoric axis.

Her house has a dark room downstairs and a much brighter studio upstairs. The corresponding half-rooms in his house are made black and white. This rhetorical figure is called *mise en valeur* and the strategy is the familiar Modernist shift, in which *amplification of value* is achieved by transforming darkness to black and brightness to white. This figure is often used in writing with erotic overtones, in which certain key words are given hallucinatory value) now the rooms are both bright and white, and dark and black.

There is only one solitary window in the wall between her house and the school yard. She can see the children play below. Her inquisitive gaze goes unobserved) like a guard in the tower of a Panopticon she can unobtrusively survey the field of education. On his wall this window goes through a transformation. First it is repeated identically in his wall. Then it is repeated symmetrically. Then these two windows are identically repeated on each of the three remaining floors. The strategy is through a "sense of order" and "composition" to *repeat* the small window in its logical place, and then through the transformation of each window (called *antanaclasis*)) open, closed, gridded, white, black, extruded, intended, and erased) momentarily turn the attention from the function of the window as the inquisitor's viewpoint, to the form and nature of the window, and then to prepare for all the eventualities of the unknown.

Through design and accident the four windows and shutters in her front facade are articulated, bottom and top, left and right) the most obvious being the slatted shutters versus the solid ones. The shutters have been repeated in the shadow-facade, but by making one rather than two shutters for each window and by hanging it either to the left or to the right, the same "difference and articulation" is achieved. These amplifications of the building's construction are taken a step further in the work on the fireplace and the stairs.

Typically, the stair in the one-room plan of her house is located in a corner. U-shaped, it completes a half-turn at each floor. The fireplace is located in the wall between her house and the school, a second fireplace is located on the second floor. The two flues are brought together in

a chimney on the roof a third flue from an abandoned fireplace in the cellar is also included.

The stair in his house is located in the corresponding corner but it has been rotated ninety degrees, so that a climber must adjust himself somewhat awkwardly upon entering the stair) sensorially he is turned towards the form of the stair. An extra flight of stairs has also been added to reach a small wine cellar below. This portion of the stair is constructed of heavy glass block. The flight from the first floor to the second floor is constructed of wood with a thin veneer of black marble. The flight from the second floor to the terrace is constructed of wood, painted white. Finally, on the terrace a glass box caps the opening in the floor made by the emerging stair. Logically, the construction becomes lighter and lighter the higher we go, and inversions and correspondences are also established: sheets of glass versus glass block; light, white wood versus heavy wood weighed down by black marble.

The logic of construction is the inversion of the experience of climbing stairs: the weight of the stair gets visibly lighter and lighter the higher he gets, but the climber's body gets sensorially heavier and heavier. The logic of construction supersedes the representation of the climber in the stair: construction over anthropomorphism.

The chimney's placement and form fulfills what is prefigured in her chimney: an additional fireplace is added on the terrace, now there is a fireplace on each floor from cellar to garret. Since one flue is added per floor the chimney stock is made thicker and heavier at each floor level. The chimney appears upside-down, but as far as chimney-logic is concerned, the chimney is correct: construction over conventional appearance.

Both strategies for the stairs and chimney make clear that the logic of construction is more important than other demands, but more importantly, it shows that function is a wide and complicated issue. Function for what and for whom? For architecture and construction or for the dweller and his demands for representation and conventionality? Here it is architecture's logic over the dwellers'. There is no mercy for the waiting lover.

With the establishment of the architectural components the scaffold of waiting is completed. On her arrival, love is consummated. The dream must eventually be replaced by reality. With a simple pull at the syntactic string, the scaffold is immersed in its own transformation where architecture's own logic is at stake.

Texas Zero

The Simulacrum

It is meant to stand, sit, and lie at the edge of an open expanse and a live oak forest, high above a meandering river in central Texas. The standing element should resemble a conventional country store, the sitting-up boxes are like conventional houses, and the lying-down shed is like a Texas log house.

Closer by, the building should appear to be in the process of construction or possibly demolition. The large front facade is leaning outward, stabilized by wooden struts.. The chimneys are leaning, ready to go up or down. The assemblage of familiar pieces loosely fit together, as if they were governed by tentativeness, even timidity. At the same time, the house should seem finished, as if the construction process has had to stop and the builder, like a good *bricoleur*, has remedied the unfinishedness by shrouding it in finished touches. In fact, these finishings serve as a veil or finery, what the Greeks called the *parergon*, the by-work covering, but separate from the real work, the *ergon*) the structure behind. Here, however, the veil works the other way around: the by-work has become the work, covering up an incompleteness) the outer appearance is the structure that holds the pieces together.

The finishing helps the house to look like a house, a jumble of things partially hidden under a veneer. But why all these tricks and machinations?

Once and for all we have come to realize that meaning is both willed and unwilled; the relationship between meaning and object is forever ambiguous. We may act as though nothing has happened, because in fact nothing has happened, but we still must act, and the house serves as a mere backdrop, a machine to facilitate our daily lives. We may, on the other hand, take the opportunity to overcome the conventions of everyday life and allow the new wilderness to enter. This is the place for the simulacrum.

Children have an astonishing ability to blow life into apparently inanimate objects such as teddy bears. The teddy bear is a model of a bear, and model is the original meaning of the word simulacrum. Its "life" is willed, and ever so powerful. A simulacrum for an adult must be different, however, since he or she is not quite as gullible, nor as inventive. It may have to be a bit more like Humpty-Dumpty, and we may have to employ considerable ingenuity to put it back together, but in the process both are invigorated.

The client wants her independence; she has been a wife and mother for very long. She needs a refuge, a place to hide, a domain where she can guide the meaning and invent a world that is her own.

Antecedents

The Texas cultural landscape is dotted with relics from its past: towns, stores, houses, streets, and squares.¹² If not glorious, a history of ingenuity and determination have resulted in simple but very beautiful everyday objects whose memory should not be forgotten. These type-objects still have a place in modern Texas.

The typical country store with a grand facade facing the street and a loft space pragmatically slapped onto the rear, provide the initial inspiration. The facade is a sign, both an invitation and a protection, even a pretense, prefiguring the modern billboard.

Through the familiar chimerical conversion, the house begins with a facsimile of the facade, reduced and conceived as a wall of glass block) both a facade and a giant window. The entry

canopy becomes the carport. A fake door) a trompe-door) is placed in the center to complete the reduction and to remove an obvious place of entry. The facade becomes a wall of protection, the leaning gives it a monumental importance (the leaning Tower of Pisa) and points at one of the most fundamental preconditions of building) gravity.

The other inspiration is the Texas log house.¹³ Its history is long and complex. One particular house is chosen and simply attached to the back of the giant facade. Initially, the pieces of the house are left intact: two fireplaces, a simple rectangular box for the house, a Louisiana-type roof, and a porch. All the architect needs to know about its history is written in the house itself, in its simple elements and in their distribution. This is the power of conventions.

The Plan

A tripartite figure: two small houses, separated by an open loft space, are held together by the frame of the giant front facade. A break in a continuous closet behind the facade establishes the beginning of an axis with the trompe door that is perpendicular to the giant facade and propels the transformation of the entire plan.

On one side of the symmetrical composition is a small black concrete house, completely occupied by a kitchen. Its counterpart is the same black house which houses the bathroom. The symmetrical placement of the bathroom wash basin and the kitchen sink, the toilet and the stove, the bathtub and the dishwasher, imply slightly sinister equivalences despite their obvious functional differences. These figures are known in rhetoric as *figures of construction*, in which symmetry and repetition are the foremost characteristics. They are quite different from simple repetition, since new meaning results from the use of symmetry and its shadow-figure asymmetry. The ambiguity that results from the potential confusion between washing one's face and washing one's plate provides the key to Texas Zero. This ambiguity opens the door to the architectural wilderness in which the hunter must decide for herself what it all means.

The two black houses are models of the typical house. They are also rooms housing the kitchen and bath, respectively) the only rooms left from the typical house. Through a sleight of hand the black houses are from the outside *simulacra*, and from the inside, *metonomies* of the single family house. The house is the bath, the kitchen is the house.

A series of figures of construction called reversion are used in the new house. First, a leaning fireplace in compression, a sofa that is also a bed, and another leaning fireplace in tension, are lined up on a secondary axis that is perpendicular to the main axis. A similar reversion is often used by the English writer P.G. Wodehouse when he lets Bertie Wooster sneer, "He has, has he?"

Through the use of symmetry around the comma, a subtle reversal of meaning takes place, similar to some of the devices of Texas Zero: first, the fireplace in compression) the sofa/bed) the fireplace in tension. Here, the question(mark) is achieved by putting the leaning fireplace in tension.

Recklessly, in the world of chimneys and sofas they stumble over each other; like a set of falling dominoes, the chain of meaning is broken, language is swiftly stripped from objects, proper names are given up in favor of a grey language of form.

Second, a sleeping porch, essential during the hot summer months, is balanced symmetrically by a gilded cage for a pair of doves. Facing both is the which-way chair.

Third, the last-supper table (she always says, "This is the last supper") is both a place to eat and to work. When she works (and drinks) she is "above" the table. Out on the porch for fresh air, she is "under" the table) the porch is a giant replica of the last supper table.

Along the lines of architectural fundamentalism and the reference to gravity a distinct clarity of construction is attempted. The roof truss uses wires and steel I-beams for members in tension, timber and lumber for members in compression. A clarity of the behavior of structure makes the conventions of construction ambiguous) construction over convention.

The resulting plan is the degree zero of all three of the house plans discussed here. By removing the syntax of the single family house, and replacing its narrative order) garage, living room, dining room, kitchen, hallway, master bedroom, master bath, and its additional sub-assemblies of rooms, with a complete set of symmetries, the ground of the common elements has been neutralized. Familiar as they are, and importantly so, the elements gain new significance and a momentary openness to interpretation and appreciation. Again, it is as if the proper names of the elements have been removed and their forms come forth. But since it is only the context of the elements that is changed, they retain some of their meaning) form and language (as names and stepping stones in the family narrative) are brought to a standstill. A status quo, where language and use is no longer the primary force in establishing meaning.

The Texas Zero house stands at the junction between a vernacular tradition and a new architectural materialism, where we begin the transformation with architectural conventions rather than geometrical forms, and where function is given a much wider definition than it usually has. Here the house must function not for the mythical family but personally and architecturally) a new wilderness in which architectural form is given a privileged status.

Conclusion

There are those who want a text (an art, a painting) without a shadow, without the "dominant ideology;" but this is to want a text without fecundity, without productivity, a sterile text.... The text needs its shadow: this shadow is *a bit* of ideology, *a bit* of representation; *a bit* of subject: ghosts, pockets, traces, necessary clouds: subversion must produce its own chiaroscuro.

Roland Barthes

The Pleasure of the Text

The ancient arts of rhetoric and architecture have found a common ground in this work. Strategies and figures of writing and architecture all aspire to uncover a world more diverse, complex, and vast in scope than the given one. Both writer and architect utilize their material with its given properties and resistance, be it language or architectural conventions. For them, art is not capricious, nor is it primarily for inventing new "languages" or new forms. The architect-rhetorician does not begin with pure geometry but with known architectural forms that supply him with the stubborn resistance of conventionality) "ghosts, pockets, traces, necessary clouds...." It is a question of finding cracks in the figures) the slippage, fracture, break, weakness between knowns in which opportunities of innovation can take place.

The specific linkages between strategies and figures of writing on the one hand, and those of architecture on the other, are tentative and probably far from exhausted in the houses presented here) rhetoric, as has been suggested, is slippery. Many strategies and figures are shared, but particularly in the former area, architecture has many of its own strategies: shift, cut, rotation, to mention a few. Strategies seem more obscure than figures. They seem to be hidden in the architect's mode of thinking and doing, while figures lie visible on the surface. Figures, on the other hand, are a complex issue; they operate on many scales and levels, ranging from "windows" to "the use of irony". The characteristic of all figures is their visibility; they are memorable because they are repeated. Much work needs to be done to bring clarity to the definitions of strategies and figures.

The most basic figures in the houses is the House itself) the Bachelardian "original" house with its attic and cellar kept apart by the "home" itself. Then there is the tripartite figure and the associated transformational principles that are constituted in the Nofamily House by the powerful flanking glass houses, in the Love/House by the void powered by the Freudian preconscious and all the rhetorical figures, and in the Texas Zero by the matrix of axes that operate over the entire plan.

The strategies used in the Nofamily House) erasure, rotation, shift, decomposition, and defamiliarization) all have their precedence in Modernism, although here they are used to convert conventions rather than seek pure form.

The figures that appear in the Nofamily House stem predominantly from the area of *tropes*, and from figures of repetition and amplification. There is some use of the ellipse and some specifically architectural figures such as the free plan and constellations of intersecting planes characteristic of Constructivism.

The Nofamily House is the most aggressively polemical of the houses.

Rudely, it attempts to trip the dweller in his pursuit of the typical family narrative. When the house is built, the discrepancies in the plan produced by the traps would soon be repaired by a pure family technology.

The Love/House is the most rhetorically diverse of the houses, using similar strategies to the previous house, but with a large array of figures: tropes, figures of repetition and amplification, figures of construction, figures of heightened value, ellipses, and figures of thought. In addition, distinctly architectural figures are used, such as the ones developed by Le Corbusier, and figures of the "original" house. Although it is the most imaginary and fantastic, the Love/House is also the most place-specific, borrowing its existence directly from the Parisian scenery.

The axis, one of the most fundamental figures of architecture, is used in Texas Zero to create a basic symmetry throughout the house. Asymmetry, symmetry's shadow figure, is in turn utilized to create instabilities within and among elements of the plan. Articulating these instabilities formally sets the stage for a slippage of meaning) a scene of reversions in which the typically closed plan is open to reinterpretation.

The three houses, the tripartite figure and its modifying transformations, and the story of each house, should each have its own identity and coherence. Seen in ensemble (including all five houses), however, it is not so much their relative development that is important as is the exploration of what has metaphorically been called the wilderness of architecture) a domain outside the straight jackets of the single family house and architectural dogmas. This wilderness is undefined and unknown, yet it is closely attached to the worlds from which it is a release, characteristics that a true wilderness must maintain to serve its purpose.

In the gaps, among and within the conventions of architecture and house, lie the sources of a new modernism, a modernism that includes both desire and form, pleasure of life and shadow, humor and sadness, juxtaposed with the vigor, positivity and hopefulness of the old Modernism. Driven thus by myth, fiction, and realism the new house leans and casts a long shadow across the planes of pure form.

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Notes

1. Josep Muntanola Thornberg, the Catalan theoretician of architecture, has generously assisted me in the development of these ideas. His forthcoming *Retorica y Arquitectura*, Murcia, 1985, has been the basis of our discussions. For an extensive and complete exploration of figures of style or writing see Henri Suhamy, *Le Figures de Style* (Press Universitaires de France, Paris: 1981).
2. Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*. (Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge).
3. Reference here is made to Michel Foucault and his concept of the disciplinary society". Much of the work underlying my analysis is drawn from his books, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Pantheon Books, New York: 1977), *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction* (Pantheon Books, New York: 1978).
4. J.W. Goethe, *Italian Journey 1786-1788*. (Pantheon Books, New York: 1962) p. 47.
5. Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*. (Hill and Wang, New York: 1978). p. 3.
6. Ibid, p. 136.
7. Ibid, p. 155.
8. Ibid, p. 168.
9. Ibid, p.37.
10. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretations of Dreams*, (Avon Books, New York).
11. Ibid, p. 653.
12. Drury B. Alexander, *Texas Homes of the 19th Century*. (The University of Texas Press, Austin and London: 1966).
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Extracto de los apuntes del curso 1978-79

Rafael Moneo

Propósito del curso

El programa que aquí se ofrece está en inmediata relación con la práctica generalizada hoy en las escuelas, pues quisiera, precisamente presentarse como una alternativa a la misma.

¿A qué se llama práctica generalizada? Basta pasearse por un aula de proyectos para ver hasta qué punto una nueva manera, una nueva academia, domina hoy las escuelas; pensando que una escuela debe estar en guardia frente al anquilosamiento que supone la repetición indefinida de los modelos e intentar, por ineludible voluntad crítica, poner en duda lo que la rutina convierte en inevitable, se intenta con la alternativa que aquí se propone salir de lo que hoy es terreno trillado y pisar otro menos conocido, pero quizás más generoso y fructífero.

Pues la fuerza con que los estudios que han permitido establecer el puente entre arquitectura y forma urbana ha prendido de tal manera en los estudiantes de las escuelas, y la de Barcelona no es ajena a ello, nos encontramos ante una situación en la que tanto los temas que se proponen como las respuestas que a los mismos se ofrecen se repiten, y se ha llegado a establecer una mecánica en la que parece agotarse cualquier intento de libre exploración de un nuevo territorio.

El proyecto de arquitectura parece haberse reducido a un análisis del contexto urbano y a la interpolación en él del edificio objeto del estudio. Que, por otra parte, quedará reducido las más de las veces a la estricta mímesis de edificios tradicionales como si no cupiese otra opción.

Las líneas anteriores no pretendían negar el valor del contexto en la definición de la arquitectura, pero quisieran señalar que la exagerada veneración del contexto y de conceptos como el de morfología urbana nos ha hecho olvidar otras alternativas, otros problemas, que también debieran ser considerados.

Si entendiéramos el contexto como la suma de datos exteriores que de un modo u otro afectan al proceso de producción de la arquitectura, cabe el preguntarse cuál es la contribución de la disciplina a dicho proceso. En otras palabras; ¿Dispone el estudiante de arquitectura a punto de

terminar sus estudios de un instrumental disciplinar enraizado en una teoría que le permita abordar la construcción? ¿Con qué cuenta una vez que la *presión contextual+ a la que parecía atribuírsele la responsabilidad entera del proyecto ha sido asimilada? Responder a estas preguntas es, a mi modo de ver, la tarea que se presenta ante nosotros.

Pero tales preguntas no van a formularse como algo ajeno a la práctica profesional en la que está empeñado quien intenta dedicarse a la profesión de arquitecto. Aún podría decirse más, y tales preguntas se hacen todavía más urgentes ante el proyecto de una obra de arquitectura. El arquitecto entiende el contexto en que se produce, pero necesita algo más: el apoyo de una disciplina que le permita abordar la definición formal de su obra.

El propósito de este curso, de este último curso, es enfrentarse abiertamente a las dificultades del proyecto sin protección ni defensa alguna: ha llegado el momento de hacer el ejercicio sin red alguna que nos tranquilice.

La consciencia de estas dificultades por parte del arquitecto es la admisión, sin temor alguno, del estado en que se encuentra el conocimiento de la disciplina o, si se quiere, de los conocimientos que la disciplina ofrece.

Es pues la ocasión de considerar qué es lo que se ha aprendido a lo largo de toda la carrera.

Pero aunque tal reflexión podría llevarse a cabo con cualquier tema, pensamos que se hará aún más evidente si se magnifica y si el próximo arquitecto mide sus fuerzas enfrentándose con una gran obra de arquitectura, con un edificio público de singular importancia.

Pienso que tal afirmación obliga a una cierta aclaración ahora. Si se toma partido por la gran escala, por el edificio complejo con múltiples problemas no es porque se considere que la discusión propuesta no cabe en un tema de dimensiones) en el sentido más amplio de la palabra) más reducidas. El proyecto de una vivienda unifamiliar, de una casa, puede llevar a una tal intensidad en el planteamiento que haga que el orden personal, íntimo, invada y rebase el orden de lo disciplinar; quedaría éste, por tanto, desplazado. La experiencia que ahora se propone al próximo arquitecto es algo más impersonal, más disciplinar por tanto. La disciplina estará siempre presente allí donde la escala de la intervención no deje tanto lugar para lo íntimo.

En el edificio público de singular importancia queda al descubierto la disciplina; con ella se construye la arquitectura.

Problemas que han sido desplazados de nuestro actual cuadro de preocupaciones reaparecen de nuevo. Así por ejemplo la cuestión del método; la discusión acerca del papel jugado por el programa; el valor de los elementos autónomos; los criterios usados para el establecimiento de principios formales; el sentido que tuvo y que hoy todavía tiene el hablar de composición, etc.

Si cabía hablar del contexto como de la presión exterior sobre el objeto puede hablarse de la disciplina de los principios disciplinares como de aquella otra presión interior que enfrentándose a él da como resultado la obra de arquitectura.

Estos principios disciplinares, este conocimiento específico del arquitecto, es lo que nos interesa considerar ahora como si de un examen de lo aprendido a lo largo de toda la carrera se tratase. El próximo arquitecto tal vez quede indefenso, inerte, ante las dificultades implícitas en lo que aquí se propone, pero pensamos que es tal actitud la que permitirá entre otras cosas entender cuál debe ser su tarea.

La composición en la tradición Beaux-arts

De cómo la antigua idea de la arquitectura establecida en el Renacimiento se transforma en la búsqueda de un nuevo método: *Beaux-arts* como método.

Los mecanismos de la composición académica: simetría y regularidad. La idea del equilibrio.

La obsesión por la unitariedad de la forma: la coherencia formal como principio.

El papel de los elementos de arquitectura en la génesis del edificio. La contribución del lenguaje clásico en la definición del mecanismo académico de composición.

El concepto de *parti*.

Distinción entre distribución, disposición y composición.

La evolución del concepto de composición; composición *versus* tipología.

Estructura axial y unitaria de la forma en la arquitectura académica. Congruencia entre axialidad y movimiento.

Mecanismos aditivos de la composición académica: el edificio como resultado de un mensaje. La analogía con la construcción de las máquinas.

El problema del carácter.

La representación de la arquitectura en la tradición académica.

Sir Lutyens: una propuesta inglesa de Beaux-arts tardío

Transformación del sistema *Beaux-arts*: el nuevo sentido dado a los ejes.

Los ejes como soportes de arquitecturas diversas.

Autonomía de los ejemplos singulares.

Mecanismos para conseguir la aparente unidad que requería.

La arquitectura mágica.

La tradición de lo pintoresco: la trayectoria de Norman Shaw.

El valor de los espacios exteriores (patios jardines claustros) como estructura formal del proyecto. (Un tema como éste debería ponerse en relación con el claro precedente que es la arquitectura romana).

El problema de los *estilos+: actitud ante la historia de Lutyens.

Algunos principios de composición y diseño.

De todo el ingente trabajo de Lutyens, se piensa hay dos obras características dignas de ser analizadas en profundidad: Deneary Garden y la British Embassy en Washington.

Le Corbusier

Los grandes proyectos al filo de los años 30:

- La Sociedad de Naciones
- El Centrosoyouz
- El Palacio de los Soviets

De cómo la Academia gravitaba sobre Le Corbusier a pesar de su aparente rechazo de ella.

Caracterización formal del programa como representación de funciones: la planta como generadora del edificio. Análisis de los croquis y estudios preliminares que confirman y refuerzan esta idea.

Criterios para una composición volumétrica.

Anexos

La analogía "maquinista".

Funcionalismo como carácter.

La exhibición de la estructura como obligado presupuesto.

Composición como proceso contiguo de adición: el olvido del *parti* unitario.

La idea de articulación.

Paralelo posible entre Le Corbusier pintor y Le Corbusier arquitecto. Dificultades para entender estos proyectos mediante la simple aplicación a los mismos de los principios expuestos en *Vers un architecture*.

Establecimiento de la distancia entre Le Corbusier constructor de villas y Le Corbusier constructor del Centrosouyouz en lo que a mecanismos de composición se refiere.

Los tres proyectos citados pueden servir como base para el estudio. En el fondo podría decirse que se trata de un solo edificio y es esto precisamente lo que nos interesa señalar: en aquellos años Le Corbusier no creía en el edificio singular sino más bien en cómo construirlo en un método de composición.

Le Corbusier: los proyectos de Chandigarh

De cómo la experiencia de Le Corbusier en las villas se hará presente años más tarde en el proyecto de los edificios públicos de Chandigarh.

El volumen dado de planta libre: análisis de la evolución sufrida.

El concepto de planta libre: extendido en el espacio.

La ocupación de un espacio dado como principio de composición.

Espacio frente al volumen.

Autonomía de los elementos en el espacio.

La forma como continua relación dialéctica entre elementos.

El papel de la estructura como continuo marco de referencia.

El valor de los nuevos elementos: *brise-soleils*, *pilotis*, tejados, etc.

La ocupación del espacio mediante la superposición de planos horizontales.

Doble interpretación del concepto de transparencia.

El proceso de substracción como mecanismo de generación formal.

Fachadas y exteriores: de cómo se libran de cualquier predeterminación funcional o constructiva mediante exageraciones que podrían ser calificadas de manieristas.

Aunque cualquiera de los edificios de Chandigarh o términos más amplios de la carrera de Le Corbusier en la India (Millowners, Museo de Amhedabad, etc.) podría servir como base para este estudio, tal vez el edificio construido para la asamblea sea el más característico; en él pueden verse con sorprendente claridad los puntos señalados en el guión.

Le Corbusier

Última etapa con tres edificios significativos: el proyecto Olivetti, Strasbourg y el Hospital de Venecia. En Olivetti: el edificio como lugar de encuentro de diversos sistemas circulatorios. La forma como descripción del movimiento, no como descripción de funciones. La geometría como soporte inerte de la actividad. Consideraciones acerca de la geometría de Le Corbusier. Congruencia geometría-estructura. La idea de volumen. El edificio como *máquina moderna+. En Strasbourg: Ville Saboye, treinta y cinco años más tarde. La arquitectura como *promenade*. La formación del espacio desde la condición itinerante de quien visita el edificio. Comparación de tal actitud con los criterios empleados en las arquitecturas antiguas. Strasbourg como paradigma en el que observar los mecanismos compositivos antes observados. En Venecia: el reconocimiento del lugar. Los problemas de la escala. El edificio como plano. De nuevo la adición. Composición y geometría. Trazados y modulación. ¿Venecia como testamento?

Louis Kahn: de nuevo el carácter y la Academia

El edificio como lugar característico: en busca del significado perdido. La formación académica como disciplina.

Anexos

El *parti* transcendido: la vuelta a la arquitectura parlante. Gestalt como soporte de la Nueva Academia. La geometría kahniana: un nuevo concepto de elemento. La idea de elemento como concepto básico para el desarrollo del espacio. Distinción entre elementos y espacios. Los conceptos de *served* and *servant*, espacios como alternativa al estricto funcionalismo. Indiferencia del espacio frente al uso. Un intento de caracterización tipológica de su obra; en cuanto a criterios de composición y en cuanto a sistemas constructivos. La idea de estructura resistente: construcción *versus* estructura. Congruencia entre espacio y estructura. El papel de los materiales en la arquitectura. Escalas y tamaños. Continuidad formal de su arquitectura: de la ciudad a la ventana. Integridad de la forma como base de una posible teoría de diseño.

Saber fer arquitectura: dues lectures

Josep Muntanola

(Capítols de la monografia: *Quatre lectures d'un saber fer arquitectura*. ETSAB, 1978)

Primera lectura: la comprensió d'un saber fer arquitectura

A força de lamentar-nos de la situació decadent de la professió d'arquitecte,¹ hem arribat a identificar-nos amb una posició *defensiva* permanent, com si els arquitectes fossin les *víctimes* indefenses d'un context que està destruint els valors eters de l'arquitectura. Això, com veurem en la tercera lectura, no és nou, els nostres avantpassats de principi de segle ja ho manifestaven amb desconsol.

L'arquitecte Rafael Moneo, en un dels seus primers escrits quan va entrar com a catedràtic a l'Escola d'Arquitectura de Barcelona, deia amb molt d'encert:

"(...) Es absurdo pensarse que el arquitecto diseña en el vacío de su propio despacho (...)."

Es a dir: l'arquitecte no treballa en el buit, ni és un element "neutral" dins d'una situació de la qual només és víctima. Aquesta és una postura absurda que vol defensar postures històriques avui insostenibles a la pràctica.

Des d'aquesta perspectiva és fàcil comprendre la por que tenen els arquitectes a ser "envaïts" per altres professions que han sabut *aggiornar-se* més ràpidament a les noves circumstàncies socials i culturals).

En aquesta primera lectura només vull descriure un aspecte d'aquesta problemàtica: l'aspecte d'una comprensió i una lògica del saber fer arquitectura.

Des de fa més de 300 anys la cultura occidental s'ha llançat en un procés de tecnificació i de "cientificació" que només en els darrers anys està entrant realment en crisi seriosa. La filosofia ja

¹ Sobre això, llegiu la conversa amb Lewis Mumford, amb ja més de vuitanta anys, a *A.I.A. Journal* núm. 6/77 (USA).

havia donat signes inequívocs d'aquesta crisi mitjançant les filosofies que avui encara anomenem "irracionals", en les quals el paper de les emocions, de les metàfores, de les figuracions i dels somnis de tot tipus era un element essencial.

Doncs bé, és dins d'aquest procés històric on comença a construir-se l'equívoc de la incomprensió del saber fer arquitectura. Els arquitectes no podien competir amb altres professions (i encara no poden) per aconseguir una conceptualització a un nivell adequat a les ciències modernes, i, per altra banda, no podien, i no volien,² ser "artistes" com els pintors, els músics, etc., per als quals la conceptualització era el mateix art, sense necessitat d'entrar en competència amb cap altra "professió". Etern desarrelat, l'arquitecte ha estat, no obstant això, un home molt necessari fins a un cert punt.

L'estratègia dels arquitectes ha estat equivocada tant quan han intentat posar-se al nivell de conceptualització de les altres professions, com quan s'han refugiat en una arquitectura "artística" de pura figuració.³ La sortida del problema estava -i està- en una altra direcció: calia veure com el pretès coneixement "científic" i la pretesa figuració dels "artistes" eren totes dues necessàries en l'arquitectura, com ho són moltes altres activitats humanes que tot just estem començant a analitzar "científicament". Em refereixo a la lingüística, a l'estructura del poder polític i psicològic, a la sociologia de *l'espai i a l'antropologia* de l'espai. La comprensió de l'arquitectura no és ni més fàcil ni més difícil que la d'aquestes altres activitats de parlar, dirigir políticament, programar l'educació, etc.

Aquest complex d'inferioritat de l'arquitecte ha reduït el creixement "normal" d'un cos de coneixements en transformació constant, fet corrent en qualsevol activitat humana. Per altra banda, ha donat suport a postures defensives que consideren que l'arquitectura és *infra* o *sobre* humana, i ha paralitzat el desenvolupament d'una arquitectura humana a seques.

L'odi o l'adoració als grans "mestres", en lloc del diàleg, és proverbial en l'arquitectura,⁴ i el *logos* arquitectònic és el que ha sortit perdent de tot això ja que va canviant de generació en generació, cada volta més raquític i disminuït.

La realitat, almenys tal com jo la veig, és molt més interessant: no és que la comprensió d'un saber fer arquitectura sigui un fet "fora-del-coneixement", sinó que el "coneixement" que ens hem fabricat en els darrers tres-cents anys és un coneixement borni, que ha menyspreat el valor que les activitats difícils de conceptualitzar, com les esmentades, tenen en la comprensió en general.

² Vegeu: "Proyectos de Reforma de la Escuela Especial de Arquitectura". Imprenta del Seminario y de la Ilustración. Madrid. 1854.

³ Vegeu amb relació a les diferències entre "concepte" i "figura", les següents publicacions: "La Arquitectura de Soria y Garcés", a *Estudios Pro-Arte*, Núm. 9; *La Arquitectura como lugar*, Gustavo Gili, 1975, Barcelona; "La Arquitectura Semienterrada de Mark Mack" a *Estudios Pro-Arte*, Núm. 10, 1978, Barcelona.

⁴ Vegeu "Aldo Rossi, o la Arquitectura de la Irritación", a *Estudios-Pro-Arte*, Núm. 11, Barcelona, 1978.

Els arquitectes haurien d'haver intentat "completar" la cultura en lloc de sentir-se víctimes inferiors, o éssers superiors, sobretot mitjançant la força comunicativa de la imatge arquitectònica.

Una part del problema prové del malentès tècnic, que diu que la tècnica és més "objectiva" que els fets socials; molts arquitectes han caigut en aquest parany arquitectònicament sense sortida; perquè la tècnica implica les mateixes responsabilitats ètiques, estètiques i lògiques que altres realitats, i l'arquitectura neix justament de l'entroncament d'unes decisions tècniques amb unes decisions socials mitjançant un procés de producció.⁵

Per últim, una altra dimensió d'aquest malentès del *logos* d'un saber fer arquitectura és la pretensió dels arquitectes que les seves decisions sobre l'arquitectura són indiscutibles, com si la lectura d'un edifici pels usuaris i pels habitants en general hagués de coincidir amb el desig de l'inventor de la forma arquitectònica. Si per al pintor això no és problema essencial (només ho és econòmic), per a l'arquitecte, a més de ser un problema "comercial", és un fet ètic íntimament lligat a la comprensió d'un saber fer arquitectura.

Resumint: l'objecte arquitectònic no és un fet màgic, ni pot ser comprès des d'una cultura exclusivament arquitectònica, sinó des d'una cultura històrica i social, com la que dona sentit al llenguatge, la política, la sociologia o l'educació. Refugiar-se en l'arquitectura "pura" només serveix per mantenir un *logos* raquític, molt fàcil de combatre des de fora. Una altra cosa molt diferent és defensar la postura d'una autonomia de l'arquitectura, precisament en la mesura que manté un diàleg i una dialèctica amb un context⁶ que no és ni pretén ser una postura "purista".

L'arquitecte ha de saber *explicar* l'arquitectura que fa perquè la COMPREN, com qualsevol persona comprèn el que fa; és a dir: a mitges, amb ensopegades, però el suficient i necessari per poder comunicar a altres cossos humans el que fa i el perquè del que fa. No pot pretendre que els que no són arquitectes l'ajudin, o el rebutgin, pel sol fet de ser bon arquitecte, sinó perquè simpatitzen amb allò que vol. I per aquest camí gairebé portem el mateix bagatge que portaven els arquitectes del Renaixement, i no per culpa de la "societat", ni dels "pecats" dels arquitectes, sinó perquè no volem reconèixer la *necessitat de "comunicar"* un saber fer arquitectura.

Quarta lectura: consells per animar el saber fer arquitectura

Com a conclusió de les tres lectures precedents podem afirmar que el saber fer arquitectura té les mateixes dificultats que un "saber viure" dels cossos humans, però vistes des de l'objecte, com una anti reflexió; l'objecte arquitectònic és com l'empremta en negatiu de l'estètica, l'ètica o la lògica de la comunicació entre cossos humans.

⁵ Vegeu, per exemple: els estudis en *LOTUS 14* i següents. Milà, 1976-1977.

⁶ Vegeu l'article d'Albert Sammoná, traduït a *Materiales para un Análisis Crítico de la Enseñanza de la Arquitectura*. Monografía 1. Cátedra de Estética. ETSAB. 1976.

Dit això ens queda suggerir unes vies d'aproximació al saber fer arquitectònic, o unes *bastides* que ajudin qualsevol persona a animar el seu saber fer arquitectònic. Heu-les aquí:

1. Sobre la dialèctica entre l'objecte arquitectònic i el seu context històric o geogràfic

Divulgades sobretot per Aldo Rossi, però elaborades molt abans per d'altres, com ja he dit en ocasions anteriors, la teoria i la pràctica d'unes "tipologies" són elements essencials en l'aprenentatge d'un saber fer arquitectònic.

Caldria que qualsevol canvi en el medi ambient pogués estar precedit d'una base informativa i històrica prèvia, perquè les decisions es prenguessin amb un mínim de coneixement i de sensibilitat. En altres èpoques n'hi havia prou amb viure dins d'un context per comprendre'n les característiques, però, després de la construcció o destrucció de la industrialització, no n'hi ha prou amb "ser del lloc", cal reflexionar amb atenció sobre la seva complexitat espacial i temporal.

Els estudis tipològics són, a més, un instrument privilegiat per al treball en equip, i per complementar els coneixements entre les persones que participin en la transformació del medi ambient. Cal impedir que aquests estudis es converteixin en una eina de poder fent-los arribar al major nombre de gent amb preus que els facin assequibles.

2. Sobre la riquesa fenomenològica (motora, sensible i emotiva) del fet arquitectònic

Els antropòlegs es queixen, amb raó, que el medi ambient construït pels dissenyadors és el "més fàcil possible", i no el més convenient possible. És a dir, l'optimització de beneficis del dissenyador repercuteix (o pot repercutir) en la pobresa sensorial de l'arquitectura i de l'urbanisme, reduint les necessitats i les funcionalitats a programes tan pobres i propagandístics com els de la Carta d'Atenes.

Per més que aquest document pogués representar en el seu moment un cert "vanguardisme", després ha estat l'excusa ideal de la mandra dels dissenyadors per innovar, i dels promotors per augmentar la complexitat de les seves construccions.

Per animar un saber fer arquitectura cal, a més d'analitzar el context històric-geogràfic, enriquir la pròpia experiència crítica del que és un lloc humà. No tothom té la mateixa experiència ni les mateixes habilitats.

La riquesa fenomenològica del lloc construït no pot ser reduïda a la "vista" sense produir desequilibris que poden ser tan perillosos a la llarga com les destruccions latents de les radiacions atòmiques.⁷

⁷ Vegeu Rapoport, A. *Aspectos Humanos de la Forma Humana*. Gustavo Gili. 1978.

3. *La qualitat d'un saber fer arquitectònic depèn de la interrelació dels dos punts anteriors, mitjançant un procés de comunicació entre cossos humans i entre grups de cossos humans*⁸

Res pot garantir, en un cos sol, que l'expressió fenomenològica i l'adaptació al context geogràfic-històric resultin significatives. Només la intercomunicació social entre cossos permet comprovar a la llarga si s'ha aconseguit o no una dialèctica entre l'objecte i el context, la realitat física i la realitat social, la raó i la sensibilitat.

Una semiòtica autèntica de la composició arquitectònica hauria de tenir com a finalitat aquesta cruïlla entre l'ètic o el lògic del saber fer arquitectura. La poètica arquitectònica, a què Robert Venturi va saber donar una textura molt suggestiva, és una tasca difícil que exigeix dedicació i que rebutja oportunitats; i no és possible sistematitzar-la durant un cap de setmana a la costa.

Innovar no és automàticament fer poesia, ni molt menys ho és copiar, sinó que, com dèiem en la segona lectura, és en el joc de "fer i amagar", d'"ensenyar i ocultar", on rau la coordinació entre experiència i història, i, amb ella, on rau la poesia de qualsevol saber fer.⁹

⁸ Vegeu *Communications* 27. París. Sobre "Semiotique de l'Espace". 1977.

⁹ Vegeu, per exemple, "Revolució Estètica i Revolució Política", al *Diari de Barcelona*, 15 de novembre de 1977.

The Professions of Architecture

Joseph Esherick

Every profession has both a set of claims and intentions) what it professes to do) and some organizational structure or mode of operation called the profession. Professions are defined by these claims, intentions and presumed competencies. They are also defined, in some cases, by what they do *not* do.

"Professions" in the title of this talk is intentionally ambiguous) on the one hand "professions" is used to describe the declarations or claims of architecture) or more narrowly what is claimed to be achieved by architecture) on the other hand "professions" is used to describe the myriad structures, organized or somehow put together to practice architecture. Architecture's declarations or claims, its "professions" are today elusive and hardly constitute an agreed agenda, but there exists a reasonable consistency that has not changed greatly from Vitruvius' time. The professional structures however are a different matter and the number of possible forms and directions has increased geometrically in the last fifty years. Further, there is a reasonably well documented history going back to ancient Egypt and Greece, and also there is considerable interest in current forms of practice.

We should be able to assume that we mean more by claims than that the building won't leak or that it won't fall down if you remove the scaffolding. One ought to be able to take these things for granted. Our concern here should be with larger social, cultural and environmental issues.

The history of architecture's professions in the sense of claims) what architects were trying to do) is a subject that does not seem to have attracted much attention except on formal issues.

Historians are less interested in claims and expectations than the means or the end result, but implicit claims exist from quite early writings. It is almost obligatory to cite Vitruvius' triad of firmness, commodity and delight, or durability, convenience and beauty, depending on which translation you read. Alberti, some thirteen centuries later, wrote:

"For the service, security, honour and ornament of the public we are exceedingly obliged to the architect, to whom in time of leisure we are indebted for tranquility, pleasure and

health, in time of business for assistance and profit, and in both for security and dignity."¹

A more explicit review of the professions) the intentions) of architecture can be inferred from Vitruvius' detailed statement of what architects needed to know) and why they needed to know it.

Geometry:

not merely as a constructive means to make accurate plans, but rather as a controlling life giving force, to give to a structure order, proportion and form. Indeed, the importance of geometry and geometric figures to control and order building form persists to this day.

Optics:

so that "the light in buildings can be drawn from fixed quarters of the sky."

Music:

to enable the architect to control the acoustic qualities of rooms and amphitheaters, but also, by plucking the strings of catapults, to know the trajectory of the projectile. The modern analogy is no doubt the tennis racket.

Medicine:

to be able to take into account climates in the siting and design of buildings, to take care of details of drainage, ventilation, where necessary wind protection.

Law:

to avoid disputes between clients and neighbors or clients and contractors.

Astronomy:

not only to understand sun dials) the construction of which was one of the architect's acknowledged specialities, but to be able to design buildings that admitted the sun or kept it out according to local or seasonal needs.

Climate:

to be able to design comfortable and healthful houses, correct for particular locales.

All in all it is virtually a building scientists' dream) or if the scientist is an academic, the outline of a dream curriculum. Further, he makes it clear persistently that architecture and the work of architects is for the welfare of society in general and for the health, security and enjoyment of individuals in particular.

It is an agenda still useful.

¹ Alberti, *De re aedificatoria*, p. X.

Today there appears to exist a competition for intentions and claims, sometimes grafted onto all or part of those of Vitruvius, some completely independent and unrelated, some highly individualistic) the inevitable result of an entrepreneurial professional in a media oriented society. Indeed, many of today's declared intentions come from the symbiotic relation of the media) particularly the architectural press) the galleries (there is now a gallery architecture)) and their architectural cohort. The language is sometimes impenetrable to ordinary folks) a jargon. As Harold Rosenberg observed in an essay² from the early 60's (practically pre-history). He goes on to say:

"The more incomprehensible this lingo is to outsiders, the more thoroughly it identifies the profession as such and elevates it out of the reach of mere amateurs and craftsmen."

And adds, in a footnote:

"The continued use of latin by the medical profession appears as simple-minded compared to what newer professions have been able to accomplish in 'English'."

Because so much of the profession is preoccupied with new images and what are alleged to be new ideas, some time, but not a lot, needs to be devoted to this media and gallery-based phenomenon. This preoccupation supports a notion I have long entertained about how architects often deal with problems they face. First, architects, usually being sensitive and aware, realize that many projects they deal with include subtle and unclear problems. Not being sure exactly what these problems are, they invent surrogate problems, solve for them, then declare that the original problem is solved: pseudo solutions to pseudo problems.

So it is with many current notions of what architects should be doing: layering (layering?), ambiguity, historicism (often coupled with wit and humor, although I'm not sure we're supposed to laugh). It is a private language embroidered on traditional themes, language and concepts not very usable in broader public discourse. I cannot imagine an architect saying to a City Council "Would you like a little layering?) some ambiguity?."

What we are witnessing, particularly when the galleries and art museums get into the act, is the claim that architecture is art) quite different from the claim that architecture is) or can be *-an art*. If architecture is art, the focus and responsibility is too often only the designer's and possibly his or her agent's. If architecture is *an art*, the normal broad responsibilities apply. A possible advantage to the architecture-is-art claim might be the exploitation of an "art defense" in liability suits.

But there is in much of the newer work a healthy strain of anti-elitism and a welcome celebration of the ordinary) which is good until it becomes elite-ordinary. Experimental work that opens up new *and useful* avenues can only be good. Traditional responsibilities are not being abandoned

² Harold Rosenberg. *Everyman a Professional in the Tradition of the New*. New York, Grove Press, 1961.

in the pursuit of much of the current innovative work. Frank Gehry and Chuck Moore, writing about their work in the catalogue³ of a recent exhibition of California architecture at the La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, sound about as radical as Ralph Adams Cram. The great danger facing any new approach today is that of being co-opted by the gallery-media conglomerates and becoming further isolated from the broader public we should be serving.

Rosenberg again:

"In any case, incomprehensibility in the arts is inseparable from the fragmentation of the public through the expansion of professionalism. The segregation of occupations within the mazes of their technical systems increasingly demolishes the old mental cohesions of class and nation. Outside each profession there is no social body to talk to, and apart from the forms in which the thought of the profession is embodied there is nothing to say."⁴

Geoffrey Scott in "The Architecture of Humanism" (1914) observed:

"We have few 'fully reasoned' theories, and these, it will be seen, are flagrantly at variance with the facts to be explained. We subsist on a number of architectural habits, on scraps of tradition, on caprices and prejudices, and above all on this mass of more or less specious axioms, of half-truths, unrelated, uncriticised and often contradictory, by means of which there is no building so bad that it cannot with a little ingenuity be justified, or so good that it cannot plausibly be condemned."⁵

He argues at length for the translation of all aspects of architecture into human terms, rather, for example, into symbolic or functional (mechanical as he has it) terms. He emphasizes order and coherence, presumably as major objectives. He sees nature as chaotic and says of man: "He may construct, within the world as it is, a pattern of the world as he would have it."⁶

In this century others have written on architecture's intentions) what it claims to do rather than, more typically, its appearance or technology, but no one writing on theoretical issues has been significantly more explicit than Vitruvius.

Let us look elsewhere.

³ The California Condition, La Jolla.

⁴ Ibid: p. 64.

⁵ Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism*, p. 7.

⁶ Ibid: p. 179.

The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) in June 1981 published a study⁷ of examination for architectural licensing. In it they identify "knowledges, skills, and abilities" required in providing professional services, from which one can infer what architects do. There are 142 items on the list. Practically everything except brain surgery. Covered are accounting, economic, legal, technical, environmental and social issues, the latter comprising four entries: social statistics, social structure, socio-economics and sociology. About one third of a representative sample of architects questioned thought knowledge, etc. in these areas was needed. The other two thirds apparently thought otherwise.

A fruitful place to look might be architects' brochures, an undertaking I had neither the time nor the stomach to attempt. It could make a good dissertation. Retain the movie rights.

The best indication of what architects do, and by inference what architecture intends and claims, is in course descriptions in the catalogues and bulletins of the architectural schools. If we are at all successful in our teaching, these indications should be good for at least ten years.

One of the most striking aspects of curricula is their rapid response to changing social, economic and technical conditions, quite different from the profession's narrower response to its market conditions. Design, the queen mother, continues at the center with history and theory. Courses that establish a social basis for architectural decisions, both programming and design, usually oriented toward the user and taught by sociologists and anthropologists are a striking addition in the last twenty years. Technical courses in structures, construction, building physics, daylighting, etc. are better integrated with the parental discipline. Computer-aided design is everywhere. Courses dealing with a wide range of environmental issues, largely concerning the physical environment, but including social, political and economic environments, are becoming stronger and more numerous. Community design courses have become well established and in some cases include theoretical issues. Third world issues are dealt with, in some cases, on site.

There is little unanimity in architecture's professions and claims on social issues. It may be the result of the post-war over-selling of what modern architecture could do to transform the social and physical environment. Presumably it was to be better. The sometime reluctance to make claims may also result from un-met expectations from garden city ideas to pruit-igoe and beyond. Social issues, civil rights in particular, have declined themselves as matters of public interest to be superseded by environmental issues. I have long held that one of the reasons for the decline of the civil rights movement and the rise of the environmental movements was that there was such a low probability that a whale would move in next door.

Architecture, the profession, is as Bob Guiman Argues, an entrepreneurial profession and, I might add, becoming more so) in some cases as much a business as the large corporate client. Entrepreneurial instincts in most cases have driven the profession toward serving developers and

⁷ NCARB Examination Validation Study, MCARB, 1981.

often the building industry itself, which has had no small impact on design. I would argue that some time in the '50's the building industry realized pre-world war II methods weren't going to work and decided that what was then called modern architecture was good business, I believe we deceive ourselves in claiming the transformation of urban building form, particularly in the central business district, is the result of architects' visions. Anyway, it makes a good excuse.

The profession has, in its evolution, continued to develop symbiotic relationships with client groups, and since building takes either money or power, but usually both, it seems inevitable that professional directions would tend to reflect corporate or bureaucratic form) where the money or power is. The result is that the well-served continue to be the well-served, and the ill-served get nothing at all.

Traditionally, professional offices have been organized to provide services for design and construction of buildings, with or without a specialty, the specialty may be by building type) schools, hospitals, etc. or by client operation - industrial, military, etc. Small offices, declining in number and in market share, naturally are more limited in what they can choose to do than larger offices in terms of building type, but many have developed special skills and an admirable level of adaptability) specialists in solar design and other technical specialties as water penetration control, programming, design-build enterprises, plan-shops for the small merchant-builder. Alteration of existing buildings and a host of infra-structure elements, subways for example, for new or continuing use is bound to be a major professional activity in the future. The A.I.A. now sees contracting and development as an ethical undertaking and is urging an every-architect-a-developer-too program, the unfortunate assumption being made by many that the architect-developer will somehow be able to control the development more favorably. Good luck. It's tough and hard work.

What is curiously missing is any significant number of research or research and development offices. Perhaps this is because the schools have had neither adequate research facilities, nor interested research staff. In any case, research is not just something one goes out and does: it must be learned) and I suspect the research drive has to be inculcated early.

Community design or, alternatively, public interest architecture offices are rare as private undertakings, and the governmentally assisted ones are withering under budgetary pressures. In Washington-language, disfunded in the in-years, or something like that.

Combining research and development and public interest architecture in a professional undertaking could be a particularly productive way of carrying out professional service responsibilities. As an attitude and approach, it may be usefully exported) more sensitive and responsible than the more typical high technology capital intensive programs.

I see architecture's professions and claims as most importantly organizational) of bringing some useful order to space, to time, to work, to processes, to the complexities of light and thermal properties) and to do it without appearing to do so: to be responsibly and helpfully imaginative.

Ours is a service profession and not a servant industry. I hope we can find ways to be useful and helpful to more people) particularly to those in greatest need. And all in all, I hope we can learn to lean a little less heavily on the world.

UCLA, 21st of May 1983

Parque de la Villette: memoria

Bernard Tschumi

Podría afirmar que la primera obra de deconstrucción/superposición fue mi *Manhattan Transcripts* (1976-1981). Trataba de disyunciones arquitectónicas y programáticas, combinando al mismo tiempo elementos tanto abstractos como figurativos. *Joyce's Garden* (1976-1977) tomaba como programa un texto literario y usaba el punto de cuadrícula como mediador entre lo arquitectónico y lo literario: una superposición de dos textos heterogéneos. El parque de la Villette (1982) es "el mayor edificio discontinuo en el mundo" y la primera obra *construida* que explora específicamente estos conceptos de superposición y de disociación.

Disyunción y cultura

El paradigma que del arquitecto nos fue legado a través del período moderno es el de dador de formas, creador de estructuras jerárquicas y simbólicas caracterizadas, por una parte, por su unidad de partes y, por la otra, por la transparencia de forma a significado. (El tema moderno, más que modernista, de la arquitectura está referido aquí como para indicar que esta perspectiva unificada excede de lejos a nuestro pasado reciente.) Un cierto número de correlativos famosos elaboran estos términos: la fusión de forma y función, programa y contexto, estructura y significado. Implícita en ello existe una creencia en el tema unificado, centrado y autogenerativo, la propia autonomía del cual se refleja en la autonomía formal de la obra. Sin embargo, en un momento determinado, esta añeja práctica, que acentúa síntesis, armonía, la composición de los elementos y la inconsútil coincidencia de partes potencialmente desiguales, se aparta de su cultura exterior, de sus condiciones culturales contemporáneas.

Des-estructuración

En las disrupciones y disyunciones, su fragmentación y disociación características, las circunstancias culturales de hoy sugieren la necesidad de descartar las categorías de significado y las historias contextuales establecidas. Por lo tanto, puede resultar útil abandonar cualquier noción de una arquitectura *post-mortem* en favor de una arquitectura posthumanista, una arquitectura que subraye no sólo la dispersión del tema y la fuerza de la norma social, sino

también el efecto de un tal descentro de la total noción de forma unida, coherente y arquitectónica. También parece importante pensar, no en términos de principios de composición formal, sino más bien de estructuras interpelantes, es decir, el orden, las técnicas y los procedimientos ocasionados por cualquier obra arquitectónica.

Un proyecto semejante está muy lejos del formalismo, en tanto que subraya la motivación histórica del signo, poniendo énfasis en su contingencia, su fragilidad cultural, más que en una esencia ahistórica. Es un proyecto que, en los tiempos actuales, sólo puede enfrentarse con la radical desavenencia entre significador y significado o, en términos arquitectónicos, espacio y acción, forma y función. El que hoy día estemos presenciando una dislocación de estos términos llama la atención no solamente hacia la desaparición de las teorías funcionalistas, sino quizá también hacia la función normativa de la propia arquitectura.

Orden

Cualquier obra teórica, al ser "desplazada" al reino construido, mantiene todavía su papel dentro de un sistema general o un sistema abierto de pensamiento. Al igual que en el proyecto teórico, en *The Manhattan Transcripts* (1981) y en el parque de la Villette, actualmente en construcción, lo que se pone en duda es la noción de unidad. Tal como están concebidas, ambas obras no tienen principio ni fin. Son operaciones que constan de repeticiones, distorsiones, superposiciones, y así sucesivamente. Aunque tengan su propia lógica interior (no son pluralistas sin objeto), sus operaciones no pueden ser descritas puramente en términos de transformaciones internas o secuenciales. La idea de orden es constantemente puesta en duda, desafiada, empujada hasta el filo.

Las estrategias de la disyunción

Aunque la noción de disyunción no tiene que considerarse como un "concepto" arquitectónico, tiene efectos que son impresos sobre el lugar, el edificio e incluso el programa, según la lógica disociativa relativa a la obra. Si hubiera que definir a la disyunción yendo más allá de su significado de diccionario, debería insistirse en la idea de límite, de interrupción. Tanto los *Transcripts* como la Villette emplean diferentes elementos de una estrategia de disyunción. Esta estrategia toma la forma de una exploración sistemática de uno o de más temas: por ejemplo, marcos y secuencias en el caso de los *Transcripts*, y superposición y repetición en la Villette. Estas exploraciones nunca pueden ser efectuadas en abstracto, *ex nihilo*: uno trabaja dentro de la disciplina de la arquitectura, aunque con una conciencia de otras esferas: literatura, filosofía, o incluso teoría del film.

Límites

La noción del límite es evidente en la práctica de Joyce, Artaud y Bataille, todos los cuales han trabajado al filo de la filosofía y la no-filosofía, de la literatura y de la no-literatura. La atención

que se presta actualmente al enfoque "deconstructivo" de Derrida representa también un interés hacia la obra en el límite: el análisis de conceptos en la forma más rigurosa e internalizada, pero también su análisis desde afuera, para preguntarse qué esconden estos conceptos y su historia, como represión o disimulo. Estos ejemplos sugieren que existe una necesidad de considerar las cuestiones de los límites en la arquitectura. Actúan como recordatorios (para mí) de que mi propio placer nunca ha emergido al contemplar edificios, las "grandes obras" de la historia o el presente de la arquitectura, sino más bien al desmontarlos. Parafraseando a Orson Welles: "No me gusta la arquitectura. Me gusta hacer arquitectura."

Notación

El trabajo sobre notación emprendido en *The Manhattan Transcripts* fue un intento de "deconstruir" los componentes de la arquitectura. Los diferentes modos de notación empleados iban dirigidos a captar campos de acción que, aunque normalmente excluidos de la mayor parte de la teoría arquitectónica, son indispensables para trabajar en los márgenes, o límites, o en la arquitectura. Aunque no existe ningún modo de notación, ya sea matemático o lógico, que pueda transcribir la plena complejidad del fenómeno arquitectónico, el progreso de la notación arquitectónica está vinculado a la renovación tanto de la arquitectura como de sus conceptos de cultura acompañantes. Una vez los componentes tradicionales han sido desmontados, el remontaje es un proceso ampliado; sobre todo, lo que en última instancia es una transgresión de los cánones clásicos y modernos no debería permitirse que regresara hacia un empirismo formal. De ahí la estrategia disyuntiva utilizada tanto en los *Transcripts* como en la *Villette*, en los cuales los hechos nunca se conectan completamente y las relaciones de conflicto son cuidadosamente mantenidas, rechazando la síntesis o la totalidad. El proyecto jamás es terminado y los límites jamás son definidos.

Disyunción y vanguardia

Los conceptos arquitectónicos y filosóficos no desaparecen de la noche a la mañana. A pesar de la "ruptura epistemológica", otrora en boga, las rupturas ocurren siempre dentro de un viejo tejido que es constantemente desmontado y dislocado de tal forma que sus rupturas llevan a nuevos conceptos o a nuevas estructuras. En arquitectura, una disyunción semejante implica que en ningún momento puede parte alguna convertirse en una síntesis o una totalidad autosuficiente; cada parte lleva a otra, y cada construcción está fuera de equilibrio, constituida por vestigios de otra construcción. También podría estar constituida por los vestigios de un acontecimiento, de un programa.

Puede llevar a nuevos conceptos, al igual que uno de los objetivos es aquí comprender un nuevo concepto de la ciudad, de la arquitectura. Si tuviéramos que calificar una arquitectura o un método arquitectónico de "disyunción", su común denominador podría ser uno de los siguientes:

1. Rechazo de la noción de "síntesis", en favor de la idea de disociación del análisis disyuntivo.

2. Rechazo de la oposición tradicional entre uso y forma arquitectónica, en favor de una superposición o yuxtaposición de dos términos que pueden estar independiente y similarmente sujetos a idénticos métodos de análisis arquitectónico.
3. Como método, el énfasis estaría puesto en la fragmentación, la superimposición y la combinación, que disparan fuerzas disociativas que se expansionan dentro de todo el sistema arquitectónico, explotando sus límites mientras sugieren una nueva definición.

El concepto de disyunción es incompatible con una opinión estática, autónoma, estructural de la arquitectura. Pero no es antiautonomía o antiestructura; implica simplemente operaciones constantes y mecánicas que sistemáticamente producen disociación (Derrida lo llamaría *différance*) en espacio y en tiempo, cuando un elemento arquitectónico funciona solamente por medio de chocar con un elemento programático, con el movimiento de cuerpos, o lo que sea. De esta forma, la disyunción se convierte en una herramienta sistemática y teórica para la elaboración de la arquitectura.

"Desconstrucción"

¿Es el parque de la Villette una teoría edificada o una edificación teórica? ¿Puede el pragmatismo de la práctica constructora aliarse con el rigor analítico de los conceptos?

Una anterior serie de proyectos, publicados como *The Manhattan Transcripts* (Academy Editions, 1981) tenía por objetivo lograr un desplazamiento de las categorías arquitectónicas convencionales por medio de una discusión teórica. La Villette era la extensión construida de un método comparable; fue impulsada por el deseo de ir "desde las matemáticas puras a las matemáticas aplicadas". En su caso, los apremios de la realización construida ampliaron y restringieron al mismo tiempo la investigación. La ampliaron, en tanto y cuanto los mismos auténticos apremios económicos, políticos y técnicos de la operación exigían un creciente agudizamiento de la argumentación teórica: el proyecto se volvió mejor al aumentar las dificultades. Pero la restringieron, en tanto y cuanto la Villette tenía que ser *construida*: la intención no fue nunca publicar meramente libros o montar exposiciones; la finalidad de cada uno de los dibujos era "construir": excepto en el libro titulado *La Case Vide*, no había "dibujos teóricos" para la Villette.

Sin embargo, el proyecto del parque de la Villette tenía un objetivo específico: demostrar que era posible construir una organización arquitectónica compleja sin recurrir a las tradicionales reglas de composición, jerarquía y orden. El principio de superimposición de tres sistemas autónomos de puntos, líneas y superficies fue desarrollado por medio de rechazar las síntesis totalizadoras de apremios objetivos evidentes en la mayor parte de los proyectos de gran escala. De hecho, si históricamente la arquitectura ha sido siempre definida como la "síntesis armónica" de coste, estructura, uso y apremios formales (*venustas, firmitas, utilitas*), el parque se volvió arquitectura contra sí mismo: una desintegración.

Nuestros objetivos eran desplazar la tradicional oposición entre programa y arquitectura, y ampliar la puesta en duda de otras convenciones arquitectónicas por medio de operaciones de superimposición, permuta y sustitución, para lograr "una inversión de las oposiciones clásicas

y un desplazamiento general del sistema", como ha escrito Jacques Derrida, en otro contexto, en *Marges*. Sobre todo, el proyecto dirigió un ataque contra las relaciones de causa a efecto, ya fueran entre forma y función, estructura y economía, o (por supuesto) forma y programas, reemplazando estas oposiciones por nuevos conceptos de contigüidad y superimposición. "Desconstruir" un programa determinado significó demostrar que el programa podía desafiar a la propia ideología que implicaba. Y "desconstruir" arquitectura involucraba dismantelar sus convenciones, utilizando conceptos derivados tanto de la arquitectura como de otras partes: del cine, de la crítica literaria y de otras disciplinas. Porque si los límites entre diferentes esferas de pensamiento han desaparecido gradualmente durante los últimos 20 años, el mismo fenómeno es aplicable a la arquitectura, que actualmente mantiene relaciones con el cine, la filosofía y el psicoanálisis (para citar solamente algunos ejemplos), en una intertextualidad subversiva de la autonomía modernista. Pero, sobre todo, lo que es corroído por los principios de la "desconstrucción" es la histórica fisura entre la arquitectura y su teoría.

No es por casualidad que los diferentes sistemas del parque se niegan el uno al otro porque están superimpuestos en el emplazamiento. Mucha de mi anterior obra teórica ha puesto en duda la misma idea de estructura, paralelizando la investigación contemporánea sobre textos literarios. Uno de los objetivos de la Villette era continuar esta investigación del concepto de estructura, conforme se expresaba en las respectivas formas de la cuadrícula de punto, los ejes coordinados (galerías cubiertas) y la "curva casual" (paseo cinematográfico). Superponer estas estructuras autónomas y completamente lógicas significó poner en duda su posición conceptual como máquinas ordenadoras: la superposición de tres estructuras coherentes nunca puede dar como resultado una megaestructura coherente, sino algo indecible, algo que es la oposición a una totalidad. Este lema ha sido explorado desde 1976 en *The Manhattan Transcripts*, donde la sobreposición de elementos abstractos y figurativos (basados en transformaciones arquitectónicas "abstractas" tanto como en extractos "figurativos" del emplazamiento escogido) coincidían con una exploración más general de las ideas de programa, guión y secuencia.

La independencia de las tres estructuras superpuestas evitaba así todos los intentos de homogeneizar el parque en una totalidad. Eliminaba la presunción de una causalidad preestablecida entre programa, arquitectura y significado. Además, el parque rechazaba el contexto, fomentando la intertextualidad y la dispersión del significado. Subvertía el contexto: la Villette es anticontextual. No tiene relación con sus alrededores. Su plan subvierte la misma noción de límites de a que depende el "contexto".

Sin-sentido¹/Sin-significado

Puede así considerarse que el proyecto del parque de la Villette fomenta el conflicto por encima de la síntesis, la fragmentación por encima de la unidad, la locura y el juego por encima de la gestión cuidadosa. Subvierte un cierto número de ideales que eran sacrosantos en el período

¹ "Non-Sense" en el original. Juego de palabras intraducible literalmente, por cuanto *nonsense* (sin guión) significa "disparate, dislate, desatino, tontería, necedad", pero el guión parece darle el sentido (ciertamente análogo) de "sin-sentido", tal como lo dejamos traducido para darle el significado que parece querer darle el autor. (N. del T.)

moderno y, de esta forma, puede ser aliado a una visión específica de la posmodernidad. Pero el proyecto discrepa con una particular premisa de la arquitectura, a saber, su obsesión con la presencia, con la idea de un significado inmanente en estructuras y formas arquitectónicas que dirige su capacidad significativa. El último resurgimiento de este mito ha sido la recuperación, por parte de los arquitectos, del significado, el símbolo, la codificación y la "doble codificación" en un movimiento ecléctico reminiscente de la larga tradición de "revivalismos" (restablecimientos) y "simbolismos" que aparecen a lo largo de la historia. Este posmodernismo arquitectónico contraviene la lectura evidente en otros campos de acción, en los que el posmodernismo implica un asalto sobre el significado o, más exactamente, un rechazo de un bien definido significado que garantiza la autenticidad de la obra de arte. Desmantelar el significado, demostrando que jamás es transparente sino producido socialmente, fue un objetivo clave en un nuevo enfoque crítico que ponía en duda las hipótesis humanistas del estilo. En su lugar, el posmodernismo arquitectónico se oponía al estilo del Movimiento Moderno, ofreciendo como alternativa otro estilo, más apetitoso. Su nostálgica búsqueda de coherencia, que ignora las actuales disociaciones sociales, políticas y culturales, es frecuentemente la encarnación de un medio arquitectónico particularmente conservador.

En contraste, el proyecto de la Villette intenta dislocar y desregular el significado, rechazando el repertorio "simbólico" de la arquitectura como un refugio de pensamiento humanístico. Porque hoy día el término "parque" (como "arquitectura", "ciencia" o "literatura") ha perdido su significado universal; ya ha dejado de referirse a un absoluto fijo, ni a un ideal. Ni el *hortus conclusus* ni la réplica de la Naturaleza, la Villette es un término en constante producción, en continuo cambio; su significado jamás es fijo sino que es siempre aplazado, diferido, convertido en irresoluto por la multiplicidad de significados que contiene. El proyecto se propone descomponer tanto la memoria como el concepto, oponiendo muchos ideales contextualistas y continualistas que implican que la intervención del arquitecto se refiera necesariamente a una tipología, un origen, o determinando el significado. Realmente, la arquitectura del parque rechaza funcionar como la expresión de un contenido preexistente, ya sea subjetivo, formal o funcional. De la misma forma con que no responde a las exigencias del yo (el arquitecto soberano o "creativo"), niega el inmanente dialecto de la forma, porque esta última es desplazada por las superposiciones y las transformaciones de elementos que siempre exceden cualquier configuración formal determinada. La presencia es aplazada y la conclusión es diferida mientras cada permuta o combinación de forma cambia la imagen un paso al frente. Y, más importante, el parque pone en tela de juicio el significado fundamental o primordial de la arquitectura: su tendencia (tal como observa Derrida en *La Case Vide*) de estar "en servicio y al servicio", obedeciendo a una economía de significado sentado como premisa sobre el uso funcional. En contraste, la Villette promociona la inestabilidad programática, la *folie* funcional. No una plenitud, sino, en su lugar, la forma "vacía": *les cases sont vides*.

Por consiguiente, la Villette se dirige a una arquitectura que no *significa nada*, una arquitectura del significador más que del significado: una arquitectura que es un puro rastro o juego de lenguaje. En una forma nietzscheana, la Villette se dirige hacia la infinidad interpretativa, porque el efecto de rechazar la fijeza no es la significación, sino la pluralidad semántica. Los tres sistemas autónomos y superpuestos del parque y las infinitas combinaciones combinatorias de las *folies*

da lugar a una multiplicidad de impresiones. Cada observador proyectará su propia interpretación, que dará como resultado una descripción que volverá a ser interpretada (según metodologías psicoanalíticas, sociológicas u otras) y así sucesivamente. En consecuencia, no hay una "verdad" absoluta para el proyecto arquitectónico, porque cualquier "significado" que pueda tener es una función de interpretación: no reside en el objeto, o en los materiales del objeto. De ahí, la "verdad" de las rojas *folies* no es la "verdad" del Constructivismo, al igual que la "verdad" del sistema de puntos no es la "verdad" del sistema de líneas. La añadidura de las coherencias internas del sistema no es coherente. El exceso de racionalidad no es racional. La Villette está al tanto de las nuevas circunstancias sociales e históricas: una realidad dispersa y diferenciada que señala un final a la utopía de la unidad.

Timelessness and Change-Presumably of Architecture and Architectural Education

Joseph Esherick

First timelessness: for a very long time, probably since the beginnings of architecture as a separate and specialized activity, there has existed a division between the architecture of power and influence and what I prefer to call ordinary architecture - the integrated work of thousands of people building mostly for themselves or for those they knew. There has also existed a timelessness among architects of internalizing architectural problems, of seeing the world in architectural terms; and there has been a persistence, if not timelessness, in the stability and conservatism of architectural education, particularly in its adherence to the sometimes narrow views of the profession and those who have a sufficient monopoly on power to be able to build, rather than adherence and attentiveness to the more numerous and varied views of a larger world.

Architecture and architectural education exist in a dichotomous environment: on the one hand, the recognized official environment is a world of large power-intensive organizations, elite, consolidated and monolithic; on the other hand, a diffused individuated world, people-intensive, pluralistic, fragmented and diverse. The former - organized, understandable and manageable (I leave to you to decide who is manageable and who is managing); the latter chaotic - confusing and often unmanageable. It is small wonder that the schools and profession have addressed themselves almost exclusively to the first of these two worlds. It is curious that no real struggle exists between the two possible tendencies. In this, too, there is a certain timelessness.

Change in architecture in recent years has been mostly a matter of degree. Complexity of processes of planning, designing and building have certainly increased. Accountability was always there but the consumer and environmental movement and the courts have made it a more potent and demanding issue.

Perhaps the two greatest changes have been the expansion of corporate practice in the image of the corporate client (it too was always there) but not so pervasive and the rise of the media as arbiter.

Architectural education has responded to these professional changes in various ways - at least the course labels and descriptions have changed. But if we take a long view and consider what Vitruvius thought necessary for the education of an architect and what an architect needed to

know, we observe that his curriculum was broader and more complex than most of today's. Change is indeed minimal - but we can be thankful we are no longer in charge of military hardware.

There is, in architectural education, a remarkable stability. There is even a timelessness about change and the way change occurs. My experience is that there is a virtually continuous drive for change - almost always characterized by total focus on the new improvement paired with an equally total ignoring of what is being changed. The result is that we know relatively little that we could build on about the successes or failures of what has gone before; we really need to know the effects of programs not just on students while in school, but the future effects these programs will have on the real world. To do this, we would need to clarify the intent of programs in detail, and to do that, we would require some measures of effectiveness. What might they be? Salaries? Design awards? Publication? Higher levels of health and safety? More enjoyable and beautiful habitats and work places? General enhancement of social and cultural values? Unquestionably, such a study is difficult and complex and the cause-effect relationships thoroughly contaminated. But the point is to look *outward* to the real world rather than inward to our own private professional world, perhaps even relaxing our grip on evaluating our own efforts and listening to others' ideas of changes for the better.

I do not wish to suggest that architects and architectural educators are the only ones who internalize their world view. It is a phenomenon common to almost all professions and groups. Early management science studies showed that it was characteristic of bureaucracies to quickly lose sight of the original mission and act primarily to protect and enhance the bureaucracy itself. A standard means of professional protection is the development of a professional jargon. In one of Harold Rosenberg's essays,¹ from the early sixties, he writes:

"The more incomprehensible this lingo is to outsiders, the more thoroughly it identifies the profession as such and elevates it out of the reach of mere outsiders and craftsmen."

adding in a footnote:

"The continued use of latin by the medical profession appears as simpleminded compared to what newer professions have been able to accomplish in 'English'."

So another possible change for the better: listening and being clear and understandable in our discourse with ordinary folks. To do that, we cannot dwell, in our language, on our internal concerns but rather will have to speak in terms and about issues that will be broadly understood.

In this respect, I found the piece on "architecture and the future" in the current ACSA news distant and removed. It is curiously a pervasively technical view, reducing our world view to one

¹ Harold Rosenberg. *Everyman a Professional, The Tradition of the View*, p. 64, New York, Grove Press, 1961.

inhabited by images, processes, trends and methods; there are bound to be people in there somewhere among all those images, but they're hard to find.

Reflected in this short piece is the persistent, if not timeless, tendency not merely to technicise our world view but to internalize it within architecture. In some unfortunate instances architecture is seen as a monolithic thing, a thing apart existing on its own, independent of the rest of the world - rather than as a diffuse, integrated array of activities embedded in the world. Where these tendencies toward internalization exist, I see the need for real change - architecture must be seen as action thoroughly integrated into the real world and not just the world of power and wealth, where it gets the most publicity, but into the world of people everywhere, especially the world of those who, for whatever reason, are disenfranchised.

If there is anything timeless it is change. Much of the change we encounter is beyond our control, but we should make a more conscious effort to both guess about future change, and plan our own changes to accommodate different possible futures. It is not easy. Casey Stengel said it best:

"Prediction is difficult, especially when it involves the future."

We need to construct an array of scenarios of the future (everyone is supposed to do *that*) and to consider what changes will accommodate what futures. In doing this, we should be flexible and build in some redundancy - it is doubtful that our foresight will be perfect. The least we can do is to develop flexible institutions that can accommodate change quickly, but also naturally.

In looking to future change, we should make a commitment to focus on external problems - we certainly should not become like too many schools of education, emphasizing teaching technique and neglecting the subject matter which is being taught. A commitment to focus on real-world problems must be a faculty commitment - and the messiness of some of the problems to be dealt with may produce situations that will cause difficulties with some academic promotion committees, and we may have to change or augment some standards. I am reminded of a recent cartoon of a tombstone inscribed "published but perished anyway."

More specifically, what do we need to tend to? In this country, we need to worry a great deal about transforming the profligate ways of building and development to a more conservative approach by weaving into everything we do a concern for natural and human resources. And when we do propose some action - a building or a plan - we need to concentrate on understanding in the most comprehensive sense the impacts of our actions. Despite long neglect, energy concerns are as timeless as any we face. We should, however, avoid the temptation to make energy issues, indeed all building science issues, technical issues only devoid of a powerful human connection. The pure technical fix is the more dangerous, the more technology biased it becomes - not just because the techniques and hardware change so rapidly, but also because it is so easy - as Sam Goldwyn would have put it - "to include people out." In some institutions, technical subjects were traditionally dealt with on a "first principle" rather than a more distant hardware basis. A change back would be good.

In passing, I would like to speculate that a major impact of computers can be an expanded and timely flow of the most current technical and hardware information.

Beginning at the beginning is generally a good idea, and the teaching of history is a case in point. But the pace should be such that there is time to get closer to the other end and see how it all came out. The current history of building and development is, because of the extraordinary complexity of the forces involved, essential for the understanding of the often wide range of impacts of construction. Although *pruitt-igoe* is often used as a bludgeon in current arguments about design, it is both inaccurate and misleading to make the case a design issue. Similarly, claiming that Manhattan-type high-rises, wherever built, are international style is to completely misunderstand that movement. But, what is worse, to block an understanding of the powerful forces driving these buildings up into the sky. The forces involved are complex, but they are not unorganized nor are they un-understandable. Our students and others outside the school need to have an understanding of the far-reaching impacts of modern aggressive development; if they are going to be co-opted by the media and the media arm of the developers, they ought to know what they are getting into and hopefully be able to make the best of it.

An 11th century Islamic writer, Ibn Butlan, in the *Qabus Namah*² (the epic of fantasy) had it thus:

"Drinking is a transgression; if you wish to commit a transgression, it should at least not be a flavorless one. If you drink wine, let it be the finest; if you listen to music, let it be the sweetest, and if you commit a forbidden act, let it be with a beautiful partner, so that even though you may be convicted of sin in the next world, you will at any rate not be branded a fool in this."

Current history courses dealing with contemporary development should produce, on the one hand, an understanding of entrepreneurship, the media and hype; on the other, a sense of objectives, a sense of possible moral and ethical frames.

The one internal concern we must have is for our students and we need to offer them the most comprehensive and honest view of the world we can; a view beyond that of the professional world. Their futures, I believe we will all agree, will be quite different from what ours were and they may see far more change than we have seen.

Their productivity will be important - indeed, productivity is one of the (if not the) major problems facing this country. By this, I mean more than just being able to draw (although that's good too), but comprehensive and effective capabilities that will respond to a larger world. It will be useful to think some about what will be the future measures of productivity. I suspect those measures will be in terms of thought, imagination, design - guided I hope by responsible and durable concern for the human condition. I believe their productivity will be enhanced by an understanding of economic, political and social issues, but above all ethical issues.

² *Qabus Namah*, p. 40 17-19, (trans. p. 62). Quoted in....

Architectural students I have known over a period now of 50 years (I include my own colleagues) have nearly all maintained an abiding human concern and a genuine desire to engage life and living. One change we don't need is the transformation of the architectural student into a detached, dispassionate professional technician, however bright.

We also do not need to change the diversity of our institutions. It is not only not necessary but not desirable that everyone do the same thing - the Moscow Architectural Institute and the NCARB notwithstanding. The healthy regional differences we now have should only be changed by making the differences clearer. Schools that have developed particular lines of expertise should be encouraged to continue doing so. We need a reasonable generosity and tolerance for differences indeed we need to encourage differences, to preserve conflict in order to clarify ideas and issues.

I'm not sure about the timelessness of modesty in our claims, but it should be there; we may be wrong. We need to maintain a sense of humor, not just in case we are wrong, but to help us understand and deal with differences. And in more specific terms we need not just a sense of place but a sense of humanity.

The timelessness of architects' concern for the aesthetic environment, for beauty, for a lively and spirited grace can be enhanced by a strengthened commitment to the humanitarian foundations of architecture.

While I believe we need to avoid the temptations of technical or entrepreneurial co-option, we should not be apprehensive about change nor should we force it. Change as I see it need only be a shift in direction toward a greater and broader emphasis on human concerns.

La arquitectura es un no-arte

Marc Mack

La visión tradicional de la arquitectura y el arte siempre ha supuesto que la primera es una forma o manifestación del segundo. La arquitectura así considerada es una de las artes.

Mi hipótesis será la contraria: arte y arquitectura deben mantenerse separados porque son nociones opuestas.

La mayor parte de la arquitectura actual está considerada como arte o como algo totalmente antiartístico, mientras centenares de edificaciones insensibles a 109 valores tradicionales de la arquitectura están siendo construidos a gran escala bajo criterios cien por cien especulativos y con total ausencia artística. Por otro lado, 109 arquitectos "artistas" diseñan muebles, y cuelgan sus abrigos en los museos.

Saber hacer arquitectura es saber edificar creativamente, y no la producción de objetos que ocultan una profesión que asiste silenciosa a la más desenfrenada especulación económica del proceso constructivo. Construir es cada día más un asunto de procedimientos legales inútiles que detienen la creatividad e impiden el progreso incluso de las tecnologías.

Mientras 109 valores tradicionales de la arquitectura desaparecen, 109 edificios brillan en las revistas, museos e instituciones. 109 criterios teóricos que se defienden en estos cenáculos anulan 109 esfuerzos individuales de auténtico interés.

Ello ya empieza en las escuelas de arquitectura, en las que, lejos de enseñar una aproximación global de lo que es la arquitectura, se entretienen en la manipulación individual de brillantes tipologías que sirven para la autocomplacencia de 109 estudiantes pero que tienen muy poco que ver con la responsabilidad global de la disciplina arquitectónica.

La selección de unos pocos héroes (arquitectos de moda) tiende a producir la cultura arquitectónica de la heroicidad, la fotogenia y la absoluta adoración de la "novedad", a través de soluciones arquitectónicas totalmente acríticas, nocivas y culturalmente inútiles e insignificantes. Simultáneamente, la arquitectura adaptada al paisaje, modesta y bien diseñada permanece ignorada, en la sombra.

Especialmente hoy, en tiempos de un liberalismo posmoderno, la arquitectura que simplemente existe, sin gritar para llamar la atención, es un hecho raro.

Los valores arquitectónicos y su moral han cambiado drásticamente desde la noción globalizada de los sesenta, aunque esto fuera más o menos correcto. Hoy se tienen en cuenta los objetos arquitectónicos uno a uno, aunque ello resulte muy intrincado, solamente las consideraciones contextuales, la mejora del nivel de vida y de las tecnologías, la calidad de la construcción, etc.; y el desarrollo de una calidad global, regional, del contexto, se han sacrificado para preservar este ámbito de creación individual de significación arquitectónica.

El arte como arquitectura ha acabado de alienar la edificación al separarla de la realidad y de los valores humanísticos. Las teorías artísticas inútiles para la arquitectura han invadido la edificación. Las composiciones abstractas, suprematistas y conceptuales útiles al arte han penetrado la disciplina arquitectónica sin modificar nada esencial y sí provocando una forma ilusoria, inútil, que cubre 109 edificios sin apenas tocarlos.

Y todavía más, la obsesión por estos sistemas compositivos ha dejado la arquitectura sin sus propias estrategias de construcción y de creación. De ahí que una arquitectura muda, sin su propio lenguaje, haya tenido que dirigirse al pasado, allá donde todavía existían lenguajes propios de la arquitectura.

Arquitectura es no-arte. Es el arte de construir y el arte de edificar. Y este arte de aglomerar las cosas con armonía y comprensión globalizadora ha renunciado a su existencia solamente para obtener autosatisfacción y gratificación artística. Materiales, conceptos, ideas y metáforas se contrastan, se refuerzan y se deforman, sólo para reinventar... la rueda.

La buena arquitectura no debe ser ni nueva ni vieja. La defensa de un nuevo historicismo hoy no es más que el fracaso de la arquitectura moderna por expresar valores duraderos. Pero crear un historicismo aguado es perder la orientación correcta. Por el contrario, si se aceptan los componentes emocionales, tipológicos y racionales de la arquitectura, pueden producirse edificios que no desfallezcan con el tiempo.

Como admitió Adolf Loos a los que en su tiempo ya mezclaron arte y arquitectura:

"(...) la casa tiene que agradar a mucha gente, por el contrario una pieza artística no debe gustar a nadie. La obra de arte es un asunto privado del artista, la casa no lo es. Los objetos artísticos no responden a un uso concreto, las casas sí deben responder a un uso. La pieza de arte no es de la responsabilidad de nadie, la arquitectura es responsabilidad de todos. La pieza de arte exige ser escuchada por el agrado, por el "comford" de cada persona, una a una, mientras que la casa sirve a este agrado, a este "comford". El arte es revolucionario. La Arquitectura es Conservadora."

La arquitectura necesita ser conservadora, "conservar". Tiene que servir a necesidades diversas: las del cliente, las del lugar, las de la economía, las de la cultura en general.

Estas necesidades están en conflicto las unas con las otras. Algunas están en armonía, pero todas deben integrarse si queremos crear una arquitectura que realmente signifique algo.

La arquitectura no es un asunto privado. Debe reflejar las necesidades del cliente tanto como las de la comunidad, la cultura y el medio ambiente. Por lo tanto, la arquitectura debe construirse desde lo que es y lo que fue. Debe construirse *desde el pasado* pero no debe construir *un pasado*. Los arquetipos, las tipologías y las tramas especiales deben sólo usarse por su capacidad para entonar conflictos reales.

La arquitectura no debe perseguir una expresividad individual. Los modelos de buenas soluciones ya están hechos y a punto de ser usados. Hay que reusarlos una y otra vez. La forma y la expresión arquitectónica se generan desde la idea general, el plano, el concepto y los temas generales manipulables.

La expresión no es la fachada: subyace en la intención. *Lo que se dice es mucho más importante que el cómo se dice.*

De nuevo es absurdo que pretendamos reinventar... la rueda, para al finar construir 109 iconos de la moda sin ningún compromiso. Hay que conseguir un equilibrio entre lo regional y lo universal.

Mientras que el regionalismo incluye la elección de 109 materiales, el lugar, el clima, etc., el universalismo concierne a las proporciones humanas, convenciones simbólicas y por ello a la estructura jerárquica de la construcción.

Las simetrías, las autonomías y la ausencia de ornamentación representan el carácter universal. La tecnología local y la ingenuidad humana representan el carácter regional. La misma dicotomía puede aplicarse a 109 aspectos emotivos y racionales de la arquitectura.

La intencionalidad de una estructura arquitectónica individual debe ser impulsada y no debe ser rigidizada. *La expresión de la arquitectura proviene de la manera a través de la cual está construida.*

La construcción en sí misma transporta la idea; las fuerzas y los pesos se expresan a través de unas pocas partes: columnas, dinteles y techos.

Los materiales, a su vez, se convierten en portadores de ornamentación y belleza, y disminuyen así la necesidad de crear ornamento y belleza, algo siempre muy difícil de definir en cualquier disciplina.

El uso de 109 materiales y el uso de 109 tipos son las bases emotivas de la arquitectura, mientras que la necesidad de estar bajo techo permanece como su trasfondo racional.

De esta manera, la arquitectura puede retener su propio lenguaje, permanece simple y directa, clara en su intencionalidad y económicamente posible.

La arquitectura tiene que diferenciarse del arte. La arquitectura puede ser algo en sí misma con su propio lenguaje, su propia retórica y su propia gramática.

Un lenguaje capaz de conducirnos a la básica y sencilla definición de una arquitectura que puede preservar la temperatura del hombre y su cultura.

Círculo de Lectores en Madrid: memoria

Enric Miralles

(Colaboradores: F. Pla, J. Callis, E. Prats, J. Mias)

Planta baja

... Desde el principio el trabajo es conseguir una sala única, que cambia para cada ocasión, donde las reuniones se puedan seguir desde cada rincón (...).

...las ideas repetidas eran: "familiaridad", "acercase", "hacerse y deshacerse" del grupo de invitados, "llegar y despedirse"...

Así los pilares se pasean... mejor dicho, se deslizan como peces entre el público.

...a la vez esconden pantallas de televisión que proyectan imágenes de la misma reunión, así las conversaciones se multiplican entre sí mismas.

Las ventanas de la fachada se asoman desde el patio de vecinos... forman el techo de la sala principal.

...mientras que quien ha sido invitado a hablar se desliza invisible sobre las cabezas del público que comienza a reunirse a través de plataformas...

...estas plataformas forman figuras, perfiles que desvelan la parte invisible de la ceremonia.

Que la organización de ese espacio se construyera como una anotación... que su dibujo tuviera algo de manuscrito. Siguiendo el orden que las ideas toman sobre el papel... Casi una escritura directa...

Algo así como esas ediciones en las que se recoge la escritura un autor al lado de su texto impreso.

Planta attillos

En ellas nos parece entender cosas ininteligibles de un modo inmediato y directo.

Es una sugerencia lejana que sin embargo me ha ayudado a dar el tono del proyecto.

Los peces me recordaron algunos de los dibujos de Federico García Lorca, tal como aparecen entre las palabras de sus dedicatorias...

Allí esas siluetas también son ojos que cuentan distintos sentimientos.

En ellos se reflejaran aspectos simultáneos de la reunión.

Los peces pasan entre nosotros como los postes telegráficos en la ventanilla del tren.

En el techo un monitor se desplaza filmando lo que sucede...

No sólo el conferenciante.

Planta cenital

Los pilares y las paredes lo repiten...

Sobre la cabeza algo se mueve: tiene algo de Camilo José Cela.

... y mientras esperamos el público, poco a poco va subiendo a los palcos para mirar desde las ventanas.

Programa de actividades

- a) Veladas literarias. Veladas musicales. Conferencias. Homenajes. Presentación de libros. Entrega de premios
- b) Proyecciones de vídeos y películas
- c) Exposiciones temporales. Exposiciones de libros ilustrados y originales, carteles y fotografías
- d) Reuniones de jurados de concursos. Seminarios internos. Cursos de formación
- e) Celebraciones de festejos de la empresa

Lugar

La nueva sede del Círculo de Lectores ocupa la planta baja y el patio interior de un edificio residencial en la calle O'Donnell en Madrid.

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