

headless

headless

roger connah

VERTIGO



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to all
who have choked
at one moment or
another at school,
at tennis,
at poker,
at architecture,
at life
in love...

headless

a listening intelligence

roger connah

Behead yourself...

Dissolve your whole body into Vision:
become seeing, seeing, seeing!

- *Rumi*

Our subject is the present waste
of human resources.

Yet this waste is nothing new.

- *Paul Goodman – Growing up Absurd*

Simply said: there is no learning without a learner. And there is no meaning without a meaning maker. In order to survive in a world of rapid change there is nothing more worth knowing, for any of us, than the continuing process of how to make viable meanings.

- *Postman & Weingartner*ⁱ

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The one who heals us

Lets whatever hurts the soul


Dissolve to a listening intelligence...

- *Rumi, The Big Red Book (2011)*



part 1

The Architectural Cliff



LIFE MAY BECOME SUBJECT TO COPYRIGHT AS MUCH AS ARCHITECTURE IS NOT. The Precipizio website comes up with the cliff of all cliffs. It is not hard to read in today's adventure, the tension of the world-weary and a lack of risk. The cliff is fiscal, social, penal, pedagogical and global. The cliff is also architectural. In such aching inaction and lack of criticality, architecture has never had it so good; and it has never had this opportunity to make such a difference. Or at least not for a hundred years! Today architecture is dancing at the cliff edge like an emoticon. Architecture can wave its arms, it can shout aloud, it can complain, it can wrangle and finagle. It can be underhand and play a straight hand: a royal flush or two pairs. Who will answer back and best serve the vicissitudes of the architectural profession today? Who will continue waving not drowning, and who will fly? And who but an ancient scholar will answer us, who but a desert father will monitor and guide us to best practices yet to appear? From website to pamphlet, from manual to textbook, from journal to magazine, there is no question that architecture today as a profession and a discipline is neither fixed nor as settled as education programs and professional bodies think it should be, and as the profession wishes for itself. In the society of the spectacle and this uncritical age, we are tasked with taking this on, with a listening intelligence and contest.

From the days of early Modernism in 1920s it was more acceptable for the non-architect to become the architect, for the anthropologist to learn design thinking with a critical freshness, for the sociologist to design questions and throw them back intelligently at the architecture profession. It is important to recognize what David Greene said so many years ago in 1972: "By elevating the status of architectural education to university level the profession by its own volition demonstrated that it was not the concern of the architectural schools to function as a sort of training ground for the production of the ideal assistant... It is commonplace to suggest that we must learn from one another, but any student must take away from his school new skills, new information and new questions, in order that he can change the situation he moves into, (normally architectural practice) and he likewise will be changed." This is the architectural cliff; how can architecture respect its professional hold and design paradigm whilst engaging a social concern, whilst expanding its political and spatial agency? Should architecture be deemed so significant when it has become part of the economic malaise? Should architects be listened to today, any more than they were not listened to in the last century? How will architecture ensure it remains an employable discipline?

Educators, historians, practitioners, theorists and students: we are all forced of course to be correct and restrained at various moments in our lives. But there is no doubt; critically impoverished or not, architecture must fly. If students can rock their leather jackets with Susan Sontag, then architecture must be expected to do the same: it must rock! Even to consider the inappropriateness of the language used here indicates the double bind architecture has given itself. And it may of course seem an undue leap or cliff-dive to the scholar and poet Rumi. It is not. Architecture has constantly pitted itself against itself; science debates with soul, and some run away from the unknown into the known, others rest more elegantly within the unknown. Poetry is never as easy or as dismissive as the scholars and historians wish it to be. We all create similar critical fictions that can become architecture. Ambiguity is no privilege of the poet, but it is of course the neck-pain of the historian. We must all, then, at times take a step away from the guided soul. And we fly the moment we question the blueprints offered us. Rumi puts it elegantly reminding all students, practitioners and professors that our responsibility is toward each other. Unbullied and unbullying, education should put us all on an equal footing. We must dissolve ourselves. We must deschool profession and practice into a listening intelligence. To be headless invites just that. Architecture must root out that intelligence; and the unknown must be the one who takes that

challenge forward. Finally, openly, critically and dynamically, cliff-diving might be critical. Headless, take the leap. Leave the safety harness behind.


So I have no peroration or clarion note on which to close. Beware the irrational, however seductive. Shun the 'transcendent' and all who invite you to subordinate or annihilate yourself. Distrust compassion: prefer dignity for yourself and others. Don't be afraid to be thought arrogant or selfish. Picture all experts as if they were mammals. Never be a spectator of unfairness or stupidity. Seek out argument and disputation for their own sake; the grave will supply plenty of time for silence. Suspect your own motives, and all excuses. Do not live for others anymore than you would expect others to live for you.

- *Christopher Hitchens Letters
to a Young Contrarian*



part 2

The Deschooling Dictionary



I HAD ONE STUDENT IN THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AT ZETAVILLE WHO OFTEN LOOKED TIRED, EVEN WISTFUL DURING OUR SEMINARS. She was not sure how and why she was studying architecture. She had almost finished her degree so this made her questioning even more agonising. She did not dare tell her friends or her parents that she might be completing a career in something she no longer had any interest in. At least not in the way it was taught at Zetaville. She often choked, and sat there, bright and intelligent, but with nothing to say during our seminars. I would ask her what's wrong, and she would often talk about choking, about not knowing how to take the next step. This happened regularly during that term and, eventually, she asked whether I would prepare a lecture on choking, on how not to feel exhausted, disinterested and empty. I always promised to do so but each time our discussions and seminars went somewhere else. Finally, just before she graduated, I said I would write what I would call a small dictionary.

During that seminar, in passing, we had been discussing *deschooling* and the relationship of architectural education to the profession. I had read in class from Havel's book 'Living in Truth', some extracts from Christopher Hitchens' *Letters to a Young Contrarian* (Perseus, 2001) and Todd Gitlin *Letters to a Young Activist* (Perseus, 2003). During this seminar period, one of the most interesting exchanges we had was what we came to refer to as

“The Worrying Traits of a Worrying Professor at a Worrying Symposium named after his own Worrying Thesis: The End of Architecture!” The students had decided this was because the professor was unable to change, unable to be flexible and on top of that, was uninterested to discuss the finer aspects of Malt Whisky. Nor, and the students were shocked at this, did the professor show any signs of appreciating the concept of being headless at the same time as understanding the merits of a deep-fried Mars Bar. This was serious!

Things went from bad to worse. The curriculum was suspect. This professor also demonstrated an undue panic at the possibility that the morning coffee pot would disappear to service someone else before he could get his own ‘fix’. This showed immense anguish and selfishness and the students could not understand being taught by such a person. They did not care that the images and pictures published alongside the professor’s words at the symposium would be done so without further vetting and any possibility of editing. No, that was not all; the professor expressed in front of the students the sad necessity of having to pursue an exhausting career in the academy, thus restricting his opportunity to practice architecture or write about the things he loved and would like to write about: emotion, fashion, unconditional love, the gift, generosity, indifference, disinterest, passion and spirituality. Karma against Dogma! The students laughed and we

enjoyed considering how this professor had choked, just like they choked sometimes doing their projects, just before crits, reviews or exams. This all came *to a head* one day when looking at a child's drawing, the professor showed undue haste in suggesting the unflattering position of the computer in the stomach of the father meant not enough time was spent by the father in the sand-pit. It was because none of what this professor had said, the students claimed, made any sense, that I decided to write for those choking students, and the one student in particular *the deschooling dictionary*. At the same time in another class students were attempting to write in 55 words their own ideas about what actually happened. Of course they didn't. It seems appropriate therefore to include all these thoughts, un-thoughts, still-thoughts, non-thoughts and headless thoughts within the dictionary here. Remember the line from The Who - My Generation: "Hope I die before I get old." I am sorry I haven't achieved that! Yet.

agonise – don't deny it but don't even agonise about it, learn how to shift the agony to the assignment (see *problematize*)

aims – make daily aims, weekly aims, monthly aims, life aims but realise each day, week, month alters these life aims...

assignment – begin thinking of an assignment as a task framed by forces outside your own self - then turn it into an internal enquiry that only you can answer (*not someone else, a professor, a famous or not-so-famous architect*).

astonishment – be open to it always, not only as a challenge but as a way to move on somewhere else, think something else and think of the 'other'...

bloody mindedness – use it until it proves too bloody minded, then move on and use it again - "So it went on until one year there was no race space on the form. I'd like to claim credit for this, though I probably can't. I offer you the story, also, as part of my recommendation that one acts bloody-minded as often as the odds are favourable and even sometimes when they are not: it's good exercise." (Hitchens).

boredom – needs cunning to face it, and re-frame it – it's one of the most important signifiers of the changes about to happen to you (*before you quite realise them*).

bypass – the city of zetaville is bypassed by a re-routed bio-duct corridor for a post-urban condition of terror. Inhabited channel structures re-territorialize no-growth urban conditions by recycling available resources within the city - flexible mobility is increased with green-heart off-shoots – a series of bio-remediation systems performing specific ecological and environmental tasks in the post-urban and terrified environment. (AS)

career – forget it! “Have a lived life instead of a career: Put yourself in the safekeeping of good taste. Lived freedom will compensate you for a few losses... if you don’t like the style of others, cultivate your own. Get to know the tricks of reproduction, be a self-publisher even in conversation, and then the joy of working can fill your days.” (George Konrad, 1987)

choke – all people do it: prime ministers, presidents, tennis players and graduates - some have more aides and time to cover it up, others have to struggle through it. Get into it early, like a good film sequence, and get out of it early, like a good film cut. And then you’re on your way. Always hang on in there, but not when you are ‘choking’.

cognitive delusion – stubbornly believing so much in your initial position that you make sure you do everything to confirm the position you started at; start as if you can go somewhere else in your mind,

without knowing always where this might be, and what it might bring.

commuting architecture – the city is weak, its heart failing, pacemakers will soon be necessary. Along with the instant church, the mall becomes the city's sanctuary. Grafting new life, shifting use and abuse, re-occupying the boredom of youth, a flat-@-scape from the suburban environment takes place on the very site of this boredom: the mall. The micro-world will change, a city re-invented as the mall becomes a new commuting quarter; transformed into a commuting city, a flickering sign of re-creation. (SZ)

compromise – take them whenever you can and use them to sharpen your own position and thinking... they are never quite what you think they are..."it is equally seldom that in a properly conducted argument either antagonist will end up holding exactly the same position as that which he began. Concession, refinements and adjustments will occur, and each initial position will have undergone modification even if it remains ostensibly the 'same'." (Hitchens) Remember your 'initial' positions are not always unmovable either.

creativity – challenge the notion of creativity today as you see it ; then if your own idea of creativity is challenged analyse why. Is collaboration an affront to your idea of originality? Are teams non-creative? How much do you still want to own your ideas; and

do you ever really own them? Fly kites with these ideas.

cut and paste – make notes anywhere and everywhere and then ‘import’ anywhere and everywhere, as long as it is organised. Make a desktop in your mind, indelible, flexible but strong.

cutting edge – remember this is always the stage someone else has reached and the rest of the world play catch up – suspect!

cynicism – often passes via gossip and whispering corridors. Don’t ignore complaints about this or that failure, teacher, direction, studio; but analyse these for the power they attempt to fix, and the discourse that wishes not to change. Also “resist the conservative lowball – the cynicism that relishes prophecies such as: “the Poor shall ye always have with ye” as reasons to turn your back on the impoverished here and now...” (Gitlin, *Letters to a Young Activist*) Don’t leave decisions to the cynical, the blind or mean-spirited for they take these decisions just that fraction too readily.

deep reading – this doesn’t mean reading underwater but choosing just those texts, narratives, fictions and books that you are not speed reading or scanning. When you ‘deep read’ make it count, make notes; try to understand why you are reading and what is worth knowing from what you are reading.

defected – an architecture abandons traditional doctrines in favour of a dynamic system of phased transitions and interactions : maximum versatility, density, utility are achieved through a combination of programmatic re-use and random re-colonizations : driven by the need for mass accommodation, *hyper_mediocrity* becomes the new paradigm. (HH)

deferral – linked with procrastination: if you are prone to procrastinate try and understand why. Then if you insist, turn it into an art. If you are uncertain, turn this too into the project. If you are a perfectionist, then turn this into perfect uncertainty (like many contemporary architects today) which just might be a ‘perfect project’!

degree zero – what to say about this that has not been said? Invent, make it your own, tease out the teasers and make this century your own not the legacy of something trailed in the sky like an abandoned kite.

de-schooling – *due for a revival; read Friere and Illich.*
Or alternately: consider ‘school excompression - frag-ment - negative - poche - anti-poach com (-ply), (-pass), (-press) 30 -10 13 long year (poly-) (de-) center - counter - school (f/t) able overwritten - extra-red - change - skip - entry - armature - dance-song - half sequencing miss almost unbent shard-mosaic meta-architecture. Then graduate! (BB)

desktop – the new metaphor for organising life beyond the screen

detachment – necessary for almost everything you do in architecture school. Remember “outsiders set agendas and insiders roll up their sleeves and get to work, possibly better funded, possibly more urgent than before.” (Gitlin) That’s how change takes place. Watch for it but don’t say ‘I told you so!’

difference – recognise the differences in ‘different’ parts of your work and self, and then remark in shock like Derrida’s mother – ‘Oh Jackie, you didn’t spell it with an ‘a’ did you?’

difficulties recognise the scales of difficulty – prioritize work, aims, tasks and realise the seduction of difficulty is not the ghost of the 20th century some have made it out to be.

discourse – the general domain of statements that often become an individualised group that operate as a regulative practice (eg. new urbanism, sustainability, post-modernism...); suspect it but don’t be afraid of the seriousness it asks from you

dissatisfaction – I can’t get no!!! use it rather than remain paralysed by it...

do – as you are told: and consider whether you can identify the moment when this gives way to being

treated responsibly by parent and authority, then do what you think you should do...

e_lasti_city – to stretch, an instinct almost involuntary becomes a radical act within an urban unpredictability : this act of adaptation invokes continuous rearrangement and re-configurations - hybridization must shock the decay and invisibility of the city - natural landscapes are constantly manipulated by human impact, often converted to a point which can never be restored : an elastic solution must emerge in response to the demands of a neglected, abused, and discarded CITY. (JJ)

emotion – suspect the emotion that confirms you need not move or change, suspect complacency. Celebrate by reading a book by Derrida or Deleuze or walk on bubble wrap and listen to the popping sound! Not a huge differ-*a*-nce!

empiricism – remember it's the reason why you are open and not an ideologue, why you understand some statements and not others

energy – ring city: if we don't sustain life in the city, life in the city will sustain its own demise - the energy ring city is an energy source, an artificial environment, inviting us to turn the energy of waste into the energy of urgency. We have 45 years to do it. But it makes more sense to begin right now for the generations to come. (YS)

erasure – if you erase things, remove them, subtract rather add, ask yourself if this is an attempt to deny what is not good enough, or a natural step towards finding a route, seeking a solution – consider this as an essential part of editing which goes on every moment. Reduce, always reduce!

ethics – of a team vis-a-vis the individual

fear – there is a logic to fear which everyone must work out for themselves. No one can do it for you. But remember, those who fear rarely have anything to teach you.

feeling – try and understand your own ‘structure of feeling’ (then fly another kite!)

filofax – the most wonderful invention of the 20th century (or one of them!) google it! *Then filofax your mind!*

fixed menu – at The Hotel Architecture: hot goat cheese platter; plate of gnocci (or similar) pasta, Genovese pesto and Fort Worth Paris Coffee House hot dressing; eye of Welsh lamb cut by Oswyn of John Jones, Butchers, Ruthin; served inventively with random fresh vegetables and laid out like a city; dessert: pancakes, served with lemon, maple syrup or Cornish ice cream with Illy or Segafredo espresso with the necessary ‘crema’.

global – genuinely global or not, you must develop new sensibilities outside this fear of terror and the inescapable clichés that guide our daily media lives. For a city, try Karachi.

garage – the place where dreams meet adolescence and either remain there, or grow up. Turn your garage into an apartment as your first job and you are on your way to becoming a real architect! Wait for the dream job, and you will melt.

green tease – a trans-urban project using ‘green tea’ as a conceptual departure and theoretical practice in the potentially degraded city of the future : environmental and ecological unpredictability spawns a 3D- matrix creating structural and material interventions at the vacant middle level of the city : hybrid platforms and green patches re-weave the city’s topography within pre-existing urban features; linked together these create a new phased partial architecture. (WF)

hit and run – zetaville 2050 is gridlocked into [H]yper-technology - an underground [H]activist network combs the city roofscape and residual spaces in search of accessible backdoors and security system loopholes the hams can access, enter, and reconfigure as ad-hoc [H]it and run architectures – free Zetaville, be Zetaville! (JP)

hope – consider things inevitable, there’s no hope! consider things not inevitable and there’s a chance.

Think of Mandelstam, Boenhoffer, Mandela, Havel. Then think of your own frustrations, the bullying and bigotry, any abuse of authority. "If you have a political loyalty, you may be offered a shady reason for agreeing to a lie or a half-truth that serves some short-term purpose. Everybody devises tactics for getting through such moments: try behaving 'as if' they need not be tolerated and are not inevitable." (Hitchens)

hyper_mediocrity – see defection

ignorance – learn how to recognise ignorance, and the structure of ignorance; not how it then 'completes' anything but opens up to other ignorance - "ignorance of the past may be excuse for people with lesser ambitions than changing the world, but it's no excuse for you." (Gitlin)

imminent – solutions that struggle to supply a river with constant water, a landscape must adapt. To discharge water in land for unpredictable, even fake flooding conditions produces dry and wet land conditions. Flooding offers new re-use and trans-use along the river. Wetlands and Dry lands allow new docking systems operating in low tide and high tide conditions. Floating flops and other partial architectures encourage an imminent ecosystem. (PA)

intuition – what role does it play? Think, think!

ideas – keep them coming, don't choke thinking you cannot move until the idea is found, shift to another problem, re-frame. Remember Dostoevsky's advice: we will make that idea from the nothing you think you have discarded. Was that Dostoevsky's idea?

immediacy – right now, not later!

import – all ideas: everything matters!

keywords – a fragment, an impulse, an idea, a thought - just before you take it further and it starts becoming a notion; use these as a running system realising they change without always being aware of these changes until later (just as clichés – Go figure!) This is how received opinions, received knowledge, is turned into your own and becomes part of your own special vocabulary. This just might allow you to operate outside that of the official 'discourse' of received ideas, of the curriculum.

list – make aims, list them; use a small flip-over children's notebook, use a filofax, a palm pilot, it doesn't matter - lists plan time for you to change, not to be paralysed. They are imaginary scenarios, scripts for your own day, work, life; they are as important and as trivial as laundry lists or lateral forces checks.

mini_cooper – an urban park which *reconfigures* the neglected, the unused, the abandoned, the overlooked, the forgotten, using strategies like CUT

mini cooper questions how deep is the wound : the CLOT implements a network strategy which attempts to stop the bleeding : the SCAB is a micro-architecture which asks how a site healed : the SCAR is a fusion of a reconfigured urban park, a mobile museum and a laptop urban garden. (SS)

mirror worlds – impulse human mapping and behavioural observation produces an On-Demand world, requiring On-Demand solutions - is what you see what you get? - fetish but swarmed algorithmic delivery datum becomes an indescribable 'component architectural' method and would offer instant gratification – then along comes 'virtuality' to produce an environmental manipulation, creating sensual landscapes, both physical and experiential : wait - the future is a blank canvas, virtuality meets reality's hall of mirrors - the world is never fake until you look behind the mirror. (TH)

Morrison – remember the immortal words of 'van the man' – *no guru no teacher no method*. Confirm this by reading Krishnamurti and Thomas Merton. And if you forget, remember if you don't pull your punches, you still might not push the river!

navigate – don't just think this happens in front of the screen when you resist cad-monkeying; every moment you navigate, only some actions appear more obvious than others. All students navigate their route through architectural school; just some are more aware of the knowledge gained and the

knowledge lost by opting for the easy, smooth solutions. Think it over: then re-navigate.

notions – see aims, ideas, keywords and lists: work them out for yourself.

No-Topiana – 2000 Zetaville Texas = NoTopiana : 2012 the mayor's public transit plans for city of half a million rejected – the myth of the Crayola Kid appears and dissent spreads throughout NoTopiana : 2018 Official ban on "Orange" in NoTopiana : 2020 the mayor, the dean and all architects disappear - foul play suspected 2022 Public begin following the discarded, old plans on their own : 2029 Kid named leader of rebellion & by 2035 Orange smuggling becomes a problem in NoTopiana : 2042 US government denies aid to NoTopiana City Council : 2047 Kid and rebels (no longer called students) begin assault on city council and by 2049 NoTopiana city council disbands : 2050 Kid Crayola Takes over NoTopiana - The Crayola Kid unmasked - Architecture returns to Zetaville. (JS)

novelty – how do you come across any new names, new knowledge – what does novelty mean to you? it should be an endless search and a way to test your own thinking so far (static, or in movement).

openness – consider your thoughts are always leading somewhere (which can of course remain open) – when you arrive at your solution consider

what other thoughts might be there that you don't know about? Then remain open to these too.

organise – *ordning och reda* in Sweden is where you can buy notebooks, paper and files. It means 'order' and 'rules': find and develop your own without strangling yourself.

para-city – a para-site-city, by all definitions, is the result of an urban network of liminal dumpsites and abandoned developments that asphyxiate a town; once teaming with a suburban populace, the city has created its own evacuation and exile that needs not a renaissance but a re-incorporation into the urban fabric of the terrified and choked metro-plex. (MG)

paradigm – a set of dominant ideas - take the chance to sniff out the new paradigm whether it is new-urbanism, eco-sustainability, digital space, liminal, virtual or born-again architecture, whether it is the 3rd, 4th or 5th - if the teacher or professor lags behind move into the space that this offers. Leave the professor behind!

problemатize – to *problematize* is essential if you are to decide what you are doing is worth doing, and what you are learning is worth learning – also essential to know when to stop problematizing and move on. For, as one issue is solved the next is re-problematized!

precedent – believing the study of disciplines that include architecture are best done by learning from and studying precedent. Remember: if Le Corbusier had but followed the precedent model of education there would not be those buildings that now form the precedent in Modern Architecture (thankfully he did not go to architecture school) - connected also with the idea of ‘received opinions’ - be careful with the notion of setting a precedent or setting an example, generally a tactic offered by schoolmasters and churchmen. “In Joseph Heller’s *Catch-22*, which I hope and trust you have read at least once, there is the following exchange between the anti-hero and the military authority:

Major Danby replied indulgently with a superior smile, “But, Yossarian, what if everyone felt that way?”

“Then I’d certainly be a damned fool to feel any other way, wouldn’t I?” (Hitchens)

perfectionism – make the difference between wanting to do things so well that you are paralysed, and the necessary individual and professional process which is also part of being a perfectionist – in other words perfectionism is not about the end result, it is also the means to that end...

pulp – the public took over after the death of architecture, after the Pulp Architecture ideas were banned by the city council of Blurbia, the city was left in an uproar - Blurbia was overwhelmed by the demand for a higher Pulp content : by 2010 the

city controlled the demand for fresher ingredients and more orange content : by 2020 a total ban on anything that contained the color orange was in place - by 2030 Kid Crayola appears to be leading the revolution in another part of this dictionary.

question – all received ideas; turn questioning into a delight not a burden.

reality check – find one of your own for each day, each moment - don't just accept the sun comes out every day when you know it doesn't but is still behind the clouds. If you feel cheated, then think of the annoyance to someone else too. Don't blame the sun!

received opinion – always challenge them

relevant – surely your own work/architecture/solution for the church /museum /film centre is as relevant as mockbee's, libeskind's, gehry's, moneo's, holl's or hadid's? Or the next star in the loose firmament!

read – speed read or scan, learn how to use these for different purposes and different materials. Don't scan everything, don't speed read everything, don't do everything at the same pace, and deep read whenever you can. Notice the differences.

repertoire – the collection that makes you ‘you’ but which is always on the move, changing, and which makes the ‘you’ in the future, or the ‘you’ you become!

re-frame – whenever you feel ‘stuck’ re-frame, re-write the problem, re-script it, re-think it. If you cannot do that, do something else, clean windows, read Brautigan, read Brecht, unplug the sink and return, re-look and re-frame.

rem – got their spine, got their orange crush!

repetition – don’t fear it, use it, recognise it for a confirmation of some patterns and a realisation of others less useful.

rilke – pronounced ril-keh: wrote *letters to a young poet* which you should read at least once in your life.

risk – learn how to take them by learning how to introduce something new and unknown into your own ‘repertoire’.

scepticism – balance scepticism with small improvements, if just by the day, by the minute, so gentle, so light. But never give up on suspecting what is right in front of your own nose. Back the hearse up and smell the flowers, but don’t decide to jump yet.

self-deception – the ability to accept unreasonable programmes and conditions and turn these round as if you have invented them yourself. Avoid. Things are imposed on you enough by authorities, society and others; don't give your overseers, deans and professors the pleasure of this mind game too.

sense – don't think you have to move only when things make sense, when sense is found, or that everything you do has complete sense, order and totality. Mostly we move partially, fragmentally and begin to assemble ideas from this. Remember: we all go in and out of sense daily, by the minute.

share – don't even dream of competing unless you have to; take a lesson from share-ware - don't be judgmental, beware the visiting critic or juror who doesn't listen to your explanations and shoots off to design the project that is not there; the project that is lost without listening – beware the un-listeners who go ballistic!

soft machine – a no growth city, a lung still breathing meets ephemeral structures which choose their moment to fall or fail - pulled by winds ill or planned, like parachutes : the flimsiness of the architecture encapsulates a yolk space – this becomes a city posed on the brink of no growth, a soft machine within its only obligation: breath. (JB)

stress – only avoided if the mind finds its balance between activity and silence. Learn to live with the

inner dialogue, the discussion with yourself that keeps you going and the continual mask you have to wear outside. Don't think this is full enlightenment; live in the Bardo realm of the provisional – read *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*.

store – become an 'I am architecture' narrative: think of yourself like the container store, compartmentalise and then open up again like a Russian doll.

surprise – be open to the places or things you are not sure about; open up to the uncertain, things you do not know – sense the potential of where unclear ideas might take you. Let the balloons go! Watch them fly over the cemeteries too!

systematic – be it, and don't be fooled into thinking the more systematic you are, the less spontaneous or original you can be. It just ain't so!

target – small everyday targets, for everything, becomes time management when linked to aims, lists and becomes natural. Produces agony if all time is going on lists and aims and you can never find your way out of the paper bag! Snap your fingers!

thin city – real and virtual as two halves in the in-between which we are living in; the design of maitland's vacation house in zetaville is as actual and urgent as the arbitrary built condition around us all is real. the house not only contains but explores multiple layered realities; a harmless spatial

construction about in-construction which is non-utopian, real and present. (PH)

time – generally not used well but this is often hidden without realising it. Time cannot work on its own, without you. It can only be used well if other things are working, if chance and opportunity give you a chance and an opportunity. Only you are in charge of your own time. The child that keeps you awake at night, or the job that takes your night shift, is the chance and opportunity to do and be someone else.

technology – treat it as software for the brain games, learn from it : it has more to offer than we or bug-filled professors sometimes think

think – not what but how : “I repeat: what really matters about any individual is not what he thinks, but how he thinks. Our conversation has been about the constituents that might go to make up an independent and a questioning person: a dissenter and freethinker.” (Hitchens)

transverb – city evolution is the code to survival - flexibility must exist to respond to current situations as life passes those who stay still - stagnation is the grim reaper : transprogram, transform, transact, transport gives us life but how we inhabit is dictated by the way we move in the residual space of motion that defines these empty zones of habitation and boredom. (KN)

trends – trends in architecture follow the media rule: ‘if it bleeds it leads’ - in other words the spectacle comes first and the rest follows. Suspect the design of this blood, and seek a way to defeat cliché. Some intelligence helps.

ultimately – remember there is no ultimately; no ultimate aim that is not shifted and altered every day.

veiled architecture – people pass by invisible spaces without as much as a glance; can we reach into these unwanted spaces and pull from them the public spaces that might awaken a city? The veil drapes these invisibilities; something magnetic must pull residents to this new sub-urban zone. Eventually these veiled architectures become living spaces, and the original homes invisible.

vygotsky – inner speech, use it, keep it, improve it but never lose sight of its invisibility.

whatever – use this only with confidence, and not to hide the silence or the necessary pause for thinking out something else.

wisdom – remember borrowed wisdom is still wisdom: the secret to studios and navigating the dullness of schooling is the following from Samuel Beckett: “Try again. Fail again. Fail better.”

zero – overused digit, always think of starting from.

We are now in danger of becoming what we as revolutionaries opposed: a vocational training school which evaluates only the final achievement and overlooks the development of the whole man. For him there remains no time, no money, no space, no concession... it remains to be seen how efficient will be the decision to work only for efficient results. Perhaps there will be a new fruitful period. Perhaps it is the beginning of the end.

- *Moholy Nagy*



part 3

Entropes

Words, Beckett, words and words

LET US BE CLEAR ABOUT IT, THE END OF
ARCHITECTURE IS ONLY A FIGURE, A TROPE.

So the end of architecture *revisited* is a double figure, a double trope. Just as the first figure allowed some in each decade of the last century to imagine the end of architecture, it is this double trope that allows us to think of the end of architecture once more. In fact we might even call this doubletroping; one of many *endtropes* which seem to crop up rather frequently. We revel in this coded glory, in this privacy of cleverness. Remember the end of cinema? Jean Luc Godard's re-scripting of the American classic? Remember the end of theatre? Tadeusz Kantor's re-scripting of Gombrowicz in the *Dead Class*. Or, the end of literature as imagined by John Barth or hallucinated brilliantly by the French cultural critic Roland Barthes with his 'writing degree zero'. Or is this connected more to the architecture of exhaustion imagined by the Spanish historian and critic Ignasi Sola de Morales; architecture as an exhausted mode?

Does this spectacle and silliness, the critical emptiness of architecture today, signify to us the end of something exhausted, an endgame situation, or something we use to entertain ourselves? In chess, the 'endgame' refers to the stage of the game when there are few pieces left on the board and any outcome is diminishing rapidly. In architecture the line between the middlegame and endgame is never clear but an endgame tends to have different characteristics. Whether or not we are reaching a

mannerism or another stage of critical, digital and operative exhaustion, the players – in this case the architects, practitioners, critics, historians and educators - often have different strategic concerns. If in chess, endgames revolve around attempting to promote a pawn by advancing it to the eighth rank, in our trope the King, architecture itself, has to be protected at all costs. And suddenly, just like the King that remains protected in the earlier parts of the game, the pawn now becomes a strong piece in the endgame. Architecture itself, suddenly under threat, is once more brought like the pawn into the centre of the board that is already an abandoned battlefield. In this way our cleverness fools us and this pawn-architecture becomes a useful even hostile attacking piece.

There are many endgame studies in chess. These explore endgame positions solved by finding a win when there is no obvious way of winning. Or then a draw when it seems the situation is hopeless. In architecture however, instead of moving the few pieces across the chessboard, fiddling with assessment strategies, architectural pragmatism, digital wizardry, un-sited urban embarrassments, clinical practice, pedagogy and curriculum, might this *end*, this time, in architecture, be serious? Might this be an architectural cliff ? No way, we say, and architect and academy begin exchanging their pieces cunningly, until the game can start over. But what is important here? The *end of architecture* or that it is an

'end' and 'exhaustion' so regularly revisited? And what is a revisited condition of the end? Is this not a paradox to all those who ever thought of staying at the Hotel Architecture and getting out of it: "You can check out anytime you like," The Eagles sang, "but you can never leave." No such luck, we are still stuck inside of mobile whilst the entertaining critical theorists and commentators are transposing, air-guitaring and re-scripting digital agendas and spectacular voids. Meanwhile committee educators, phd inventors and criteria formulators do their best with their policy speak to walk the walk, after they have talked the talk at executive faculty meetings, senate hearings, professional tribunals and graduation ceremonies.

So, the end of architecture, revisited? Is this a privilege for the marginal or misfit discourse in architecture, as it used to be called it in the 1960s? Is this only a tolerated, fringed activity in an educational conference, whilst down the corridors the convention discusses real issues in rampant consumerist practice, education process, mistaking housekeeping for administration and instruction for learning? And what is discussed there? Best practice leadership, spiffy digital technology and delinquent sensibilities, multi-tasking and critical thinking, z-corp 3D printers or laser cutters, firm-based graduate surgeries, health care studios, developer sessions and those franchised studio ateliers set up to design the re-vamp of Chipotle or Radio Shack? As administrators have problems with critical method,

as teachers have problems with administrators, and architects lose any critical measure wishing for clean assessment strategies and theory-free zones, everyone seems to have problems with fewer and fewer resources and increasingly wicked, unrealistic economic strategies. A devaluation of teaching, practice and criticality has collapsed into one. Learning is exchanged for instruction; charisma is bypassed and professional enthusiasm for the vocational and craft of architecture turns 'school' into recruitment centre. Whether this covers all bases or not, there is a general agreement in policy-speak that times are uncertain, and the future is quite different from the past; which is, in fact, a pretty obvious statement. Is architecture more seriously adrift than imagined?

According to various educational directives and policy formulations issued over the last decade, educators must learn to walk the walk after they have talked the talk. In some universities mandatory laptop requirements confuse learning with instruction, whereby students are often instructed to confirm existing models rather than challenge those offered. But this debate has long been decided; there is no issue about the computer anymore. It is as dead and now as alive as it ever was. But the benchmark is diminished and lower expectations in architecture school have become a new ambition for the pedagogy of the fatigued. Cleverness tricks no one but ourselves, whoever serves the cocktail at the faculty meeting or contractor's board meeting.

Software configurations read like top-down directives; use this not that. Don't even think of hacking the future? In the transit-developer sessions, students are told to learn to draw once more whilst the craft of architecture slowly erases an architecture culture. The future is scripted by tired endgame-models, and the pen or pencil - remember these implements - are used overtime in tick-box activity. When a Dean or Director turns round and announces anyone can teach what you teach, you know the ship is going down, the game is over, and the King is re-grouping. That is, the pawn is retreating!

At the same time, down those corridors in the Doubletree, Holiday Inn, Big Western, we are *seeking the city* as architects and all and sundry are endtropic. Implied in the small print given out for the conference program is the notion that the visionaries are on the margins. The visionaries in this case are the architects, or let's say those who belong to the design profession. Are the problems listed out in the programme, those connected with our blurred boundaries and cities out of control, best solved by the design profession? Or is this a final recognition of architecture's essential position: on the margins? What does that say of our current situation? And where are the evolutionaries, as they are called, those who will know just the right moment to step in with a selfish gene, meme or scream? Does that leave the margins the only place for the visionary until they too 'evolve' and remove themselves to the centre?

And if we do not like the centre today, why would we want to move there? Worse: why would we want to be visionary, if it is likely to be hacked to death by evolutionary administrators, contracting consortia and funding bodies?

The subtext is possibly more alarming. Could architecture be faced with an admission of secondariness without quite knowing why this has happened? The small print in the profession's report is clear: the panic is on for architecture's to be de-personified and to take back control. But to take back control of what? The overriding agenda is to redefine architecture in today's world, to call for commitment in the frail but consumerist-frenzied world; that is, to call for engagement in the unengaged world. That the profession now has to define itself in relation to blurred identity, shifting sands, climate change, economic pressure, token sustainability and runaway market forces, could mean however something much more disorientating. In sum, it might mean possibly recognising the act of building and development – architecture in general – is structured, funded, developed, distorted and administered now well and truly beyond the control of the profession. Certainly beyond the control of the universities, schools and colleges! Let's continue this endtropic a little more. Might this signify that architects are functional to the privileged design profession, but redundant to the development of just about everything else: our cities, our disasters, our politics, our affairs, our lives

and our dreams. If architecture can be a diagram of everything, and it has been known to hear such claim, everything does not sit happily within that diagram.

Game over?

*

"It is necessary that I open myself to knowledge," Paolo Freire writes, "and refuse to isolate myself within the circle of my own truth or reject all that is different from it or from me."ⁱⁱ Visionaries on the margins? Evolutionaries owning the purse strings? The architect as marginal being? Can we celebrate this without crying into our Guinness? Does this imply the end of architecture, or simply, the end of an appalling sequence of veiled and coded cleverness? Does this condition now leave the architectural profession trying to take back its 'utopian' agenda as visionaries on the margins? Does this mean re-inventing architecture's brief to contribute to social reform, human value and humane habitation and respond to the urgent needs of climate change, fiscal instability and depleted world resources? If so, at what stage does the crisis tell the architecture student to learn to draw (which of course they should), own a laptop, embody leadership qualities, think innovatively, multi-task, possess flawless judgment and – at the same time – exist in this unique moment to re-structure the whole profession including education? In other words

how long can we defer architecture before it starts to re-imagine itself as an image of its own past, as a confirmation of its own intrigue? And what role education in this agenda? What role the training sessions and policy-speak?

There's a new term going round – *Team Architecture*. Integrate practice, model information transfer, become Team Architecture to take back the territory that is now run by business, begins to sound like a good start. The best entrepreneurs apparently are those who took on business itself and undermined it to re-shape it. We do not even need to resort to citation from the dance of change or other such learning models like 'on having no head', that useful Zen text; this is surely more serious than all that. It is a call to the phoney island of the mind itself. And the models are Google, Amazon, You tube, Wikipedia.

Team Architecture would get students learning business, investment strategy, and radical organisational strategies. It would teach students to game with hedge fund experts and take on the venture capitalists running football teams like cities and cities like football teams. Team Architecture? What knowledge is needed to take back control of the shape of the city and development? What is going to make up serious guerrilla tick-box dissent? The results are unknown: Virgin architecture, Wiki-architecture, Google-architecture. Disruptive learning against managed education? Is this fair? In politics the question asked of the politicians

responsible for the theatre of war is often: what is the endgame? This means, in their parlance, what is the exit strategy? But an endgame in chess actually has no clear exit strategy. It is not simply a question of moving the pieces back and forth into various spaces. This fiddling, prevarication, cunning tactics to save the King can go on infinitely until no one wins. *Game over* is an agreement to end the game but not win the war. It is an agreement to begin all over. We might have this situation today in architecture.

Architecture, the one we are speaking about today, could be hiding behind accreditation core values and a self-confessed crisis in education and the profession. Is the King asking for the system to renew itself, like dating? Or is the pawn to be given equal opportunities? Same game: new rules. Or, like chess, same rules, new game, new gambits? Why should we attend once more to such a double trope? We might reasonably respond with Josef Albers' words in 1958 from his *Poems and Drawings*:

Calm down
What happens
Happens mostly
Without you

*

Francis Fukuyama's book 'The End of History and the Last Man' (1992) led to a whole array of *endtropes*. In 1993 the Mak in Vienna, under the

editorship of Peter Noever, produced a set of conference documents and manifestos under the title 'the end of architecture'. In 1994, Jean Baudrillard produced *The Illusion of the End*, and, according to the book blurb was: "compelling, diabolically clever, outrageous, wounded, ironic, refreshing and certainly controversial." However the usual suspects in the re-scripted conference in Vienna were about to shift the pawn to the King. Architects like Hadid, Gehry, Libeskind, Mayne and Woods suddenly entered that cathedral of critical misery by self-framing their own demise. They de-framed their own world. What is the role of contemporary architecture in our increasingly complex society, what relation does it have to history, to tradition and what architectural programme or urban concepts can meet the demands of our age? Clearly none of these questions actually prefigure the conclusion, the end of architecture.

A cursory glance at the architects involved from then (1993) to now (2013) would suggest this was not the end of architecture at all, but a useful trope to fill in time before or between wars, unemployment and restaurants. Was their contribution to the 'end' any more than an internal cry for work from the unemployable? Of course eventually, apart from one or two who remain consistently in the Resistance, the work came along for these architects. The result was a new enigmatic architecture, spectacles and strange shapes formed by Esperanto software and a concerted consumerist practice to take on business,

advertising and branding. This produced a self-defining movement crossing integrated practice strategies within architecture with the lost Jazz-Bauhaus age of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Some of the work has since confirmed the Debordian 'society of the spectacle'. To some of these 'end-architects', the end of course was always only a serious beginning, echoing Eliot in *The Four Quartets*. But for other architects it was quite the reverse. The beginning was a serious end, as the profession met the crisis of spectacle and commerce that Guy Debord predicted.

Today, almost two decades on and we have the agenda for the new conference. *Desperately Seeking Engagement* includes the following paragraph and ends with a devastatingly precise shift that has huge implications for architects, students, administrators and the entire profession. Reworded it goes something like this: Globalism and multiplicity are architecture's future just as the city will become a voided generic megalopolis. Architecture exists at this collision of forces of power. Multiplicity and globalization have given rise to a search for identity in a world of blurred boundaries... and so on. The re-scripting will turn words on themselves as another lifted but clever discourse is discovered, with so little critical stamina, to get us out of the blur. Cognitively or spatially this teeming agglomeration of words, ideas, software and people have started to densely accommodate only themselves. Nothing follows nor needs to follow conventional planning methods. And

the ubiquity of electronic communications though it is supposed to replace face-to-face contact does not really, it is just another useful endtrope: the end of communication (as we knew it). And the non-place is not a non-place really, it is an unspace into which all of us crawl, with an energy that must elude control. Let us not be fooled by this cleverness. It is not only corporations who capture architecture and see the city as a commodity. The aggressive developers of brands include architects and artists, defenders of profits too.

The fiction every conference and spectacle produces goes on. Diversity is not drained away by corporations but by the lost citizens who have no desire to find their place in the economic and social milieu of the metropolis. The pawn is now moving to challenge globalizing forces with underfoot pressure. Whichever way we write or re-write it, it is not surprising the conference can announce that *architects and planners play only marginal roles of corrective interventions*.ⁱⁱⁱ Think about it hard: If architects are to play out marginal roles of corrective interventions, surely they may be forced to become more than air guitarists and once again rediscover resistance: hacked futures rather than the desired futures of the administrators? 'The provocative statement is constantly annulled by checkbook and cocktail party' Moholy Nagy stated in 1945 after he saw the 1945 exhibition on the celebration of the Container Corporation *Modern art in Advertising* as nightmarish. "Am I in the same way?" he went on to

ask. Are not some of us in the same way: architects, educators, historians, visionaries even all presented with the same revolutionary ideas constantly annulled by checkbook and cocktail party? If so, how is King-architecture to respond to the *endtrope* with new systems within itself yet be released from uncritical measures?

This can work two ways: from the past or from the future. The first scenario tends to use the past and all its accepted history and experience. Here the ruling King-architecture creates a policy and structurally re-groups around the fixed canon. Ultimately, this is a safe conservative strategy where anxiety and crisis are disguised by programmes of pragmatism and protocol. These policies serve to strengthen what educators term the vocational calling and re-invent the architectural education of a professional training school. Fear for the fall of King-architecture sees many small strategies trying to get the remaining single pawn to the 8th rank, where it then can be crowned King. Faced with this what happens? Charismatic educators, eccentric architects and true chess players begin to create their own parallel universe, the *school within a school, the project within a project*. The world outside architecture is then freed even further to frame the patterns and structures that control architecture. The endgame, any endgame, then mirrors the impending but often understated crises. The King has less and less squares into which to move. Many schools of architecture are now forced by core value

statements and policy formulation to re-invent themselves as questions of ethics and production, best practice leadership strategies, learning outcome and assessment requirements - required by previous accreditation criteria - have become detrimental to holistic education. The damage to visual discernment and critical thinking is extreme: the architect is now considered not only to have diminished quality but questions the vocation itself.

Younger architects and students however begin to read the condition differently of course. They play chess with the spirit of Tony Hawk and invent language with a skater's panache. The 'end' for many students is a welcome trope, for it is the end of something they do not think is going in the direction they recognise or relate to. The future for most of them is involved in an unknown, unscripted future, and whatever that direction is or could be. Bruce Stirling has written a highly original narrative called *Tomorrow Now* which, divided into 7 ages, takes on just the unsettled but talented duties available to us in the future. The question the student throws back at the profession is this: does the double trope, the revisited end of architecture imply new conditions? To a limited extent, the administrators might answer yes to this. But they must go further in their own questioning to remove the tristesse and clear malaise felt in many schools. The end for the student may not be where we think it is. It is not the relentless move against critical theory by hitching onto the practice and the professional agenda, this is just

allowing privilege for a language or fetish we don't understand and they don't care about. Nor is the end the closer wedding of students to the professional condition by bringing practicing architect-developers into the schools. This, to most students well able to hack into any corporation, is using current obedient forms of business to control the educational loss and drool over star architecture. No future!

However effective or entertaining then this 'star architecture' might be, the students are not always taken in. Such practice can communicate very little about the way they need to understand the conditions that can sustain change. Even if the 'end' appears an entertaining trope (or double trope) and the profession is in the endgame, students are somewhere else entirely. They too are in the school within the school. They know we have had far too many entertaining tropes in the last decade or so. The shock and awe of it is, frankly to them, exhausted. The Clash may have sung about rocking the Casbah, but that is being re-run every day. And just so that we get the cleverness out of the way; the acronym of the End of Architecture Revisited is E. A. R. In our condition, in this tricky endgame for King-architecture, the ear of the other has to be students, to listen to the students? This is the option that works from the future in all its uncertainty and re-scripts the present. The protagonists of this scheme are and can only be the students themselves. With the blurred boundaries, the hollowness of high-end architecture, changing networks, a

profession controlled beyond its borders, a global and generic megalopolis that eludes the architect, are the students going to accept to become marginal players, those scriptwriters of inflated corrective interventions? If so, and if we truly believed in a 'critical architecture', would it not be reasonable for the students to say no to all this? And if indeed they do react in such away, do we know to what are they are saying no?

We hunger for new strategies to teach the young to correct these failings of a bigger professional world. We struggle to make programs to teach and frame students to have an ethical position on all these things. We even go as far as wanting an education structure that teaches students to be more or less good at following the rules we set up for them. Have we ever considered whether the marginal is our legacy to the students; a legacy they need not accept? Is the marginal essential for the visionary and vice versa? If some of us react against this, it could leave many of us faced with a serious refusal to teach what is already being directed beyond the control of the profession. In other words, this is not to disrespect the initiatives for firm-based studios or contractor sessions, nor is it a slight at the investor and hedge fund culture that controls development, and even no disrespect to the venture capitalist or the land-grab corporate entrepreneurs. But what is it? Frankly, we must accept there is little in the future to suggest that architecture will not be run like huge multi-national concerns that take over football teams or

ice hockey teams and run them with strategies and investment techniques that have nothing to do with the discipline itself. This is where the contemporary student is probably well ahead in asking how to insinuate themselves back into this field with the idea that educators might just do more than offer corrective scenarios from the margins.

Perhaps we need to be more honest. Let those who wish, continue to fool themselves as they build asymptotic or aphasic civic buildings, that they are avoiding the full deal with the corporate devil. Let those who design architectonic towers for Dubai, Abu Dhabi or cities in China, the UK or the US convince themselves that the step-up to high-end architecture still retains individual control. Team architecture knows better than any nonsense about avoiding the full deal with the devil. And it matters little what language is used by the architects on strange projects and enigmatic architecture to say that it really wasn't meant to come out this way, it wasn't intended to be so big, and we still retain control over our ideas... and so on.

The checkbook and the cocktail party know much better than this. What matters more surely is the cognitive deception played by theorists and practising architects on themselves. What is required is an ethical conscience to action beyond architecture but reflected back in the self. Criticality has to return. A self-confessed crisis implies each one of us is an agent in this crisis. Education or the profession


are not about to get out of this hole by increasing leadership strategies, studies in the humanities and philosophy, critical theory and/or new material science and physics in the curriculum. The tristesse of contemporary architecture and the architectural education is way beyond that. The cleverness is how long architects pretend serious structural change is possible. Serious change is only possible if enough people say No, and know what they are saying No to.

Architecture kills!



part 4

Saying No to What



YOUR DUTY IS TO RUN DOWN THE ABUSED VOCABULARY, PRETENCE OF SPECTACLES AND FAKE DEVELOPMENTS THAT MAKE UP ARCHITECTURE TODAY. Your duty is to say no. All this implies a generosity. No, to the concept of visionaries on the margins! No, to the easy comfort of moving from the margins to the centre and appearing to succeed! No, to turning the frisson of empty language into thin architecture! No, to re-heated modern promise, semantics games, communications and the promise of silly ideology! No, to professional practice holding ransom young students! No, to an accreditation system validating techniques of dull measurement and grading! No, to the gradual erasure of charismatic teachers and the quirky eccentric steps necessary for architecture to renew its own education! No, to the cognitive deceptions that the profession keep playing on its educational institutions. No, to education too long constrained by accreditation systems that tie in with a competent but often limited professional vision. No, to architecture of re-treads, of immoral weight, no to creative simulacra! No, to the end of shared symbolic orders! No, to thinking the left is dead in the water. No, to the privileged discourse that leaves architects talking only to each other. No, to the critical malaise that sees so many teachers, instructors and professors check out before their time is up. No, to endless rhetoric and verbiage that sets out scenarios for what ought to happen but which never does before the next conference comes up. No, finally no, no, no to the grand deception!

But yes, to a public badly served by private architectural discourse. Yes, to a new expanded architecture sensitively sited, opening to wider agenda, attending to global issues like informal settlements and climate change. Yes, to holistic approaches and a systematic way of thinking that integrates radical resistance to market, business and investment. Yes, to the end of architects using language for somersault tricks and back-flips. Yes, to the introduction of new systems of thinking where thinking errs more than now and again. Yes, to a new collaborative profession based on the inquisitorial mode not the accusatory models. Yes, to a new public understanding of architecture not reduced to heroic rhetoric of spectacular buildings. Yes, to the end of the hero. Yes, to that kenotic dimension, the emptying of the divine. Yes, to the end of architecture, as we know it, and the beginning of one that we do not know. Yes, to the end of the singular, divine genius akin to the artist giving beauty where beauty is not expected or needed. Yes, to the end of architecture as it is taught now, meaning a new curriculum and all that that implies, Yes, to the end of scapegoating education, attacking students for not reading, for being seduced by iMacs and iPhones whilst every educator and architect wants the latest upgrade and puts their old machine back into the faculty or office food chain. Yes, Yes, to generosity, self-honesty, the irresponsible guerrilla self and the two demands this puts on every one of us every day:

What is worth knowing and what action is worth taking?

Reading educational reports and professional wish lists one is struck by the obvious: the admirably vague call for important issues in architecture to intersect with architectural core value statements - a rhetorical flourish just as comfortable in football management as in architectural practice and education. How many of the good intentions vaguely wrapped up in policy formulation and report language actually hinder development and structural change in architecture is a concern. Such language can appear to offer strategic leadership through its core values whilst effecting a tactical shutdown. Programmes erring towards training the vocational skills necessary to keep architecture tied to the business world do the opposite. Programmes reducing the role of the guru and charisma in teaching in favour of instruction-heavy professional boot camps may have the reverse effect. Guided skills and a wish list of engaged concern for the bigger picture in the world do not always have the desired effect. There is a coherent identification of policies which lead to policy formulas. The very structure of policy objectives can produce dysfunctional continuity for both student and architect.

Where is the role of imagination, of invention, of subversion, we might ask, in relation to the beloved role of problem solving within the design paradigm?

Education policy-speak, effectively coded, can be seen to prop up an existing flawed system. It cleverly provides loopholes for a creative but idiosyncratic development. Service delivery, student outcomes, the language of assessment and accreditation criteria self-defines its strategies. A slow disconnect between the desire for social inclusion and the productivity agenda confuses education with training. For example, to allow student to enter school with portfolios of dubious authorship and scholarship can destroy a school's legacy, whilst merit and so called design intelligence, when shifted to accreditation criteria appraisal, becomes for the student an exercise in credit management. A programme of 'deradicalism' also can have the opposite effect. The dark writing in proposals about educational theory or professional ideology is usually all about the formulaic. The private sector in the form of developer-initiatives, and practice-contractor partnerships begin to define the rewards of a state education. Privileged distortion of language and reality is not only to be condemned in the often obscure rhetoric and jargon of critical theorists. All education proceeds in cross-strategies of schooling and deschooling, though this is often kept quiet. Even the contract and exchange of the younger faculty who teach against and across older faculty produces a healthy deschooling environment. There is nothing new in this oscillation in architectural education. The cognitive models and active learning that test each student and teacher are essential to the

education of each student, whether they will end up in a practice in Dallas or Denton, London or Kingston.

Is there a way to balance all this? Let's just shift the vocabulary a little away from the policy-speak and accepted rhetoric of the profession's reports. Architecture is one of the most consistent and enduring models for any collaborative system. It takes hundreds of invisible hands to produce a building, to produce architecture. Guru, star or god, it still takes endless exchanges and relations to make up architecture. It is, and has become so much more recently due to the interdisciplinary increase and building information modelling and transfer, a relational practice. Recognising the students' collaborative learning talent, a condition very much of today might be one solution. Where conditions have been altered by phenomena like flash mobbing, social networks, game-playing, open-source systems, peer-to-peer communities, share-ware and lateral networks, the cognitive models for new collaborative and cooperative systems are everywhere to be seen. The social significance of some of these new models, along with developments in social theory, and the communication strategies used, imply new hierarchies within the schools. Electronically organised systems may ultimately also electronically organise architecture. When New-pedia changed to Wikipedia, a new socially sharing and self-altering organised system was born. Wiki-architecture might be an awkward reference to what could be,

in a decade's time, a self-altering, collaborative practice called *we-architecture* or *wikitecture*. This may have little resonance with what is being taught and prescribed today in our schools but this is not anarchism, but the inevitable control that an out of control organisation takes back. Ultimately they take revenge on themselves.

The organisation potential in students is also immense but relatively untapped within an unchanged curriculum. There could be a course for students where mastering business and architecture would help learn organizational effectiveness, interventional and cooperative strategies. This would not only aid current practices but it would give the students tools to change the conditions under which architecture is produced. Is there not something positive in being taught how to undo the errors of an education more or less professionally directed and wedded to the shared symbolic logic of corporate architecture directed by offices, successful or otherwise, in downtown Dallas or Houston, Ottawa or Toronto? Is there any way to participate within, understand and yet wish to alter the shared symbolic order provided by market forces, limited vision, the creeping architecture of elsewhere and the triumph of the brandmen who brilliantly collapse architecture with icons to bring marketing value to cities, towns and organizations? To some this has already been a hoodwinking strategy that may have destroyed better buildings and monuments than the cities may be getting now, and all in the name

of branding. A hoodwinking so close to advertising that some contemporary architects could be forgiven for not being embarrassed about pitching for work everywhere they go.

When deanspeak is crossed with such branding marketspeak, real politik in architecture becomes exceedingly confused. The self-same school, rejecting experimental peer-to-peer active learning research, will find itself, like other schools, setting out to correct earlier recruitment strategies. It begins to have to encourage the same agenda embedded within a rejected atelier studio. Along with the mandatory laptop, configured software, and the desire to impart the craft of architecture, and return to the vocational, the students are once more being taught visions using tools by many professors who have no visions within those tools. Esperanto software architecture results from 3D printers and laser cutters. The strange shapes that will emerge will be always one step behind the strange shapes already filling cities. At the same time accreditation requirements, which often include inane survey courses and computerised assessment and evaluation techniques, though they should not erode the humanities and liberal arts, are in fact doing just that. No amount of deanspeak, integrated practice or building information modelling will save a school like this that displays such a closed critical thinking. The irony has to be mentioned. All this, at the time when directives ask the school to teach critical thinking and ethical and professional judgment in

their students, whilst these talents appear close to non-existent in the chief educator and the senior faculty. The key ingredient many consider makes up the architect, the generalist, is in such a school not even allowed to be the generalist in the talented world of student enthusiasm for software, team architecture and invention.

There is a way out, or then a way forward.
“Everyone is talented. Every healthy man (or woman) has a deep capacity for bringing to development the creative energies found in his or her nature.” Moholy Nagy said in his *New Vision* (1947). The call today is not for initiatives and papers to preserve a past craft, it is a call for unscripted solutions to architecture, reflective and critical thinking in a non-aligned manner. This is a call to go beyond the diagram of accepted solutions and solepsism, recognising the exhaustion of the fixed canon. For this, the shared contemplative logic of dissent must reside in teacher and student, in the learned and the learning. Otherwise a Software Esperanto will ensure that no desire for social activism can take over architecture again. This would be more of the same, that pedagogy of the exhausted where vocational training will become the useful managerial backlash to quasi-academic and quasi-political theorizing, resulting in a reduction within the academy itself. Strategies may continue to be infantilised as well as they are mastered; ideological silliness follows these programmes around the universities. Progress appears to be made, but

it is illusory. Architecture in some universities has become similar to golf-course management or baseball studies. Fusion, as thesis subject, is crossover food with all the physics essential to understanding fusion left outside the remit of the study.

In all seriousness, let's be brutally honest, it is unlikely that we can refer to architecture schools as academies today. So the end of architecture revisited is one of attitude; both the critical theorists and the theory free zone sticker users can kill architecture off if they so wish. But students will always have something else in mind.

Perhaps that's good thing. We could pretend that all that isn't there never existed anyway. The great ideas? What good are they if they're misplaced, In the wrong order, if you can't remember one At the moment you're so to speak mounting the guillotine.^{iv}

The American poet John Ashbery, not unreasonably, has us mounting the guillotine. It would seem that if education is in a crisis, so is the profession. And that seems a well accurate picture of the situation. How to effect structural change to respond to the condition necessary to revitalise architecture as a social factor in society, when those professional agents of change are part of the diminished culture which needs this change so badly. Surely it is the responsible duty of all – in a self-confessed crisis – to

understand how we are part of the condition, part of the problem, to effect change in the way architecture runs its own profession and education. Instead of endless rhetorical sentences on what could and should happen, creative verbiage to say the least, take just five simple suggestions:

1 History – why could we not re-assess the way ideas are sampled, traded and re-labelled to become the hot topics of yesterday's philosophers. Forget the survey course of known, dated and seminal buildings confirming architecture's privilege amongst itself, understand instead the power of divergent and inclusive thinking which has seen other disciplines run the brief for an expanded architecture.

2 New science and physics – material studies, soil mechanics, environmental and sustainable studies, and new structures, topographical and morphological, can all be taught as if they can script future architecture instead of being passive resolution of readily-accepted problems. Here problem-solving shifts to redefining the problem itself, needing serious inter-disciplinary work with, amongst others, engineers, scientists, geographers, economists, lawyers, property developers, politicians and cooperative strategists.

3 Critical Theory – instead of the fear of the devil in the obscure words, what about understanding and challenging the cognitive models that can encourage

critical thinking. So much talk is made about critical thinking and conceptualising in the curriculum yet this is one of the first areas to be jettisoned when the funds are tight. Cognitive models are hardly ever taught when ethical engagement and powers of judgment are asked of the new student.

4 Esperanto Software & digital blasphemies – the much flaunted gulf between the analog and the digital is misleading. It is probably more of a gulf for the senior faculty than the junior. But the trends for morphological fidgeting and topographical adventures provide many instructors with possibilities to teach Maya, Form Z, Rhino or Revit and other inventive programmes. The issue lies elsewhere.

5 The avowed crisis is embedded in a misunderstanding of contemporary talent and the analog-digital divide. Some call this a 'disconnect' between faculty and students, the engaged and the passive. This is inaccurate; understanding the phenomenology of the crisis itself in architecture will help structure serious responses. It is up to existing faculty (and architects) to re-train also to recognise contemporary talents, which they may not have. John Hejduk asked all this in 1991 in a paper called *The Pathognomic*

So let's try again. What is important here? Two things, two obvious conflicting educational and political positions: The inquisitorial mode or the

accusatory mode. Education at present, despite its brave outlines for change, appears stuck in the accusatory, when it may proceed more effectively as an organisation if it had adequate tools to re-think the inquisitorial. Not easily done. Report language and the initiatives that have emerged out of it are putting in place a profession that still controls education in order to replicate itself. This is the divine option and results in the proliferation of the design-build movement and mentality. For yes, there is a mentality and a mind-set that goes along with this contractor-business-led world where students are encouraged to turn up to lectures hosted by contractors and building firms who seek the young studs not only to be able to draw the digital wizardry which will adequately use the products, but imagine the architecture that satisfies these conditions. Then there is the kenotic option: a design-based interactive profession, grounded but recognising the talents of students who may be navigating the world and their own education in ways the profession can as yet not recognise. To achieve this, educational strategies may have to undermine the architect's heroic role or position as leader of the building team. A spatial production quite unlike what we call architecture today might transcend architecture's traditional control, even transcend the reach of material and form to become critically impermanent.

Meanwhile however, there is so little advance in the home, in environmental psychology, in the health and well-being of our constructions that it might

deserve the tobacco manufacturer's advice to all its patrons: Architecture kills. Where is the home that can heal against the house that can hurt, as the Afro-American poet Maya Angelou put it? Is there another direction for this century that will distinguish it from the last? Is it a direction not seen in architecture, but a vital one concerning the dwelling, the home, that 'machine for living' as Le Corbusier described it over 80 years ago? And which machine-age have we reached now? The third, fourth, fifth? Which new paradigm do we seek to reward ourselves for progress? The software machine may be ubiquitous, illusory and a chameleon. It might also be strangely unanimated, un-dramatic, firm and lacking in the spirit required of it. Was this the modern vision? Was it rational, mathematical, objective and style-less? Or was it secretly labyrinthine, dynamic, mystic and open? Nothing seems to stick. Even de-schooling rebounds uncomfortably as any backlash is deconstructed and blowback takes over in the eternal corridors of the schools of architecture. Haven't we said that before? Architecture either becomes the remedy for the squalor and distress of the past - providing a resistance - or then architecture becomes an indicator of democratic sign - celebrating infinity. Either way, the barricades are set up, warring ideologies fade and the journals bring in the latest rock-star architects. Architecture is championed for being iconic and looking like all other architecture once again. What the professors and students edited out that didn't fit into their picture of contemporary architecture, redundancy started to bring back.

Despite the arrivals and brave re-structuring of different educators over the years, education and many schools are – sadly – still in that end-game situation.

We are back in Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*. The accreditation committees, the faculty, the curriculum, digital and graduate committees, the University Promotion committees, the Professional bodies and the Profession of architecture all seem to be waiting for Godot. Surely it can't go on like this? Looking the wrong way for about 50 years, we have gone through the major texts, considered the master narratives and gone back and forth across the commentators. We have sported with illuminati and literati. We have gone back to the authors, even though we have been told, the Author is dead. Yet in relation to contemporary architecture we still lose a handle on all of this. Despite much passion for architecture and its understanding as educators is it any surprise that more than sometimes we feel redundant.

Architecture kills!

The best day of my life – my rebirthday, so to speak – was when I found I had no head. This is not a literary gambit, a witticism designed to arouse interest at any cost. I mean it in all seriousness.

- *D.W. Harding*



part 5

On Having No Head

TEACHING HAS FOR ME ALWAYS BEEN PART OF MY OWN HALLUCINATION, ARCHITECTURE THE ALIBI.

For over thirty years it has - sporadically - offered a way to withdraw from some parts of the world, whilst at the same time offering engagement in others. That this teaching could happen in different parts of the world aided and coloured what has appeared as my own engaged retreat within the world. Though having taught in various parts of the world teaching in India was and remains most memorable and, I convince myself, most rewarding. Perhaps the malady of my own committed disinterest, or that 'nihilism' that Roland Barthes felt he shared with Nietzsche, was best comforted and relieved in India. To some I was passionate, to others passable, and to the remainder less than acceptable. To those who recognise the obsession to be engaged in their own understanding and knowledge not their teacher's, I might have been considered a generous teacher. Mostly though, I was miming it.

Never wishing to impose any knowledge on another person leaves you with two options. First, you encourage the student to find their own way to widen their access to knowledge. In other words you encourage them to understand where that access comes from, where it is nurtured and how to situate their learning. Second, to provide as much as possible that can question the knowledge the student often requires from you as a person in an 'authoritarian' role. That this process was in need of

review was made obvious to me during a seminar held one year near the turn of the millennium in the Helsinki Art Academy. I had called the seminar *The Critical Self*. Little did I know I was about to get a lesson in having no head when, after asking each student their own ideas and thoughts about the first week of the seminar, I reached Henrik, a young Swedish artist.

Well Henrik, are you ready?

I suppose so

Ok then. It's your turn

Well, I've got nothing to say

Nothing?

Well, I have been on the course for two weeks but I don't feel I have learnt anything.

As we spoke earlier, you've had some interest?

I've been here. I've been present, haven't I?

Can you remember anything from the first week?

No.

Not a thing?

No.

Not even a story, an anecdote.

Hardly anything.

Not even a scene from a film?

No.

Yet you chose to continue.

I wouldn't use the word 'choose'.

Did you feel then it was obligatory to come?

No.

Have you taken any notes?

No.

Has the interest any way to come out?

Maybe.

Do you think it might find a way out later?

Maybe, I cannot say

(long pause)

Can you say 'anything' about the seminar then?

Not really.

Do you communicate with anyone? Your mother or father?

Yes, I have frequent contact.

How frequent?

Once a week perhaps.

Do they ask about you?

Yes.

What do they ask?

Whether I am sleeping well.

Are you?

Yes.

Do they ask about your courses at art school?

If I tell them.

Do they ask about this course?

No.

What would you tell them if they asked?

I'd say I was in a course for two weeks

Would you describe it?

I would tell a bit about what you talked about.

What have I talked about in the seminar?

I can't say. I'm not sure.

How would you tell them then?

I don't know. Perhaps I wouldn't.

(pause)

Has it been interesting?

I've been here all the time. I've been present.

Eager?

Uh?

Well active eager or passive eager?

Oh, I'm interested.

Have you done anything recently that you were interested in?

I've done the tango.

Danced it or theorised about it?

No, danced it of course.

Why of course?

huh? But no more.

Why no more?

It was a tango thing. And in Finland! We had to find men.

Did you?

Yes, but it was difficult here in Helsinki.

Did you learn to dance yourself?

No, not really. I didn't want to.

Then what was interesting?

Arranging it. Getting Finnish men... cyber or gay... the only ones.

And now?

I'll not do it again. I'm not interested anymore.

There was another long pause. One of the other students (there were about 10) was an American and her face had become increasing contorted. More and more she appeared to be having problems with this exchange. I addressed her:

Megan, you look confused? Shocked?

Is this a joke?

What do you mean?

Are you playing some sort of joke on us?

No

Is it some sort of theatre? Does it belong to the seminar Critical Self?

It's no theatre. It's no joke. Of course it is theatre in a way. Why did *you* think it was theatre?

In the United States, this would be impossible.

what? the theory and practice of resistance to everyday life?

what?

Oh you mean a dialogue?

Yes, a dialogue between a professor and a student like this.

Why?

Well, we are forced to pretend. It would be impossible to say such things.

What things?

The things you have just said between you.

What have we said?

Well, nothing actually. I mean that's just it, nothing.

We'd be forced to pretend to have some knowledge of something. This would be impossible.

To be so honest or...

Yes, if you put it like that. Everyone, just everyone is aware of the game.

What would happen to Henrik in the States?

He'd be told to take a rest.

To retreat? To drop out?

Yes, to take a year off, even see a shrink.

Anything else?

(Someone else spoke out): He has an attitude problem!

Yes, he'd be told he had an attitude problem.

With such disinterest, you mean?

Yes. He'd have to retreat to solve his attitude problem.

Really?

Yes.

But he's not disinterested. He's working, he's thinking. You are working, aren't you Henrik?

Yes, a lot. On many things.

What for example?

We have a project in Trondheim.

An art project?

Yes.

How did you get it?

We applied for it.

Then you had an idea what this project was?

No, not at all. We had no idea what we were going to do.

How did you get the project then?

I told you. We applied.

What did you write?

That we had no idea what we wanted to do.

And you got it?

Yes.

I think you have the right attitude

How so?

On having no head. Nothing more to learn!
Everything to learn!

I suppose so

Ok then. Now it really is your turn, Henrik.

Well, I've got nothing to say.

No guru, no method, no teacher? An engaged retreat allows us to remain outside everything whilst attempting to control how far outside we have become. A committed retreat allows us to deschool. After the dialogue with Henrik I felt I was a little nearer understanding the Englishman D.W. Harding who wrote his small treatise about Zen and the 'art' of having no head. Henrik had earlier informed us that he did not quite know where his knowledge came from. He told of his father back in Sweden reading newspapers and passing on the knowledge gained from this experience. It was impossible to determine whether this was a repressed state or whether Henrik really did marvel at the world. Whichever way it was, it seemed he was confident that his indifference was not indifference, his attitude problem was no problem, his disinterest was not disinterest and the things he had heard about might, at some stage in his life, return with some significance. One does not exist without the other.

No guru, no teacher, but no method? Are not the best teachers like this? The mentor becomes the mentored; in Urdu the *ustad* alternates with the *shahgird*. Why do we put such stress on gurus and teachers who so often remain invisible but manage

nevertheless to remain with us throughout our lives? Is it a specific talent or a generosity that we take for granted? Which teachers do we remember: those that get us through exams, those that are pleased with us, or those to whom we give an apple daily? What about the invisible ones? Those wishing not to impose their own knowledge, whilst at the same time realising how important such knowledge might be. Such a strategy appears to have no method. It appears endless, indeterminate. It is like an open work; an open work that is only as open as we wish it to be. Then it is locked open. But how? Like a photograph, the moment we see it is the moment we begin to layer it with our own experiences. The teacher never wishing to impose any knowledge on another is left with those two options: encourage the other to find their own way to knowledge, or provide as much as possible that questions the knowledge gained from the teacher. As I intimated, the obviousness of this recalls that little gem of a book by the Englishman D.W. Harding: 'On Having no Head'

A few years later I was travelling on one of the monster ferries between Helsinki and Stockholm. There, leaning on the side, was Henrik. We greeted each other and spoke. I mentioned that I was on the way to Pakistan and then the USA. I expected he might once want such an experience for himself, or at least think of going to South Asia. He seemed intrigued by this possibility. His intrigue though was not made of the predictable, that Pakistan or

India would offer some alternative geography. It was something more intimate. Instead he replied carefully: "I'd rather go to Finland." "Why?" I asked hiding my surprise.

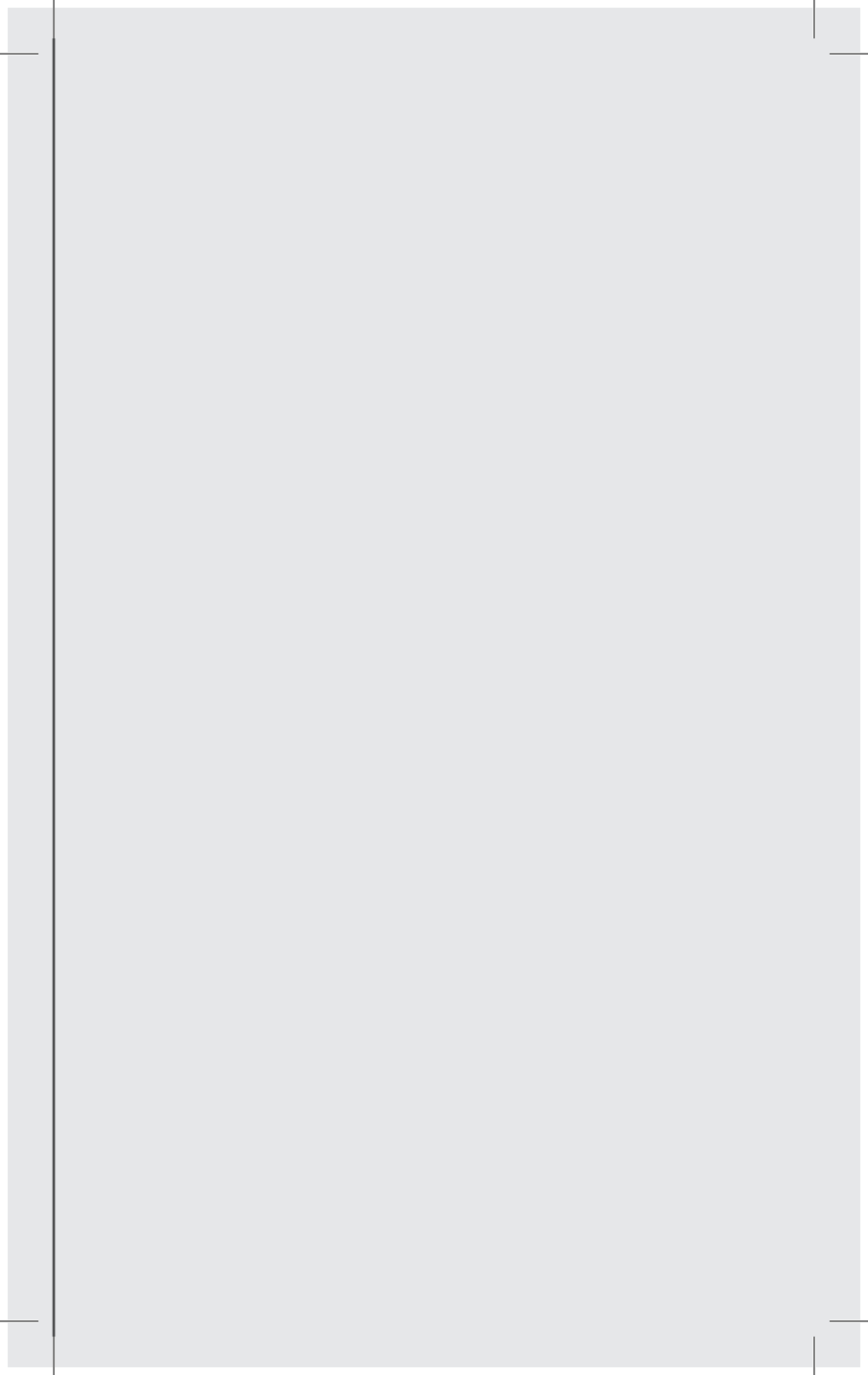
"There is such a huge distance between Finland and Sweden." He replied. "Yet you cannot really see it. If I went to India or Asia, the difference is too obvious, too spectacular." Saying this, Henrik reminded me of what V.S. Naipaul wrote when he began re-arranging his material as a writer and described the way he continually re-scripted his own history in his novel 'The Enigma of Arrival' (1987). This was an alternative geography, the "joke knowledge of the world the young boy of eighteen had arrived at", a knowledge appearing like sophistication but in fact far from it, a knowledge the writer suggested more radically, that may never get beyond the joke. For Naipaul, everything outside England and Europe was a fantasy Africa, a fantasy Peru or India or Malaya.

I thought I understood Henrik. How much of our own learning, our own knowledge, never gets beyond a joke? How much of it remains bad fiction? If I think about myself, all the countries I have lived in, have I never left a fantasy world, a fantasy Poland, a fantasy India, a fantasy Scandinavia, a fantasy Eastern Europe, a fantasy Texas? Was I about to teach in a fantasy USA or fantasy Canada and go back and forth to a fantasy South Asia? And what of my own fantasy Britain? Soaking up images and

not grasping them intellectually, do these make up our alternative geographies? Is this what bad fictions are made of? Was this not another retreat to rival the retreat of the word that so fascinated the 20th century? Deschooling? Who knows when all this begins and nothing but control is left us?

And who knows when we are miming it all?

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- i Neil Postman & Charles Weingartner, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*, 1969.
 - ii Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Heart*, 1997.
 - iii Re-scripted from *Seeking the City*, ACSA Houston (2008) 1 How can we understand the emerging city and mitigate cultural, economic and spatial conflict in the fluid and pluralistic society? 2 What roles can architecture and architects play? 3 What visions will emerge from the margins to nurture sustainable dwelling places and promote diversity of people, of ideas, and of possibilities?
 - iv John Ashbery, *Wave*, Viking Press, 1985, p.11.





headless

a listening intelligence

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The Artist known as HEADLESS -

born without realising it, in Rockferry, Wirrall, England; he attended Rockferry Grammar School & then went on to study Anthropology at Oxford (Jesus College). Leaving England for the Baltic States in the early 1970s, taught English as a Foreign Language in Estonia and Finland and became a translator of Estonian and Finnish Poetry. After being awarded a scholarship by The Finnish Ministry of Education to study at the Theatre Academy in Warsaw, he began his lifelong preparation of lectures, seminars,

reports and writings on art, architecture and culture: the first example of what became later Headless Artscripts. Visiting guest lecturer in Vilnius University (Comparative Literature Department) and Jyvaskyla University, Finland (Department of Art Education), he moved to Paris in the mid-1970s. Living on Rue Vieille de Temple, he studied Modern Dance and Flamenco, frequented the cafe La Tartine on Rue de Rivoli along with the group of artists who became known as The Rivalists. This led to later creating, scripting and producing the choreographies KALEVA, SHONA, and THE WHEEL

& THE BUTTERFLY. The latter, co-produced with Siska Gripenberg, was performed in Helsinki and Tallinn by The Oxygen Rolonoff Dance Theatre and televised by YLE, the Finnish Broadcasting Company.

Life then gets murky, years drop out and remain lost. In 1983 he was the Keynote Speaker at The International Semiotics Congress, University of Riga where he delivered his seminal paper: 'The Rhetorics of Choreographic Form.' Later in this decade he was to become Lecturer in Special Studies in Riga and in Helsinki and also led courses and workshops at The Estonian National Broadcasting Company. Specializing in Communications, Media Theory, Photography, Architecture and Advertising, it seems his special headless talent was moving in between these disciplines and - delightfully - to go by many of his archived notes, never coming to rest in any one of them. It was during this time too that he began to work as a solo artist under the name *Headless* with his first exhibition *The Seven Famous Raincoats & a Moygashel* (The Cellar Gallery, Helsinki, Les Fous de l'Île Galerie, Paris, April 1984, and Pinacotheca Fine Arts Gallery, Jyväskylä, February 1985) These *Headless* exhibition texts were later published in 'Contemporary Writing 1985' (Helsinki). *Don't Go So fast, You'll crash into Martin Wagstaff* followed at Helsinki Konsthall (1985). *Headless* appears to have left the Baltics and then spent five years in India as a free lance artist and designer taking up a brief role as a visiting professor at Jamia Millia Islamia University, Delhi in the Mass Communications Research Centre (film, video, scriptwriting, photography, photo-journalism) in 1988. It is rumoured that he taught there the comb-carrying, soon-to-be Bollywood star Shahrukh Khan. Whilst in India, he also taught Exhibition Art, Design and Implementation (The Trade Fair Authority of India, New Delhi) and - 1986 being a particularly productive year - designed, co-designed and produced another series of exhibitions: *Space &*

The Act of Space (KHAM) Ravindra Bhavan Gallery, New Delhi IGNCA; Satish Gujral *Four Decades*, Ravindra Bhavan, New Delhi. In this year he also became the Visiting Special Lecturer in Design & Product Semantics and Communication Theory at The National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, India where he produced his first collaborative art exhibition and series of Headless artscrippts called *Nexus Environmental Installations on a Traffic Roundabout*, Ahmedabad (1987). A workshop course in product design, interior design and architecture resulted in an Urban Intervention, the first of its kind in India. From a brief to participate and intervene at a traffic roundabout for an event of three days, this took him on to co-design and produced *Shelter: a place to live*, installations for Hudco, also in Ravindra Bhavan, Delhi.

There is no trace at present, however, of his headless activity, life and work between the years 1988 and 1994. But from the sketchy records available, it seems he went on to deliver the *Flat Stanley Lecture* at Vilnius: Museum of Contemporary Art, (Lithuania) in 1994, on 'Postmodernism - From Anarchy to Cultural Perspective' and was the Keynote speaker at the Kaurismaki Film Festival: The Cinema of the Brothers Kaurismaki, Vilnius, Lithuania and an Invited speaker at the International Graphics Conference: 'The Mood/Mode of Contemporary Graphics: designing for complexity'. It is also possible to trace his role as an International Advisor for MECCA, Middle European Colony of Contemporary Arts, Terezin, Czech Republic where in fact he met up, by chance, with Will Challinor, father of N. Alice Challinor.* It is rumoured here he also met Vaclav Havel but no further record exists of this entry in one his unfinished almanacs. It was in the 1990s that he found himself once more in the Baltics and in Sweden where, perhaps upon an introduction through Will Challinor he began his collaboration (still as the artist known as Headless) with the

Swedish art group called *The Rocket Girls* (Raketa). Having also conducted Critical Self workshops from 1998 onwards at art academies around the world, he produced a little known artsript called *Zen and The Art of The Fluorescent Tube* (1998-2000) for an Art Installation in Villa Medici in Rome found within The Collection of a Thousand Projects. There is no record of whether this project was ever completed.

This is all I have been able to construct so far of Headless's life and his collaboration with *The Rocket Girls*. Clearly he continued his artsripts before disappearing in Karachi, and his collaboration with my own father Will Challinor is all the more interesting considering his particular interest in graphic art, film and writing. In fact, my father's graphic experience seems to criss-cross with this artist known as Headless as they were both involved in editorial work, design, layout, typography, computer graphic interfaces, marketing, publishing and distribution projects. I am however still to research the links between Headless and my father, Will Challinor and these will form part of the next section of my research. There is no truth in the rumour or critical fiction that Frank Heron was or still is the Artist known as Headless; nor is there any truth that they were architects. *N Alice Challinor Stockholm*



N Alice Challinor is the daughter of the writer and professor Will Challinor who spent a brief time in Stockholm at the Royal School on Skeppsholmen. Born 1995, she went onto doctoral research in Fine Arts specialising in the work of the Artist known as Headless and Frank Heron. N Alice Challinor will also later be known for her pioneering work in *A.D.D. Art* and its *Cognitive Deceptions* and is the writer of a book to appear in 2018 called *Super Art, Super Funding, Super Ficial* (Konjak Press). She is currently working on expanding her research into the artist's documents

for a definitive volume on Headless and Heron, called *The Critical Heron*. After a recent trip to Peshawar on the Afghan border, where she seems to have traced the last sighting of Headless, her current headache however is what to do with all her father's archives and how to separate them from the work of the artist formerly known as Headless and Frank Heron. She is preparing the second volume in this series called *Alternative Geographies*. N Alice Challinor has no time for hobbies or to hug Kafka but is also working on a new film project called *In Search of the Real Max von Sydow*.

