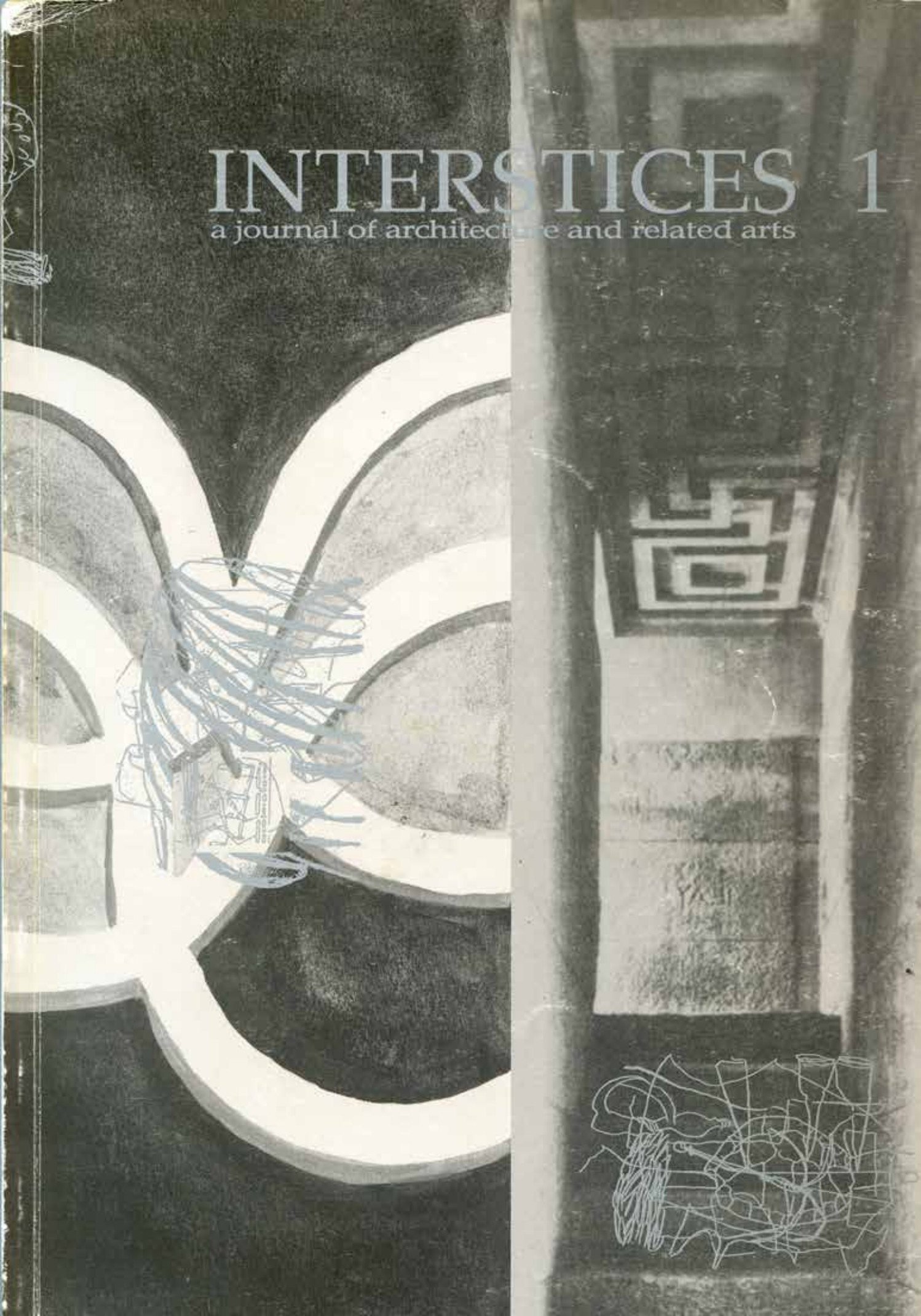
INTERSTICES 1

a journal of architecture and related arts



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All correspondence should be addressed to The Editors, INTERSTICES, Department of Architecture, University of Auckland, Private Bag, Auckland.

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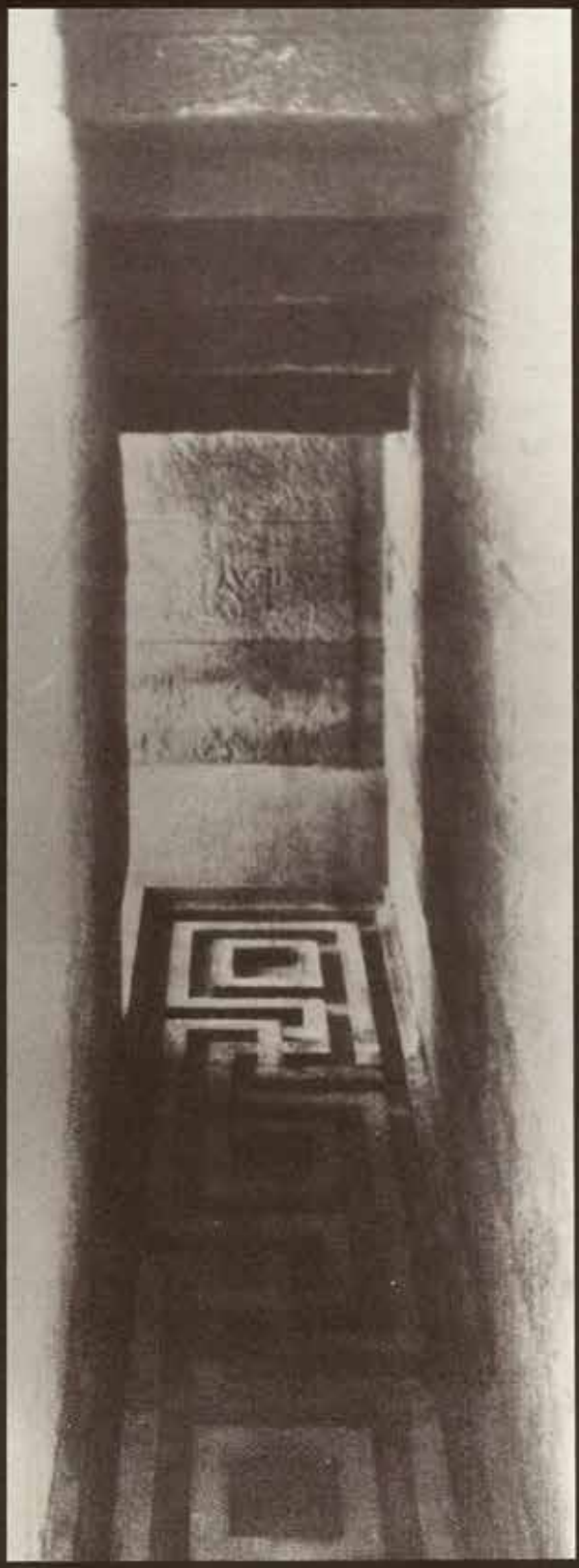

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The Spaces Between

Ross Jenner

For some time now a need has been felt to set up another platform for architecture in this strangely dislocated part of the world where an architectural culture can be said scarcely to exist. Important developments in thinking about architecture have been ignored or actively resisted here. It is our premise that architecture only happens in an environment of critical discussion and debate. We hope to offer a forum for the discussion and development of issues and ideas important to architecture without the restrictions of immediate commercial appeal which has hitherto been a 'justification' for the lack of a thoughtful treatment of architecture which elsewhere is taken for granted. 'Justification' because ultimately important assumptions which for many must not be broken open and examined underlie this resistance to architecture and to theory.

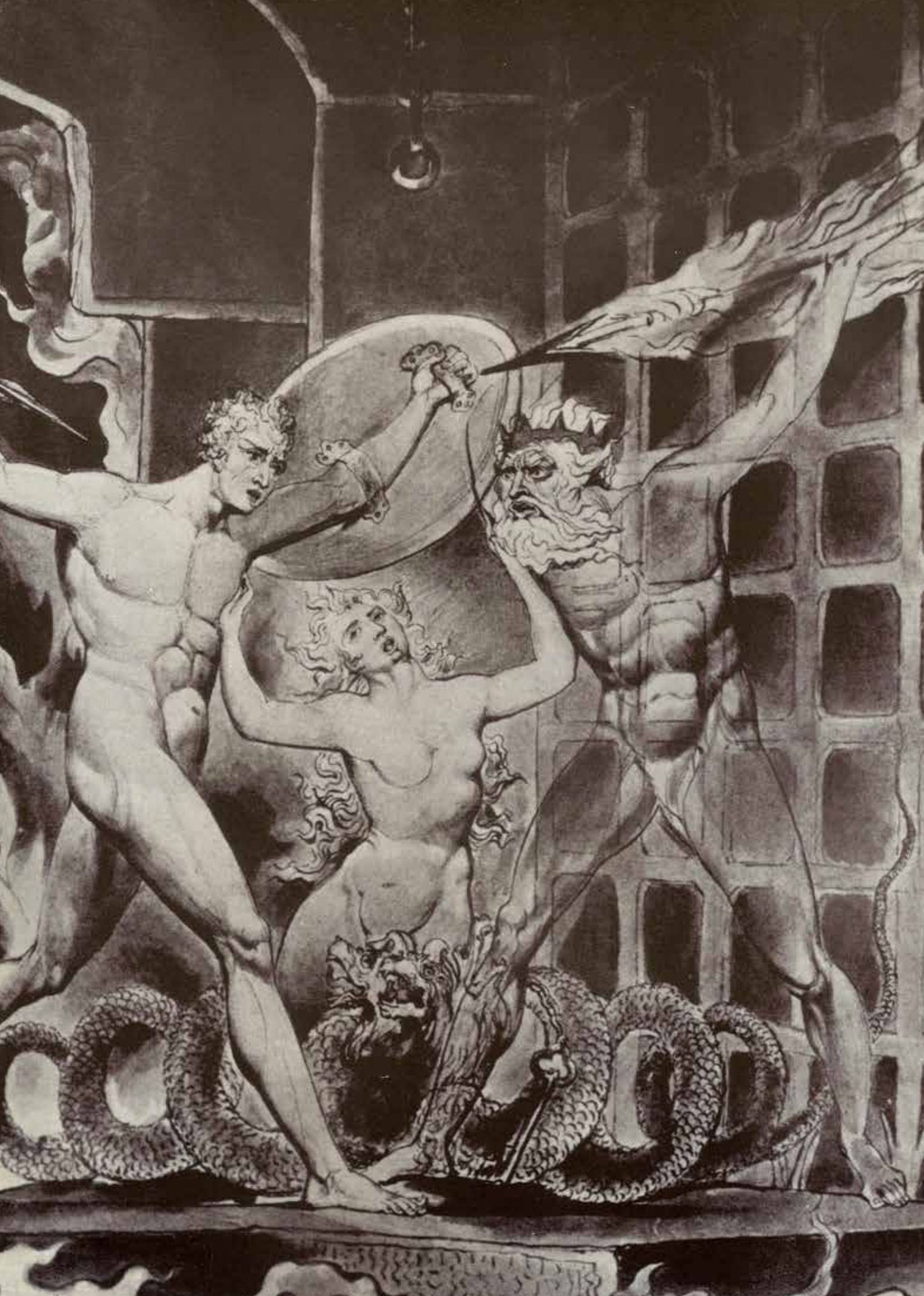
The intention of this journal is not to reaffirm existing normative standards and canons, nor to rest comfortably in the supposed self-sufficiency of the building object, regional identity, composition, nature, function – or other modes of legitimating work here – but to explore the interstices, the gaps and fractures within an institution that appears solid, secure and fixed. It is the spaces between idea and thing where perfect correspondence is never quite found, demanding a realm of endless negotiation and interpretation that we see as productive. This is the sort of mismatch that Damisch observes relative to Viollet-le-Duc where he says 'the "truth" of a building is not to be found in bricks and mortar any more than in the outer form. No, it lies in the space between them, that which makes them complementary, in that space where style is born, in that gap between things which is intimated in the absence of a logical link . . .'.

This is not a 'project' for an all-embracing account of things but a sounding of the cavities within the walls which sustain architecture. What interests us is the recognition that no formal schema posed in terms of composition, structure, or function can any longer adequately cover either the production or the account of the design in hand, where with the invasion of language into every area of problematics in architecture, in the resulting absence of centre and origin, everything becomes susceptible to the play of discourse. Similarly questions of place, identity, regionalism, biculturalism, relations between the modern and the

non-modern, thrown into prominence by the recent call for the design of a national museum, in this light can only be posed in terms of the conjunctural, constituted by negotiation, splicing, juxtaposition, collage. Cultural factors are seen to be mixed, relational, inventive, mobile, with uncertain boundaries, not constituted by stable essences or polar opposites.

It is also becoming clear that, while architecture must measure up to the quality of critical thinking demonstrated in other disciplines, there are gaps through the walls, institutionally defined disciplinary boundaries are being increasingly threatened and crossed. A productive tension is found sliding through the intervals, a labyrinthine exploration of the interstices, to risk 'speaking into the void'.

Our intention is to publish original writing generated from the Under Construction Seminar Series hosted now for the last three years at the Department of Architecture, University of Auckland, whose aim initially to produce an increased consciousness in architectural circles of developments in theory in all disciplines, unexpectedly became a platform which did not seem to exist in the wider university. We aim to provide illustration and discussion of current architecture from New Zealand, the Pacific rim, and those from further afield which we see as being of interest and relevance to local practice, student work from the schools of architecture, translation of significant writing on architecture, and extended book reviews. Letters will be treated with serious consideration, our interest is in fostering and continuing discussion not in sustaining a monolithic position.



On Two Sublimes

Jonathan Lamb

'A fashionable current theme', Fredric Jameson calls the sublime, 'rediscovered in the works of Edmund Burke and Kant.' He makes the remark in his essay 'Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism', as he prepares to add his own variant of the sublime – the camp or hysterical sublime – to the growing heap of sublimes that are now discriminated in literary and cultural theory.[1] In the United States the sublime has not needed rediscovery. Ever since it was theorised as a basis for Romanticism in the 18th Century, first by the British and then by the Germans, it has been kept reasonable steadily in the American eye, not simply by scholars like Samuel Holt Monk and M H Abrams, but also by critics such as Emerson, Wimsatt and Bloom, not to mention practitioners like the poet Allen Tate and the painter Barnett Newman. More recently the sublime has been the subject of some remarkable post-Freudian theorisations, chief among these being Thomas Weiskel's *The Romantic Sublime* and Neil Hertz's brilliant collection of essays, *The End of the Line.* What is interesting about Jameson's rediscovery of the sublime is that it coincides – or collides – with a notable addition to thinking about the sublime made not by an American but by a French philosopher and art critic, Jean-Francois Lyotard. Although Jameson does not mention his name in his essay on postmodernism, it is hard not to suspect Jameson of trying to neutralise Lyotard's sublime and then to appropriate it for his own radical purposes.

Jonathan Lamb is an Associate Professor of Eighteenth Century English at the University of Auckland. His book Stone's Fiction and the Double Principle *was published in 1989.*

1. Fredric Jameson, 'Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism', *New Left Review, 1: 46*: 1984, pp. 53-91.

It is the relation between these two sublimes, the Jamesonian or hysterical and the Lyotardian, that I want to discuss here. But first I want to point out that a rediscovery of the sublime ought to include Longinus, who gets the credit of inventing the first of its fifty seven varieties some time in the second century, somewhere in the Middle East – it seems appropriate that the dating and placing of its origin should be so imprecise. Even his name is uncertain, whether Cassius, Dionysius, or even Longinus are his proper names.

Very briefly, the radical shift accomplished by Longinus which differentiates his work so sharply from that of Aristotle, Horace, and Quintilian, is his neglect of art's mimetic function in favour of its symptomatic force. The sublime in literature and oratory (and it is to these two branches of art that he limits his study) is the sign, trace or echo of a huge impression, whether formed internally from sheer

opp. From William Blake's Safau, Sin and Death

2. Longinus, *On the Sublime*, translated by William Smith, London, 1739, p. 19.

magnanimity ('the greatest Thoughts are always uttered by the greatest Souls'[2]) or from some vast phenomenon beyond ourselves ('the Nile, the Ister, the Rhine, or still much more, the Ocean', p. 85). The sign or register of this impression will be a disturbance of form: exclamation, repetition, question, tautology or any other failure in logic and syntax – which Longinus groups together as the rhetorical figures of the sublime. These figures are symptoms of passion, and their effect is not to transfer to the reader's or the audience's mind a detailed image of what caused them, but to set up a sympathetic vibration which will eventually equal the magnanimity of the original response. Symptom, that is to say, doubles up as cause, so that the poet seems to be in the presence of whatever it is that moves him, and the minds of his audience, swelling in correspondent transport, mistake 'what was only heard [for] the Product of [their] own Invention' (p. 14). It is easy to see how imitation, the corollary of mimesis in classical criticism, is redefined by Longinus: the faithful copier, 'ravished and transported by a Spirit not his own' (p. 36), makes copies indistinguishable from originals.

It is evident even from this short account that Longinus is blurring important differences; for example, the difference between art and nature (are the figures of the sublime deliberate or spontaneous?), between the represented and the representor (does the sublime quality reside in the object, the subject or both?), between the author and his audience, between the original and its copy, between the prior and the posterior, between the high and the low, and so on. Nor are the political implications of this levelling of hierarchies avoided by Longinus, when he declares, 'That Democracy is the Nurse of true Genius; that fine Writers will be found only in this sort of Government' (p. 103). Here the Whig and American affiliations with the sublime are quite clear; and it is worth emphasising what they entail, because Jameson's fears about postmodernism go all the way back to Longinus. These fears revolve around confusions that were first properly broached by Addison, in his *Spectator* papers on 'The Pleasures of the Imagination.' He labelled the dynamic of these confusions 'the double principle.' It operates whenever we can view the same object in two lights, as nature and as art, as copy and as original, as the effect of design and as the effect of chance (No. 414). These cognitive puzzles are part an emotional ambivalence that attends the sublime, when 'the Horror or Loathsomeness of an Object' (No. 412) is mixed with the pleasure afforded by its novelty or by its representation in words, so that the sensibility is treated to a 'double Entertainment' as it skirts pain to arrive at that more exquisite pleasure Burke, building on Addison, was to call *delight*. Included in the economy of the double principle is a cooperation of the imagination and the reason, when 'the Fancy copies after the Understanding, and transcribes Ideas out of the Intellectual World into the Material' (No. 421). But there is an inequality in this relationship, noted by Addison and improved by Kant: 'The Understanding, indeed opens an infinite Space on every Side of us, but the Imagination, after a few faint Efforts, is immediately at a stand, and finds herself swallowed up in the Immensity of the

Void that surrounds it' (No. 422). Here is the germ of Kant's reason, that superior power which disburdens the imagination of the threat of the unrepresentable by grasping it as an idea of infinity, accomplishing in the region of the supersensible an apprehension of greatness in itself.[3]

3. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, translated by James Creed Meredith, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952.

In the first phase of his confrontation with the postmodern world Jameson is tormented by two things. The first is the impossible complexity, the un-navigable space, of the fourth machine age, where all sense of depth and distance have been obliterated in the endless and boundless production of signs which, having no referents in the real, practical world of human community and endeavour, erase the sense and memory of that world in proportion as their signifieds are supplanted by signifiers. If this is the infinite Jameson's imagination cannot grasp, its symptoms, or the figures by which it manifests its force, provoke him to fits of impatience and disgust that are much more specific. Here it is as if Addison's double principle had been transformed by Jameson into a state of affairs in which every positive term (nature, community, reality, intentionality, representation, articulation, history) is sucked into its opposite (art, isolation, illusion, chance, iconoclasm, repetition, the dehistoricised present) and rendered inert. The double principle that would accompany the appreciation of parody, where the recognition of the difference between the original and the copy gives it its point and makes it amusing, has (as Jameson sees it) been made irrelevant by pastiche, or by the play of simulacra, where there is no difference to interpret, just iteration without enhancement. Parody made blank.

He keys this disgust to at least four themes, all related in one way or another to the sublime: death, repetition, madness and allegory. Death is perhaps the most obvious, the 'king of terrors', as Burke calls it. Comparing van Gogh's picture of peasant shoes with Warhol's *Diamond Dust Shoes*, he calls the latter 'a random collection of dead objects . . . as shorn of their earlier life-world as the pile of shoes left over from Auschwitz, or the remainders and tokens of some incomprehensible and tragic fire in a packed dancehall' (p. 60). It is striking how ungeneralised Jameson makes that image, loading it with particulars in defence as it were of a real, sensible world that has, like Auschwitz, been the site of a holocaust. The very texture of Warhol's picture intimates mortality, the coloured surface having been 'stripped away to reveal the deathly black-and white substratum of the photographic negative.' A similar effect is achieved by the statues of Duane Hanson, polyester figures that rebound upon those viewing them, so as to 'transform them also for the briefest instant into so many dead and flesh-coloured simulacra in their own right' (p. 76). Pastiche Jameson calls speech in a dead language, 'amputated of the satiric impulse', a sightless *memento mori*, 'a statue with blind eyes' (p. 65). This personification of the deathly impulse is completed in the long quotation he gives from Michael Herr's Vietnam recollections, called *Dispatches*. Caught up in the perpetual motion of the generic helicopter, the 'meta-chopper' which is the 'saver-

destroyer, provider-waster, right-hand left-hand', Herr reports that he felt 'death, death itself, [was] hardly an intruder' (p. 85).

Jameson's thematisation of death is partly a glance at Burke, who, like Addison, had singled out Milton's allegory of Death as 'sublime to the last degree' because of its terrible equivocality:

> The other shape,
> If shape it might be called that shape had none
> Distinguishable, in member, joint, or limb;
> Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
> For each seemed either; black he stood as night.
>
> (*Paradise Lost*, II, 666-670)

Death represents for Jameson all that is most alarming about obliterated differences. It also provides a point of ultimate reference for an associated theme of uncanny repetitions. Eyeless statues and artificial human bodies echo two of the motifs of Freud's celebrated essay on 'The Uncanny', where, in the process of offering a commentary on Hoffmann's strange story of 'The Sandman', he first elaborates the theory of the repetition compulsion.[4] His idea, worked out fully the following year in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), is that repetition is a signal sent from the inmost core of the unconscious where an impulse more primordial than the sexual drive lurks; namely, the desire to return to an earlier, inanimate state of things, a longing for death. Hence 'Diamond Dust Shoes' has 'nothing to do with death or the death obsession or the death anxiety on the level of content', says Jameson, but much to do with all three at the level of an image endlessly and perfectly replicable. Underneath its brittle elegance, and underneath the commodification of culture as a whole, Jameson locates 'blood, torture, death and horror' (p. 57).

Repetition is a sign of madness as well as death. Once again Jameson moves in company with Burke. In the *Enquiry* repetition is first of all linked to those madmen who 'remain whole days and nights, sometimes whole years, in the constant repetition of some remark, some complaint, or song' (p. 74).[5] Later it is associated with effects in architecture like the colonnade, where pillar after pillar 'repeats impulse after impulse, and stroke after stroke' (p. 141). Jameson's world of infinitely reproducible simulacra is likewise assimilated first to madness, then to architecture. The madness is schizophrenia. Those afflicted by it suffer, Jameson argues, a break in the signifying chain, and are left confronting isolated phenomena whose vividness, vastness, gloss and smoothness is typical of the simulacra of commodity culture. The architecture is John Portman's Bonaventura Hotel in Los Angeles, whose clients endlessly rise and fall in the huge elevators, and whose visitors perpetually traverse the shopping arcades without ever managing to shop. The hyperspace is like the schizophrenic's glossy vision of the infinite, except that it incorporates and disorients great numbers of people.

4. Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny', *Pelican Freud 14*, Harmondsworth, 1985.
5. Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. J T Boulton, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958.

Jameson's observations on this building are most intriguing, for he is more amused and fascinated than disgusted by it. At the same time it ties together for him the tormenting themes of the sublime – if death, repetition, madness and the uncanny – into the knot of allegory; for what Jameson witnesses in the Bonaventura, particularly in those gondola-like elevators that ceaselessly rise and fall, is an allegory, 'new reflexive signs and emblems of movement proper . . . a transportation machine which becomes the allegorical signifier of that older promenade . . . the designation of cultural production as its content' (p. 82). In one sense he merely advances an insight about myth that he has from Roland Barthes, who shows how to make an image of an image by transforming its signified into the signifier of a myth. Thus the past becomes postmodernist pastness; motion towards a given point is turned into motion for its own sake, or mobilism, like Herr's helicopter; clothes stop keeping the cold out and become the signifiers in the system of fashion. But here in the hyperspace – the space of space – there is a reminder not only of commodity fetishisation and mythologisation but also of the uncanny and the sublime. Freud says that 'an uncanny effect is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, as when something we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full functions of the thing it symbolises' (p. 367). Herr must have had that sensation on the meta-chopper when he felt an imminent and entirely familiar meeting might take place between him and 'death, death itself.'

In the Longinian sublime this effect is produced when the confusions of subject and object and of copy and original combine to make a speech by Demosthenes (for example) enact its theme by being violent about violence. Its most frequent formula concerns Longinus himself, who is always sublime on the sublime, or, as Pope puts it, 'He is himself the great sublime he draws.' In short, by contriving simultaneously to be what he endeavours to represent, he becomes a personification in an allegory of the sublime. He is both agent and patient of the sublime, designation and content: he is the sublime itself. So is Death of course, who is simultaneously the victim of his own dart and the cause of death in others. Here is that absolute allegorical quality which Kant himself refers to as greatness in itself, or 'greatness comparable to itself alone' (*Critique of Judgement*, p. 97). In a most astute analysis of the role of personification in the sublime, Stephen Knapp observes that 'in many of the most striking instance of sublime personification, the agent's total dependence *on* its idea is matched by a reflexive consciousness *of* its idea: the personification is self-consciously obsessed with the grounds of its own allegorical being . . . it knows itself with a symmetrical purity unmatched by anything in empirical consciousness' (*Personification and the Sublime*, pp. 33-4).[6] The symptom, or figure, of the self-realising power of allegorical agency beginning to exert itself is either a tautology ('the sublime is he and he is the sublime') or a pleonasm, as in hyperspace (space of space) or meta-chopper (chopper of choppers).

6. Stephen Knapp, *Personification of the Sublime*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1985.

Let us get back to Lyotard, whose view of the postmodern and of the sublime, while by no means identical with Jameson's, nevertheless maintains some instructive parallels with it. He identifies the danger of the postmodern producer of art objects in much the same terms: the allure of 'quotations, ornamentations, pastiches, kitsch and the baroque' when flattering 'the eclecticism of a sensibility enfeebled the multiplicity of forms and available objects' leads, he maintains, to reflection not of sublimity but of 'the spirit of the marketplace' ('The Sublime and the Avant-Garde', p. 43).[7] Like Jameson, he also associates this false eclecticism with the bad infinity of repetition, glancing at Freud as he does so: 'I would say that the quotation of elements of past architecture in the new one seems to me to be the same procedure as the use of remains coming from past life in the dream-work as described by Freud.... This use of repetition or quotation {requires} a working through – what Freud called *Durcharbdeitung*.... If we give up this responsibility, it is certain that we are condemned to repeat, without any displacement, the modern neurosis, the Western schizophrenia' (Defining the Postmodern, pp. 6-7). Lyotard agrees likewise on the prominence of death in the postmodern sublime. Burke prompts us, he says, to rethink 'the importance of death in life, because terror (through many expressions – lack of light, lack of words, lack of sounds) is a feeling of the imminence of death. With the sublime, the question of death enters the aesthetic question', (Complexity and the Sublime, p. 10).[8]

From this point Lyotard and Jameson begin to diverge, and the divergence becomes more marked as they explore the duties of a thinker experimenting with the sublime under the threat of allegory. As far as Lyotard is concerned these duties comprise two questions, 'What is painting/writing/criticism?' and 'Is it happening?' This last question is posed in a 'now' very different from Jameson's unanchored schizophrenic moment; it forms part of a rigorous commitment to a quixotic project, the presentation of the unpresentable, in which the questioner is alert to the mixed feelings such a futile enterprise inevitably prompts. Lyotard describes there in Kantian terms: 'This frustration of expression kindles a pain, a kind of cleavage within the subject between what can be conceived and what can be imagined. But this pain in turn engenders a pleasure, in fact a double pleasure: the recognition of the impotence of the imagination contrarily attests to an imagination striving to illuminate even that which cannot be illuminated, and the imagination thus means to harmonise its object to reason – and furthermore the inadequacy of images, as negative signs, attests to the immense power of ideas. These unruly powers give rise to an extreme tension (Kant's agitation) which sets the pathos of the sublime apart from the calm sense of beauty' (SAG, p. 40).

Lyotard is quite willing to pay the price of a widening gap between the world of the senses and the world of these amazing ideas. Answering a question put by Terry Eagleton, whose Marxism is of roughly the same cast as Jameson's and who wanted

7. Jean-Francois Lyotard, 'The Sublime and the Avant-Garde', *Artforum, 22: 8*, 1984.
8. Jean-Francois Lyotard, 'Complexity and the Sublime', *Postmodernism: ICA Documents* 4, London, 1986. See also 'Presenting the Unpresentable: the Sublime', *Artforum, 20: 8*, 1982.

to know if by the 'sublime' Lyotard simply meant 'anti-Leninism', Lyotard points out, 'Nobody has ever *seen* a society. nobody has ever *seen* a beginning. An end. Nobody has ever *seen* a world . . . We must consider these Ideas as Ideas if we are to avoid illusion.' He might have added, if we are to avoid allegory, which is precisely the confusion of a general idea with empirical data, the invention of an idea which can do things, accomplish itself and change the world. Hence the monstrous danger of a politics of the sublime, when we make 'the terrible mistake of trying to present in political practice an Idea of Reason. To be able to say, 'We are the proletariat,' or 'We are the incarnation of free humanity,' and so on' ('Complexity and the Sublime', p. 11).

Specifically Lyotard is warning us against personification, that transformation which occurs (to quote Freud again) 'when something that we have hitherto regard as imaginary appears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full functions of the thing it symbolises.' That is why it is crucial that the sublime questions be rigorously posed, for if they yield a jot to nostalgia, so that 'Is it happening?' is replaces by 'Is Siegfried coming?' then 'the aesthetic of the sublime [is] neutralised and converted into a politics of myth.' The allegorisation of ideas and the politics of myth are in effect the same thing for Lyotard: they are pure terror. What stands between us and that terror is the iconoclasm of the sublime, the inevitable but exciting failure of the project of representation, the impossibility of mimesis. The gap between ideas and things ensuring this impossibility Lyotard calls *le différend*, 'the unstable state and instant of language when something which must be able to be put in phrases cannot yet be.[9]

With this in mind let us now see what Jameson does with his sublime. Remember I suggested that Jameson interprets the symptomatic confusions of the sublime, and the double principle they conform to, in a persistently negative, univocalising way, so that there is no tension, no Kantian agitation, no Burkean emotional ambivalence, no Addisonian double entertainment to be had out of them. Nevertheless he keeps pointing to intensities, euphorias, energies, hallucinatory highs – to some species of pleasure that accompanies the navigator's painful sense of lost coordinates. This is to be the alibi for a Marxising of the sublime, when Jameson will testify to his sense of the co-presence of pleasure and pain. Having identified the hyperspace of the Bonaventura as the scene of the allegory of a depthless and distanceless world, he then *allegorises the allegory*, taking it 'as the symbol and analogue of that even sharper dilemma which is the incapacity of our minds to map the great global multinational and decentred communicational network in which we find ourselves caught.' That is to say, the transformation of movement into mobilism, which ought to bring the mind to a Kantian halt and set up the limitless play of signifiers and simulacra, turns out to be an interpretatable symbol of an altogether different set of movements. To the imagined cry, 'What is happening?' Jameson responds, 'The Marxist dialectic', for it is Marx who

9. Jean-Francois Lyotard, 'The *Differend*, the Referent, and the Proper Name', *Diacritics*, Fall, 1984, p. 10.

rediscovers Addison and Kant. 'In a well known passage, Marx powerfully urges us to do the impossible, namely to think this development positively *and* negatively at once; to achieve, in other words, a type of thinking that would be capable of grasping the demonstrably baleful features of capitalism along with its extraordinary and liberating dynamism simultaneously, within a single thought, and without attenuating any of the force of either judgement. We are, somehow, to lift our minds to a point at which it is possible to understand that capitalism is at one and the same time the best thing that has ever happened to the human race, and the worst' (p. 86). If this sounds very like Herr's experience of the meta-chopper (saver-destroyer, provider-waster, right-hand left-hand'), it is because Jameson has both politicised and re-allegorised the sublime, reading it as a moment in the Utopian narrative of Marxist history. The personified idea under whose agency this narrative unfolds is the Dialectic. Long ago Jameson defined the dialectic as tautological, and added, 'What is meant goes deeper than mere logical tautology . . . here the identity is not between two words, or two concepts, but rather between subject and object itself, between the process of thinking and very reality on which it is exercised'[10] (*Marxism and Form*, p. 341). This is very close indeed to what Lyotard calls terror, the feeling we have when threatened with absolute privation of 'death, death itself.' Terror is always incident to the efforts of self-sufficient, self-lifting figures, whether personified abstractions or proper names, who claim to make the world a better place by transcending its contradictions.

10. Frederic Jameson, *Marxism and Form*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.

It is interesting to wonder how many of these gestures of Jameson's are conscious, and how many are symptoms of a sublime encounter he truly cannot control, even with Dialectic. Altogether, at any rate, they add up to a comprehensive list of what Longinus would call figures of the sublime: repetition, a great number of quotations, and that allegorising shift which makes symbols, signs and images auto-referential and self-performing. The difference between Longinus and Jameson is that the ancient critic is under no illusions about the destructive forces of the sublime, and offers his figures as consolatory, reconstitutive echoes of the damage it causes. It is not tautologous identity that Longinus pursues by being sublime upon the sublime, rather a *Durcharbeitung* of the repetitions and doublings which are its most notable verbal symptoms.

Perhaps this distinction will sharpen by a comparison of Jameson's predicament with Wordsworth's. In the hyperspace he shares a confusion experienced by Wordsworth in the streets of London, in the region of Bartholomew Fair, where he suffered the same sort of disorientation experience by visitors to the Bonaventura Hotel. There Wordsworth was haunted by a miniature world which had turned into nothing but symbols and signs, an allegory of modern life which threatened to incorporate him as just another perambulating emblem.

Oh, blank confusion! and a type not false
Of what the might City is itself
To all except a Straggler here and there,
To the whole Swarm of its inhabitants;
The slaves unrespited of low pursuits,
Living amid the same perpetual flow
Of trivial objects, melted and reduced
To one identity, by differences
That have no law, no meaning and no end.

(*Prelude*, VII, 695-705)

In the midst of this confusion suddenly he confronts a blind beggar, underneath whose sightless eyes and fixed face a label hangs, explaining 'the story of the man, and who he was', and Wordsworth feels admonished as if from another world. This figure has a lot in common with the Death who threatens to ride the meta-chopper, or with Duane Hanson's polyester figures, and he looks very like the image Jameson uses to characterise pastiche, 'a statue with blind eyes.' Neil Hertz takes the beggar to be a figure of minimal difference (between face and label) that is at once typical of the confusion of the fair and yet a consolation for it, an emblem of failed emblem-hood, a messenger of a vast allegorical narrative ('the utmost that we know. Both of ourselves and of the universe') which will remain untold. The difference between the face and the text is critical in preventing the tautology of a word identical with a thing; it sustains the instability of *le différend*, where phrases are always about to be uttered but never are. The beggar mirrors Wordsworth, then, but neither allegorises nor abolishes him. In all sublime scenarios, Hertz argues, 'what is repeatedly represented ... is a practically (but not quite) dispensable "subject" confronting a split or doubled "object"'[11] (p. 222). This inclines me to think that Jameson's most useful intuition is not of the dialectic under a sublime form but of two slices of mirror-glass building in specular confrontation, distorting, shivering, ruining one another as reflexions are despatched from 'one enormous glass surface to the other' (p. 79). It would almost be worth trading in one's monadic subjecthood to witness such a conflict between splitting glass objects in this town.

11. Neil Hertz, *The End of the Line*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

Two Visions of Utopia

David J Fausett

The 'two visions of utopia' that I wish to discuss here are critical ones: interpretations of utopian theory, rather than any particular idealisms or imaginary worlds. They refer to two distinct periods in literary and social history, the pre- and post-Enlightenment; and to the two distinct types of utopian writing produced by those periods. Because of the utopia's close association in any period with historical and ideological realities, an understanding of the shift in attitudes and styles that occurred in the Enlightenment is essential in approaching the question as to why we should now be in a third phase in relation to utopianism, in which no such form of idealism is any longer taken seriously, either as positive idealism in the literal sense, or as negative idealism in the satirical sense. Something that utopian writing stood for throughout its history, in both of these modes, seems to have slipped away from the modern consciousness, and that is really what is posed as a question within the continuing debate over utopian theory.

Utopianism itself has in all its forms come to be regarded as a sort of 'closet totalitarianism': but it should not be supposed that the theory or interpretation of it has similarly become a dead issue: far from it. The issue is just as immediately relevant – particularly in situations of post-colonial ethnic integration such as New Zealand faces – as it was for Plato. Indeed, the 'question of utopia' in this abstract, critical sense is the single most significant point of reference in the problematics of the so-called 'closed' and 'open' societies.

So to begin with, it must be admitted that utopian literature is no longer much in vogue, except as an object of analysis in literary criticism and social theory. Some landmarks of the genre are generally known, such as Plato's Atlantis, More's Utopia, Campanella's City of the Sun, Bacon's New Atlantis, Swift's Gulliver, the 19th-century idealisms of Saint-Simon and Fourier, and the 20th-century anti-utopias of Wells and Orwell. But these are only the tip of a vast iceberg of productions, mainly in French and English literature; and they do not at all represent a single genre. There are two distinct categories of works commonly lumped together as utopias, and an adequate approach to this form of writing must take account of these 'two visions': it must in fact itself adopt a double vision

from Thomas Moore, *Utopia*, Frontis piece

making the distinction between the 'classical' genre of pre-Enlightenment times, and the more familiar modern utopia.

This distinction is necessary because utopian writing is closely related to ideology and theories of social structure, and because these, as its referents, have undergone a major change during the Enlightenment, of which the two visions are symptomatic and which, therefore, can be analytically approached through the study of utopianism.

The irony in this distinction is that the uncritical assumptions that subsist because utopianism is now a relatively minor field of literature, tend to assimilate all utopianism to the modern variety; whereas in fact it is only the classical variety that should strictly be called a utopia at all, for reasons that will hopefully become clear as we examine what was at stake in the two forms of utopianism.

So, there have been two phases of utopian writing, and the passage from one to the other can contribute to our understanding of the Enlightenment and of the 'crisis' of the advent of modernity. But in this enterprise we are faced at the outset with a major problem of definition: what, finally, is a utopia, in the strict sense? The uncritical assumptions just referred to equate utopianism in general with the modern anticipatory form of idealism: whether inspired, critical, fanatical, constructive or despairing, it is in all cases regarded as a vision of some sort of world to come. It is a future-oriented idealism. But this is not the strict and original sense of the genre; it is a travesty of it, taking over the classical utopia's place when the latter became extinct in the course of the Enlightenment. The original sense was that conveyed by the Greek root of the word, *ou-topia*, meaning a 'no-place; which was the name invented by Thomas More to describe a society locatable in discourse, but unlocateable in reality, as a physical 'point' on the earth's surface. This rhetorical gesture had arisen alongside the problematical progress of geographical discovery, as an expression of the corresponding problematic of local territorial space and, implicitly, of the relation between territorial configuration and social structure. It was this significant relation that became invisible or irrelevant when geographical knowledge ceased to be a problem, so that the literary genre that it had supported fell into disuse.

Effectively, the utopia arose as an expression of the way in which the architectonics of social structure is patterned on that of physical space, or territory; and by pursuing this relation through its Enlightenment transmutation to found a significantly modified genre, we can gain an insight into the nature of the changed social structure that was engendered by the new, global configuration of territorial space that was inaugurated at that time, by the virtual completion of the discovery-process.

In its eschatological bearing, the modern utopia has at the same time taken over the function of another major casualty of the Enlightenment, religious ideology; while the new form's profound collusion with the statist programmes culminating notably in the American and French constitutions has not escaped theorists such as Marx. Indeed, it is just this disturbing proximity of modern utopianism to modern ideological orthodoxy that in large part determines the seemingly 'hysterical' refusal by the philosophical Establishment to reckon seriously with utopianism. And yet we are dealing with the crucial point of articulation between the architectonics of the physical and social realms, as noted and as is suggested by the double use of this word, in architecture and in philosophy.

Such refusal of utopianism may well be justified in the case of the 'naive' idealism of the modern utopia: and one would readily concede that it is less a matter of (re–)creating anything in the realm of social structures, than of understanding empirical processes themselves; or, at least, that the latter understanding is the necessary prerequisite to any effective social action, and is a task that would, if taken to its limit, inhibit all such action. But that understanding, and that essentially passive relation to empirical sociological reality, was precisely what the classical utopia represented, by contrast with its modern avatar. By re-programming our reading of the classical genre in accordance with what we are able to reconstruct of the general pre-Enlightenment 'vision of the world', we can begin to theorise what has been at stake in the turn to sociological and philosophical modernity, and to realise the implications; of the profound collusion of modernity with the anticipatory or activist form of utopianism.

For the modern world is itself, quite frankly, a utopia; or more precisely, a pantopia: a societal form determined by global inclusiveness. By contrast, the classical world and world-view (and their articulation together as classical utopia) was determined by the residually primitive closedness of the idealising reference back to local, partial culture as the source of models of behaviour, of meaning and of authority in general. The classical utopia, accordingly, was less concerned with the representation of new futures than with that of the general process of 'closed' reference to the cultural past. The Enlightenment, or crisis of modernity, was the profound shift from the one concept of social existence to the other: an integral disinvestment of the primitive valourisation of the past, and a turning to the valourisation of unknown, conjectural futures. In the same movement occurred the definitive turn from collectivism to individualism, and from socialism to materialism; which can be seen, by analysing the concept of metaphysics, to be fundamentally irreconcilable sets of goals.

Some explanation is perhaps indicated, of the use here of the terms 'primitive', 'classical', and 'modern'. 'Primitive' refers, not to any judgement of developmental value, but to the underlying etymological sense of the word, as it is still used in

French for example: of that which is first or original. 'Classical' refers, not to Mediterranean Antiquity itself (although the phenomena in question had their beginnings there), but to the entire history of emancipation from the 'primitive' both in society and in utopian writing, down to the definitive rupture with it in the Enlightenment. 'Modern' in the present usage refers particularly to the latter institution of future-oriented world-view, rather than to the whole of the post-Renaissance period, for example: the original 'primitivist' or collectivist bias having survived in effect down to the Enlightenment and the sea-change instituting the world-view we now own. In utopianism as in its societal referent, then, 'classical' and 'primitive' here signify a general mode of fidelity to received patterns; and for this reason I use the umbrella term 'classico-primitive' to cover this meaning. 'Modern', on the other hand, signifies the mental horizon determined by the loss or irrelevance of such societal patterns and, secondarily, of the literary means of representing them.

Another clarification is perhaps called for, of the assumption just made about the utopia's 'societal referent'. Utopian writing is generally recognised as being a form of ideological predication; and yet the distinction between its aims and styles in the two periods of its production is less well-known. Accordingly, that to which such writing refers is assumed uncritically to have always been the same. What attention to the distinction between classical and modern utopianism can help to illuminate is the profound shift in collective goals that the Enlightenment represents, and the reason why it has generated social crisis. Indeed, the very fact that it has generated crisis can only be verified, from within the modern ethos, by reference to the latter's classico-primitive exterior; since it is in the nature of all ideology to imply that the given is the 'best of all possible worlds', others being merely imperfect realisations of it.

The social referent, then, was a goal of a different order before the Enlightenment, to what it has become since: it was at that time a primary goal, by contrast with the relative (and progressive) primacy in modern times, of material-economic goals. It is this distinction that can be made by analysing the difference between the two orders of utopianism, and that lies at the heart of the question as to why the advent of such a modernity should have been a 'crisis'. Reference to social history helps to define the goals that have historically been pursued by man. It is commonly supposed, for example, that because technology and material-economic concerns in general are the primary concern of modern man, that it was always so: that 'such is the nature of man' (Sahlins and others not withstanding). The scientific pursuit of the origins and nature of humanity is dominated by this base-assumption of a primary technical orientation: hence 'homo faber', 'homo economicus', etc., and the whole paleontological orientation (which, admittedly, is also in large part shaped by the nature of the surviving evidence). And yet one need only look sympathetically at the evidence of ethnology and of ethology, to realise that the logically prior

goals, where any social organisation is concerned, are to do with the maintenance of that organisation itself: with the technics of social structure.

Viewed in these pre-modern terms, the 18th-century crisis can be seen to resemble in the first instance a social, rather than an industrial, revolution. It inaugurated an industrial revolution, but that was not in itself the primary cause. The same tautology or blinkering-effect dominates the perception of human history in the context of its 'origins' themselves: as a retrojection of the effects generated by historical events, in the assumption that these effects were teleologically the cause of the events, forcing them to occur by their own inevitability. Such modes of thought are determined by the thinker's encapsulation within his/her own historical mentality: a kind of inbuilt limitation to any thought about a historical or epistemological other that links it more or less closely to myth.

The classical utopia was relatively 'up front' about this inherently mythical bearing of ideology; as already noted, an explicit recognition of it was built in to its rhetorical mode, in the form of the metaphor based on geographical knowledge. From the Greek beginnings of what in modern times has become social science, speculation about social or cultural otherness was prefaced in this way by the satirical gesture of a play on social ideality, on its 'unlocateability' in the real world. As a complement to serious ideological or primitivist speculation, the utopia implicitly posed the prior question, what could we know about it? Who are 'they', or 'we'? Where are the boundaries between cultural sameness and otherness? Are categories such as 'man' and 'society' universals?

These questions bear, as mentioned, on the relative interpretations of classical and modern utopianism: the latter is concerned with anticipatory speculation (whether it be good or ill that is anticipated), and is linked to the general 'planifying' approach to social as well as to material-economic processes, that is progressively realised as the 'essence of the modern'. From within such a mentality it is inevitable that the classical utopia will tend to be perceived in the same light.

And yet it is the classical utopia itself that points to the logical flaw in that uncritical perception, by means of its discursive essence as a representation of (an imaginary) society. As such it abstracts and depicts the social technicity which was originally the primary one: that of which the dissolution causes the materialist primacy we now know to be precipitated into primacy. The logical relative primacies of these factors can be seen by projecting the 'chicken-egg' aporia back to the hypothetical origins, where there was virtually no material-economic technicity at all; but very definitely a complex technicity of social organisation, as modern ethology well knows. The classical utopia can thus be employed to deconstruct its own uncritical reading by a post-classical age and, in the process and in view of its demise with the advent of modernity, it can serve as the crucial symptom of the great 'articulation'

in social history, between these two worlds and world-views. In a word, there are two 'visions of utopia', because there have been two fundamentally different societal modes.

Hence the magnitude of the shift in structural patterns that the 18th century crisis represents. To put it in Popperian terms, it is the turn from the closed society to the so-called 'open society'. The classical utopia was, more than anything else, a figuring or iconic representation of the closed society: which is to say, of the closedness of the human or religious system, whereby it generates and sustains the specifically human form of semanticity, or language. The latter's distinctive quality is that it is arbitrary: a product of convention, rather than of nature. Linguists have analysed at length the phonetic and grammatical aspects of man's 'articulated language', without generally realising that the articulation in question is first and foremost that of ethical topoi, of relations of individuals and collectivities.

In semiotic processes, meaning is generated and exchanged within a 'closed circuit' of communication, analogous to that of the words' familiar technical usage; and this closedness is what generates the effect of meaning, which could be called 'sponsibility' or sponsion in order to emphasise that it arises out of, and refers back to, ethological configurations. It is because of this dependence for semantic ratification on a 'closed circuit, that there can be no serious question of an 'open society': since that would be an absence of society or meaning, in the human sense; a relapse into animal sociality. The question is a more complex one, involving the definition of relative degrees of closedness and openness; and involving therefore analysis of the historical interplay of these factors, as the result on the one hand of socio-cultural conservatism, and on the other of the forces of culture-contact and assimilation.

As mentioned, the classical utopia's role in representing this interplay, expressed as its spatial metaphor, was central to the pre-Enlightenment understanding of the social process. The ideal republic was effectively a 'pre-contact' society – ie. one miraculously preserved from inclusion within the Western monoculturalist orbit; and it was in this that it was able represent that 'primitive' or essentially human quality that the classical mentality residually valourised: the inherently closed and arbitrary nature of human ideology. There are two main ramifications of this interpretation: firstly, the fact that utopian writing arose as a commentary on the process of cultural assimilation, geographical exploration and commercial exploitation known as the Western expansion; and secondly, that the socio-cultural relativity or problematicity which inspired that commentary has, since the Enlightenment, virtually disappeared from Western man's consciousness; a disappearance inseparable from that of the classical utopia itself.

These two aspects of the question, the geographical and the socio-structural, are

mutually significant in a way that tends, furthermore, to have slipped below the modern horizon of readability, within which there can be no social ideal (or society at all) except the future universal one, needing to be 'made'. That significance or double architectonics of spatial and social configuration in fact holds the key to the question as to why the momentous change from social passivism to activism should have occurred at all. If the advent of Western monoculture is a process of re-structuring on a progressively larger scale, leading to a uniform global or 'open' society, why should the latter not simply be a fully-realised version of what each of its constituent social elements was striving towards? Such is, indeed, what the prevailing ideology would have us believe. But it is not the case, because the structural conditions are decisively different in the two cases. As the assimilation process intensifies and residual classico-primitive effects are diluted, a new form of society emerges, based on the principle of 'general equivalence'; and it becomes clear that in this process two and two do not add up to four, since the 'twoness' of the twos had been a structural effect of their mutual relationship. This is why monoculture cannot be 'human' society in the traditional sense of the word.

The difference, as noted, has to do with the inherently 'closed' nature of the human ideological formation, which depends on a situation of cultural relativity: of the mutual difference that provided the structuring force. Human ideology or semanticity was originally structured as such, as the formal exclusion of a competing social exterior; a process theoretically inseparable from the role of territory in generating and supporting social 'insularity'. The classical utopia was the pre-Enlightenment expression of that relation of analogy.

What happens, though, if the perspective of local difference is put out of play, by the progress of territorial assimilation, to the point where the entire world is effectively 'known', or included in a 'global village'? Then, an equal and opposite reaction sets in, and an involution occurs in the socio-structural process that had been primarily based on territorial exclusion. This is the perspective that was produced by the 18th-century closure of the global circle, as a 'crisis of consciousness' and which, since that time, has progressively hardened into a crisis of social disintegration.

Such effects are the necessary corollary of a virtual realisation of the monoculturalist process determined in the first instance by the loss of the physical basis of cultural difference: spatial isolation. If the residual 'closedness' or relativity we still know were to melt down completely into a uniform world culture, not only would all the problems of cultural integration be solved, but in the same movement humanity itself would disappear, in the form that we know it. And yet, that is clearly what is happening; the trend towards 'post-structural' uniformity appears inevitable. The specifically human effect, generated initially as a passage 'beyond the *physis*' of territory and into the metaphysics of religious ideology, subsists

within the 'society of representation' (or political, monoculturalist society) only as, precisely, an effect of representation. It is not spontaneously regenerated there, because the structural preconditions are absent. Hence, the 'crisis'.

What, then, can the classical utopia tell us about where this process leads to? Firstly, there is the historical demise of the genre itself, which, as mentioned, is highly significant. Secondly, there are individual works which, by virtue of their authors' prophetic insight, have satirically portrayed a calculated guess as to the outcome of the process; among these, Gabriel de Foigny's *Terre Australe connue* is probably the most interesting. Thirdly and most importantly, there is the analytical key that the utopia's play on spatial reality provides, to the enigma of the primary structural process and its relation to territorial configuration. By following through the implications of this analytical perspective, one can begin to see what has been involved in the 'going into reverse' of the primary process.

The intention here is to outline briefly that perspective, noting its implications in terms of a 'lapse' into uniformity, particularly as satirised by the late classical 'austro-hermaphrodite' metaphor, of which the *Terre Australe connue* just mentioned is most representative. By means of this approach it may be possible to shed some light, not only on the fate of the classical utopia, but also on that of its referent, the classico-primitive form of society; and, by means of this reference 'outside', to approach a theoretical understanding of the modern ethos.

Because there have been two distinct 'visions of utopia' in the abstract sense here intended, hinging on the 18th-century crisis of Enlightenment, it is necessary for the critic or historian of ideas to approach the analysis of utopian theory with a double critical vision, bearing in mind that the pre-Enlightenment world is emphatically not ours. The reason why it is not comes down ultimately to the classico-primitive relation to the organic cultural past, and to the territorial physics that primarily supports such 'local' difference. When the latter was virtually liquidated by the global extension of geographical knowledge around the 18th century, a new form of society defined in terms of an absolute territory was born, or rather realised, as the Western monoculture. The 'open society' or absolutist state was in the first instance rendered possible by this historical opening-up of the primitive closedness of territory; in which the status of the last 'unknown', the Australasian and South Pacific regions and Antarctica, was exemplary. Western geographical and commercial expansion had thus had the sociological effect of reversing the primary process of metaphysical structuration, source of the 'human phenomenon'.

This is why the modern society predicated as universal, far from being a classico-primitive 'quasi-utopia', is in fact literally a utopia, or pantopia, in terms of the original usage of the word. The 'closed circuit' that had been figured in its closure

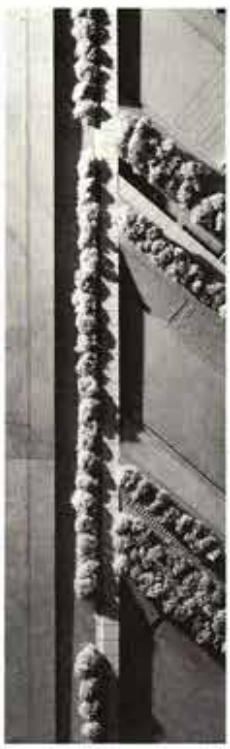
as the hermeneutics of the 'unknowable' ideal society, and represented metaphorically as a geographical 'non-location', has virtually ceased to exist as such: by virtue, that is, of the removal, of its physical preconditions of insularity or territoriality. A universal society would have no social exterior, just as a global territory has no physical exterior; and, therefore, no structuring force regenerating the metaphysical basis of religious ideology. In other words, there would no longer be the force opposing, and strategically repressing, direct animal sociality. It is the relative lifting of that force, for example, that has conditioned the rise of individualism and of materialism, and of their corollaries such as psychoanalytical theory.

The value of the classical utopia lay in the implicit connection it drew between these sociological effects and their primary basis in geophysical configuration; a perspective which, as noted, has virtually disappeared with the advent of the 'global' overview. Indeed, an involution of the primary social and epistemological forms has occurred: the 'closed circuit' has become definitively opened, tied to no significant place but to all places. The classical genre necessarily disappeared in this movement; its gesture of concrete representation (as imaginary society) of an abstract phenomenon (the human 'closed circuit') being supplanted by the abstract representation (as literary criticism or social science) of a concrete phenomenon: the advent of that real-historical 'utopia', the global monoculture of which we presently inhabit an early phase.

To recall, in conclusion, some of the implications of this process: firstly, the latter is particularly acute at the margins of the monoculturalist vortex, at the interface between what remains of the primary or 'pre-contact' social form, and what has been irrevocably instituted of the secondary form, or 'society of representation' – in other words, in the ex-colonies. Secondly, the base-phenomenon is the reduction to 'general equivalence' which, while initially a material-economic process, becomes beyond a certain limit a socio-structural one, in which the person acquires a status equivalent to that of merchandise, and is propelled towards uniformity and exchangeability in terms of his or her – or more precisely 'its' – social roles. This process affects (secondarily) the metaphysical status of the body and of the relation to the material world. The meaning and fate of the classical utopia provide a clue to such social architectonics, because the latter are determined in all cases by the status of the mediating 'closed circuit'.

Finally, on the subject of architectonics and the significant parallel between the architectural and epistemological senses of the word, let us consider some etymological usages which betray the same base-concept as I have identified in the case of the classical utopia. Take the convent, which has the conventional or arbitrary character of human religious ideology inscribed in its very name, designating a gathering-place in which religion (also implying a quasi-physical

binding) is practiced; while its cloisters again carry the sense of essential closure, as in the word's kinship to the French 'clôture', which literally means 'closure'. These examples perhaps serve to illustrate the close relation between configurations of physical space and social structure in the classico-primitive conceptuality, that was the basis of classical utopianism: one which in our time is by contrast barely conceivable, so completely has the significance of the primary bounded structure fallen into irrelevance.



THREE PROJECTS

Renato Rizzi

Rediscovering the City

Zwischenwelt in Rovereto

principal: R Rizzi
project team: F. Allocca, C. Bosio.

The city is in a process of moving away more and more from its quality of having 'place' because it is being rapidly homogenised. This has already happened in the peripheral areas and now there is a danger that the same contamination may happen even for the central areas.

In other words, it seems almost that the ways and customs that have progressively taken root in the suburbs are able to become models for imitation in designing the zones inside the city, forgetting that there exists an enormous bundle of generative grammars that have been produced from a slow process of modification and that these possess the features of an urban character.

THE CHARACTER OF PLACE

In terms of Rovereto the site represents a very important 'void', for all the city, a place in which figurative memory finds its expressive, oneiric forms, where the circus, the tournament, games, festivals: had their stage of illusion, a carnivalesque place. An indefinite place, however, that could fill up until it almost burst or remain empty, a void unutilised, transversed only by children's incursions. This place of thousands of limits and also of no limit, has a precious richness in defining the differential character of Rovereto. This space, a little protected, enclosed, this space of forgetting, has maintained its character of marginality even though surrounded by the contemporary city. An area with certain invisible aspects, free, that has never participated in and that has never been absorbed by urban re-organisation and has always resisted any transformational programme.

THE HISTORIC ICONOGRAPHY

A reading of historical images traces a process of modification principally by cancellations, by the loss of signs, by successive and continuing enfeebling to the point of their total disappearance. The constituent elements that structured the plan – small canals that incised the borders: the enclosing walls that are inscribed on the countryside – represented the continuation of an urban landscape much more articulate, much more complex than that deduced from the few remaining archaeological traces or indications

Some of them describe the entire development of a network of waterways, illustrating and recounting with an incredible precision and richness all the possible

diversions, controls, closures, barriers, types of canals, locks, wheels dislocated along the entire tracing. The value of these maps is in being able to restore a tangled world of images, of sounds, noises, it allows us to see the entanglement of the timbers with the fine threads of silk in a deafening rotation of gears rotted by water, which wrap around each other setting the scene now for the great urban machine. Only in the book Invisible cities by Italo Calvino can one savour again this fascinating intricacy and from a different point of view, some sort of analogy is offered by the machines of Jean Tinguely. But one can interpret other things from these maps. It is the particular way of holding together the region, countryside, architecture even the particular internal constructs of the *figure*. Everything comes to be presented by their own image, all is expressible through the figures of a refined aesthetic logic.

THE PLANNING PROGRAMME

Above all the project is the endeavour to give a contemporary description of the city, it is the possibility of an urban narration through the figure. It expresses an undeniable aesthetic necessity if one wants the *city* to turn into a representation of itself grounding its own legitimacy on the necessity of use and not the contrary.

Therefore, the assumptions or themes of the figurative plan are:

a. the theme of the void: to construct the void as a distinct characteristic of the area;
b. the theme of transgression: to permit the possibility of welcoming again, the circus, the tournaments, the festivals, the games also fairs and markets at the limit;
c. the theme of inversion: to bind the area whether to the historic texture or to the modern orthogonal outlines, upsetting sense. While the more rigid contemporary plan imposed itself on the more delicate historical plan cancelling it out, now the historic generative grammars assume pre-eminence over the modern organising syntaxes.
d. the theme of the citation: the use of traces fragments, analogous figures, coming from the text of the city and from the iconographic memories, as referential citations
e. the theme of the theatrical: the insertion of the great natural landscape, the mountains inside the urban rim as a new and fascinating theme of the modern.

THE FIGURATIVE PROGRAMME

Two worlds, two landscapes look for their own space of confluence in the project. The first is an horizontal space, taut, even slightly concave, that almost covers

completely the entire area. It is the space that represents the void, the place where anything can happen. It should resemble a piazza but it is not exactly that. It is a space liberated, open to everything and anybody, not institutionalised, whose one rule is that it no one possess it. Placed some metres above the level of the street it acts as roof – it could be more opportune to say, as shield – for the area below full of activity. It is a space that refers to the modern city, to its horizontal expansion.

The second represents a vertical space, deep, dense, from the forced and controlled views. The landscape of the border. It changes radically depending on the different ways one approaches it. If one travels along it in an east-west direction, following the development of the historical city, it becomes a true urban street of more levels, rich with objects and figurative surprises, supported by a building-wall that will also welcome residential use. It reflects a modern sloping of the street of the historical areas, since it places itself as an ideal continuity with it. The compactness of the fronts, the continual suspension, floating between a below and an above produces the analogy of serried and articulated perspectives.

If instead one comes from the north towards the south, the direction of the modern city, the edge is transformed into a soft organised margin of trees. A linear park of tall trees with the ground lower than the level of the streets becomes furrowed by the transversing pathways.

The figurative tension that it produces between the edge and the horizontal space makes a series of objects emerge, fragments that are none other than circulation spaces – stairs, ramps, entrances, bridges, gangways – between the two diverse systems. To establish a reverberation between the opposite edges they reflect the traces extracted from the pre-existing buildings in the area.

Standing in a central position one can, moreover, observe a hierarchy of horizons. The first is given by its own limits, the second those that appear at the edge – higher than 2.4 metres – the third from the limits of the foliage of the trees, the fourth the urban skyline and last of all the scenography of the mountains. The point of view of the observer is no longer external to the city, but instead inside. It is no longer possible to perceive the city in its totality but only through parts, through traces and the texture of the fields in this case, no longer convex but concave since it is no longer nature but architecture.

The figure had to exceed its own confines (the physical confines of the area) to display its expressive charge derived from the confrontation with the different texts of the city. It had to search for a profound rootedness in memory and tradition knowing well that only thus could it possess the necessary strength to detach itself, to be able to reveal, to be transgressive and innovative.

It has re-figured a middle space, a Zwischenwelt, an 'in-between world' which together hold the irre-soluble conflict between the historic city and the modern city, between the tight, fine, horizontal spaces, and the dense vertical spaces, between the limits that separate and the limits that include in a continual and incessant exchange of roles. The figure has thus finally unveiled the disquieting images of the place making them legible, liberating them from the prison of history.

Fragments for a Zwischenwelt: At the edge of the sky

These fragments are drawn from *Limina: il pensiero e le cose* by Franco Rella, Feltrinelli, 1987, and are authorised by the author. Each piece is followed by a numeration which corresponds to the chapter, paragraph and page.

Title and selection by Renato Rizzi

Absence of place is paradoxically what allows us 'to grasp' space in all its extensions, to catch its specific 'reality'. (I-1, 9)

'Displaced' space is then *atopic*, but it is not unlimited. It receives within itself the limit . . . that no longer runs around its exterior, as a line of defence, but in its interior. (I-1, 9)

The modern city has no confines, but its interior is transversed by a plurality of limits. (I-2, 10)

Leopardi, however, has celebrated the city, precisely because thousands of limits break the habitual gaze – the gaze of reason which orders everything into hierarchy and category – and is compelled to go beyond these limits with the imagination: with the noetic force of the image. (I-2, 10)

The arabesque . . . a kind of indefinite negation of closed geometric forms. (I-2, 10-11)

Even in the figure of the arabesque the demonic touch of Eros is decisive. (I-2, 11)

The thing . . . is the place of a paradoxical synthesis in which both Polemos and Eros act . . . the love of the thing, because it is a polemic love, is then deconstruction and new construction of the world. (1-3, 12)

The alienation of the ego, the metaphor of the labyrinth, the unsettling of the light-dark dialectic in the Kafkaesque proposition of the shadow as place of a different ability to see the world, the unsettling of the relationship between the real and the possible, are certainly included in the modern, but they also mark – in the moment of their becoming our thinking today – a profound epochal change. (I-4, 15)

Always to think the modern is to think the limit: it is liminal thought. (I-4, 15)

The secret . . . is also next to the figure of *horror*, of stupor, of displacement. (I-5, 16)

In a certain sense the secret is then the spirit of the unsettling strength of *atopia*. (I-5, 18)

We have returned to the capital point of the experience of the modern: the voyage that transforms the *everywhere* of the labyrinth into its own house. (I-7, 20)

Fronting the great paradox of contemporary modernity is the language of Witz, of the arabesque, of the eroticism of knowledge, that can give us a glimpse of the possibility

of transforming the chaos of things, of the intrigue of images and of information, into a order, into a dissonant harmony. (II-1, 27)

In fact the *fantastic form*, or the arabesque, in its sinuous and woven movement, keeps together, as possibility, whether it is what we consider true or what only appears so, which is then object of fantasy or of the knowledge of the imagination. (II-5, 37)

The luminous point of fluctuation becomes the discovery of a new world. (II-7, 44)

The specific space of the thing: the displaced and atopic space of the thing, in as much as it is its middle space, its interior limit, the Zwischenwelt, the in-between world, that will be captured by Kafka, Klee, Proust and Rilke. (II-7, 45)

When a line of confinement is placed at the centre, and not at the extreme periphery, where it is almost invisible, this line then not only redesigns the map of the land, and uncovers depressions in it until now invisible and unknown, but it also overturns the habits of its inhabitants. (III-1, 67)

It is in this intermediate place . . . 'that the little that we can apprehend of the laws of the visible world makes us discover the immensity of the superior worlds'. (III-4, 72)

Mythical cosmogony opens to man a new world . . . in the interlacing of the opposing tensions that reside within myth, inside its *synthesis of the heterogeneous*. (III-9, 84)

Tediousness and stupidity seem still to dominate every human horizon in the guise of whatever has no figurative image. (IV-2, 103)

And Cézanne communicated to Gasquet . . . the terrible impression that *everything is lost, that you need to be quick if you still want to see anything*. (IV-6, 115)

It is a matter of designing difference, then, or better the place – the atopic space – in which differences can not only become manifest, but also reproduce themselves. (IV-7, 119)

In the hustle of metropolitan life man lives a perverse relationship with space and time, a relationship that has been highlighted as a terrible estrangement, and which only today can we begin to read as a productive *atopia*. (V-1, 125)

Everything is oscillating along the evanescent frontier that separates being and nothing, the apparent and the unapparent. (V-I, 125)

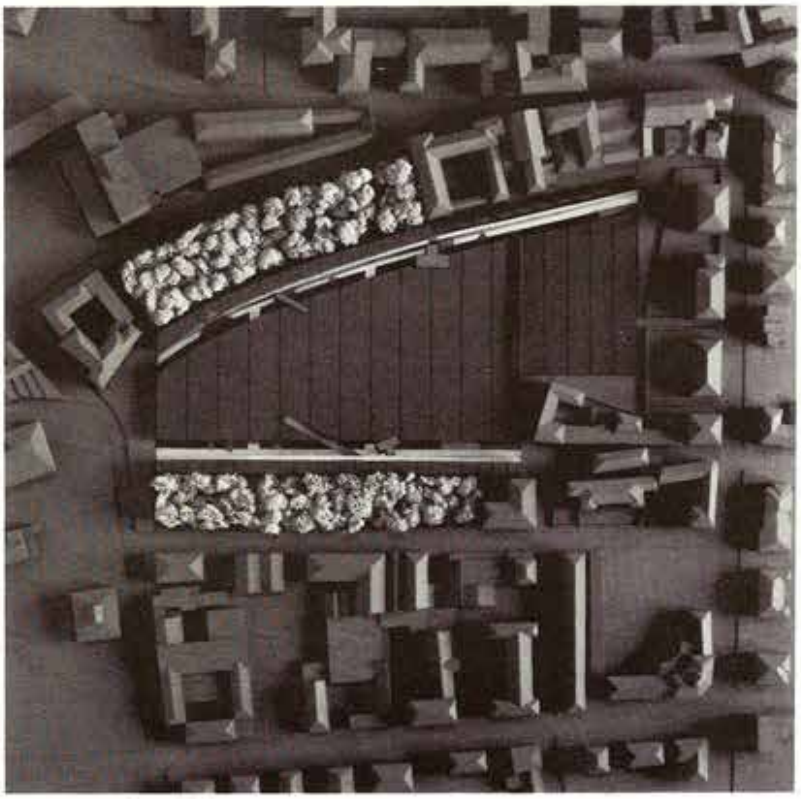
The figure . . . must have the precision, the inventiveness of imagination, *but also the element of exactness and of the possibility of fulfilment*. (V-3, 130)

The figure proposes an oblique truth. It proposes, in place of its hierophany in light, the reality of light and darkness. (V-4, 130)

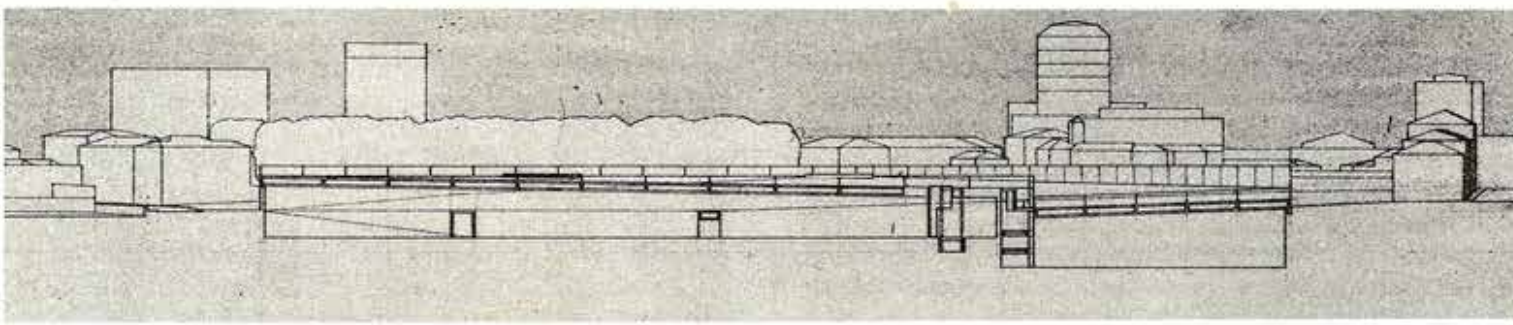
. . . the only language in a position to capture reality is . . . the figurative language of mixture. (V-6, 135)

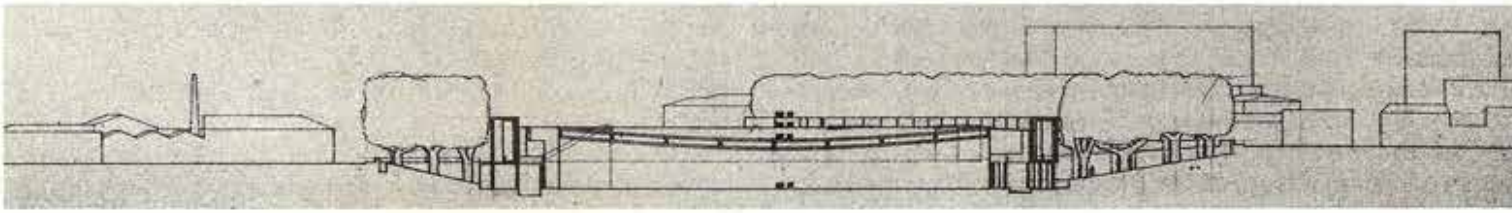
Today we are in another paradoxical time, in which as Handke says, springs gush even from the trash. (VI-4, 162)

Site Plan

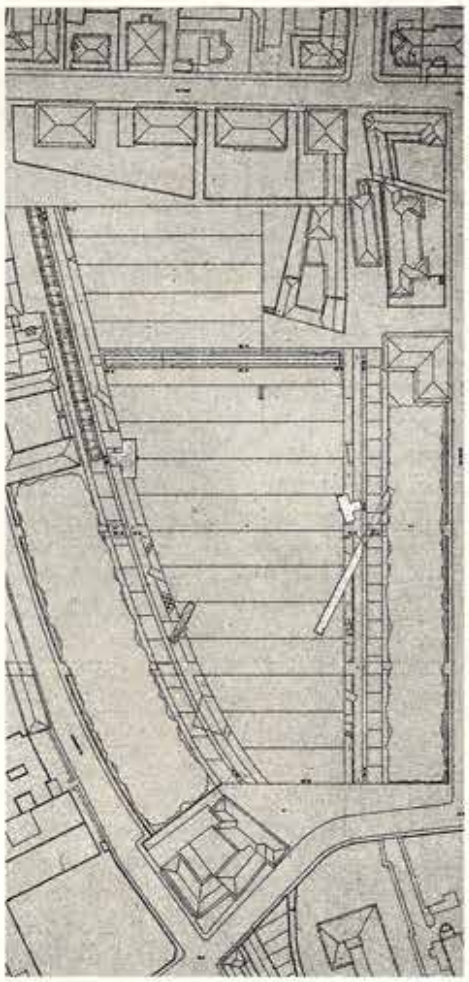


Plan view of model

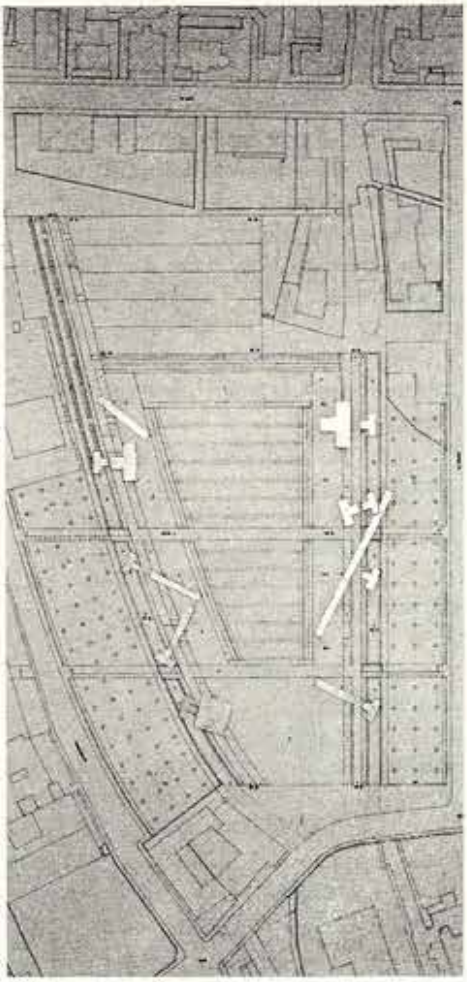




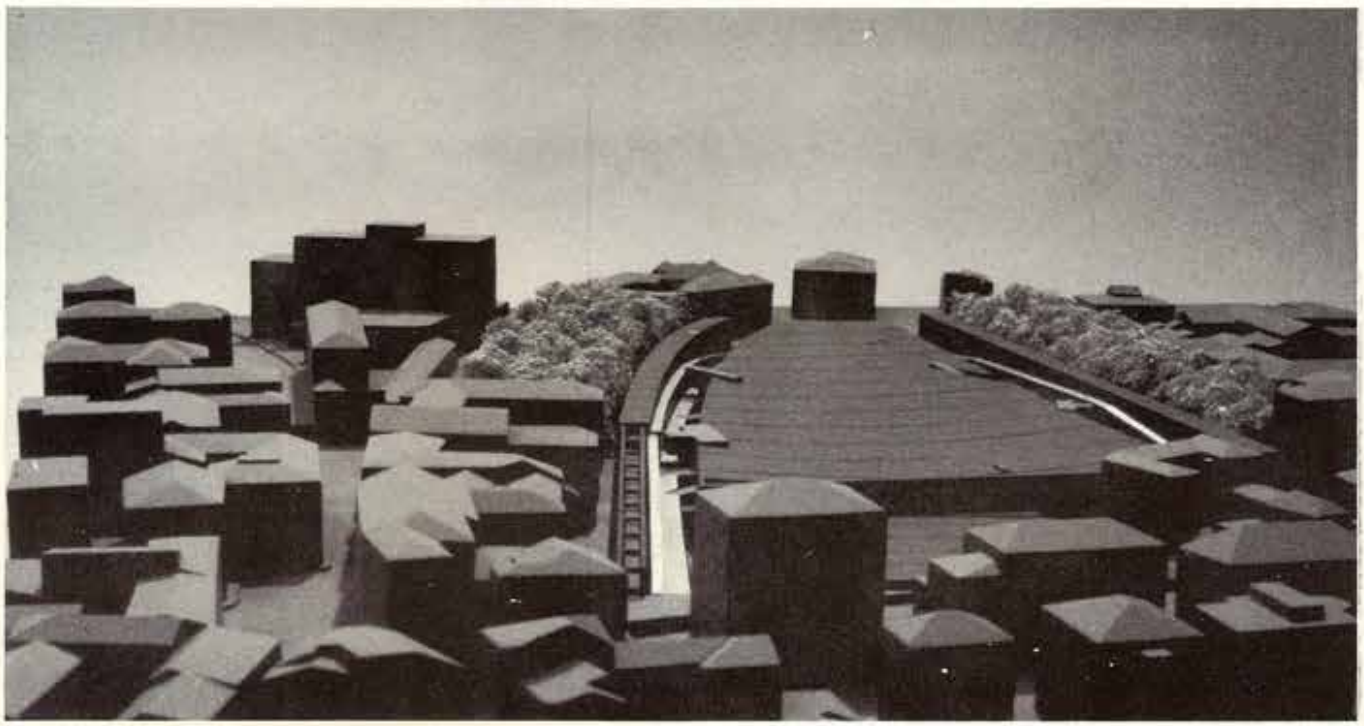
above longitudinal section, below transverse section.



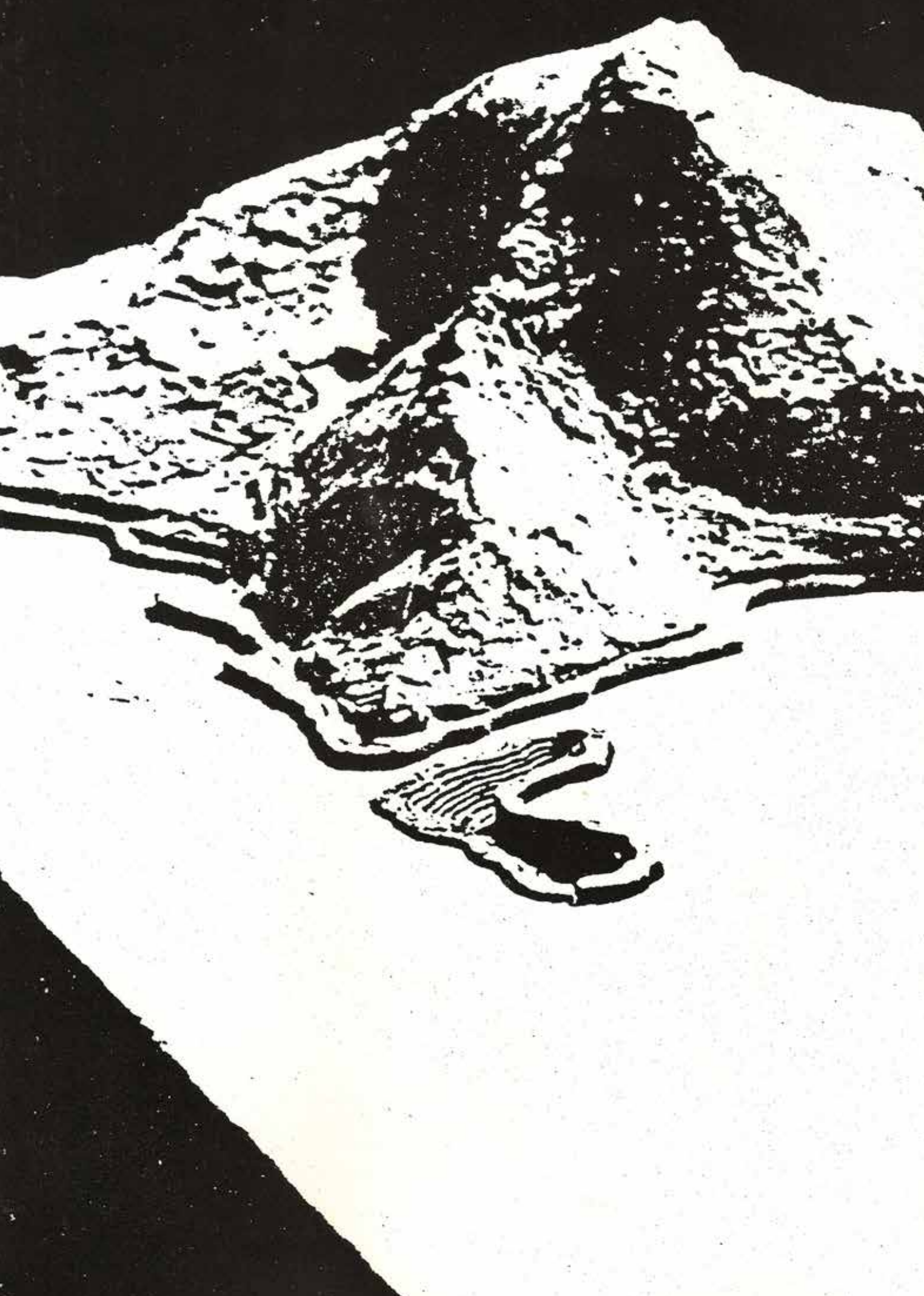
Plan of lower level



Plan of upper level



View of model from East



The Beauty in Between

Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongawera

R Rizzi in collaboration with T Leeser and Sinclair Group Architects.
Model B Borgini and A Oradini.

This project was for the competition to become the architect of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongawera. The model was not submitted for the purposes of this competition but was rather developed for an exhibition in Italy. The text is an abstract from the report that the architects submitted.

One of the most fundamental concepts of New Zealand is its dichotomy with the rest of the world. Appropriately from this concept comes the different understanding of society, culture and history, and from this a new possibility of being arises. The richness and uniqueness of the country is grounded in this particular concept of 'polarity'.

For this reason it is necessary to discover a pattern, an order, a language which is capable of holding together the 'two worlds'.

The principles of our project are based on the understanding of this extraordinary condition. In order to synthesise these ideals we propose to shift into the intersection of Maori with White culture, and the intersection of natural with artificial environment, which means between landscape and city. Oriental Bay and Point Jerningham – the place where the mountains reach the water – marks the threshold between the Lambton Harbour and Port Nicholson, a symbolic place between Wellington and New Zealand, and New Zealand and the 'wider world' across the oceans.

Between land and water. The myth of beauty, the Goddess Venus and all life arises from the water.

We start from the water as a generator of our project, because we consider the great relevance of this element to the country as the origin that contains the heritage of all culture and the expressive and peculiar forms of the land.

Between up and down. The water's surface will be treated in order to reflect the continuity of the landscape. As the mountains rise out of the landscape like blade their image will be mirrored in the cavity of the water like a cut. The building shapes this cavity, as an extension of the landscape, creating the edge between the void and the water.

Between solid and void. The bulk of the building, containing it's void, will be floating almost completely sunk in the ocean, at the same time materialising a new horizon. The quality of this image simultaneously resides in the presence as will as the absence of figure. The uniqueness of that figure is the beginning of what raises this building into the ranks of the big museums of the world.

opp. view from North

Between centre and edge. The irregular shape of the building, long and narrow like an island extending Point Jerningham into the bay is constituted by two main elements.

The border – on the edge – like a thick wall, contains most of the interior museum functions, separates the surrounding water from it's central void. It will be seen to project above the sea level only just enough to protect itself.

The void – in the centre – reaching way down below the level of the water, where it is confined by a horizontal major exhibition space, relating it to the continuous thick border of the floating building. This empty void, like the imprint of a prehistoric landscape, is ready to be 're-inhabited'. It is also filled with the symbolism of the Marae, reinterpreted through cutting it from its traditional context and shifting it into the new context of water, giving it back new value.

Between strength and silence. The simplicity and clarity of the project is well understood from the view corridor of the Wellington Harbour and the city. It is in balance with New Zealand's landscape through the quietness of it's horizontality. The implied notion of invisibility recalls a mysterious sacredness.

At the same time the strength of the figure creates a new aesthetic datum in the vertical dimension.

The visible environment of the cavity will be an extraordinary architectural experience offering the new comprehension of the values and the origin of the country. The richness resides in the void and precisely this image of the absence will be recognised in the entire world.

Between past and future. Instead of being grounded on the earth, the floating structure of the museum is linked on the one hand to the old tradition of boat building, on the other hand it involves the necessity to apply the most advanced technologies available today (e.g. Concrete Gravity Substructures). This technology in our project will allow us to deal with the fundamental problems of seismic movement and shock in a new way. Rather than setting power against power, or force against force, we utilise the water as an absorber of subterranean movement in a passive way. This soft approach to found the building implies a new sensibility and respect towards nature.

Between desire and reality. We understand and are aware that this project requires to go beyond most projects being undertaken anywhere in the world. We also know, that our proposal goes beyond some of the restrictions of the competition. But we seriously believe in the goals of this Museum which are the goals of New Zealand. And we further believe that the achievement of these goals imply a big risk: the risk of honesty and truth.

opp. Plan view

Sports Complex for Trent

Architect Rizzi
In collaboration with
F. Allocca
Model F Allocca, E Burgini,
A Oradini, C Michelet

THE CHARACTER OF THE PLACE

The site, in its marginal position, adjoining the city but cut off outside it, separated from it, stands inside a sort of large enclosure set up by the railway, the banks of the Fersina and by the regional highway. An 'island' in relation to its urban surroundings, an area of refuse and of isolation. By contrast, the firmly committed programme, anticipating a rich and articulate insertion of sporting activities and services (sports stadium, ice-skating rink, bowling links, soccer fields, baseball, softball, travelling spectacles etc.), aspires to elevate the area as a generative node in the re-organisation of the entire neighbouring region. Thus the objective of the design – with respect to the figurative programme – is that of defining the place as a space of confluence between the artificial world of the city and the natural world of the countryside (sport in a constructed environment and sport in the natural environment) within a system of dis-continuity. A space in the middle, a world in between, between the urban models and the natural models, that must in fact refrain from any flowing continuities with the constructed city.

The site then becomes a fundamental text to be interpreted in which it is possible to trace the rules and the structural principles which help the arrangement of the figures extracted from the city and the natural landscape. If the morphological character of the site is defined:

a. by its own margins that encloses it from the exterior,
b. by the various ground levels, the natural ones of the countryside and the artificial produced by filling a stratum of 4-5 metres with landfill,
c. by the regulating lines of the agricultural roads, with an east west orientation, these principles are translated and completely transfigured in the support network of the entire planning programme.

STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES

The margin, the visual element that reinforces the boundaries of the area, organises the external border on which the system of pedestrian pathways, threshold points and the disposition of services is developed. It is then no longer understood as an element that excludes and separates, but as an element of connection, of knowledge, of experience, of exchange. The various ground levels articulate three levels that correspond to the different grades of function and plant:

i. the higher for the public concourse
ii. the intermediate for the services functions and for open-air games
iii. the lower for the practice of sports under cover.

This layout is particularly useful in that it favours the separation of pedestrian traffic from vehicular traffic avoiding any interconnection.

Finally, the regulating lines, organise the internal area into strips or bands, running in an east-west direction. The three principal strips or 'ramparts', since in fact they end up excavated relative to the layout of levels, correspond to specific functional categories:

i. strip A, ice-skating rink, bowling links, tennis
ii. strip B, stadium and sports fields
iii. strip C, travelling performances.

THE FIGURES

So placed the interweaving which structures the design is activated in the configuration encountering and working with a double set of figures in a subtle play of exchange of parts between the urban elements, such as ramps, stairs, inclines, bridges, streets, dams, and walls and natural elements such as trees, avenues, bushes, gardens, ramparts, lines of planting, tracks, foot-paths, embankments. It becomes thus a matter of setting up an installation, gently but firmly rooted in the ground with a landscape that reveals a heterogeneous succession of escarpments, depressions, plateaux, inclines, mixed into the web of the geometric order of the strips and levels. The *ramparts* are edged with grassed banks and rows of trees are cut transversely by *dams* that are simply the crossing concourses – used also for the technical installations – scanned from the distributive grid.

The design is not an investigation into the usual architecture made from buildings well individuated by base or crown but an incessant exchange of figures that read the place from the ancient memory of the regulating lines and from the weak traces handed on from the working of the earth, it seeks to act in the present with determination and figurative autonomy on the reorganising modification of the site.

With this device all the different systems – that come from the condition of the roads, accessibility, car parking, footpaths, playing fields, green spaces, trees, strongly equipped areas and service spaces – find their logical expressiveness within the continual oscillation of the elements, reverberating the one on the other (the same for the material systems that comprise the natural components and the artificial, transparent and opaque). For example, the environmental thresholds, points of exchange in the flows of region and city into the sports area, are configured like the Kleingarten, carparking-gardens, 'enclosed gardens' for cars. Enclosed by a wall they are characterised by pergolas on which will grow climbing evergreens, offering thus a variation on the theme of enclosure, border, and the organisation of the strips.

Another experience of the margin is announced suddenly. Running along the shaft of the concourses that link them – that became in fact the principal collector of the entire pedestrian system and of the support services placed on the intermediate level – one can observe from its privileged position either the broad landscape outside – the landscape of the river, of the hill, of the countryside but also the suburbs – or the landscape inside, made up of the different rooms, environments for the sports practice and for games. A theatrical space from where one can watch but from where it is possible also to be seen.

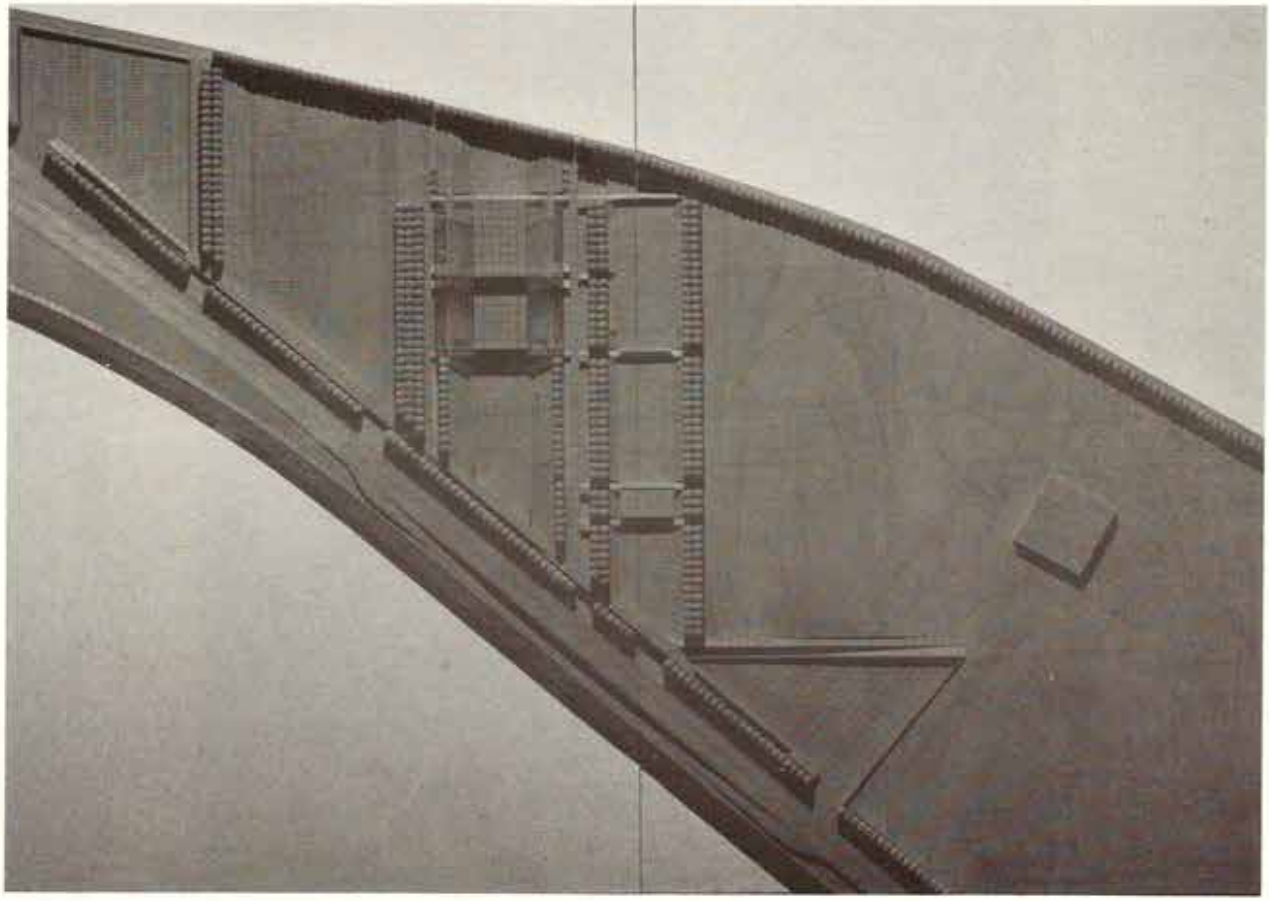
THE SPORTS BUILDING

Analogously, the sports stadium ends up broken down, involved in and assimilated into the general morphology of the complex. The external 'strips' penetrate and generate the playing fields, such as the margins to the side of the concourses – the grassed inclined embankments – they inadver-tently brings the form of the ground levels inside the palace, in a perceived continuity. The treatment of the roof in opaque and transparent areas, corresponds with the strips of the fields and with the zones of the ground levels, endeavouring to underline and accentuate the building's belonging to the characteristics of the region, reproducing at a different scale the strategy used in determining the general plan.

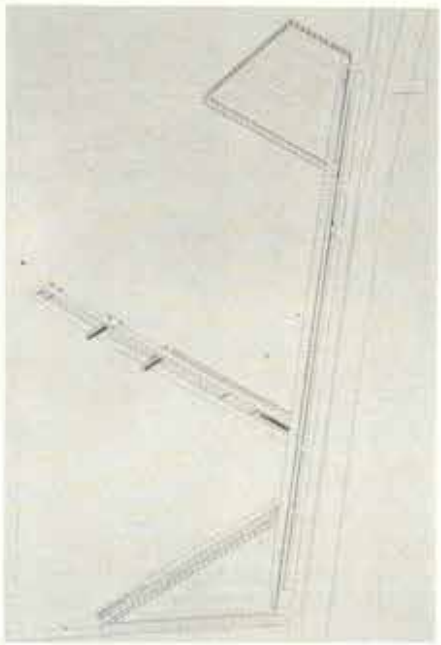
One distinctive emblem of the building, almost a sort of architectonic memory, is the high, fine vertical blade that cuts it transversely, emerging from the roof plane housing the machines and the dividing walls that like a guillotine divide the great hall.

The resulting plot of land is modelled and organised as a large building and the building in its turn as a plot of land. Paradoxically one could say that a single sports building does not exist, but rather many, one of which is covered and the others are open. The sports area then is not understood as a specialised place for practicing the different disciplines, but represents a place of integration for other uses, for other existences, a place where the dimensions of play, amateur sports and competition can co-exist. One can walk, pause, hide, disguise oneself, take shelter in the thick of the trees, cross the site completely without ever interfering in the activities. It is a place of representation because it is all a device for its observation.

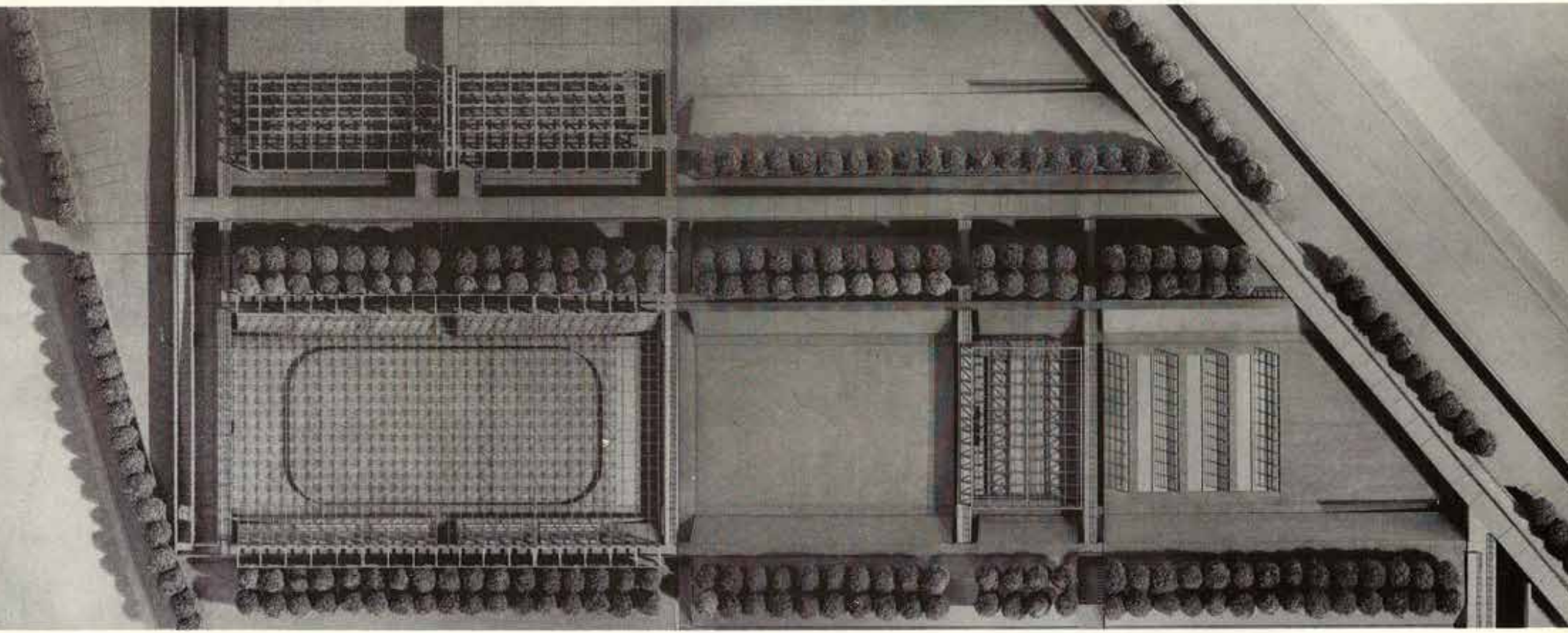
The urban and natural models are transfused in this middle space, since the first elements are always crossed by the second, and vice versa. The organising logic of the parts and the whole that belong to an urban way of thinking is sustained largely by the natural elements which are called upon to play an ambiguous role in their serried ordering arrangement. A natural world and an artificial world seek here their own abode. An acquiescent figure that brings together the world of institutions and rules and a world free and open.



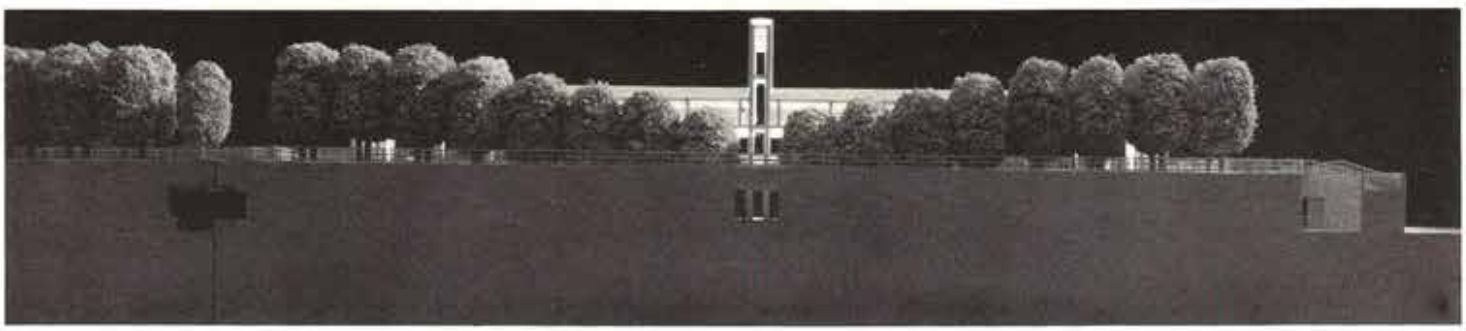
Plan view of model scale 1:500



The principle system of pathways connecting the sports area and the car-parks

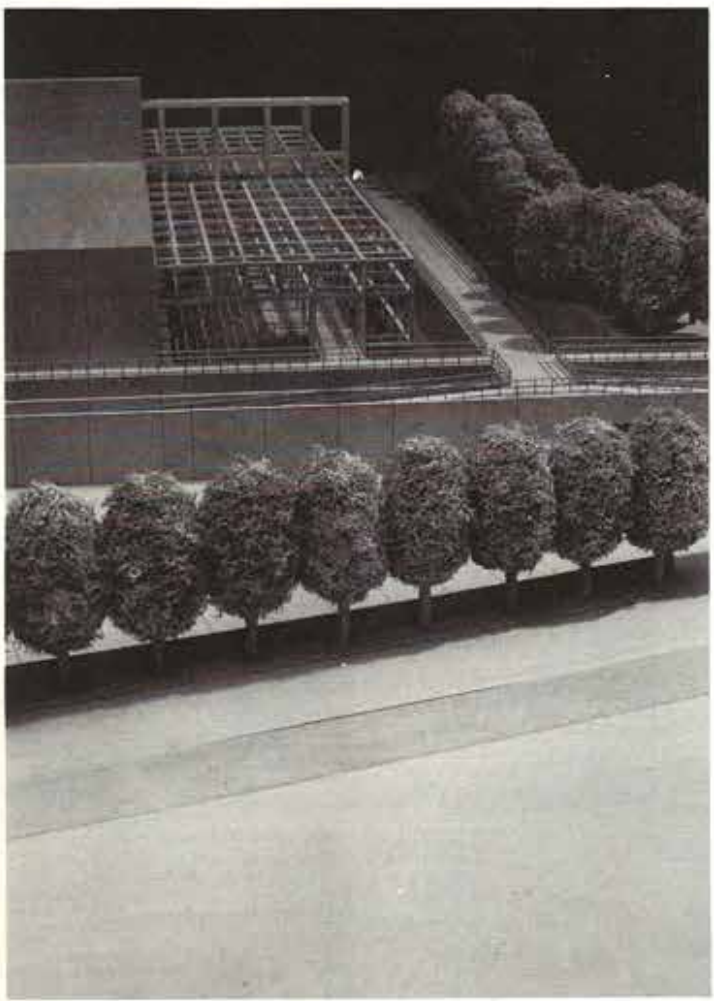


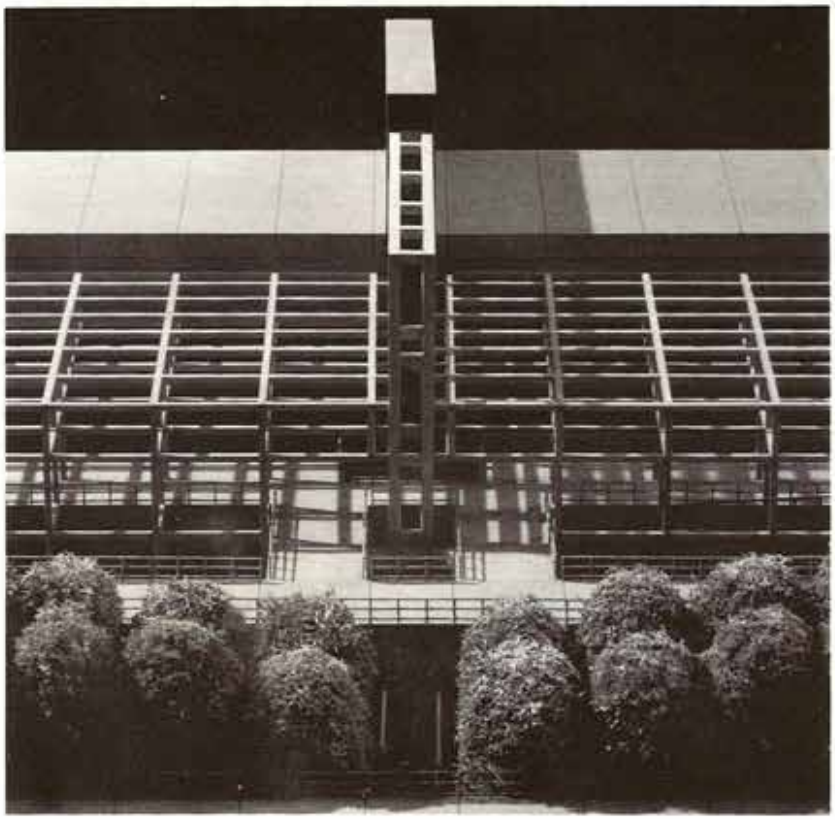
Plan view of model scale 1:100



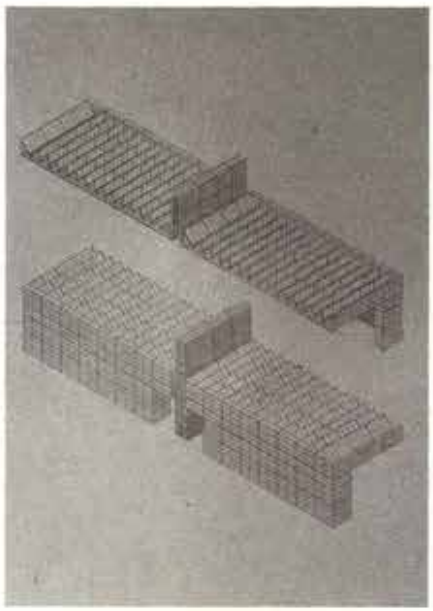
Section view of model

Partial view from on via Fersina, to the East.

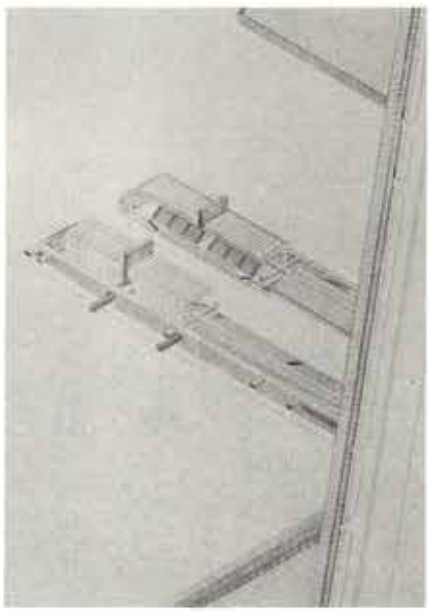




View of model showing structure of front façade and the central dividing "blade".



a



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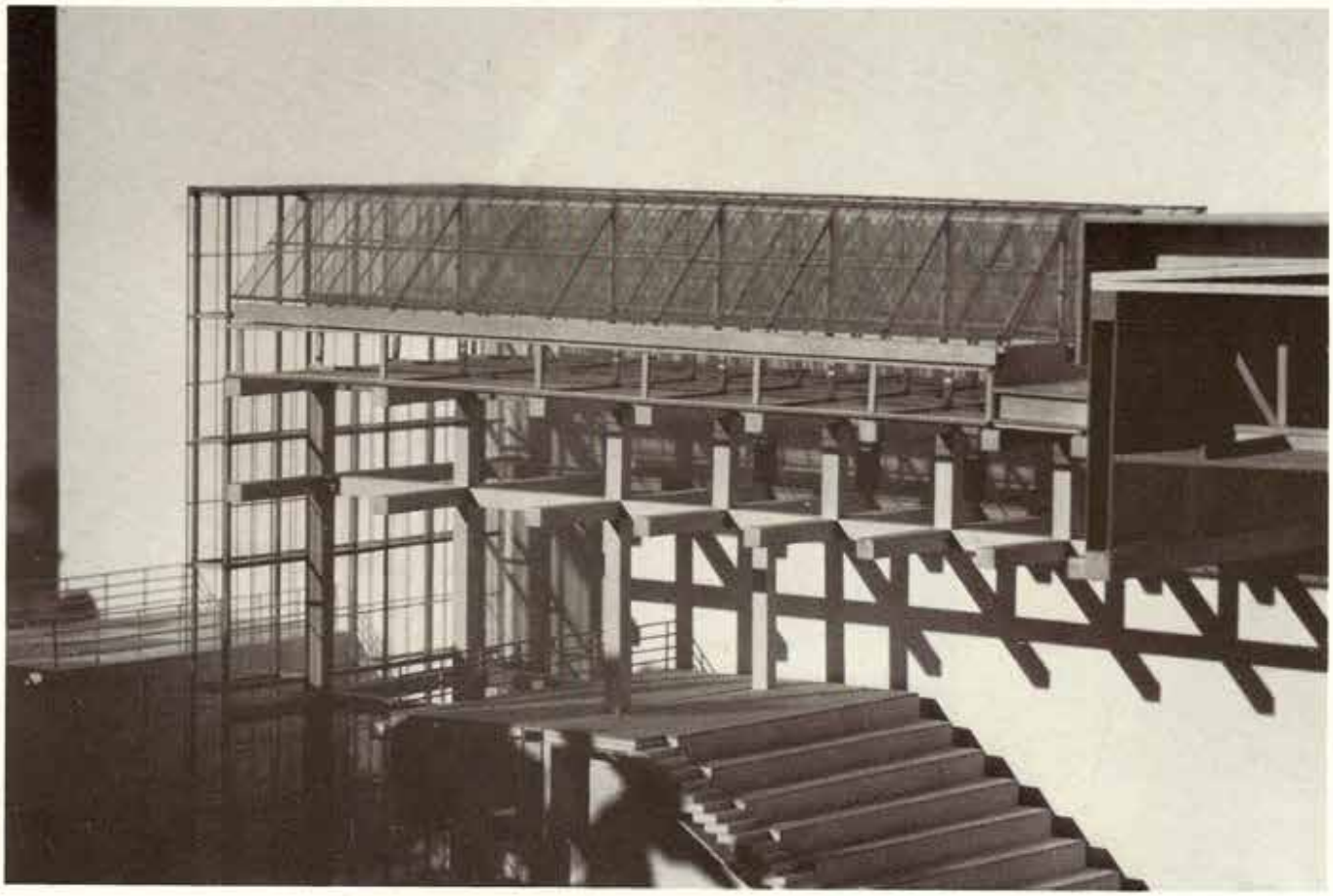
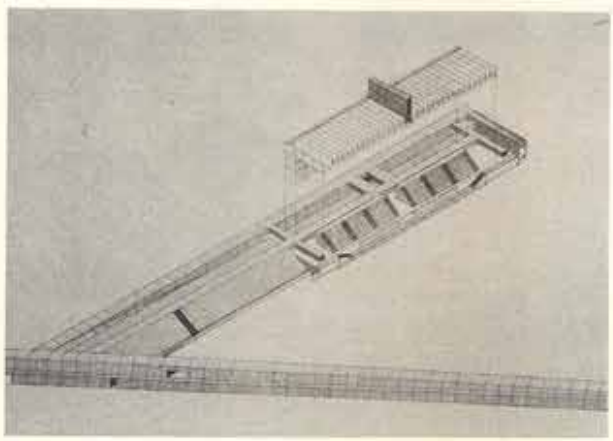


Section through model study of transparent roof and seating in large pavilion

a,b,c,d Axonometric drawings explicating the structure and arrangement of the large enclosed sports pavilion and relationship to principal concourse



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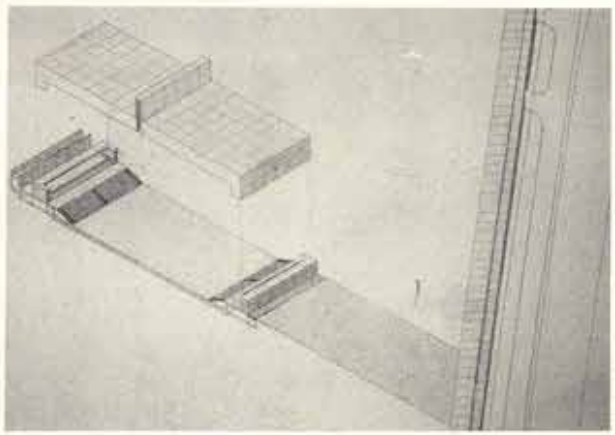

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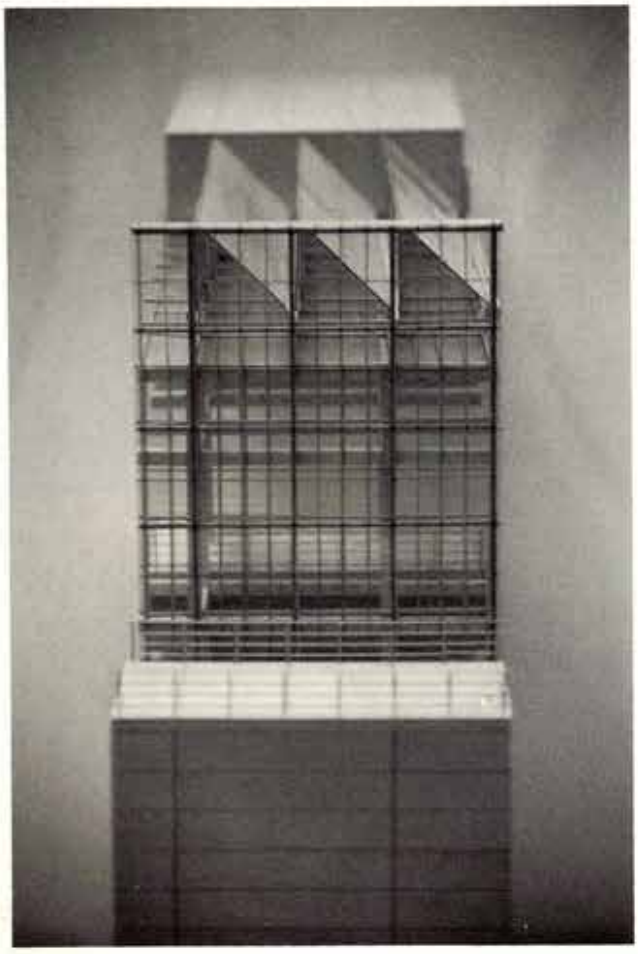

Structure and transparent façade

The Necessity of Beauty

Renato Rizzi

THE CONTINUOUS GROWTH OF COMPLEXITY

The evolution of the economic, productive and administrative phenomena that characterise the process of transformation – those that manifest themselves and translate themselves into a region changing its physical appearance – are reaching such a level of complexity and articulation that they render the entire planning system comprehensible only with difficulty. It would be better to say with 'visible' or 'observable' difficulty within a complex horizon, difficulty in verifying with respect to the concrete, physical and material aspects of objective reality. So it is true that to control it this planning system is manipulated into a decomposition of parts (traffic, housing, services, industry, recreational) ramifying its homogeneous subsystems, in an attempt to reduce the complexity, which results, but into a fragmentation unable to restore formal sense to a general planning programme.

From this point of view regional planning, forming a hierarchy with respect to the diverse operative levels – provincial, district, communal, local – is forced to enclose, reunify or at least keep together within proper objectives, the complexity of reality. A reality that, tends to become diluted, ground down, rendered ever more inconsistent, almost transparent because it is seen, analysed, interpreted principally through the abstract filter of technico-normative instrumentation. A reality which shows the weaknesses of the planning system, unfortunately overworking foreseeable aberrations and consequently stressing the defects.

FROM THE QUANTITATIVE TO THE QUALITATIVE CONDITION

The state of crisis reached by the regional and urban arrangement only testifies, precisely through the factual evidence, that the brining together of the urbanistic, economic productive programme with the effectual reality produces a great distance between the expectations and the intentions of development and their traditional practices. The phenomenon of the degradation of things in general – the environment, the countryside, the city – is stressed ultimately in these years because it has passed from a first quantitative phase, concerned with the development of primary needs (house, work, services) to that of a qualitative type

Renato Rizzi, born July 3 1951, Rovereto, Italy. He graduated from the Instituto di Architectura, Universita di Venezia (I.A.U.V), and now has his own practice with F Allocca in Rovereto. Together they undertake a broad range of work from exhibition design to large urban projects. In the mid to late 1980s Rizzi collaborated with Peter Eisenman on anumber of projects. In addition to these professional activities, he also teaches at the I.A.U.V.

Rizzi has visited New Zealand twice: 1988 Resene Paints Architecture Exposition as judge and 1989 with assistance from Fletcher Development and Construction Ltd to work with members of the School of Architecture, University of Auckland, on the report Aesthetic Directions for Hamilton, *presented to Hamilton City Council.*

which explores in the modes of use and in their representation its own value.

Up to the recent past, the region was still understood as a place of inexhaustible exploitation: productive, residential, agricultural. Today, however it is coming to be considered as a place of value for its intrinsic qualities: its own beauty. It is passing thus from a conception of property to be consumed to another, property to be conserved.

Above all this state applies to the city. Exhausted, the great phase of uncontrolled expansion has turned towards attaining internal requalification, seeking to recover a series of values and significances that were previously fought against or, at best, ignored.

From an idea of city as production, towards an idea of city as representation.

THE IMPERFECTION OF THE REGIONAL PLANNING VIEW

This important change which demands a further displacement of such limits – understood as conservation and representation – requires a revision of the planning codes and instruments. It requires a different approach, a different thinking which does not sour expectations by the normative grid, or stiffen the restrictive bonds exclusively. The theme of environmental quality, urban and rural, now demands the introduction of an aesthetic thought that concretely values questions of form – precisely in their figurative aspects, perceptible by the sensibility of sight.

The actual structure of town planning or of regulatory plans, is founded above all on a descriptive abstraction of reality that is entrusted almost exclusively, to the capacity or potential of numerical calculation – indices, relations, standards. An abstract interpretation that reduces and cancels out study of the physical and figurative materiality of the city and the region, rendering it in the end inconsistent, almost incomprehensible. Like a view almost of deprived of sight.

FROM THE FREEDOM OF CHAOS TO THE FREEDOM OF BEAUTY

An aesthetic programme that develops an 'idea of beauty' appears to be, today, the only possible response. To recover aesthetic thinking no longer as handed down from the historical tradition (for our intents and purposes the tradition that developed from the 19th century on: the knowledge, or more precisely the study of the perception of beauty and of the work of the art), but as a 'consciousness', as a capacity to interpret, to understand, to project reality through sensible forms. It means developing a thinking capable of 'seeing comprehensively', of re-unifying in the figure, or better in an entanglement of figures, the different aspects of the

opp. Beato Angelico, The annunciation 15C St Mark's Convent in Florence

planning ideas: political, economic, technical, poetic. It means erecting a programme of 'figurative coherence' that establishes a great constellation of referential images that can reverberate – as in a process of expansion and concentration – at different levels: from those of the region to those of the community or neighbourhood.

The territory, the countryside, the natural environment and the built environment of the city, come to be interpreted then no longer separately, as facts in themselves, and thus bereft of their complex framework, but rather in their togetherness, in their fickle exchange of values and of relationships, in company with all the body of programmatic expectations.

The study of a 'beauty of form' which could embrace all ideas (defined by Hegel as 'the highest act of reason'[1]) represents the struggle to attain that necessary quality, but pursued in vain (so they declared) by the regulations.

It is the breaking open, the surpassing of linguistic chaos expressed, for example, in architecture. An inevitable chaos, since, for all that, no objective to attain it exists. No aspiration towards representation – except as solitary or individual presence – exists any longer, since in fact, it is impossible for it to be inscribed in a wider horizon of meaning.

This is how the theory of the 'fragment' came to be. A weak strategy that has renounced its involvement and confrontation with a more complex idea of 'planning', and that, therefore, has justified and legitimated at present the 'particular in the absence of a general reflexion'.

The same holds for the theses sustained by 'planning'. These testify to the failure, it would be better to say the abandonment of town planning, compelled to renounce its own abstract strategies in favour of more concrete but limited formal observations.

If a great aesthetic thinking for 'producing beauty' is not reproposed it means giving up any 'authentic project', thus, reducing the horizon of our destiny to the ordinariness of making.

The freedom of languages – which means freedom of ideas, of movement, of choice, and which represents one of the most important values by our social-historical epoch, has produced an enfeebling of quality in general, but above all notions of aesthetic quality, since it has subtracted from the great liberal progressive strategy its vital foundations: the ability to plan.

The absence of 'planning' leads towards chaos, it opens to the disorder of things, to the impossibility of recognising value, to incapacity and the indifference of choice.

1. F. Rella (ed), *Bellezza e Verità*, Feltrinelli, Editrice, Milan, 1990.

The value of freedom, however, is a precious value, irrevocable, but which cannot produce paradoxes for pursuing an imperfect progress: the degradation of the environment, the squalor of the urban edge, the impoverishment of the urban, the chaotic disorientation, the destruction of the countryside.

Even for freedom – if we want it to grow in its value – the definition of limits, of thresholds is necessary, certainly not to repress or quash it, but to 'direct it', to unveil the complexity, leading it away from confusion, so that instead of dispersing and cancelling itself out in the indistinguishable chaos of the swarm of things, it is elevated to produce beauty, value recognised by all.

An idea of beauty that displaces, of course, the classical categories of harmony, symmetry, hierarchy, that abandons completely the absolutism and the rigidity of the styles or univocity of ideologies.

No longer an oppressive or conservative beauty, but rather a beauty that thinks out the becoming, the possible, the plural, difference, that cares for complexity and that contains multiplicity.

A beauty able to restore and elevate to aesthetic dignity what consider contradiction, bond, impediment.

A beauty able to produce a unifying force[2] demonstrating and exalting the tension of difference. A beauty that holds together freedom and quality: a cohesion possible only within dimension and an aesthetic consciousness.

SPLENDOR MUNDI

An aesthetic programme that derives its structure from images, its own projective sense, its own legitimation, in taking root in and entanglement in the other demands: political, economic, social. It itself becomes a normative programme defining the great figurative-formal thresholds capable of restoring to the region, the natural and agricultural landscape, to the city and its parts, to the great structures of communication their own specific beauty, as a representation full of our own well being and our own civility.[3]

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Speaking To and Talking About: Maori architecture

Michael Linzey

Michael Linzey studied engineering at Canterbury University later graduating with a PhD from Melbourne. He is a Senior Lecturer in construction, computer applications at the Department of Architecture, University of Auckland. He is pursuing an investigation into the relationship between myth, metaphor and architecture.

When a New Zealand Maori orator standing to speak on a *marae* addresses the meeting house in the same breath as he also addresses the assembled people – this may be taken as prototypical of a surprising comportment towards architecture within a traditional society. The Maori intuition that the *whare whakairo*, carved house, is a living presence is richer than any mere simile, it is beyond the idea of metaphor or representation in a European-educated sense. The house is not *like* an ancestor, it *is* the ancestor. In European-educated terms this issue may appear peculiar but it is susceptible to phenomenological attention.

The Maori comportment of 'speaking to architecture' is alien to European-educated ways of thinking. Europeans are permitted to speak to one another, but may only talk about architecture. The respective linguistic comportments, 'speaking to' and 'talking about' are distinctly different ways of seeing and understanding architecture.

We set out to contradict the common racialist myth that the architectural comportment of the Maori is more 'primitive', while the European-educated perception of objective profanity is more 'advanced'. It is argued on the contrary that Europeans are excluded by prejudice and a certain linguistic prohibition from a potent world of architectural meaning. But to access some of the nourishing possibilities of the indigenous architecture it is necessary to confront impeding myths within the European-educated outlook – certain philosophical attitudes which prevent us addressing architecture in its imaginative fullness.

PAPER TALK

This paper *talks about* a peculiar aspect of the New Zealand Maori dwelling experience – that Maori people directly address and include the carved house, *whare whakairo* in the rhetoric of tribal occasions and public gatherings, that a work of architecture is a living presence in the hearts of people. In ceremonial greeting for example, when one group of people come to visit another on their traditional land,

opp. Te Tokangunui-a-noho, opened 1874, stands today in the town of Te Kuiti photo: Michael Linzey.

1. J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press; 1984.

an orator will extend greetings to the land or *marae* lying before him; he will greet the house as an ancestral presence standing on the land; he will acknowledge the ever present mythical-spiritual world of Papa and Rangi, earth and sky; only then will he address the people gathered together.

We cannot simply talk about this traditional phenomenon, remarkable as it is, without also acknowledging a certain tensioning and quickening of interest within the European-educated consciousness. The Maori comportment has survived within a predominantly European ambience of New Zealand life. We are not talking here about pre-European Maori. Nothing modern Maori do is isolated from the European majority culture, just as in New Zealand nothing European is isolated from the Maori presence. (Much as some of us might resist the fact, we are a bicultural country.) Europeans however, in the new world as in the old, do not speak to their houses or to architecture. Europeans are permitted to speak to one another, and some Europeans speak to God; but there is a tacit prohibition – it is not extreme to say in Maori terms that it is a *tapu* – Europeans dare not speak to 'mere things' for fear of looking completely ridiculous. (Dr Dolittle was considered eccentric and amusing because he spoke to animals.)

European-educated interest in the Maori comportment of emotion and appreciativeness towards architecture is tensioned by a spirit of lamentation. We lament the loss of meaning in our own European architecture. Some even go so far as to say that architecture is dead. And there is reason to suspect that this absence of meaning, this reduction in living value of modern European architecture stems from a prohibition, which a Maori might describe as a *tapu*, but which derives from the European-educated tradition itself.

While the paper talks about a peculiarly Maori phenomenon, it is also at the same time speaking to an international readership. (I do not in fact know who is the readership of this paper; but it is strange is it not, that in the European-educated world, although it is not acceptable to speak to architecture, yet it is completely appropriate for a mere paper to 'speak to' an invisible and possibly even non-existent audience?) Whatever may be in fact the case, I presume that you are European-educated and that this sense of loss and lamentation has been brought to a certain fashionable pitch for you in the post-modern condition of intellectual and theoretical life. Lyotard[1] for example portrays traditional societies as dominated by 'grand narratives'; traditional mythical and legendary narratives condense descriptive with normative and aesthetic elements, legitimate the social institutions, and serve as models for inclusion of individuals into those institutions. The European-educated tradition on the other hand, in particular the tradition of modern science, purports to be *purely descriptive*, to have cut itself free from ethical, aesthetical and religious connotations. The purely descriptive language games of modern science generally set out to delegitimise traditional narrative forms.

Specifically in relation to architecture, Perez-Goméz[2] traces the slow demise of 'mytho-poetic' dimensions in European architecture, related to the crisis of modern science. So that the principle of functionality is no longer seen as a positive and sufficient attribute of modern architecture but is felt instead in terms of an absence or a lamentable loss, a setting aside of the traditional mytho-poetic dimensions.

The richly carved and decorated elements of Maori architecture make many direct references to traditions, poems, and myths, and must ultimately be comprehended by us in terms of the mytho-poetic dimensions of traditional life. The paper will touch upon some of these but by no means exhaustively. Instead in particular we address Maori architecture in terms of the *comportment* of the orator, in terms of this one peculiar image of an orator standing on the *marae* and speaking to the carved house.

The paper attempts also to turn our observations onto ourselves. As we explore the mytho-poetical foundations of a Maori behaviour, at the same time we contrast these with the European-educated narratives that seem to underpin our *own* architectural behaviours, and in this way to explain our own cultural inhibition or prohibition against speaking to architecture.

HUMAN METAPHOR IN ARCHITECTURE

The *whare whakairo* is often profusely decorated with human figures both realistic and abstract. The house is in a sense made, designed to be spoken to. There is usually a carved head piece, the *koruru*, at the apex of the gable, to which speech is directed. And inside the house along the walls at intervals are carved *poupou* or side-posts, and rafters painted with traditional patterns. The central line of posts supporting the ridge beam, and the ridge beam itself are also carved or painted with human and mythological forms. All this carved timber is no mere ornament added on to the architecture, as it might be interpreted in a European sense. Usually the house itself is named for a specific ancestor and it actually is in its whole construction the *embodiment* of that person; so that the ridge beam is his or her spine, the rafters are the ribs, the interior space is the belly, the outstretched bargeboards, *raparapa*, are the arms with fingers extended in greeting.

Te Tokanganui-a-noho is a *whare whakairo* standing at Te Kuiti in the central North Island. Perhaps the oldest fully carved meeting house in New Zealand today outside of a museum, Te Tokanganui was first built in 1874 although the house has been relocated and partially rebuilt several times in its history. The original architect was Te Kooti Rikirangi, an outstanding military and religious leader of the late nineteenth century, born on the East Coast, who was forced for a time to seek asylum with the Maniapoto people. According to Phillipps[3] the house was

2. A. Perez-Gomez, *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science*, Cambridge Mass: The MIT Press; 1983.
3. W. J. Phillipps, 'The Te Kuiti house', *Art in New Zealand 10: 1*; 1938; pp. 82-9.

presented to Ngati Maniapoto in recognition of the hospitality which they extended to Te Kooti during his enforced sojourn amongst them. The house was originally named Rawaho-o-te-Rangi who was an important tribal ancestor.

On the East Coast of New Zealand there is a story about Rua-te-pupuke who first acquired the art of carving from Tangaroa, the god of the wild ocean. Tangaroa had kidnapped Rua's son, carried him away to his land under the sea, and there transfixed him upon the gable of his house. After a long search Rua came to the house beneath the sea. He recognised his son in the carving and angrily set fire to the house, removing his son and several other carvings from the outside of the house. There were carved figures inside the house as well which had the power to speak, but all of these were destroyed in the blaze. It is said, because Rua only took carvings from the outside of the house, therefore carvings now cannot speak.

This founding narrative of *whakairo* is an insight into what was thought about, for to tell a story about why carvings do not speak seems to at least canvass the possibility that carvings *might* have spoken. And anybody who has had the experience of sleeping a night 'in the belly of the ancestor', surrounded by richly carved *poupou* and other fine works of Maori art will readily acknowledge the power that this possibility presents to the imagination.

In the European architectural tradition also, we 'people' our work metaphorically in a number of ways. Le Corbusier for example, imprinted the stamp of his own personality upon his work. The Maison La Roche in Paris, an early work of Le Corbusier, contains his 'trademarks' – pilotis, ramps, roof gardens. And the controlled and measured spaces, in particular the picture gallery and the main entrance way, speak to us of Le Corbusier. Entering the house today one almost feels his 'ghost' stalking the empty spaces; but this is not exactly what is meant. It is not ghosts or phantoms haunting a place, nor indeed is it any mere egotistical trademarks that mark good architecture in the European tradition. For we do not advocate that architects should impose their private egos on their work as mere contrivance and idiosyncrasy. This is generally read as a weakness in architecture. But it is as if the building itself haunts and dwells and somehow persists in our imagination, so that for example many years later one spontaneously and vividly recalls the shape or detail, or some characteristic ambience, in precisely the same way a much loved or a strongly delineated person will dwell fondly in the imagination and in memory. When architecture 'becomes a person' in this way in the appreciative imagination, we also see the authority of the architect shining through it as a creating and shaping force, like a family resemblance. Such architecture has 'human scale'; it speaks to us at a number of different levels of meaning simultaneously, with some of the same richness as a lively human dialogue.

But European architecture's licence to speak to us is strictly proscribed by certain rules of metaphor. Architecture speaks to us, only metaphorically. (And we may not speak in turn to architecture, either metaphorically or any other way.) Geoffrey Scott describes architecture, particularly that of the Renaissance period, in terms of 'the universal metaphor of the human body.' He writes,

> The tendency to project the image of our functions into concrete forms is the basis, for architecture, of creative design. The tendency to recognize, in concrete forms, the image of those functions is the true basis, in its turn, of critical appreciation.[4]

However there is nothing at all in this very European-educated analysis of architectural humanism that would sanction us to speak to architecture. Scott's project is rigorously proscribed by two typically European-educated barriers or fences – the one that is set up between metaphor and reality, and secondly that between body and mind. For the human functions here spoken of by Scott are strictly confined to the *bodily* functions and architecture is transcription of the *body's* forms into forms of building. Architecture speaks to our 'body memory' through the physical articulation of Line, Space, and Massing.

CAVES AND SHADOWS

We now propose to compare certain mytho-poetic imagery of the Maori with similar or related figures in the tradition of European education, and so perhaps draw closer to comprehending the apparently radical difference in the permitted comportments of Maori and European-educated people towards their respective architectures. This course is in line with that strand of post-modern thinking which redirects attention to the myths, metaphors, the grand narratives upon which all theories and philosophies appear to have been founded. The shaping power of underlying narrative, as primal image, is as much significant for European-educated conditions of thought as it is for Maori.

Indeed this attention to the mytho-poetic underpinning of a culture is by no means exclusively post-modern. Sir George Grey, Governor of New Zealand from 1845, wrote *'... I found that these chiefs, either in their speeches to me or in their letters, frequently quoted in explanation of their views and intentions fragments of ancient poems or proverbs, or made allusions which rested on an ancient system of mythology ...*'[5] He soon perceived that he could neither successfully govern nor hope to effect conciliations without first coming to terms with these myths and narratives, the paradigms of their social existence. Sir George may perhaps not have been quite as ready to acknowledge that similar primal imagery also underpins and informs European-educated views and intentions.

For example our views about education itself are molded by Plato's well known

4. G. Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism*, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1961; p. 213.
5. G. Grey, *Polynesian Mythology*, Christchurch: Whitcoulls Ltd, 1974.

story of the cave. The peculiar affection we have for notions of transcendence, our readiness to adopt two-world views about things as diverse as education, divinity, and metaphysics can be shown to presume upon this simple but evocative tale from the *Republic*, in which ordinary people are depicted lying enchained in a cave, and ordinary phenomena are somehow represented to them as if they were merely shadows projected on a curtain hung within the cave. Education, according to Plato, draws people up out of this cave into the light of the sun. The sun, transcending the shadowy world of transitory and expedient appearances, symbolises the Form of the good; it is also *logos*, the second person of the Christian Trinity, also reason, rationality, etc. etc.

Plato forced onto European education a predilection for a radically *other* world, a two-world image of the cave wherein all was shadows and illusions, and the educated world animated by light and form; in so doing he set up a massive disturbance within the course of European philosophy.[6]

In New Zealand there is another cave-narrative altogether, which presents us with an opposite image of the place and aspirations of man. It is the story of Maui, the trickster, the thief of fire, the inventor of rope. It is, among other things, the story of how that invaluable commodity, rope was first discovered. Maui is presented as being already outside of the cave, already in the world of light, and instead it is the sun that is ensconced in a cave. Maui travelled with his brothers to the mouth of a cave on the Eastern edge of the world out of which the sun would shortly set forth to take its daily course across the sky. The story goes that the sun had been misbehaving, travelling far too quickly across the sky, and Maui set about to teach the sun a lesson. But first he had to show his brothers how to make rope. They learned the mode of plaiting flax fibre into stout square shaped ropes, *tuamaka*, and the manner of plaiting flat ropes, *paharahara*, and of spinning round ropes.[7] With these they snared the sun and held it down and beat it severely, so that the sun itself was subjugated to the will of man.

It is interesting to compare these myths from another culture. We have noted that European-educated people naturally believe that we may only speak to other transcendent entities; to other souls, and to God. It offends our common sense to speak to architecture because architecture is not a sun-like thing. At different times in European history it would have been considered 'unreasonable', 'irrational', 'unenlightened', and also 'unchristian' to speak to an inanimate thing. The prohibition may be traced to the mythology of sun-worship, the myth of transcendence, the primal image of Plato's cave. In the New Zealand culture, whose grand narratives are altogether other myths, there is not this same prohibition in force against speaking to inanimate things.

The Maori focus on the primal image of Maui's invention of rope, and his clever use

6. *'Presence disappearing in its own radiance, the hidden source of light, of truth, and of meaning, the erasure of the visage of Being – such must be the insistent return of that which subjects metaphysics to metaphor. . . . The sensory sun, which rises in the East, becomes interiorized, in the evening of its journey, in the eye and the heart of the Westerner. He summarizes, assumes, and achieves the essence of man, 'illuminated by the true light' '* J. Derrida, 'White mythology' in *Margins of Philosophy* translated by A. Bass, Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1982; p. 268.
7. Grey, op. cit.

opp. An interior view of part of the side wall of the Te Tokangunui-a-noho shows carved posts, poupou alternating with panels of woven tukutuku. The second poupou from the right shows the mytho-poetic figure Maui holding two ropes, with one he has snared a Europeanised depiction of the sun god, Te Ra. The style of the carving painting and weaving combines pre-European forms and Ringatu(Christian) symbolism in a way that is characteristic of Te Huringa(the Turnig, or early European Contact period). photo: Anthropology Department, University of Auckland.

of rope, disturbs the traditional European-educated tendency to naturally believe, or somehow to accept the notion without really believing, in discrete categories of existence, even to the extent of forcing a chasm of unknowing between forms and appearances; the Maori narrative attends instead to the reality of tension between categories. The Maori image attends to the weave and structure of rope itself.

Maui once tricked his brothers to take him fishing. With a hook made from an ancestor's jaw-bone, and with a strong fishing line made of course from rope of his own invention, Maui managed to snare the door-sill of the house of Tonga-nui. He pulled upon his line and fished up the whole North Island of New Zealand, which is known to this day, poetically, as Te Ika a Maui, Maui's fish.

It can be difficult for us to appreciate how powerful this primal image of Maui's rope[8] may have been in neolithic everyday life. In the days before there were reliable metals there could be no tension, only compression, only earth bound structures in the Maori world, except for the tensile, fibrous kinds of things like ropes, woven mats, cloaks, fishing nets, eel traps, and crayfish pots. The houses themselves in pre-European times derived structural integrity from ropes called *tua whenua* slung across the back of each portal frame formed by pairs of *poupou* and *heke* (posts and rafters), and tensioned with large wooden levers against the massive *tahuhu*, ridge-beam. *'The creaking of timbers was heard under the strain.'*[9] This is why the *tahuhu* and *pou tahuhu* are required to be such massively large members in Maori house construction, in order to sustain the tension forces induced by the *tua whenua*. In the European colonial tradition of light timber frame construction and in the Chicago balloon frame, the ridge board carries no constructional load whatsoever and is there only in order to form the line of the roof. Structural integrity is achieved with steel nails instead of rope. It is instructive here to recall how highly valued were metal nails as trade items in the first European contacts.

In the beginning of European imperial history, Alexander the Great announced his colonial intentions in a way that appears bizarre today, but which may have been more highly significant in the context of his own time, when he took up his bronze sword and cut the *gordios* knot. We note that Alexander was educated in the spirit of Platonic enlightenment by Aristotle himself.

In New Zealand, European-educated missionaries were not slow to class the Maori as 'benighted savages'. The New Zealand mythos seems from our European point of view almost to have gone out of its way to *devalue* enlightenment. Maui and his brothers subjugated the sun when it misbehaved, travelling too quickly across the sky. And the New Zealand version of the creation myth, when earth and sky were separated, differs subtly from most places in Eastern Polynesia. In most of the island groups the primal father is called Atea, Expanse of Light, but here he is Rangi, which simply and matter of factly means Sky.

8. The Maori word for rope, *'kaha'*, also means: strength; persistence; the line of hills and the boundary line of land; umbilical cord; line of ancestry; and various other meanings which have to do with divination. See H. W. Williams, *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*, 7th Ed., Wellington: New Zealand Government Printer, 1985.
9. Makereti, *The Oldtime Maori*, London: Victor Golancz Ltd, 1938.

We may also note that the Polynesian word, *mana*, which means the power or virtue that a person acquires in the social weave and tension of the family and kin group, does not translate exactly as 'charisma' or 'aura' in precisely the same way that a rope does not translate as an instrument of transcendence. The unique meaning of this Polynesian word, *mana*, is reflected in the considerable currency it has already achieved in European languages, certainly within New Zealand.

HERMENEUTICS OF DIALOGUE

The philosophical project to deconstruct Plato's 'two-world' image of education, to debunk the cave metaphor was already begun by Aristotle[10], and it has been well in train since Galileo, in the whole corpus of modern science. Hermeneutics of dialogue directs attention in this regard to the constituting power of language and thought, and in particular raises the issue of the constitutional difference between the linguistic comportments, speaking to and talking about. We proceed by the Husserlian method of *epoche*. We temporarily suspend whatever metaphysical presuppositions we might hold about the animacy or inanimacy, the transcendence or otherwise of the 'other', and attention is directed instead to the linguistic structure of dialogue itself, the 'mode of address', the comportment by which the other is confronted. Martin Buber's[11] radical observation sets the stage here, that if one deliberately sets out to talk about the other, then the other naturally takes on attributes of 'It-ness'. But when one sets out to speak to the other then the 'You-ness' of the other is naturally disclosed. The comportment, the way of seeing, addressing and understanding things, is also the way things are constituted. These alternative comportments, speaking to and talking about, are not an irrevocable dichotomy, not a new ontological chasm in the place of the old appearance-reality, light-shadow split. The difference between speaking to and talking about is not a radical difference in the constitution of the vocalising subject; nor is it a property inherent in the predicated object. It is a difference precisely and only in my comportment, a property not of me or of you or it, but precisely of the linguistic realm *between* us. They are different modes of address, poles of possible and actual meaning. Buber calls them 'basic words.'

Buber's basic words I-It and I-You are linguistic comportments. But language cannot be divorced from thought and imagination. For in terms of the surface grammar of language alone, 'you' and 'it' are both merely pronouns, and they are equal in valence. But to talk about something is to *see and comprehend* it as an it, as a mere thing. To speak to something is to *see and comprehend* a person, or something personified. The constituting meaning of the pronouns, and in particular the significant difference in meaning that there is between them, only appears after the pronouns are understood and experienced, when consciousness fleshes out the potent linguistic forms in active intuition.

10. *'In opposition to the privileged ontological status that Plato accords to the idea, Aristotle emphatically asserts that the primary reality is the particular individual . . . but even so he remains within the framework of Plato's orientation towards the* logoi." H.-G. Gadamer, *The Idea of the Good in Platonic – Aristotelian Philosophy*, translated by P. C. Smith, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1986.
11. M. Buber, *I and Thou*, translated by W. Kaufmann, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1970.

12. H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd Ed., translated by G. Barden and J. Cummings, New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1975; pp. xxiii and 321-2.
13. M. Theunissen, *The Other* translated by C. Macann, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1984; p. 275.

One cannot experience the full weight of this comportment of speaking to unless one is also prepared to *listen to* the other, and to admit that something standing over against one demands to be recognised, to let oneself be told something by it.[12] Gadamer describes the undercutting of the full value of speaking to exhibited by speaking *down* to or *up* to someone. He emphasises that speaking to is a comportment of equality. The comportment of speaking to is not fully achieved when the other is treated as a means to a selfish end, as a tool that can be known and used; or when the dialectic of the relationship is used to 'reflect oneself out', as for example when one claims to understand the other better than he understands himself. The other then loses the immediacy with which it would otherwise make its claim. Without this immediacy and equality, unless one is prepared also to listen, there cannot be a fully human relationship.

Theunissen[13] identifies three formal features by which the comportment of talking about may be contrasted with speaking to. Spatially, talking about is 'perspectivally ordered.' I is the midpoint of a constituted world, 'it', the 'other', is the sphere of having, centred on the subject. But speaking to is not centred spatially on the I, nor on the You, but it is symmetrical and equal. A conversation is carried out precisely in the realm between people, in a dimension that is equally accessible to them both. Secondly, in social terms, talking about *'secures for the human being the mastery of his essence.'* The other is determined; I determine. It is a product; I am the producer. It is the slave; I am the master. But speaking to by contrast, is a relation of mutuality. There is no connotation of superordinacy and subordinacy. And a third distinction that Theunissen identifies is that to talk about something is to ensnare it in a 'world project.' It is mediated by a horizontal space with which I surround objects in their objectification, a *'... conceptuality that fixes beings with a determinate sense and orders them into the system of unified signs.'* But the comportment of speaking to is not constrained by this semiotic model, because although the I is separated from the other, they are not separated *'through the barrier of the meaning-instituted project.'* You are not in general the signified term in speaking to.

This last also reflects a difference in the way that we can denominate the third person pronoun, compared to the second person pronoun. 'It' or 'he' or 'she' must of necessity stand in the place of the name of something; but 'you' can remain unnamed in this precise sense. For me to say, 'I love her', is to talk about someone. But who precisely is being talked about? We immediately demand to know. Who do I love? Name her! The sentence, 'I love her', as it stands is almost meaningless without the name. The project is blatantly incomplete. But if instead I say, 'I love you', then your name becomes almost superfluous to the meaning of the sentence. To use the name in speaking to serves only to make the sentiment slightly more formal. But *not* to use the name in talking about, to refuse to nominate what is being talked about, is deliberately to mystify a situation.

When I am talking about something, the name of that thing has to be readily and explicitly available to my consciousness. It is the *that-ness* of reference, by which representation is achieved. I cannot honestly and legitimately talk about something but I must be immediately prepared to name it. But when I speak to someone, their name is submerged, interiorised, only tacitly beheld. Regardless even whether I know what your name is or not, I am hardly ever forced to use this knowledge in speaking to you directly. Consequently, namelessness is no impediment in the comportment of speaking to as it is in talking about.

There are many kinds of thing, strange things, new things, unborn things, beautiful things, and numinous things, that we experience difficulty in talking about because to talk about them requires us to name them, to fix them in the system of unified signs, demands that we know their name; and in attempting to name them it is as if their very meaning dissolves or shifts awkwardly. These are situations it may be wrong to talk about, for to do so requires us either to *pretend* to know the name or to *mis*name something that may be intrinsically unnameable. It is also highly inappropriate to blandly ignore these things, to turn one's back on them. A more appropriate and respectful comportment to take towards nameless things is to address them directly, to draw them into imaginative dialogue, to find out who they are by speaking to them. Because speaking to is the one mode of address that does not demand an explicit name.

Speaking to, using the second person pronoun rather than the third, enables us to address a subject directly, even although it may be nameless, even if, by its nature it is unnameable. Speaking to is a linguistic structure that is appropriate for an encounter with the 'Living Presence' for precisely this reason that the gods are also often unnameable. This is not to say that the other has to be nameless in order to be spoken to, but that speaking to may demand and obtain the appropriate degree of respect and effective openness. The Maori meeting house has the name of a tribal ancestor, and in ceremonial and other situations the house may indeed be addressed by name. These houses are held in the deepest respect, veneration, affection, but they are not worshipped as God or as gods. When Maori people speak to their house, the house itself takes on a corresponding numinous quality – the quality of the living presence of the ancestor – but it is not the awful unnameable numinous quality of the Living Presence of God.

Of course a Maori also is free to talk about the meeting house. The peculiarly Maori comportment of speaking to architecture, (which we are suggesting is only peculiar in this respect that it is not European-educated, not prohibited by the effaced mythology of sun-worship,) does not preclude the Maori from also and in other circumstances, talking about architecture. (Although the quality of respect, and the general tone of voice is different in talking about a *whare whakairo* compared to

talking about European buildings – a Maori elder at a *marae* work committee meeting might say that the meeting house needs a new coat of paint on the roof, or perhaps that 'he would like' to be repainted.)

... *this often-referred-to 'symbolism'* [of the meeting-house] *is quite literal'*, writes Austin,[14] *'but Maori attempts to explain 'in* pakeha *terms' their feeling for the* marae ... *come out as either obscure expressions such as 'a symbol of* Maoritanga [Maoriness]*', or 'being a Maori', 'where I meet my ancestors', or apparent trivialities such as 'the food', 'the people', 'sleeping alongside my kin', and so on.'* But this apparent incompetence to talk about what is the central dimension of their own architecture is by no means peculiar to the Maori; it is not a cultural deficiency somehow concomitant with their demonstrated competence to speak to architecture. For European-educated people prove to be equally incompetent in this respect. The main cultural difference seems to be that European-educated people are also incompetent to speak to architecture.

Speaking to is a natural and a sensitive comportment with which we may address certain aspects of the human environment. It is a comportment that Maori use in everyday life in contemporary New Zealand to show respect for their architecture. But in the European-educated view it still does appear to be mighty peculiar to speak directly to a building which we understand to be inanimate and unenlightened. We have suggested a possible explanation why this may be the case: that Europeans are inhibited in their comportment by a kind of intellectual prohibition which stems from a founding myth of European education itself. It may or may not prove to be possible or even desirable for us to deconstruct this linguistic impediment that we have, to lift the *tapu*, thus perhaps to enhance the European-educated comportment towards European architecture. But in contemporary New Zealand society such a programme of philosophical deconstruction would not be merely an academic exercise or a contribution to architecture in theory alone. It might also prove to be a positive and necessary step towards forming a healthy pluralistic society.

14. M. R. Austin, 'A description of the Maori *marae*', in A. Rapoport, ed., *The Mutual Interaction of People and their Built Environment*, The Hague: Mouton, 1976; pp. 229-241.

Silence, Solitude, Suffering, and the Invention of New Zealand (A fictitious story)

Francis Pound

The very foundations of the house were built on solitude, a soil lacking the humus of history.

James Courage, *The Call Home*, 1956)

Nothing said of Aglaura is true, and yet these accounts create a solid and compact image of a city, whereas the haphazard opinions which might be inferred from those living there have less substance. This is the result: the city they speak of has much of what is needed to exist, whereas the city that exists on its site exists less.

(Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*)

... the reader can hardly conceive my Astonishment, to behold an Island in the Air, inhabited by Men, who were able (as it should seem) to raise, or sink, or put it into a progressive Motion, as they pleased.

(Swift, *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World by Lemuel Gulliver*, epigraph, Allen Curnow, Introduction to *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*, 1960)

invent v.t. Create by thought, originate (new mode, instrument, etc); concoct (false story etc); so inventOR n. (Especially in Law, patentee of invention) [ME, = discover, f. L IN (venire vent – come) find, contrive]

invention n. Inventing; thing invented, contrivance, especially one for which patent is granted; fictitious story; (Mus.) short piece developing simple idea; inventiveness; Invention of the Cross, (festival on 3 May commemorating) reputed finding of the Cross by Helena mother of Constantine, A.D. 326 [ME, f. L inventio (as prec.)]

(*Concise Oxford Dictionary*)

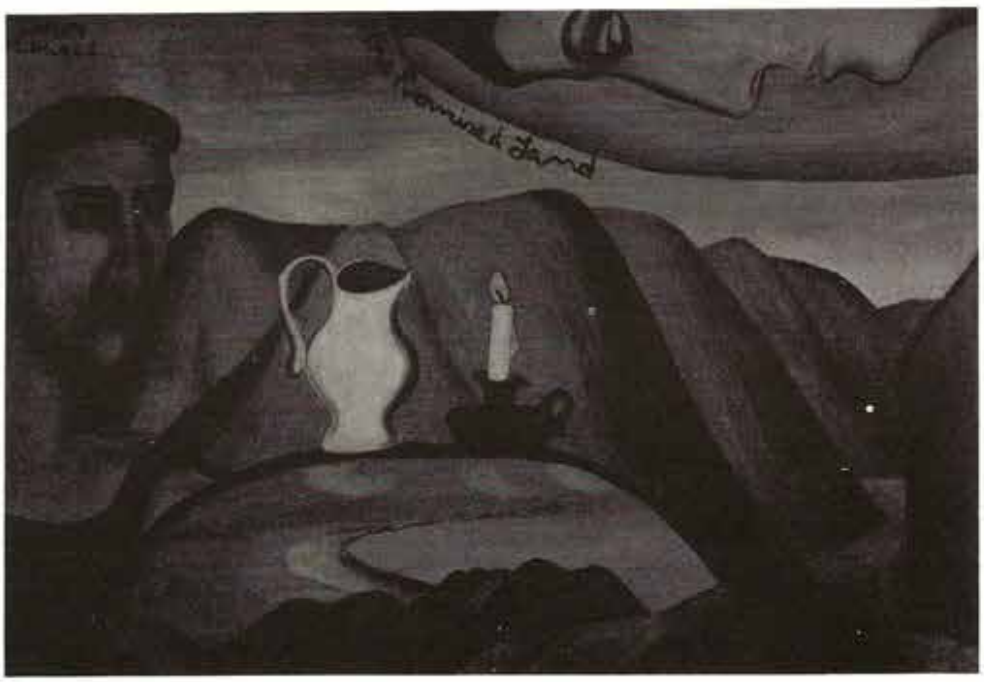
INVENTION – WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The Invention of New Zealand. An ambitious title, seemingly. Or an ambitious task. The *invention* of New Zealand. A task spoken before me, in two significant moments, by two – perhaps *the* two – major figures in Nationalist New Zealand culture: once in a moment of heroic anticipation, once in a moment of gratified retrospection. By Allen Curnow, poet, anthologist, writer. By Colin McCahon, painter, cataloguer, writer.[1]

The poet Allen Curnow notably said – in the *First Yearbook of the Arts in New Zealand*, 1945 – that 'strictly speaking New Zealand does not exist yet, though some

Francis Pound, born 1948, graduated Master of Fine Arts, University of Auckland. He practices as an art writer-curator and has a special interest in New Zealand culture. Pound has written a number of papers in different critical journals and exhibition catalogues. His first books was Frames on the Land *(Collins, 1983). He is currently working on his Doctorate on the painter Richard Killeen.*

1. I am uncertain, then, whether I have invented or discovered my title – and uncertain of my entitlement to it. 'There is always a sentence that has already been sealed somewhere waiting for you where you think you are opening up some virgin territory.' I must acknowledge Roger Horrocks therefore, who, in reference to the same Curnow 'invention' sentence I use, titled a groundbreaking article 'The Invention of New Zealand'. (*And 1*, 1983, pp. 9-30). The same title was given, too, so Dr. Peter Simpson kindly informs me, to a lecture and seminar series organised by him for the University of Canterbury in 1977: 'The Invention of



possible New Zealand's glimmer in some poems and in some canvases. It remains to be created – should I say *invented* – by writers, musicians, artists, architects . . .'[2] And the painter Colin McCahon remarked, in 1966, in his *Landfall* essay, 'Beginnings', that his work's largest endeavour had been to convey to New Zealanders a vision of something . . .' belonging to the land and not yet to its people. Not yet understood or communicated, not even really yet *invented*'.[3] (My italics, as they say.)

But what does it mean – what *can* it mean – when 20th century artists say they want to invent New Zealand, or when it is claimed of them that they have done so? First, I must stress an old meaning of 'invent', which may still shade such recent uses of the word – the old usage in which 'invention' means 'discovery'. As, for instance, in the title of Piero della Francesca's fresco, today called 'The *Discovery* and Proof of the True Cross', but called in the older books on the artist, 'The *Invention* and Proof of the True Cross'. If to invent is to create a new thing, and, contradictorily, to discover is to find – to dis-cover or uncover what already was there – then, I will have to say, both contradictory senses of 'invent' subsist, whenever the idea of the 'invention of New Zealand' is used. And so I must play here, visibly, on the double sense of this word. My whole text, perhaps, is but a play – a kind of hilarious game – on the word 'invention', and especially on two of its meanings: the old meaning, which was to discover, to find something that was already there before you; and the current meaning, which is to create something new, or even to concoct it, to make up a fictitious story. My text, like the story it recounts, is but a short piece, developing a simple idea.

In Piero della Francesca's fresco of the *Discovery* or the *Invention of the True Cross*, a cross is represented as dug up by St Helena from its centuries old hiding place in the earth, and demonstratively pointed at by a choreic figure, and miraculously proved and named as the True Cross – the cross upon which Christ had died. Which leads me to this question. Do you *discover* or do you *invent* the True Cross – or the True New Zealand; do you *contrive*, or even *concoct* it, in the act of digging it up from where it had in some sense always existed, buried in distance and time, hidden for centuries from you? Do you discover, or do you invent the True Cross or the True New Zealand in (re)naming it, in pointing to it, in 'proving' it, in miraculously or otherwise authenticating it?

You do both, undecidably, I will say – both and at once.

THE INVENTION OF NEW ZEALAND

This undecidability of the word 'invent' is of a crucial importance here, since 'the invention of New Zealand' is such a stock theme of that self-proclaimedly New Zealand culture which begins in the 1930s. The land seen through the eyes of this

New Zealand: Founding a National Identity'. Dr Simpson, having heard of my forthcoming book, *The Invention of New Zealand*, has sent me the pamphlet which accompanied the Canterbury 'Invention' series. That pamphlet as it turns out, quotes the same McCahon 'invention' sentence I might have thought *I* had discovered . . . I am encouraged by these predecessors to think that I am, after all, onto *something*. The present article is an early draft for a chapter of my – hopefully soon – forthcoming *The Invention of New Zealand: a Nationalist Mythology of Landscape c.1930-c.1970*.

2. Allen Curnow, in Allen Curnow and Ngaio Marsh, 'A Dialogue by Way of Introduction', *First Yearbook of the Arts in New Zealand*, Wellington: H.H. Tombs, 1945; p. 2
3. Colin McCahon, 'Beginnings', *Landfall* 80, Vol. 20, no. 4, December 1966; p. 364; reprinted in *Beginnings: New Zealand Writers Tell How They Began Writing*, introduction and notes by Robin Dudding, Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1980; pp. 101-5.

Colin McCahon, The promised land, 1948;
oil on canvas 920 x 1370 mm
Auckland City Council Art Gallery collection, presented by the McCahon family, 1988.

4. Robin Hyde, 'The Singers of Loneliness', *Tien Hsia Monthly*, Vol. 7, August 1938; pp. 9-23.

figure of speech seems but an emptiness to its European observer, an absence, a silence, a solitude, a perpetual retreat, a formlessness empty of meaning and definition. What is required then, and longed for, is the discovery or the invention of a New Zealand whose form and whose meaning might fill that unbearable emptiness, the ache of its yawning space.

The land's speechlessness impels the painter, the poet, to speak, even if only of that very speechlessness: the New Zealand artist is that creature who finds and founds now a place, a place to speak, and a speech for her or himself, who has to run out, out to us, to tell us of the land's silence. There is a long babble of silence, from the 1930s to the 1970s, whether in agony, wishing for speech, or in relief, saved from the too multitudinous voices of the city; in pleasure, then, or in pain, speaking, again and again, of silence. Silence, like a stone made lustrous by repetition, polished by its endless turning and returning in the copious pockets of the Nationalist mouth, until it seems an indisputable, shining, and adamantine, reality.

And so:

A New Zealand is *manufactured* in desire's economy – in a desire conceived of as a lack, absence, silence, an agonising negativity – it is no *fun* wanting a real New Zealand culture; but also in a desire staged in words, sounds, colours, shapes: a *productive* desire. It is a desire that colours and carves, into its inchoate void, a fantasy of that thing which it lacks: so, desire as *dream-work*.

Finally, this economy's desire will be *spent* – spilled in thousands of paintings, millions of words, in which New Zealand might seem present at last, and *made*. There, innumerably, indisputably, in the paint as well as in the words, will be the singing of solitude and silence. Painters too, as in Robin Hyde's saying, will be 'The Singers of Loneliness'.[4] They too will complain, with R. K. Mason, in his 'Song of Allegiance', that there are 'none to hear'.

> God, it is all dark. The heart beat but there is no answering hark of a hearer and no one to speak.

So these words, from *Van Gogh: Poems by John Caselberg*, will be released by McCahon, to fly like a flock of black crows through the dark sky and gold of his landscape, *John in Canterbury*. *John in Canterbury*, recalling the stock subject in European art, *John in Patmos*, the subject painted by innumerable European painters, over a thousand or more years, where the evangelist endures his bitter island exile, and revenges himself, in the lurid ecstasy of his revelations, against the unhearing and the uncomprehending. *John in Canterbury*, a landscape whose composition and colour is based on that of van Gogh's last landscape before suicide, the *Cornfield with Crows*. The bullet, as Artaud put it with rhetorical truth, already in his belly as

he paints. *John in Canterbury*, where the exile is such that not even the poet's figure is to be seen, where there is nothing but the solitary despair of his figures of speech, a kind of bleak trace flying over a bleakly beautiful land.

The poet John is made by the inscribed title to resemble the prophet John whose name he bears. His rhetoric therefore is transcendent, of the heavens, where fittingly we see it inscribed. Furthermore, his words cry out into no human assembly (there are as yet none in New Zealand for true painting), but into Nature itself. It is a cry which might come, in the end, to the city, but which is not of it, a message akin to the harsh cries of the birds, or the howl of the wind in that reverberant plain. The originary text of a co-founder of the discovered country is made, as so often in these inaugural rites, to seem as if inscribed by the wilderness itself, far from the boundaries of the city, of Culture.[5]

McCahon does not forget Caselberg's howl. He had first inscribed it in 1957, on his lithographed versions of *Van Gogh: Poems by John Caselberg*. He will inscribe it yet again on a paper scroll of 1969. And this on another:

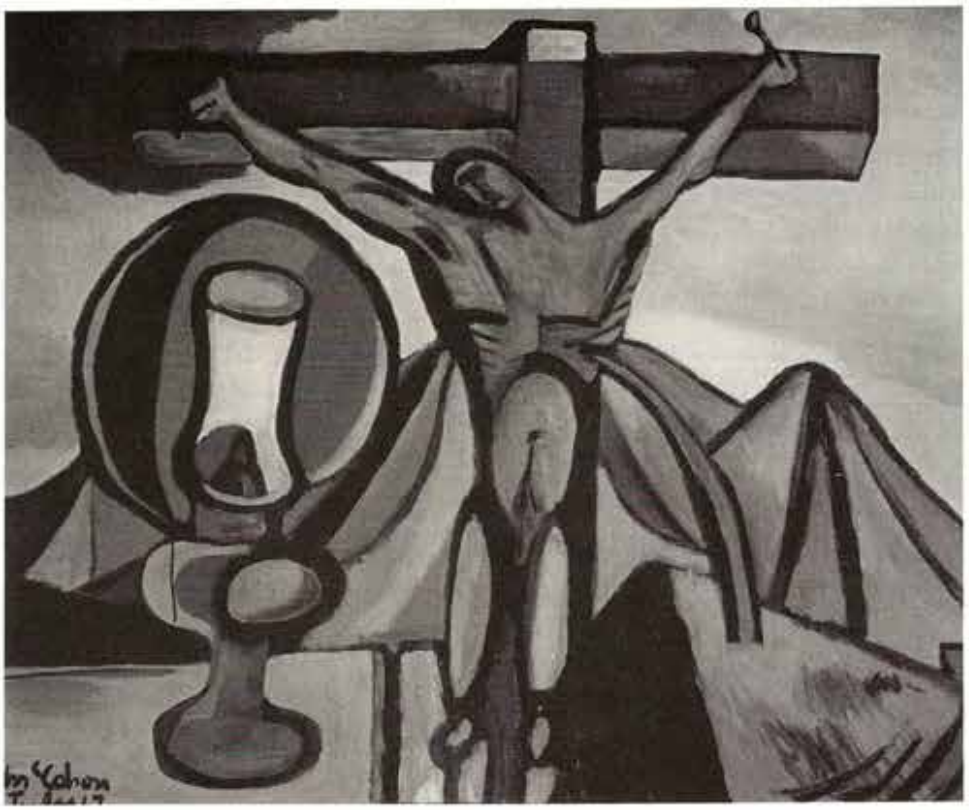
> My heart has
> expected
> reproach and
> misery, and
> I looked for one
> that would grieve
> together with me
> and
> I
> found
> none.

So the invention of New Zealand was conceived as a task of solitude and suffering. Van Gogh like, evangelistic, Christlike, or prophetic. And so, as suffering, it was ritually enacted.

> Poets, painters, musicians, scientists will suffer agonies in a country serving under gross masters. But out of their sufferings the wheat lands, the cattle country and the sheep country may be born again. At present, however, an artist can only suffer, and record his sufferings; hoping to make others suffer with him in the necessary pains of first self-knowledge.
>
> (Allen Curnow, Prose note to 'Poem XII', *Not in Narrow Seas*, 1939)

> Where van Gogh struck his seed
> Flat France twirled with pain:
> To these Pacific boulders
> There will come men
> Put to such planting
> . . .
> With their seed of sorrow:

5. Significantly, at his 1972 Auckland City Art Gallery survey show, McCahon hung *John in Canterbury* (1959) as the cross bar of a Tau or T shaped cross whose upright was *You are Witnesses* (1959) – a painting whose subject was belief in the resurrection of Christ. So, by means of an assemblage unthought of at the time its two components were painted, the Moses-like – or Christ-like – and redemptive nature of Caselberg's suffering was further marked. There is a companion painting to *John in Canterbury, Toss in Greymouth*, where Woollaston, like Caselberg, bears witness in the wilderness. He too labours under the sign of the Tau cross. The Tau cross is the cross of Moses, who prophesises in the wilderness, and who guides us, the chosen people, towards the Promised Land. Woollaston is here acknowledged as a brother and companion in tribulation to such as Caselberg and McCahon. McCahon's sending this painting to his friend Woollaston, and *John in Canterbury* to his friend Caselberg, might be likened to John's epistles to the seven churches in Asia. Woollaston too bears witness to the True New Zealand. Like the Ephesians, he has borne much, has patience, has laboured, and has not fainted. McCahon's *Toss in Greymouth* proclaims to Woollaston, like John to the Ephesians in the visions of John the Divine: I know thy works and tribulations and poverty (but thou art rich) '. . . I know thy works, and where thou dwellest'.



The vertical ice, the dry
Shriek of the kea.
A howl of misery like
The cornfields of Auvers.

(Allen Curnow, 'Poem XII', *Not in Narrow Seas*, 1939)

It is significant that van Gogh – the very archetype of the suffering artist, the man suicided by society, as Artaud has said – should so often be proffered as a role model for the new New Zealand artist. He was chosen, as we have seen, by Curnow and Caselberg. And had not A.R.D. Fairburn, faced by New Zealand's 'natural bleakness', found that it 'does seem to need the burning honesty of a van Gogh to extract what aesthetic truth may lie in it'?[6] McCahon, with his 'howl of misery like/The Cornfields of Auvers' is doubtless among those prophesied ones, who 'will come with their seed of sorrow', that 'the wheat lands, the cattle country and the sheep country may be born again'.

Such an invented New Zealand, formed in the act of crying out a solitude and silence, is a supplement to the geographical, physical New Zealand, which all of us might think that we know – a *supplement* in the double-meaninged sense that Jacques Derrida grants to the word. 'The supplement adds itself', says Derrida, 'it is a surplus, a plenitude enriching another plenitude, the *fullest measure* of presence'.[7] In this sense, Nationalist New Zealand painting will offer a supplement, an addition to, and proof of, the real and already plentifully present and self-sufficient New Zealand's truth.

But: the supplement also 'adds only to replace. It intervenes or insinuates itself *in-the-place-of*; if it fills, it is as if one fills a void'.[8] In this sense, Nationalist New Zealand painting, and its invented New Zealand, is not simply added as a description, and proof, of the real New Zealand, as a demonstrative gesture pointing towards it: it compensates for its unbearable absence; it reveals that there is as yet no real New Zealand: it uncovers and points to its lack; it fills up the gap . . .

Or, to put it more cruelly, it covers over and hides that which it would point . . .

PRODUCT OF A COLONIAL PAST . . .

Absence, blankness, solitude, silence. Such was the self proclaimed origin of the quest of the 1930s, 40s, 50s, and 60s to discover, or to invent, the True New Zealand. But that quest is also the product of a somewhat longer history, of the political and ideological facts of a colonial past . . .

The concept of 'the invention of New Zealand' has its (mostly unconscious) origin in the 19th century colonisation of the country. In the 17th and in the 18th century,

6. A.R.D. Fairburn, 'Some Aspects of New Zealand Art and Letters', *Art in New Zealand*, Vol. VI, no. 24, June 1945; p. 215.
7. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, translated by Gayatri Spivak, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974; p. 144-5.
8. Jacques Derrida, ibid, p. 145.

Colin McCahon, Crucifixion (with Lamp), 1947; oil on board 760 x 912 mm Hocken Library, Charles Brasch bequest, 1963.

Europeans might be said quite literally to 'discover' the country – if, that is, the previous Maori discovery be discounted. (It was.) By the 19th century, the Europeans were, in a sense, literally and physically 'inventing' a New Zealand by repeating an England – making a country over in their own (English) image, that field and house might replace forest and whare; and they were erasing the Maori names of places and things, and replacing them with their own. Such 19th century colonising acts make it conspicuously clear that the act of naming, of inventing, of discovering, of proving and authenticating the New Zealand you make, is what in the 20th century it will continue to be – an act of *patenting* power and privilege.

For what is a patent, and what does a patent do? It confers a right, a title, especially a sole right for a period to make, to use, or to sell some invention – the invention here being New Zealand: it is the grant of an exclusive privilege. So Europeans patented New Zealand for themselves. Or, more figuratively, a patent is a sign that one is entitled to something, to possess some elusive quality – a patent of truth to New Zealand, say. For the 20th century New Zealand painter, then, who claims a patent on truth to New Zealand, the art historian, the critic, or the curator, becomes a *patent-agent* – an attorney specialising in the procurement of patents; and the successful painter becomes *patentee*, the holder of the patent of truth to New Zealand, and the person for the time being entitled to its benefits.

Such a political, economic and aesthetic patenting of New Zealand began in the 19th century. And the 19th century 'invention' of New Zealand, much like the 20th century 'invention', is projected into a land perceived as silent and empty, as a blank space which may be filled only by invention or by repetition. Paul Shepard's searches through the writings of early travellers and settlers in New Zealand have shown it: a profound sense of solitude repeatedly filled the 19th century European observer of New Zealand, especially when he or she was gazing from a high place over an unpeopled vista.[9] The spectator, if male, would wish for his wife to be with him, or any European, anyone other than 'savages'. In such utter solitude, these spectators might fancy themselves 'the only inhabitants of the world' – a stock device for inducing the Sublime emotion.

In the 19th century, as I showed in that slim, pink book, *Frames on the Land*, European painters and spectators of landscape framed the land with a set of European artistic conventions, genres (the Sublime, the Picturesque, the Topographical, the Ideal, the Impressionist)[10]. So, as I said, they symbolically annexed, colonised, and made European New Zealand. So, as now I might say, they invented a country – two nebulous isles.

It has been objected that my description of those Europeans seeing their set of conventions as the land insufficiently allows for their experiencing the shock of the new . . . Well. Let me make a conciliatory gesture. (The kind, perhaps, that a Catholic

9. Paul Shepard, *English Reactions to the New Zealand Landscape Before 1850*, Pacific Viewpoint Monograph no. 4, Wellington: Victoria University, 1969. For a further analysis of 19th century claims of New Zealand's solitude and silence, see my *Frames on the Land: Early Landscape Painting in New Zealand*, Auckland: Collins, 1983, particularly the sections 'The Sublime', 'Solitude and Silence', and 'The Sublime painted', pp. 19-21; and the section on William Fox, pp 42-46.
10. Francis Pound, *Frames on the Land*, ibid.

thief might make, in genuflecting to the altar he is about to rifle.) There was indeed, let's admit, a new land, new for them, suddenly revealed to 19th century Europeans: a physical entity which doubtless struck them, at times, in terms of its strangeness, its 'otherness'. But into that otherness, as it came through such cracks as there might be between the frames they applied to the land, those Europeans projected a silence and an emptiness which they wished quickly to fill with their own speech.

If in the 19th century, just as in the 20th, there was an endless sense of silence in the land (a litany of silence in travellers' reports: 'a dull, monotonous silence', 'the absence of sound', 'silence herself'), it was a silence perceived in terms of what I called in *Frames* 'the paradox of noisy silence'.[11] This paradox: inevitably in 19th century travellers' reports on New Zealand, as Shepard has shown, the claim of a complete and melancholy silence is qualified by an 'except for' – the prefatory phrase to a list of sounds uttered in English, as if to fill that unknown with a known tongue, to silence that unbearable silence.

The nineteenth-century solitude and silence was like the twentieth-century solitude and silence in that it was the invariable occasion of European utterance, of a certain garrulousness, of the desire to paint and to write about it for others, and so return it to communality.

The material, 19th century colonisation lies behind what Allen Curnow calls the 'new discovery' of New Zealand, and behind what his monographer Leigh Davis has described as the '*new* colonisation' – the 20th century 'imaginative colonisation of New Zealand', the *re*-colonisation, or '*authentic* colonisation', which does at last, according to its own self-proclamation, endeavour to grasp the real New Zealand, and root itself firmly there.[12] Or which proclaims its first task as to *invent* the real New Zealand, that it might get rooted in it.[13] *Rooted* should also be understood, here in its New Zealand vernacular, sexual sense ... ('man must lie with the hills like a lover').

This new colonisation may occasionally even, as does in Curnow's case, pose itself *consciously* against that earlier, too material colonisation. It seeks, in any case, a more purely *spiritual* conquest. It is, as Curnow says, a battle for 'the land which [the New Zealander's] body inhabits but his spirit has not won'.

> The 19th century colonists achieved their migration bodily, but not in spirit. It was only within severely practical limits that they could regard New Zealand as a goal rationally proposed and attained.[14]

Only when, 'three or even four generations later', 'Time and loneliness have taught them to discover what their colonial forebears could not',[15] might that New Zealand be seen which was more 'goal' than merely material fact.

11. Francis Pound, ibid, p. 20. 'Noisy silence' is a rephrasing of Paul Shepard's paradox of 'noisy solitude'.
12. Leigh Davis, 'Noyade: Genre in Allen Curnow', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1980; pp. 25-26.
13. This rhetoric of rootedness has been nicely remarked before me by Roger Horrocks, 'No Theory Permitted on These Premises', *And* 2, February 1984, esp. pp. 131-132. For an analysis of this agricultural pathos in New Zealand art as well as in New Zealand letters the reader will have to await the 'Earth, soil and roots' chapter of my forthcoming *The Invention of New Zealand: a Nationalist Mythology of Landscape.*
14. Allen Curnow, *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse,* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960; p. 20.
15. Allen Curnow, ibid, p. 20 and p. 21.

BY THE 20TH CENTURY

By the 20th century in New Zealand the land was no longer so much treated as it had been in the 19th, as at once sublime poetry and potential property, since that potential as property had largely been realised. The land was now, increasingly, the property of 'Europeans', and so was commonly depicted by them as a landscape of their use. But it was a property which felt pastless and voiceless to them: a property where, as in Charles Brasch's poem *The Silent Land*: 'The plains are nameless and the cities cry out for meaning', where 'The unproved heart still seeks a vein of speech'; a property where, as in Allen Curnow's words, 'all human history had lapsed . . . and left a strange quiet'[16] – a land still full of solitude and silence.

If out in the silence of that land one trod a 'clay track', like James K. Baxter, 'In no forefarer's footmark treading', even inside the house there was no comfort. There too, despite the sheltering walls, and despite the familiar furniture, which might have on it all the patina of memory and use, the European is threatened by the 'immensity of the landscape outside'.

> A century ago no man of white skin had been seen by these coastal hills, no English voice had spoken here . . . the very foundations of the house were built on solitude, a soil lacking the humus of history.[17]

'Mum it lies', says Charles Brasch, in a line that critic Wystan Curnow has had fun with, playing with the metaphor of the land as our mother.[18] Anna Cavan, and innumerable others, now speak of the land's 'silent aloofness'. The stock feeling is that 'Nature is still untouched or at least unaffected by man . . . it appears to us remote, impersonal, indifferent. We are still "strangers in the land"'.[19]

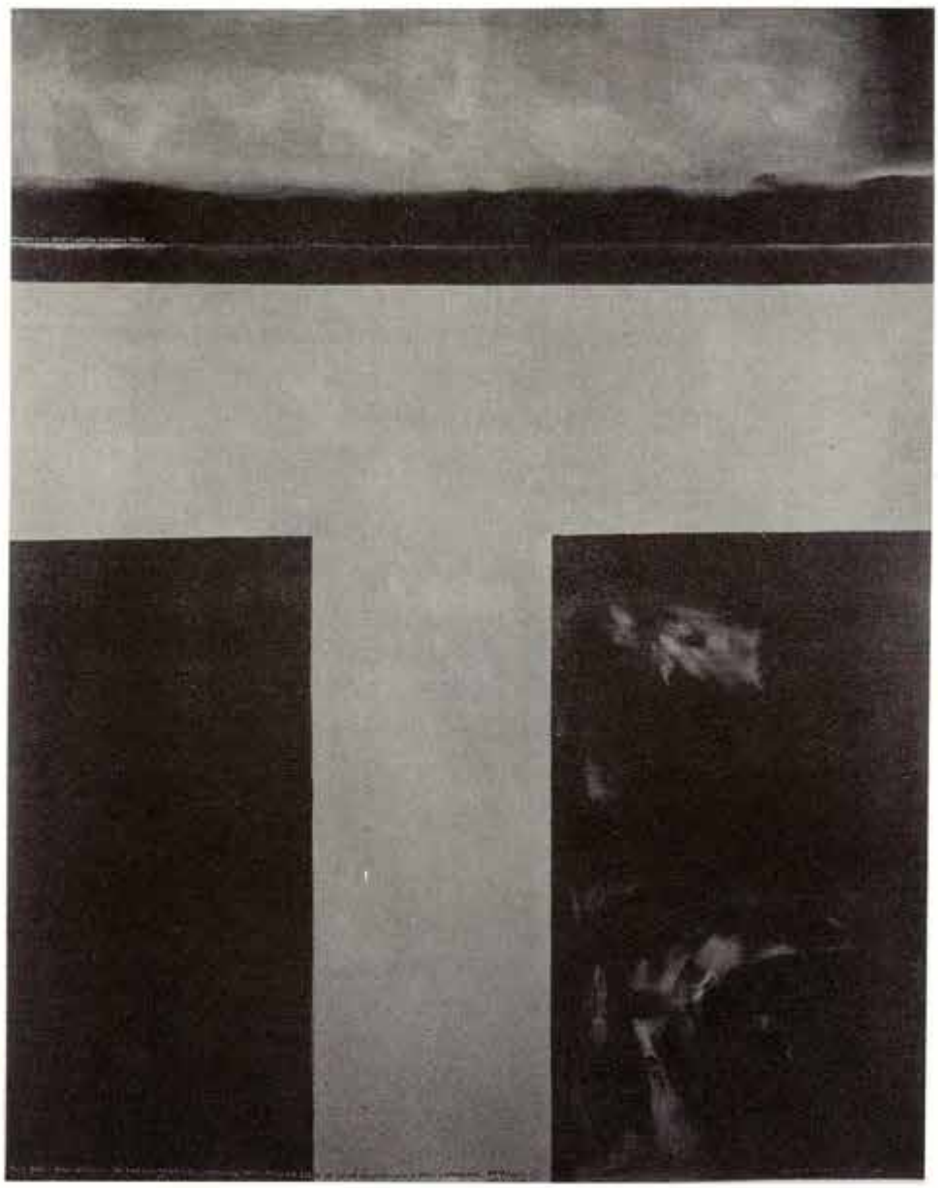
It is, so McCahon memorably writes on the *Northland Panels*, 'a landscape with too few lovers'. It is a land where 'even the manuka in bloom can breed despair'. As if, in Bruno Schulz's wonderful words: 'Not knowing why', the land 'had been introverted and silent – retreating, melting into space, into an empty azure without meaning or definition – a questioning empty shell for the admission of an unknown content'.[20]

Colin McCahon, The days and the nights in the wilderness 1971; polychrome PVA on unstretched canvas 2360 x 1840 mm. Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, purchased with the assistance of the Monica Brewster Fund and the QE II Arts Council of New Zealand, 1977.

So Sylvia Thomson, in her story 'The Brown Bridge', can project the silence back into the colonist's mind, 'a silence that seemed to freeze his brain, paralyse his tongue and congeal the blood in his heart.'

> His desperate attempts to dispel it had resulted in incredible, unpardonable volubility in which his brain refused to take part, and which had the effect of producing even deathlier silences. In spite of the rancid butter, the unclean bedding, he might even have enjoyed it all. It was the silence that frightened him . . . the blankness in his brain. To be aware of one's mind's force, and yet have nothing to pit it against, that was agony. . . . He had read of frightful things happening to men in silent places.[21]

16. Allen Curnow, ibid, p. 37.
17. James Courage, *The Call Home*, Jonathon Cape, 1956, cited Paul Day, review, *Landfall*, Vol. 10, no. 4, December 1956; p. 348.
18. Wystan Curnow, unpublished lecture, delivered at the conference 'Te Whenua, Te Iwi – The Land and the People', Stout Research Centre, Victoria University, 21-23 June 1985.
19. Unsigned editorial, 'Notes', *Landfall*, Vol. 4, no. 3, September 1950; p. 186.
20. Bruno Schulz, *Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass*, translated by Celina Wieniewska, with an introduction by John Updike, London: Picador, 1980; pp. 31-32.
21. Sylvia Thomson, 'the Brown Bridge', *Art in New Zealand*, Vol. III, no. 9, September 1930; p. 36.



Or the project can beam itself still further back into the past, as in T.H. Scott's 'South Island Journal' of 1950, which, in thinking of the European's pain in the face of the land's silence, suddenly suspects of the Maori that they are more fortunate as lovers, since *their* acts of love of the land are reciprocated, since in *their* case the possession is mutual.

> . . . though they had known and possessed this great and somehow desolate land, and perhaps loved it, that was not all. As perhaps happens to all men in vast and silent places, because of its inscrutability, and the narrowness of their way, it had possessed them, as no lesser place could.[22]

(It may be of interest here to note that, at McGill University, T.H. Scott had shut people up in a sound-proofed box, constructed to learn the effects of sensory deprivation – of interest, since he was to project what he learned, on that occasion, into his treatment of New Zealand culture. At the time of his death, in 1960, he was preparing a lecture series on 'The Effects of Isolation on New Zealand'. And fittingly too, he died in climbing a mountain, supreme site, since the 18th century, of Solitude, Silence, and the Sublime.)

Really, in the 20th century, it was an *intellectual's* construction, the whole painful 'silence', 'isolation' and 'blankness' business. T.H. Scott himself could not help but notice of New Zealand, if perhaps with surprise: 'Yet many here do live their lives as natives' – the average citizen was more or less comfortable. The discomfort, the alienation, was an experience, and a myth, and repeated ritual and rite, only of the intellectual, of poet and painter.

It is really a nationalist variant of the old 18th and 19th century Sublime, of which Terror, Solitude and Silence were essential components, a variant which, in its peculiarly pained local inflection, at once makes us seem interesting to ourselves as anguished subjects, and offers us a mode of self-definition.

> And caught between the mountains and the sea, never far from the silence of the bush and the stars, we are in the bland, frightening witness of the infinite, and we haven't created a social convention strong enough to reassure us.[23]

Let us pay a closer attention to what is happening here. To what is being made to happen. To what is being contrived or concocted. . . . 'We' are 'caught' in a vast, silent space. (In a rhetoric of silence.) A galactic Sublime is opened, between the silence of the bush and the silence of the stars: an unbearable abyss, a threat against which 'we' have, as yet, no institutional shield, no walls. It is no wonder that we sleep badly. But it is a space too of starry grandeur, the classic Burkean Sublime, with its seas, its mountains, its dark skies, its silences, its solitudes, its terrors. And this despite the fact that Pearson will not admit to the Burkean exhilaration of the Sublime he creates, attempting to smooth over it as he does with his 'bland'.

22. T.H. Scott, 'South Island Journal', cited by Keith Sinclair, 'Memories of T.H. Scott (1918-60)', *Landfall*, Vol. 14, no. 2, June 1960; p. 183.
23. Bill Pearson, 'Fretful Sleepers: A Sketch of New Zealand Behaviour and its Implications for the Artist', *Landfall*, Vol. 6, no. 3, September 1952; p. 226.

It is a loss of power, in that we are terrified, and cannot be reassured; and yet, in the very extension of our pain into the stars, in the projection of 'the mind's force' into the farthest nebulae, into the limitless itself, it is a gain, an immense gain of power. *To the stars.* Nothing could be more apt for the agony and pride of the proclaimed New Zealand condition; nothing more apt for the desire to make something grand out of this New Zealand nothing.

But such a pride is only implicit, echoing there only in the talk of the stars, in the very vastness of our haunted vacancy. It is the 'frightening', the unreassurable, the 'caught' which is stressed. *That*, according to this fretful mode of self-definition, is who we are: the people who feel this pain, this distress of isolation and silence. But who are 'we'? The 'we' is not what it pretends to be, the 'we' of every New Zealander: it is the 'we' of New Zealand intellectuals, of poets and painters, granted no particular social place or task, nor audience, and having made as yet none for themselves, in which they might be reassured. No job, no business, nothing to get on with. 'To be aware of the mind's force, and to have nothing to pit it against'; to paint a landscape with too few buyers; to find, like Mason's 'Song of Allegiance', that there were 'none to hear' – *that* was the agony.

The silence, so often spoken of through two centuries, the intolerable emptiness, is now the silence, and the empty space, of the absence of a truly New Zealand painting and writing. The prescription and remedy, then, the desire and the license, is to make these empty lands speak, and visually to appear, so as to have at last, and in relief from this agony – a culture. And to have a task for oneself, proper employment at last, in the consequent culture industry.

The task, for the poet, might be as Allen Curnow conceived it, to make:

> A passage of proud verse, rightly construed,
> An unerring pen to edit the ensuing silences . . .

Or, as M.H. Holcroft had it, 'we must learn to be venturesome, going down to the silence in the way that our forefathers went down to the sea', down to 'the great silence . . . which cannot be ignored by artists'; and this bravely, since 'It would be premature to decide that the silence lies defeated at the beginning of our little history'.[24]

There was a stillness and a bareness waiting for the Europeans, now that they had rendered Maori voices silent, and erased most Maori markings from the land.

> Waiting for our songs the woods are still
> The stones are bare for us to write upon.
>
> (Charles Brasch, 'Islands', *Disputed Ground*, 1948)

24. M.H. Holcroft, *The Waiting Hills*, 1940, p. 153, p. 93 and p. 143. Note: all page references to Holcroft refer to his *Discovered Isles: A Trilogy: The Deepening Stream. The Waiting Hills, The Encircling Seas*, Christchurch: Caxton Press, 1950, which gathers together Holcroft's *The Deepening Stream*, Caxton 1940, 1946. *The Waiting Hills*, Progressive Publishing Society, 1943, and *The Encircling Seas*, Caxton, 1946.

So A.R.D. Fairburn ends his long poem, 'Dominion', in which he had striven to give New Zealand voice, with the following celestial graffiti:

> In the beginning was the word:
> And in the beginning again shall be the word:
> the seed shall spring in the blackened earth
> and the word be made flesh.

And it is in the land, of course, it is in the blackened earth, that one will find the true culture of New Zealand – not in the city, place only of unreality in Nationalist discourse – or of the woman, the foreigner, the communist, the internationalist, the fashionable, the aesthete, the homosexual and the Jew. The artist must move, in mind or in fact, to the country, so that in the loving labour of art the land might more properly be loved.

'I would like', says Fairburn, in perfect illustration of this *topos*, 'to live in the backblocks of New Zealand, and try to realise in my mind the real culture of that country'.[25] But until the countryside is properly populated with artists and writers, New Zealand must remain 'a landscape with too few lovers'. An insufficient number of partners will exist, one might say, knowing in the aesthetic codes of the Sublime, etc., who might aesthetically, and spiritually (and carnally, or in the biblical sense too) – *know* the land. Or New Zealand will remain a landscape with too few lovers, in that it has not yet been turned into a landscape, in that it is a land which has not yet been sufficiently prepared, posed, anointed by painters and writers, so that it might more easily be known.

In the dispensation of this latter claim, the landscape is only lovable when it is (already) powdered with pigments and words, when it is mascara'd with ink, and lubricated with oils, when it has become a *painted* surface (Mallarmé – 'this art made of ointments and paints'). The land will not be lovable to other than solitary artists, who in any case can only love it in an agonised sense of its absence, until it has been properly *made up* by artists, *invented*.

The land, in this latter sense, is a postulate, that is, a goal. It may only be realised in the mind. And so artists carry on their shoulders the burden of an heroic mission – to uncover, to achieve the goal, the postulated New Zealand, and to bring it back into communality.

Poetry and painting each set out seeking, with Charles Brasch:

> . . . the shock
> Of recognition, after long heedlessness,
> to make of new earth, new air, part
> Of its own rhythm and impetus.

25. A.R.D. Fairburn, *The Letters of A.R.D. Fairburn*, selected and edited by Lauris Edmond, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1981; pp. 62-3.

The shock of recognition, sought after the long heedlessness, is that of seeing a new country as if for the first time; and that of having one's own work recognised, at last – it is both and at once: inextricably.

So Kendrick Smithyman can subsume his own sense of the poet's and artist's alienation into the sense of his invented priest, Peter Radford, that 'we belong here unwanted':

> Yet we must
> We must speak and live by an unwanted love
> We carry them

And so the poet, 'born in the soil of pain', and 'walking in the way of my craft', can sense that he is *made* in that novitiate to a country:

> Wayward I could sing for its born people, being
> one knows no faith in them, being perversely of them.
> It takes me, makes me, taxes me, and I shall not
> turn from its service.

It was a kind of spiritual service industry . . .

As Allen Curnow comments, without dismay, 'The New Zealand poet [or painter] is unlikely to escape wholly the character of prophet to his people'.[26] It was a plausible pose to adopt, and one in which one might avoid despair, when the audience seemed so insufficient. It seemed rational to announce, with Curnow, that 'the poet is as the nerve to the body of his race, feeling and declaring the need or sickness which all suffer'.[27] It was a feasible thing to proclaim, with McCahon, 'As a painter I may often be more worried about you than you are about me and if I wasn't concerned I'd not be doing my work properly as a painter'.[28] And it was to be, in the long run, a dramatically effective piece of public relations.

So historian and poet Sir Keith Sinclair can, in looking back, with a pretence of deprecation, but with a deep tenderness, refer to 'The Task' of his generation in their youth: 'to help make New Zealand less "sheep and gold", more storied; through art and ideas more real, and enhanced . . . We would find out what we were . . .'

> We were brave, we were mapping the coasts of mind
> Where we strove to plant, in the soil of speech,
> The Truth that was born on a Rock, a Creek:
> Our random home, grown native now . . .[29]

It is the grand Joycean project, spoken by Stephen Daedelus in *The Portrait of the*

26. Allen Curnow, *A Book of New Zealand Verse 1923-1950*, Christchurch: Caxton Press, 1951; p. 22.
27. Allen Curnow, ibid, p. 40.
28. Colin McCahon, *Colin McCahon: A Survey Exhibition*, Auckland: Auckland City Art Gallery, 1972; p. 38.
29. Keith Sinclair, 'Memories of T.H. Scott (1918-60)', *Landfall*, Vol. 14, no. 2, June 1960; p. 182.

Artist as a Young Man: the artist is off 'to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience, and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of the race'. Nor, in their accounts of the forging (or forgery) project are New Zealanders adverse to quoting, or to echoing, such 'foreign' sources. Thus A. R. D. Fairburn, even in the act of deploring the Anglo-Irish decadence of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, does so in the intonations of that Joyce whom he professes to despise, when he dreams of leaving London for rural New Zealand: to 'try to realise in my mind the real culture of that country'[30]. Thus Allen Curnow, in the epigraphs to his *A Book of New Zealand Verse: 1923-1950*, has Joyce ask 'do you know what a nation means?', has Yeats speak of 'my country not born at all',[31] and Mathew Arnold, just as so many New Zealanders will, speak of 'that promised land'.

> That promised land it will not be ours to enter, and we shall die in the wilderness: but to have desired to enter it, to have saluted it from afar, is already perhaps, the best distinction among contemporaries; and it will certainly be the best title to esteem with posterity.[32]

A key painting of that endless trope of New Zealand as land of promise and hope is McCahon's painting, *The Promised Land*, 1948. The painter gazes from the foreground left at the land which is at once his vision, his prophecy, his discovery, and his invention. He is in a black, workingman's or farm labourer's singlet, as though he had just laboured in a *making* – the painting itself is his farm or construction site. The painter's hut flanks the painting to the right, as his portrait and signature flank it to the left – so the land is encompassed by the painter and his appurtenances. The painting combines two separate landscapes into the one space – so new earth and new air are made part of painting's own rhythm and impetus.

There is a lighted candle, sign of divine vision, and a jug of water, sign of holy purity; the land is hardly touched, as yet, by human eye or hand. An angel, the only being who may yet share the painter's vision, until, through the painter's prophetic work, we too learn to know it, stares down from the sky. By the angel's head are the words: *The Promised Land*. So the painter's vision is made a promise divinely vouchsafed; and so his invention and discovery is miraculously authenticated – proved by angelic announcement, and by the signs of divine purity and light: so this work might be called *The Invention/Discovery and Proof of the True New Zealand.*

> ... I saw an angel in this land. Angels can herald beginnings ... I saw something logical, orderly and beautiful belonging to the land and not yet to its people. Not yet understood or communicated, not even really yet invented. My work has largely been to communicate this vision, and invent a way to see it. This vision or discovery ...
>
> (Colin McCahon, 'Beginnings', *Landfall*, December 1966)[33]

If 18th and 19th century exploring artists like Hodges, Heaphy and Fox made

30. A.R.D. Fairburn, op. cit., p. 62-3.
31. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, cited by Allen Curnow, op. cit., p. 24.
32. Mathew Arnold and W.B. Yeats, cited by Allen Curnow, op. cit., p. 17 and p. 15 respectively.
33. Colin McCahon, 'Beginnings', *Landfall* 80, Vol. 20, no. 4, December 1966, p. 364; and reprinted in *Beginnings: New Zealand Writers Tell How They Began Writing*, introduction and notes by Robin Dudding, Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1980; pp. 101-5.

themselves the heroes of their own mission, in depicting themselves, as best they could, as alone in a land of vast and terrifying splendour, how much more heroic, then, is the modern artist's role, whose exploration is not only into the unknown, but into a land which cannot even be seen, and of which no native report can exist, and which may presently be known, at most, as a kind of glimmering . . .

> Strictly speaking New Zealand doesn't exist yet, though some possible New Zealand's glimmer in some poems and on some canvases. It remains to be created – should I say invented – by writers, musicians, artists, architects, publishers; even a politician might help – and how many generations does that take?
>
> (Allen Curnow, *First Yearbook of the Arts in New Zealand*, 1945)[34]

And how many generations does that take?

> The truth is . . . that the spirit of a country, recognisable in history and literature, is a kind of collective definition undertaken by a line of writers. Only in a receptive and sensitive mind can the undertones and secret values of a countryside be given concrete forms.
>
> (M.H. Holcroft, *The Deeping Stream*, 1940)[35]

> It is a kind of exploration in a country of the mind.
>
> (M.H. Holcroft, *The Waiting Hills*, 1943)[36]

> The country and the people have very largely to be created, in terms of literature.
>
> ('Notes', *Landfall*, March 1957)[37]

> For while the country has been physically measured by the cartographer, it is still little known to human inspiration. In this sense, it is still the enigma, Terra Australis Incognito, the elusive southern land, and has yet to find its way into our culture through the transforming power of the imagination.
>
> (Denys Trussell, *Art New Zealand* 7, 1977)[38]

It is as if New Zealand is so far just a conspiracy of cartographers, not yet truly known to the mind and to the senses five. 'We were mapping the coasts of mind'. 'A kind of exploration in the country of the mind'. 'A country physically measured by the cartographer', yet 'still little known to human inspiration'. *Et cetera.*

All this talk of cartography, of exploration, of mind: it irresistibly recalls McCahon's *Six Days in Nelson and Canterbury* (1950). This painting, where blood flows through the heart of the landscape, or, more exactly where blood flows down the central frame, is, in many ways, the summary of McCahon's early landscapes and religious works, and the summary of all the early Nationalist endeavour. Six days: the six days of God's creation of the world – and six days of the painter's creation of a country. The blood: Christ's sacrificial blood – and the artist's.

> This painting I never explain but am often asked to. To me it explains itself. It was, I suppose, reconciling gains and losses, stating differences, hills and horizons. Simple. A

34. Allen Curnow, in Allen Curnow and Ngaio Marsh, 'A Dialogue by Way of Introduction', *First Yearbook of the Arts in New Zealand*, Wellington: H.H. Tombs, p. 2.
35. M.H. Holcroft, *The Deepening Stream*, 1940, p. 32.
36. M.H. Holcroft, *The Waiting Hills*, 1943, p. 92.
37. Unsigned editorial, 'Notes', *Landfall*, Vol. 11, no. 1, March 1957, p. 3.
38. Denys Trussell, 'Landscape, Civilisation and New Zealanders', *Art New Zealand*, 27, 1077, p. 17.

bit of blood shed in the middle.[39]

39. Colin McCahon, *Colin McCahon: A Survey Exhibition*, Auckland: Auckland City Art Gallery, 1972; p. 21.

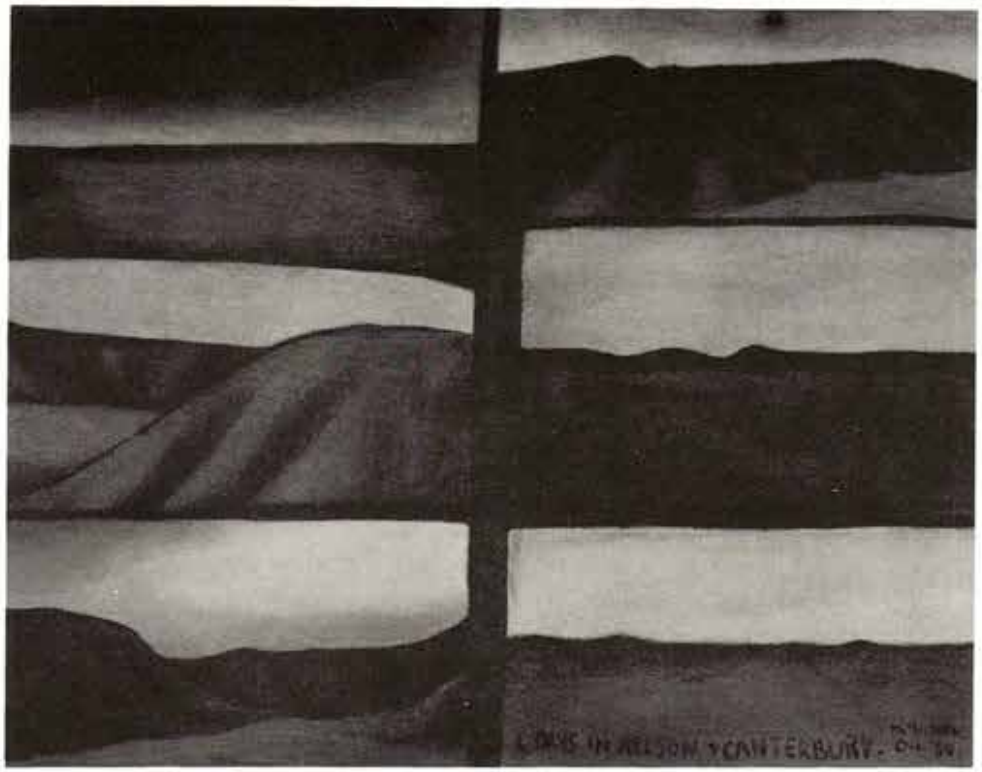
McCahon, perhaps I should mention here, once fell from his bicycle, and cut his knee, while cycling through Nelson and Canterbury in search of seasonal labouring work. Characteristically, he turns this little biographical accident to the purpose of a grander, Christianising metaphor, in which his own blood is subsumed into that sacrificial blood of Christ which gushes in such McCahon crucifixions as the *Crucifixion with Lamp* (1947) – a blood which, whether jetting from Christ's wound, or the suffering artist's wound, serves to make fertile, to sanctify and to vivify the invented New Zealand.

Six days in Nelson and Canterbury is a map of McCahon's and of all the Nationalist concerns – and it is a map of memories. It recalls, as I have said, the journeys McCahon had made through Otago and Nelson looking for work. The way the landscapes are stacked one above the other is reminiscent, too, of the 17th, 18th and 19th century charts of coastal profiles made as navigational aids in exploratory voyages in the Pacific. But with McCahon the stacked strips of landscape become something more than description or memory, and the journey something more than a physical journey. They are navigational aids in the discovery – or the invention – of a New Zealand; they are charts to a country to be found and formed in the mind.

'And how many generations does that take?' 'That promised land it will not be ours to enter, and we shall die in the wilderness.' It is a country in the process of a perpetual *deferment*: the eye which descries it is like an arrow in an unceasing pursuit of a target in unceasing retreat; flying after a goal perceptible only in its disappearance, over horizons without end. Only occasionally does a critic seem to catch sight of some present New Zealand culture – and then, at the very moment it is seen, it is liable to vanish, to be replaced by a prophetic vision of the forms in which, at last, the New Jerusalem of a wholly New Zealand School will arise.

'Strictly speaking, New Zealand doesn't exist yet' says Curnow. 'The country and the people have yet largely to be created' says *Landfall*. There are always, it seems, as in M.H. Holcroft's claim, at most only the 'beginnings of a journey which might be travelled in search for truth as it exists for New Zealanders . . . in the silences of the land that had received their fathers.' Always, it remains 'still little known to human inspiration. In this sense, it is still an enigma, terra Australis Incognito, the elusive southern land.'

opp. Colin McCahon, Six days in Nelson and Canterbury, 1950; oil on board, 885 x 1165 mm. Auckland City Council Art Gallery collection, presented by the Friends of the Auckland City Art Gallery, 1978.



40. Colin McCahon, letter to Nola Barron, December 19, 1969, photocopy in my possession.
41. Jacques Derrida, *Truth in Painting*, trans, Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987, p. 26.
42. Bruno Schulz, *Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass*, p. 13.

So, more than thirty years after McCahon had seemed confidently to affirm the discovery of the Promised Land, in *The Promised Land* (1948), there comes a statement of the uncertainty and endlessness of the quest: his *Flight from Egypt* (1980). McCahon inscribes the panels of the *Flight* : 'WHEN DO WE START?' And 'the Desert'. And: 'WHEN DO WE GET THERE?' And: 'I AM TIRED'. And, gazing uncertainly through the last aeroplane window, out to the ochreous desert: 'IS THIS THE PROMISED LAND . . .'. It is a flight, it seems, which must perpetually be renewed; a flight after an elusive goal; a flight on which one may become exhausted and fail; an interminable, inextricable flight, whose end is uncertain; a flight not even now properly begun . . .

Or, if the flight is over, and its landing long ago achieved, the question may fall, as if melancholy and uncertain retrospection, into the past tense, as it does in the title of a McCahon landscape of 1962: *Was This The Promised Land?* Or the wilderness through which the promised land is sought may seem so boundless, and so perpetual, that the only hope left is that in the darkness of the wilderness itself there may be some shaft of grace. Such redeeming grace will come, therefore, since we must die in the wilderness, not so much as that light suffused and bounteous end of the journey, the promised land, but as the Necessary Protection only, granted us from above, during the endlessness and terror of our quest. As McCahon writes: 'Moses was not permitted by God to reach the Promised Land . . . this is the place where the painter never arrives'.[40] So we have three major McCahon paintings: *The Days and Nights in the Wilderness Showing the Constant Flow of Light Passing Through the Wall of Death* (1971); *The Days and Nights in the Wilderness: a Constant Flow of Light Falls on the Land* (1971); and *Days and Nights in the Wilderness Showing the Constant Flow of Light Passing into a Dark landscape* (1971).

Yet, the promised New Zealand is constantly presupposed, and in anticipating itself, precipitates itself. Head first, as Derrida would say. Head first into existence. 'Everything with which it commences' itself, even in its uncertainty as to whether it has yet begun, 'is already a result, a work, an effect of a projection of mind, a *resultare.*' Every painting or 'every foundation, every justification, will have been a result . . .'[41]

Poets, painters, critics, desire still more intensely a country which so eludes their possession of it; hope anticipates possession; regret amplifies desire.

So invent it. Invent New Zealand. Then, and then only, might we 'feel its taste on our tongues, its cold fire on our palette, the width of its breath fresh like a draught of pure ultramarine'.[42]

Then:

Someday thought will startle the bush like scarlet,
The pillar of dust stand in the road a spinning
Stiff legendary fire.

(Allen Curnow, 'The Scene')

Then, and only then, may there be an art 'which is of this people, by this people, for this people', as Allen Curnow requires it.[43] And until then as Douglas Lilburn says 'we're not really New Zealanders at all, we are only in the process of becoming'.[44]

HOW TO BECOME?

But how to Become? By means of the invention or the discovery of New Zealand. Which? And which is which?

Each is always jealous of its other half. They are an inseparable couple. Each fears (a bit) what the other might do should they be apart. Worse: each is agonised at watching the other repetitively, suggestively, and demonstratively, rub itself against the desirable bodies of strangers and enemies, one after another. All the while turning to laugh in its other half's eyes.

They come, as couples are said to do, to look like each other over the years. Theirs is, in a sense, a truly *corrosive* relationship – host and parasite to each other, eating each other away. Invention – this singular, fissured, richly equivocal word, in which its other, *discovery*, is always at least faintly present, as if in the reflected light cast by an adjacent body.

Invention – an oscillating, an undecidable, a precarious and perilous word, in whose use, finally, the distinction between the invention and the discovery of New Zealand is made impossible. Impossible in that both their possibilities seem to persist, as if in an absolute suspension, and this no matter how many times the differentiating operation is tried. Yet, and yet, it is this very impossibility, this mutual incompatibility and inextricability of the couple, which gives birth to innumerable progeny of the word and of paint – it is a most richly productive confusion.

The lovely trope of the invention of New Zealand, the trope used by Curnow and McCahon, today often considered *the* major figures of the search for the True New Zealand, undoes itself in the very act of its utterance. And this just because the invention of New Zealand occurs in the terms of two mutually destructive claims: the claim of inventing a new thing (a New Zealand); the claim of discovering what (New Zealand) already was there.

Those who would make the double and contrary claim will find there are two ways

they might be caught out. To claim to *discover* New Zealand, and to have it found out that one has merely *invented* it – passed off a self-made subterfuge. Or, conversely, to claim to have *invented* New Zealand, and to have it found out that one has merely *discovered* it, misleadingly proffered as one's own creation a merely *found* object, found and 'simply' signed, and suitably *presented* – an *objet trouvé*.

Nationalist culture (*circa* 1930-1970) *itself* could never finally work out which of the meanings of invention it meant, which was the true one. Nor can that new culture which has re-placed it work out which it meant. Nor can I.

Doesn't McCahon speak of an 'invention', which is also a 'vision or discovery'? Doesn't Peter Tomory, one of McCahon's most powerful backers, summarise all of New Zealand art history under the title 'Imaginary Reefs and Floating Islands'?[45] And doesn't the first epigraph to Allen Curnow's Penguin *Book of New Zealand Verse* quote Gulliver, astonished 'to behold an Island in the air, inhabited by Men, who were able (as it should seem) to raise, or sink, or put it into a progressive motion as they pleased'?[46] And this despite Curnow's every effort to ground the invented New Zealand, to root it firmly, to grant it solid foundation?

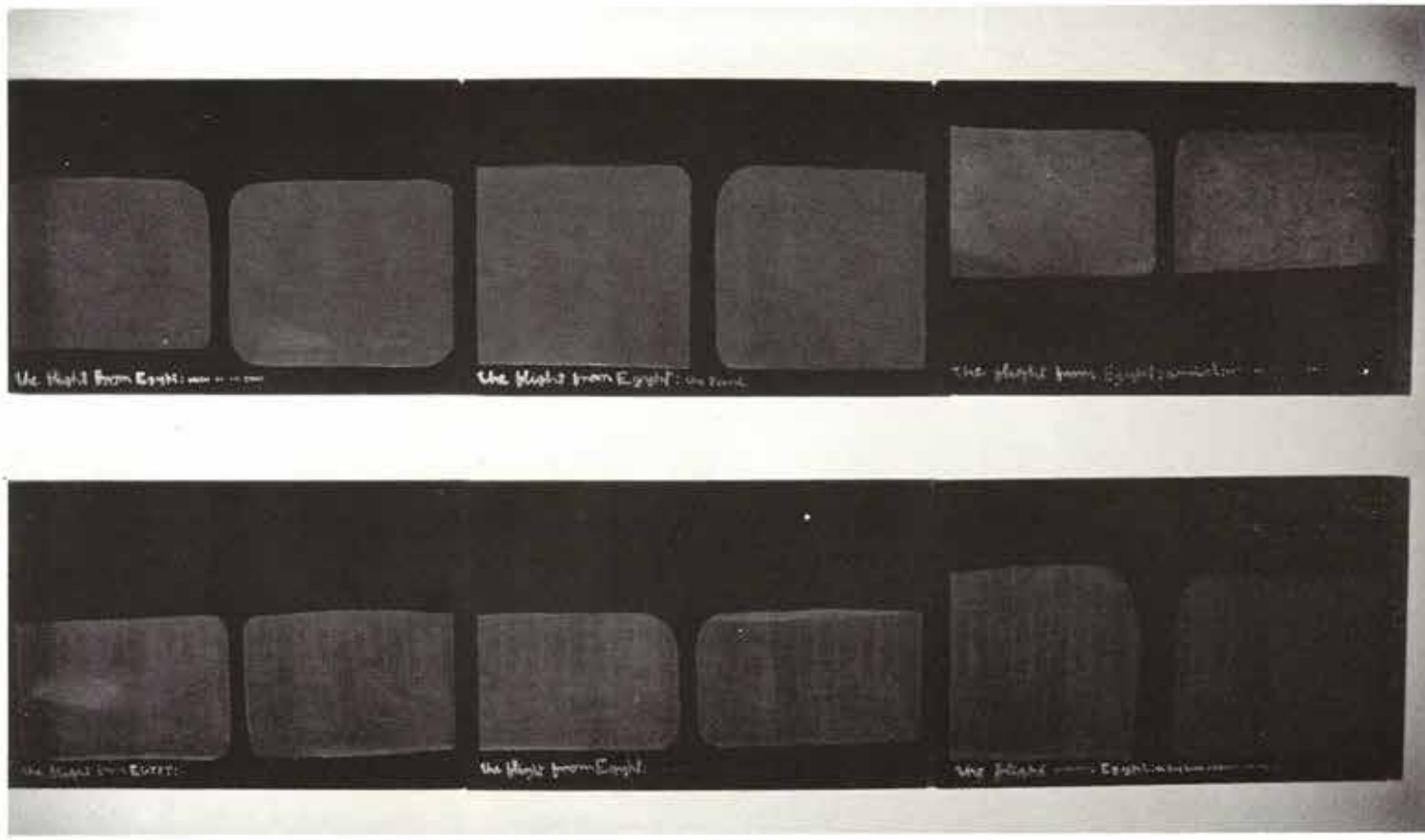
I might have wished – have not I already all but said I wish? – to master the culture, to summarise, as if in some splendid order, all of its vivid life, to uncover, with masterful precision, all the rules of its operation: but its own indecision undoes me.

It is as Derrida says in *Truth in Painting* of a story *he* would tell, that 'I would always have to renew, reproduce, and re-introduce into the founding economy of my tale . . . the very indecision I was trying to reduce'.

There is no end to it.

45. P.A. Tomory, 'Imaginary Reefs and Floating Islands', *Ascent*, Vol. 1, no. 2. 1968; pp. 4-19.
46. Allen Curnow, first epigraph to *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*; p. 15.

Colin McCahon, The Flight from Egypt, 1980
six sheets, acrylic on paper each 750 x 1110 mm, numbered in sequence:
i) Where do we start
ii) The desert
iii) a big tree offers shade
iv) When do we get there
v) I am tired
vi) arrival: is this the promised land
Private collection of Dr Allan AC Godfrey.


the flight from Egypt
the flight from Egypt
the flight from Egypt

Two Houses at Haslett Street, Eden Terrace, Auckland, 1989-90

Neil Kirkland and Kim Sinclair

Neil Kirkland and Kim Sinclair graduated from the School of Architecture, University of Auckland, practice Architectural Design and Construction in Auckland. They have completed a number of private dwellings.

Sinclair and Shouler House
Design: Kim Sinclair
Builders: Neil Kirkland and Kim Sinclair

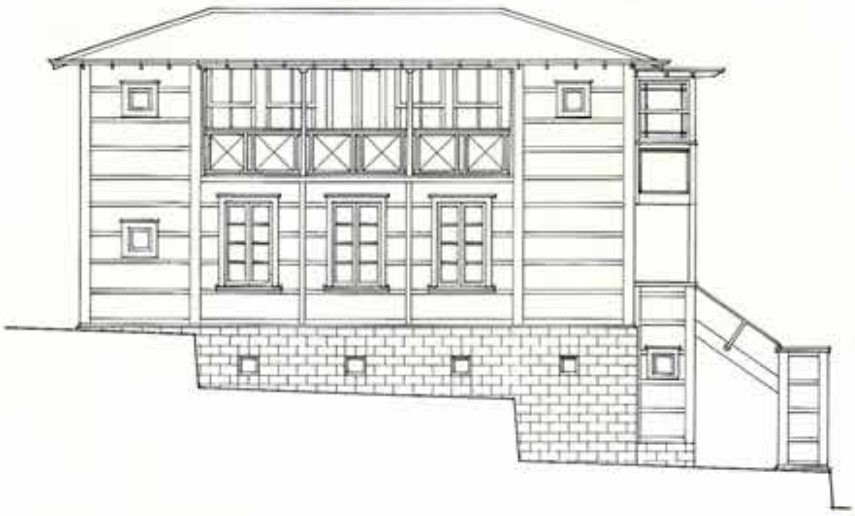
Kirkland House
Design: Neil Kirkland
Builders: Neil Kirkland and Kim Sinclair

opp. Worm's eye isometric of Nor-Western corner of Kirkland House

View from Haslett Street (West).

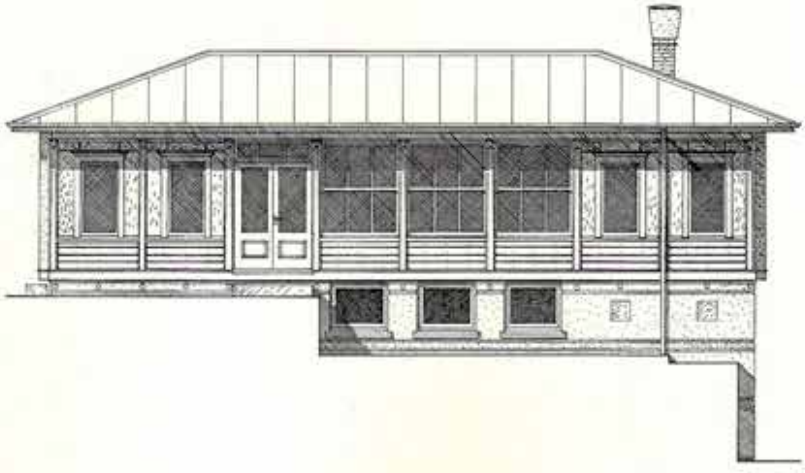
Plan

Legend
1. Living Room
2. Sofa (Hall)
3. Bedroom
4. Oda (Rooms)
5. Loggia
6. Study
7. Kitchen
8. Bathroom
9. Laundry
10. Fountain
11. Pergola



Sinclair and Shouler House: North Elevation

Sinclair and Shouler House: West Elevation

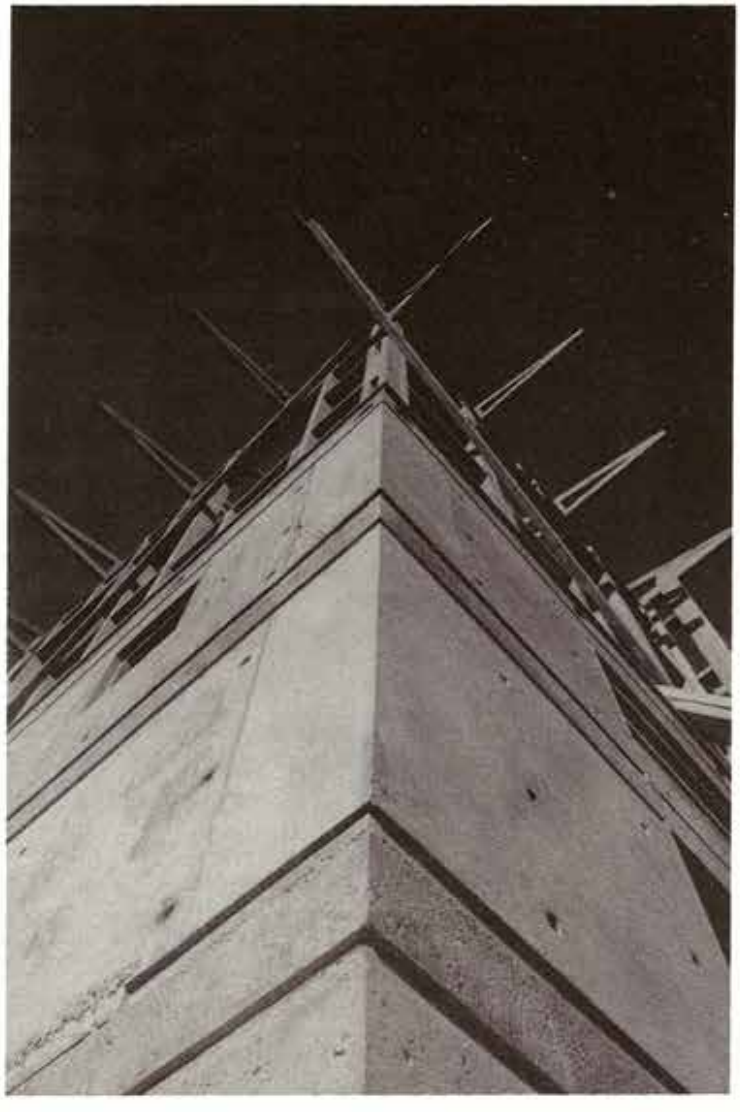


Kirkland House: Nor-West Elevation

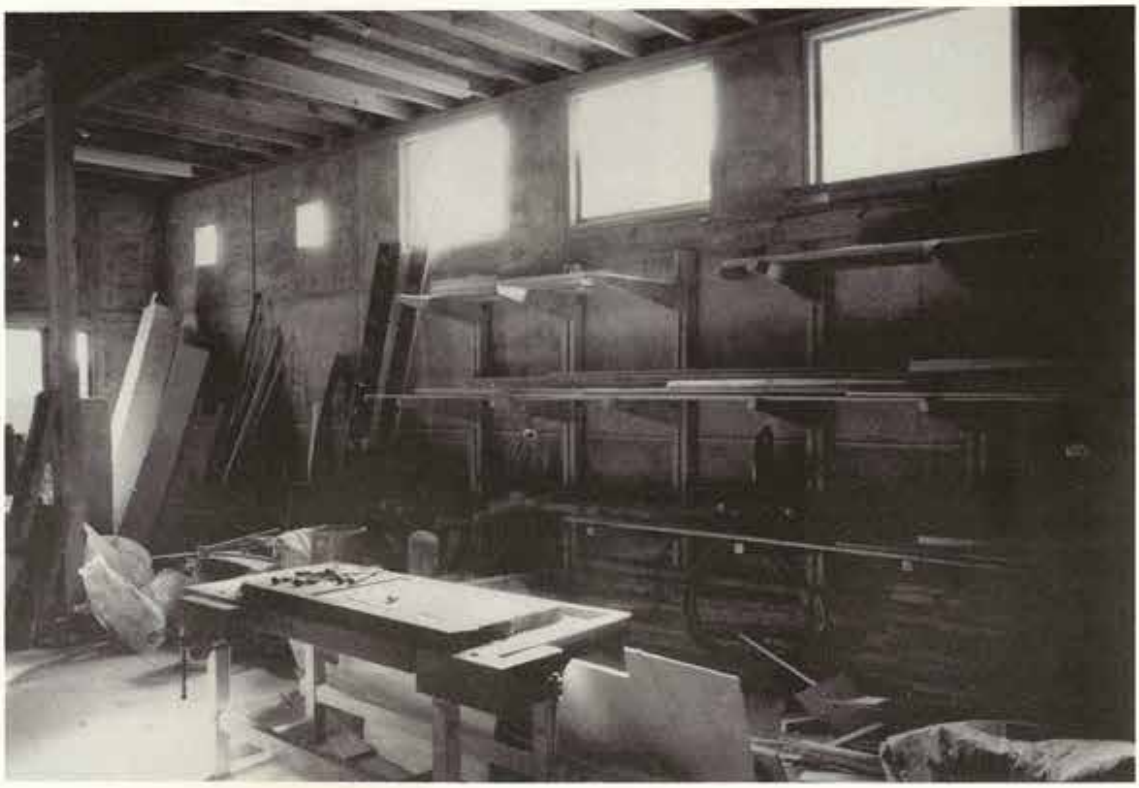
Kirkland House: Sou-West Elevation

Sinclair and Shouler: Bedroom and on to Loggia

Sinclair and Shouler: View from Nor-East



Kirkland House: Sofa



Kirkland House: Work Shop in basement

The Kirkland House and the Sinclair and Shouler House

John D Dickson

The site disposition of these two houses seems to have less to do with nostalgia for the nineteenth-century urban residential-streetscape, than with confident placement upon upthrust-landform, and with full spatial participation in the surrounding landscape and skyscape.

THE SINCLAIR AND SHOULER HOUSE

The tall, narrow west-end facade of the Sinclair and Shouler House, dramatised by first-floor entry, has a theatrical air. A sense of dislocation of a town-house facade, combined with the accoutrements of more spacious environs, notably a palm-tree and open-light, give the sense that even in one's approach one is actually stationary and it is the world that is moving, to any locale, to any height. One is dazzled by this display of the world's virtuosity, and by the apparent weightlessness of material such as a brass door-knocker, which in a London town-house context would be redolent of solidity and permanence, these excited by its polished glint, but here it is flashing through high-trapeze-space caught up in a Zabriskie Point tour en l'air. Sinclair is clearly less interested in what things are than in what these might become, and to enter this house is to be caught up in such a transformation. Reassurances of New Zealand's staid building – concrete-block, timber, plywood, corrugated-iron – here have a trompe-l'oeil quality, with building elements balanced and counter-balanced in acrobatic display. One senses that space beyond the door is of another kind. Meanwhile one is observed by the display itself, for bemusedly levitating two floors above is a window-seat with swan-necked rafters.

Through the door is indeed another world, a rectangular hall the length and width of the house it seems, with a central line of posts. Is module here too intrusive? But surely less so than in the work of New Zealand's modern rationalists such as the Group Architects. The hall spills to ground-level at its east-end with rhythmic alternation of vertical windows and wall on the north-side. A lean-to serves to the south butting into the ridge. Here is one large room yet does one sense from the module, partitions and corridors stacked away? Under the stairs perhaps? A light

touch of classical intention composes this room twinned beneath at ground-level. A hall in plan but not in height. On this floor one again senses movement all around, yet there is nowhere to go, except into a cupboard under the stair wherein access to the lower-floor is found. Curiously confined as on a boat, one can pace length, and there are lateral encounters with posts. And as if boats are moored alongside each other, rhythmic intimation of buildings nearby direct one's attention back into the room, where movement is stylised ingeniously, as in the lean-to kitchen where all its appurtenances seem to be contained in bins-on-wheels or dramatically, as by the stair crafted by Neil Kirkland, which descends from above like a thunder-bolt from Zeus, or perhaps it is the lighter flash of Mercury's tripping. Despite these disturbances the room undoubtedly alludes in plan to Sinclair's admiration for monastic and vernacular buildings in the South of France and to later chateaux. One senses this in details such as the proportion and placement of windows, and in the room's simple outline and construction, but without the appearance of stone. Is there here also, nostalgia for history's inter-tidal zone? For the library of Bishop Selwyn at Parnell? Or for that by Lippincott at the University of Auckland, where recently, partitions and corridors have been re-deployed? Life in this room is meanwhile luxurious whatever the incoming-tide may bring.

This first-floor room is centered on its south-wall, on a side-board painted Mediterranean blue-green, from which, colour accents spring out into the room; lemon, orange perhaps, or blue ceramic. Whatever momentary still-life is here, each frame gives way to colour dynamics in the larger space of the room and inevitably toward red. One is aware that everything including the floor is painted, as if an old building has been converted with pipes and wires cut through its joists. The room recycles itself endlessly; cycles of matt and gloss texture construct a succession of trompe-l'oeil scenarios in the large back-reaching room-space. Sinclair's command of spatial-openness places him as the twentieth-century's child sprung from the French ethos of fin de siècle painters such as Matisse, and with the colour-sense and brightness of Le Corbusier's painted kouros, and accustomed to the liveliness of a ballet-set by Picasso brilliantly renewed by David Hockney. Yet maybe, as one glances at the Minoan-columned table, is there not a touch of necropolis in this realm of super-colour so evocative for Ancient People of eternity's paradise?

If we have accounted for the lightness and agility of Sinclair's cyclist temperament; and we shall take as an axiom of Sinclair's design that architecture expresses the person; this room in its polychromy suggests also a neo-classical bravura, a touch of gravity and composure, expressive of Kirsten Shouler's Danish heritage perhaps; an insistence on design and form in everything; a Scandinavian recognition of beauty; and an irresistible attraction to the Southern-world of colour and warmth. An alliance of architecture in New Zealand with a nineteenth-century neo-classical world effected in timber, is re-stated here. Yet in this room in which joie de vivre through colour dominates, we are seemingly untroubled by Scandinavian

mythology, well away from the Danish and Manawatu lowlands.

If on the first-floor, colour is within a comfortable register of nostalgia, on the floor above, the presence of colour takes over with excess. Images compound. References to living-places previously enjoyed are intense; a window-seat at Robin Rockel's Endymion apartments at Newmarket, and Courtville apartments' loggia. The personal realm intensifies architectural detail. There is a neo-classical ambience; the slender-waisted, wooden, Doric columns of the loggia, carved by Neil Kirkland to Sinclair's design; the out-reaching cyma- recta profiles of the window-seat rafters; the long runs of cornice and shelf mouldings. One detects an interest also in pop-art and folk-art motifs; stencilled leaping dolphins in the bathroom, and in fret on its wooden shutters. Although Sinclair's gift for rendering spatial-openness through colour and pattern must be recognised, it raises the issue of largesse or spatial-extravagance? Yet there seems to be no desire to impress. But who can judge in such matters?

Hayward and Rowe House (1985)
North elevation

Externally this second-floor is clearly intended to express an admiration for the icon of mansion so successful in Western architecture; a loggia between two towers – Roman palace, Venetian palazzo, and Tuscan villa. The full impact of this facade is blocked by the neighbouring Kirkland House. This second reference to frontality in the Sinclair and Shouler House suggests an open space, undoubtedly water-space, before it to command. However, the symmetries of these two frontal statements, north and west, are cheerfully added to, in a New Zealand manner, by a lean-to, to the south. Sinclair's symmetries cannot be taken as indicative of a serious belief in classical composure as a committed stance. These symmetries exist as set-pieces with iconographic intent.

We must consider the possibility of an ecclectic design-philosophy at work. An informed dexterity undoubtedly, and this gives architectural vitality, and as we have seen vivaciousness, moving across boundaries set by painting, stage-set, and film, together with a recycling of Auckland's topos. But do we under-estimate Sinclair's extensive reading of architecture and its critical theory? Can we detect here a palimpsest of images, a shifting ground with articulate, momentary, conjunctions betwixt architectural periods and places, and betwixt architecture's internal and external spaces and forms? Can we detect here an architecture of references and denials, or do we grace Sinclair with the conceits of others? At this point, a wider assessment of Sinclair's design-work is called for beyond the scope of this review. Suffice to note a range of approaches and dissimilar forms. How for example, can we bring the concrete, barrel-vaulted Hayward and Rowe House, (1985) at Anawhata, into meaningful relation to this Haslett Street house with its more direct involvement with the New Zealand building-vernacular?

THE KIRKLAND HOUSE

On approaching the Kirkland House one encounters at its south-west-end, a concrete basement-workshop, over-sailed by a slight cantilever of the timbered living-quarters above. Enclosed by concrete of precise and smooth surface-finish, and with half its volume lodged in the earth of the sloping site, the basement makes an emphatic statement of solidity. A steel-beam and posts, supporting lofty joists, together with the concrete walls and floor, define a volume impressive in a domestic milieu. Here, the place is fixed, whatever comes in or goes out. This scale is qualified on the south-west facade by the only low-window, and at the sub-terranean north-east-end, a mezzanine-alcove cut into the earth, provides a drawing-office above the heavy-work ground-level. In recalling Antonello da Messina's painting of Saint Jerome in his study, one nervously searches for Saint Jerome's lion. Light floods down into the workshop from high, separately defined windows, some qualified with degrees of translucency. This is a cavernous in-world; an artisan's work and storage-space up front, proudly manifest, yet capable of privacy and seclusion. Somewhere within there is an inter-connecting stair, but this is played down. There is no discernible applied finish to the architectural elements of concrete, wood, and steel.

The concrete walls of the basement are qualified and geometrically organised by means of bands of red aggregate incised with under-cut shadow, and with frieze-rondels and a cavetto-cornice, and green-plugged tie-holes in regular patterns. Thus the walls, in accounting for hydrostatic pressure and successive pours, make reference also to mud-brick coursing and masonry, to Egyptian and Syrian ablaq patterns, and to geological processes of sedimentation. This is not rough concrete-work anticipating concealment, but construction of quality. Kirkland is clearly interested in finding out what can be achieved, and what he with his own hands can do. There is water here, outside at the door, and fire – a forge and anvil – one pace within, beneath where springs above a corbelled, arcuated, qualification of the concrete-wall at first floor level, derived bluntly from circles in a robust Roman manner. But this basement-workshop, open to the south-west, seems a cold place, at least in winter, and contrasts with the sun-dried timber-world above.

Intimation of the north-west orientation of the first-floor is discernible on the south-west facade, where the symmetries are complex. A pair of parallel windows, set in slightly protruding, plastered timber-work, express enclosure and confirm a closed south-east flank to the house; whereas to the north-west, timber weather-boards and plywood, framed by timber pilasters, plinth, and architrave, together with a broader eave indicate a loggia, the full extent of which occupies the entire north-west facade. The whole length of the house is thus framed rhythmically by pilasters, architrave, and plinth, in the manner of the Palazzo della Cancelleria at Rome. This long glazed-loggia is qualified at its ends by timber containment. On

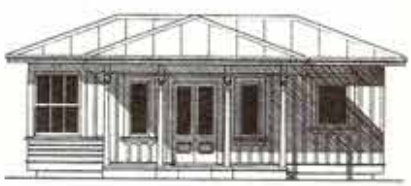
account of its colour and textural differentiations, this wall has the subtlety and impact of a painting. Apprehending this at close-quarters, on rounding the corner from the south-west, and then raised-up gradually by a stair to become level with the centre of this painting toward the north-east-end, one at the moment of penetration becomes Archangel to the loggia within. Yet, although one discerns centrality and module with bays defining a rhythm closed by each end, the length of the composition is sufficient to turn one's mind from Fra Angelico's Annunciation, to Duccio's gold Majestas with its serried ranks of figures to each side. By this flight of fancy I mean to convey that there is a breath-taking majesty, to the discerning eye, on entering this house; in experiencing the composition of this painterly facade with its sky-blue doors, red-gold boards, cream joinery, and below this world of blue and gold, the earth-realm of red, grey, and green. If at this moment, one was to step back into the landscape void, and view the house from a distance as one might have done on approaching the place, the siting and prominence of the form and shadows of eave and windows, would clearly reveal the loggia, held from behind by the solid, plastered walled-enclosure. But close-to one's attention is held by the glint and absorption of surface, by the fine, linear-detailing of joinery and mouldings and incised relief, with its black crevices of shadow, and by other concavities of glowing shade.

Stepping inside, under the hipped-roof of the house, is a moment to savour. A long room the entire length of the house, and independent of its immediate environs at ground-level, except at its north-east-end, is orientated toward the landscape, but not frontally, for this direction is brutally blocked by the neighbouring house to the north. Instead one sweeps out into the landscape progressively, along the depth of the room; a direction reinforced by oblique walls and doorways. There is a sense of belonging, and in-dwelling of the landscape through a linked succession of especially broad double-hung windows with fine glazing-bars, all of which when raised together, open the central, wider space, entirely. The room is as much an Elizabethan gallery as it is a New Zealand verandah. Its chevroned and battened timber-boarded ceiling, zigzagging along its entire length, makes the hieroglyph for water, and thus suggests a water-space below reflecting up into the room. There is also, in this pattern and texture, annunciation of Archangel wings, a beneficent outline above, as from the fronds of the palms outside the windows. The room is slightly contained and separated at each end. All the spaces of the house on this floor open onto this long gallery, and two of these at either end of the house, are conceived of as square rooms oversailing the concrete basement below. These are closed to the south-east, provided with cupboards, bound internally with mouldings, and open through shuttered windows onto the long gallery, as well as opening directly to the morning or evening through inward-opening shuttered windows. Symmetrical, self-contained, refined further in their linings and mouldings, these rooms celebrate the intimacies and value of human shelter; one room for necessity, and another for the other – whatever that might prove to be;

the night, visitors, or whatever one chooses, or whatever may be forced upon the household.

Mc Kenzie House(1990)
Perspective view from North

It is obvious that considerable thought has been given to sun-protection and sun-penetration, to ventilation and insulation, to site orientation, and to the complementary roles of room and gallery; to a simple gradation of inside, in-between, and outside. All these considerations have been reconciled with a classical approach to form and to use of a New Zealand vernacular. Furthermore, recognition has been made of the similarity between the New Zealand vernacular and the Ottoman vernacular. The Kirkland House, in its planning and construction, expresses curiosity about this similarity. Both the New Zealand and Ottoman vernaculars are committed to the external landscape, to a degree of open-living in close association with others; both have been developed in temperate-zones using a wood and masonry based technology; both are based on Mediterranean culture; and both respond to European custom. The semblance of the Kirkland House to Ottoman house-types, is not mere reference ethnically, or architecturally, nor is it simply coincidental as part of a wider affinity with a classical approach, but it is rather, an intended invigorating implant, implying that the New Zealand vernacular can be even more richly aligned to an appreciation of material, technology, and form. This seems to be a reasoned emotional choice. Cross-fertilisation and the vigour of hybridisation is the goal. Yet there can be doubts. There is perhaps a fine line between this path Kirkland is treading and romanticism. Can this house be clearly seen as the outcome of one or the other? Its form is clear enough, with its sofa (hall), and two sekiliks (raised seating alcoves) at either end, and two oda (rooms) opening onto the sofa. More allusive tendencies are already embodied in New Zealand's Victorian, and Orientalist-orientated Arts and Crafts traditions, and their development in the context of the bungalows of the 1920s and 1930s. The Kirkland House is too frank in its use of Ottoman form to be considered in these terms. Its curiosity about Ottoman architecture is too far-reaching; its re-organisation of the New Zealand vernacular is too deep, too convincing, too classically enacted to be solely a romantic interest. But is this nevertheless a direction backwards?



Maxwell House (1986)
Nor-west elevation

The Kirkland House, by means of its detailed finesse and quality, and consideration of environmental performance, indicates the considerable distance this design-direction has already been advanced. A review of Kirkland's earlier design and building-work is beyond the scope of this review. Suffice to note an assessment of the Modern-Movement and its Ottoman susceptibility in the exquisite loggia for Sir Alan and Lady Stewart, (1982) on the north and west-front of their cliff-top house at Whakatane; also the carved Radiata posts in the Chisholm House, (1985) at Maxwell Avenue, Grey Lynn; and the Maxwell House, (1986) at Army Bay, Whangaparaoa. The Maxwell House has a cruciform hipped-roof of singular beauty with a central sofa, glazed on its east-arm, and a porch with carved posts on its north-arm. The

implications of this form for weather-boarding, timber-framing, concrete-work, corrugated-iron, and double-hung sashes are all convincingly essayed. In the recently designed McKenzie House (1990) at Paekakariki, classical elements are further closely adapted to a New Zealand life-style. Its symmetries and regularities are balanced by the peculiarities of its situation. But of course that is exactly what the Ottoman tradition, and any classical vernacular, is practised at. This house is satisfyingly sited according to a New Zealander's expectation, no matter how much one equates the Bosphorus with Cook Strait; up a hillside, overlooking the sea, managing with its neighbours to maintain its own advantage of identity and exhilaration; with a basic variety of internal spaces, and deploying New Zealand vernacular elements in specific ways; with also a touch of Middle New Zealand déjà-vu.

In conclusion, whatever the independent failings, or thoughtful detail, of these two Haslett Street houses, they can be seen to share something of distinction which closely identifies them with their own neighbourhood. I think it is their siting, their larger response to the landscape, and their use of a familiar building-vernacular, which fastens these two houses securely in place and which gives them local identity. This is not distracted from by arbitrary style, but rather, their sense of enlivened ordinariness might well cause the viewer to become aligned sympathetically with them.

'after Titian':

Intertextuality and Deconstruction in an Early Painting by Colin McCahon

Laurence Simmons

Texts deconstruct *themselves* by themselves, it is enough to recall it or recall them to oneself.
Jacques Derrida, *Memories for Paul de Man*, 1983, Memoria for Paul de Man,
The Wellek Library Lectures at the University of California, Irvine,
Columbia University Press, New York, 1986

Any discourse must wrestle with the problem of its beginning and consequently the problem of its origin and of origins in general. Every textual beginning of necessity establishes its non-primary originality by inscribing a principle of repetition, which does not privilege any anteriority, since all beginning does – as Edward Said has so eloquently and complexly argued in *Beginnings*[1] – is repeat itself as beginning. A discourse, it has been argued, is intelligible only in terms of a prior body of discourse which it implicitly or explicitly takes up, prolongs, cites, refutes, transforms, and which it uses as a foundation. Thus a fundamental element of the internal coherence of any text consists in the organisation of systems of recall of other texts and without this 'intertextuality' a text would simply be unintelligible. And, in this sense, the meaning and structure of a text is grasped only through its relation to others of which it may be the realisation, transformation, or transgression. Another way of expressing this is to say that every text stages a pre-text which acts as, or takes the place of, that which the text is supposed to represent or repeat. The use of the term 'intertextuality' to cover these features has become widely accepted in literary circles but, as Jonathan Culler has recently complained, specific analyses dedicated to intertextuality have essentially ended up being a studies of what more traditional stylistic criticism defined as 'sources' of a text and as such connected with the evolution of literary styles.[2] Julia Kristeva who first coined the term in 1966 has more recently re-emphasised that 'intertextuality' must not be seen as an accumulation of influences and textual sources, but is concerned with the complex transformation and assimilation of various texts:

> The term intertextuality denotes [the] transposition of one (or several) sign-system(s) into another; but since this term has often been understood in the banal sense of 'study of sources', we prefer the term transposition because it specifies that the passage from one signifying system to another demands a new articulation of the thetic – of

Laurence Simmons is employed as a lecturer at the University of Auckland in the English Department teaching Media Studies and in the Italian Department teaching Renaissance Studies. He is currently working on his doctoral thesis. In addition to teaching, Laurence has written a number of articles and co-edited with Jamie Ross a Festschrift on the artist Gordon Walters (1989), has been a guest editor of Antic *special edition on psychoanalysis, and it is planned that he will edit a special issue of* Interstices *on contemporary Italian thought in architecture.*

1. Edward Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, New York: Basic Books, 1975.
2. Jonathan Culler, 'Presupposition and Intertextuality' in his *The Pursuit of Signs. Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981; pp. 100-118.

opp. Titian (Tiziano Vecelli),
The Entombment, 1559
oil on canvas 1370 x 1750 mm
The Prado, Museum

> enunciative and denotative positionality. If one grants that every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (an intertextuality), one then understands that its 'place' of enunciation and its denoted 'object' are never single, complete and identical to themselves, but always plural, shattered, capable of being tabulated.[3]

It is clear, then, that the fluid metaphors of 'influence' and 'source' are better replaced by the textural network of differential relations contained in the associations of 'texture' and 'weave', but it yet remains to be seen if Kristeva's preference for 'transposition' reflects a more accurate description of such a complex process.

With reference to painting and paintings as texts, it is curious that the phenomenon of intertextuality appears to constitute the nucleus of the research of the traditional disciplines. Art History, until recently, has almost always proceeded by attempting to identify a painting's intertext(s) through the bugbear of influence or by examining relationships with other works, other texts, of the same artist in terms of a chain of cause and effect. What the art historian has not managed to arrive at is the systematic way in which the intertext is manifested in a painting. This is so because until now the connections made have always been singular: such an object can be found in such a preceding or successive relationship and is to be considered as cause or effect of these ulterior or preceding instances of verification; or the links have merely been catalogued as the peculiar types of borrowings of a particular artist. A second problem concerns the very nature of the textual segments selected as transferred. Iconologists spoke of a 'transmigration of motifs', by which they meant the transfer of a represented object from one work to another. The problem with such a theory of contamination of images is the problem of the original and originary text. Meyer Schapiro has argued that Renaissance painting has consistently drawn its motifs from literary texts and that effective response means reading in the painting the story that the painting has attempted to 'translate' into visual images.[4] Schapiro's discussion, however, still favours historical-causal relationships in its reductive search for literary sources of images, rather than shifting attention to the communicative function of their descriptive metalanguage. It is not by chance that the philosopher Jacques Derrida has recently deconstructed a text by Schapiro on Heidegger's interpretation of a painting by Van Gogh, showing how the traditional desire for attribution of classical art history leads Schapiro to commit gross acts of visual misinterpretation (to see in that painting a pair of shoes where in fact there are only two left ones).[5] From the opposite direction to production of images, but still from the point of view of semiotics, it is possible to argue, like Jean-Louis Schefer, that a painting has no other referent or *a priori* structure than the text that finally expresses it, the textual structures of which it is the system. Accordingly to describe a painting, to create what perhaps we should call its 'post-text', is to constitute it. For Schefer the text does not duplicate the painting, it recovers the secret of its generation, and criticism is merely the

3. Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, translated by Margaret Waller with an Introduction by Leon Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press, 1974; pp. 59-60.
4. Meyer Schapiro, *Words and Pictures: On the Literal and the Symbolic in the Illustration of a Text*, The Hague: Mouton, 1973.
5. Jacques Derrida, 'Restitutions of the truth in pointing [pointure]' in *The Truth in Painting*, translated by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press; 1987: pp. 255-382. The French original is to be found in *La vérité en peinture*, Paris: Flammarion, 1978.

writing out of the painting's writing.[6]

In order to verify the specific modes of the pictorial manifestation of intertextuality in an attempt to demonstrate that the phenomenon of intertextuality is not simply a network of sources, more or less explicitly recalled by the painting, but is more fundamentally an architectural principle of the painting as text, it may be fruitful to turn to some recent elucidations of literary criticism.[7] From the position of textual production and an individual author's more or less explicit use of parody, borrowing or revolt, Harold Bloom has advanced a sophisticated psychological interpretation of literary evolution where the intertextual is compressed to a relationship between two individuals – a relationship that is seen in psychoanalytical terms as analogous to that of father and son.[8] Poets, according to Bloom, suffer from an Oedipal 'anxiety of influence', a complex which leads a writer to alter the literary models which she or he reacts to by a variety of rhetorical figures: *clinamen* prolonging the work of one's predecessor or bringing it to its final point or conclusion; *tessera* creating something new but something which calls for a reconsideration of the predecessor's work as a whole; *kenosis* the radical break with the 'Father'; *askesis* purging oneself of the common knowledge that one shares with a predecessor; *apophrades* creating a work that seems paradoxically the source not the result of the previous work (works of literature are never mere memories as Borges says, writers rewrite what they remember and in so doing they paradoxically influence their predecessors). In Bloom's terms literary history is to be viewed as no more than a 'family romance', with each new generation anxious and active to establish its originality on the poetic battlefield of tradition. But this posing of the problematic of intertextuality in terms of the history of the producer of the text, the shifting of emphasis from texts to persons, means that as a theory it is incapable of handling intertextual phenomena on any sophisticated level, since it seeks to uncover an order for intertextuality exclusively in its conditions of production rather than its forms.

On the other hand, forms of intertextuality are exactly what have been examined in detail by the French critic Gérard Genette in an attempt to obtain a functioning and operational model of citation.[9] Genette has proposed the following five textual relationships for which he suggests the name 'transtextuality': *intertextuality* a reduction of the original blanket use of the term but still containing the variants of quotation, plagiarism and allusion; *paratextuality* the apparatus that surrounds the text including titles, subtitles, prefaces, postfaces, forewords, marginal notes, footnotes, epigraphs, illustrations, errata, bibliographies, signatures (including autographs and allographs), even the dustjacket and wrapping in which a text may arrive; *metatextuality* the group of metalinguistic indications that forms the critical relation par excellence in the relation of commentary that links one text to another text about which it speaks but may not necessarily cite or even nominate; *architextuality* the genre competence that is instituted in the text; *hypertextuality* the

6. Jean-Louis Schefer, *Scénographie d'un tableau*, Paris: Seuil, 1969.
7. For a review of current positions see Laurent Jenny, 'The Strategy of Form' in *French Literary Theory Today. A Reader*, edited by Tzvetan Todorov and translated by R. Carter, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1982; pp. 34-63; and Jonathan Culler 'Presupposition and Intertextuality', op. cit.
8. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.
9. Gérard Genette, *Introduction à l'architexte*, Paris: Seuil, 1979: *Palimpsestes*, Paris: Seuil, 1982: and *Seuils*, Paris: Seuil, 1987. In this later work the paratext is further divided into 'peritext' and 'epitext'.

typological mechanisms of transfer and the relationship that links text B (the hypertext) with the anterior text A (the hypotext). Despite the usefulness and the rigour of Genette's typology, it may well be that the semiotic mechanisms of intertextual recall cannot be effectively studied by empirical methods and do not accurately reflect levels of coherence and cohesion in a work, even if the employment of these in analysis at a certain stage may be desirable. This is so because the mechanisms of repetition extend to the entire text and their modalities are differential. Each element is a mark, but in every new discourse it is *re*marked through its rhetorical relationship with other terms. On another level this is, of course, tantamount to saying that every critical interpretation of a text must likewise treat that text in some manner as an *intertext*. It is also necessary to add that activating the intertextuality of a text, in establishing the totality of implicit codes and anonymous practices, does not result in a sense or a picture of unity, but rather a textual iridescence of infinite reflexes in what Roland Barthes has described as 'a mirage of citations'.[10]

A more fruitful way of proceeding, I believe, would be to take intertextuality as embodying what the very process of deconstruction seems to do to a text: particularly in its fragmentation of texts into components, codes, discursive practices and the way it exposes repetition as the productive mechanism of a text. Deconstruction confers a new kind of readability on contradictions, obscurities, ambiguities, ellipses, discontinuities and all play of the signifier. A deconstructive reading is an attempt to show how conspicuously foregrounded statements in a text are systematically related to discordant signifying elements that a text has thrown into its shadows or margins: it is an attempt to recover what is lost and to analyse what happens when a text is read solely in function of intentionality, meaningfulness and representativity. This would be to stress the relationship between viewing and painting, reading and writing, both at the moment of composition and at the moment of reception. The real value of this suggestion lies in the fact that deconstruction is not a technique applied to the text from the outside, nor is it a tool brought to bear on a confused or mystified text by an all-seeing critical subject. Texts are constituted by their own deconstruction which has, as Derrida would say, 'always already begun'.[11] Any given monological reading of a text is undermined within the text itself, and any reading which simply latches onto the overt content of the text's assertions, or else onto the rhetorical mode of those assertions, will be a partial reading, and will remain short of what is at work in the text. It is interesting then, despite reservations about the reduction of intertextuality to source-seeking, to see how the reading of allusions in any text will force a critic to underline the citational nature of that text and in so doing put emphasis on the textuality of the text and not its referentiality. As such it has the distinct advantage of being as close as possible to the reading that every text gives of itself, of unveiling the fact that every text is as Paul de Man said 'the allegory of its own reading'.[12]

10. Quoted in Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs*; p. 102.
11. Jacques Derrida, *Memoires for Paul de Man*, translated by Cecile Lindsay, Jonathan Culler, and Eduardo Cadava, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986; pp. 123 ff.
12. Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979; p. 205 and passim.

The consequences of any critical reading as an allegory of reading, following de Man's deconstructive practices, point to the fundamental illegibility of the reading which each text gives of itself, as it unfolds through a sequence of interpretative moves which both strain towards a sense of ultimate understanding and, at the same time, confess the impossible nature of any such achievement. What the text says incessantly about itself is only the fundamental illegibility of its reading of itself which the critical text then takes as its origin. In this manner the textual scene, founded upon the referentiality of the text, the supposition of an author, of a narration and a reader, is demystified completely. In addition, by seeing interpretation itself as a fiction-making activity, deconstruction has displaced the authoritative metalinguistic status of textual interpretation and exemplified theory's own undecidable status *vis-a-vis* the text. The necessarily intertextual nature of any utterance reflects the difficulty of describing intertextuality since, as Barthes states: 'The *I* that approaches the text is already a plurality of other texts, of infinite or, more precisely, lost codes (whose origins are lost).'[13]

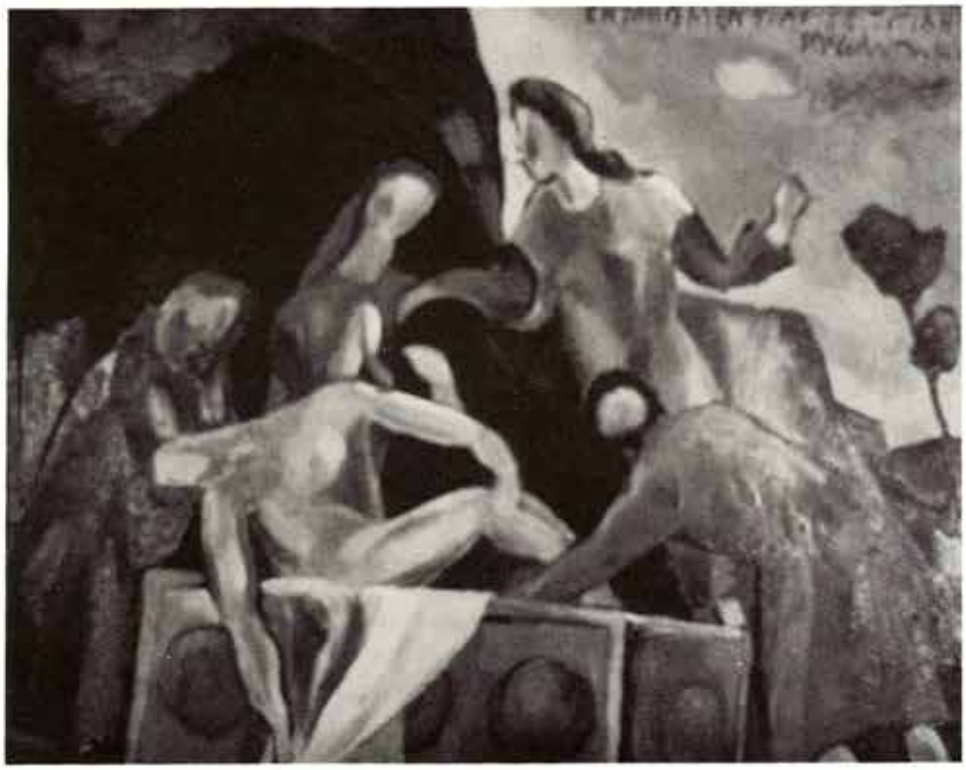
Now let us return to the traditions of art history to examine a painting based upon a painting with these comments on 'textual effects' in mind. The painting I have in mind is an early religious work by Colin McCahon, entitled *Entombment, after Titian* painted in 1947 and which may be found today in the National Art Gallery, Wellington. McCahon's painting, as its title indicates, consciously uses as its foundation the Venetian Renaissance painter Titian's *Entombment* of 1559, which is today found in the Prado, Madrid, and possibly a similar and later version of the same subject of c. 1566 also in the Prado. In biographical terms it reflects McCahon's personal response to his exposure about 1946 to various Quattro and Cinquecento Italian painters and paintings then available to him in reproduction for the first time.[14] It also relates directly to several versions, drawings, watercolours and oils of a similar subject McCahon completed at the same time, in particular a painting of the same title and the same year in a private collection in Christchurch described by McCahon in 1974 as 'the very first of them',[15] and more generically to works such as *Christ Taken from the Cross* and *The Marys at the Tomb.* But let us separate for the moment questions concerning the internal development of McCahon's oeuvre from a direct response to specific paintings, in order to concentrate on the textual effects of McCahon's allusion. There are three that may be significantly highlighted:

First of all, the underlying and the strong effect of the direct allusion to the work by Titian is the fact that this painting by McCahon proposes to its viewer the moment of painting as one of a game of difference and repetition. Through a definite allusion specified in the title, and made manifest in the textual machine,

13. Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, translated by Richard Miller, New York: Hill and Wang, 1974; p. 10.
14. Both paintings by Titian are illustrated on facing pages in the 1936 German edition of H. Tietze's *Titian*, Phaidon Press, a copy of which McCahon possessed, cf Gordon H. Brown, *Colin McCahon: Artist*, Wellington: A.H. and A.W. Reed, 1984; p. 218, note 4.2.
15. Quoted in Luit Beiringa, *McCahon 'Religious' Works*, Palmerston North: Manawatu Art Gallery, 1975; p. 53.

overleaf

1. Entombment (after Titian), 1946
oil on canvas
5150 x 6350 mm
2. The entombment (after Titian) 1947
oil on cardboard
520 x 650 mm
National Art Gallery, Wellington



intertextuality is proposed as the ultimate subject matter of painting, not only this painting. The painting is not only a source of meaning, but is also an open re-source of meanings. This is also heightened extra-textually by the many versions of this painting around it, such that the reading of each individual painting is synecdochic and the total meaning must be larger than that which each separate painting conveys. McCahon's painting can be taken, then, as emblematic of a certain ontology of painting, and its play of textual difference and repetition may be mapped as follows:

Entombment (Titian)	Entombment (Priv. Coll.)	Entombment (Nat. Gal.)
Central compositional unit of six figures, from left to right around the sarcophagus containing Christ: Joseph of Arimathaea, Virgin Mary, John the Evangelist, Mary Magdalene, Nicodemus.	Central compositional unit of six figures from left to right around the sarcophagus containing Christ: Joseph of Arimathaea, Mary of Bethany(?), Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, Nicodemus.	Compositional unit of five figures to the left of centre, from left to right: Mary of Bethany(?), Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, Nicodemus and Christ in open tomb.
Figures make up over two-thirds of the total compositional value.	Figures are less than half of the total compositional value.	Figures cover approximately one third of composition.
Joseph of Arimathaea: garments of yellow ochre and white, a distinguishing beard, supporting the body of Christ from behind. Purported to be a self-portrait of Titian.	Joseph of Arimathaea: red garment with a distinguishing beard and a similar gesture to the figure in Titian's painting.	Absent.
Virgin Mary: dressed in a dark blue garment, supports Christ's arm but also leans forward perhaps to kiss Christ.	Virgin Mary: dark blue-black garments, more deliberately bent down over Christ's arm.	Virgin Mary: dressed in blue with white cowl, not touching Christ's body.
John the Evangelist: an indistinct figure dressed in red in the background with only his face visible.	A female figure (Mary of Bethany?) in an analogous position with hands clasped in prayer, dressed in light-blue.	A female figure (Mary of Bethany?) dressed in red.
Mary Magdalene: Dressed in white with arms thrown up in a dramatic gesture of grief and placed behind the Virgin.	Mary Magdalene: Dressed in white and blue garments and hands repeat the gesture of Titian's figure. This figure dominates in composition.	Mary Magdalene: a dominant figure dressed in blue, placed behind the Virgin whose back her arms touch.
Nicodemus: dressed in red, leaning into sarcophagus to place Christ's feet. Bald patch is a distinguishing feature.	Nicodemus: Dressed in yellow ochre and leaning into the sarcophagus.	Nicodemus: Kneeling at rear of sarcophagus on right with head bent down and bald patch recognisable.
Christ: the following features are noticeable: the unsupported head, the curve of the left arm	Christ: the curves of the arms are copied from Titian and accentuated, the legs are not so visible,	Christ: the curve of the arms and the angularity of the legs is particularly pronounced.

taken round through the top of the torso, the angularity of the legs bent at the knee.	the body is slighter.	
The gaze of all the figures except John the Evangelist in this composition is directed down towards Christ.	There is no delineation of eyes and facial features but a similar direction of gaze as in Titian results from the direction of the heads.	The direction of the gaze is down towards Christ except for the displaced figure of Nicodemus.
Gestures and interaction of hands an important compositional element.	Gestures significant for the overall composition.	Gestures and position of hands of relatively little importance.
The background of Titian's composition is clearly divided in two with the division further emphasised by being carried down through the edge of the sarcophagus. Features include the stone face of the burial cave on the left, clouds and distant hills on the right with a distinct tree and in the immediate foreground vegetation of grasses and small plants.	Here the landscape is divided almost evenly and the arch of the burial cave is more defined, as are the outlines of the hills that follow the outline of the figures, the solitary tree on the right is the only specific example of vegetation.	The natural background is much more extensive than in the other compositions although there is no apparent rock face or cave. The three crosses and the ladder recall the earlier moment of deposition. The forms of the hills are closely repeated in the human figures. There is no detail of vegetation.
The orientation of the sarcophagus is a dominant element. The angle of view is almost that of eye-level level with the open top. The scenes in the grisaille represent 'The Sacrifice of Isaac' and 'Cain Slaying Abel' and are examples of prefigurations of the death of Christ.	The sarcophagus is presented complete and from a similar angle and a circular pattern has been added to suggest the grisaille scenes of Titian.	The angle of view of the open sarcophagus is from above and to the left and the shape is a semicircle. There is no obvious decoration.
Signed on tablet in centre in gold letters: TITIANUS VECELLIUS AEQUES CAES.	Title, signature and date in upper right corner.	Inscription (partial title) date and signature.

16. Ibid, p. 1.

Let us begin by considering some of the traditional readings and the longstanding acceptance of what constitutes McCahon's differential practice in these paintings. Previous discussions have emphasised the reductive, subtractive mode of composition on McCahon's part. Luit Beiringa, for example, who has commented in some detail on the early religious paintings, suggests that McCahon was 'less concerned with visual exactitude than with the meaning behind [the images]' and that his ultimate aim was 'to reconcile those religious symbols of an especially European derivation with his New Zealand setting'. To do this the borrowed images were 'reconstituted' by McCahon and 'simplified to regain direct impact and avoid obscurity'.[16] More recently, Gordon Brown has proposed that 'McCahon has

17. Gordon H. Brown, *Colin McCahon: Artist*, p. 37.
18. Ibid, p. 38.

stripped away the niceties of late Renaissance style so that the only strong connection to remain is the intense feeling for the common theme implicit in each painting' and that the depiction of 'human activity' is 'kept to a minimum'.[17] Brown, too, wishes to see historical and geographical reconciliation as the impetus for this: 'One of McCahon's deepest desires was to make the events of the divine drama real to New Zealanders and the contemporary situation in which they found themselves.'[18]

What I want to argue is that although this view may respond to some of the manifest features of the painting, it does so in terms that misapprehend the foregrounded play of textual similarity and difference. These assumptions do not recognise that the pictorial composition of McCahon's *Entombment* in the National Gallery (NG) is a great deal more complex than appeals to the notion of subtractive composition would have us believe. Observe, to begin with, the tangle of the figural qualities of these paintings. It is clear, with respect to the elements of figure in Titian's 1559 composition (T), that in the Christchurch *Entombment* (PC) and NG we have a visible reduction (a subtraction) in compositional value and in their number and also some misreadings of their identity (a point I wish to return to shortly). What is also clear, however, is how the spatial structure of each painting is constituted by the disposition of the figures included. The figures may be seen as comprising a vigorous network of lines, including a number of axes that have been arranged so as to reflect each other back and forth across the picture surface, building up a central triangular compositional unit.

Let us take T first, there are a clear number of parallel lines that bisect the composition diagonally: from left to right – Christ's body, left arm and leg; the forward tilt of Nicodemus' body; Mary Magdalene's outstretched arms; the line of the Virgin Mary's body and John the Evangelist's clasped hands; from right to left – Christ's knees; the winding sheet; Joseph of Arimithaea's back. One can immediately see, as well, an analogous but counterpointed series of vertical lines: Christ's right arm; Joseph of Arimathaea's leg; the projecting corner of the tomb; the line of the lighter-coloured fold of Nicodemus' garment. With PC the central triangular aspect of the composition is tightened and echoed in the arched cave in the background which could also be seen as a sort of displaced shadow of the central group. Again, the axes of contrast are clear: for the diagonals, from left to right, we have – Christ's right arm, the line of Mary Magdalene's body, Nicodemus' back, the leaning tree and the outline of the background hills; from right to left – the left side of the cave arch, the Virgin Mary's body, Nicodemus' left arm, the upper part of Joseph of Arimathaea's body. Strong vertical and horizontal lines are clearly discernible as well: for the verticals – the cliff line, the protruding corner and left edge of the tomb, the side of Christ's body and the folds of the winding sheet; for the horizontals – the line across the top of the sepulchre and that across the top of Christ's body. In NG there is clearly a reduction in the

significance of gesture as the figures have a static or semaphoric quality, but the function of these elements is taken over by the lines of the hills in the background: the verticals are strongly represented by the three crosses; the diagonals left to right by the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene as well as Christ and the hills on the viewer's right; the diagonals from right to left by Mary of Bethany, the ladder, winding sheet and the hills on the left. In many respects a tighter more complex integration of figures is achieved here. The triangular basis of composition, for example, is emphasised by the three crosses which provide encompassing lines of connection. With their reduction in number and the elimination of centripetal gestures to produce more static elements, the figures may be said to be reflected in and to some extent comprehended by the background. The composition of NG emerges from our discussion as closer to that of T than seemed possible, and if we go on to compare certain aspects of how the backgrounds in these three paintings are rendered, the connection is seen to be more proximate still.

One of the most striking features of Titian's *Entombment* is the syncope or break between the two halves of the composition: the left-hand side containing the dark indistinct cliff and carrying literally the greatest weight of the composition with the greatest number of mourners; the right-hand being a lighter, more open landscape vista, and appearing more volatile in its figural aspects. This sense of division is further emphasised by the dividing line of the protruding tomb edge. As well, both the hazy atmosphere of the background and the oblique angle of the tomb, with its dramatic disposition of surrounding figures rather like a stage set, serve to foreground the action. In PC the division of the background into two elements remains clear as do the stage set attributes as the angle of view has only slightly shifted. There is, however, more attempt to define the background and to relate it to the foregrounded figures: the outline of the hills on the right follows the line of the figures, the colour of Joseph of Arimathaea's garment is mirrored on the opposite side in the background hills, the outline of the burial cave is much more pronounced. In NG the angle of the spectator's point of view has changed significantly, now being directed down from above on a tomb whose interior is visible. The now rounded tomb neutralises the function of the foregrounding of the tomb corner in T and PC as does the more extensive background of this composition as a whole. It is still possible to observe the syncopation in two of the composition: the central vertical cross divides into complex left and a simple, clear right elements, and one could speak more accurately of the figures being comprehended by the landscape, in both senses of the word.

What is here briefly traced in the passage T/PC/NG, in other words, is a sort of constant flickering of presence and absence where meaning is scattered along the whole chain of signifiers as something suspended, having been or still to come. Such a complex process does little to support the traditional view that the stripped down effect of the minimal is to emphasise the simplicity and self-sufficiency as well

as the pictorial and ontological completeness of NG.

Secondly, the textual allusion has the status of an explicit mark of the intention of the painter. The painting as a text declares its own complete control of the textual scene in the selection of model spectator as captive of the authority of the painter as author. The explicit allusion of the title functions internally in the text to declare and convince that the author controls the process of intertextuality and dissemination – a process which in reality however at least partially escapes him. McCahon's simultaneous dependence on and disengagement from the Renaissance tradition are highlighted in those elements that seem clearly to respond to each other and therefore to play with allusion. The allusion proves the dependence of one painting upon the other and, at the same time, the desire of the alluding text to conceal, or at least make enigmatic, such dependence. With this gesture the text reads itself as if it were produced by the reading that it chooses, interprets and reinscribes. Thus it invites its viewer/reader to read in the traces of its omniscient and omnipresent painter/viewer. Titles, in fact, represent one of the most crucial intertextual mechanisms of painting and serve to undercut the values of closure and self-containment traditionally ascribed to individual paintings. McCahon's 'after Titian', with its connotations of 'consequent upon' and 'temporally subsequent', immediately implicates the work in an intertextual matrix that includes both pictorial genre and canonic subject. And such a theoretical self-consciousness can be seen historically as a feature of McCahon's modernism: 'the increased theoretical self-consciousness of modernist painters expressed itself in (among other things) an awareness of the utility of names.'[19]

From a postmodernist critical perspective the curious appending of a visible signature in each of the compositions is to be recognised as a further form of the taking of responsibility. Each signature shifts position – from lower centre to upper right to upper left – and while this shifting in itself may not be important, it does direct our attention to certain correspondences between the form of the signature and the form of the composition as we shall see.

Traditionally a signature attests to the presence to consciousness, and thus the control, of a signifying intention. In the realm of art history the signature has been used restrictively for authorisation and authentication. Similarly, in the realm of banking, which, after all, may not be so distant, for a signature to function it must have an iterable, repeatable form, it must conform to a model and be recognised as repetition to validate a cheque. But if we ask, following Derrida, what enables a signature to function in this way, we find that the real effect of signature is to disperse the subject in the text. By visible signing what is being signaled here is painting as a process of appropriation, a signing for a world, the painter making it his vision or thing, and this is emphasised in all our three cases by the very compositional integration of the proper name. What is at work in the signing of

19. Stephen Bann, 'The Mythical Conception is the Name: Titles and Names in Modern and Post-Modern Painting', *Word & Image*, Vol. 1 no. 2, April-June 1985; p. 182.

these three paintings is what Karl Abraham in an early psychoanalytical essay called 'the determining force of names',[20] a notion which Geoffrey Hartman has recently taken up to suggest that every artist may be productively, if unconsciously, in conflict with his or her own name and each text is at once an acknowledging of this and an attempt at mastering it. The immodesty of Titian's reference to his Imperial Knighthood 'AEQUES CAES' ('may you equal Caesar') inscribed on the tablet in his *Entombment* is a clear indication of such a struggle, as is the monumental M of McCahon's later I AM paintings. Compositionally, as we have also seen, all three paintings in question may be considered as a series of interactions between the diagonal and the vertical, perhaps then it is no coincidence that the graphic essence of both painters' signatures (TV for Titian and M for McCahon) express that interaction. It is possible to note a more precise M in the position of the dead Christ's legs in NG? Can we also detect an inscribed C for Colin in the unusual shape of McCahon's tomb, as well as in the curve of Mary of Bethany's arm? If all this seems too far fetched to be taken seriously, I would simply point again to McCahon's signing practice throughout his whole oeuvre, where each visible signature has a definite corporeality of its own and is never merely a simple verbal signifier of authorisation.

There is more. The traces of the proper name in the reproduced signature in the text produce a disappropriation while they appropriate. As Derrida has shown in his reading of the contemporary French poet Francis Ponge, the proper name becomes improper:

> A proper name as mark ought to have no meaning, ought to be a pure reference; but since it is a word caught up in the network of a language, it always begins to signify. Sense contaminates this non-sense that is supposed to be kept aside; the name is not supposed to signify anything, yet it does begin to signify.[21]

The work of proper names in producing a text is always caught up in a play of signs whose signifying ramifications it never masters. Derrida's meditation on signatures points to what lies outside the work, to the distinction between what is intrinsic (text) and extrinsic (intertext), and to the structure of its border. In theory signatures lie outside the work, they frame it, present it, authorise it, but it also seems that to truly frame, mark or sign a work the signature must be within at its very heart, it must be incorporated. So the problematical relation of the inside and the outside of the text is played out in its inscription of proper names. As Derrida notes:

> In the form of the whole name, the inscription of the signature plays strangely with frame, with the border of the text, sometimes inside, sometimes outside, sometimes included, sometimes thrown overboard . . .[22]

And so we arrive at the third effect of direct citation, the first as we have seen is the revelation of the intertextual process as a process of the moment and condition of painting, the second is the contrary effect, the text seems to hide the process of

20. Abraham's essay of 1911, entitled 'On the Determining Force of Names', is mentioned by Geoffrey H. Hartman in his *Saving the Text. Literature/Derrida/Philosophy*, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press;1981: pp. 96-117. On signatures in general cf. Jean-Claude Lebensztejn, 'Esquisse d'une typologie', *Revue de l'Art*, 26;1974: pp. 46-56. In another context Tony Green also speaks of McCahon 'finding his signature' in the 1940s, cf. his 'McCahon's Visit to the United States', *Bulletin of New Zealand Art History*, 3, 1975; p. 20.
21. Jacques Derrida, quoted in Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction. Theory and Criticism After Structuralism* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983; p. 192.
22. Jacques Derrida, Signéponge/Signsponge, translated by Richard Rand, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984; p. 120.

intertextuality and aims to persuade its viewer that it controls every aspect of its own composition. Seeming at once to deny and to explicitly declare its own processes, it desires to show off that it is in complete control of its textual determinations.

The third effect of explicit allusion is that as a gesture it does not proceed in any unitary interpretative line. In fact it both affirms and negates simultaneously the other text, on the one hand the allusive intention declares the domination of the originary text on the other it reflects a deep despair that in its extreme becomes a parody or in its paradoxical form may appear primitive and thus place itself at the beginning of the tradition rather than at its culmination, thus antedating its original and constituting its own model.

These considerations find support in McCahon's handling of the elements of scene and time. With the visible elements of the crucifixion (crosses) and deposition (ladder), and in spite of the 'after Titian', the temporal indications of NG point to a moment *before* that depicted by Titian in his *Entombment*. Another feature that deserves emphasis in this connection is the confusion over or misreading of the identity of the figures in T on McCahon's part. The exchange of Mary of Bethany for John the Evangelist in PC and NG and the absence of Joseph of Arimathaea in NG indicate not only an overall shifting of the balance of gender and the inscription of yet another M by McCahon into his text, but also the temporal dimensions of the event depicted. The presence of three Marys at the tomb points both to a later event and a subsequent composition by McCahon. What is being represented here, then, is not so much a precise historical event but the (hi)story of the very process of representation itself and all the mobile circuit of substitutions, displacements, condensations and recombinations involved. If we wish to find another instance of the complexity of compositional interplay, we may detect this in McCahon's reading of Titian's elaborate and radical use of colour. Since the critical reaction of Vasari, Titian's particular use of colour (*colorito*), as opposed to the accepted graphic values of line and form (*disegno*), have remained a focal centre for discussions of his work which have emphasised his avoidance of well-defined linear contours, as well as the softness and blending of his colours. These practices, it is believed, derive from Titian's working method of blocking in masses of colour at the early working stages of his composition.[23] McCahon in NG has shifted the balance and the figural associations of colour from Titian, emphasising both red and blue which are also repeated as blocks in the landscape background. As well, in contrast to the delicacy and suffusion in Titian, McCahon's linear outlines and contours in NG are strongly defined in black and contribute considerably to the primitive appearance of his work. There is a further instance where the displacing movement of the sign in the dynamics of these paintings postulates a return to the same and in so doing a return to the origin. As has already been noted, the compositional weight of Titian's *Entombment* is given over to the figure, as well as to

23. On colour in Titian cf. Theodor Hetzer, *Tizian, Geschichte seiner Farbe*, Frankfurt, 1935; 1948.

drapery and the clothing of the figures in general. Upon close observation of NG, it is clear that this weighting is echoed and recuperated in its very antithesis: McCahon's background hills contain all the multifaceted infolding, creasing and composed disarrangement of the garments of Titian's figures. This apparent landscape is more than landscape and manifests a connection with the original staging of the figure in T. Upon further observation, it could also be speculated that these background hills are suggestive of some kind of painted (canvas) backdrop draped over an uneven set support, thus providing an illusory scene of the text of painting and (inter)texuality itself: 'etymologically the text is a cloth; *textus*, from which text derives means "woven".[24] That such possibly different signifying mechanisms are exhibited by these two texts under the aegis of the same or analogous signifiers implies a complex strategy of concealment and exposure, continuity and disruption, loyalty and betrayal. Through such a simultaneous movement of retrieval and obliteration intertextuality 'fabricates' a text, and in this very process the notion of the integrity and self-containedness of the text finds itself disestablished.

24. Roland Barthes, 'From Work to Text' in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, edited with an introduction by Josué V. Harari, London: Methuen, 1980; p. 76.

At one extreme, McCahon's reading of Titian may be a disrespectful reading, ironical of a venerable and venerated text and its religious and artistic conventions, through the emptying out of historicity and specificity and in allowing the meaning of representation to take precedence. At the other, it may exhibit a kind of 'textual paranoia' – a mortal fear of abandoning the tradition recalled. Or, on the other hand, it may appear 'primitive' and originary both in style and theme and thus place itself at the beginning of a tradition rather than at its culmination. In the specular reading which each painting gives of the other, one painting would repaint the other, but it would be simultaneously painted by the other, hiding the possible repainting beneath the sameness of the repeated signifier. The irony of deconstructive reading consists in the ambivalence that prevents any elimination of one of these extremes, even if the desire of the reader is for a unitary rationalistic reading. The relation between text and intertext involves the repetitive set up and collapse of their difference, and one could say in fact that this indecision of reading is one of the main intertextual resources of the text.

What is interesting to note at this point is that as the painter's reading is dissolved, so, too, the phantasm of the textual scene dissolves. The textual scene is played out according to its own needs. Criticism assumes the same power that the author/painter appropriates by making an allusion, that is by choosing, fixing, establishing the movement of intertextuality. The power, and one might add the despair, of the critic repeats the gesture of the author: in fact by activating and operating the pretext of allusion the critic assumes the role of the implied reader inscribed in the text.

Let me now rapidly try to theorise the principal strands of the argument. The

author/painter holds together the text, but the text continues to demonstrate its frustrating force, since the presence or absence of the author derives from it at one and the same time. The integrity and intentional self-identity of the individual text are put into question in ways that have nothing to do with concepts of 'originality', 'foundation' and derivateness, since the very notion of self-contained artistic 'property' is shown to be an illusion. When read in terms of its dynamic intertextuality, of intertextuality as deconstruction, the text becomes differently energised, traversed by forces and desires that are invisible or unreadable to those who would see it as homogeneous, a totalisable collection of signifieds. Through this indecision of reading the control and precision of the reading of the author is reduced to illusion and the text can only show through its mechanisms that the reading of itself proposed is in fact the reading of the illegibility of reading.

So it is, too, that the ongoingness of art history is acted out by this text despite an apparent attempt to arrest it. Not in terms of the traditional concerns with the transfer of artistic property, but in terms of misreading or infiltration, that is, violations of property. Not in terms of a comfortable Oedipal reading between father and son in which there is a reciprocal reinforcing relationship, even if it be based upon antagonism, but mining the solidity of the textual scene through a diasporic, disseminating, intertextualising reading. It is also worth noting at this point the similarities between this deconstructive gesture and the ways in which gender and feminist criticism might similarly subvert the underlying traditional paradigms of intertextual theory. Intertextuality has long been viewed as a struggle between fathers and sons, and it would not be exaggerated to say that both art and literary history have viewed it as an exclusively male affair. The presumption of both these histories in the past has been to take issue with gender only when it has become an issue if the author or painter was a woman, and to maintain the ultimate conception of beauty as a female body: naked, immobile and mute. As Susan Gubar remarks in a recent article entitled 'The "Blank Page" and the Issues of Female Creativity': 'When the metaphors of literary [and we could easily extend that to artistic] creativity are filtered through a sexual lens, female sexuality is often identified with textuality'.[25] Intertextuality may radically de-psychologise and deconstruct such male-dominated reifications and we are only beginning to touch here on a new and exciting area that Barbara Johnson has labelled 'the intertextualities of intersexuality'.[26]

What further complicates the issue is that any deconstructive strategy comes to find itself in a position of paradoxical relativity between its own discourse and its own theories as Paul de Man, in an essay entitled 'The Resistance to Theory', has convincingly shown.[27] At the end of his essay de Man observes how deconstructive literary theory is a non-theory or 'the universal theory of the impossibility of theory' to conclude ironically that: 'To the extent however that they are theory, rhetorical readings, like the other kinds, still avoid and resist the reading they

25. Susan Gubar, 'The 'Blank Page' and the Issues of Female Creativity' in *The New Feminist Criticism. Essays on Women, Literature and Theory*, edited by Elaine Showalter, London: Virago Press, 1985; p. 294.
26. Barbara Johnson, 'Les fleurs du mal armé: Some Reflections on Intertextuality' in *Lyric Poetry. Beyond New Criticism*, edited by Chaviva Hosek and Patricia Parker, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985; pp. 264-280.
27. Paul de Man, 'The Resistance to Theory', in *Yale French Studies, 63*, 1982; pp. 3-20.

advocate. Nothing can overcome the resistance to theory since theory *is* itself this resistance.' This means, of course, that intertextuality or deconstructive discourse does not support its own control, it declares itself at one and the same time the master and the servant of discourse. But in the sense that its critical practice is capable of undoing and exposing the links in and of a text, exhibiting in such a way its own virtuosity and strength, deconstructive discourse comes to occupy, at least momentarily, all the positions of power (coherence, authority, truth) that it makes vacillate in other texts. In particular it acquires an extreme power of seduction by measuring itself through the force of other texts and by coming out as victor in the confrontation. I say momentarily, for any deconstructive gesture may only wait and want in turn for its moment as victim, for the moment of its deconstruction.

Incorporating Architecture

Paul Walker

> Any discourse must wrestle with the problem of its beginning and consequently the problem of its origin and of origins in general. Every textual beginning of necessity establishes its non-primary originality by inscribing a principle of repetition. . . .

Explanations of the origins of architecture have repeatedly been presented as explanations of the origins of shelter, of building. Architecture is taken to be building, to have its origins and its ends in building. Architecture is a corpus of buildings, a canon of masterpieces. Or it is certain kinds of building; cathedrals say, but not bicycle sheds. Or refined or elegant or symbolic or meaningful building. Or decorated building. Whatever else architecture might be it is building, and its origins are one with those of building.

Near the end of *On Adam's House in Paradise* (we are dealing with mankind here) Joseph Rykwert writes that: 'The return to origins always implies a rethinking of what you do customarily, an attempt to renew the validity of your everyday actions, or simply a recall of the natural (or even divine) sanction for your repeating them for a season. In the present rethinking of why we build and what we build for, the primitive hut will, I suggest, retain its validity as a reminder of the original and therefore essential meaning of all building for people: that is, of architecture.' But this primitive hut, he writes, should not be taken '. . . as a shelter against the weather, but as a volume which he [Adam, man] could interpret in terms of his own body and which yet was an exposition of the paradisiacal plan, and therefore established him at the centre of it'.[1]

I want to place this in doubt, this pretence that we can always return immediately to the origin of our discourse, architecture, equated with the origins of building, whenever we feel need for recuperation. It is a pretence that history does not matter. I want to introduce this doubt by citing another text on the primitive, Claude Levi-Strauss's *Tristes Tropiques*. Lévi-Strauss gives a beautifully arcadian description of a village made by the Burmese Kuki tribe.[2] Their:

> . . . houses were not so much built as knotted together, plaited, woven, embroidered, and given a patina by long use. Those who lived in them were not overwhelmed by great blocks of unyielding stone; these were houses that reacted immediately and with great flexibility to their presence, their every movement. The house was, in fact,

Paul Walker graduated from the University of Auckland with a PhD in Architectural Theory. Walker currently works for Ian Athfield Architects and lectures part-time at Victoria University in Architectural Theory and Criticism and Design. He will be a guest editor of a future special issue of Interstices *on Ornament.*

1. Joseph Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1972; pp. 192 and 190.
2. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *A World on the Wane*, (translated from *Tristes Tropiques*, 1955), London: Hutchinson, 1961; pp. 198-199.

opp from D. Barbaro, *I dieci libri* (1556), verso of frontispiece

> subject to the householder, whereas with us the opposite is the case. The village served the villagers as a coat of light elastic armour; they wore it as a European woman wears her hats. It was an object of personal adornment on a mammoth scale, and those who had built it had been clever enough to preserve something of the spontaneity of natural growth. Leafage and the springing branch were combined, in short, with the exactations of the carefully planned lay-out.
>
> And when they went forth from their houses it was if they had just slipped out of an enormous dressing gown of ostrich feathers. Their houses were caskets lined with down, it might have seemed, and their bodies the jewels within them.

But however desirable these houses are, they are not the kind we know. Our architecture is not like this, even if one believes, as perhaps Lévi-Strauss does, that it properly should be. In a later chapter of *Tristes Tropiques*, the chapter titled 'The Writing Lesson', well known because of Jacques Derrida's attending to it in *Of Grammatology*, Lévi-Strauss writes briefly of the origins of architecture as *we* know it. He links these origins with the invention of writing, which for him would also be the invention of history and inequality and alienation and inauthenticity; writing made it 'possible to assemble work people by the thousand and set them tasks that taxed them to the limits of their strength: to this, surely, we must attribute the beginnings of architecture as we know it'.

But if there are differences between Lévi-Strauss and Rykwert – for the one paradise is a (sadly disappearing) reality from which we have long been excluded by the operation in our culture of writing, while for the other it is a fiction (sometimes a written fiction) with a power of renewal on which we can always call – they are alike insofar as both describe a very close relation between the primitive building, the essential building, and the bodies that occupy it. As close, perhaps, as the relation of the body and the soul.

It is the assumption of this close relation that makes the body so important a motif in architectural theory, for the architecture that links itself absolutely to the body, that appropriates the human body, is guaranteed privilege now and forever, for bodies are always and everywhere the same. A natural constant, so it is assumed.

Recently, writers and readers on architecture have taken up this theme again. Not a new book, but one that has recently been reread is Geoffrey Scott's *The Architecture of Humanism*, first published in 1914. Written as a defence of the classical architecture of the Renaissance, Scott's book attacks various views of architecture which he calls fallacies (romantic, mechanical, ethical and biological fallacies) which have their beginning mostly in the eighteenth century, but it also attacks over-intellectualised theorising in general, including the codification of the orders of classical architecture and the Renaissance veneration of the Vitruvian text. Scott does not think much of Vitruvius, and argues that the pre-eminence of his status as

a theorist (all Renaissance theory is perhaps to be read as a gloss on *The Ten Books on Architecture*) was a result of his text being fortuitously rediscovered at a time when printing was just being established, when the literary still had the prestige it earlier enjoyed in the age of the manuscript, but when it could be widely and inexpensively disseminated through the agency of the press.[3] Scott wrote of Vitruvius 'Upon this obsequious, short, and unprospering architect the whole glory of antiquity was destined to be concentrated. Europe, for three hundred years, bowed to him as to a god.' But it is Renaissance classicism, an architecture built around Vitruvius's text, which Scott admires: it is admirable because it responds to the aesthetic taste of those 'whose minds are not disembodied', for 'Our aesthetic taste is partly physical; and while mathematical "proportion" belongs to the abstract intellect, aesthetic "proportion" is a preference in bodily sensation'.[4] Thus we transcribe ourselves into terms of architecture and feel a real physical discomfort in a top-heavy building, and we transcribe architecture into terms of ourselves and see a spire soar, while in fact gravity is pulling it downwards. For Scott, this haptic, somatic view of architecture is universal, it is an unconscious process like breathing.[5]

> The processes of which we are least conscious are precisely the most deep-seated and universal and continuous, as, for example, the process of breathing. And this habit of projecting the image of our own functions upon the outside world, of reading the outside world in our own terms, is certainly ancient, common and profound.

Importantly, Scott relates these notions to the employment of mass and line and space in the design of buildings. And of these it is space that is 'the very centre of architectural art', for buildings create spaces in which we can stand and breathe and expand, the very epitome of bodily wellbeing. This emphasis on space relates Scott's work to those modernist theories of architecture that also purported space to be the essence of architecture. The overt rejection of textuality by this theory (which is to say its repudiation of Vitruvius) also links him to modernism.

A very current writer who also returns to the body in his advancing of a particular mode of building is Kenneth Frampton. His so-called 'critical regionalism' is to be an architecture that resists consumer capitalism, and it is to do so by eschewing the visual and emphasising the tactile apprehension of building:[6]

> One has in mind a whole range of complementary sensory perceptions which are registered by the labile body: the intensity of light, darkness, heat and cold; the feeling of humidity; the aroma of the material, the almost palpable presence of masonry as the body senses its own confinement; the momentum of an induced gait and the relative inertia of the body as it traverses the floor; the echoing resonance of our own footfall.

But the kind of dilemma that one senses in Scott's book returns here. Frampton problematises his own arguments by occasionally calling on Victor Hugo's *Notre*

3. Geoffrey Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism*, New York: W W Norton & Company, 1974; p. 146.
4. Scott, p. 156.
5. Scott, p. 162.
6. Kenneth Frampton, 'Towards a Critical Regionalism', in *The Anti-Aesthetic*, Hal Foster ed, Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1983; p. 28.

Dame de Paris, a book which describes architecture in altogether other terms – not those of the nature of that body, but of cultural history – and which argues against any possibility for a vigorous tectonic culture now at all. For Hugo, print has simply displaced architecture as the privileged encoding device for culture; architecture now finds its legitimacy chiefly serving as a metaphor for print. The piles of print we produce are the new tower of Babel.

Scott's book and the new classicisms which it is currently being used to endorse, and Frampton's curiously old-fashioned theory (it is like a repeat of fifties theories of regionalism) both deserve a great deal more attention. However, the texts I want particularly to examine here are some papers by the American archaeologist/art historian/semiotician Donald Preziosi and two books by him (*Architecture, Language and Meaning* and *The Semiotics of the Built Environment*) and a long paper by Umberto Eco, 'Function and Sign: the Semiotics of Architecture'.

But before proceeding I want to note that in Lévi-Strauss, in Scott, and in Frampton, some cognisance is at least implicitly given to the written and/or printed which in some way problematises the view of architecture as an anthropocentric and anthropomorphic building practice. The role of the written is attended to by Eco in his paper: he distinguishes 'codes of reading (and of construction) of the object', and codes of *design* which precede the object. And though allowing that these codes of design might have their own interest for the semiotician, might indeed demonstrate the 'entire gamut of signs proposed by Peirce', he describes them as notational codes, a means to transcribe the built object (even before it exists), 'just as to transcribe spoken language there are conventions for representing such elements as sounds, syllables, or words'.[7] Thus are architectural writing, drawing, photography, and architectural speaking always bracketed and put aside, as notational codes which find their end and which are superseded in the built, in the tectonic. No attention has to be paid to them, no matter how interesting they may be, because *ultimately they do not matter*. Only architecture's embodiment as building does. If drawing, photography, etcetera, do usurp our attention, they are to be stigmatised for failing to keep their place as simple communicational tools in service of the tectonic. In particular, it has been architectural photography which has been indicted for this impropriety, indicted on moral grounds.

To anyone who has read *Of Grammatology* all this must sound familiar. There Derrida writes of condemnations of writing for its tyranny and pathological behaviour, condemnations repeated by Ferdinand de Saussure, founder, originator, of 20th century semiotics. Saussure: 'Language and writing are two distinct systems of signs, the second exists for the sole purpose of representing the first.'[8]

But writing is not content with such secondary status and it 'manages to usurp the main role'. It does so firstly by failing to represent the spoken sound of words and

7. Umberto Eco, 'Function and Sign: The Semiotics of Architecture', in *Signs, Symbols, and Architecture*, G Broadbent, R Bunt, & C Jencks eds, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1980; p. 36.
8. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, London: Fontana/Collins, 1974; p. 23.

then, by a false authority, insisting that speech match these misrepresentations. Linguistics, here the model for a wider semiotics, is to examine the monstrous effects of writing upon language. 'Linguistics should put them into a special compartment for observation: they are teratological cases.' Derrida places Saussure into a tradition of Western metaphysics:[9]

> Sin has been defined often . . . as the inversion of the natural relationship between the soul and the body through passion. Saussure here points at the inversion of the natural relationship between speech and writing. It is not a simple analogy: writing, the letter, the sensible inscription, has always been considered by Western tradition as the body and matter external to the spirit, to breath, to speech, to the logos. And the problem of soul and body is no doubt derived from the problem of writing from which it seems – conversely – to borrow its metaphors.

The suppression of writing in the philosophy of language in its privileging of speech, and of verbal and graphic codes in architecture in its privileging of the building, are the same. But graphic practices are incidentally conceded the pivotal role by Eco in the semiotics of architecture which he attempts to outline in 'Function and Sign' in a brief aside he makes near the beginning of the piece. Contemplating the 'point of view of the man who started the history of architecture' who finds his way into a cave to shelter from a storm, Eco asks himself, how would the concept of 'sheltering cave' that this projected primitive might usefully formulate there become more than an element in a purely private tectonic code? How would the code become shared, social, which is to say *properly* a code? Eco answers:

> . . . he would probably be able at this point, to communicate the model of the cave to other men, by means of graphic signs. The architectural code would generate an iconic code, and the 'cave principle' would become the object of communicative intercourse.

But if the code is conditional on this communicative intercourse, then it is an iconic, graphic code which has generated the tectonic code, and not vice versa. Some kind of graphic marking is present in architecture at its origins as Eco describes them. His lack of interest in this, his relegation of the graphic to a merely notational role is, then, curious.

Eco's initial description of what constitutes architecture, what I would call the tectonic, is wide. 'It should be noted that the term *architecture* will be used in a broad sense here, indicating phenomena of industrial design and urban design as well as phenomena of architecture proper'.[10] He is ambivalent about whether architecture has any bounds. On the one hand he decides it would be better to pass over the notion that the built might find in Euclidean geometry a second level of articulation equivalent to that of the distinctive features found in language because 'this geometric code would not pertain specifically to architecture'.[11] On the other he discovers on examining what architects do in practice 'that in the last analysis

9. Saussure, p. 32; Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976; p. 38.
10. Eco, p. 11.
11. Eco, p. 37.

12. Eco, p. 51.

13. Donald Preziosi, *Architecture, Language and Meaning*, The Hague: Mouton, 1979; p. 33.

the architect has to elaborate his sign vehicles and messages in relation to systems of meanings that lie outside his province'. The series of social exigencies which the architect addresses constitutes what Eco calls an anthropological code. He suggests that an intimation of the nature of this code is found in Edward T Hall's work on proxemics, significative spatial behaviour in animals and humans. But the discussion of proxemics is confusing (confusing because Hall's work is confusing): it is never clear whether proxemics is a matter of culture, or whether it is a natural phenomenon. Studies of various animal species have demonstrated species-specific (and species-universal) flight distances, attack distances, and so on: for living creatures space is meaningful. Proxemics, then, belongs to the realm of nature. But we are told by Eco that: 'The problem of proxemics has been to investigate the codification of such phenomenon in human culture, and to investigate the different codifications of them in different human cultures.'[12]

He then devotes some pages to reporting Hall's analyses of space types and distance types (intimate to public), and differences between these in American and German cultures. The reader is left with the implication that either differences between species are a matter of their possessing different cultures, or that Americans are different from Germans, and from the French, Japanese, and Arabs, insofar as these nationalities each constitute different natural species.

Preziosi also hovers around the boundaries of the natural and the cultural (as if they exist). Firstly, when he considers the origins of architecture: he pays some attention to the scrappy remains of a hut found near Nice and speculates about the emergence of culture. To engage in cooperative behaviour early hominids would need to have had both verbal skills and a tectonic code – they would have needed meeting places. (Preziosi here reads like Vitruvius.) Secondly, he is near the nature/culture divide when he considers the limits of that which he is theorising about when he theorises a semiotics of the built environment.[13]

> From the perspective of the formations and communicative signals of other species, human artifactual formations have a curiously 'blurred' identity. Whereas many non-primates such as birds and fishes often respond to a single patch of colour or bodily gesture . . ., the primate more consistently responds to the appearance of an entire body in space, its posture and soundings, in the context of the history of previous encounters with that other individual.

If meaning is articulated only at the level of entire social encounters, can different semiotic aspects be singled out in any way to be separately theorised? Are there boundaries within culture? Preziosi in effect answers this question right at the beginning of *The Semiotics of the Built Environment* when he insists that an architectonic system can get along without building as such. It can on the one hand assimilate the natural environment, and on the other it can also be played out somatically, proxemically, as in a group of people meeting in a field, seated in a

circle . He writes:[14]

> But if the latter observation is so, then it is important to be clear about the 'boundaries' of architectonic communication, representation and expression *vis-a-vis* other non-architectonic signings in the visual channel. We must distinguish between 'somatotopic' behaviours wherein bodies construct spatial frameworks architectonically, and somatic gesturings wherein body parts such as the limbs and portions of the face are employed in support of a verbal message.

Here the boundary between the tectonic and the linguistic is determined in the different demands that each places on the body. This economy of demands can be supposed to subsume other demands that further, only apparently independent, semiotics might make.

Eco's view and Preziosi's can be taken as complementary, for the one establishes the bases of the tectonic, the built, in proxemics, in the body, in the somatic, and the other posits that its boundaries are there. Architecture, identified with building, begins and ends in the body. Presumably, then, what gives some construction its status in the tectonic code is that the human body can in some way be imputed to be its guarantor, and it the body's deputy, its transcription. The built is valid when it transcribes the somatic, just as writing is traditionally validated in its transcription of the spoken (and as graphic practices in architecture are validated by building). This likeness in these views of building and writing is not accidental. Preziosi's work has been elaborated under the eye of linguistic and literary theorist Roman Jakobson, at least metaphorically: at the beginning of his *Architecture, Language and Meaning*, Preziosi offers Jakobson a special acknowledgement. Writing in the same tone as Saussure on the relationship of the written and the spoken, Jakobson (with Morris Halle) has described writing as supplementary and as parasitic auxiliary.[15] Buildings, then, are dead letters for the liveliness of bodily experience.

Now if one is going to construct a semiotic theory of something, the way to proceed, I suppose, is to describe its signifiers and its signifieds, the mode of their correlation, and then, bearing in mind that such descriptions are heuristic fictions, to describe how the thing being theorised operates as a code. Which is to say, how the fiction of system is always stretched, tested, threatened, and how codes and languages come to have histories. This, at least, is how Eco proceeds in his *A Theory of Semiotics*.

In Eco's few allusions to the tectonic signifier in 'Function and Sign' it is seen as being a 'spatial form' that concretises significant proxemic distances (a table physically establishes a spatial separation between people, the scope of that separation being accorded meaning in the proxemic code). In his 1972 paper 'A Componential Analysis of the Architectural Sign /Column/' Eco distances himself from a spatial orthodoxy he saw operating in architecture – scholarship has its own

14. Preziosi, *The Semiotics of the Built Environment*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979; p. 6.
15. Roman Jakobson & Morris Halle, *Fundamentals of Language*, The Hague: Mouton, 1956; p. 17.

proxemic code, its own significant distances, and techniques for achieving them. This doxa is an aesthetic fallacy, Eco says, which he wishes to dispatch so that architecture can be equated with building; it holds not so much that space is the medium of architecture, rather that architecture is about spatiality. An architectural work, such as Palladio's Rotunda, communicates 'that particular space that is the space conceived by Palladio'.[16] As a counter to this Eco discusses a stick thrust into the ground. Both stick and the space gathered by it are elements of a tectonic sign vehicle that may serve to communicate various meanings that can be conventionally correlated with it. And this stick is, of course, a sort of prefigurement of the column Eco goes on to analyse. And the column is not only a mass/space form, but also anthropomorphic, immemorially so.

For Preziosi, space is also *the* thing in his, scrupulous and sophisticated (but perhaps not quite persuasive) investigations of the architectonic signifier. He argues that it is the space cell which is the maximal formal configuration that can be minimally significative. Approximately, it is the equivalent of the word, or of the phoneme. (It should not be assumed that the space cell is a room – the stick in the ground or the solitary column which Eco considers 'generate' spaces around themselves that constitute space cells in Preziosi's parlance). Space, then, remains privileged, and this is to be taken as a privileging of the body also. 'At its deepest levels, architecture suggests a series of performances or actions performed in space with their own somatic relational geometries'.[17] Preziosi believes that the tectonic code, like the linguistic, is ruled by a double articulation: 'As a result of research over the past decade there is no longer any question that both systems are designed according to a principle of "duality of patterning" or "double articulation"'.[18] Indeed, it seems that for Preziosi double articulation is present everywhere in human semiosis and that it is this which constitutes the nature of the human subject, of subjectivity, our specificity. In the architectonic, the built, this hierarchical principle mediates between a number of different entities – Preziosi terms them features, forms, templates, figures, cells and matrices. It is not important here to know the differences, just that all these things are mediated by a double articulation. This notion is Jakobson's invention. Again Preziosi identifies his work with the linguist's. (It has been Eco, by the way, in this *A Theory of Semiotics*, who has done most to show that the principle of double articulation is not universal in human semiosis.)

Now for both Eco and Preziosi, the signifieds of the architectonic code are to do with function. Preziosi further aligns himself with Roman Jakobson, discovering the built to have, like the verbal message in Jakobson's view of it, six functions – the referential function (doubly functional as the references that Preziosi describes are references to activity – but form follows function only insofar as following is ascribed by conventions), the aesthetic function, meta-architectonic function, phatic, emotive, conative functions. Eco very explicitly aligns his semiotics of the

16. Eco, 'A Componential Analysis of the Architectural Sign/Column', in *Semiotica*, Vol. 5, 1972, p. 100.
17. Preziosi, 'The Non-Dichotomy of Sensory and Grammatical Relationships: Toward a Relational Theory of the Built Environment', in *The Second LACUS Forum 1975*, Peter A Reich ed, Columbia, South Carolina: Hornbeam Press, 1976; p. 634.
18. Preziosi, 'Language and Perception', *The Fourth LACUS Forum 1977*, Michel Paradis ed, Columbia: Hornbeam Press, 1978; p. 7.

architectonic with the functionalism of Roland Barthes's *Elements of Semiology*. Barthes wrote of the semantisation of function and utility: '... *as soon as there is a society, every usage is converted into a sign of itself*; the use of a rain coat is to give protection from the rain, but this use cannot be dissociated from the very signs of an atmospheric situation'.[19] Everything, in fact, is semanticised, becomes sign. Eco's functionalism does not, however, recognise any signings which are innate, natural; we are still in the realm of a semiotics of convention and the arbitrary here:[20]

> The object of use is, in its communicative capacity, the sign vehicle of a precisely and conventionally denoted meaning – its function. More loosely, it has been said that the first meaning of a building is what one must do in order to inhabit it. ...

Stairs and ramps, claims Eco, denote the possibility of vertical access 'according to an immemorial architectural codification'.

But despite Eco's insistence on convention, functionalism has operated in architecture always to veil convention, to naturalise the cultural object. Functionalism occludes the semantic qualities of our artefacts, and does so through an implicit appeal to the supposed universality of bodily experience, to those minimal conditions the body needs for its survival, a vital anthropological minimum, a natural constant, an essence of man. When Manfredo Tafuri writes that during the 18th century 'Psychology, society, *man*, enter the discourse on architecture', it should be borne in mind that this man, this subject who was placed at the centre of modern architecture was not only constituted psychologically, but also physiologically.[21] This subject is still at the centre of Eco's discourse in 'Function and Sign'.

If I were to continue this presentation of a semiotics of the built drawn from Eco's paper and the texts by Preziosi, and to continue to follow the design suggested by Eco's *A Theory of Semiotics*, at this point I suppose I would consider a theory of sign production, which is to say a study of how we sign, how from the systems of meaning that we each postulate, we get on in negotiating our way in the semiotic universe. Preziosi would claim for the tectonic just the kind of creativity here that is displayed in language – a code with a limited number of elements yields a 'transfinite variety' of formations through the iterative application of rules.[22] All this is familiar enough. Eco's position is more interesting, because although he is very concerned with changes in the conventions that underwrite the built world, he has no way of theorising these because he finds that in the tectonic, change seems to be precluded:[23]

> ... what stands out about these codes is that on the whole they would appear to be, as communicative systems go, rather limited in operational possibilities. They are, that is, codifications of already worked out solutions, codifications yielding standardized messages – this instead of constituting, as would codes truly on the model of verbal

19. Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1967; p. 41.
20. Eco, 'Function and Sign', p. 20.
21. Manfredo Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture*, New York: Harper and Row, 1980; p. 80.
22. Preziosi, 'The Network of Architectonic Signs', in *Semiotics Unfolding*, T Borbe ed, Berlin: Mouton, 1983.
23. Eco, 'Function and Sign', p. 39.

languages, a system of possible relationships from which countless significantly different messages could be generated.

A church is a church is a church. A house is a house is a house. A hut is a hut is a hut. And if this is so, might we not suppose that churches and houses and huts are always the same because bodies that always implicitly inhabit them in Eco's theory are always the same? It is the unquestionable constancy of the body that has made it so attractive as a centring metaphor for architectural discourse. But the discourse may pay for this metaphor by being forced into a theoretical bind, and building that maintained allegiances to such theory would be forced into silence. Change could only be considered to occur inexplicably, catastrophically.

I want to leave this speculation and leave Eco's paper too. Nor will I return to Preziosi's writings. Instead I want briefly to turn my attention to Eco's *A Theory of Semiotics*, in which after the author has introduced a typology of modes of sign production he immediately implies that this typology is fictional since 'what one calls "signs" are the result of many intertwined modes of sign production'.[24] He considers a staircase and finds that at least four of the kinds of sign production which he identifies in his typology are involved in the stair's fabrication and, presumably, its interpretation. The complexity of the relationship between tectonic signifiers and signifieds is iterated in the complexity of the labour involved to produce or understand tectonic signs/messages/texts. The built is textual. (The textuality of the built is further insisted upon in Eco's later *The Name of the Rose*.) The reified order of the body has been undone, perhaps, as Eco's texts translate each other. *A Theory of Semiotics* was written after Eco gave up trying to translate his *La Struttura Assente* (1968) into English ('Function and Sign' is a translated and revised excerpt from *La Struttura Assente*). And not least is the body undone as a unifying metaphor insofar as Eco's corpus of works, works which inform and generate one another in an intertextual play of translation, is not uniform, not a corpus at all. The constancy of the author's own body does not guarantee the unity of his texts. The texts fray instead of incorporating. Bearing in mind these dangers to the order of the body in the acts of translation and excerption, the dangers of textuality, textual generation, of the intertext, we can say of Eco's writings on architecture, and Preziosi's too, and many other translations of architectural theory into the jargon of semiotics, that though these translations apparently bolster the traditions of the architectural discourse with the prestige of a philosophy or a science, they also bring with them a tendency not to bolster but to subvert, simply by placing architectural theory into a textual tradition. A tradition in which certain kinds of uncomfortable questions can be asked of architecture, certain possibilities allowed to play.

Perhaps, for instance, the body itself is textual. In *The Pleasure of the Text* Roland Barthes[25] records that

24. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1976, p. 259.
25. Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1975; p. 16.

> Apparently Arab scholars, when speaking of the text, use this admirable expression: the certain body. What body? We have several of them; the body of anatomists and physiologists, the one science sees or discusses; this is the text of grammarians, critics, commentators, philologists (the pheno-text). But we also have a body of bliss consisting solely of erotic relations, utterly distinct from the first body: it is another contour, another nomination; thus with the text: it is no more than the open list of the fires of language. . . . The pleasure of the text is irreducible to physiological need.

Perhaps the body is not a principle of unity, of wholeness, of integration. In another piece, Barthes[26] writes:

> Here is what I did with my body one day: at Leysin, in 1945, in order to perform an extrapleural pneumothorax operation, a piece of one of my ribs was removed, and subsequently given back to me, quite formally, wrapped up in a piece of medical gauze. . . . For a long time I kept this fragment of myself in a drawer . . . [But] then, one day, I flung the rib chop and its gauze from my balcony, as if I were romantically scattering my own ashes, into the rue Servandoni, where some dog would come and sniff them out.

Perhaps the body is not the seat of human being. Jean Baudrillard:[27]

> . . . this body, our body, often appears simply superfluous, basically useless in its extension, in the multiplicity and complexity of its organs, its tissues and functions, since today everything is concentrated in the brain and in the genetic codes, which alone sum up the operational definition of being.

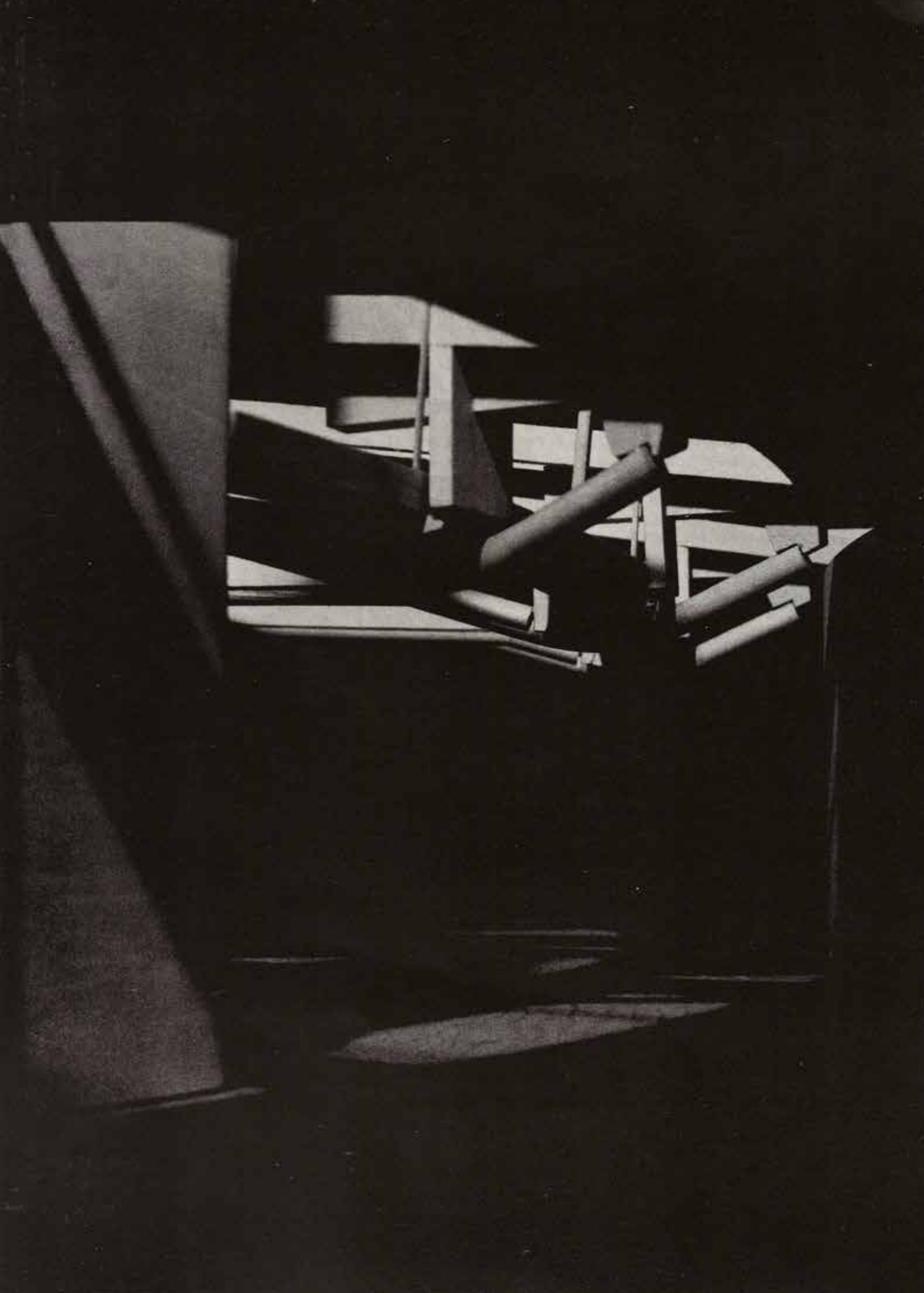
Perhaps bodies are not always and everywhere the same; perhaps

> . . . there exists no pregiven human body as such, but rather the whole historical range of social experiences of the body, the whole variety of bodily norms projected by a series of distinct historical 'modes of production' or social formations . . .

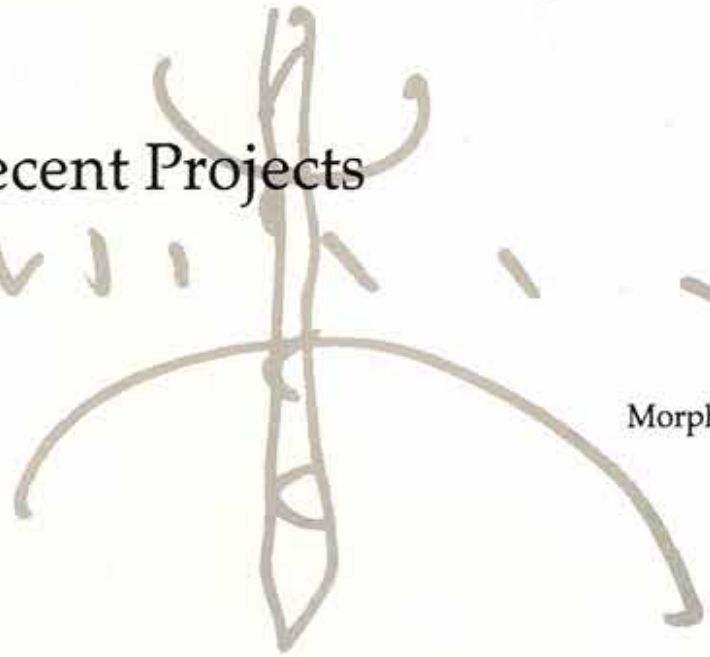
I cite Fredric Jameson.[28]

Who knows what the body was that first entered the cave, that first made the hut? Perhaps it was a woman's.

26. Barthes, *Roland Barthes*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1977; p. 61.
27. Jean Baudrillard, 'The Ecstacy of Communication', in *The Anti-Aesthetic*, Hal Foster ed, Bay Press, Port Townsend, Washington, 1983, p. 129.
28. Fredric Jameson, 'Architecture and the Critique of Ideology', in *Architecture, Criticism, Ideology*, Joan Ockman ed, Princeton Architectural Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1985, p. 51.



Two Recent Projects



Morphosis

Morphosis is a Santa Monica-based patnership established in 1977 by Thom Mayne and Michael Rotondi. Since its inception the practice has built up a strong international reputation and an extensive portfolio, that encompasses work from house alterations and restaurants to cultural centres and health clinics. Morphosis have won many design competitions and have been acclaimed with numerous design awards along with having their work published in an impressive collection of critical and professional journals.

In addition to their professional activities, Mayne and Rotondi have been and continue to be involved extensively in Architectural Education. Mayne was a founding board member of the Southern California Institute of Architecture (1972) – SCI ARCH – and is still listed on the faculty there. Rotondi is currently Director of SCI-ARCH. Both Mayne and Rotondi have been listed on the visiting faculty for many architectural schools, and have served on different juries of importance.

Thom Mayne visited New Zealand in 1989 as the Levene Paints Ltd International Architect.

Site model (photo Tom Boner)

CHIBA PREFECTURE GOLF CLUB

'The ongoing conversation about the environment is grounded in the ancient dichotomy of man versus nature. So far we have sought to resolve the argument through a series of truces; either sequestering large traces of wilderness in a state of imagined innocence, or limiting the ways in which man can domesticate nature's imagined savagery. We must begin to talk about man and nature, not man versus nature. What do we see when we look into a forest? Lumber? Our planet's breathing apparatus?'

The Chiba Project concerns itself with the interaction of our architecture (which establishes a discussion about the man-made) and the natural landscape. It is a project which attempts to break down or blur the demarcations between the man-made and the natural by developing a strategy which links a site investigation to an architectural language. The focus is directed to the whole of the physical and draws on all senses, producing an architecture which is engaged in making natural environmental processes self-evident and connected to one's day-to-day life. The work is perceived as an instrument of pleasure, a sum of knowledge capable of organising space and time. The entire program with it's emphasis on the game (golf) is about movement, the rhythm of walking, the arc of an arm in full swing, the nature and sequence of physical spaces, the narrative and diversity of place, and the dynamic and connective nature of a complex organisation.

The building is about the land's surface (hence its orientation to the building's sectional characteristics) as it affects movement both via the automobile and via the pedestrian. The basic *Parti* is made up of four elements; a segment of a curved wall which produces a space for arrival (automobile), a lineal sequence of alternating volumes which accommodates a majority of the program, a second circular wall which embraces the larger site and facilitates movement to the grounds, and a pavilion which contains space for dining and social events. The configuration of the two curved walls holds the more static and platonic inner spaces which are introspective and contemplative in character. The Pavilion piece is in the air and outside the limits of the bounding walls allowing the observer to perceive the vastness and expansiveness of the natural setting.

The realised or built environment seeks more than just a 'truce' with nature. We have aspired to create an architecture which can contribute to the 'man and nature' rather than the 'man versus nature' conversation.

Design architect: Morphosis

Principals: Thom Mayne, Michael Rotondi

Principal in charge: Thom Mayne

Project architect: Kiyokazu Arai

Project team: John Enright, Julee Herdt, Teresa Ross, George Yu

Project assistants: Susan Addison, John Baez, David Bennett, Peter Buffington, Craig Burdick, Belinda Georhe, Andreas Heirholzer, Jim Jackson, Conrad James, Frederick Lebard, Lauren MacColl, Frank Martens, Mark McVay, James Meraz, Raul Moreno, Christopher Oakley, Michael Poris, Scott Romses, Jennifer Schierbeck, Ursula Shumacher, Peggy Shinkle, Selwyn Ting, Chris Wahl

Associate architect: EPI Corporation

Principal: Takero Ogawa

Project Team: Yoshikazu Togami, Masao Abe

Structural and mechanical engineer: Ove Arup and Partners

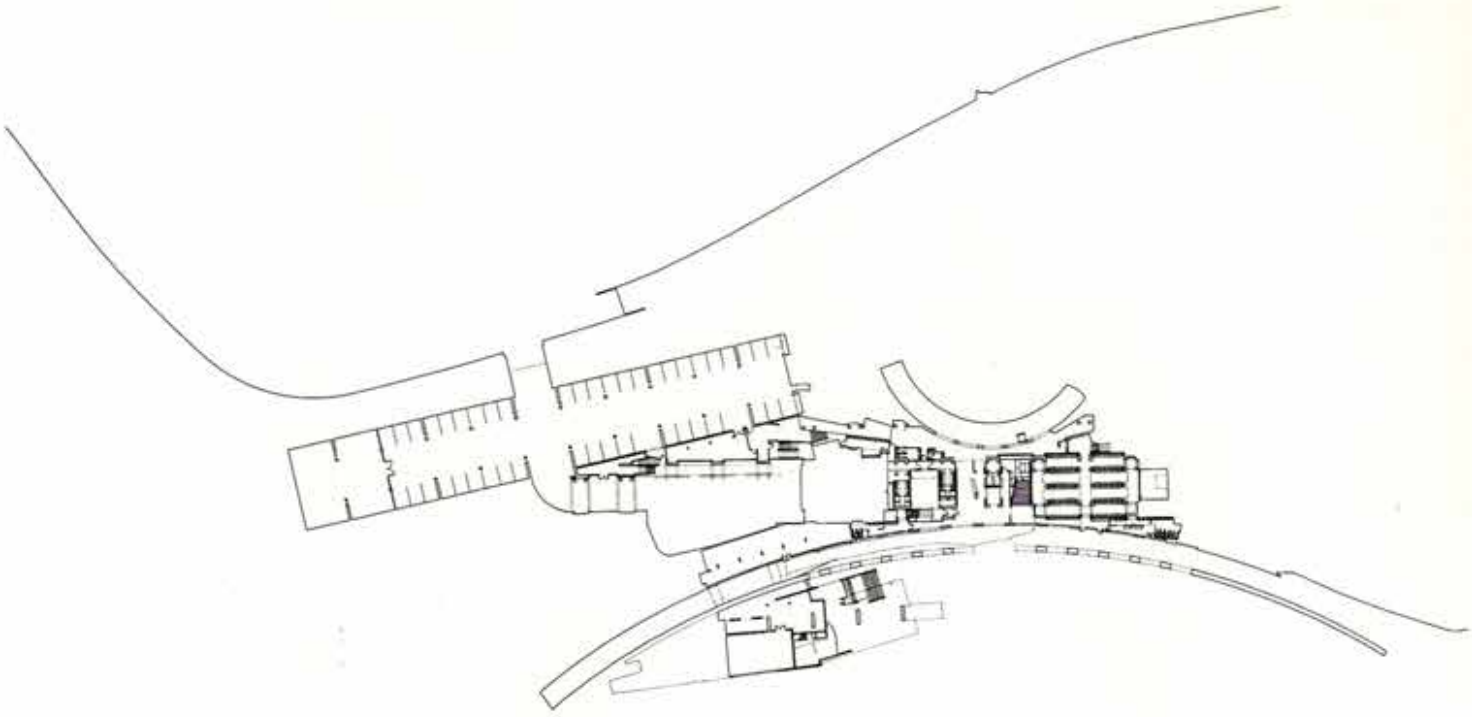
Principals: Peter Budd, Alan Locke

Structural engineer: Toyohiko Yamabe

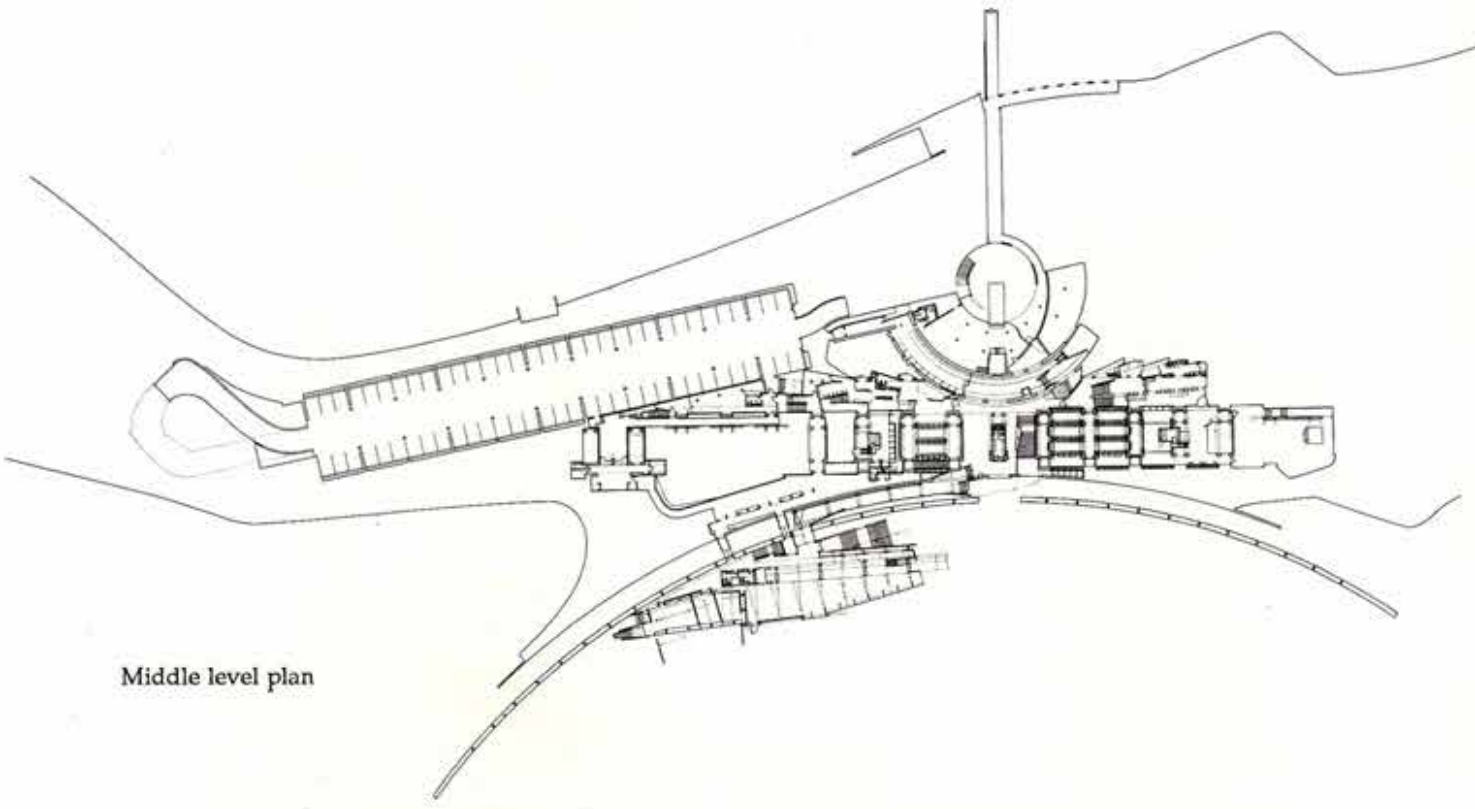
Project team: Mitsuhiro Hashino

Mechanical engineer: Alpha Engineering Company Ltd

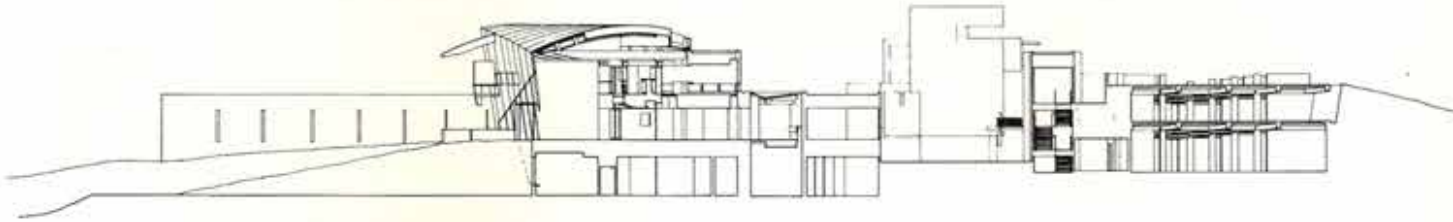
Principal: Masanobu Kondo



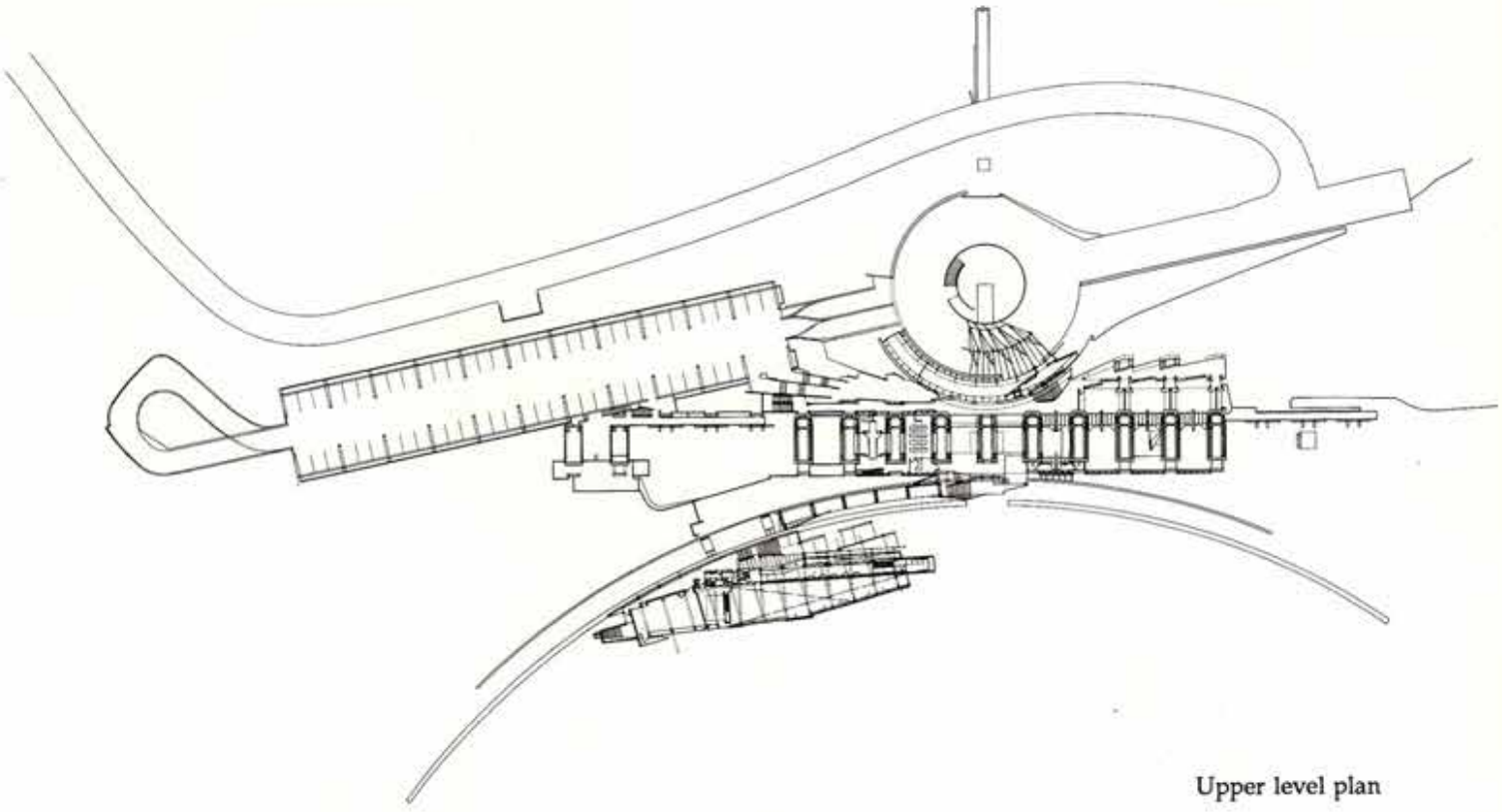
Lower level plan



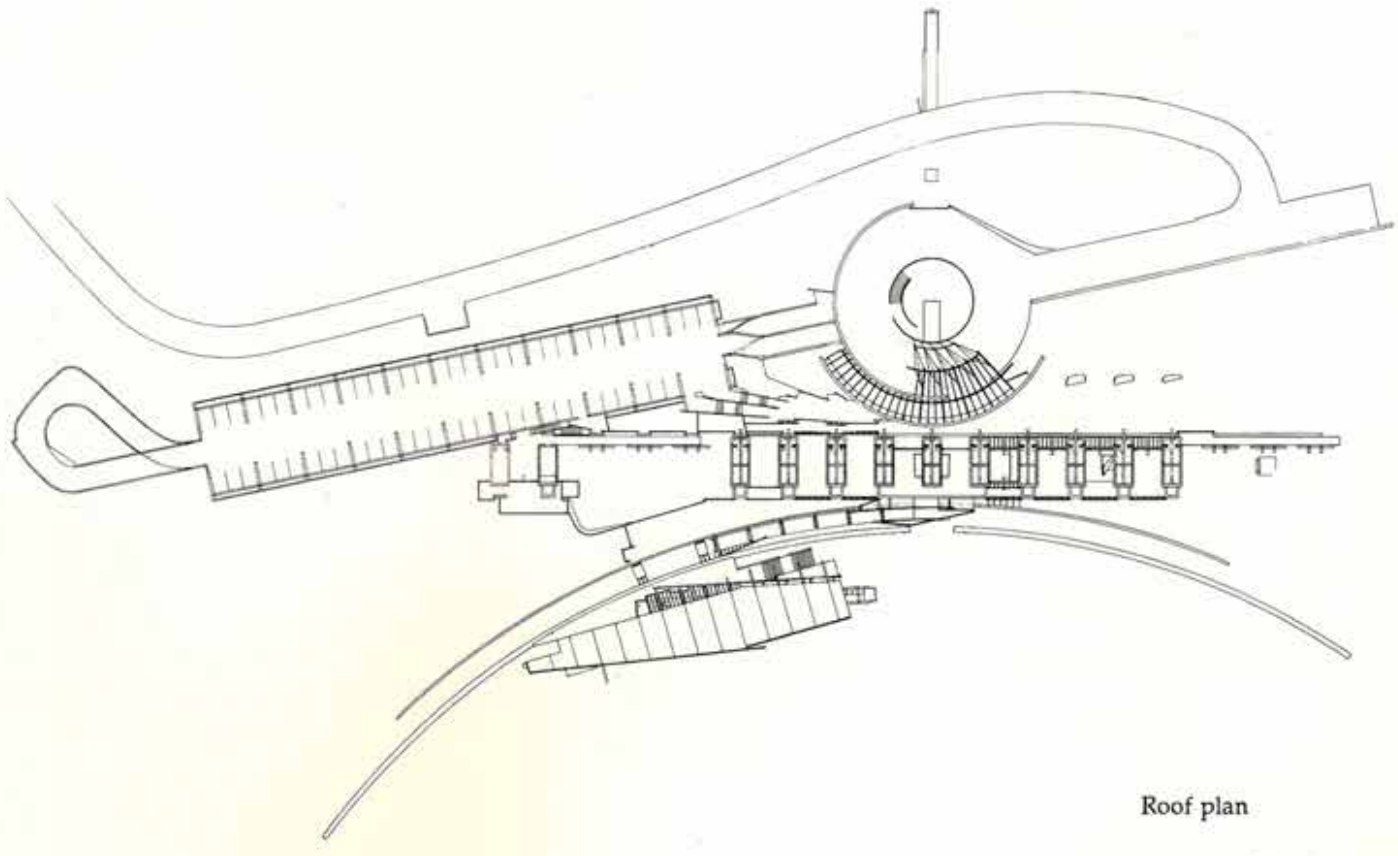
Middle level plan



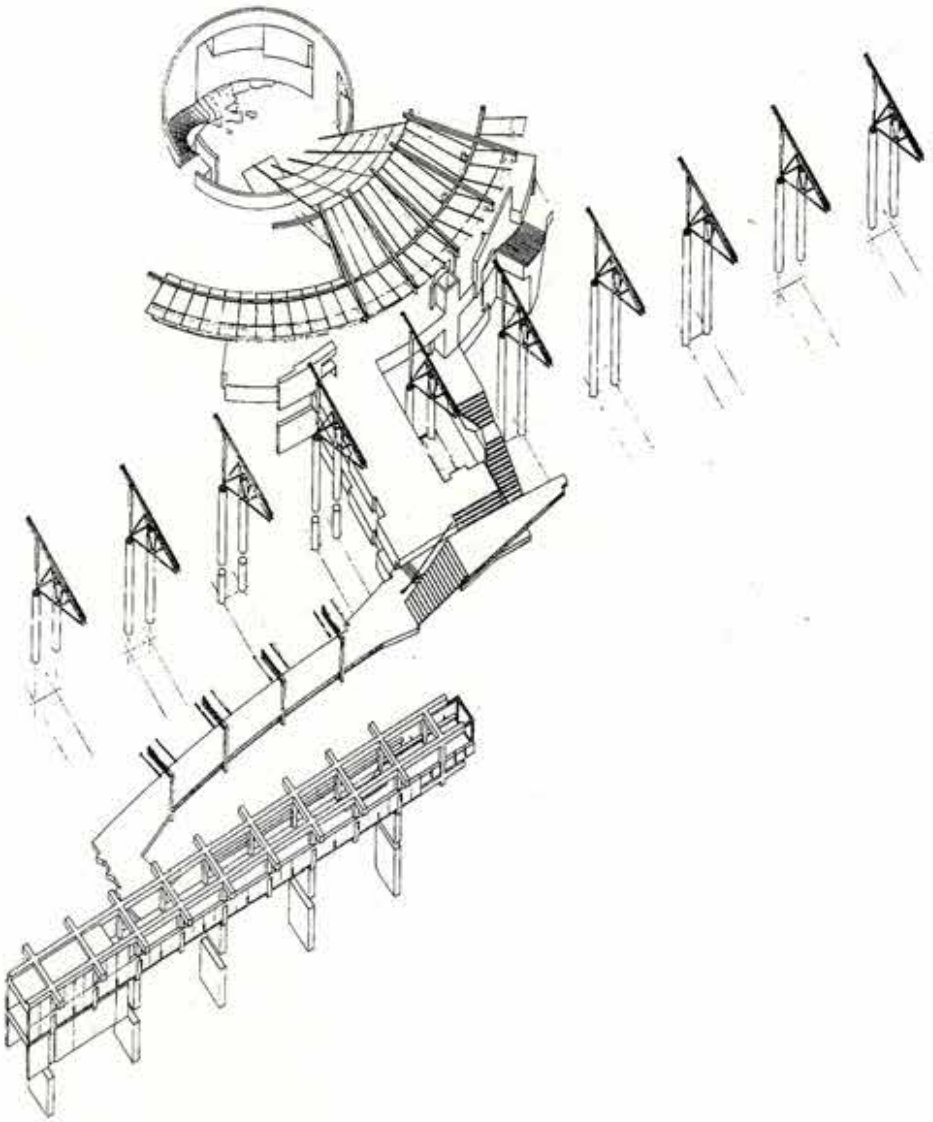
Transverse section through
restaurant



Upper level plan



Roof plan



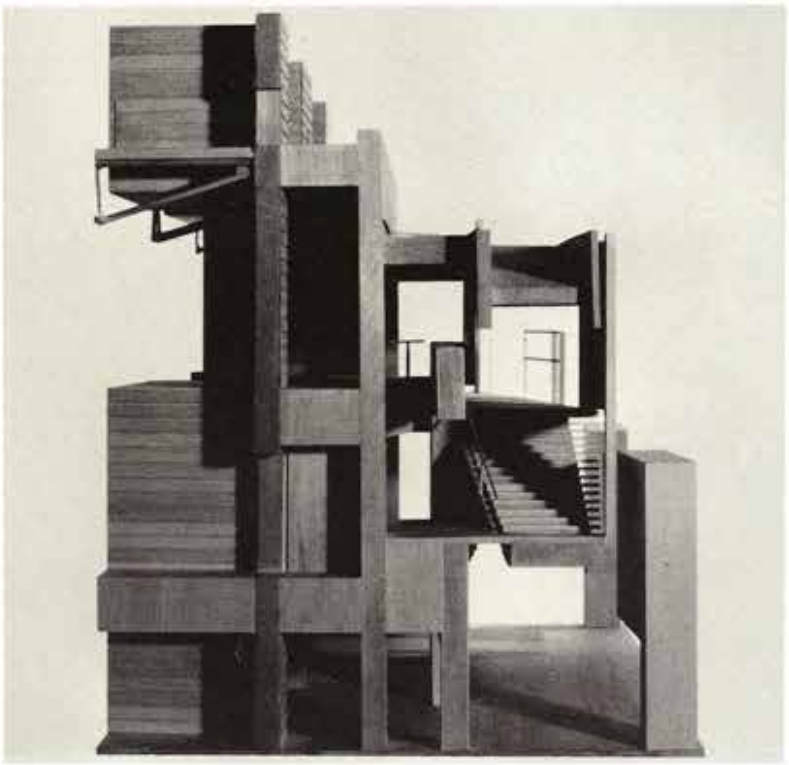
Axonometric showing the parti of the project
in order from top:

Vehicle entrance canopy

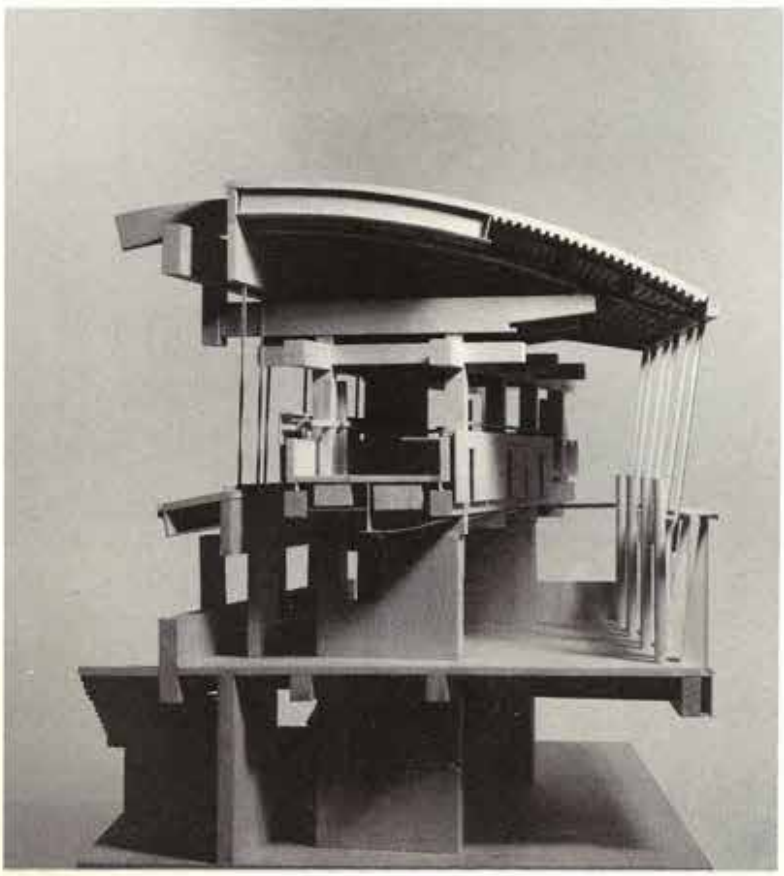
Monitors truss that support the shell
of the light monitor

Cantilevered walkway connecting main
building to the restaurant pavilion

Structural armature of the restaurant



Section study of connecting passage
and stair (photo George Yu)

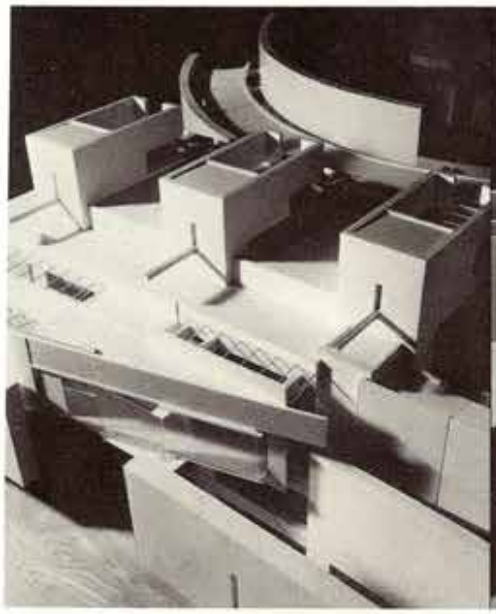


Section model study of restaurant

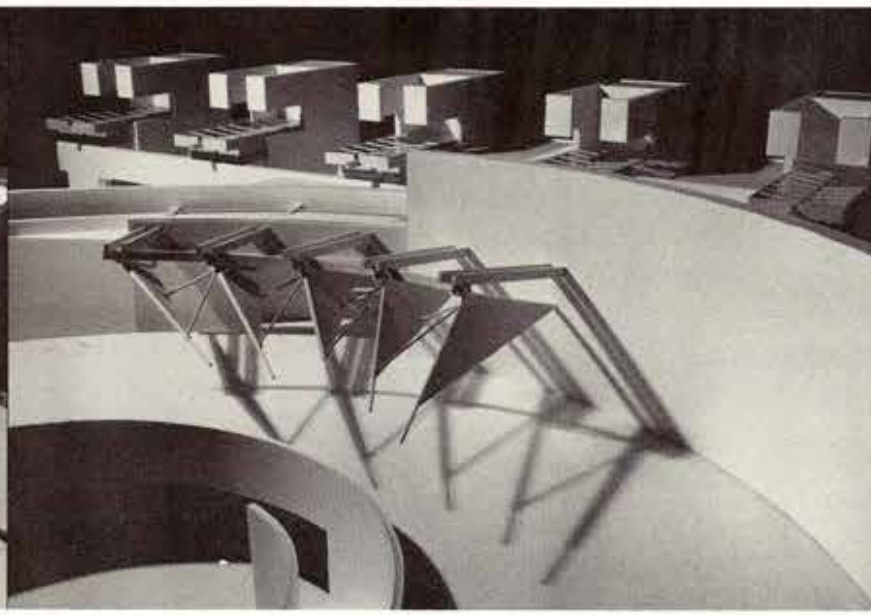
opp. Drawing study for canopy and monitors

insert left. Model study of light monitor

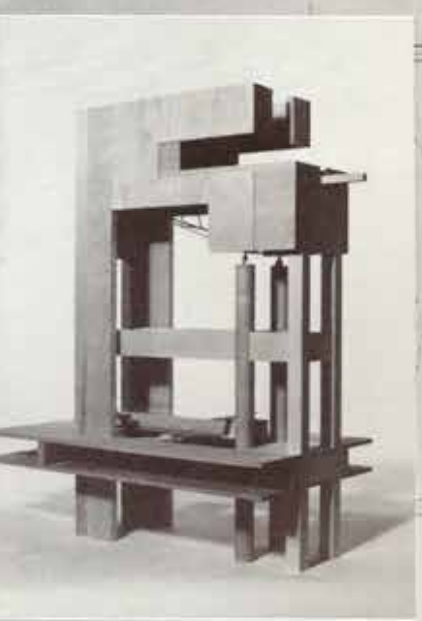
insert right. Plan view of light monitor model

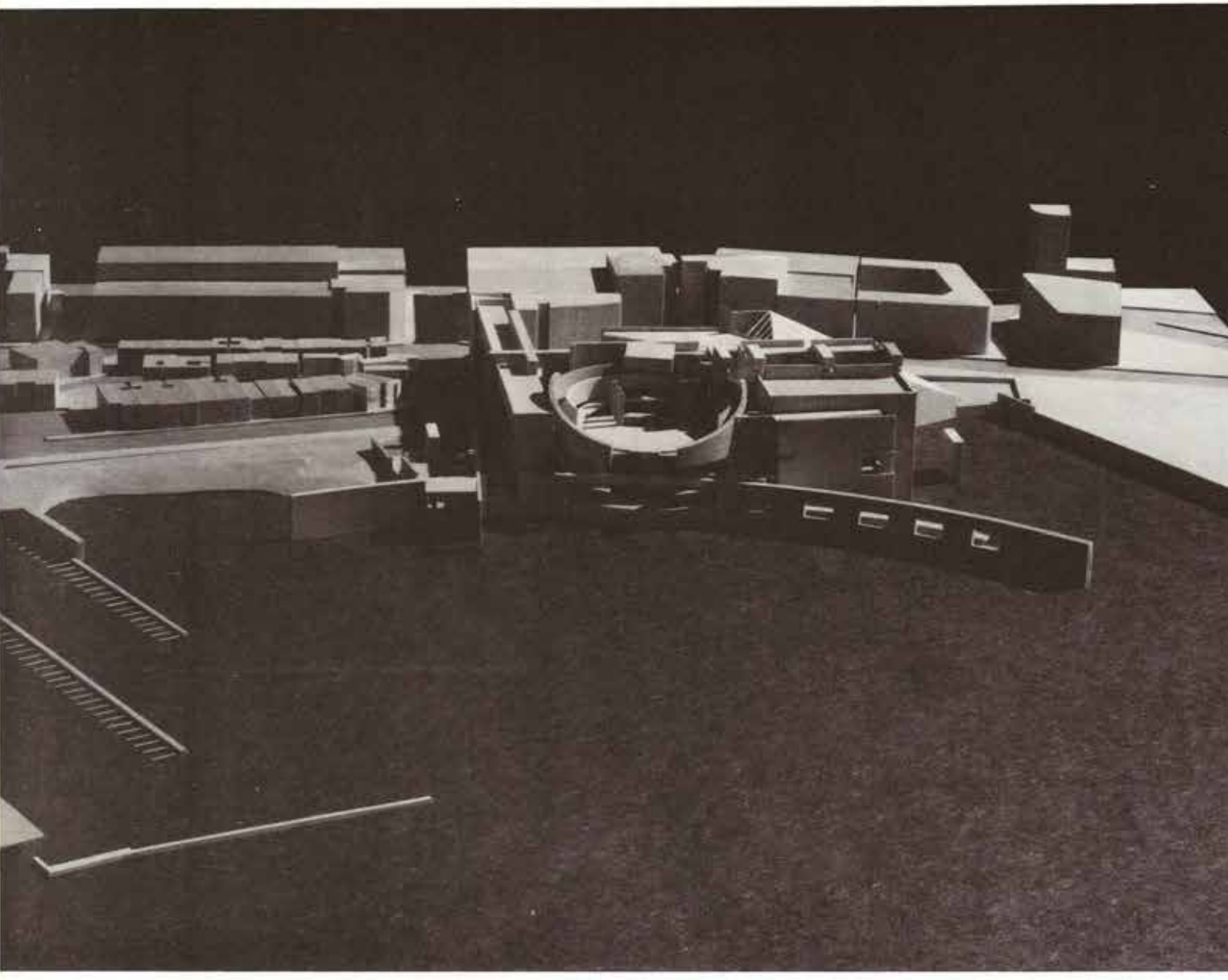


Partial view of model from south showing vehicle entrance, light monitors, entrance to club house, double landscape wall
(photo George Yu)



Model study of vehicle entrance with truss-canopy and light monitors beyond





Aerial view from habour

Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongawera

Competition entry for the Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongawera

Architects: Morphosis

Principal in charge: Thom Mayne

Project Architect: Kiyokaza Arai

Project team: Craig Burrick, Teresa Rose, Maya Shimoguchi, Selwyn Ting

Associated architect: Hames Shardy International

Auckland principal in charge: Roger Nelson

Project architects: Kevin Brewer, Julie Stout

This project is a competition entry for the Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongawera: it is both the National Museum and a National Marae. In addition to the complexities and problems that have recently characterised the design and administration of museums this project must also engage with another architectural discourse, one no less problematic, the Marae. The question of the formal arrangement of the two is made all the more difficult because they have been set as tokens of Pakeha (museum) and Maori (marae); the two dominant cultures in New Zealand. The importance of the Maori/Pakeha was underlined by the brief – that the project be a bicultural institution. It would seem therefore that the project is expected to represent Maori, Pakeha and the relationship between them both: to commemorate the relationship between the two as much as each individually.

The project is begun by exploring the boundary between land and water. In a two fold action the land in a form, resembling a sea wall, is extended out into the harbour and the water is let in, by way of excavation, to flood the land. Possible new shore lines are proscribed and conversely, possible lost shore lines are traced. The results is an overtly constructed, artificial site, somewhat dislocated but which because of these qualities provides a condition appropriate to a project such as this: a no-man's land. Further and as a direct correlation to the manufactured qualities of the 'site', readings perhaps previously illegible, repressed, may be made apparent, such as the tenuity that characterises the relationship between land and water: tidal patterns, reclamation, erosion, geo-tectonic movement replete with tangential allusions to the respective Maori and Pakeha accounts of the formation of the land. As such the site is not only the physical base for the project, it is also the basis of the representation programme of the project.

The Museum-Marae complex must participate actively in the city of Wellington. Through a process of teasing out of the city those force lines which govern its form – between monuments, natural features, economic zones, patterns of movement etc. – and using them to plot lines of organisation – form/structure, movement – the project is woven into the fabric of the city. It offers itself as a machine for reading the city/harbour interface and has potential to assist in the future construction of the greater urban environment.

The order of the Museum proper is established with the siting of a linear sequence of pylons which serve as the project's structural and spatial skeleton. In a figurative sense the potentially infinite length of this sequence of pylons is expressive of the

systematic categorisation and measurement of the world which most critics defined as perhaps the most telling characteristic of Western Culture. A process of which, the institution of the Museum may be considered one of its most accomplished manifestations. Around and within this sequence are woven two volumetric figures.

The first volume, a $\sqrt{2}$ prism, accommodates the majority of the display spaces, including the Maori collection, and the various support spaces. The gallery spaces will be characterised by numerous openings in the vertical and horizontal planes which allow for visual connections, altering volumetric conditions and a possible plurality of narrative sequences. The other volume – a cylinder – principally provides accommodation for two typological spaces: an auditorium and the Marae complex. The Marae itself is structured along a sea-land axis which bisects the cylinder and obliquely intersects with the major axis of the Museum. The oblique angle at which the two axes – Marae, Museum – intersect instils a sense of movement, of the two axes oscillating, changing their positions with respect to each other. This sense of movement which may be transfigured to a sense of resistance on the part of Maori and Pakeha against being fixed, is re-enforced by the offsetting of the locus of the cylinder from the intersection of the two axes.

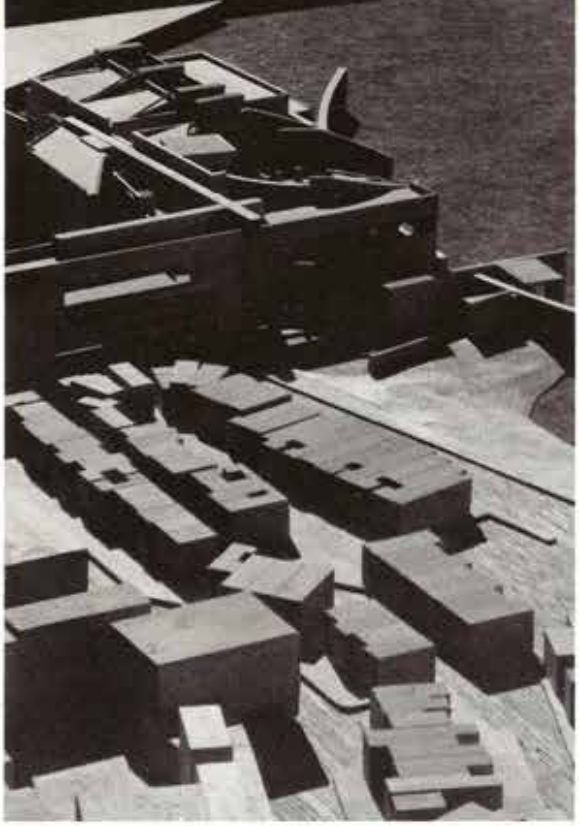
The Marae complex itself is set into the upper level of the cylinder with the whare-nui settled in the mass of the building and the Marae-atea in an open relationship to sky and the harbour landscapes; one that breaks the confines of the projected shore line. The relationship between the Marae-atea and surrounds will be recognised as traditional, however, the extended elevation, almost suspension of the Marae effects a displacement, a break between the two, recognising the special conditions of this Marae: a national Marae, a marae in which all the peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand can stand as hosts, and further anticipates the continued development of the urban Marae as something which is part of the traditional Maoridom, yet through circumstance removed from it.

A sequence of shifts, displacements, traces and doubles characterise the formal relationship between the Marae and the Museum. This relationship is developed in the functional and figurative interconnection of the two volumes. The Marae-atea, as will be more fully discussed later, doubles as the ceremonial forecourt of the Museum and this in a sense it is an annex of the latter. Yet because the Marae is on the same level as the Maori collection the Museum space is enclosed within the space of the Marae as a paataka (store hut). The rotunda which from the description given so far could be construed as emblematic of the Maori world in contrast to that of the Pakeha as represented by the prism is also, however, located within the typological experience of Western architecture and of the Museum in particular: the crossed axis surmounted by a dome. The already observed misalignment of the axes and the dislocated drum is emblematic of a shaking of the nineteenth century conception of the museum space, a kind of modern pantheon into which everything

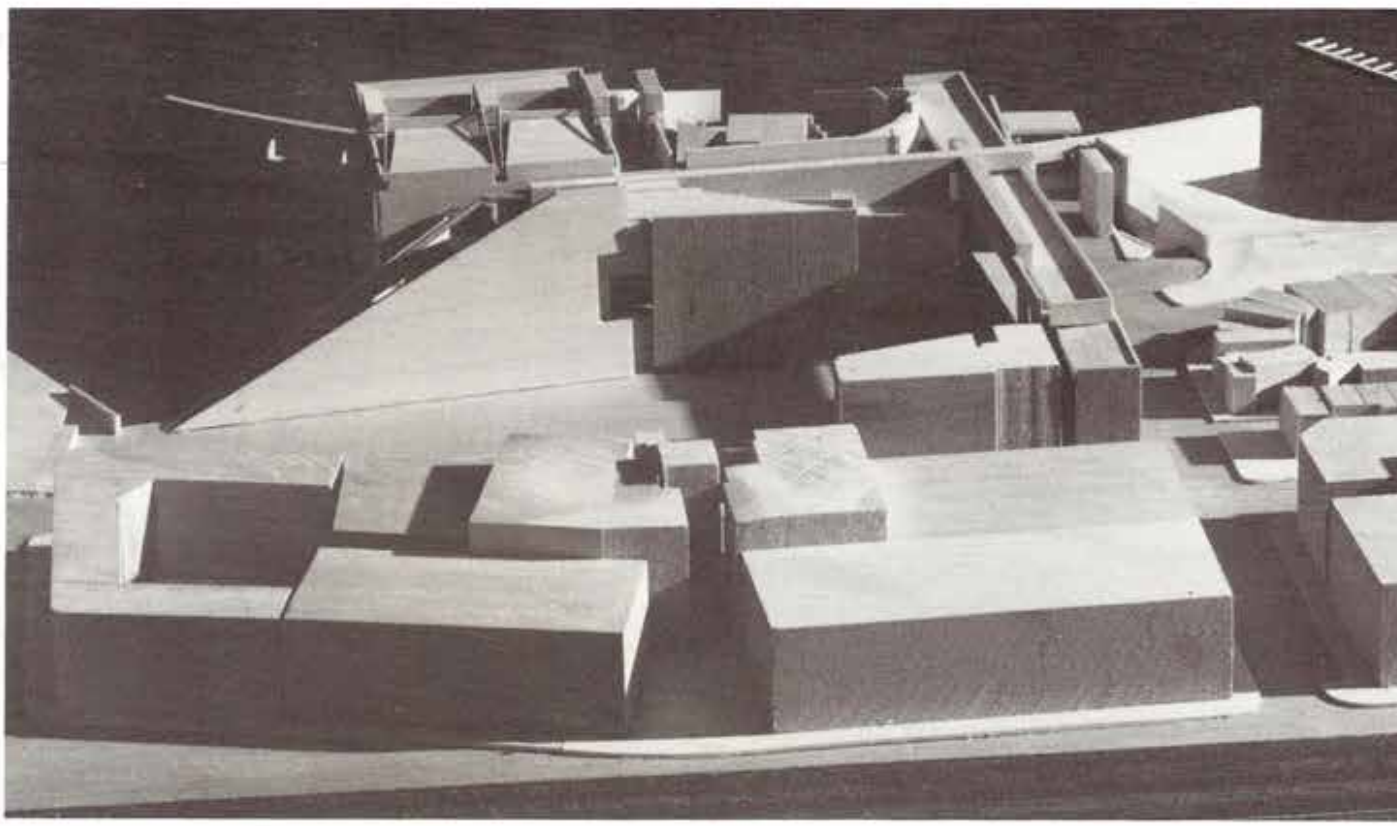
can be placed, ordered. If this project resembles a pantheon it is a ruinated pantheon. A pantheon voided of any pretension of representing the heavens, that no longer encloses. It is in these metaphorical ruins that marae and the museum are camped.

In addition to the two major volumes there are three minor volumes and a set of interstitial spaces which complete the project. Contiguous with the volume of the museum are two irregular volumes. On the sea-ward side is a rhombic prism which will accommodate touring or temporary exhibitions. On the land, helping define an urban space which in itself denotes the public status of the projects, is an imploded pentagon which will accommodate the art collection. Tangentially connecting with the rotunda along an implied intersection with the Museum axis is the administrative wing. Skewed from the axis of Tory St, the elongated form of the administration wing extends out into the immediate urban fabric and encloses from the south the public square which has the potential to be developed into a double of the Marae-atea. The directional force of Tory St is continued through, intersecting with the Museum axis then penetrating the sea wall and passing out into the harbour. Conterminous to these volumes are the interstitial spaces. Foremost of these spaces is the great hall, between the prism and the cylinder.

For the most part entry to the Museum and the Marae is from the south, entering on a line that transverses the rotunda, from whence two routes of circulation are provided. The main ceremonial entrance follows the protocol established for passage onto a Marae and is from the west. This has been achieved by the use of a sequence of ramps which first move out towards the harbour before returning to face the Whare-nui and hosts: accomplishing the movement from outside to inside involved in a Maori welcome. To avoid any breach of protocol that may occur should guests to the Marae be seen to turn away from the hosts, the movement out into the harbour is so handled as to ensure the first sighting of the guests as they prepare to enter upon the Marae-atea. As mentioned, the Marae-atea space is open to the environment, however, shelter for the whare-nui and immediate surrounds is provided in the form of a glass enclosure to ensure continuity of functions in moments of inclement weather. From the Marae-atea one enters the spaces of the displays across the various halls. As already indicated the display spaces and the interrelation between these possess a labyrinthine quality that is emblematic of the condition of contemporary knowledge. This interrelationship between the Marae rotunda and the display spaces is the most critical condition in the design. By insertion into the fabric proper of the Museum, circular paths around the Marae organise a journey through the exhibits. Through this the Marae becomes a living part of an integrated complex, not a mere forecourt to a Pakeha museum.



Partial view from South



Aeriel view from city

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

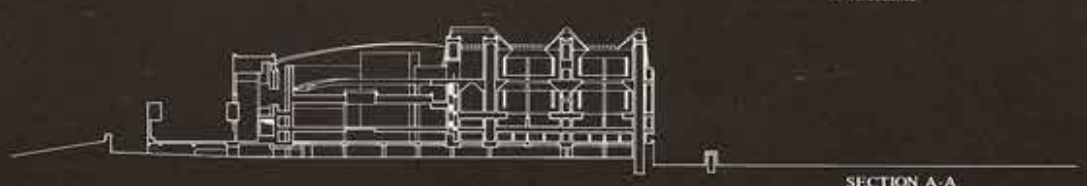
1. ENTRY HALL
2. TICKET SALES AREA
3. INFORMATION DESK
4. COAT CHECK
5. LUGGAGE LOCKER
6. PUBLIC TOILET
7. MUSEUM SHOP
8. CAFETERIA
9. CLASS ROOM/INDOOR ROOM
10. CHILDREN'S LEARNING CENTER
11. DEMONSTRATION LAB/ CLASS ROOM
12. STUDIO/ARTS CLASS
13. LIBRARY
14. ART COLLECTION
15. STORAGE
16. OFFICE
17. WORK ROOM
18. MATERIAL STORAGE
19. HISTORY COLLECTION
20. MAORI ART HISTORY COLLECTION
21. SUPPORT SPACE OFFICE
22. VISITOR AREA
23. CONFERENCE ROOM
24. MANAGEMENT OFFICE
25. PLAZA

PARKING LEVEL PLAN

1. PARKING
2. MECHANICAL ROOM
3. RECEIVING
4. WORKING ROOM
5. WORK SHOP
6. OFFICE

2ND FLOOR PLAN

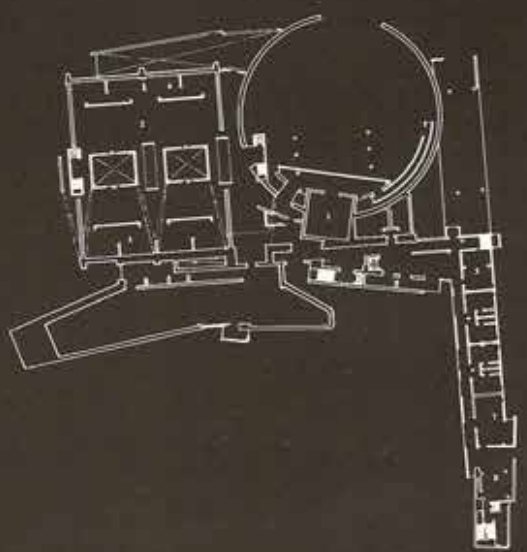
1. AUDITORIUM
2. HALL
3. CONFERENCE ROOM
4. PUBLIC TOILET
5. NATURAL ENVIROMENT COLLECTION
6. STORAGE
7. LAB/RESEARCH
8. OFFICE
9. SENIOR MANAGEMENT SUITES
10. MANAGEMENT/ADMINISTRATION SECTION
11. COMPUTER ROOM
12. PUBLICATION
13. PUBLIC PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATION
14. RECORDS/MAIL
15. PERSONNEL
16. CONFERENCE



SECTION A-A

3RD FLOOR PLAN

1. MARAE (EVENT SPACE)
2. RECEPTION
3. HALL
4. SPECIAL EXHIBITION
5. TEMPORARY EXHIBITION
6. MAORI ART/HISTORY EXHIBITION
7. PUBLIC RESEARCH/RESOURCE AREA
8. LIBRARY
9. ART EXHIBITION
10. LABORATORY/WORKSHOP
11. OFFICE
12. WORK STATION
13. LIBRARY
14. TEMPORARY STORAGE
15. TREATMENT ROOMS
16. PHOTO LAB



4TH FLOOR PLAN

1. CEREMONY HALL
2. HISTORY EXHIBITION
3. PUBLIC RESEARCH/RESOURCE AREA
4. LIBRARY
5. OFFICE
6. TRAINERS WORK ROOM
7. CONFERENCE ROOM
8. SPECIALIST RESOURCE ROOM

SECTION B-B

insert picture still from Prince's Kiss Video

It was the writer's intention that this article be illustrated with images of those artists whom she discusses. Regrettably we were unable to obtain the necessary permission from some of these artists. It was decided therefore to replace all images with insttructions for our readers to insert the images for themselves. This action is of course a protest; a protest against censorship in what ever its form. It is not however a criticism of Warner Music NZ Ltd and Sony Music NZ Ltd. Indeed the editors would like to acknowledge the co-operation and efforts of both Warner Music NZ Ltd and Sony Music NZ Ltd in trying to obtain the necessary permission from those artists whom their respective parent company represents.

insert picture of Dynasty Trinity

On Masquerade

A visual-text on sexual stereotypes in the media

Lita Barrie

> 'The reader may now ask how I define womanliness or where I draw the line between genuine womanliness and the 'masquerade'. My suggestion is not, however, that there is any such difference, whether radical or superficial, they are the same thing' – Joan Riviere, Womanliness as a Masquerade.[1]

If language dictates what can be said and thought,[2] then in an era of high-tech communications, media language has the most powerful effects in the determination of our sexual identities. The art of selling sex in today's media relies upon skilful manipulation of fictions which have been passed down through the millenium of patriarchal thought and become embedded in popular memory. By revamping these mythico-religious fictions into sexual signs we unconsciously recognise, the media reinforces the archaic symbolic underpinnings of our present-day libidinal economy.

I want to begin by considering an example of the way feminine sexual identity was represented in a Renaissance economy based on Neo-Platonic symbolism.

Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love* was executed in 1515 to embody Neo-Platonic ideals of morality in the figures of two Venuses – one clothed and one naked – and originally bore the title *Beauty Adorned and Beauty Unadorned.*

But the painting became emblematic of the way inherited signs of femininity, acquire different moral evaluations in different periods of history, according to the dominant symbolism of the time.

The allegory of the two Venuses was familiar to a Renaissance audience who inherited the history of two early Greek statues by Praxiteles of a naked and a clothed Venus. The naked Venus was rejected by one island but later glorified by another. During the middle ages the double Venus became a convention for representing nature and grace. In Titian's allegory the adorned Venus is a sign of 'Transient Bliss', who attempts to persuade the Unadorned Venus – 'Eternal Bliss' – to throw away her worldly treasures of gold and jewels. But this reading

Lita Barrie graduated Master of Arts from the University of Victoria, Wellington. Barrie has worked as an eductor and art critic. She has a special interest in contemporary French Feminist Thought and has written for different journals and in a number of catalogues. Barrie now lives in Los Angeles.

1. Joan Riviere, *'Womanliness as a Masquerade'* in Formations of Fantasy, Methuen; 1968, p. 38.
2. According to Jacques Lacan's revision of Sigmund Freud's dictum that "anatomy is destiny" it is language which determines the psyche – since we are born into language which is structured upon an Oedipal division of sexual identities.

depended upon the Platonic division between the material world and the world of idealised forms.

The painting was not re-titled *Sacred and Profane Love* until the 18th-century when its Neo-Platonic frame of reference was lost. Released from its original symbolic sub-text, the painting became more problematic to read – as the infamous art-historical debates over what each Venus represents, demonstrate. But the intrigue of the painting is that it exemplifies the 'riddle' femininity poses to patriarchal thought.

Because the 'seen' is privileged over the 'unseen' in masculine imagination, femininity has traditionally been associated with masquerade. If man invented a principle of sexual identity based on his own visible sexual organ, then woman's lack of anything to see has been interpreted as her non-identity. Because woman can only impersonate this non-identity man has given her, femininity has been associated with a mask – as a form of masquerade.

Friedrich Nietzsche provides one of the strongest articulations of the masculine response to feminine adornment as a mask or masquerade beneath which lies some hidden 'unseen' danger. Perturbed by the relation between woman, truth, and adornment he wrote, 'From the very first nothing has been more alien, repugnant, inimical to woman than truth – her great art is the lie, her supreme concern is appearance and beauty'.[3]

For Nietzsche woman is a lie – the only truth she has is that she is adornment. Even in the sexual act, she is nothing more than an act. As he says 'they "put on something" even when they take off everything. Woman is so artistic'.[4]

But the underlying sub-text (man's fear of the larynx-with-teeth) was revealed when Nietzsche approached the problem (which later pre-occupied Freud and Lacan) of what woman wants. Because the masculine libido relies upon woman's silence for its stability, the articulation of what woman wants, threatens man. Hence Nietzsche's comment, '. . . already female voices are raised which by holy Aristophanes! make one tremble; there are threatening and medically explicit statements of what woman wants of man'.[5] To the 19th-century philosopher this was outrageous. Woman must be re-assigned to a position where she cannot speak for herself – but is spoken for, instead. And that position is the site of the masquerade where woman silently mirrors the claims man has imprinted upon her. This non-identity must be worn as a mask which is never removed in case the flaw in man's fiction was exposed by the suggestion of a 'different' feminine subjectivity, which escapes masculine logic.

Interestingly, it was a woman who provided the first psycho-analytic explanation of feminine masquerade as a defence woman used in a masculine regime. In 1929 Joan

3. Freidrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Vintage Books, 1974; p. 317.
4. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Penguin; 1973, p. 144.
5. Ibid, p. 145.

Riviere developed her argument from a case study of an intellectual woman who, as a defence against male reprisal for exhibiting her intellectualism in public speaking engagements, sought male re-assurance by 'means of flirting and coquetting in a more or less veiled manner'.[6] Riviere applied Freud's idea of Oedipal rivalry to argue that in the act of public speaking, this woman symbolically exhibited herself in possession of the father's penis and, having castrated him, must placate his anger by masquerading femininity to father substitutes – in effect 'disguising herself as merely a castrated woman'.[7]

Riviere emphasised the enigma femininity represents to man, arguing that womanliness is a mask 'behind which man suspects some hidden danger'.[8] But this enigma is man's perspective, his image of woman, so that Riviere was trapped in a contradictory position in her attempt to unravel it. Ironically, her own life became the re-enactment of the case study from which her argument was developed. As a punishment for attempting to unravel a 'riddle' man invented, Freud diagnosed her as an hysteric. But as Stephen Heath commented, 'hysteria is what?' Failed masquerade. The hysteric will not play the game, misses her identity as woman.[9] As he says, 'Riviere is admirable and disturbing and so disturbed'.[10] As a woman who dared to analyze her own identity, Riviere failed to masquerade 'properly' according to the law-of-father-Freud, her analyst-teacher.

After all, man invented the conception of woman as the 'dark continent' to ensure that only he can shed light on his mystery. Man has the ultimate sanction that his word is law, because he has transcended himself into the 'voice of God'. Disembodying himself to speak from this lofty position he then has the authority to impregnate her body with his word. Thus her identity becomes his 'immaculate conception'.

Her fate is written – a fate which sentences her to a death of silence. And since 'it has been written' in a language which only he can pronounce with the authority of the universe he created behind him, he can adapt his conception of her to suit the economy of the time.

The mass-media construction of Lady Di as a present-day Madonna with child relies on thoroughly coded images that manipulate memories of biblical icons and Virgin Queens. Of course, Diana was invented to ensure the maintenance of a patriarchal regime at a time when women had gone further toward articulating what they want than Nietzsche could have imagined in his worst nightmares.

The young Diana had a much publicised virginity and her major aspiration was to bear children. If man has ensured that woman's maternal functions take precedence over her own specific (erotic) desires, then Di served as a sign of the re-inscription of woman as a glamourised breeding mare with a phallic economy.

6. Joan Riviere, *'Womanliness as a Masquerade'* in *Formations of Fantasy*, Methuen, 1986; p. 36.
7. Ibid, p. 38.
8. Ibid, p. 43.
9. Stephen Heath: *Joan Riviere and the Masquerade'* in *Formations of Fantasy*, Methuen, 1986; p. 51.
10. Ibid.

She neither looked nor talked back – but, instead, carefully kept her eyes turned downward maintaining her silence – so that she never recalled the danger of what might lie beneath feminine masquerade. Diana showed no desire to walk in her own forest. Instead, she followed the path of 'proper' behaviour which eventually led her down the aisle to marry a Prince – just as she had been told in man's fictions.

Because Di was invented to ensure that other little girls could learn to masquerade 'properly', her masquerade became high extravaganza on the day she assumed the royal veil to travel in a medieval coach to the altar where she exchanged the name-of-the-Father for the name-of-the-Prince, in a mass-media spectacle with a global following of millions.

On the night of her deflowering crowds hailed outside her royal bedroom window. The next morning BBC reporters speculated on the date for a royal heir. And within a year, Diana delivered a new prince, named according to the law-of-the-Father as a potential King. Diana became a new fertility symbol, revamped as a sign that maternity had gained a new prestige. She served a burgeoning fashion industry and sanctified the place of royalty once again in a depressed English economy. Royal Britannia was not sinking After all – it had a new Virgin Queen, a white Madonna, an icon for its postage stamps.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, television's Dynasty revamps biblical fictions, appropriating the original protaganists as new signs of sexual identity within a monetarist economy. Blake becomes a sign of the law-of-the-Father, while his angelic wife is a crystal (Krystle) through which he sees a reflection of himself as a benevolent patriarch of a corporate dynasty. As a revamped Virgin Queen, Krystle embodies patriarchal ideals of feminine goodness in opposition to all that is evil – embodied by his de-throned wife. Alexis, a revamped Mary Magdalene.

This ruthless siren is a sign of the matriarch-turned-mogul-woman, who outplays the corporate patriarch at his own game by following pagan rules. In her blood wedding she became the widow spider, changing patrimonial names to acquire an even bigger corporate dynasty than this. She takes younger lovers as her consorts, and her heirs must choose between the profane love of the mother and the sacred law-of-the-Father.

But in this re-play of biblical fiction, the protaganists no longer elicit a single 'proper' reading. Krystle might be a sign of the perfect feminine masquerade, but to many younger women her 'proper' behaviour is boring. As the crystal that mirrors man's absurd privilege, her masquerade reflects the subordination of woman's desires to man's – which simply does not inspire 'girls who just want to have fun' (Cyndi Lauper).

Alexis is a more complex sign of feminine masquerade taken to excess. By foregrounding the masquerade, she suggests the 'unseen' danger Nietzsche feared lay beneath the feminine mask. As Mary-Ann Doane comments 'what is not understandable within the given terms is why a woman might flaunt her femininity, produce herself in excess of femininity, in other words foreground the masquerade'.[11] By flaunting femininity, Alexis suggests that it is a mask, which is not only worn but can also be removed.

Freud traced the experience of evil to the formation of the castration neurosis, when the boy first sees the mother's unveiled body. The femme fatale who produces femininity in excess, by exaggerating the accoutrements of femininity as accoutrements, is regarded as evil by men because she arouses masculine desire while simultaneously recalling the castration threat that woman's body symbolises.

Alexis is a supreme symbol of the femme fatale who (like Marlene Dietrich and Joan Crawford), can suggest that even her own body is a disguise. By exaggerating her poses as poses and her pouting as pouting, she recalls Nietzsche's comment that 'they "put on something" even when they take off everything'. By reflecting this paradox, the femme fatale acts as a mirror for what man both wants to see and does not want to see in himself. The woman who masquerades-in-excess becomes the embodiment of evil and desire (agony and ecstasy). As Michele Montrelay comments 'woman is not accused of thinking or committing this evil, but of incarnating it. It is this evil which scandalises whenever woman 'plays out' her sex in order to evade the word and the law'.[12]

Not only does Alexis's masquerade-in-excess recall the ever-present castration threat woman's body symbolises, but her aura of danger is accentuated by her succession of younger consorts, recalling pagan myths of Fertility Queens who annually took son-lovers who died at the end of each season. These mythological fictions are interwoven into the sign of the corporate mogul woman, to suggest the danger of present-day female power by evoking memories of the ancient matriarch. (Angela in Falcon Crest also symbolises the danger of the matriarch-turned-mogul woman, and Maxine in Gloss is a similar symbol of dangerous female power in a monetarist economy).

In today's libidinal economy women are beginning to claim both money and power so that the super-bitch has become the object of desire and fear.

Interviewed on her recent best-seller, Ambition – on the plight of corporate bitches – Julie Burchill responded to the question of how she herself became a super-bitch by answering 'a combination of nature, nurture and Nietzsche'. As a super-bitch,

11. Mary Ann Doane, *'Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator'* in *Screen*, September/October 1982; p. 81.
12. Michele Montrelay, *'Inquiry into Femininity'* in *French Feminist Thought – A Reader* ed. Toril Moi, Basil Blackwell, 1987; p. 237.

insert picture of Botticelli's
Madonna and Christ Child

insert picture of Michael Jackson
from the cover of his Bad album

insert picture of L.L. Cool. J. from
the cover of his Bad album

insert picture of Princess of
Wales and Prince Harold

insert picture of Jackie and Joan Collins, sitting together in back of limousine

insert picture of Prince in concert, liking the neck of his guitar

insert picture of Madonna from the cover of her True Blue album

Alexis embodies the male fantasy of dangerous femininity – but the question of what she means to herself, remains.

The character of Alexis is incorporated into the media invention of Joan Collins. Off-screen she acts-out a further permutation of the male fantasy of the femme fatale through her re-emergence to fame and fortune in her sister's screenplay, The Stud. But despite the female authorship the script merely rehearsed the masculine perspective of fictions passed down through time immemorial.

Today, the sisters of glitz are 'Queens of the Road' – twin Venuses of profane love travelling the highway. But they follow the path of masculine logic where woman can only say what man has invented. Since to say what she wants, women would have to re-invent a different logic in which improprieties could be suggested to disrupt man's repressive logic.

Madonna, the rock singer, also acts-out the masquerade-in-excess, but to parody the logic underpinning man's conception of woman – rather than to reflect the paradox of 'unseen' danger the femme fatale symbolises. By mixing-up the logic of the virgin and the whore and sacred and profane love, in a fusion of religion and sex, she has earned her name as the 'Immaculate Mis-conception'. Madonna makes the 'riddle' woman represents to man ridiculous by blatantly manipulating sacred images with profane lyrics and dance movements, to confuse the logic of morality and immorality, repression and lust in her performance of songs such as Like a Virgin.

In *Papa don't Preach* she parodies the sanctimoniousness of the sacred law-of-the-Father and in Like a Prayer she goes furtherest in suggesting how the Church is built around the repressed erotic connotations of the virgin's body – which is linked to rape. In the video for *Who's that girl* Madonna parodies the use of woman's body for male voyeurism by playing a cabaret performer in a peep show – recalling Marlene Dietrich's performance in *The Blue Angel*. With camera cuts to spot the sociologist in the audience who is scribbling notes, and a young boy whom she befriends, she turns the spectacle into a joke.

Madonna has sometimes been described as a 'new feminist' who proves that feminism can be fun. As an anti-dote to puritanic forms of 70s po-faced feminism it is refreshing to see a revamped Monroe gone down market in floozy style, who enjoys the masquerade as a game.

But her parody of feminine masquerade is just that – a parody – in which she is finally reduced to enjoying a joke upon women that men invented. Perhaps the question of an alternative image of woman also involves an alternative to the image. Woman's relation to the scopic regime differs from man's, because she is positioned as passive object of the actively male structure of 'the look'. Madonna offers the

image of the female body man has coded for his own pleasure – rather than suggesting it is she who inhabits her own body. Rather than the 'disruptive excess', Luce Irigaray suggests as a way of subverting the masquerade 'to re-discover a possible space for the feminine imagination'[13] she runs the risk of being reduced to the masquerade woman is traditionally assigned.

To re-write the meanings of woman's body, pre-supposes a work on language. It is no accident that since the publication of Riviere's article in 1929 a number of feminist theorists have addressed the problem of woman's entrapment in the masquerade. But this has also coincided with the development of cinema – a multi-million dollar industry that relies on woman's position as silent icon for the pleasure of the male spectator.

Women's sexual realities will only change through a disruption of the repressive symbolic structures that dictate the way women are seen and spoken of. The new mobile woman of the future who can escape the fixed identity man invented, will only emerge after woman's body has been recoded in terms of specifically feminine desires which are beyond masculine logic. For this reason French feminist philosophers advocate a feminine writing or écriture that owes a debt to the corporeality of the feminine body – which is related to jouissance (a specifically feminine bodily, sexual pleasure which fragments notions of fixed identity).[14] Images that suggest a specifically feminine corporeality are potentially subversive to masculine logic – but because woman is fictionalised as nothing more than an image, this is a problematic undertaking. Black soul, and rhythm and blues singers seem to be closer to suggesting such feminine corporeality through their lyrics and movements.

To rewrite the meaning of feminine masquerade seems then, to require more than foregrounding its artifice. Because the masquerade is a male fantasy, it can only be subverted through the suggestion of a corporeality which is linked to a 'different' feminine imagination . . . which, perhaps, Mae West went furtherest to suggest with linguistic improprieties which contradicted her image in the masquerade.

In a libidinal economy based on the opposition man/woman, the counterpart to feminine masquerade is masculine display. Man's masculinity relies upon an imaginary relation to the symbolic phallus he, himself, can never possess. As Lemoine Luccione comments, 'Display just like the masquerade thus betrays a flaw: no one has the phallus'.[15] The accoutrements of masculine display have traditionally been chosen for their phallic suggestions. Like the masquerade, display is a re-enactment of power relations. In rock music, the charade of phallic power has some of the most vivid effects in reinforcing the symbolic identifications which determine sexual realities.

13. Luce Irigaray, *This Sex which is not One*, Cornell University Press, 1985; p. 76.
14. 'Jouissance' is the leitmotif of French feminism. The possibility of disrupting the symbolic edifice which defines woman in relation to man depends upon the articulation of a feminine sexual 'difference' which is repressed by language. Since, as Luce Irigaray says, "feminine pleasure signifies the greatest threat of all to masculine discourse, reprewents its most irreducible "exteriority" or "exterritoriality". *This sex which Is Not One*, op. cit., p. 157.
15. Eugene Lemione Luccioni, cited in Stephen Heath, op. cit., p. 56.

Because the act of looking is a masculine position, images of masculine display serve man's narcissism. But the effects of masculine display become more complex when combined with masquerade – for example, when Michael Jackson became Bad.

Jackson's masquerade mixes-up different social codes in a racial/class masquerade in which Jackson as the middle-class Hollywood inspired black attempts to re-fashion himself in the mask of a ghetto black. 'Bad' is black jargon for affirmation and used in hip hop music. Perhaps to recover the black audience from whom he was becoming increasingly alienated as his success in the white media economy grew, Jackson borrows signs used by 'bad' ghetto musicians, like L.L. Cool.

The record cover for Jackson's *Bad* album is a masquerade of the hard, tough, phallicness of the L.L. Cool album, transformed into a Hollywood version of glamourised black leather and chains. Cool is part of a black resistance which risks real danger on stage (provoking gun shooting) which marks the anti-thesis of the plastic-fantastic conventions Jackson attempts to conceal by re-inventing himself as Bad.

Jackson's multi-million dollar *Bad* video ironically became the white fantasy of ghetto black resistance. Produced by Martin Scorsese in classic white Hollywood tradition – not dissimilar to his earlier *Beat It* video – it is based on the riot scenes in *West Side Story* (the prototype of this genre) and *Saturday Night Fever*.

The narrative is based on the story of Edwin Perry, a Harlem black who gained a scholarship to the prestigious Exeter academy. To the black community he became a symbol of upward mobility, so that when he was found shot after attempting to rob a plain clothes policeman a widely publicised controversy arose which disclosed Perry's secret double-life as a gang member during his returns to Harlem in the school holidays. In the *Bad* video Jackson masquerades as Perry returning to Harlem where members of his gang ask him to prove he is still 'bad', by joining a hunt in the Harlem subway. But when he is confronted by an Hispanic victim he warns him to run. The other gang members rebuke him saying, 'you ain't bad you ain't nothing' and Jackson must re-establish himself by being reborn bad. He re-appears in black leather and chains – accoutrements of phallic display – in a highly-stylised hip thrusting dance sequence.

Jackson's masquerade is a bizarre conflation of on-and-off screen biography because the *Bad* video was made as a come-back after years off-screen while he had extensive plastic surgery to replicate the feminine features of his mother-fantasy, Diana Ross.

Jackson's phallic display in a class masquerade becomes more complex because it conceals a mother-identification. Jackson becomes a sign of the 'hysteric phallic', as

Richard Dyer describes men who display masculinity in excess because it is in doubt. Jackson's attempt to over-produce masculinity suggests that he is concealing a psychological crisis. His phallic display is thus confused with a convoluted masquerade which disguises an identity-crisis, related to both class origins and sexual identity. Although his use of artifice suggests the extent to which masculinity (like femininity) is a cultural invention, Jackson's performances are still an attempt to project the fiction of fixed, stable, sexual identity.

Prince, on the other hand, suspends the fiction of truth and exposes the simulation involved in sexual identity. The high-camp trollop of rock and roll, riddles the fiction of a fixed, sexual identity by mixing-up the logic of masculine display and feminine masquerade, knowingly.[16]

At one time he might carry masculine display to sleazy excess with phallic substitutes like his motorbike or guitar. By over-producing the narcissism inherent in masculine display he confuses homo-, hetero-, and auto-eroticism. The semantic concern in these images is to be excessively unsubtle. But he also masquerades effeminacy, adopting the mask of the luxurious feminine in heavy make-up, rufflettes, lace and velvet – in images which draw on the same iconography as Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love*. By playing-out what Nietzsche called woman's 'genius for finery', he contradicts the masculine identity suggested by the phallic displays.

But he also twists rock and roll messianic conventions, by acting-out the role of the sacred Eastern Prince, adopting a caftan and cross costume. By exaggerating religiosity in songs like *The Cross*, he parodies sacred belief until he reaches blasphemy.

Prince is a highly complex *Sign of the Times* when sexual realities are in a process of shifting from the fixed male/female opposition, to an awareness of sexuality as a cultural construction, which allows more play, reversibility, and exchangeability. In Prince's *Kiss* video, he riddles notions of fixed, sexual identity by fracturing himself into two bi-sexual personas. He appears as the singer-dancer, performing to the music of a woman guitarist who becomes the straight man or full guy. Prince acts-out a male bi-sexual persona in a mid-drift who dances with a veiled woman in sunglasses who, iconographically, functions as his female bi-sexual persona. This splintering of stable, sexual identity is suggested by fleeting insets of a veiled woman who sings in a deep male voice – in contrast to Prince's high, feminine singing voice.

The lyrics emphasise that a game is being played out with sexual identities. Prince sings: 'there is no particular sign I'm compatible with', using his hands to suggest Venus and Mars symbols. The choreography incorporates Kundalini movements

16. Prince's private life relations with women – which would appear to be very domineering – cannot be confused with his semantic concerns in images and songs.

over the crutch to suggest bi-sexual Tantric sexuality. He sings 'you don't have to watch Dynasty to have an attitude' – emphasising the fiction involved in the portrayal of polarised male-female sexual identities in the television allegory.

Fleeting insets overlaying double images of Prince's face against the bi-sexual couple, occur very quickly to have a subliminal effect. The video operates as spectacle in contrast to the conventional linear narrative effects in Jackson's Bad video, to elicit more unconscious sexual identifications. The digital signs in the video further emphasise this splintering and fracturing of so-called stable sexual identity. In the era of AIDS it is intriguing that Prince exaggerates sexual performance until it is suspended as a self-referential act – beyond actual references – suggesting a simulacra of free floating, exchangeable sexual identities.

But Prince takes 'gender-fuck' to its furtherest excess on the cover of his *Love-Sexy* album. The image conflates sacred and profane feminine masquerade. If Nietzsche insisted that women '"put on something" even when they take off everything', then Prince shows that the male body can also be used as a disguise.

Posed as a little Thumberlina who arouses an orchid stamen, he confuses the symbolic underpinnings of the image. By concealing his genitals he makes the image sexually ambiguous, because the supine pose with the hand over the nipple is a commutation of a female pin-up. The aroused orchid stamen then becomes a confusing index for reading the image: does it represent man's imaginary relation to the symbol of the phallus or woman's arousal of a piece of male anatomy?

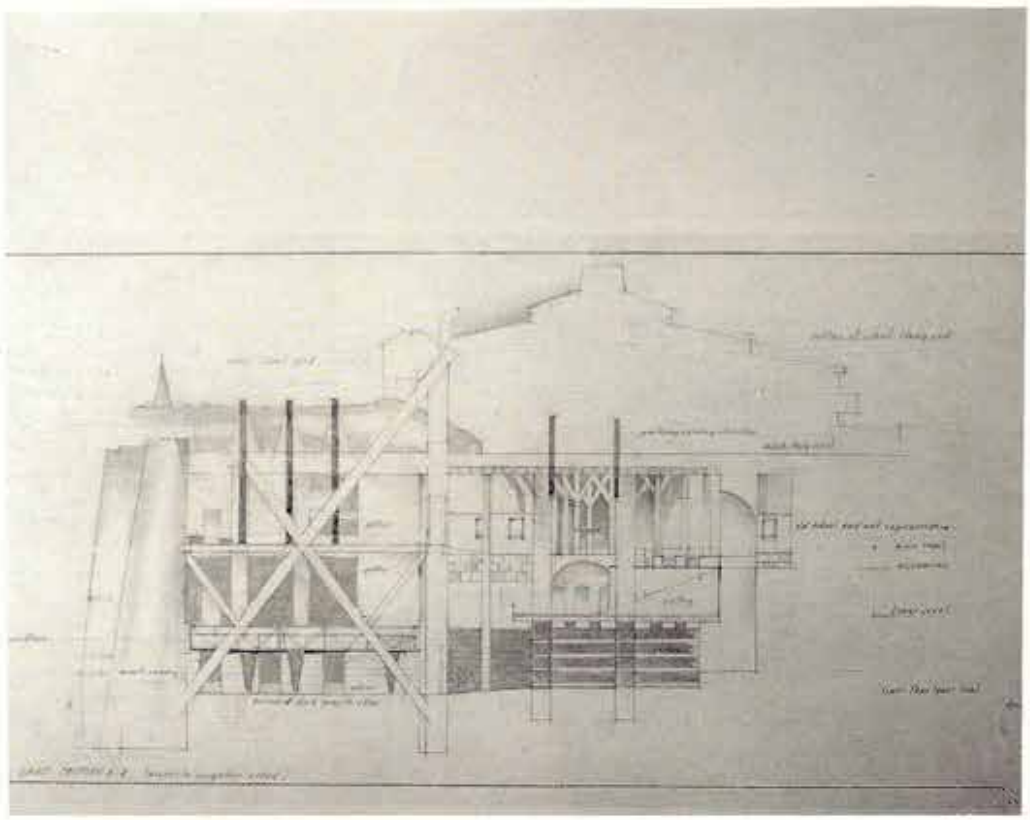
The image plays upon contradictions to break the viewer's habitual sexual identifications – because it is uncertain whether Prince is offering a narcissistic image for the male viewer or a fetish for the female voyeur. Of course, it is a far less complex undertaking to subvert sexual identify from the position of male privilege than from one of female subordination. Unsurprisingly, Prince can image himself to confuse sexual identifications in a way that it is probably not yet possible for women to do with images alone (since a contradictory text seems to be required to subvert feminine masquerade). The *Love-Sexy* image is a sign of riddled sacred and profane love in our own time when it has at least become possible to play a semiotic game of pederastic femininity. Which is just a way of saying: you can be want you want to be . . .

Note: My special thanks to Lawrence McDonald who provided valued stimuli in discussions preceding the writing of this essay.

insert picture of Prince in Messianic costume

insert picture of Titian's *Sacred and profane love*

insert picture of Prince from his Love-sexy album



Architectural Titans: Keats and the Problem of Rebirth

John D Dickson

PREFACE

In this paper cross-reference is made between the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo, Florence; the Quattro Fontane and the Sistine Chapel, Rome; and Keats's *Hyperion. A Fragment, The Fall of Hyperion. A Dream, and Sleep and Poetry.* These texts are shown to be linked by a common interest in the theme of renewal and the problem of birth. Donato (1979) argues Keats's departure from Wordsworth's belief in what he terms a redemptive history, and takes *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion* to be Keats's statement of the failure of this redemptive history; for Keats far from being inadequate to the task of finishing the poem recognises, Donato asserts, that this narrative of Apollo's birth cannot be completed because of a failure by the 'already dead' Apollo to be born.[1] This failure of the Olympian programme and the redemptive scheme it sustains, as perceived by Keats and discussed by Donato, has fascinating implications for reading the selected Renaissance texts.

Crucial to Pope Leo X's conception of the New Sacristy tomb, is anxiety at the imminent extinction of the Medici Dynasty and a flickering of new hope with the birth of a legitimate heir, Cosimo.[2] There is anxiety also concerning the fortunes of the Roman Church with the advent of Luther's Protestantism.[3] The theme of resurrection, of personal significance to Pope Leo, becomes a crucial image for the Roman Church's conception of self renewal. Self-styled as Sol-Apollo, Pope Leo clears the way for the resurrected Christ to be styled likewise as Apollo.[4] With the death of Pope Leo these themes are notably unfulfilled in the New Sacristy tomb, but reappear in relation to the Sistine Chapel where the resurrected Christ-Apollo is eventually painted by Michelangelo. But can this figure be Apollo? A reading of Keats alerts the viewer to the significance of the titanic condition of the Christ figure and of the enormous composition of which it is part, perhaps otherwise simply understood as Michelangelo's Roman style.[5]

It is suggested that this depiction of rebirth can be understood as the titanic appropriation of Apollo's birth, involving the simultaneous presence of the Olympians and the Titans. The coincidence of the golden age of Virgil's peaceful

John Dickson graduated with a PhD in Architectural Theory from the School of Architecture, University of Auckland where he is currently a Senior Lecturer in Architectural History and Theory and tutors Architectural Design. He has a special interest in Ancient and Medieval Architecture of the Middle East.

1. Eugenio Donato 'Divine Agonies: Of Representation and Narrative in Romantic Poetics' in *Glyph 6*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979.
2. Janet Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art. Pontormo, Leo X, and the Two Cosimos*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984; p. 43.
3. Frederick Hartt *The Drawings of Michelangelo*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1971; p. 181.
4. Cox-Rearick, 1987, p. 137.
5. Charles de Tolnay *Michelangelo, Sculptor, Painter, Architect*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981; p. 51.

opp. Roger Fairey, Museum of Architecture for the University of Auckland (1985)

agricultural deity Saturn, with Apollo's reign, as depicted in Pontormo's Vertumnus and Pomano lunette fresco in the Salone of Lorenzo il Magnifico's Villa at Poggio a Caiano, is a Medici conceit anticipating Michelangelo's fresco in the Sistine Chapel.[6]

The later Quattro Fontane project in relation to these themes appears to be an uncomplicated case of appropriation of old springs. The city of Rome is renewed by a re-assertion of her inevitable titanic condition. New water outlets may be provided but these are not new springs. An old water supply system is patched up by Pope Sixtus V, and fertility and prosperity for the city of Rome and its rulers is assured by the presence of images of the old river gods.

The *topos* of rebirth is related in this paper to the architectural use of stone. Keats's imaginative empathy for stone; as statuary, or mountain ravine and crag; relates readily to Michelangelo's technical expertise with stone. The use of stone is problematic for contemporary architects in relation to Donato's reading of Keats. Is stone dead? Can it, should it be revived? Is there a new lightweight contemporary stone Apollo about to be born? Can the Humpty Dumpty pieces of an antique stone world be put together again?[7] Is a new stone architecture inevitably a titanic appropriation of archaic building? Does a stone crypt suffice?

Consideration of these themes and texts by undergraduate architecture students in several design-studio sessions since 1984 at the Auckland University School of Architecture is referred to in this paper with brief reference to the fortunes of the institution of the University. Discussion of several students' designs involves mention of their own architectural and sculptural references and the cross-referencing of these with still further references. Such is the nature of design.

A DUMP: THE FAIREY CRYPT

For under the building in which this paper was first read Roger Fairey in 1985 proposed a crypt.[8] The brief was for an architectural museum to be associated with the Auckland School of Architecture. Fairey's design is a dissertation concerning Terragni's Danteum project of 1938 for the Via delle Imperio at Rome, part of a larger scheme concerned with the twentieth century renewal and restoration of Rome.[9]

Fairey's design involves a labyrinthine journey down through interconnecting galleries and voids, penetrated by, and confronted with solids, according to the schema of the forest, descent into inferno, and ascent through purgatory and paradise. Various archetypes and fragments of previous forms are encountered in this layering of space conducive to memory. A centring axial grid relates these complex interpenetrating forms with the circulation patterns within, and around, existing buildings.

6. Cox-Rearick, 1984, p. 133.
7. Donato, 1979, p. 110. Donato sees the nursery rhyme 'Humpty Dumpty' as a metaphor for the failure of a redemptive history.
8. Roger Fairey graduated in Architecture from Auckland University 1986.
9. Giuseppe Terragni 'Relazione Sul Danteum, 1938'. Translated by Thomas Schumacher, *Oppositions 9*, 1977, pp. 89-107.

Fairey, as did Eugene Viollet-le-Duc, assumed that we 'will be struck with awe and respect in penetrating into these subterranean chambers.' And that relics 'enclosed within a darksome place, far from vulgar observation ... placed in the innermost recess of a narrow crypt approachable only by traversing several successive grottoes, diminishing as we advance.'[10] will be permanently respected just as the older relics had been respected before their translation to exhibition on altars in the Gothic churches above.[11]

The current architecture faculty administration at Auckland was horrified at Fairey's proposal saying an underground space denied everything the existing buildings stood for – fresh air, sunlight, openness, greenery. This protest is an account of what can be termed, employing Donato's terminology, the redemptive schema of modern architecture's Apollonian *topos*, which requires the absence of the crypt. The Auckland School of Architecture has nevertheless extensive basement accommodation.

Suppression of the crypt has been recently scrutinised by Wigley (1987). Wigley cites Derrida's observation:

> The ground on which the foundations of the house are laid is necessarily unsafe, undermined by the crypt: the terrain is slippery and shifting, mined and undermined. And this ground is, by essence an underground.[12]

The structure of Fairey's entrance-shaft 'crashes through the School's existing foyer'. He specifically states this on the drawing. Its throat in steep descent passes a library (colour remains above), and reaches down to rest at the edge of the forest. From here an abyss can be discerned. There is a mezzanine at a lower level then a gallery at what he terms 'a lower than lower level' skirting the abyss with inferno alongside. A ramp spirals round a huge conical column, through the galleries of purgatory, eventually breaking out to the court above.

A process of refinement of detail can be seen at work in Fairey's drawings. Comparison of the profiles of the column capitals in the underground forest can be made with a bronze incense burner, from Paros perhaps, of the mid 5th century BC, found at Delphi, and now in the New York Metropolitan Museum. It is 34 cm high and perhaps depicts Athena helping Herakles temporarily replacing Atlas in his task of supporting the earth. Athena's upraised supporting arms make a graceful papyriform outline as in Fairey's design.[13] Here is a hint of the Olympian mission, of lightness and grace displacing titanic muscularity.

INTERLUDE: STONE *TOPOS*

Fairey's design for an underground museum of architecture makes extensive use of

10. E Violett le Duc, *Lectures on Architecture*, translated by B Bucknall, 2 Vols, London: Sampson Low, 1877; p. 23.
11. Paul Theodore Frankl, *Gothic Architecture*, Penguin, 1962; p. 226.
12. Mark Wigley 'Post Mortem Architecture, The Taste of Derrida', in *Perspecta* 23, 1987. Jacques Derrida translated by Samuel Weber in 'Limited Luc', *Glyph* 2, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1977, p. 168.
13. *Greek Art of the Aegean Islands*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979; pp. 228-229.

stone, and thus, as a stone crypt, on two counts makes that which is supposedly absent central to the architectural imagination; for in progressive architectural circles in New Zealand there has been a myth concerning New Zealand's lack, not only of crypts, but of stone buildings generally.

This myth is not shared in geological circles.[14] In Auckland it is not unusual for current demolition of inner city buildings to expose crypts constructed of local basalt.[15] Their stones are mute, uninscribed and unremarked upon, recumbent at the edge of each excavation's abyss; their location perhaps measured for a day, or week, by hurrying archaeologists before these stones are replaced by even larger crypts. Basalt blocks are also used as curbing stones for Auckland's city streets like in the streets of Pompeii. These basalt blocks are used as was Hector trailing from Achilles's chariot, dead underfoot:

> . . . and the head so princely once
> lay back in dust . . .
> So his whole head was blackened.[16]

for in New Zealand the notion that stone is dead has been widespread and long held.[17]

The oldest standing building in New Zealand of European design, the Keri Keri Stone Store, Bay of Islands, built 1832-1836, has walls made of the local basalt. Yet its arches, quoins and keystones are made of imported Sydney sandstone which Hayward (1987) remarks 'was much easier to dress'.[18] Athena assisting again perhaps? Or a graceful instance of titanic appropriation of the birth of New Zealand's European architecture; for these sandstone blocks are the large structural stones in the design.

Connected with this view that stone is dead are commonly held attitudes to stone in architectural history. The very word Egypt has become an acoustic of death and of the entombment of stone inevitably buried under both desert sand and its own weight and bulk. This acoustic is noted by Donato as the song of mourning heard by Flaubert and Keats in Egypt. A mourning, Flaubert observes, for the withdrawal of the Gods.[19] Other Olympian dreamers, notably Lawrence Alma-Tadema and Edward Poynter, have shown just how sweet this mourning can be by their nostalgic evocation of the delights of the marble patina of a past golden age.[20]

If Egypt gives profound confirmation of the death and entombment of both the Gods and stone itself, it has also from the outset linked stone with the problem of birth and the theme of renewal, as at Zoser's funerary and Heb-Sed jubilee renewal complex where it seems the fresh beginnings of stone architecture are concerned with conscious reference to the primeval beginnings of life and to its continuation.

14. The recent publication by the Geological Society of New Zealand; Bruce Hayward, *Granite and Marble: A Guide to Building Stones in New Zealand*. Guidebook No. 8, Lower Hutt, 1987; indicates a specific interest in stone building in New Zealand.
15. I am grateful to Auckland architect Neil Kirkland for directing my attention to Auckland's many basalt constructions; and for his enthusiasm for stone in all its forms.
16. Homer, *The Iliad*, translated by Robert Fitzgerald, Oxford, 1984; p. 392.
17. An index of this attitude could be indicated by the lack of a masonry workshop at the Auckland School of Architecture although it has fully equipped carpentry and metal workshops. There are several recent undergraduate theses at Auckland concerning the use of stone in architecture. This may suggest a renewal of interest in building stone amongst local architects. The theses include: Diane Burgess 'Building in Stone', 1979; Janine Boyd 'Detail in Stone Building', 1984; Jenny Rattenbury 'New Zealand Rock Formation and Architecture', 1985.
18. Hayward, 1987, p. 10.
19. Donato, 1979, pp. 94-95 and p. 118.
20. Christopher Wood, *Olympian Dreamers. Victorian Classical Painters 1860-1914*, Constable, London, 1983, Chapter 3, 'Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema', Chapter 4, 'Sir Edward John Poynter'.

Temple, palace and tomb are inseparably linked with the birth of the gods, and with rebirth in death. Here, from the outset, stone delicately at first, and then with a rapidly increasing force which never loses this delicate reference, continues to appropriate the reed booth.[21] As birth is a prior condition for existence, so stone can be seen as a prior condition for civilisation. As birth for the continuation of life in the face of death, becomes a repeatable imperative, so the continuation of civilisation in the face of extinction requires that the architecture of stone be repeated. Thus it seemed to the Renaissance mind preoccupied with the theme of rebirth, seeking out antique stones for their inscriptions, design, and position in larger compositions; and these made the subject of learned references in brick and stucco, painting and sculpture, just as Romans before had done; referring in fresco and stucco both to an Archaic or Classical past, and to recent, and contemporary, architectural innovations.[22]

Perhaps the theme of rebirth in relation to stone has not been advanced further than the Byzantine mind. References, in glass and stone chips as mosaic tesserae, to the spatial nuances of Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic figure sculptures' posture, outline, arrangement and polychromy (as lively as contemporary magazine and poster graphics) were it seems, intended to spiritually transcend the substance (the weight, volume and texture), of earthly stone. In the presence of this spiritual reality, prefiguring types and shadows are acknowledged only by their absence. Stone, spiritually incomplete, is no longer required of itself.[23] Humpty Dumpty's myriad stone fragments are reassembled into a new spiritual design, with the help of the King's men – chiefly the Apostles, with numerous Saints, Warrior Saints and Heavenly Beings. Not for nought the presence of the quadriga of gilded copper horses, which once presided somewhere over Constantinople's Hippodrome and Augusteum, and latterly over the Piazza di San Marco in Venice, from the base of the vaults of the Basilica of St Mark. Such horses reappear later, with Apollo as their Charioteer, as the focus of the watergardens at the Palace of Versailles.

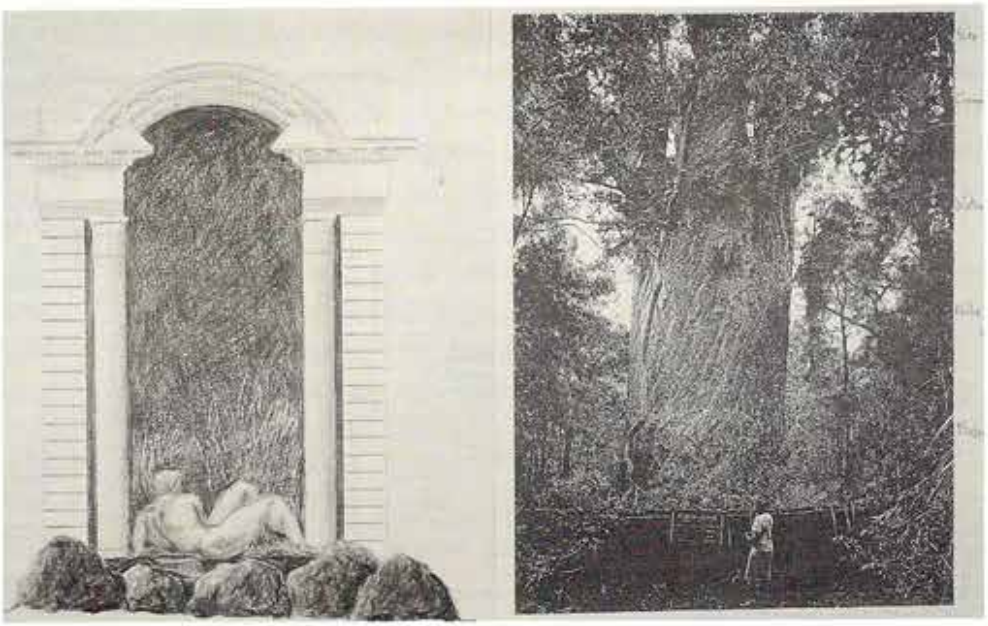
Beneath the Byzantine vaulted, spiritual polychromy, is stone, in the guise of its earthly self, as massive piers, and surface patterns of marble depicting the fertility of a watered earth, as wall revetments and floor slabs. To the Mesopotamian mind this stone world below is an inferior doomed world, its cipollino patterns intimating the deluge. To the Greek mind, it is Mount Olympus providing access with the help of gods, heroes, and Christian Saints to the heavens.[24]

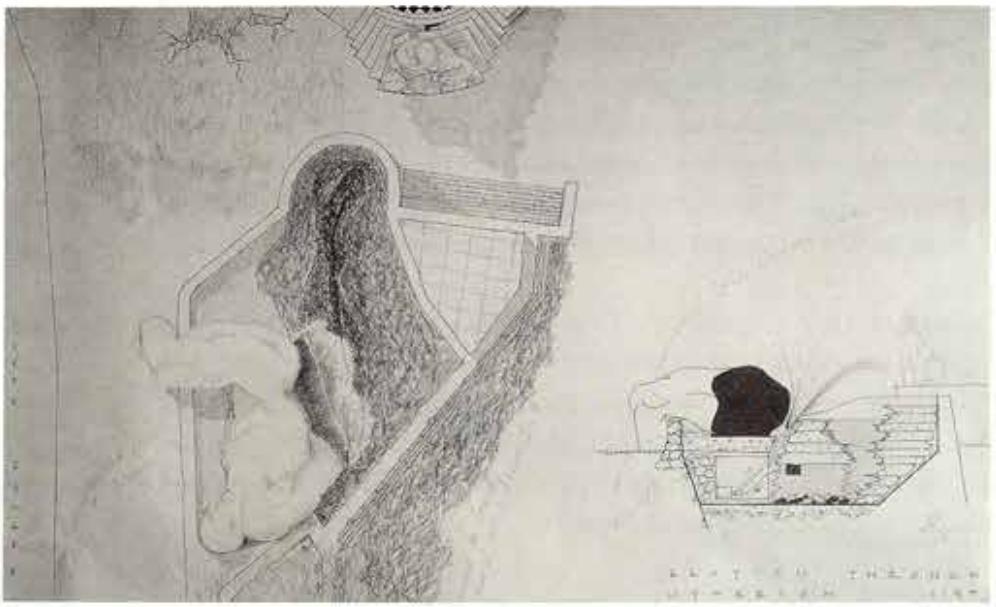
Keats, in depicting Hyperion's palace, draws on the imagery of these Constantinopolitan vaults, jarred repeatedly by earthquakes, and Constantinople's two falls, and jars them further with his own doubts, re-integrating their heavenly conceits with their earthly origin:

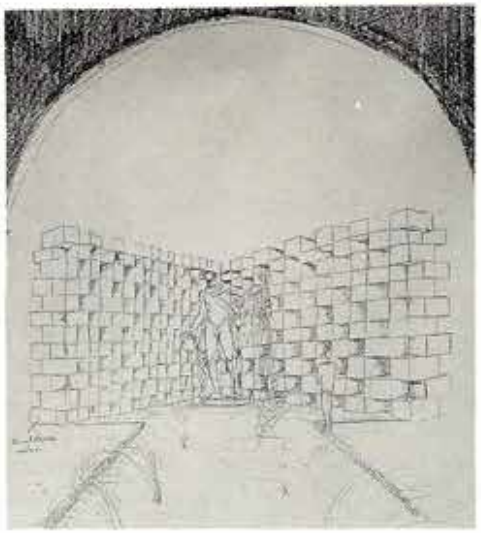
21. Jean Phillipe Lauer, *Saqqara: The Royal Cemetery of Memphis*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1976.
22. Vincent J Bruno, 'Antecedents of the Pompeian First Style', in *American Journal of Archaeology*, 73, 1969; pp. 305-317.
23. Gervase Mathew, *Byzantine Aesthetics*, London: John Murray, 1963.
24. Kathleen E McVey, 'The Domed Church as Microcosm; Literary Roots of an Architectural Symbol', in *Dumbarton Daks Papers*, 37, 1983; pp. 91-121.

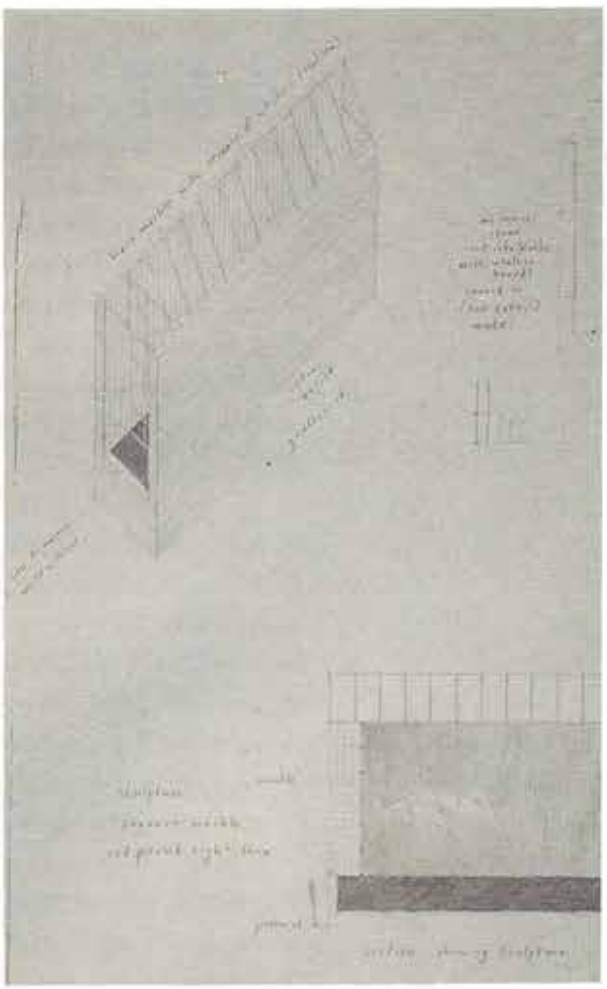
overleaf

1. Jasper van der Lingen, Saturn – Kauri Fountain for the University of Auckland (1986).
2. Linley Hindmarsh, Hyperion Fountain for the University of Auckland (1989).
3. Richard Ried, Hyperion Fountain for the University of Auckland (1988).
4. Denise Wright, Hyperion Fountain for the University of Auckland (1989).









25. John Keats. *The Complete Poems*, edited by John Barnard, Penguin, 1976. All quotations from Keats's poems are from this volume.
26. H.V. Morton, *The Waters of Rome*, London: Rainbird, 1966, chapter VIII, 'The Aqua Felice and its Fountains'. See also Anthony Blunt, Borromini, London: Allen Lane, 1979, chapter 3, 'S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane'.

He entered, but he entered full of wrath;
His flaming robes streamed out beyond his heels,
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,
That scared away the meek ethereal Hours
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades,
Until he reached the great main cupola.
There standing fierce beneath, he stamped his foot,
And from the basement deep to the high towers
Jarred his own golden region . . .

Hyperion A Fragment, Book 1 (213-224) [25]

A Hump: van der Lingen's and Hindmarsh's Quattro Fontane and Wright's and Reid's Apollo

The Quattro Fontane of 1588 is part of Pope Sixtus V's pleasant space of urban theatre, shaped by the Porta Pia facing into the city of Rome toward the Quirinal Palace, with the Via Pia between. The Quirinal also faces across the grander space of the Tiber river valley to the Vatican and S. Pietro. Its long sleeve (manica lunga) reaches along the Via del Quirinale from the sculptural group of the Dioscuri on Monte Cavallo. These figures, over six metres high, of Castor and Pollux, the so-called horse tamers and their horse, are believed to be Roman copies of the 4th/5th century BC Greek statues found in the Baths of Constantine. Their fake inscriptions – attributions to Phidias and Praxiteles – have been renewed as 'friendly voices' by Sixtus V. The long sleeve of the Quirinal reaches toward the Quattro Fontane at the intersection of the Via Pia with the Via Felice, extending toward S. Maria Maggiore – a centralising grid connecting with the circulation patterns of the existing buildings. Obelisks, symbolising renewal, can be seen in each direction from this street intersection at the top of a hill, below which, is the building in which Keats died.

A short distance further toward the Porta Pia, is the terminus fountain, the Fountain of Moses, of Sixtus V's Aqua Felice completed by Fontana in 1587. Its water feeds the Quattro Fontane and the Capitol beyond the Quirinal. Thus as Morton (1966) relates, the Aqua Felice brought water back to the Capitol (1588), after thirteen centuries, from springs fifteen miles east of Rome, fed by water from the Alban Hills, that has filtered through volcanic tuft, and which reaches the city from the springs in twelve hours. The old Claudian and Marcian aqueducts are used by Sixtus V along the way in this most expensive, most generous, of his works.[26]

The four fountains of the Quattro Fontane are four figures: Fidelity with a dog, Strength with a lion, and the river gods – the Tiber, and its tributary the Anio from the Sabine Mountains to the East of Rome. Or perhaps it is the Nile. The Tiber is

lodged in the corner of Borromini's S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, the design of which also springs from the Sabine Hills, as Borromini's inspiration seems to have come from the then contemporary excavations at Hadrian's villa at Tibur.[27]

The Quattro Fontane river gods continue the tradition of the old Roman sculptures of the river gods of the Nile and Tiber (formerly the Tigris), sited at the Quirinal and removed by Michelangelo to the Capitol, where he placed them beneath the stairs of the Senate in a composition comparable to that in which the river gods were intended to participate in the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo in Florence. Symbolic of renewal these statues are a tangible continuity with ancient Rome, being two of the few Roman sculptures to survive uncovered from ancient times.

Gais (1978) in her quest for the sources of river god iconography argues the reclining river god as an Hellenistic synthesis from Alexandria, achieved by the 4th century BC, and inspired by the river Nile; a synthesis of the reclining banqueter, particularly Herakles, with his antagonist the archaic river god Acheloos.[28]

In the role of river god, Herakles, a popular comic character in his drunken recline, is also a moral exemplar of stoic philosophy reclining justly from his ethical struggles. He is a powerful protective hero, holding a cornucopia in the role of an agricultural fertility god, feasting with Dionysos at ritual banquets with initiates in honour of the gods, or in honour of the deceased at funeral banquets. He is the giver of prosperity, the river, a source of life, and here at the Quattro Fontane he is the river Tiber, or perhaps the Nile, presiding over the city of Rome's renewal.

Moore (1960) suggests fertility is a dominant theme of the extensive hydraulic conception of Hadrian's villa at Tibur.[29] Renewal is a likely preoccupation of Hadrian. Gais's analysis brings Zoser's renewal complex at Saqqara on the banks of the Nile into sympathetic relation not only with Hadrian's villa at Tibur, where renewal of the Emperor in at least a recreational sense can be considered a theme, but also with Hadrian's mausoleum on the banks of the Tiber.

The Capitol at Rome receives water from Sixtus V's Aqua Felice, and is also the repository of the reclining figure Marforio, perhaps symbolising the ocean, an old Roman sculpture from the forum placed on the Capitol by Jacopo della Porta in 1594.[30] Marforio is a talking statue, as is also Rome's Pasquino depicting Achilles lifting the body of Patroclus whom the immortal horses bore away as rivers do.[31] These horses are the subject of Angelos Sikelianos's poem *The Horses of Achilles*:

> . . . Their backs gleamed like a wave;
> they came up out of the sea,
> tore over the deserted sand,
> necks straining high, towering,
> white foam at the mouth, stallion-strong,

27. Blunt, 1979, p. 37.
28. Ruth Michael Gais, 'Some Problems of River God Iconography', in *American Journal of Archaeology*, 82, 1978, pp. 335-370.
29. Charles W Moore, 'Hadrian's Villa' in *Perspecta 6*, New Haven, 1960, pp. 16-27, p. 19.
30. Morton, 1966, pp. 148-154.
31. Fitzgerald, 1984, p. 299.

. . . The hero held the reins;
he spurred, hurling
his godlike youth forward . . .[32]

The cross referencing of the themes of Achilles and Patroclus, of Hadrian and Antinous, of Achilles' horses achieving the Olympian redemptive mission, of Hadrian's Antinous cult, of the Nile repeatedly appropriated by Rome, as in the titanic raising of obelisks, and as in its Nile fountains and river gods, is beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless a third royal renewal complex, that of Louis XIV at Versailles, must be linked with those of Zoser and Hadrian, and the river gods such as Jean Baptiste Tubi's 'Rhone', and Etienne le Hongre's 'Seine' recalled.[33]

In inviting undergraduate students (1986 studio session) to prepare designs of four fountains at a hill top street intersection within the University of Auckland, making reference in their designs to the Quattro Fontane and Keats's *Hyperion*, students were seen as participants in a ritual banquet, as initiates, or banqueters feasting in honour of the deceased, in honour of a cultural heritage of which the Quattro Fontane and Hyperion are part. Through their designs all students would be invited to join in the feast. The whole University is seen as such a cultural banquet, advantageous to society, for its prosperity and wellbeing, protecting society's interests, and fostering its renewal. Such was the programme for the design.

In Jasper van der Lingen's design the river gods of the Quattro Fontane are transplanted directly with their niches and foliate grottoes.[34] Not only does Herakles become merged in body with Keats's Titans, but the foliate backgrounds also assume the titanic condition Keats has imagined:

Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat grey-haired Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair;
Forest on forest hung above his head
Like cloud on cloud . . .

Hyperion. A Fragment, Book 1 (1-7)

Saturn reclines specifically sixty five metres beneath the deep shade of New Zealand's indigenous titanic trees, the kauri, totara, rimu and kahikatea; each tree separately carved into stone for one of the four street corners.[35] Van der Lingen accommodates also the delicate forest floor plants associated with each tree, contrasting these with the titanic assertion of the huge trees. New Zealand stones,[36] Coromandel tonalite and Oamaru limestone, are blended with Carrara marble in rhythmic stepped progressions in the manner of Carlo Scarpa.[37]

Van der Lingen has achieved a heavy, deep sense of fecundity; a sense of strength

32. Angelos Sikelianos *Selected Poems*, translated by Edward Keeley and Phillip Sherrard, London: Allen and Unwin, 1980, p. 13.
33. Jacques Girard, *Versailles Gardens. Sculpture and Mythology*, translated by Ellen Rosenthal, London: Sothebys, 1985, 'Seine', p. 230 and 'Rhone', p. 239.
34. Jasper van der Lingen graduated in Architecture from Auckland University 1988.
35. John Morton, John Ogden, Tony Hughes, Ian MacDonald, *To Save a Forest*, Whirinaki, Bateman, Auckland, 1984. The Kahikatea reaches 65 metres in height, the Totara 55 metres, the Rimu 65 metres. See also S W Burstall and E V Sale, *Great Trees of New Zealand*, Reed, 1984, pp. 19-20. The giant Kauri Tane Mahuta, 51.5 metres high in the Waipoua Forest has a trunk 17.68 metres high and 13.77 metres of girth. Te Matu Ngahere, also in the Waipoua Forest, has a trunk 10.21 metres high and 16.41 metres of girth.
36. Hayward, 1987.
37. See *Carlo Scarpa*, edited by Toshio Nakamura, Tokyo: B&U Publishing Co, 1985.

in times past, of wealth and resource, a funding of society's enterprises. Yet the wind stirs uneasily, the mind drifts through an awful sadness. In some of the sculpted forms there is an exceptionally sweet song of mourning; for each tree god follows the contours, texture, and profile of its namesake tree. Because of this emphasis on timber the mind drifts to other timber forms; perhaps to the Maori canoe Mata-atua uplifted at Whakatane and rescued from drifting further, after coming to rest in the Bay of Plenty as part of the first landfall of the Arawa tribe.[38]

In van der Lingen's design the heavy masculinity of the tree gods, their basso profundo slowness, the funeral ensemble of stelae, all assert the 'nest of woe' of the assembled Titans as encountered by Saturn and Thea:

> . . . Above a sombre cliff
> Their heads appeared, and up their stature grew
> Till on the level height their steps found ease,
> Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms
> Upon the precincts of this nest of pain . . .
>
> *Hyperion. A Fragment*, Book II (86-91)

One feels unease at the ominous threat of uprooting engendered by van der Lingen's giant trees.

Linley Hindmarsh's approach is a lively narrative one accenting the vigour of the battling giants as a prelude to the Titans' realisation of failure and their consequent lethargy.[39] Her groupings refer to Hellenistic theatrical treatment of the subject, and to Orsini's 16th century battling giants at Bomarzo, and Giulio Romano's Sala dei Giganti in the Palazzo del Te at Mantua. Initially her design entertained a fragmented screen of columns and entablature entwining motor traffic with struggling giants but this was abandoned in favour of an intense consolidation of the four street corners.

Hindmarsh's vivid sense of colour and texture makes use of black basalt, red volcanic scoria, white Oamaru limestone, and purple, green and black hyperite. With these stones she evokes an abyss over which Hyperion is poised.

By cross referencing the Quattro Fontane with Keats's evocation of the Titans, the cheerful, after-dinner somnolence of the traditional river god type is profoundly disturbed. Forms of muscular repose; creamy sweet of limb, oiled sleek, slack aging Olympians, as depicted in Tubi's 'Rhone', and le Hongre's 'Seine', at Versailles; become tensed. Herakles's indulgent lassitude becomes a case of the post-labour blues, implying doubt concerning the success and outcome of his labours. Herakles is edged by Hindmarsh to the brink of despair.

Van der Lingen displaces these doubts with the optimism of the colossal, as did

38. Errol Braithwaite, *The Companion Guide to the North Island of New Zealand*, Auckland: Collins, 1970; pp. 399-400.
39. Linley Hindmarsh graduated in Architecture from the University of Auckland 1989.

40. The Nile, Chiaramonti Museum, Vatican, Rome.
41. Gerald van der Kemp, *Versailles*, Park Lane, 1981; pp. 206-207. See also Girard, 1985; pp. 150-151.
42. Girard, 1985; pp. 222-223.
43. E Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire Raisonne de l'Architecture Francaise du XI au XVI Siecle*, Paris, 1875, Volume VII, 'Pierre'; pp. 121-130.
44. Denise Wright graduated in Architecture from the University of Auckland 1989.

Michelangelo, to whose river god studies and figures for the New Sacristy, van der Lingen refers. But no matter how high these giants lift their stature; no matter how far they extend their arms; doubt gnaws at their roots, exactly where the tree gods lie.

In these designs the river god type moves far from the amiable Nile, besotted with a progeny of putti nomes, in assurance of untroubled continuity of life.[40]

Van der Lingen's assertion of the colossal requires further cross referencing. It occurs at Versailles with Gaspard Marsy's 'Enceladus' fountain. Here, an almost totally engulfed figure, with only hands free for leverage on the rocks, manages to eject from an anguished mouth a seventy five foot jet of water upward into the air.[41] The titanic force of this water is rooted in Enceladus' throat depicting the re-assertion of power in full redemptive force. Just as Fairey's underground museum's entrance shaft crashes through to the surface. By comparison Tubi's 'Apollo' fountain, at the focus of the Versailles garden is a frilly, frivolous frolic.[42]

Titanic determination comparable with that of Marsy's 'Enceladus' is demonstrated by the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, as grasped by the imagination of Viollet le Duc, and carefully described by him in his *Dictionnaire*.[43] He relates how for strength, the foundations, piers and columns of the building, have rebuilt the geological disposition of the stone as it occurs in the quarry beds from which it is taken. That which appears vertical to the eye, particularly the columns, is in fact a composition of horizontals. Each layer of stone has been placed in the building just as it was under natural compression adjacent to the layers of its accustomed neighbours. This geological conception of the building's design; its reference to its under construction, to its own underground pre-life; is a triumphant re-assertion of form and secures for the Cathedral its full redemptive function. This geologically conceived form is a renewal of an age-old continuity in the face of the fractured counterpart of the purging blast of its construction: for quarry beds have been de-crypted, split asunder; chips, flakes, showers, clouds of grit and dust have been with the demons blasted off, or not quite, for fine sculpting of the uplifted form renders its titanic construction in Olympian dress.

Denise Wright in her design for the four university fountains refers to the explosive force which the Titans withstand, retaining the integrity of their own form, but which places their dominion into other hands.[44] She depicts the fall of the Titans by means of a descending water stair, and then through a ritual subterranean passage of entombment, provides a view of the triumph of light: a sleek Apollo Belvedere, well turned out, with a fitted sandstone wall behind composed of small blocks arranged in an open pattern. Fragments from an explosion can be formed into many intriguing geometrical patterns; in which Apollo delights, and which may well furnish the realm of the visual arts and music; but these fragments cannot be formed

into Titans.

The recent rebuilding of the colossal twenty four foot seven inches high statue of Ramesses II from the Temple of Ptah at Memphis demonstrates the distinction between Titan and fragment.[45] The reconstruction is convincing because of the three large remaining blocks: head and shoulders, torso, and thighs. The shattered kneecaps and heels, although restored, remain fractured. The whole figure is reinforced from behind with a wall-pillar. The device of an anterior wall seems coincident in cases of colossal resurgence and will be encountered again when discussing the Sistine Chapel.

These ancient stones constituting the Ramesses colossus which have lain horizontal at Memphis for several millenia, are now in relation much as quoin stones are to the lesser stones of a wall as in New Zealand's oldest standing stone building of European design already referred to in this paper. The raising of the colossus of Ramesses; an act of titanic reassertion; is concerned with the theme of renewal of Ramesses II, and of the renewal of Egypt.

It can be noted that the reclining sculpted figure of Marforio previously discussed, and now on the Capitol at Rome, has similarly suffered fractures of the heel and arms. Jacopo della Porta restored these extremities to the torso. He also built a high wall behind the sculpture defining the position of the Capitoline Museum in Michelangelo's Capitol design. A central niche located Marforio in this wall. Eventually when this wall was replaced by the Capitol Museum, Marforio was moved to the courtyard.

In Wright's design Apollo Belvedere, like Bandinelli's 'Orpheus' in the courtyard of Michelozzo's Palazzo Medici-Riccardi in Florence, 'paws up against the light' as Keats has activated the horses of Imagination's chariot:

> Is there so small a range
> In the present strength of manhood, that the high
> Imagination cannot freely fly
> As she was want of old? Prepare her steeds,
> Paw up against the light, and do strange deeds
> Upon the clouds?
>
> *Sleep and Poetry* (163-168)

Richard Reid makes Oamaru limestone refer, in his design, to New Zealand's ubiquitous timber weatherboard wall cladding.[47] Its characteristic stepped profile is carved into the stone sides of a vertical fountain tank containing a sculpted Hyperion in free fall with water running down with him.

In both Reid's and Wright's designs, stone in lightweight guise supercedes or

45. Rita Freed, *Ramesses the Great*, Memphis: St Lukes Press, 1987.
46. Morton, 1966, p. 154.
47. Richard Reid graduated in Architecture from Auckland University 1988.

48. Keats uses the image 'nervy kneed' to describe Endymion not his horses in Book I, p. 174.

substitutes for the titanic impulse: just as Zoser's renewal complex makes reference in stone to delicate reed architecture, and as Notre Dame in Paris, notably by means of its rayonnant rose windows, refers to delicate organic forms.

The stepped profiles of Reid's stone weatherboards evoke the numerous tramplings of Keats's first sighting of the Charioteer's 'nervy kneed' horses.[48]

> . . . for lo! I see afar,
> O'er – sailing the blue cragginess, a car
> And steeds with steamy manes – the charioteer
> Looks out upon the winds with glorious fear:
> And now the numerous tramplings quiver lightly
> Upon a huge cloud's ridge . . .
>
> *Sleep and Poetry* (125-130)

The Fall: The New Sacristy of San Lorenzo, Florence and The Fall of Hyperion. A Dream

Cross referencing the New Sacristy with Keats's Hyperion furnishes much coincidence. The New Sacristy, with its semi darkness at floor level enveloping figures reclining on sarcophagi, is astonishingly as Keats's has imagined the assembly of the Titans in their craggy lair:

> . . . that sad place
> Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourned.
> It was a den where no insulting light
> Could glimmer on their tears . . .
> Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seemed
> Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
> Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns;
> . . . Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon,
> Couches of rugged stone . . .
>
> *Hyperion. A Fragment*, Book II (5-6, 10-16)

The atmosphere engendered by the Carrara marble wall tombs and protruding limbs of the sculpted figures is intuited by Keats:

> Dungeoned in opaque element . . .
> . . . and all their limbs
> Locked up like veins of metal, cramped and screwed;
> Without a motion . . .
> . . . here found they covert drear.
> Scarce images of life, one here, one there.
> Lay vast and edgeways; like a dismal cirque
> Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor.
>
> *Hyperion. A Fragment*, Book II (23-26, 32-35)

It is well to remember that Michelangelo knew the mountain quarries of Carrara as

intimately as he did the human body.

49. Robert Gittings, *John Keats*, Penguin, 1985; pp. 102-103.

In the New Sacristy, the river gods envisaged beneath the sarcophagi are notably absent; unlike those Michelangelo positioned beneath the stairs of the Senate on the Capitol in Rome. The New Sacristy river gods were intended perhaps to be the four rivers of Hades, or of Paradise. Symbolic of fertility they set the scene for rebirth, but have given way to the image of the banqueting Herakles; four banqueters reclining upon sarcophagi in almost drunken torpitude. This is the scene of a funeral feast in honour of the deceased Medici. But cross referencing with Keats, these four figures are disposed as if on an operating table from Keats's medical years, with the vacant spaces beneath the table now an ominous indicator of the success of the operation. Bodies that have been borne away, not by Achilles horses, but by unseen rivers; or as in themselves these rivers reversing the imagery of fertility and renewal traditionally carried by river gods. The mortuary is evoked also, and the need for other horses unable to redeem the deceased. Keats depicts such a scene at Saturn's Temple:

> . . . 'If thou canst not ascend
> These steps, die on that marble where thou art,
> Thy flesh, near cousin to the common dust,
> Will parch for lack of nutriment – thy bones
> Will wither in a few years, and vanish so
> That not the quickest eye could find a grain
> Of what thou now art on that pavement cold.'
>
> *The Fall of Hyperion. A Dream*, Canto I (107-113)

Keats's reference to the 'quickest eye' and its focus on a 'grain' evokes his likely source of the operating table or dissecting room acutely. The reference to acute vision is of crucial connection with the design of the New Sacristy in which the direction of vision of each figure has been carefully calculated.

The familiarity of Keats with witnessing pain in hospital wards and his concern at the brutality of his superiors in the operating room[49] is focused on the steps of the Temple of Saturn in a sudden climax:

> . . . when suddenly a palsied chill
> Struck from the paved level up my limbs,
> And was ascending quick to put cold grasp
> Upon those streams that pulse beside the throat.
> I shrieked; and the sharp anguish of my shriek
> Stung my own ears.
>
> *The Fall of Hyperion. Dream*, Canto I (122-127)

In this cry of anguish there is also the acoustic of survival; of birth and of death in birth witnessed perhaps by Keats. This scene occurs also in *Hyperion*:

50. Cox-Rearick, 1984, argues the traditional figure of Lorenzo as actually Giuliano, p. 235. The two figures of Lorenzo and Giuliano are named and described in this paper accordingly.
51. Cox-Rearick, 1984, p. 42.
52. Plato, Phaedo.

> . . . Thus the God,
> While his enkindled eyes, with level glance
> Beneath his white soft temples, steadfast kept
> Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.
> Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
> All the immortal fairness of his limbs -
> Most like the struggle at the gate of death;
> Or liker still to one who should take leave
> Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
> As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse
> Die into life; so young Apollo anguished.
> His very hair, his golden tresses famed
> Kept undulation round his eager neck.
> During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
> Her arms as one who prophesied – At length
> Apollo shrieked – and lo! from all his limbs
> Celestial . . .
>
> *Hyperion. A Fragment*, Book III (120-136)

Coincident with Keats's acute acoustic reference is his acute awareness of the eye and the significance of angles of vision. This control of vision is a crucial aspect of the arrangement of the sculptures with in the New Sacristy. Just as Thea when accompanying Saturn climb up to the Titans' craggy lair 'Sideways long fixed her eyes on Saturn's face' (*Hyperion. A Fragment* Book II, 91), so Giuliano and Lorenzo look sideways to the Virgin and Child, at the focus of the New Sacristy, placed also to receive direct vision of the celebrant priest at the altar.

Neither Lorenzo nor Giuliano actually wink at the Virgin Madonna, presumably for decorum's sake. Yet taken together, with Lorenzo's head inclined upward, and Giuliano's head downward, the mechanism is present.[50] This pattern is even more extensive, if less focused in the arrangement of the four figures upon the sarcophagi; a dreary succession of dawn and day, and dusk and night; perhaps symbolic of the uninterrupted cycle of prayers of intercession for the deceased; they are grouped in two pairs with faces alternatively lifted up and down.[51]

If each pair of reclining figures are thought of as the eyes of each wall tomb, with the figures of Giuliano and Lorenzo each the bridge of the nose, and the sarcophagi as the mouths, then with this metaphor comes an awareness of the rhythmic motion of one eyelid up, one eyelid down each side; a gesture thrown by Giuliano and Lorenzo, rhythmically to the Virgin, one eyelid up, one eyelid down: repeated yet again in the fractured lids of the sarcophagi, and terminated by their scrolled ends, just as the eyelid itself is inherently a closed form following the curvature of the eyeball. Is Michelangelo winking an eye at Plato's theory of opposites?[52]

If the theme of the tomb is fertility, procreation, and renewal arising from the seasonal rhythm of the great rivers and the passage of time with its day and night

cycle; for which the Madonna and Child is the transcending symbol; then a vulgar reference such as the wink is not irrelevant as a symbolic guarantor of life.[53]

> . . . Did my very eye-lids wink
> At speaking out what I have dared to think.
>
> *Sleep and Poetry* (299-300)

A connection between winking and rebirth is implicit in the Apostle Paul's imagery:

> We shall all be changed in a flash,
> in the twinkling of an eye.
>
> (*I Corinthians* 15: 51, 52 New English Bible.)

The link between natural procreative sympathies and the redemptive schema is less explicit in the term 'twinkling' than is expected in Pope Leo X's world. A wink, unlike the image of 'flash', implies languor of the body: specifically the weight and curvature of the eyeball and its covering lid. Here is a confirming response from the otherwise engulfing lassitude of the titanic sculptures of the New Sacristy; a response magnified rhythmically by the scale of the room.

But the first step in the titanic impulse toward appropriation of birth in the act of renewal is observed in the upright, seated posture of the figures of Lorenzo and Giuliano. In their godlike, forceful, upright stature, contrasting with the reclining sculptures beneath, these figures of Lorenzo and Giuliano imply the redemptive schema; at least a renewal of mortal life in this middle register betwixt immortality and death:

> . . . 'Thou hast felt
> What 'tis to die and live again before
> Thy fated hour.' . . .
>
> *The Fall of Hyperion. A Dream,* Canto I (141-143)

If Apollo can be seen to be in Michelangelo's mind Keats's Bacchus is there also, particularly in the figure of Lorenzo.[54]

> . . . forms of elegance
> Stooping their shoulders o'er a horse's prance,
> Careless, and grand – fingers soft and round
> Parting luxuriant curls – and the swift bound
> Of Bacchus from his chariot, when his eye
> Made Ariadne's cheek look blushingly.
>
> *Sleep and Poetry* (331-336)

In their slender upright proportions, particularly of Lorenzo's neck; as are poplars; one feels the apprehension of falling, as in van der Lingen's reference to the great trees:

53. Humour in Michelangelo's character and work seems to have been largely ignored.
54. Following Cox-Rearick, Lorenzo here is the figure traditionally designated Guiliano.

55. Hartt, 1971, p. 181.

If I do fall, at least I will be laid
Beneath the silence of a poplar shade;
And over me the grass shall be smooth-shaven;
And there shall be a kind of memorial graven.

Sleep and Poetry (277-279)

Implicit in these two registers of figures, reclining and upright, is the rhythm of rise and fall; as if the Medici not only are sustained and consumed by the natural cycles of day and night, the seasons, life and death, and time, but also ruled over these. From the contemplative stance of all these figures derives the despondency of this shortfall of eternal renewal, and like Keats's Titans, bewilderment at their failure. Oppressed by the enduring rhythms of which they are part, of fertility and death, the New Sacristy figures brood, incapable of achieving the redemptive short-circuit, or the extinction implied in the ambivalent image of Apollo's shriek. Subject to the all consuming destructive force of time: subjected to the ponderous alternation of the seasons and daily cycles, they groan,

Can I find reason why ye should be thus -
No, nowhere can unriddle, though I search,
And pore on Nature's universal scroll
Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,
The first-born of all shaped and palpable Gods,
Should cower beneath what, in comparison
Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here,
O'er whelmed, and spurned, and battered, ye are here!
O Titans, shall I say, 'Arise!' – Ye groan . . .
Shall I say 'Crouch! – Ye groan:'

Hyperion. A Fragment, Book II (149-158)

Yet in their titanic condition; in these base rhythms; there is available extraordinary force, as that depicted in Marsy's 'Enceladus' fountain at Versailles.

The explosive quality of release, of a pent up power, is indicated in Michelangelo's resurrection drawings for the New Sacristy; not implemented, presumably on account of Pope Leo's death. The resurrection of Christ – 'Rise up O Christ' – is also the theme of Pope Leo's Papal Bull against Luther. For the Roman Church likewise caught up in this titanic condition, the explosive concept of the resurrection, as enacted on Easter Saturday in front of Florence Cathedral at the festival of 'The Explosion of the Car' (Scoppio del Carro), provided an image for a redemptive short circuit, in the face of the Protestant challenge.[55] This leads eventually to the Protestant birth being appropriated by the Roman Church in an act of titanic renewal as depicted in the Sistine Chapel.

Although the resurrection frescoes have not been painted in the New Sacristy their intent is implicit in the Sacristy's architecture; in the arcs of light, delineated by a

dome, and pendentive vaults. Here is the realm of Keats's charioteer Endymion in 'a fair-wrought car, /easy rolling so as scarce to mar/ the freedom of three steeds of dapple brown.' *Endymion* (165-167).[56] But this realm above remains inaccessible and its presence glimpsed increases the despondency of those below who are returned to the realm of the river gods, and to renewed alarm at the absence of these, reinforcing the river gods function of 'carrying away'.

56. Plato, *Phaedrus*. The allegory of the charioteer and his horses.
57. Gittings, 1985, p. 361.

> The visions are all fled – the car is fled
> Into the light of heaven, and in their stead
> A sense of real things comes doubly strong,
> And like a muddy stream, would bear along
> My soul to nothingness:
>
> *Sleep and Poetry* (155-159)

In Keats's resistance there is the reinforcement of doubt:

> . . . But I will strive
> Against all doubtings, and will keep alive
> The thought of that same chariot, and the strange
> Journey it went.
>
> *Sleep and Poetry* (159-162)

And the uplift of the New Sacristy's architecture is reversed, as is the gesture of the open sarcophagi below; open ready to receive the fallen just as the sea opened to receive Icarus and covered him.

> Ah! rather let me like a madman run
> Over some precipice! Let the hot sun
> Melt my Dedalian wings, and drive me down
> Convulsed and headlong!
>
> *Sleep and Poetry* (301-304)

Michelangelo also, has depicted such a fall; that of the Charioteer Phaeton, in his presentation drawings for Tommaso Cavalieri, and also made use of this motif in his design conception for the Sistine Chapel wall.

Perhaps in apprehension of such a fall Keats's struggles with doubts and feelings of inadequacy as a poet. He is also oppressed by his brother Tom's illness. Oppressed by his 'identity pressed on his own', and which '. . . pulled on his senses'; 'identifying himself too-closely with the patient, in a self-destroying sympathy that should be reserved only for poetry.'[57] Thus he feels 'not yet a glorious denizen/ Of thy wide heaven.' (*Sleep and Poetry*, 48-49).

In the New Sacristy these emotions are encompassed by the uplifted dome: as an image for Keats's 'wide heaven' spanning the wide world below, which inspires Keats with the force of titanic resurgence:

Then the events of this wide world I'd seize
Like a strong giant, and my spirit tease
Till at its shoulders it should proudly see
Wings to find out an immortality.

Sleep and Poetry (81-84)

If the dome of the New Sacristy is a symbol of heaven, or the planet's entire orb; like the complementing eyelid and eyeball; it is also the wide ocean – the watering of the eye. And this image too, after an initial calm, increases Keats's despondency by its titanic scale:

. . . an inward frown
Of conscience bids me be more calm awhile.
An ocean dim, sprinkled with many an isle,
Spreads awfully before me. How much toil!
How many days! What desperate turmoil!
Ere I can have explored its widenesses.
Ah what a task! Upon my bended knees,
I could unsay those – no, impossible!
Impossible!

Sleep and Poetry (304-312)

Despite the intent of the New Sacristy toward rebirth, the prevailing mood is that of titanic despondency, defeating the uplift implicit in its design. Although the delicate, sweet celebration of rebirth depicted in Pontormo's Vertumnus and Pomona fresco which depicts a similar arrangement of figures, eludes the New Sacristy; within the New Sacristy is a reservoir of titanic force of rhythmic intensity which becomes unleashed, as in the 'Enceladus' fountain, in the full blast of the Sistine Chapel's redemptive scenario.

THE WALL: THE SISTINE CHAPEL, ROME

Michelangelo's explosive resurrection studies, following Hartt's chronology, begin in 1512 with drawings for Julius II, for an unrealised painting above the altar in the Sistine Chapel. The theme is continued for Julius's Tomb and the facade of San Lorenzo and in 1520-5 with drawings for the New Sacristy in Florence, and then for Pope Clement VIII in 1532-3, again for the Sistine wall above the altar.[58] All these studies are transformed by the project for the entire end wall of the Sistine Chapel focussing on the triumphant figure of the resurrected Christ whereby titanic composure is asserted.

Apollo, if this be he, takes on a titanic Roman form. His square torso is like the trunk of New Zealand's giant kauri Te Matua Ngahere. Tityus is raised upright;[59] as Ramesses II's colossus is, despite his shattered heels and knees.

58. Hartt, 1971, pp. 88-89, p. 116, pp. 138-139, p. 181, p. 244.
59. Hartt, 1971, p. 249. It seems Michelangelo used this posture several times in both horizontal and vertical stances. Hartt cites en earlier reclining instance of this posture as Adam on the Sistine Ceiling and upright for an earlier resurrection study on the verso of the Tityus Sheet.

So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
A power more strong in beauty, born of us
And fated to excel us, . . .

Hyperion. A Fragment, Book II (212-214)

Michelangelo appropriates this beauty with titanic force, requiring the entire wall to do so. The work contrasts with the perfection of his earlier studies of the resurrected Christ depicting:

. . . Apollo! Young Apollo,
The morning-bright Apollo! 'Young Apollo!

Hyperion. A Fragment, Book II (293-294)

This act of titanic appropriation is like Zeus as an eagle swooping down to pluck young Ganymede from the earth; also the subject of a presentation drawing by Michelangelo.[60] Keats understands how Ganymede's beauty is appropriated by Zeus:

. . . His youth was fully blown,
Showing like Ganymede to manhood grown;
Endymion
Book 1 (169-170)

But eagles golden-feathered, who do tower
Above us in their beauty, and must reign
In right thereof. For 'tis the eternal law
That first in beauty should be first in might.

Hyperion. A Fragment, Book II (226-229)

Michelangelo's colossus requires an entire wall. The colossus of Ramesses II required a reinforcing wall-pillar behind. Marforio was relocated on the Capitol with a high wall behind. Such is contemporary technique for reinforcing traditional stone work in both restoration and new stone building. There is subtlety in the walls of Carrara marble introduced by Michelangelo into the New Sacristy to back the wall tombs. Here, the white marble seems to dissolve the Chapel walls giving an illusion of Apollo's presence by an architectural means.[61]

The Apollo-Christ of the Sistine Chapel is not a perky, nervy-kneed youth sitting atop a wall reaching to prune and hence create the fresh laurel growth as Portormo has depicted at Poggio a Caiano; he is a titanic Apollo, raised upright above the craggy lair of the damned, amidst the ponderous embrace of the blessed. In this multitude of accompanying figures; some, chiefly the Apostles and Saints, being of comparable or even greater titanic proportions than the keystone Christ figure, are like the large quoins and arches of a stone wall.

The overwhelming titanic force of the composition seems to preclude any

60. Hartt, 1971, p. 249. The Ganymede drawing is now lost but was given with the Tityus drawings to Tommaso Cavalieri, 1528-1533. Charles de Tolnay refers to Sebastiano del Piombo's suggestion that Ganymede, with a halo, be painted in the lantern of the Cupola for the New Sacristy. Charles de Tolnay sees this as a joke. *Michelangelo. The Medici Chapel*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970; p. 50.
61. de Tolnay, 1981, p. 39. 'Here, the walls seem to be pierced and dreamlike facades of white marble appear to loom on every side. It is like seeing through into another world where relations of height, width, and depth appear fleeting and deceptive (architecture which vaguely recalls the effects of the frescoes at Pompeii)'.

62. de Tolnay, 1981, p. 63.

nervousness. In Michelangelo's composition, there is not any hint of doubt, or despondency in the triumphant figures such as is aroused by the 'Apollo of the Bargello' sculpted at the cessation of the Florentine Republic.[62] In this Apollo the problems of Keats's narrative can be discerned. The youth, particularly the beauty of the figure, is distanced, with consequent disturbing effect:

> Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,
> My dispossessor? Have ye seen his face?
> Have ye beheld his chariot, foamed along
> By noble winged creatures he hath made?
> I saw him on the calmed waters scud,
> With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
> That it enforced me to bid sad farewell
> To all my empire:
>
> *Hyperion. A Fragment*, Book II (232-239)

The Sistine Christ-Apollo is all-present, through the titanic appropriation of youth and beauty. One wonders if this is the one for whom Mnemosyne, the Virgin of the New Sacristy, '. . . 'hath forsaken old and sacred thrones/For prophecies of thee, and for the sake/Of loveliness new born'.' (*Hyperion. A Fragment* Book III (77-79))

> . . . Apollo then
> With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes,
> Thus answered, . . .
>
> *Hyperion. A Fragment*, Book III (79-81)

For the success of the redemptive schema, it seems that Humpty Dumpty is of little consequence; what matters is the rebuilding of the wall implying a stone by stone reversal of the fall. In this rebuilding of the wall the large titanic stones are crucial, whatever rubble is employed. Cannot then, the colourful fragments of Humpty Dumpty be arranged in artful patterns upon this wall as one pleases?

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Le Corbusier's Longest Journey

Russell Walden

If we were to ask any intelligent group of architects in the late twentieth century: 'Who combined the imaginative aspects of Rabelais, Palladio, Cervantes, Poussin, Rousseau, Viollet-le-Duc, Baudelaire, Choisy, Nietzsche, Provençal and Picasso?' the only reasonable reply would inevitably be 'Le Corbusier'.[1] For us today, who are celebrating the 100th anniversary of Le Corbusier, the embarrassing feature of his work and legacy is its immense scope, the vast potential ramifications and repercussions of what Le Corbusier did or was groping towards doing. Formed as much by his milieu and unyielding will as by his idiosyncratic ways, Le Corbusier occupies a strategic position in the history of modern architecture. Indeed, the intricacies of the subject cannot be discussed comprehensively without him. He was the moral and spiritual leader of the modern movement. He exerted the most powerful form-giving influence on the architecture of the Twentieth Century. During his lifetime he was the doyen, idealistic conscience and chief propagandist for modern architecture. He inspired the deepest feelings and exercised a magnetic and barely rational hold over his followers throughout the world. He left behind him more than seventy buildings, two of which – the pilgrimage Chapel at Ronchamp (1950-55), and the Dominican Monastery of La Tourette at Eveux, near Lyon (1952-60) – can be considered timeless masterpieces.[2] Besides his heroic architectural struggle – and his utopian nightmares in urbanism, Le Corbusier left some 300 paintings, and wrote thirty-eight books which were translated into a dozen languages.[3] He also did countless articles and public lectures; as well as contributing to many exhibitions with wooden sculpture, lithographs, tubular furniture, tapestry and enamel designs. Indeed, as a propagandist, we have to go all the way back to Ancient Egypt, to Imhotep, to find an equal.

But Le Corbusier was also a very peculiar person. Ferociously egocentric and difficult to work with, he possessed tremendous vitality, high artistic perception, the deepest feelings, a sense of drama, a love of nature, and throughout his life remained an outsider to Parisian society.[4] But in the age of the herd-instinct, our fascination with him tends to increase. He was an incorrigible fighter, and a truly uncompromising figure of intense artistic integrity. We need to remember we are dealing with a combative, truculent and committed individual in whom the temperature of feeling is very high. As a designer he practised architecture and

Russell Walden graduated from the University of Auckland with a Masters of Architecture and received his Doctorate from Birmingham University. His thesis research on Le Corbusier led to his being appointed the editor of a collection of essays on that architect entitled The Open Hand *(MIT Press, 1977). Walden is currently employed as a Reader in the History of Architecture, Victoria University of Wellington. He has also written many articles on Le Corbusier and New Zealand Architecture and a number of monographs in the last subject area. His latest book* Voices of Silence *on John Scott's Fortuna Chapel, Wellington, was published in 1981 (Victoria University Press).*

1. Le Corbusier always maintained that he was a self-educated person, see Le Corbusier Talks with Students, New York, 1961, p. 77.
2. For books about the Chapel of Ronchamp, see Russell Walden, Bon Anniversaire Le Corbusier 1887-1987, The loy of Ronchamp, Auckland, 1987.
3. For a complete list of Le Corbusier's books, reprints and translations, see Jacques Guiton, *The Ideas of Le Corbusier*, New

York, 1981, pp. 119-122; see also Jean Petit, Le Corbusier lui-méme, Geneva: Rousseau, 1970; pp. 258-268.

4. For the difficulties of working in Le Corbusier's office at 35 Rue de Sevres, Paris, see the biography of Xenakis, pp. 34-144; and Judi Loach, 'Studio as Laboratory', The Architectural Review, Volume CLXXI, No. 1079, January 1987, pp. 73-77.
5. Interview with Jean-Serge Torres, at Agence d'Urbanisme de Dunkerque, France, November 1972.
6. See Charles Jencks, Le Corbusier, *The Tragic View of Architecture*, London, 1972.
7. For the scandal and court case which surrounds the history of the Villa Schwob, see Maurice Favre, 'Le Corbusier in an Unpublished Dossier and a Little-Known Novel', in *The Open Hand, Essays on Le Corbusier*, pp. 96-113.
8. Joyce Lowman, 'Corb as a structural Rationalist', The Architectural Review, London, 1976, pp. 229-232; and Brian Brace Taylor, Le Corbusier at Pessac, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., in collalboration with the Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris, 1972.
9. Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, London, 1967, p. 12.

preached urbanism, and was totally ignored by the French Planning profession.[5] Le Corbusier was not content to change the aesthetic direction of architecture twice within his own lifetime;[6] he aspired to be a prophet, and even to the destiny of a saint. What then was his character?

Charles Edouard Jeanneret-Gris achieved fame over night at the age of 30 with his Villa Schwob (1916-17) in La Chaux-de-Fonds. It was the first flat-roofed concrete house of the Twentieth Century for the elite of the Chaux-clockmakers. The quality of the Schwob living room has a convincing plastic unity, achieved through concrete and classicism. From being a nobody, he became one of the most talked about architects in Switzerland. But there was 'la worm in the fruit of fame'. When it was revealed late in the contract that this villa was going to cost one and a quarter million more Swiss francs (at 1970 rates) than the client expected, a whispering campaign began against him.[7] He was removed from the job, and sued by the client. The building was never quite finished as designed. His agony was acute, his personality vulnerable, and soon his character came under scrutiny, when the whole affair went to court. It took him years before he could bare to think about this painful episode. It caused him acute professional embarrassment. He wanted both to become, and to be seen to be, a different person.

With the help of Max du Bois, a Swiss engineer, Jeanneret (as he was known then) fled to Paris in January 1917. Here he eventually found a left bank garret in Rue Jacob. Du Bois also came to the rescue by finding Jeanneret a job as an architect-consultant to S.A.B.A. (Société d'Applications du Béton Arme). In this capacity he built a water tower, designed an abattoir and worker housing, and made an ill-fated attempt to run a brick factory at Alfortville. By the end of the war he was dealing in war surplus supplies.[8] So in this bewildering great-war euphoria, he exchanged the regulated atmosphere of La Chaux-de-Fonds, for the manifold stimuli of a great intellectual centre.

In Paris – the symbol and synthesis of classical genius, the city of many cultural, political, and economic faces provided the essential atmosphere – the difficulties were fierce and unrelenting. But the battle of Paris was worth experiencing for it aroused mixed feelings in Jeanneret. On the one hand, living in the Latin Quarter provided the intellectual intensity he needed and provided a base from which he could broadcast his ideas using the nearby publishing houses. On the other hand, the urban phenomenon of Paris stimulated Jeanneret into a permanent love-hate relationship which he described in terms of 'a dream that I never again left'.[9] Although he loved the vibrance of the Latin Quarter in all its variety and artistic uniqueness, more and more, from the early twenties onward, the general obsolescence and multiple failings of the city as an urban unit became a constant affront to his ideas of what a great city could and should be.

So right from the beginning of Le Corbusier's L'Esprit Nouveau years, and particularly through Vers une architecture (1923), L'Art decoratif d'aujourd'hui (1925), La Peinture moderne (1925), and Urbanisme (1925), we find him insisting that the four fields of architecture, design, painting and town-planning depend upon the product of the individual creative intelligence. Under the tutelage of Amédée Ozenfant (1886-1966), Le Corbusier had come to understand the eternal values and ideal principles found in modern tradition.[10] According to this classical horizon, architectural value could only be measured against absolute timeless standards (Fig. 3). So we have to take his idealism seriously if we are going to understand him. But to build, Le Corbusier had to fuse his idealism with political and technical realities. Herein lies the dark shadow of professional life. However, before dealing with this, it is important to stress his idealistic formation, because this is what makes Le Corbusier so peculiarly distinctive. It is his very idealism which drives him to face the large issues of contemporary life. The city, therefore, comes critically first in his thinking. Nowhere is Le Corbusier's Achilles heel more painfully exposed than when he sought to redevelop the centres of Paris and Moscow. Le Corbusier wanted to reorder these cities with a ruthlessness that would have shocked Baron Haussmann and Marshal Stalin. On the basis of a geometrical system he developed his notorious vision of high density towers, motorways and underpasses so familiar to us in the western world. But for all this visionary idealism Le Corbusier never really appreciated the effect of excesses in transportation and centralisation on people. His model was central Paris, and he took its historic right bank, and autocratically applied his heavenly vision to the Marais quarter, that area of Paris jealously watched over by the City of Paris preservationists. Between 1922 and 1946 he put forward five separate schemes for Paris, and each time he abundantly demonstrated his political naivety.[11] Now Le Corbusier always considered that he observed people's needs and thought he had the answer to solve the problem of urban decay and ugliness, but it is now quite clear, his designer's autocracy obscured any real understanding of other people. Le Corbusier conceived his plans messianically then wondered why he 'got kicked in the arse for his pains'.[12] Ultimately, these rejections created a deep pathological bitterness within him.[13] This is surely a significant reason why he later rejected much of his machine-age posturing. But before this would become visible through the Mediterranean condition of his mature work, Le Corbusier pushed his idealism for the high density city to a new level in La Ville Radieuse.[14] Here he begins to move away from centralised power, towards a more human city of sunshine, space and greenery. Thus, Le Corbusier moved one more step closer towards the great metropolis as the ideal form of human habitation.

By the beginning of the thirties Le Corbusier began to have doubts about large cities, and we find him reducing his 1920s yardsticks to about a million people.[15] Such a redefinition implied a major redistribution of the population, which in turn led towards the linear industrial city. Developed between 1942 and 1962, Le

10. The Ozenfant/ Jeanneret partnership produced two books: Apres le cubisme, Paris, 1918; and La peinture moderne, Paris, 1928; two purist art exhibitions at the Galerie Thomas: Dec 1918-Jan 1917, at the Galerie Druet: 22 Jan-Feb 1921; and 28 issues of L'Esprit Nouveau, from October 1920 to January 1925, with only four breaks in sequence.
11. See Russell Walden, 'Le Corbusier', in *Contemporary Architects*, (ed) Muriel Emmanuel, Macmillan Press Ltd, London and New York, 1980, pp. 460-461, and 1987 edition, Chicago and London, pp. 521-523.
12. Le Corbusier, My Work, London, 1960, p. 147.
13. Philip Johnson, Progressive Architecture, October 1965, p. 237.
14. Le Corbusier, La Ville Radieuse, Boulogue-Sur-Seine, 1935.
15. Anthony Sutcliffe, 'A Vision of Utopia: Optimistic Foundations of Le Corbusier's Doctrine d'Urbanisme' in *The Open Hand*, op. cit., pp. 220-221.

16. Le Corbusier, La Ville Radieuse.
17. Frederick Starr, 'Le Corbusier and the USSR: New Documentation', Oppositions, The MIT Press, Winter 23, 1981, pp. 122-136.

Corbusier defined this model of urban form as a continuous belt of parallel roads and railways with housing etc. along its length. This was his most compelling contribution to urbanism. But as a means of social regeneration, the Parisian planners remained unmoved by Le Corbusier's environmental determinism.

Turning now to Le Corbusier's political dilemma, his idealistic engagement had all the waywardness of a proverbial magpie. In the twenties, he seemed the living embodiment of the conservative technocrat in wing-collar, dark suit, pipe and bowler. Here we see the posturing of a young professional trying to place his genius before banks, international corporations, and the decision makers. In his L'Esprit Nouveau pavilion, he put his plans for an ideal city for three million before Parisians. The rejection was almost instantaneous, but perhaps the bitterness was not as deep as his competition rejection for the Geneva League of Nations. These failures turned his attention eastwards. So by 1928 we find Le Corbusier making overtures to the Soviet Union, donned no less with cloth cap and rough woolly overcoat. Disillusioned by capitalism, his fascination with the radical Soviet avant-garde finds him expressing great enthusiasm, for a Communist country with a five year plan. In view of the west's broken economy, Le Corbusier made three journey to Moscow beginning in October 1928.[16] Here he succeeded in realising a Centrosoyus trade union headquarters – his largest office building completed before 1945. Now, Le Corbusier was seen as Moscow's torch bearer for the 'big' idea. While never a Communist party member and not even a Marxist in any rigorous sense of the term, Le Corbusier embarked on the Centrosoyus building with a fervour that rivalled that of its sponsors.[17] Clearly, Le Corbusier had absorbed the heady utopianism of the First Five Year Plan. But all this euphoria turned rather sour, when the Soviets refused to use air-conditioning. On top of these Centrosoyus squabbles followed another painful rejection of his 1931 Palace of the Soviets competition entry. This coup-de-grace effectively ended his flirtation with the Soviet Union. Returning to Paris he became a tireless spokesman for indigenous French socialism, which called for the trade unions to take over the means of production. Now Le Corbusier's conversion to syndicalism was no doubt comforting to those who wished to identify modern architecture with leftish politics; nonetheless, it still fails to define the real Le Corbusier. His activist period of the thirties was also characterised by his growing fascination with authoritarian, quasi-fascist groups at the fringes of French political life. After the fall of France, in the long hot summer of June 1940, this fascination with a Nietzschean will to power became commitment. He announced his allegiance to the reactionary right-wing regime of Marshal Pétain, and sought to join the government himself. Now Le Corbusier spent eighteen fruitless months at Vichy, hoping to become the great dictator of French architecture. Most certainly, this waywardness, was not his finest hour.

As a politician, Le Corbusier's engagement had all the shortcomings we associate

with the intellectual in politics. During his political wilderness, Le Corbusier was certainly opportunist, sometimes utopian, and usually spiteful and unco-operative. Robert Fishman in The Open Hand certainly put his finger on Le Corbusier's pulse when he wrote:

'Le Corbusier was as sensitive to his prerogatives as he was insensitive to the rights of others. Indeed, for a life long proponent of organisation, Le Corbusier was singularly incapable of working within one.'

'Yet, if his activism had its miseries, it also had its quixotic grandeur. Even at Vichy Le Corbusier never lost his dedication to his own complex vision of a harmonious future.'[18] For him, politics existed only to provide authority for the great works of reconstruction. Now towards the end of his first visit to Chandigarh in 1951, he was moved to record the main members of the architect team, during which he drew himself as a raven. So the analogy of political magpie comes close to the master's perception of himself.

From his political waywardness, I want to turn to his technical dilemma. Here we have another vulnerability. For most of his life Le Corbusier spent his mornings painting, so he cannot really complain if the world has 'seen him as an "art" architect and largely ignored his attitude to construction and building technology'.[19] The truth of the matter is that he had little technical background.[20] Nor was he a builder, but he did have technical ideas.[21] Moreover, he desperately wanted to personify the ideal of l'homme engagé, the intellectual who was also a man of action. Ironically while Le Corbusier wrote manifestoes to the machine, his purist villas had frequent problems with leaking and condensation, while his artificial lighting systems were clearly inadequate, with frequent break-downs in the heating systems. His idealist approach can be indicted for substituting a symbolic machine aesthetic for technologically viable buildings. Now while Le Corbusier made a lot of noise about 'the house is a machine for living in' – machine a habiter he called it – the truth of the matter is that Le Corbusier's concern with purist morality never carried him behind the walls of his buildings to consider the plumbing. As Brian Brace Taylor put it – 'The general mystification surrounding Le Corbusier and his Oeuvre arises from the following paradox: a prolific writer, experienced lecturer, and irrepressible strategist, he extolled the virtues of efficiency and rationality in planning, while continuing to practise his profession as a designer in the idiosyncratic ways of a traditional craftsman'.[22] But idealistic architecture was clearly a state of mind for Le Corbusier. As he saw it, architecture was an art, a phenomenon also of the emotions, lying outside questions of construction and pragmaticism. For him, it was never enough to provide just a technical solution to an architectural problem. For, 'Architecture is the masterly, correct and magnificent play of masses brought together in light'.[23] From this lyrical definition, we can sense that Le Corbusier's approach to design was essentially intellectual, and

18. Robert Fishmann, 'Le Corbusier's Plans and Politics, 1928-1942', in *The Open Hand*, op. cit., p. 246.
19. John Winter, 'Le Corbusier's Technological Dilemma', in *The Open Hand*, op. cit., p. 323.
20. Russell Walden, 'Le Corbusier' in Contemporary Architects.
21. Interview with André Wogenscky, 24 Rue Nungesser-et-Coli, Paris, 20 November, 1975.
22. Brian Brace Taylor, 'Technology, Society and Social Control in Le Corbusier's Cite de Refuge, Paris, 1933', in LC 1905-1933, Oppositions, 1979: No. 15/16, p. 183; and La Cite de Refuge di Le Corbusier, 1929/31, Officina Edizioni, Roma, 1979.
23. Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture*, Paris, 1923, English trans. *Towards a New Architecture*, 1952 edition, p. 31.

spontaneously subjective. He was also fond of ambiguity, hence his work has many layers within it. His architectural currency dealt with forms in light – emotional relationships, and the promenade architecturale. As he saw it, the 'business of Architecture is to establish emotional relationships by means of raw materials'.[24] But the mysterious quality of his work, stems from the fact that he always attempted to reconcile the conflicting tendencies between spiritual ideals and material realities.

As Alan Colquhoun put it: 'If this idea of the fusion of art and technology was at the basis of modern movement theory, in the case of Le Corbusier it was combined with a concept of architecture derived from an older tradition – that of classicism. According to this view, architectural value could only be measured against an absolute and timeless standard'.[25] Hence his life-long poetic struggle 'to re-establish a state of harmony between man and his surroundings, a harmony disrupted in his eyes by machine civilisation'.[26]

Jerzy Soltan has written about the pains of Le Corbusier's creation.[27] But it is surely one thing to assert that art transcends reality, and another to actually fuse the classical values of an older tradition within the technological demands of an industrial culture. Yet it was just such an idealism that drove the classical wing of the modern movement. Be this as it is, the act of building was surely a painful dethronement for Le Corbusier.

Up until 1940, his collaborator cousin Pierre Jeanneret attended to the technical side of the practice. For he had a surer grip upon the technical realities of professional life. But clearly, Le Corbusier could not ignore the technical problems associated with the large building commissions of the late twenties and thirties. Indeed for Le Corbusier these difficulties were a considerable burden. Whether his office was building for 20 below in a Russian winter, or 20 above in a Parisian summer, Le Corbusier ran into a barrage of technical difficulties. Somehow these unaccommodating difficulties were sorted out. The Centrosoyus acquired its double skin of glass, the Cite de Refuge, and the Swiss Pavilion their brise-soleil. But it did not arrive until after World War 2. Nor did it arrive without struggle and embarrassment. Le Corbusier never capitulated. Like an incorrigible Don Quixote he continued to test his lance, by pushing himself hard. His struggle to build in machine-age materials was certainly made more acute by the steel and glass success of Pierre Chareau. Chareau's mastery of invention and precision, produced the poetry of the Maison de Verre. This isolated building was certainly the first machine-age shock by an artist-architect. Le Corbusier was never slow to spot a winner. He became Chareau's secret disciple.[28] A man of his time, Chareau admitted no compromise. His example and influence was as clear as in the glass-brick facade of Corbusier's Rue Nungesser-et-Coli apartment block. On top of this steel and glass clad building, came the mature penthouse commands that changed the condition of Le Corbusier's architecture. Within a few years he achieved the

24. Ibid, p. 140.
25. Alan Colquohoun, 'The Significance of Le Corbusier', in *The Le Corbusier Archive*, Vol. I, p. xxxv.
26. Le Corbusier Sketchbooks, Volume 2, 1950-1954, Thames and Hudson, London, and Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris. Notes by Francoise de Franclieu, D14 Sketchbook, February 1950, p. 7.
27. Jerzy Soltan, 'Working with Le Corbusier', in *The Le Corbusier Archive*, Volume XVII, pp. ix-xxiv.
28. See Stanislaus von Moos, Le Corbusier, *Elements of a Synthesis*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979, p. 92. See also footnote 76, Chapter 3.

transition from the hard edged architecture of the classical villas, to rustic buildings with thick walls in chunky concrete. Thus, in Le Corbusier's long struggle to find himself, he took a different stance from the position he adopted in Vers une architecture. The driving spirit behind the ruggedness of his invention, derived from his penthouse study – a true plastic sanctuary of silence – 'a secret laboratory – was a generator of forms'.[29] In silence, above the Rue Nungesser-et-Coli, his plastic metamorphosis took place. In this monastic atmosphere, the final definition of Le Corbusier's idealistic and tragic persona was born.

To this haven of monastic silence, a very bruised Le Corbusier returned in July 1942, following his attempted rapprochement at Vichy. Here in Paris Le Corbusier found his roof garden overgrown with weeds and decay everywhere. Even the metal frames of his apartment's *pan de verre* were all jammed up with rust and deterioration. Such a scene perfectly matched his disenchantment with authoritarian regimes such as Vichy. Nursing a wounded consciousness, Le Corbusier renounced the pre-war enthusiasms of European fascism. The terror of war, the occupation and its lack of food totally overwhelmed him.[30] The post-war scene was just as threatening – the devastation and terrifying uncertainties, the war dead, the missing persons, the gutted cities, the broken bridges, the widely publicised war-crimes, the horror of Belsen, Auschwitz and Buchenwald.[31] Le Corbusier felt revulsion at the horrors of totalitarianism. The evil of Hitler's war, which pushed humanity way beyond the horizon, did not escape him. This deep psychological trauma, leads directly to a consideration of Le Corbusier's development as an artist.

As an artist-architect, Le Corbusier was deeply receptive to the lessons of nature and history. Throughout his long career, he maintained the French artist's habit of the sketchbook. Through the visual diary, he fixed in his memory the spontaneous record of significant visual experiences – silhouettes, interactions between horizon and sky. In this way he recorded the heroic and humble events of life. People in public and in private are revealed in fleeting impressions – the gift of a quiet eye. Le Corbusier's notebooks, more than seventy in all, provide the private and poetic response of his inner and longest journey.[32]

Now, Le Corbusier understood the notion of the artist as genius, seer and visionary prophet. He placed stress on the spontaneous expression of emotion. This side of his psyche was clearly dominated by feeling – by Romanticism. But the high Romantic in Le Corbusier was countered by another facet of his personality – that side of him which drove towards a preference for harmony. This more classical aspect of his personality explains his preoccupation with images of the ideal, and eternal principles.[33] These two sides of his personality – Romantic and Classical, spiritual and material, Dionysian and Apollonian reflect the polarities of his vision, and his pursuit of ambiguity. As Paul Turner put it: 'This multiplicity is not simply

29. *Le Corbusier Sketchbooks*, Vol. 3, 1950-1954, Thames and Hudson, London, Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris. See D16 Sketchbook, January 1950, p. 11.
30. For Le Corbusier's reaction to the horror of concentration camps: *Le Corbusier Sketchbooks*, Vol. 3, 1954-1957, see L46 Sketchbook, January 1957, ref. 835, p. 68.
31. For images of horror from Buchenwald: ibid, p. 68. For further reactions to world crises, see Sketchbook 3, Nov-Dec 1955, specifically Sketchbook J38, ref. 410, '. . . Civilization is a terrible drama. What distinguishes its great moments from its dissolution and failures is the courage to accept risks, and the power to overcome its disorders (through) serenity of heart'. See also Richard Cobb, French and Germans, Germans and French, University Press of New England, Hannover and London, 1983; and David Pryce-Jones, Paris in the Third Reich. A History of the German Occupation, 1940-1944, London, 1981.
32. *Le Corbusier Sketchbooks*: Vol. 1, 1914-1948; Vol. 2, 1950-1954; Vol. 3, 1954-1957; Vol. 4, 1957-1964; represent 70 notebooks where Le Corbusier recorded the spontaneous thoughts of his career as an architect. They provide positive evidence of Le Corbusier's poetic creative life of inner struggle. Currently the only remaining sketches to be published are the early carnets, dating from 1911 to 1914. These represent the earl iest years in La Chaux-de-Fonds. See Le Corbusier, Voyage to the

in the observers' eyes but is inherent in the work itself and, more than that, in its underlying theoretical foundation'.[34] This very dualism accounts for the collaged expression of line against curve, plane against volume, symmetry against asymmetry, form against grid, and the sensual against the abstract. As a form-maker, Le Corbusier was 'the supreme dialectician'.[35] So Le Corbusier was a man of both intellect and spontaneous emotion. As he admitted in 1948: 'I believe that if one gives any importance to my achievement as an architect, the true reasons for it may be found in this hidden labour [as a painter].[36] Clearly painting provided the spiritual energy for all his plasticity.

Settling in Paris, the cultural eye of Europe, Le Corbusier began by giving his still-lifes of the early twenties a classical restraint which appeared to match the new morality of mechanisation. By 1928, women and the human condition had replaced purism. In December 1930 he married Yvonne Gallis, who patiently helped him towards a Mediterranean metamorphosis in the light of Provence – that part of France that had liberated Cezanne. By the mid-thirties this liberated condition could be seen in his paintings. The Dionysian side of his psyche leaped energetically forwards. His paintings from there on glory in curvaceous forms, which leave no doubt about the influence of women in his life.[37] In his post-war architecture women and children were certainly glorified on the promenade deck of his Marseilles Unité, with its kindergarten and paddling pool on the roof-terrace, a creche and extensive built-in furniture within the apartment block. Further, the curvaceousness of women in general has surely influenced the gargantuan earth-mother, strong-leg forms of the piloti. We sense here the uncensored form-maker in heroic pursuit of the Fourierist temple to the family. Reyner Banham must surely be near the mark, when he suggested that the Marseilles Unité is 'one of the ancient monuments of modern Europe'.[38] Certainly the primitive perception of this building was the imagery which seduced generations of architects to the Mediterranean. Architects as a group never flock easily; but all this shock of the primitive appeared just at the point in the post-war scene when heroes were out of favour in Europe. At this psychological moment, when the human cry was not even unambiguously human any more, Le Corbusier struck with all the compulsive thunder of a rank outsider. He revolted against authority, against the psychological disruption of evil; he revolted against bureaucracy, against the flood of laws, regulations and encroachments against the individual. At this very moment in modern architecture, we come face to face with the modern master for the first time, and we experience the shock of the old in the new. From then on, it was possible to review his secret metamorphosis which included objects of poetic reaction, the human modular, and the nude. This mature work was certainly not understood, and some academics like Nikolaus Pevsner were openly dismayed.[39]

At this point the meaning of Le Corbusier's Longest Journey begins to unfold. His longest journey is, of course, his journey inwards.[40] From that time on Le Corbusier

Orient, New York: Rizzoli, 6 Volume boxed set, 1988.

33. Russell Walden, 'Le Corbusier's Ronchamp', *NZIA Journal*, 1, 1977, pp. 26-43.
34. Paul Turner, 'Romanticism, Rationalism, and the Domino System', in *The Open Hand*, op. cit., p. 15.
35. William J R Curtis, *Le Corbusier Ideas and Forms*, Rizzoli, New York, 1978, p. 8.
36. See *Le Corbusier Peintre*, Basele, 1971, p. 5. Also *Sketchbook 4*, p. 60. Ref. 506, 'Painting is a terrible battle, intense, pitiless, without witness: a dual between the artist and himself. The battle is internal, . . . unknown to the outside. If the artist tells about it then he is a traitor to himself'.
37. See Lynn Hanney, Naked at the Feast, The biography of Josephine. Baker, Robson Books, London, 1981, 'Le Corbusier enjoyed his liberties when travelling. Women generated an intense excitment in him, which he considered moral by its very force'. p. 157.
38. Reyner Banham, 'La Maison des hommes and La Misere des villes: Le Corbusier and the Architecture of Mass Housing', in *The Le Corbusier Archive*, Vol. XXI, 1983, pp. IX-XVIII.
39. Nikolaus Pevsner, 'The Anti-Pioneers', in The Architects' Journal, London, 1 February 1967, pp. 279-280.
40. See Jones C, Wainwright G, Yarnold E, The Study of Spirituality, *SPCK*, London, 1986, p. 535.

embraced humanity with a born-again vengeance. Significantly his post-war buildings became instant tourist attractions. They all glory in a plastic monumentality in harmony with nature. In a series of compelling gestures after 1945, Le Corbusier began to turn the modern movement on its head. Gone were the thin walls and sweet-pea colours; gone were the purist hymns to machine morality. We need to remember artists of real talent can never be understood as predictable creatures. Not surprisingly out of the ruins of the thirties and forties, Le Corbusier turned and faced post-war sterility head-on.

Of his mature work the building which most demonstrates Le Corbusier's plastic development is his pilgrimage chapel of Ronchamp. This is his most enigmatic building. He referred to it as the 'pearl of my career'.[41]

In this commission he unashamedly and passionately responded to nature and her inherent rhythms. When he stood on the high point of Bourlemont in 1950 and savoured the atmosphere and visual vibrations of the surrounding Vosges landscape for the first time, he became deeply committed to designing this chapel of pilgrimage. He was never given a theological programme – 'it was agreeable for once, to become absorbed in a disinterested problem without any real practical programme'.[42]

Le Corbusier acquainted himself with the limitations of the existing chapel whose war-damages state suggested that it be dismantled. There was the usual hue and cry, since this chapel had been in use since the twenties, but the War Damages Commission could provide a subsidy towards a new chapel. Le Corbusier was determined not to disappoint them. He appreciated the fact that this site had a long historical lineage that went back before Christ, when a pagan temple was first raised for sun worship. So to build on this ancient site was a high challenge.

Undaunted as ever by the fact that the site had no real access road from the village, he would have to build in concrete; stones from the ruin would do for fill, but certainly not for load bearing. Le Corbusier spent time getting to know the ground and the horizons in great detail. His creativity always compressed many levels of consciousness. The fluidity and intensity of his first charcoal drawing suggests that the birth of Ronchamp was a mystical moment of illumination, preceded by a period during which the architect lost himself in the contours of the four horizons. As an act of creation, it could be likened to the intense concentration and outpouring of the pilgrim traveller in search of a union between the Absolute and the Real. These two experiences tend to become obscured through the architect's creativity, but in the mystic's 'attempt to philosophise on his experience he is bound to separate them. Over and over again the mystics and their critics acknowledge, explicitly and implicitly, the necessity of this discrimination for human thought'.[43] As a designer, the collaged collision between his idealism and the practical realities is the dualistic

41. Le Corbusier quoted in France Dimanche, No 356, 21 June 1953, p. 15.
42. Le Corbusier, Oeuvre complete 1946-1952, p. 76.
43. Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, London, 1942 edition, p. 108.

tension ever present in all his thought and work.[44]

Of the four horizons surrounding the Ronchamp promontory the most dramatic view is towards the south sky where it meets the terrain of the Vosges. Beyond this horizon is Switzerland – Le Corbusier's homeland. From the same direction also comes the full power of the sun; and to all these stimuli Le Corbusier was most sensitive. He responded first to the south horizon with an in-swinging wall. As a solar receiver it was bent back before nature, the sun and the Vosges horizon. The east wall followed logically within the discipline of the pilgrims' anti-clockwise route. Next came the counter curves of the outdoor sanctuary and esplanade which took the form of a crescent before the outdoor altar. In this way the pilgrims were gathered together in nature, before the outdoor altar table. To complete the plan, all that remained was for Le Corbusier to close up the remaining north and west sides with straight lines.

As an act of creation, this charcoal drawing represents the mystical evocation of the four horizons of Ronchamp. Le Corbusier made no secret of the importance of these, openly admitting, 'It is they which unlocked, architecturally, the echo, the visual echo in the realm of shape'.[45] In this matter Le Corbusier revealed himself abundantly as a nature mystic.

When visitors try to fathom the poetry of the walls of Ronchamp, they usually have some difficulty locating those areas of the horizons which spoke to Le Corbusier. To find the essential landscape profiles which triggered Le Corbusier's poetic responses, time has to be spent in patient discovery. In this comprehension it helps to see the walls and crab-shell roof as 'receptacles best suited to light and to music; concave mirrors, panoramic screens, loudspeakers shaped like shells, radar instruments which are both receivers and diffusers'.[46]

Although the birth of the plan form took Le Corbusier not more than a dozen strokes of charcoal, we must remember that a lifetime's preparation had enabled the artist to imaginatively capture the four horizons of Ronchamp within the discipline of the pilgrims' route, as they meet on the climb and as they encircle the hill of Bourlemont.

For a consideration of the building volumes, the first clues are to be found in his sketchbook 'E 18'. In these sketches we find the first three-dimensional elaboration of the concept. From this series of drawings it is clear that the Chapel of Ronchamp was not going to be like anything previously built. Its shell roof, dominating walls and hooded towers completed a composition unique in the history of religious architecture.

When talking about the birth of this project, Le Corbusier said that after finding a

44. See Russell Walden, 'Le Corbusier, Ideals and Realities'.
45. Le Corbusier, The Chapel at Ronchamp, London, 1957, p. 89.
46. René Bolle-Reddat, Our Lady of the Height, Ronchamp, Munich and Zurich, 1965, p. 6.

crab shell on Long Island beach in 1947, he noticed how strong it was when he put his weight on it. He kept this shell, and poetically it inspired in him the idea of the chapel roof. It was a sympathetic form for the plan he had in mind. Yet Le Corbusier did not simply place the crab shell in the architectural space, he elaborated upon it and transformed its appearance.

Almost in the same spontaneous way, Le Corbusier came up with the form of the towers that overlook and illuminate the secondary chapels. From his storehouse of memories, he took over the idea of using light wells from the Villa Adriana at Tivoli, Rome. From this conceptual collage, we see how Le Corbusier established the first ideas which were all in place by June 1950. Staged development sketches continued, but from the beginning we need to understand how Le Corbusier's poetic response to nature affected the birth of the building.

The idea of pilgrimage, of worship before the spectacle of nature, appealed to Le Corbusier's developed notion of the spiritual. The site was on a high point above the village of Ronchamp, where the surrounding configurations of earth and sky reveal a rare richness – both basic and profound. For this reason the building is one of his most revealing commissions. Ronchamp is the meeting place of the sense world and the spiritual. In his nature mysticism he unrelentingly projected the principle of a spontaneously free creative life as the essence of reality, and gave instinctual expression to the whole of nature, that aspect of creation neglected by Christianity.

This distinctive inspiration can be explored from the other end of the project, from the point of view of furnishing and detailing. By taking the architectural promenade, starting from where the pilgrims arrive on the hill, entry is by the principal south door. This exterior door is an exclamation of colour. It is a signpost of the inner journey that had been going on within Le Corbusier's psyche, ever since he left La Chaux-de-Fonds. So while the exterior door welcomes the pilgrim, the interior panels are concerned with the Virgin: Notre-Dame-du-Haut.

Considering the eight exterior panels first, we notice that Le Corbusier uses symbols to draw attention to the nature of pilgrimage. Set within an invisible horizontal framework, this door draws attention to the longest journey of the pilgrim through the fog of life's journey; while red and blue hands either side of cogwheels signify giving and receiving within our working lives; above this is the biblical sign for the presence, a red and blue cloud. The whole scene is a multiplicity of alternating colour within a secret geometry. Here then is the welcome that greets the weary pilgrim from the four horizons. While the exterior panels suggest life's spiritual encounter, those of the interior deal with initiation and intercession through the Virgin, Notre-Dame-du-Haut. These doors are concerned with the dilemma of contemporary men and women, and they deal with spiritual regeneration: a post-

war issue of critical concern.

When we consider the interior panels in detail, we find Le Corbusier again uses signs and symbols from nature and the world. This time the generating lines of the composition are vertically centred. At the bottom of this door Le Corbusier has used chaotic bull symbols which have feminine connotations in his mind.[47] Above are the spiralling red flames of intercession to the Virgin, then the forgiving hands which lead to the gold triangle – a comment about ultimate reality. Though the pilgrim is called, the route to spirituality is long and difficult. It relates to the lonely struggle of the pilgrim for inner peace and fulfilment and the tortuous path of the longest journey is also certainly autobiographical. Le Corbusier never explained these panels, but when we understand his nature mysticism, as well as his creative struggle as an architect, they can be meaningfully interpreted. Further assistance in interpretation comes from the number of preliminary studies made for both sides of these doors. They are of fundamental importance to the project as a whole.[48] Indeed, without them the building is meaningless. To discover the hidden meanings of these doors is part of the pilgrimage encounter.

Other than the principal south door, the only other element in the building to be treated in a similar manner is the white tabernacle on the main altar. This enamelled-steel tabernacle contrasts sharply with surrounding textures, particularly with the hand-thrown rendering of the east wall.

The tabernacle is a simple cubic form on three supports with a small door which encloses the eucharistic elements. This door is painted with the signs of the cosmos and the paschal lamb. On its right side Le Corbusier has images of a butterfly, two four-winged birds and a moth. The left side of the tabernacle is reserved for flowers and leaves, while the rear panel received the silhouettes of trees and mountains. A cross containing a crucifix surmounts the tabernacle, as is required by canon law. This allows the main cross to be positioned free of the main altar and beyond the vision of the celebrant, thus providing a unity in the composition of the free-standing elements. For the detailing and signs of the tabernacle, nature is the source from which Le Corbusier has drawn stimulus. This is another potent example of the expression of Le Corbusier's spirituality.

Continuing the architectural promenade, we immediately discover with the windows of the south wall that Le Corbusier has used the same iconographic language that first appears on the principal door and then the tabernacle. His deeply-splayed wall niches contain clear and coloured glass, which Le Corbusier has painted in metallic oxides. Again he has used images of birds, butterflies, flowers, leaves, the sun and moon, stars and clouds. His images sing praises to nature. At the same time there are several phrases referring to our Lady, such as 'je vous salue, marie'; 'pleine de grace'; 'bénie entre toutes les femmes'. The decision to

47. Le Corbusier Sketchbook 4, March-April 1961, R 63, Ref. 690: 'These Taureaux = total and intimate confusion, Corbu-Yvonne, my constant, sick, dying, dead wife = the Taureaux!!'.

give the space an ethereal quality by using this manner of lighting is a clear rejection by Le Corbusier of stained glass in contemporary architecture. Moreover, while selecting the overall intensity of light required for the interior, Le Corbusier has also placed emphasis on positions of liturgical importance. For example, his window 'etoile du matin' and its neighbour 'la mer' provide an unforgettable accent and richness to the memorial act of candle lighting.

While under the magic of the south wall which curves and splays in three dimensions, we cannot ignore the bench pews built lovingly by Le Corbusier's Breton friend, Savina. This sculptor was the only artist Le Corbusier invited to help him in his chapel. Savina's eight benches have been beautifully shaped with a strong hand sympathetic to the use of timber. These benches are placed and fixed on an upstand under the glow of the south wall. They occupy only ten percent of the nave, but Le Corbusier must have regretted having to have any at all.

Savina also hand-made the sanctuary cross and the confessionals. Le Corbusier's instructions to Savina on the quality of the woodwork were quite specific: 'I cannot admit to having doors shaped by machine'.[49] Certainly the artistry of Savina's confessional doors are sensitively set within the geometry of the west wall. This wall flows rhythmically into a returning loop containing the south tower which sheds a continuous stream of light downwards on to the side altar.

The south-west tower receives almost continuous light as its cupola faces north. The other two smaller towers face east and west, and therefore receive morning and afternoon light respectively. These three towers catch the sun as it moves around the building, and in the process become dynamically alive. 'The key is light, and light illuminates shapes, and shapes have an emotional power'.[50] This chapel is a synthesis of light, nature, form and the liturgy.

From observations of the interior, we can say that Le Corbusier's theological task was to give expression to the domesticity of the Mass,[51] the sacrifice of Christ and the Church,[52] and the intercessionary offering of these dimensions through the Virgin: Notre-Dame-du-Haut.[53] As architect of this chapel, Le Corbusier had to provide a place for individuals to share the meal together, a place to share in the celebration and the sense of the tragedy of sacrifice, and a place to share the corporate action giving due regard to the intercessional value of private devotion to the Virgin. These were the theological criteria.

For the celebration of the most holy mysteries, Le Corbusier received liturgical guidance from Lucien Ledeur and Abbe Ferry.[54] He began with a Burgundy stone altar. This was placed on the central axis and given the human proportions of a table. Behind and to the right, the cross of human tragedy was positioned in the floor. Above and further to the right was positioned the wall Virgin. The Virgin

48. For a full discussion of the Ronchamp doors, see 'Le Corbusier, Ideals and Realities', pp. 419-434.
49. Le Corbusier letter to Savina, 8 February 1955, *Archives Fondation Le Corbusier*, hereafter AFLC.
50. Le Corbusier, The Chapel at Ronchamp, p. 27.
51. See Charles Davis, Liturgy and Doctrine, London, 1960, p. 10. Also Frederic Debuyst, Modern Architecture and Christian Celebration, London, 1968, pp. 9-19.
52. See Jungman, J A, 'The Sacrifice of the Church', *The Meaning of the Mass*, London, 1956, p. 1.
53. See Dom Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy, London, 1945, p. 2.
54. Abbé Ferry, letter to André Maisonnier, 15 April 1955, AFLC.

dominated the composition, which was balanced by the candle holder and the asymmetrical placement of Savina's bench pews. The whole composition was a dynamic one, in which Le Corbusier communicated the characteristics of domesticity and monumentality, mystery and peace. In this way, the architect satisfied the details of Catholic liturgy, while being true to himself.

Yet, what did the users and passers-by think of this building? Abbé Bolle-Reddat, the Chaplain of Ronchamp, recorded many experiences from pilgrims and casual travellers. From a young man, Bolle-Reddat noted: 'The first time . . . I was quite filled with prejudice against this modern chapel . . . but I have ended up allowing myself to accept the invitation to silence, to meditation and to prayer'.[55]

From a woman Professor of Art History: 'I have visited so much ancient and modern architecture . . . this is the most extraordinary that I have seen. I have never been affected like this before. I am an atheist, but I had to light a candle, for me that is very significant . . .'.[56] Clearly we cannot disguise the emotional impact on people of this cave-like grotto. Nor can we discount these dimensions of spiritual response within the religious experience.

Abbé Bolle-Reddat took this question further when he described the chapel interior under the metaphor Marie, belle comme la lune. 'Enter the sanctuary, as a visitor or as a pilgrim. Both must here seek before all else the Presence and meditation. He calls upon his spiritual sensibility. The practising Catholic will perhaps not find straight away the usual context of his prayer. But many who thought they were strangers to worship in spirit and in truth are amazed at being affected and moved . . . Silence . . . A great sign appeared in the sky: a woman, dressed in sunlight, a crown of stars around her head, at her feet the moon.'[57]

Abbé Marcel Ferry, a member of the team of clerics who looked after the chapel before the permanent Chaplain was appointed, wrote: 'The chapel complies admirably with the profound life of the liturgy. The pilgrims visit it faithfully as before. One can pray there without growing weary, for whole hours, when the tourists do not interrupt with their noise and their indiscretion. One can find there – on this point all opinions are in agreement – an authentic spiritual atmosphere, poverty, peace, joy, grandeur, the essential traits of the Gospel. The architect, in effect, has disciplined his lyricism through an unrelenting will and through an undeniable sense of the sacred'.[58]

We should not leave this chapel without noting what the architect thought: 'Not for one moment have I had the idea of making an object of wonder. My preparation? A feeling for others, for the stranger, and a life which had passed in the brutalities of existence, the spitefulness, egoism, cowardice, trivialities, but also so much kindness, goodness, courage, impetus, smiling, sun, sky. And a resulting choice;

55. Abbé Bolle-Reddat, 'Miettes' in *Journal de Notre-Dame-du-Haut*, Ronchamp, December 1971, p. 6.
56. Ibid, p. 8.
57. Ibid, p. 16.
58. Quotation from Abbé Marcel Ferry, in Jean Petit, Le livre de Ronchamp, Paris, 1961, p. 12.

taste, need of truth. Ronchamp? Contact with a site, siting in a scene, eloquence of the scene, word addressed to the scene. To the four horizons'.[59] This passage, particularly the last phrase, is a potent reminder that Le Corbusier's spiritual communion with nature far outweighed the mystery of the Catholic Mass. The question of Le Corbusier's religious attitude has puzzled everybody, yet nobody has managed to provide a satisfactory explanation. Perhaps the nearest is that provided by Father Monier who said, 'Le Corbusier was himself, that is what is the most important'.[60]

59. Le Corbusier quoted in Jean Petit, Le livre de Ronchamp, p. 18.
60. Abbé Bolle-Reddat in *Journal de Notre-Dame-du-Haut*, December 1971, p. 8.

To celebrate the pilgrimage Mass outdoors before nature was in great sympathy with the architect's approach to the spiritual. He was supremely receptive to the world of nature, and before nature he was himself. When we consider his solution to the outdoor Mass, the witness before the altar and before nature, we cannot deny the masterful timelessness of Le Corbusier's solution. His cycloramic backdrop makes sense in terms of the liturgy and acoustics, and at the same time the chapel has become a perfect receiver of nature. It is open to pilgrims, open to travellers, open to passers-by from the four horizons. Nature, in fact, has become the loudspeaker for Le Corbusier's architecture. From this chapel, we can sense that Le Corbusier believed in some sort of Benevolent Being and had sympathy with the idea of a simple return to the ideals of the past. Le Corbusier was concerned for a society clearly beset by deep inner poverty. He was a storm centre during his lifetime but the inner core of this man is a massive indictment of the established order. Le Corbusier, like Rousseau before him, aspired to a new order. His intentions may or may not have been revolutionary, but his remarkable imagination certainly was.

All his final work was deeply personal. It expressed a profound hope for the future, for Le Corbusier's work was passionately rooted in something real and vital in his own experience of life. At the pilgrimage Chapel of Ronchamp, Le Corbusier came as near to expressing his inner voice as he ever came to do. In this commission he successfully resolved the ideals and realities of the situation. Now, it is this singular magical moment which should move us. For Ronchamp is a timeless contemporary masterpiece. It is an architecture in deep communion with primeval and timeless instincts.

In conclusion, Le Corbusier's architecture commands our emotional and intellectual attention. His life and work provide a series of expressions of his agonising creative journey. If his architecture differs from the herd instinct, it is because he had the capacity to endure creative isolation. This irony may be complex, but the message is plain.

Although his final work was more human and personal than his purist concerns of the twenties, the difference between these two periods is one of degree, not of kind.

His purist years were under a discipline of idealised object-types, while his final concerns had a more obvious and richer affinity with nature and the human condition. This is all the more apparent when we have personally experienced the psychological condition of the Mediterranean. Therefore, we have to answer 'No' to the question of whether or not Le Corbusier's vision as an architect changed radically. However, it must be admitted that, until he built Ronchamp, his nature mysticism was not fully visible to the world.

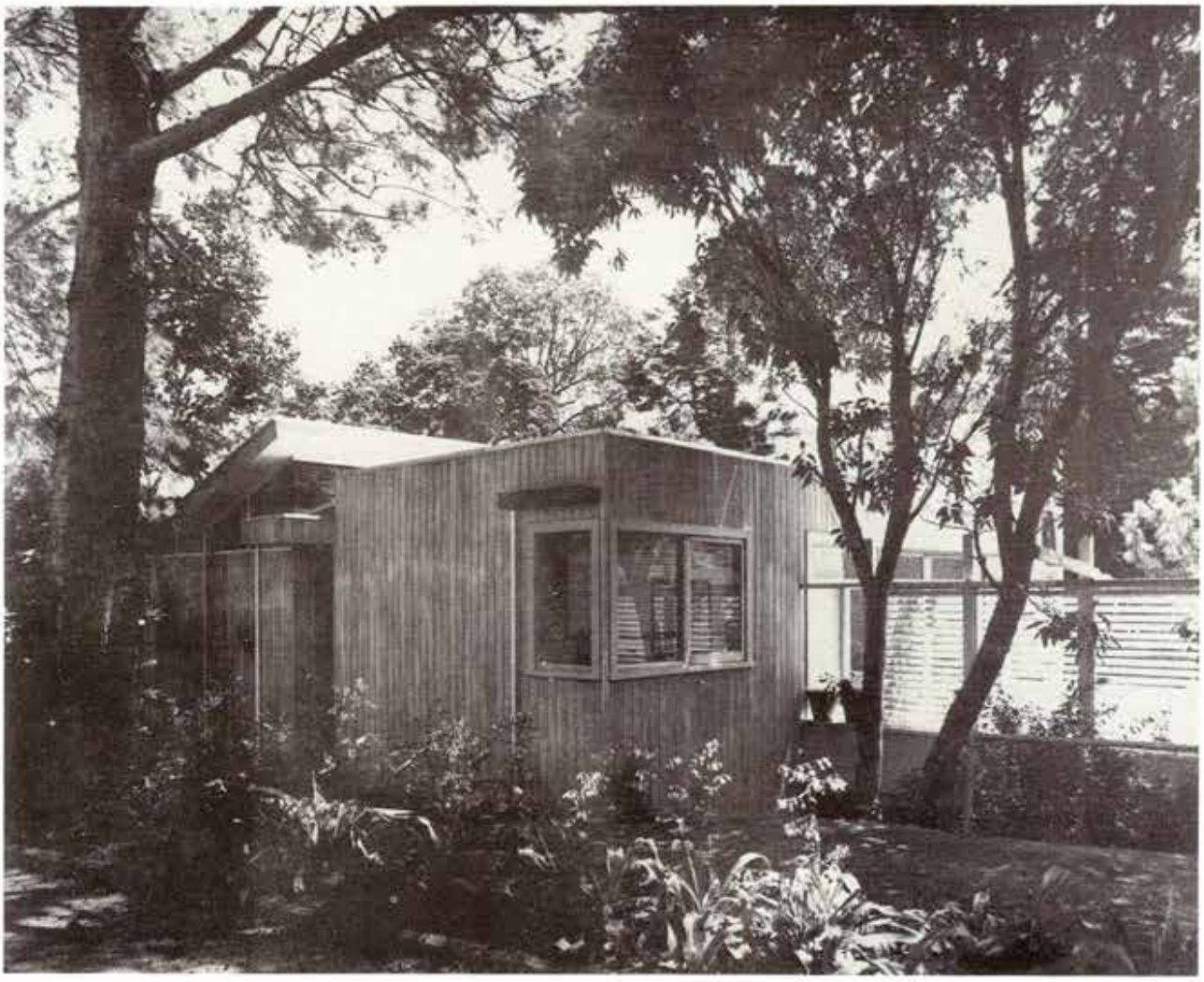
Finally how good an architect was Le Corbusier? Clearly Le Corbusier was a colossus when designing for projects which required a profound degree of spirituality – such as when designing for silence and inner renewal. But as an architect-planner – when designing cities – his creative autocracy often led him towards sterility and worse. However, like most of the modern pioneers, Le Corbusier's personality mirrors all the major problems that have beset the Twentieth Century: authoritarianism, fascism, opportunism and creative autocracy. Politically, his dilemma was that he operated as a nature mystic in the age of the masses. As a god-like operator, he was doomed to suffer defeats. Le Corbusier was rejected in Moscow, Geneva, Paris, and New York. He was also rejected by Vichy. When he acted like a god, the gap between his idealism and the political realities was one that could never be closed. However, when commissions came to him where he could respond with total freedom as a nature mystic, he created architecture that was not only original within the period in which he worked, but also within his own *oeuvre*. Le Corbusier remained creative right to the very end.

As an artist-architect Le Corbusier could be both devastatingly brilliant, and an overwhelmingly tragic figure, depending upon the circumstances. Where the architect's mysticism was alien to the socio-political programme, there was stalemate. But where the architect's vision coincided with the requirements of the client's situation, he achieved masterpieces of imaginative force and deep inner conviction, particularly at Ronchamp and at La Tourette. Both buildings are major works of genius which profoundly express his visionary idealism, his sense of history, and above all his compelling nature mysticism. In these buildings we stand in the presence of a man with a destiny. He was master of his own fate, faithful only to himself, lonely as the sun, but one who glowed with much the same intensity.

Two Single Dwellings: McCrae House and Grace House

Architectus: Bowes Clifford Thomson

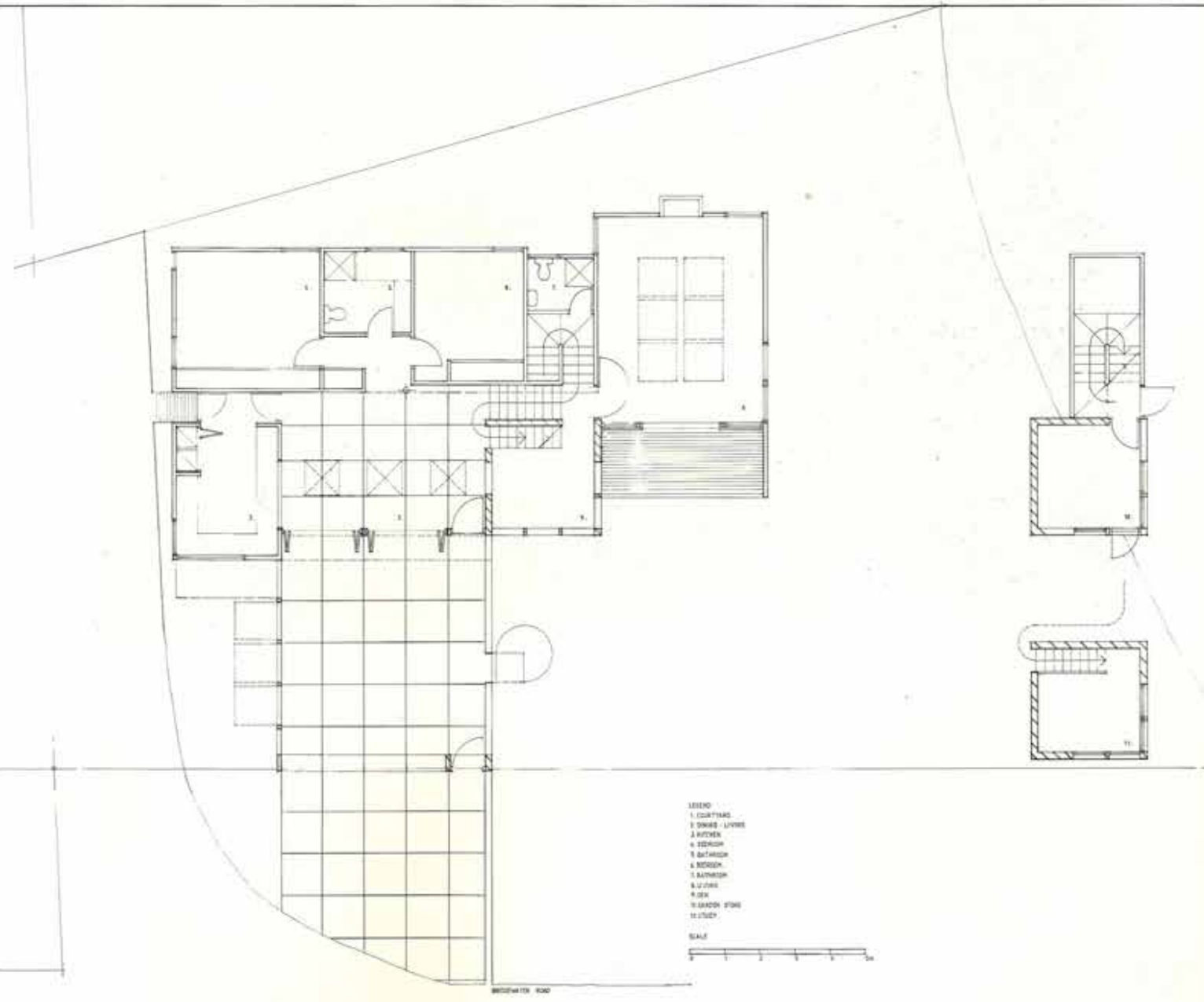
Architectus: Bowes Clifford Thomson, an Auckland-based architectural practice established in 1987 upon the return of Malcolm Bowes, Patrick Clifford and Michael Thomson, all of whom graduated from the University of Auckland in the early 1980s. Since establishing themselves Architectus have completed a number of projects both the private and public sectors. In 1989/90 Architectus as members of the collaborative Architecti was a finalist for the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongawera. In addition to their professional work, Clifford and Thomson tutor at the Department of Architecture, University of Auckland.



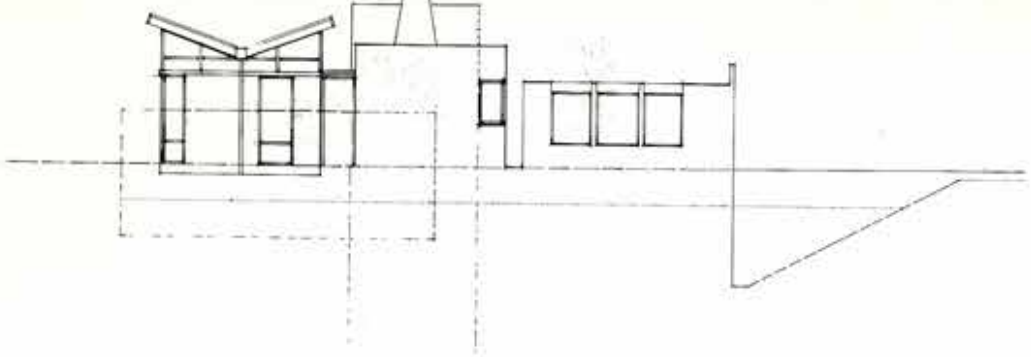
View from East

View of secondary entrance

View from West

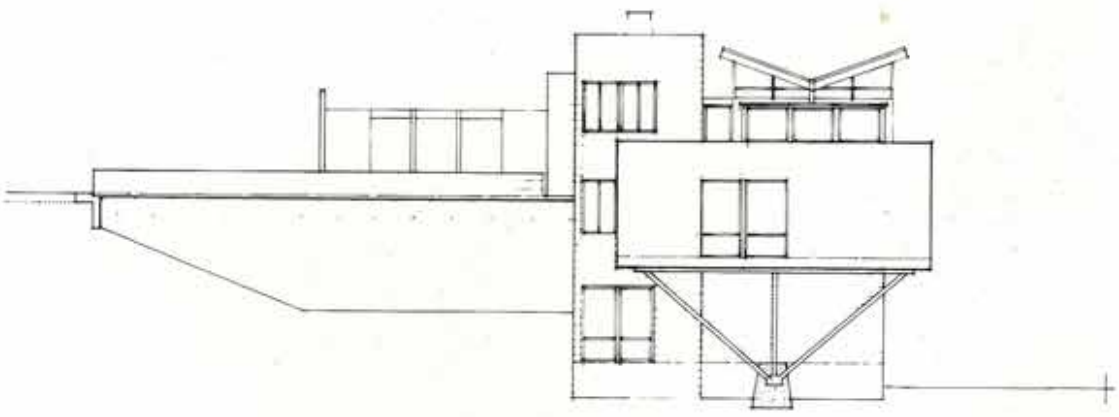


View of courtyard through to living space



EAST

NORTH



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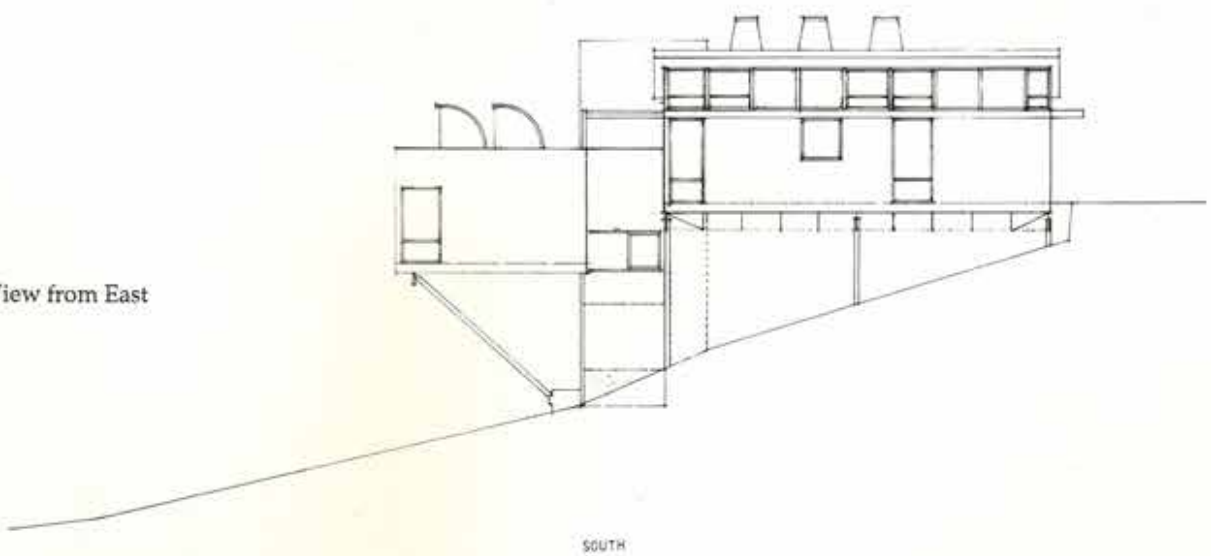
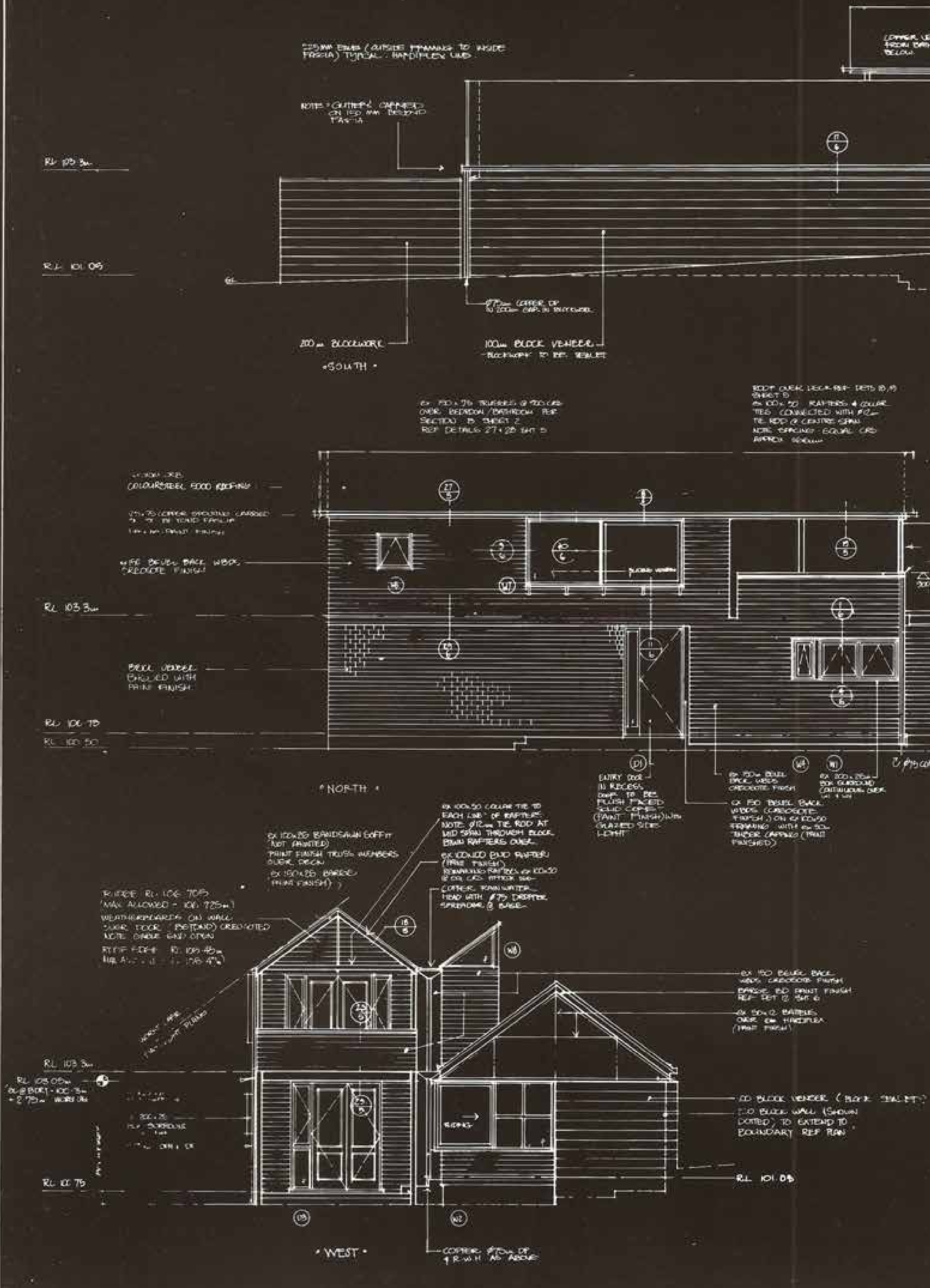
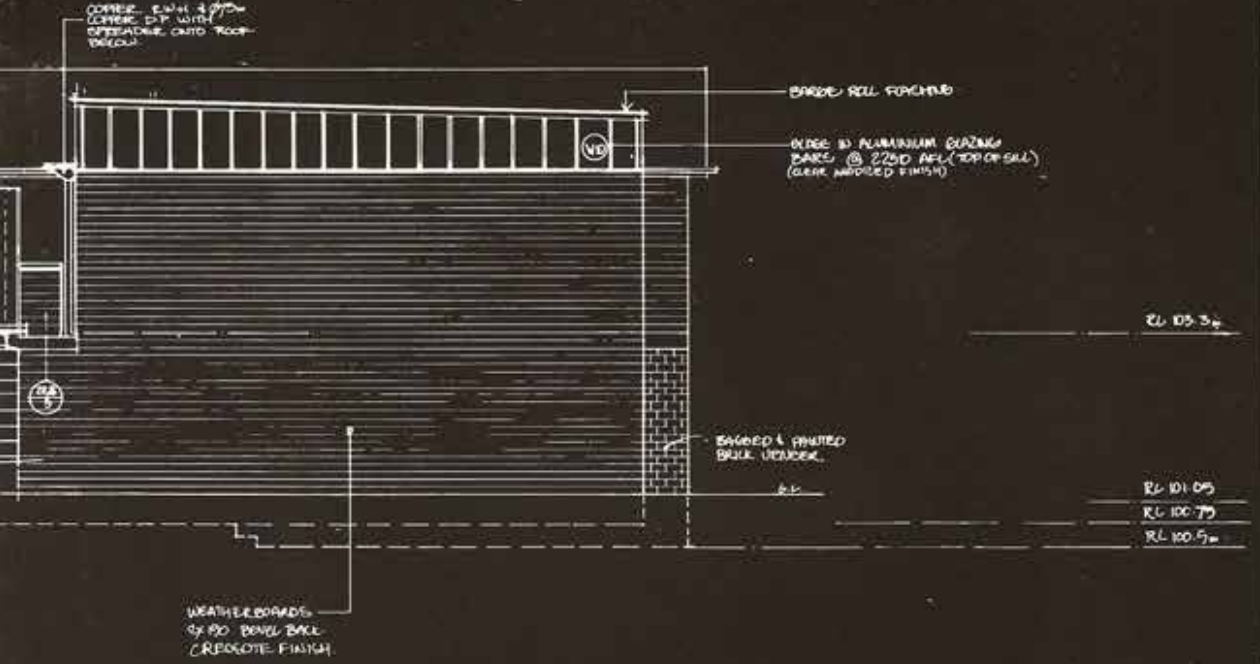
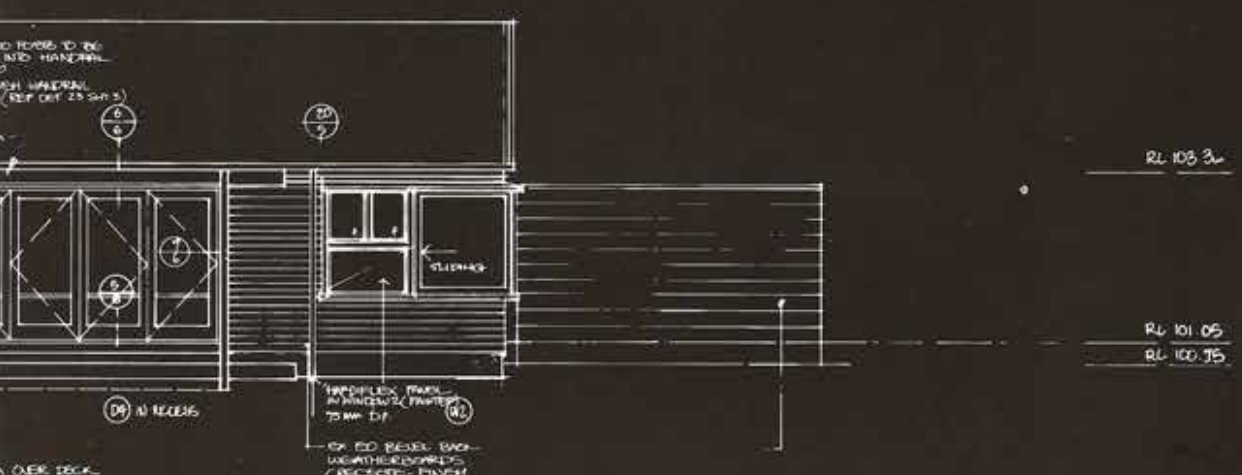


SOUTH

View from East


RL 103.3m
RL 101.05
200mm BLOCKWORK
100mm BLOCK VENEER
SOUTH
COLOURSTEEL 5000 ROOFING
RL 103.3m
BRICK VENEER
RL 101.75
RL 100.50
ENTRY DOOR IN RECESS
NORTH
RL 103.3m
RL 101.08
RL 100.75
SLIDING
WEST





No	DESCRIPTION	DATE
	REVISIONS	

PROJECT

GRACE HOUSE.

305 MT. EDEN RD
MT. EDEN.

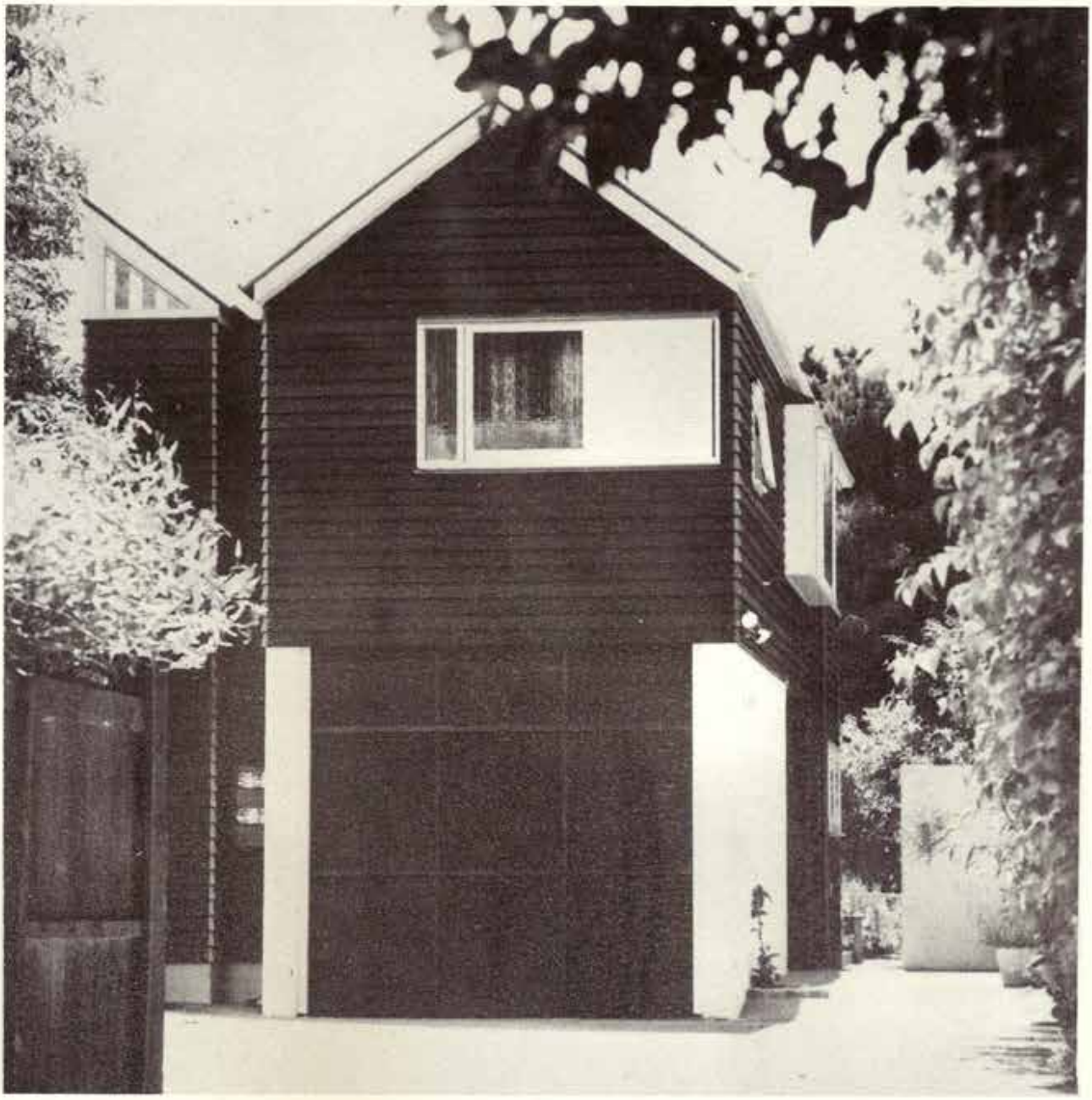
SHEET TITLE

ELEVATIONS.

SCALES 1:50.

ARCHITECTUS
BOWES CLIFFORD THOMSON LTD
6 OSBORNE STREET NEWMARKET
AUCKLAND NEW ZEALAND
PO BOX 9701
PH (09) 520 6179 FAX (09) 524 9866

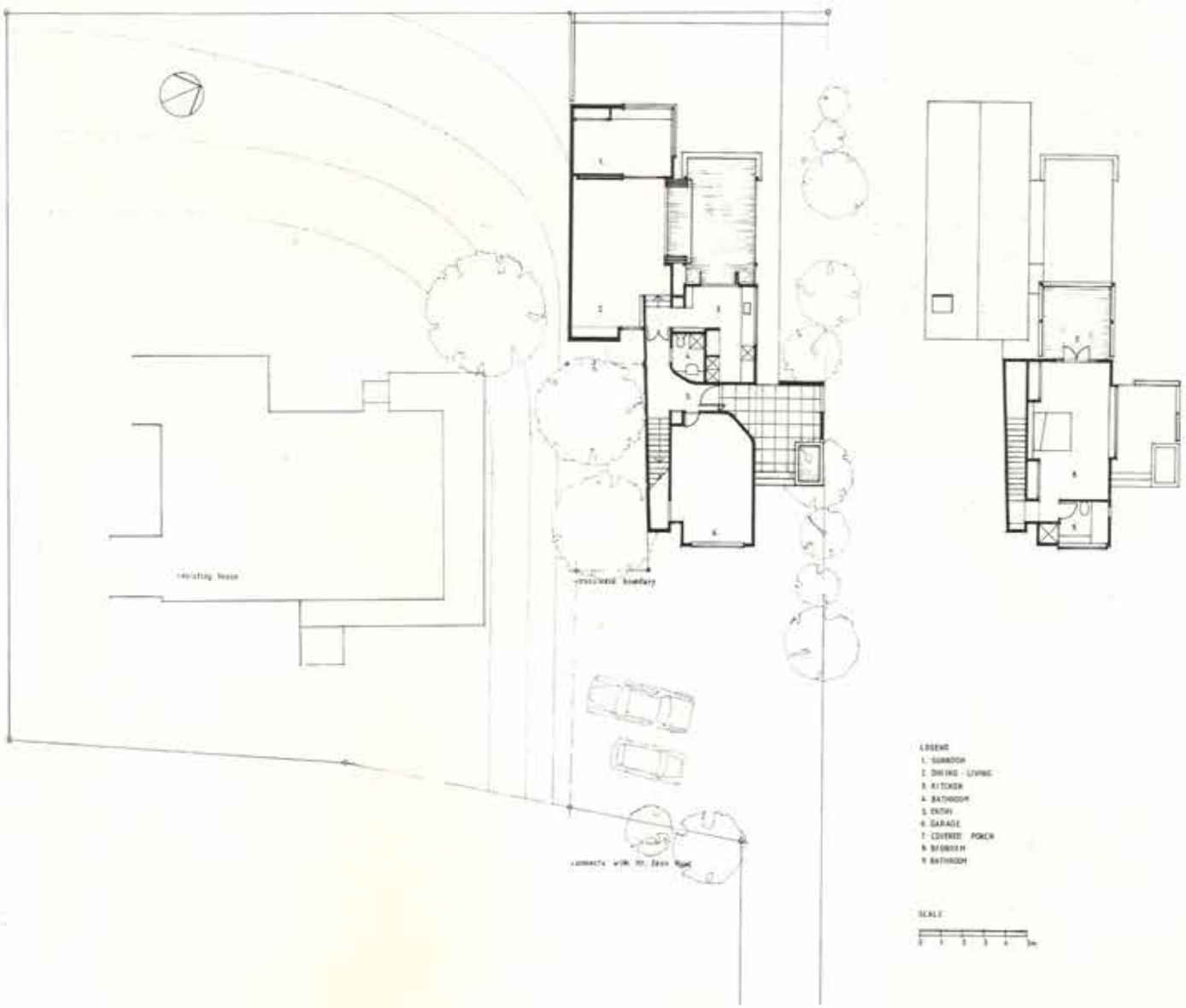
DATE PRINTED			
DESIGN		DRAWN	
CHECKED	MT.	DATE	
PROJECT No.		SHEET No.	



View from street

View of courtyard

Enclosed porch off bedroom



View of living space

Grace and McCrae Houses: A Review

Paul Walker

The Grace house is small, two storeys, built for a single occupant in the garden of an old Auckland villa. It seems straight forward, even elegant. One simple gabled form contains a garage, kitchen, and toilet and shower downstairs; bathroom and bed up. A second volume, single storey, houses the living room and, separated by a wide sliding door, a sun room-cum-spare bedroom. All the rooms are in fact well disposed to catch sunlight and views – even from the bath tub, I suspect, a view may be had of the top of Mt Eden – while the building organises the site intelligently to create a forecourt at front and a small private garden at back. Fenestration is generous, well-proportioned, disciplined. Materials, colours and finishes are disciplined too: dark-stained weatherboards, corrugated metal roof and white-painted trim outside, more white paint and ply-wood surfaces inside. All in all this is apparently a house of commodious simplicity.

But a taste for simplicity seldom lasts for long and it is some time now since we were taught that the zero degree of formal rhetoric is the most contrived position of all.

This tastefully minimal house is, then, not quite the open book, the black and white thing, it first appears to be. It is not simple. It is over-detailed. It is occupied not just by a modern, economical sensibility, but also by all kinds of associations and memories, that dull patina called 'meaning'. Amongst others, the ghost of a Bachelardian archetypal house lurks here, though there is no fireplace for it to gather at. The garage has become the densely unknown chthonic space that the cellar used to be. Its unseen interior (there are no windows and I did not go into it on my visit) and the machine it shelters have a palpable presence in the house by dumbly intruding into it – you have to move along and past the garage negotiating your way into and then through the place. Attics, those other essential attributes of the story-book house, have a presence of sorts here, too, in the upstairs bedroom and porch overlooking the roof over the living spaces below. These have somehow slipped out of the vertical equation of the oneiric house, preferring the existence of a cottage in a garden to anything more urbane.

Nooks and crannies are necessary for the accumulation of domestic memories. There

are many of them in the Grace house – sills, bays, shelves. It is over-detailed. A sort of zone in the house alongside and under the stair (clear in the plan) has accumulated these small places. There is plenty of storage, plenty of space for family secrets or for dead vacuum cleaners and other skeletons in the disciplined consumer's cupboard.

If this building is intrigued by ideas of houses that are essentially literary (and I think this may have been instigated in part by the client who, for instance, insisted on going upstairs to go to bed) it is also preoccupied, to a degree, with high architectural ideas. These, also, have a distinctly retro flavour. The stair participates in the dreamy psychology of the house, but by occupying its own distinctive form rather than being tucked into the rest of the house fabric it also partakes in that kind of architectural modernism in which the chief adornment of the body of the building is its dismemberment. The interesting New Zealand architecture of the sixties was of this kind. The house seems mindful of this period not only in its articulation and re-articulation of elements but in various other ways too – roof pitch and window proportions and placement have a 'Christchurch school' flavour. The materials and colours can take us back further still, to a strain of creosoted 'Georgian' suburban houses of the forties and fifties on the one hand, and to Vernon Brown's Auckland sheds of the same time on the other. By inviting us to make these comparisons the Grace house indicts its own assertion of simplicity: here, black and white are merely shades of grey.

The McRae house in Judges Bay appears to engage in many of the same games as the Grace house. It also looks back to the suburban domestic architecture of the fairly recent past. The vertical boards, window and door treatments, and even the direct relationship of house and car are reminiscent of the expansive suburbia of twenty-five years ago.

But unlike the Grace house and unlike those sixties houses which in part it mimics, the McRae house is not composed within any vision of coherent domesticity. Consider, for example, the dining room: it has no obvious, direct relationship with the other living spaces but is so immediately connected to the parking deck adjacent as to be an extension of it. You eat in the garage. Guests can drive in for dinner.

The kitchen and dining area has its own wooden volume. Likewise, the bedrooms and the bath have their own separate box, as does the living areas half a storey down from entry level. There is no interaction in plan between them. From the exterior, too, each zone maintains formal independence – at least in the drawings of the house – through different roof treatments. The dining space is to have three steep top-lit truncated pyramids above, the living room two rows of hooded sky-lights. The bed/bath box is already asserting its individuality with a butterfly roof, floating on glass as they always do. The butterfly is, of course, also an inversion and

rejection of the gable which is almost inevitably used on New Zealand houses to contain whatever formal work may be occurring below.
All of this is not to say, however, that the McRae house is not composed or lacks coherence. But such composure as it does have is derived from the abstract disposition of its forms and not from the iconology of a typical or an archetypal house. But this suggests, again, a rather atavistic quality. These days formal procedures are usually set up only so their rules can be distorted or violated. This does not happen here.

Central to the composition of the building is a three storey tower made of block as opposed to timber, painted baby blue with blotches. Though it looks like a vertical circulation core to nowhere from the outside, it in fact contains three small stacked rooms, the purpose of which – apart from filling a formally necessary shape – is, as we say now, 'undecidable'. (The architect has, as a matter of course, assigned uses to them.) This oddness marks the whole house.

The Grace house and the McRae house are interesting insofar as they deploy – to rather different ends – forms which purport to be a-semantic as well as repertoires of recent, domestically charged architectural motifs. But in neither is anything overt.

Book Reviews

State of the Art (Criticism)

Hubert Damisch, *Théorie du nuage. Pour une histoire de la peinture.* (Paris: Seuil, 1972)

Fenêtre jaune cadmium ou les dessous de la peinture. (Paris: Seuil, 1984)

Laurence Simmons

To judge from various recent publications, the discipline of art history is about to undergo, is perhaps already undergoing, a vigorous shake-up. It is clear that we may no longer be hearing too much about style, attribution, archival method, dating, the identification of mythological and Biblical subjects and symbols etc. For the stress will not fall so much on fact-gathering, but on 'the representational status of images' as one critic puts it.[1] It may be legitimately said, for example, that from a theoretical point of view very little has happened in art history since the re-presentation of Kantian hermeneutics by Panofsky and followers. This recent attack on the theoretical quietism of the discipline has come from the outside – in a series of studies by Norman Bryson[2] which expropriate French and American literary critical theory and deconstructive techniques in an inventive fashion to art historical territory; and from the inside – spearheaded by the work of T J Clark on art and class struggle and subsequent developments in the radical magazine *Block*[3]. In isolation and at the same time a quiet revolution in French art criticism has produced a new way of reading paintings stimulated by interest in the linguistics-based field of semiotics.

Semiotics does not ask what paintings mean but how they mean, and this meaning is, as it were, bracketed through an awareness, grounded in linguistics, of the arbitrariness of the sign and of painting as an ultimately autotelic statement. It has been the points of convergence of the study of images with the study of language which have been fruitful. The old prejudices of the history of writing on art – that iconic images are too similar to their objects to have the character of language and the Platonic belief that mimetic arts cannot provide us with knowledge – have been dispelled. The demystifying power of semiotics has been considerable in both

1. Stephen Bann, 'How Revolutionary is the New Art History?' in A L Rees and Frances Borzello (eds), *The New Art History*, London: Camden Press, 1986; p. 26.
2. Norman Bryson, *Word and Image. French Painting of the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze* (London: Macmillan, 1983); *Tradition and Desire. From David to Delacroix*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984. Here one could also mention the role of the American magazine *October* and the work of Rosalind Krauss, cf. her *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1985.
3. See the review essay by Jon Bird, 'On Newness, Art and History: Reviewing *Block*, 1979-85', in *The New Art History*, op. cit.

exploding the myth of correspondence between sign and referent and freeing critical discourse from the debilitating burden of description and descriptive practices. The results, in the practice of recent French art criticism, have been as powerful as they are irreversible.

One of the most striking practitioners who has to date produced, in relative obscurity as regards Anglo-saxon critical traditions, some of the most perceptive work is Hubert Damisch, director of the Circle Histoire/Théorie de l'art at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris. As well as a series of articles, Damisch has so far published two important books: *Théorie du nuage* (1972), subtitled 'Towards a History of Painting', and *Fenêtre jaune cadmium* (1984), subtitled 'The Underneaths of Painting'; and has also preannounced the arrival of an extensive work on the origins of perspective.

In *Théorie du nuage*, as the title indicates, Damisch attempts to describe the ways in which artists, from the end of the Middle Ages until the late eighteenth century, have represented clouds in painting. Explained like this it would appear that we have merely another detailed study of an object found in paintings, another iconography of a 'motif' and a research into the particular, comparable with, say, Rudolf Arnheim's masterly treatment of the theme of the centre in painting.[4] But perhaps such a problematics of the sky in painting is to be looked for in Ruskin on clouds. It turns out, in fact, that we are not dealing with such a traditional reading at all, not withstanding the fact that the material concerning clouds in painting is presented by Damisch with great erudition and an army of examples worthy of such a tradition. The representation of the cloud is utilised as a pretext in order to observe the manifestation in painting – paintings – of a series of concepts or theories of painting.

I want, for the moment, to consider briefly one of Damisch's examples: the problem for religious painting of representing miraculous religious events such as the apparition of saints, visions or the Biblical miracles themselves. From the point of view of representational coherence what should a painter do? Leave these figures suspended in the air or sustain them with some form of support? From a theological point of view the problem is equally as vexing: if a cloud is placed under a saint, angel, Christ or even the Madonna, this may allow the viewer to believe that their ultimate nature is in some way material or corporeal, since without this support they would fall to the ground. Also from the theological point of view there is a further disturbing corollary: are God, Christ, the Virgin, saints and angels all materially composed of the same substance and can there be no effective distinction concerning their spiritual matter and density?

It is clear, then, that in this seemingly innocent and evanescent object of the cloud theories concerning theology, physics and even representation itself accumulate

4. Rudolf Arnheim, *The Power of the Centre: A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

and come into conflict in each individual painting as they do in the entire course of the history of art. Such an object becomes laden with theoretical elements: it is itself a 'theoretical object', an instrument of the manifestation of a group of ideas and a history of ideas. It is not only to be understood as an element at the level of content of expression (a linguistic element in the semiotic paradigm) but also as a trace of the material nature of painting, of its production and its effect with respect to a spectator. In this sense it is possible for Damisch to reread the history of art, and hence his subtitle to *Théorie du nuage*, as the relationship, succession and conflict of objects in painting, both determined by theories and carriers of theories. Such an object, the cloud, is recurrent in history but with a varying function: in the late Middle Ages it serves to introduce the sacred into the profane and, by providing a support for apparitions, ascensions, mystical visions of Christ, to thereby justify the insertion of the metaphysical into the physical without directly questioning the latter. In the Renaissance the role of the cloud becomes fraught since the regulation of each composition is assured by perspective. The cloud serves to indicate what cannot be represented: the infinite. The infinite is marked by the cloud but at the same time designated through it. In fact, Damisch insists, the rigidly defined system of perspective based upon an effect of linearity enforces its own countersubject of the cloud: indefinable effects of pure colour exceeding the boundaries of the line and beginning to fracture the perspectival space as precursors of modernist abstraction. And so it is that each single object represented may become, under the pressure of particular epistemological circumstances, a condensate of the applications of a theory. That is: every object in painting can itself become a *theoretical object*, the reflection or origin – intrinsically – of an abstract reflection on art or representation in general.

But are we to find Damisch with his 'head in the clouds'? It could easily be observed, on an entirely naïve level, that any creative work – novel, film, painting, poem – always has a theoretical content in the sense that it contains the instructions for its own use and consumption and, at least for critics, contains elements that may be analysed through, and perhaps only through, theories. It could also be added that ever since a history of art has existed there have been theories of art (from formalism and iconology to the psychology or sociology of art even to semiotic theories of artistic language). But it is exactly here that the formulation of the problem in Damisch seems both stronger and more ambitious. The point is as follows: not only do there exist in art objects that may be analysed with theories, but rather certain objects once confronted with problematics of their representation contain at least potentially and internally one or more of their theories.

It is a credit to the rigour of his arguments that Damisch's second volume, a collection of a series of essays on modernist and contemporary painting written over a thirty year period, consistently and effectively tests this same notion of

representational status. The first essay is an extended commentary on a tale by Balzac, *Le chef d'oeuvre inconnu*.[5] This short story, to refresh our memories, deals with a triangle of painters, two historical and one fictional – Pourbus, Poussin and Frenhofer – and is, in a very schematic form, the debate between the first two younger artists and the older Frenhofer about the perfection of works of art. Frenhofer maintains that he is painting the figure of a woman, which when it is completed, will so perfectly resemble the real that the spectator will not be able to distinguish whether he or she is dealing with a body of flesh and bone or a canvas. Through a series of narrative twists and turns Poussin and Pourbus manage to get themselves invited to Frenhofer's studio when he has finally finished his masterpiece and agreed to show it to his friends. But when the older artist uncovers the canvas to the amazed eyes of the two younger men, with all the air of one who knows he has completed a masterpiece, all they can discern is a mass of colours superimposed without meaning, a flourish of lines and contours that follow no recognisable figure: 'a confused mass of colours contained by a multitude of bizarre lines, which formed as it were, "a wall of paint"'. But then at the foot of the painting they do perceive a recognisable form: 'they saw, in a corner of the canvas, the tip of a foot emerging from this chaos of colours, indecisive nuances, a kind of undefined mist; but a delectable foot, a living foot.' It is this apparition emerging from the underneath of the painting, and hence Damisch's subtitle for his collection of essays, which causes the young Pourbus to exclaim the equally delectable line: 'There's a woman under there!'

Frenhofer's painting has been read as exemplifying the theme of the destruction of the figurative on the part of the modern, a parable of the painter who spoils a masterpiece with the excesses of too much retouching, or even the prophecy of a twentieth-century abstract avant garde[6] and the similarity of the quoted descriptions of Frenhofer's painting to, say, a Jackson Pollock will not be lost on the present reader. It could also be said that the lack of comprehension of which Frenhofer accuses his incredulous friends at the end of the story – before masterpiece, house and painter are dramatically consumed by mysterious flames – is exactly that to be later suffered by the modernist artist.

But from this tale Damisch wishes to exact a deeper theoretical reflection by Balzac on the nature of representation itself. A reflection that includes imitation of reality, the relationship between creativity and invention, and a psychology of reading which dramatises the spectator response. Not only is Frenhofer's painting to be read as an allegory of the outcome of modern painting, continuing the history of the contrast between the linear and the nebulous, and overriding the distinction between abstract and figurative which has such a current currency, but the real problem for Damisch is that the perfect verisimilitude desired by Frenhofer brings with it such a subtlety of technical artifice that only this, at the end, appears on the surface and there is no longer space for representation. The absolute truth in

5. There is a recent English translation of Damisch's essay, 'The Underneaths of Painting', translated by Francette Pacteau and Stephen Bann, *Word & Image*, Vol. 1, no. 2, April-June 1985, pp. 197-209. The English translation of another major essay in *Fenêtre jaune cadmium* is 'Equals Infinity', translated by R H Olorenshaw, *20th Century Studies*, 17/18 (1978): 56-81. The short story by Balzac exists in an English version: Honoré de Balzac, *The Unknown Masterpiece*, translated and illustrated by Michael Neff, Berkeley: Creative Arts Book Co., 1984.
6. Dore Ashton, *The Fable of Modern Art*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1980.

painting coincides with the absolute artifice: Lines without forms to contain, colours without objects to make manifest the geometry, the thickness of the support all so worked that the profundity of mimetic space no longer manages to appear, to surface . . .

While the more traditional areas of the discipline – whether they be iconographical or sociological readings – intervene in areas such as dating, inclusion of single works in a historical series, the relationship between artist and public, readings of paintings that are deconstructive (the affinities between Damisch on painting and Jacques Derrida on writing are consciously recognised by both) use elements provided by the painting itself, not added to the painting but constituted in the painting. Before explaining a work through its history or the relationships it establishes with its own time, it is necessary, in the first instance, to know how to read and understand the internal mechanisms that are capable of questioning and testing the very theories of art themselves. The first analytical gesture is that of knowing how to see and observe a work of art, since each and every work of art proposes the problem of its own 'vision' before providing the keys to its interpretation. As can be seen, even through these rapid and selective examples, Damisch's writings pose, together with their semiotic[7] and post-structuralist theoretical undercurrents, a series of general problems for art history and a new way of reading these problems. As such they are at the forefront of the 'investigative craft of seeing'.[8]

7. Further theoretical reflections on semiotics by Damisch can be found in 'Eight Theses for (or Against?) a Semiology of Painting', translated by Larry Crawford, *Enclitic*, Vol. 3, no. 1, Spring 1979; pp. 1-15.
8. The phrase belongs to Svetlana Alpers and is quoted in Stephen Bann, op. cit. p. 26.

Architecture in Pakistan

Kamil Khan Mumtaz, *Architecture in Pakistan* (Singapore: Concept Media Pte Ltd, 1985) ISBN: 9971-84-141X

John D Dickson

Kamil Khan Mumtaz has taken the trouble to write a book, ten years in the making, about the architecture of his whole country. It is comprehensive, researched, and well referenced. This achievement marks him out as an architect beyond the ordinary. At the outset (of civilisation) Mumtaz emphasises a spatial division between labouring artisan classes living outside, and land-owning ruling classes living within a walled citadel. Forts are thereafter, a dominant element in Pakistan's

architecture; including Akbar's Attock Fort in the North West Frontier, the Rohtas Fort near Jhelum (1539), Ghulam Shah Kalhora's two forts at Hyderabad (1768-72), and Shagai Fort constructed by the British, on the Khyber Pass in the 1920s. It perhaps follows that to be happy one needs to be in with one's rulers, or at least in sympathy with their ethos. Pakistan has had a succession of rulers and Mumtaz's book follows these chronologically, with chapters on: Early Indus Communities, Graeco-Indian, Early Muslim, Imperial Mughal, Sikh, British Colonial, and Independent Muslim Pakistan in an international context. But there are kinds of rule other than political, ideological, or religious. Basic economics, topography, and climate rule in their own right also, and architecture's alliance with these is discussed in chapters on Provincial and Vernacular Tradition.

It is perhaps asking too much for any one person to be in with all of these factions and factors at once, and one therefore senses Kamil Khan Mumtaz is at times somewhat uncomfortable, if not downright unhappy, as when proclaiming the decadence, of Sikh architecture and their pillaging of Mughal buildings for marble and precious stones; or when scorning British brutal handling of these same buildings – Lahore Fort for example, where pavilions were converted to a church and liquor bar, baths into kitchens, a marble water tank filled in to make tennis courts, courtyards filled with barrack buildings and verandahs added to everything, distancing interiors. Mumtaz however reserves his severest criticism for those International Modern style buildings he considers irrational, and on account of their symbolic self-preoccupation, intrusive. No doubt, Mumtaz can be assured of readers' sympathy for the impossible position in which he has placed himself, by seeking to unravel all of Pakistan's architectural complexities. Training at the Architectural Association, London, during the 1960s, has presumably led Mumtaz to this kind of book, the validity, and usefulness, of which can be questioned in a Post-Modern age.

Mumtaz presents a series of selected buildings illustrating, as quotations, his essays. These are based on a variety of published papers and monographs, and on Mumtaz's own fieldwork, which has resulted in over 200 black and white photographs, and drawings, included in the book. In presenting what appears at first glance to be a comprehensive system, yet which is, of course, incomplete, the book tends toward the Eastern concern with order and unity – that all things are knowable, indeed are known, by one power. Although singled out by Mumtaz as a feature of the Modern approach, this concern with total control is at home in the East. In his preface, Mumtaz asserts this Modernist pre-occupation as his purpose, declaring the book as an 'overview', concerned with a 'totality', and 'cohesiveness of the whole', and he expresses unease at the limited number of buildings that can actually be discussed.

It is not surprising that an equal, even, treatment is therefore given to all styles,

regions, and periods; a quality expressed particularly by the grey photographs. I have found it necessary to repair at frequent intervals to monographs and articles in popular journals, illustrating with coloured photographs the architecture discussed by Mumtaz. It is impossible to comprehend, for example, the glazed-tile mosaic technique, so much admired in Pakistan, without reference to colour. For instance, Mumtaz presents the Tomb of Bibi Jivinda, at Uchch, as yet another grey mass, whereas in Amin, Willetts, and Hancock's Journey through Pakistan, 1982, this building is a breathtaking lapis, turquoise and golden, geometrical figure, set on a high dry mound above a cultivated plain of damp, black-brown shade, and ethereal green; and thus architecture's reference, in this scenario, to life, death, rebirth, and eternity become comprehensible.

A catalogue of selected examples raises the question of skim-milk or cream? I am inclined to think that the contemporary popular literature is the cream – a wealth of graphic information in colour, in monographs, and articles, concerning the geography, and culture of the East, many from the point of view of travel. No matter how authoritative, the systematic monograph, such as the revised Banister Fletcher's A History of Architecture 1987, or John D. Hoag's Islamic Architecture 1975 (revised with colour plates 1987), these still have to compete with a vast kaleidoscopic, popular literature. In a computer age it seems that a catalogue is now achievable as a versatile entity, capable of being approached, and arranged, in a myriad of ways. One looks therefore to the interpretative essay for demonstration of ways to exploit these systems.

Mumtaz offers what he calls a 'loose' chronology, and location, as ordering devices, and for those who have acquired already a bewildering array of images and information regarding Pakistan's architecture, this simple overview will help. The book is not organised for building type, although the Index is helpfully qualified for this, together with names of people and foreign terms, by use of varying type-face. Mumtaz's use of location is, however, rudimentary. There is little sense of the inter-relations between buildings within cities, across period. Apart from archaeological plans of Mohenjodaro and Taxila in the first chapters, and a sketch glimpse of Early Muslim Bhambore, the largest building complex given in plan is Lahore Fort. This plan is erratic in its labelling and it is therefore difficult to co-ordinate with the text. By comparison it is a relief to follow J. Lehrman's simply labelled plans in his Earthly Paradise. Garden and Courtyard in Islam 1980.

In consequence of this lack of attention to inter-relationships of buildings, photographs are invariably of a building as a convex mass in space, or as a surface. This has the effect of, for example, making the open spaciousness of Mughal buildings indistinguishable from later compressed Sikh buildings, and Mumtaz's attempts to distinguish these become incomprehensible, as both appear in the photographs to be employing simple object-centredness as a theme. I have found

this lack of focus on individual cities in Pakistan a disappointment. It is refreshing to be able to shift focus to Lahore, for often, when considering Mughal architecture centred on Delhi and Agra, it becomes perplexing to have the chief characters suddenly exit for distant Lahore or Kashmir, yet Mumtaz does not seem to take advantage of the cohesive possibility of urban studies. One retains the haziest of ideas about the form of Pakistan's large cities, whether Islamabad (The City of Islam), Peshawar, Lahore, or Karachi, let alone Multan, Uchch, Sukkur, or Hyderabad.

It comes as a surprise to encounter in the last chapter the Modern Museum at Mohenjodaro, impossibly separated by chronology from the old buildings at Mohenjodaro, for which it exists, and to which, in experience, it must be related spatially, as any tourist would know. Mumtaz's book does not have the facility and ease of a guide book. It is significant that the most extensive plan is taken from John Marshall's Guide to Taxilia. A genius of guide-books is that they tend to be interdisciplinary, artfully combining information so as to make inter-relation accessible, and giving a whole-sense of communities. Mumtaz is an architect, and whilst our guide is an expert on the range of buildings in Pakistan, his devotion to his specialty becomes a severe limitation if one is expecting an evaluation of these buildings in the wider context of culture; an approach with which contemporary general readers and Post-Modern students of architecture tend to be accustomed.

The early Buddhist Gandhara period provides an example of the book's severity and specialist pre-occupation. As has already been mentioned concerning the plan of Taxila, Mumtaz provides a relatively extensive glimpse of some buildings of this period including the development of the Stupa, and its Graeco-Roman influenced sculptural decoration, yet this is the period of the advent of anthropomorphic representation of the Buddha and Bodhisattva, as Mumtaz remarks and of which visually there is not a hint. It is left to the local reader to realise that these buildings have something to do with for example, the 2nd/3rd century A.D. schist sculpture of Buddha from the Peshawar Province, a breathtaking object, part of the Mackelvie collection of the Auckland Museum, and one of this museum's finest, most esteemed treasures.

Whilst it is unfair to criticise a book for the lack of material outside its own declared scope and purpose, it is nevertheless relevant to assess the value of that purpose. Deprivation, which can be characteristically induced by a specialist discipline, is a paradoxical issue. In a cross-disciplinary, unauthoritative, Post-Modern world, an architecture school (of the professional, Colonial type), or an architectural text, can be the last help that an enthusiastic inquirer into architecture is advised to consult.

Inherent in the book, is a tension between an unreadable list of buildings (and with chapters – list of lists), and an interpretative commentary. For the Western reader

with romantic, anarchic, tendencies, which indeed characterise the Western ethos, there is insufficient narrative in Mumtaz's book; too few, if any, developed characters; no drama, no architectural events, and therefore little sense of the classical dilemma of finding a balance between systems of order and individual impulse. Curiosity about Mumtaz's own architectural impulses – what he personally admires, and is excited by – is unsatisfied. The reader will be unsure of Mumtaz's own inspirations; in the van of which one is left with an 'official' overview, ironically an outcome deplored by Mumtaz as a feature of British Colonial rule.

A tantalising exception to the general lack of characterisation is the insight given into the life and personality of Mir Ma'Sum, 'poet, historian, soldier, widely travelled diplomat and courtier, a physician with an interest in alchemy, a calligraphic designer and sculptor, and above all an architect' living in the Mughal period, intimate with Akbar and Jahangir of India, and Abbas Shah of Persia. Mumtaz compares his universal genius to Umer-e-Khayyam and Leonardo Da Vinci, and attributes the brilliance and universality of the Mughul court to such men, acting as agents for the focusing and dispersion of ideas. At Sukkur in the Upper Sind a monumental tower 'erected for no other purposes than the pleasure of observing the countryside around' indicates how Mir Ma'Sum has anticipated Patrick Geddes. Much of Mir Ma'sum's preoccupation with building was directed toward providing helpful public amenities.

In the commentary, discussion of important themes seems to be left until too late, as for example, the definition of 'Islamic' and 'Muslim' architecture and the contemporary debate of these issues, which is encountered only in a Postscript. Discussion of these powerful, dominant ideas is needed earlier to inform the text. The postscript includes a summary which could well have been a starting point, opening as a flower, as the book proceeds. Sikh architecture likewise needs concise ideological explanation. The impacting of Islamic and Hindu religions and cultures, and their architecture, is underplayed. Surely it must be/have been like two continents colliding. The complexity of the 19th Century British Colonial period needs more amplification – its evident coexistence with Vernacular architecture seems too simply polarised.

For the Western reader there is a gulf between the Post-Renaissance world and the past. In Pakistan, a romantic notion of the ancient is belied by Vernacular tradition, which chapter, supported by free, scaled line-drawings is a vital part of the book. It is sobering for the Western reader to appreciate the continuity of tradition, and to resist a tendency to slip back into a distanced past – at least back to the 1920's climax of awe of the ancient past, with the opening of Tutankhamun's Tomb in Thebes, an event contemporary with the unearthing of Mohenjodaro and Harappa; and to realise that there are people in Pakistan that live in much the same manner as

those of Tutankhamun's time, and that in Afghanistan, Baluchistan, and elsewhere in Pakistan, these people wear jewellery of the same materials and techniques, as that which in Tutankhamun's Tomb seemed so extraordinary to its excavators.

In the commentary Mumtaz is surprisingly reticent concerning the Islamic point of view. Its premises are glimpsed here and there, as when Sikh architecture is described as being a vulgarisation of Mughal architecture, and 'not to be guided by the over-riding concern with the concern of a cosmic unity which inspired his Muslim counterpart'. And in the postscript reference is made to 'de-emphasizing the materiality of physical surfaces with remembrance of God through his abstract attributes and qualities'. This Muslim conceit concerning the dematerialising of surface (a process E.H. Swift has identified with late Roman Architecture in Roman Sources of Christian Art 1957), presents a problem for the Western viewer who instinctively sees, and enjoys, Muslim architecture as sensuous in material and technique – as colourful, substantial, and intricate of pattern. To be informed that this is a spiritual thrust of dematerialisation, is disconcerting; that what for the Western observer is wondrously material, is actually apprehension of a hidden reality. Is this the reason for the grey photographs? – a concealment of the interior of Islam, just as the delicate patterned end papers of Mumtaz's book, by means of their pale grey and white geometry, act as a spider's web of concealment at the cave's entrance for Muhammad. A delicate grey pattern – a window fret – is set significantly in black, on the rear panel of the dust cover, at the books conclusion. Mumtaz also concludes his chapter on Vernacular Tradition with four images of intricately carved doorways, each with a texture comparable with the end papers. Agathe Thornton in Te Uamairangi's Lament for His House 1986, has made clear in the context of Maori Architecture, that the spider in instructing humankind in the art of carving, and house building, is associated with the genesis of architecture.

Utterly concealed is the repeatedly referred to glazed-tile mosaic technique traditionally used in early Muslim architecture in Pakistan. Displaced at the Mughul courts of Lahore, Agra, and Delhi, by the pietra dura (jewel and precious stone inlay on white marble) designs, characteristic of the Imperial Mughal style of Shah Jahan, glazed-tile mosaic nevertheless appears to have flourished in the provinces in the design of interiors, facades, and gateways; notably the Jami Masjid (begun 1644) at Thatta, the Tomb of Lal Shahbaz Kalandar (begun 1356) at Sehwan, and the Jami Masjid at Khudabad. At Lahore, the North wall of the Fort displays a vast picture wall, begun 1624 for Jahangir, of 8000 square yards of glazed-tile depicting geometrical, floral, animal, human, and mythical figures, engaged in sporting and other events. Mumtaz apologises for mentioning this significant undertaking, on account of it not really belonging to the three-dimensional art of building!

The chapter on Mughal architecture makes a contribution to an understanding of Mughal architecture often associated with North India alone. The following

discussion of the Provincial schools of architecture in the Punjab and Sind is where the book really warms up, and with the chapter on Vernacular Tradition one begins to appreciate Pakistan's regional diversity, and hence the body of its architecture. Mumtaz presents the Vernacular by means of a breathtaking, Geddesian, regional section, from the forested alps in the north, then arid mountains, foothills and plateau, riverine plain, to the humid delta in the south. From juniper constructions and clusters of mungh (windcatchers) – like colonies of marsh bird-life – all pointing south to catch the sea breeze; massive earth-structures with acacia and sheeshan (Indian rosewood) roofs, on the static river plain; earth-building and caves further up; fortified earth and stone communities, with 'Egyptian' profiles, further still into the mountains of Baluchistan and the North West Frontier; and with the huge timbers (a metre square, twelve metres in length) characteristic of the alpine catchment areas of the Swat, Indus, Shelum Rivers – these timbers overwhelming in the Swat Mosques, with their awesome scroll-carved capitals, undulating out across entire spans. These carvings are cited by Mumtaz as 'an act of worship'. And moving through all these districts, the mobile constructions of the Nomadic tribes: the gidan wagon-vaulted dome-type of the Baluchi, the mat-tent of the Katachi, Pathan tents, the tobas and gopa of the Cholistan desert tribes, and the Gypsy tent-huts, which seem alive.

When viewed from without, this regional cross-section of a continent can be seen as a threshold to the Indian sub-continent, for Central Asia, and the Near, and Further, West. Viewed from within, Pakistan is a vast interior world of the 'mighty' Indus and its five other rivers, walled in by ocean, deserts and mountains. These walls have been successfully dematerialised in the west by Alexander the Great, and the Arabs, and in the East dematerialised by the British, subjugating Pakistan as part of India; whilst in the north they have been penetrated by Ayrans and Mughals. Pakistan's architecture is the legacy of all these adventurers from without, and of the stoicism, and spirit, of the people within.

To this geographical section must be added the architecture of Pakistan's large cities, responding directly to wider horizons, and dominated by ruling classes, embellished by their courts, temples, mosques and tombs: State Granaries at Mohenjodaro; exquisite Mughal pavilions and gardens at Lahore Fort, built in the 1630s and 1640s by Shah Jahan, with his garden Shalamar Bagh (1642) in the Kashmiri mode, and Jahangir's hunting lodge at Sheikhupura west of Lahore; and the inevitable colonnades, villas, and parks of British Karachi. Attention is drawn by Mumtaz to the fine industrial and military architecture of this period – the Services Hotel at Peshawar, for example. Mumtaz gives a brief resume of the architectural development of Pakistan's capital Islamabad; its grid-iron bones by Doxiadis Associates, fleshed by Gio Ponti, with the ghosts of Arne Jacobsen and Louis Kahn, the sprawling Mughal Revival Presidency Complex by Edward Durrell Stone, and Turkish architect Vedat Dalokay's Faisal Mosque.

Tombs are a building type important to Pakistan: the impressive Early Muslim, medieval, Ghaznavid brick and glazed-tile constructions near Multan – the oldest surviving being the 12th Century Tomb of Khaliq Walid – and also of note are the 14th Century Tomb of Shah Rukn-i-Alam; the trabeated carved stone, Gujrati and Rajput influenced Chaukandi Tombs at Makli, near Thatta; and the later Tombs of the Talpur rulers at Hyderabad.

Admirers of F.L. Wright and Le Corbusier will not be disappointed, for in the last chapter the work of the Modernists, foreign and local, is shown – notably that of Mehdi Ali Mirza (1910-1961), and essays in concrete and masonry construction by the younger generation, including Yasmeen Lari, and William Perry at Karachi. In a book written in the masculine, and in which women are not especially referred to, the Modern work of Yasmeen Lari has prominence, including her own house at Karachi. Yasmeen Lari is also active concerning the preservation and recording of traditional architecture in Pakistan as evidenced by her recently published book Traditional Architecture of Thatta 1989.

Of interest and concern also, is Mumtaz's brief account of architectural education in Pakistan. An official skimming off of an educated professional elite from traditional schools in the British period, left the elite out of touch with traditional building craft, and crafts-people and labourers bereft, subject to a suppressed education characteristic of British Colonial policy. Draughting Schools were set up in this period, notably the School of Industrial Art in 1875, established by Rudyard Kipling's father Lockwood Kipling, at Lahore, with its star first pupil, Ram Singh, whose design work is discussed. The schismatic system of Professional Architecture Schools and Technical Institutes, current in New Zealand, is undoubtedly a comparable legacy of British Colonial thinking.

Each chapter has a list of notes and references and the book concludes with a bibliography and glossary. Despite the limitations cited above, the reader will undoubtedly want to know more about the composition, construction, and decoration of the architecture of Pakistan, whether of the cities, or of the provinces, or of the Vernacular Traditions of both Nomads and settled communities. There are questions left unanswered concerning: the Eastern contracts of unified order between rulers and ruled, and concerning the interplay of decorative enthusiasm, and geometrical austerity, in Muslim architecture. Kamil Khan Mumtaz with the generous help of the Aga Khan Foundation has given us a monograph about that country just inside land's edge to the Eastern ocean, and although Alexander the Great may have wept there for the lack of anything more to do, the reader will most certainly be kept busy for a good while.

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