



NOTES FOR A LECTURE: 'NOUVELLES IMPRESSIONS D'ARCHITECTURE'

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Source: *AA Files*, No. 6 (May 1984), pp. 3-13

Published by: [Architectural Association School of Architecture](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29543396>

Accessed: 12/06/2014 11:40

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NOTES FOR A LECTURE: 'NOUVELLES IMPRESSIONS D'ARCHITECTURE'

Daniel Libeskind

you drew the space in
reticule
now spread the iron net,
Enyalion

Charles Olson,
The Maximus Poems

No longer can one find Architecture in a pre-existent state, after the manner of techno-physical space. The former unfolds itself, lubricated by a substance that neither acid nor water will dissolve, only through the dominion of densities. These compact resistors are hardly ingestible by that 'widest open of all mouths which is Space' (Malcom de Chazal).

In being drawn to 'places' (loci which are inflected according to the caresses of contingency), Architecture is charged by waves emitted from these densities: wireless micro-stations which send signals uniquely disposed to determine the *spiritual space* revealed by the removal of objective carcasses.

Enough to take away the object to see that the trace lingers, like an elongated shadow, in its place. The emptied locale floods the consciousness and strikes at the husk of memory. Thus drawn by an experience of spaceless-place, a realm opens which is not visualizable, a region of invisible presence that refuses to be occupied by anything.

Released from the dictatorship of proletarian thoughts, space oozes out into a nebula that has no connection with any astral deity. There it undergoes its death with a dignity once accorded to alchemical transformations. No longer seen, because now incarnated and belonging to the eye itself, space becomes a clot localized and diagnosable within the embolism of carnal traumas. In the disguise of 'place' it looks back at us with the gaze of a melancholic — having sacrificed its suicide to an afterlife in which none are possible.

When Architecture no longer deals with Space, all transactions, in which the container and the contained twisted together — whether the ecstasy of space was that of birth or death or form — have come to an end. Only a phosphorescent glow reminds one that the two-dimensional contour one is pursuing is that of his own eyes.

The supple distance between the eyes, a third dimension of craft, is sufficient to prevent the collapse of a crystalline domain, which drawing too protects. Participating together in an organic complicity between two kinds of elisions, something gratuitous and free comes to the fore. One could call it the Undecided Flesh (of Architecture). A possibility emerges for Architecture to escape from its 'cage' precisely because it is 'absent' from itself, like the subconscious released to float in the air through the mortification of the body. Today Architecture's truth is not dependent on its embodiment. The vacant 'eye' of space — blind or dormant, who

is to say? — has drained the Angel of Light of his glow; how strange that his dazzle could offer itself so meekly!

Can Architecture come to a 'free-hold' on dwelling? Can the receptacle ever again be merged with its contents? Can parallel activities (such as drawing and thinking) intersect in any realm? Nonetheless, today they refuse to intersect because at the imaginary point of contact (a point which is always ahead) one realizes that the 'performance' — in which the distinction between actor and spectator is eradicated owing to the seating arrangements — has already occurred, but *from behind*. Thus the necessity to re-awaken the eyes in the back of the head is not to be looked upon as a concern for Pataphysicians, Madmen or Utopians; rather, this need of 'becoming what one already is' (Heidegger) incinerates apprehension with its forward-looking aims, and reflects it retrogressively on the *derrière* of the retina. Staring intently for so long at the 'sunlight of forms', one has come to see Architecture (is it an after-image?) in the whiteness of its non-forms, in the blackness of its forms.

Architecture remains 'nameless' — for it now seeks to spare dwelling. By refusing to 'deal' with imbeciles at noon, by avoiding the 'kick-backs' of space, by accepting its uselessness in the cataracts of the neo-constructive, Architecture adjusts its concavity to that other concavity we call the Real World. In this double concavity it loses its former spherical voluptuousness and crosses the frontier of colour into the infra-red area associated in the mind with the colour of the sky or with the River Styx. Having 'crossed-over' (Hejduk), the emptiness of Space no longer appears as a deficiency — as a failure to fill the gap between the heart and the stars. Presumably emptiness allies itself with it, forming a new ovule, and through no failure of ours brings to fulfilment a foetus whose resilience is inconceivable in its unmitigated thinness.

Emptiness is not a pure minus — not a deficiency as the idealists thought — but a play of new curvatures, curvatures eternally misadjusted to each other's hollowness. The audibility of Unoriginal Sounds — yet to be heard amidst the cheerful ice crackling around us — projects this immeasurable 'hole' of absence into a megalithic proportion coextensive in size with the head, the hand and the eye. No one can be closer than that to the creator, while dis-remembering his plans for a uni-directional telecommunications centre from which radiate signals that can never be retrieved.

INTRODUCTION

In the crucifixion of dwelling — irreversible because resolved as space — drawing as an aesthetic is stretched along the axis of past-future: the Alpha and Omega forever at right-angles to the point we call the Great Beyond, and oblique to the present.

The drawing 'system' is sacrificed to a divine discontent precluding the immediate Delivery of the Unhistorical. This *aporia* of the architect, accompanied by his inability to have any emotion left for the 'lebenswelt' — having himself succeeded in eradicating any *Justitia* he had felt for it — is a camouflage of the Noetic. Architecture is *not* consubstantial with Dwelling but only with the garment it displays. This ambiguity may be viewed with equanimity, however:

- A. An observer of disorder ('man of marble')
- B. A disorder of the observer (aphasia as a mnemonic device)

Resolving mathematically, one computes the following calculation:

If $A = B$, then a voiceless sound (surd) suggests that *you speak to your drawing as if you were speaking to yourself* (as the drawing speaks to you).

In other words: draw on your drawing while you are drawn upon.

In sum, the element of perfect rigidity is the gyrostat. Everyone is familiar with those square or round copper frames containing a flywheel spinning rapidly around an interior axis.



Successfully repeated seduction: 'on what ground shall we criticize the City Manager?'

It is established herein that Composition or sensible refinement (caloric infusion)

- is a failure of feeling
- is a Radix, Matrix
- is a worn-out knot; fruit eaten

only when decayed, he sd.

'Growth of the Soil' (see: the visit of Knut Hamsun to Goebbels) is not predicated on the ground, but on A CURE of the ground.

Can Poetry ever be a cure?

Curiological cure = cure by covering the abyss of Ground, by permanently solidifying the ABYSS so that the illusion and abyss might never again be scoured away.

Might Architecture be believed as a final fiction, which is known as fiction in a fictional world — there being nothing else, he sd?

'The Tempio Malatestiano is both an apex and in verbal sense a monumental failure.'

Ezra Pound

God, god, gods . . . from Sinai, Trieste, Cumae and Todtnauberg and the Imagination of Disaster form an unwavering and singular continuum. This bridge spans the vortex of vortex; an insurmountable fault: the famous 'knife without a handle, with the blade missing'.

(ordine geometrico demonstrata)

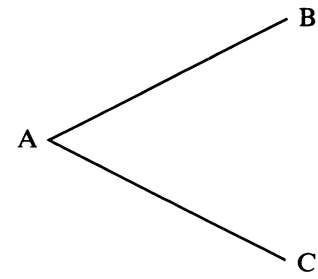
Definition: I understand Tang or Flat Grind through the 'cursed spite that ever I was born to set it right' (Theory of Machines).

Axiom:

- I. All things which are, are in themselves or in other things.
- II. That which cannot be conceived through another thing must be conceived through itself.

Proposition: A serrated edge which ends in a point must traverse the length of a blade, bolster and the neb, eventually arriving at the antipode of its guard: Humility is not a virtue if it does not arise from reason.

Proof: 'Time is out of joint.'
'Another Proof': 'Being is out of time.'



Corollary I: If an infinite distance is measured in infinite but equal spasms . . . the distance between B and C will continue to increase, and from being determined and finite distance it will become immeasurable and infinite; assuming AB and AC of fixed length at first, increasing to infinity. . . .

The angle of Architecture cannot be increased (Note: the diagram is hypothetical). On the other hand think of all those architects who draw in order to escape from their spouses! The Children's Crusade — silence speaks. The rest is silence. Whereof one cannot speak one must be silent (Wittgenstein): One must try to speak.

Did Saturn want to take back the names he had given?

- The landscape of the verses
- The landscape of the earth
- transcendental-figurative phenomenon
- The landscape of the soul
- becoming nameless



I N T E R L U D E

Early Bergman:

Eva: You took the money?
Jan: Yes I did.
Eva: Where did you hide it?
Jan: I didn't hide it.
Eva: Where have you got it?
Jan: Here in my pocket.

(They sit for a long while in silence.)

Much later:

Eva: Is the thing drawn measured?
Jan: What is measured is drawn.
Eva: Is the thing imagined as drawn?
Jan: The drawing as imagined and the thing imagined as drawn are imagined as one.
Eva: By whom?
Jan: By their maker.
Eva: I guess birds perceive the world differently. . . .
Jan: For them the liquid is solid and silence shapeless.
Eva: I wonder whether Paul ever read Philo?

(They move toward the viewer, as if directed.)

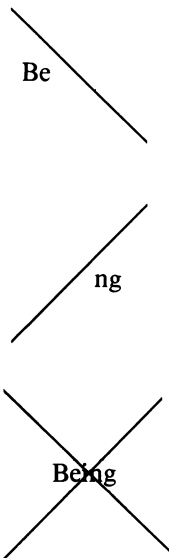
The remainder of this treatise is wanting:

I shall not consider the actions and passions of men as if they were a matter of lines, surfaces, and volumes. I shall consider these as Spinoza's secret rendezvous with Humanism's ghost: inscribing in the diamond the taste for a one-room house.

Entering the hallway, one is confronted by an architecture of weird and commanding beauty, the baffling intricacy of its fearless design. . . .

At moments of fatigue, however, one no longer looks ahead but laterally, cancelling the depth of the whole by a line that connects the two uprights with a lintel.

In short, we ordinarily find it impossible to align the axes of perception with Adam's rib.



Some are less susceptible; (see Chandayoga Upanishad III, 11); Architecture as a whole is less susceptible to Metaphor than a

Thought | House
Balloon | Tea-cup
 | Bird
 | Triangle

Symbolia | Line

Staggeration | Les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux
billard (the white letters . . .)
 | Les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux
billard (the white man's letters . . .)

Wafteron | digital cleverness
 | cerebral traction

Agitrons | hordes

'You speak. You say.'

Like a building in the shape of something minus space
dazzle equals room (Red, Vernueil, Rose, Blue, Green,
China, East, Monroe)

and a heliped on the SOUTH lawn
with no thoughts of people now dead.

JOB

Business promises

'if this proves right' he said

'then we would have to search for the special
character' of

'if you had enough of Rome',
said Bruno, 'go to
Paris'

CLEARING AWAY

From Jonah, George and the Whale

Antiquities briffit : 'our daily bread'
Bernini Jarns : 'even Jerusalem'
Tatlin quimps : 'Ain-soph'

Euclid's diagram for a first
proposition: area enclosed by
the arcs is a mystical figure,
Vesica Piscis, symbol of the womb;



'A line is a length without a breadth.'

Grawlix: *V.B. King*

Wonder of the World (imagination of bronze)

- 1 Pyramids/SOL
- 2 Walls and Hanging/MI
- 3 Gardens of Babylon/FA
- 4 Statue of Zeus/Re
- 5 Lighthouse at Alexandria/LA
- 6 Temple of Diana/DO
- + 7 Colossus of Rhodes/DO
- 8 Mausoleum/TI

now revealed at the
'edge' of space as familiar
but dubious: No fire-fangled feathers
here!
Noah's raven returns with olive leaf in his beak



INTRODUCTION TO DRAWING
(ARCHITECTURAL)

In drawing one must love the lines themselves, their ideas, images, rhythms and their liquid-crystal display with the capacity to love anything at all:

Even the endoplasmic reticulum.

Accuracy of observation = the precision of CARE in the membrane:

Equivalent to the accuracy of the

THOUGHT
Architecture

Because drawing is the better part of

ARCHITECTURE
Thought

(adding the proviso)

only because Architecture is the better part of

DRAWING
Drawing

Only because the plant Kingdom is represented from the roots up, whereas edible animals have been illustrated in such a way as to show those parts . . . with the exception of man.

For every line one must supply the following information: differentiation code, expiration date, subscription code, subscription source, demographic code, address, surname count, and coded surname count.






S O C I A L P R E F A C E
(A R C H I T E C T U R A L)

A community of ORIGINALS is not a community.
Hence a fashion of the Unoriginal, rather than
AUTHENTIC UNORIGINALITY:

1. It is easier to copy than to think.
2. Cemeteries are more picturesque than coat and hat-racks.
3. Space is in the plural (if it were One the soul would crumple like an . . .).


(In the original manuscript,
from which I have been copying
this, there is a gap here followed
by a series of etymologies.)

'The Art of the Moving Picture' by V. Lindsay

Here is the picture of an angle: , Latin equivalent, Q.

This is another reminder of the technical outline . . .

I will leave the spiritual interpretation of the angle to Emerson, Swedenborg or Maeterlinck.

Here is a picture of a mouth: , Latin equivalent, the letter R. If we turn from the dictionary of the monuments, we will see that the Egyptians used all human features in their pictures.

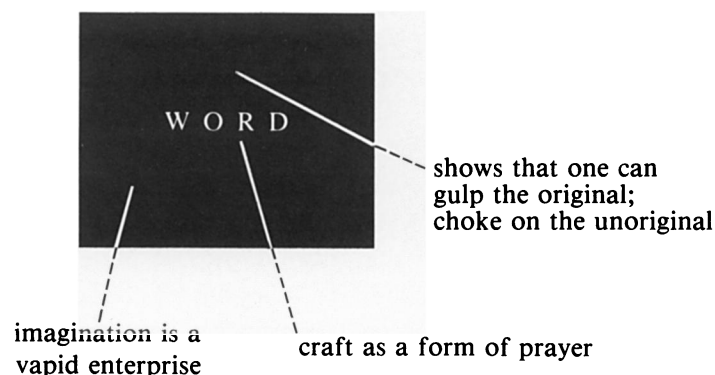
$\frac{9}{10}$ (actors' faces) fixed (as the masks of the Greek chorus)

By staying too close to the ground, one is proceeding at too low a level; where is the rope stretched which makes one stumble?

The Graphic as the soul of Architecture.

'The special character of sculpture as one of the graphic arts' (Heidegger) to be followed.

Language as the Material of Poetry is not a medium or instrument: Theatre of Trope or Drawing as Architecture must 'resist the intellect almost successfully', must not degenerate into an instrument nor into Deepinsnow. An epilogue — picnic in the ruins — over the arches and arcs returns to architecture through non-architecture like man through animal.



The architect comes into his destiny today as nature in the distant past came to him, a desert, with indifference and a strange lostness.

(For demonstration, see *Gargantua* ch. XVI: On Inquiring What Men of Learning There Were Then In the City, And What Wine They Drank There.)

In this process — itself a metaphor which creates a new reality — the drawn Original appears Unoriginal (unreal).

Short Treatise:
ON THE
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE
MEAT AND THE SIGNATURE

Architecture of Plenitude, this imitation of emotion (clip-on) when it refers to pain is called compassion (face-mask). When referring to the donut of desire it is called emulation or cover — which is nothing else than the padding of anything engendered in one by the fact that one ‘imagines others to have that padding’.

Illustration:

<p>A. CENTER FIELD Architecture is a vacuum</p>	<p>B. RIGHT FIELD FOUL LINE Realism</p>
<p>C. FENCE/WALL Realism</p>	<p>D. HOME PLATE Corruption of reality</p>

Note: gateways, porticullises, jambs, pulley chains, and fluted spires are all included between the ‘hot corner’ and foul territory, as are all other on-off elements.

In the four quadrants (A,B,C,D, or B,D,C,A, . . . etc.) everything which appears becomes visible against the artificial turf; even buildings tend to become real. Everything tends to become real. We continue to build the city (AD, BD, CD, . . .) though we live on deck, protected by the umpire’s area.





Photographs by Tom Buck.

P R O (L O G) U E

According to some the effort to take your place, then, among these piles of less efficacious suppositories is constant enough to seem arithmetically proportional to the time allotted for it. Comforting thought. . . 'it is time'. . .

'Must she then die Latent Observer. . .
Brr. . .Brr. . .The momentary oblivion
induced by sleep. . .It is freezing hard. . .
general sinister impression. . .brr. . .brr'

Alfred Jarry

. . . 'it is time' to dis-articulate (architecture's) thought. There are some today who do not underestimate the object, but elevate it into a + : the mere weight of this object on the ✱ is an endless reminder that from a certain point onward the confession justifies itself in the form of ✕ (having dispensed with the lateral movement). Thus in reducing further we arrive at the formulation ✕ or the Deconstructed Labyrinth: \ .

The de-construction of de-construction yields:

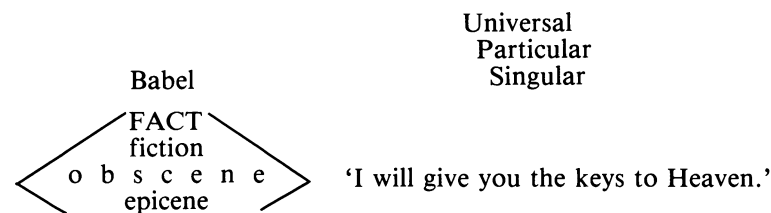
'aren't you at least equal to Russia Cement?'

in this form: ()

From figure to figure, motif to motif, repetition which parodies nothing —

Foible and Forte
Guard and Pommel
Blade and Mounting
Gripping Hole and Spring
Swivel and Crossbar
Cassini Division and Doppler Shift
Double Stars and Red Supergiants

to employ the $\frac{\text{sub-Versive}}{\text{SUB-versive}} = 5 = \text{power present in the } -$



to find. . .metagrammatically. . .the. . .element. . .in. . .
the. . .free. . .throw. . .(Alogical). . .the. . .thread. . .
in. . .the. . .Structure. . .which unravels. . .it. . .all. . .
the Loos. . .stone. . .which. . .pulls. . .down. . .the. . .
building. . .

This key-punch is not a dismantling of structure but a moment in which it has already registered itself on the screen. Its apparent oscillation is not life but 1/2 life, 1/4 life, 1/16 . . . 1/n' annihilating the shot-timer itself (knowingly? unknowingly?):

Forking of the Non-source — interference rejector.

PLATO: 'O, Socrates, make music and work at it.'

ROUSSEL: 'First gramophone: But the telegram is dead.'
'Second gramophone: It's just because it's dead that everyone understands it.'

KAFKA: 'But then he returned to his work as if nothing had happened.'