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## The proposal midwide

for all students of architecture past, present and future and for all filofax fanciers

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### architecture degree zero

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### for David J. Azrieli

### Radix, Matrix

As one speaks to stone, like
You
From the chasm. From
A home become a
Sister to me, hurled
Towards me, you,
You that long ago
You in the nothingness of night,
You in the multi-night enCountered, you
Multi-you -:

At that time, when I was not there at that time when you Paced the ploughed field, alone:

Who, who was it, that lineage, the murdered, that looms black into the sky: rod and bulb -?

Root, Abraham's root. Jesse's root. No one's root – O Ours.)

Yes, As no one speaks to stone, as You With your hands grope into there, And into nothing, such Is what is here:

This fertile soil too gapes, this going down Is one of the crests growing wild.

> - Paul Celan trans. Michael Hamburger © 1972

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**O** degree

"There is a perceived polarity (however artificial) between technology and the humanities, between science and art, between right brain and left. The burgeoning field of mathematics is likely to be one of those disciplines, like architecture, that bridge the gap."

- Negroponte1

Cyber Self, forget it. The Digital Self, forget it. Analogical smear, forget it. Tactic or strategy? Eros and Psyche? Seduction and resistance! Analog AND digital? That divided self, perfect! We are all divided selves. Perhaps me more than ever; I too am a Divided Self. Usually the rules of a visitor to a city, a home. any place even a school of architecture imply a detachment. There is that quiet inability to participate in a deeper way within the structure and infrastructure of the school and its education. Sometimes I am reminded of this 'alienation' each time I enter Chicago. After being asked for both index fingers, after the web camera takes one more shot, I usually get pulled over. I know it is going to happen but I am powerless to do anything about it. You see, some years ago somebody put the wrong words on an International Form and for the life of me, I cannot change it. No one knows how to remove it from the machine. No one seems to be able to take the responsibility that it was a mistake and should be removed. Hence, every time I get pulled over.

"There is something unclear about your position, Sir, your registration. Go and stand over there. Someone will come for you." I usually try and explain to a rather unsmiling

Immigration Official that this happens every year and we have already sorted it out. But immigration has no history anymore; it lives only in the present, which is a present of constant fear, constant suspicion, of the 'other'. It used to be a fear of the outsider, now it is the 'other'.

Someone usually does come for you in these circumstances. But don't dream of showing any impatience in the face of Immigration officials. One slight twitch and you're done for. Don't even think of smiling or saying you are a Visiting Professor or even a Sufi thinker. Instead I usually go Zen, and think of my own parallel life. It's not analog and/or digital. This is not the divide that's important. It's much, much bigger than this.

Have they finally noticed the visas to Pakistan in my passport? I think. Has someone seen the photographs of me in the North West Frontier Province – that no-man's land full of ruin, drug-running, Al Queda and young boys playing cricket between Afghanistan and Pakistan? Has someone seen that image of me on the Khyber Pass with a Kalashnikov in my hand? How do I explain it was thrust into my hands by the Local Tribal leader called Ifti Khan. Educated at a private school in Lahore modelled on the English schools, he was the Tribal King: Khan meaning 'king.' He was then the Minister of Education. He opened all doors. When he asks for a Kalashnikov he gets one. Even for a smiling, humorous photograph. He ripped the kalashnikov out of the hands of his security guards and put it in mine, and said: "There, take the photograph!"

How were the officials to know; who reads the code? And what was that cigar in my mouth and that fake snarl on my face? In Chicago I am usually released – eventually - along with the other usual suspects: Mexicans, Muslims, Mongolians and monks.

\*

Teaching alongside writing is my life-blood. I am passionate to understand ideas not fully formed. I am passionate to understand where architecture might be going in the 21st century. It has a right and an urgency to be different

from the last century. It has a right to struggle to define its respect to, but difference from the immense legacy and shadow left by the last century. Can we free ourselves from it, from the masters that engulf us? Do we need to? Will you – professor or student - need to? "If I have seen further," Sir Isaac Newton the British scientist said, "it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." Are we, to follow, and stand on the shoulders of giants? Or are we rather presented with a different condition today; working under the armpits of those giants? I would suggest this presents us today with a way to look again; what we might call, for our enquiry here, an 'architecture degree zero'.

### ★ the first interruption

The analog and the digital? It might help to put in context what we may think of as a rather comical divide by reading from a recent white paper delivered to the NAAB by the Association for Computer Aided Design in Architecture: "Has "the digital" been absorbed by the discipline or has "the digital" absorbed the discipline? Depending on your perspective, Architecture either continues to disintegrate or has reformed around a new definition of "the master builder". Digital technology has opened a variety of new career opportunities for the graduates of a digitally advanced architectural education. Some depictions of this trend have the discipline of architecture continuing to fragment into specialties. However, software has established platforms from which the activity surrounding a design project can be directed, managed, and built. But, does the capacity of software to re-center what is required to make a built environment mean that the design and making of such will fall to the historic notion of "master builder" or "the architect"?" > > <

Zero? The nothing that is? The big O? The symbol that we cannot manage without, the symbol that drives mathematicians to string theory, chaos theory or the theory of everything; the symbol that drives architects to drink, and then to the string theory, chaos theory and their own versions of the theory of everything. Or starting over, never departing, never arriving: the non-destination or the real destination for the 21st century? Architecture open to all or architecture about to eat its own tail.

Why this fascination with zero, for zero? Does it comfort us? Does it remind us of the other side of zero, infinity? How much is it confused in that other more recent use of the term: Ground Zero? Why do we speak in such terms? And how many Ground Zeros existed in the 20th century: Hiroshima, Auschwitz, Tiananmen Square, Columbine in the USA, Dunblane in Scotland. Or an event in our own lives: the cooling point, the freezing point, the point at which the world turns and goes on turning and turning and turning. That point of all spinning which must at some stage come down to that still moment - the degree zero.

So what of this fascination with the notion of a degree zero? Where did it come from? Just a piece of stray language from fashionable French theory, traceable to a small book published in 1953 "Le Degré Zéro de l'Écriture" by a little known French literary scholar, Roland Barthes, translated into English as Writing Degree Zero? What does it mean if we speak of the Zero Degree of Architecture or Architecture Degree Zero? Are we about to start over, without knowing why or how? Have we reached a return, a desire for the return and if so a return to what; to the beginnings of a Modern world or the beginning of Modernism? To an 'essence' when architecture was all done straight, non-ironic, without fiction, without gossip, without fame? Or to the beginnings of a Modern Architecture which is still coming to terms with a public's confusion and disapproval? This – in simple code - is called 'legacy'?

What should we do with this legacy? What should you sitting out there in the audience do with it? Is your thinking

all squared, neatly compartmentalised by the education you have received, by the teaching you have had to sit through, by the learning you haven't engaged? Does this 'legacy' sit nicely in a string of zeros, or a string of zeros and ones? And does it make any difference?

\*

Recently I had two interesting conversations. The first I was at dinner in North Wales with a friend from Architecture School. He was now a partner in a firm of over 50 employees. As he walked past my 300 year old cottage he remarked: "I wish I could get the passion back. I wish architecture could have remained what it was when we were at school. I wish it were that simple to help and change people's lives." He paused. I had never heard him so intimate. "I wish I could still solve problems, use a drawing board and feel satisfied. Now, every day, I am worried we are going to get sued."

"Every day?" I asked. "Every day! It's become so passionless." He went on to explain what 'design-build' meant to him and his firm in South London. Ultimately either the practice rubber-stamped a project or provided a digitally prepared diagram for the planning department. The importance was in the looseness and ambiguity of the diagram. He specifically used the word 'diagram' not drawing which for him was something gold, from his past. He hadn't been excellent at school, but he had been solid, very solid. "This diagram," he said, "then allows contractors to build it with as much creative economy and fakery they can muster. Sometimes," he continued with a wry smile, "we are invited back to improve the diagram given by another architect. We then 'tweak' it, without altering the approved external image and massing."

"The result," he added, "is always devastatingly boring."

Boredom to be interesting needs slyness. It didn't even have that. His eyes glazed over. He kept reliving the idea that this is not what we studied for. I looked at him. Was time to stop at the moment we trained for architecture in 1968, forty years ago, when we entered university wet behind the ears? Was it to end in 1971 with a first degree, or later with the

professional degree? I chose not this path.

But this was not anger. This was a contemporary fatigue, a coerced resignation. This practice in South London had no use for 'paper architecture', for ideas, for the games of the journals. As an architect, he was so far away from this that it seemed we were splitting into another profession entirely. There was fame, artifice, rock star architects and virtual reality. And then there were ordinances, regulations and a physical reality. Yet the practice had 3 partners and a host of CAD monkeys. The world was not hated, but it was unsteady. Perhaps Golf, GPS gadgets in new Volvos and Guinness helped the pain. This was a zero but of what type? This was a reality that could not award anything to the unbuildable and the utopian. Anything radical sent a shiver down their spine. It had become a world without pain but on his face it was not and could never be painless. Architecture was in his blood and he no longer knew why or whether he wanted it.

\*

The second conversation was with a talented young academic practising architecture. He had told me of his choice to avoid wasting his time talking to young friends, potential clients, about the type of McMansion they desire in Texas. Hedge Fund specialists, venture capitalists, frat-boy adventurers, Bud Light drinkers; they need the three SUV garage, the pool hall, their own aqualand and the latest addition, their own plasma-screen cinema. Instead this young architect has decided to announce that he only takes on commissions with a 'contemporary look'. By this we are already speaking in code. We mean everything these young clients, these young venture capitalists do not want.

These potential wealthy clients may share his interest in computer gaming, in the latest gaming software, the films of David Cronenberg and George Lucas, the books of William Gibson, Dave Eggers and Stephen Hawking, but they wish not for a house that looks anything but 'traditional'. That, they are clear about! He has, he told me, more and more conversations about what this means. But he has less and less jobs. He may, he says, with a smile, be forced to remain in teaching.

Is this another degree zero: to wait within the university until the outside world changes? Until the wind blows over, and new insight arrives? We'd wait a long time. Outside the risk-averse environment is obvious. The wind blows in ways we don't understand anymore. Past and present education collides: we stare at the mirror of our own history. History is last week, or even yesterday. What happens if – interestingly - the corporate conventional and formulaic direction of the profession of architecture sees its own development and control with no echo? Would this answer market conditions, the strategies of a neo-conservative, neo-liberal democracy? Or are we waiting until Francis Fukuyama takes back his words, and we all need another guru? Remember the theory so quickly the sound byte: the end of history? Who really took it back to Hegel and Marx?

Would this also be another Zero? Just who amongst us then might be redundant? Older professors or younger micro-serfs? And just how much architecture – if we can call it that – will go on being built by those we consider – in our arrogance and hubris – have no right to be called architects? And what would the consequences of this be to a school of architecture?

We track trends only to see them rebound on us. There is fear now when a bag is left a little too long at a bus station, when a package sits on an airport shuffle without an owner, when a parcel is delivered which you didn't ask for. It's easy to look back; it's even comforting to look back. The dark side is here in front of us. The light side is there, back in the unbearable lightness of being.

But was there really a golden time? When were the banquet years when architecture socialised, when it took on the agenda of humanity, when it's education worked, when it could answer the modernising agenda and poverty's call in countries like Finland, Holland, Turkey and India? Was there a harmonising agenda which we require so badly today? Was there a tacit, unspoken code; that synthesis between fear and function, between form and fantasy, between science and technology and that elusive, wonderful dream of modern life? A Doctor Pepper's sorbet and ice, or in my childhood, that undefiled time when lemonade was

called 'Pop' – for the bubbles that kept on coming up and up to the surface.

Have we, in our rush to be Modern, feel Modern, breathe Modern, speak Modern, dance Modern, curse Modern, abuse Modern, forgotten how to really be Modern? Let us pause, and put off that moment where we wish to put our legs under the banquet table and return to those hard-won, once-so-deeply held values, those moral positions that were so tempting, so precious, so progressive and so full of promise.

So why would we speak of a degree zero in architecture? Architecture: Yes. Unquestionable and questionable! Degree: a measurement, a unit division of a temperature scale, a planar unit of angular measure equal in magnitude to 1/360 of a complete revolution. Zero: the nothing that is, the infinite return, the Devil's magic or the secret of book-keeping. This is the beauty of mathematics. The seduction of an order often beyond us but which keeps us reaching for more. "If you look at zero you see nothing," writes Robert Kaplan; "but look through it and you will see the world." Yet Zero is an intrigue, full of misreading, mistaken identity, abuse and inventive fiction.



I wish to share briefly some ideas where architecture may be going. Where we as professors and educators might be going, which might not be the same place. I wish to suggest we might have looked the wrong way; we may still be looking the wrong way. The three partners in London may have looked the wrong way. I myself may be looking the wrong way. Consider this theatre poem by the British playwright Edward Bond:

Whenever you see an artist look at him closely

He should look like a man Who's come round the corner

He should look like a man Who expects surprises

Who distrusts maps But carries a map in his pocket. Do we all carry a map in our pocket? Do we not all strive to map the world in visions of our own self? Do we wait until we are mature, and then announce that we have a map of the world? Do we wish to read architecture as a text without having enough knowledge to do this? Or do we fake it, imagine ourselves better than we are, ignore all those warnings against ourselves and live by the most impossible map of all; the map of reason? The map that tells us where we are going, the map we dream of but cannot inhabit.

All of us at certain times wish to know where we are going. In fact we claim it is our right. Tell us which direction we are going, and then we can correct you if we disagree with that direction. Countries do this. Politicians do this. Families do this. Artists do this. Architects do this. Universities do this. All to varying degrees of success and arrogance.

Therefore, is it not only right sometimes to ask where we are going in our education? And in our case it is even narrower: where is architecture's direction? Is it a reasonable question at all? Does it imply that we would need to recognise the direction we are going in, in order to go there? And how exciting would that be! To arrive at a place we knew we were going. Surely this is misleading.

Often we are heading in directions which are unknown and exciting because of that. Many of the early Modern Architects felt that too. I recently finished a book in the Modern Architectures in History series that researched how almost all Finnish architects were able to navigate all trends in pre-modernism, neo-classicism, constructivism, some even post-modernism, modernism and modernism. neo-modernism and deconstructivism. In many ways these architects sampled architecture and, to use the operational jargon from another world, re-purposed their messages. This is not unusual. It is just that most of the recognised history books aren't written that way.

Often too we are heading in a direction which is ambiguous until we arrive. It can be alarming even, until we arrive and make peace with that arrival. Often – some of us recognise this – we arrive at a point only to say we knew all along that

we would arrive there. This too is misleading: nothing in the last century, the Modern century, the century of Modernism, nothing worked that way. Nothing was predictable. Nothing in its march to progress suggested despite all its manipulation and opportunism that we arrived at where we imagined going. The century was both more thrilling and more evil than perhaps anyone imagined. So much so I would suggest that some of us have stopped thinking of arriving anywhere. The moral, the French filmmaker Jean Luc Godard said during the early 1960s, is in the *traveling*. *Le traveling*! It's a technical term. He meant the *traveling* camera. But he could have meant something else. Is it only now at the end of the first decade of the 21st century we are beginning to understand why?

Just glance back at the 20th century. The seminal buildings were not always seminal. Buildings once seminal are no longer seminal. Other buildings are waiting to be discovered seminal. History itself is travelling; its moral is looser today than ever. Ideas brilliant in one era or decade may not have had the conditions to make them succeed. If we think of Richard Dawkins thesis 'The Selfish Gene' were the architects not selfish enough? Or were the ideas not selfish enough to be replicated to survive? Are we to condemn buildings from the past for the conditions that buried them, for the conditions that destroyed those ideas and devastated the illusions of progress? Or can we discern in the legacy of an old rhythm, the richness of newer systems. And do we - students, teachers, professors - have to throw away the past, like we throw away old hardware? In order to live the 21st century do we need to jettison the 20th century?

### ★ The Second Interruption

The moment we are school and schooled so seductively, we need to deschool. The architect Stephen Holl from the recently published Index of teaching at Columbia school had this to say: "Studio and schools have changed – everything is computerised and almost no one uses a drawing board anymore." Does that mean we have all

changed and have no choice? "In our office," Holl continues, "we have 18 people doing what would have taken 25 people to do. The machines are playing an increasingly larger role and therefore you have to think differently." Really, how? Have we started to think this difference in any serious way? Holl knows, as anyone knows, the analog defines the soul, the digital scripts the soul. Or that's how it seems until we arrive at a serious artificial intelligence. "I do not think that machines can ever conceive, so the soul and spirit of architecture are still part of the analog process. The conceptual condition that transpires between the brain and the hand begins what later might become a digital process." Is Holl right? Even though his water colours can be instantly scanned to become part of larger digital drawing process, so can the residue of tea leaves, coffee grains and shredded paper. Does this mean he has to draw more than ever to keep up? And to keep up with what? We are not talking of a 'paperless' condition here, we are talking about a much more vibrant interchange between the analog and the digital. >



You guessed it! We are speaking in code. Depending on who writes, who thinks and who speaks, the old either runs on empty, is obsolete or the 'old' recharges and reinvents itself. According to the computer programmer Ellen Ullman from her book Closer to the Machine, "old systems have a name. They are called 'legacy systems'. In the regular world," Ms Ullman writes, "'legacy' has an aura of beneficence. Parents leave a child a legacy: fortunate child. A brother gets into a fraternity because of his older brother's earlier membership: a legacy admission. A gift. An enrichment. The patina of age, but good age – venerability, the passing on from generation to generation. A gift of time." Yet it seems we can forget how to register the gifts of time. Novelty hits

us in the solar plexus, we bunjy-jump, para-glide and crash, we hit the ground running. Nowhere better have we had to negotiate this in architectural education than with the digital world. "The change from atoms to bits is irrevocable and unstoppable," Nicholas Negroponte wrote in 1995, "but the real cultural divide is going to be generational." Is this really so? Understanding that bits are the underlying principle of digital computing may have secretly or even less secretly expanded our so called 'binary vocabulary', but how does this restrict our world?

Does this mean we understand the ability to digitize more and more types of information (audio and video) reducing them to 1s and os? To what degree has the notion of runaway data produced prosaic, embarrassing architecture? How much will some of the parametric models look like a car wreck, how many will survive as buildings? And if 'ones and zeros' have produced such wayward desolate forms of corporatism, is this a less authoritative architecture? Less than what? If architecture is reduced to clipped bits, edited sequences – a form of sampling – surely this is not a privilege only of the digitalised world. We should remember, it is well within the editing, mimicking and sampling creativity of us all, and it's not too difficult to trace this talent back to the 20th century and earlier. It is a talent for both mimesis and poesis; it is the talent of survival too.

But for some reason, edited sequences of constructions, fabrications - creative assemblages if you like - from a random access engine ask questions of us in relation to a supposed authenticity in architecture. Is this what it means to hijack the digital language for our own use? Do we really try to understand how the operational language from one discipline or lifestyle is altered to become our own. We see architectural offices 'repurposing' their bits to remain attractive to the 'analog' public, whilst increasingly operating in a digital world of instant transfer and gratuitous sign. I suggest we might pause here to consider how these transfers happen? A recent graduate told me that her firm sends plans off to India for the CDs, the construction drawings. Plans only, mind! Rushed elevations may follow. Then the rendering farms in India take over. Now the rendering farms

are returning home and popping up in Dallas, Houston, Ottawa, London and Dublin.

How many of us really live in codified bits of information as if we are cyborgs? Are we to call our curriculum vitae, a source code – as William Gibson does on his website? What is the difference between a personal history which was once termed in such an ugly phrase, 'bio-data'? Does it matter? These bios are still fakable, editable and alterable whether analog or digital. Are we dead if we cannot read the signs, if we cannot decode the increasingly encrypted world? And what of the codified bits of information beyond us?

I am not a programmer but I can understand the programmer's language and anxiety. Hardware can be thrown out, no one wants it. But software can be played with, tinkered with. It has, according to Ellen Ullman, a 'life cycle': "from birth, to productive maturity, to bug-filled old age." Is that what we have too, as professors and teachers, we pass from birth to productive maturity, and at some stage, as we still try and teach an architecture we thought has some validity, we have a bug-filled old age? If so, I can only think of the anthem of my generation, a song many of you students will or will not know, by a British rock band known for smashing their guitars and amplifiers, The Who. They used to do this whilst playing a song called My Generation from 1965:

People try to put us d-down (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

Just because we get around (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

Things they do look awful eecold (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

I hope I die before I get old (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

"Hope I die before I get old". Trouble is: rock stars, like rock star architects don't always die before they get old. In fact they begin to live again when they get old; they recreate all the things they were not able to do earlier. They get stuck in the preciousness of legacy, in a bug-filled old age. They use Garage software to prepare their music on a Mac. They reunite and show that they can all interchange on a Pink Floyd song called 'Shine on you Crazy Diamond'. But they certainly won't die before they get old. For they are already old! Look at Mick Jagger cavorting on Copacabana Beach in front of a million screaming digital beings: are they dead already? Can they still get no satisfaction? 'I can't get no satisfaction.' What a legacy!

In computing terms, Ms Ullman tells us, "'legacy' is a curse. A legacy system is a lingering price of old junk that no one has yet figured out how to throw away. It's something to be lived with and suffered. The system is unmodifiable, full of bugs, no longer understood. We say it's' 'brain dead'. Yet it lives. Yet it runs. Drain on our time and money. Vampire of our happiness. Legacy."



We are good at speaking in code, but are you sure we are all decoders; are you sure the coded legacy of architecture or the Enigmatica or Digiphilia as it is called is equally decodable? Am I being comical, the analog professor in a digital world? A Sufi in Ottawa? You know what a Sufi is. The mystic from the 9th century when a city like Baghdad was so sophisticated it radiated the world's intelligence whilst the world we inhabit now was still very much in the dark. One slip of the tongue when amnesia burns us and we prescribe blueprints for intimidated students! Is this one more example of what we call in English, a 'senior moment'? When novelty hits us so relentlessly, when novelty asks us to keep up and move on so impatiently, yet embeds us within codes we do not understand but which we pretend to; all this code shifting - just like Jack Kerouac's 'road-going' so much so that that we have difficulty moving on. Jack Kerouac? Ever heard of him? Neal Cassady? Alan Ginsberg? The Merry Pranksters? All that 'road-going', as the American Beats sought the 'it', the 'it' of it all: jazz, passion and the jazz of life. And if we tolerate this, our children will be next? And if we don't tolerate this, what do we do?

V for vendetta! We take revenge on the asphalt, or we

metaphorically keep smashing the machine and the guitar and yet dream of John Ruskin.

Why don't you all f-fade away (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

And don't try to dig what we all s-s-say (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

I'm not trying to cause a big s-s-sensation (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

I'm just talkin' 'bout my g-g-g-generation (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

This is my generation This is my generation, baby

When my daughter looks impatiently at the slowness of my hand on the cell phone as she shuffles numbers and text at lightning speed, she says "Don't worry Papa, you're old, this is not for you." She smiles, just as I smile at my 88 year old mother with her CD player. Occasionally, only occasionally, my mother will attempt to turn over the compact disc, as if it could, as if it should, play on both sides (and why ever not?). Then she has a senior moment and we laugh.

I touch my Namiki fountain pen and thankfully sigh, thinking that I may have lost it. A flush spasms through my body. My daughter sees the grimace, then the relief on my face. She's seen it hundreds of times before.

"It's only a fountain pen Papa!"

She's right, it is only a fountain pen.

But it's the most unique fountain pen in the world. It's retractable.

"And this," she says when she finds it after I have lost it once more, "this is only a Filofax, Papa!"

But it's not. It's not only a Filofax. It's a PDA, it's my PDA. It is key to the way I think, to the way I speak today, to the codes of this lecture, to the variables possible in this lecture, to the random order and the order of the random in this lecture. It has the 60 sheets that make up this lecture. It has the alterable order. It has the memory of thinking and creativity. It has the pain of ignorance and failure. It has the frustration of more and more useless, damn words on

architecture, as if they all matter. It is the analog version of my digital self like the lizard I wear on my lapel. It is the digital imagination of the analog process. It is the divided self, part of all of us, whether a senior moment or not.

### \* third interruption

Recently this was in the white paper sent to the NAAB for consideration? Is it a sign of things to come or a desperate move? "Healthy disciplines remain tolerant of a state of flux by constantly questioning the inclusion/exclusion, export, and collaboration/isolation to/from new ideas, new techniques, new disciplines, and new technology. At the perimeter of this nebulous exchange, an innovative discourse is emerging that offers unexpected new conduits an attentive to discipline of architecture. Topic nodes" - don't you sometimes hate this momentary change of vocabulary – "topic nodes' within this discourse are evolving with a particular set of important distinctions from one another. Thus, we contend that the digital discourse is augmented by further specificity such as: Digital Pedagogy, Digital Tools, Digital Production/ Fabrication, Digital Visualization, Digital Projects, Digital Design, Digital Representation, Digital Thinking, and Digital Practice. While many points of view are represented with these position writings, all stress the immediacy of acting with strong and proactive consideration of digital technology. We urge NAAB to color the rhetoric of its discussions with the immediate issues of digital technology and its impact on architecture. We hope that this white paper will serve as a useful guide for that discussion." Listen to the language: We urge the NAAB to colour the rhetoric of its discussions...is that not too often the issue. It is not, cannot be reduced to mere rhetoric. Rhetoric, unchallenged

is spin. Rhetoric unchallenged is lazy thinking. Rhetoric unchallenged is fast-food discourse, it is archo-babble. We need, all of us, to do more homework, in fact. We need to get the books out again. And I just don't mean the latest ones by Moneo, Koolhaas, Tschumi or Rashid. I mean the forgotten ones, the once seminal ones. The literature gone by and sidelined that allows us be so cavalier today. This too is the zero condition. There is no mistaking it. We are all in this today. We all share the spin and rhetoric. No one can take more responsibility for the slide. ><

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Left them some troumene. It was Nowly harbon: And him whom - an mount my where grathin . For m Kombon with . The messmoone

Amons and rand, They tim in Pright.

1 the filofax

"Entering the game, as it were, whether of belonging to a nation or of using a language, a man enters arrangements which it does not fall to him to determine, but only to learn and to respect the rules."

- Alain Finkielkraut The Undoing of Thought

Does it not strike you rather odd, comical even, that the only ones amongst us using terms like Cyber Self, Microserf, Cyborg, Gameboy and Digital Self are those struggling to come to terms with the analog legacy, those teachers amongst us who refuse to use email, to slip into Facebook or YouTube, those Prada-wearing slip-shoe hugo boss suited professors that shake the boogie out of night time architecture and dream of the way things were. No young people I speak to ever really talk of being digital, of cyberspace, of cyborgs; most of them already inhabit this space. Yet most young people will look at a 'Filofax' and think, well what would they think: a wallet, money purse, a notebook, a Bible, the Koran, or a collectible from grandfather's memory closet?

I am going to take some moments to describe the Filofax to you. You will notice that I am continuing to talk in code, yet you will also realise I am talking directly. It is no special trick and we all do it throughout the day, whether we are aware of it or not. I found a Brief History of Personal Time Management on the internet from a German archive. I paraphrase: the "Filofax" celebrated its 75th birthday

in 1996. Originally from the first name "File of Facts," launched in 1921, by a British Colonel Disney who founded the company Norman & Hill, Ltd. in London. Based on the American "Organizer System" dating from World War One, the Filofax was a time planner ring book. Six holes: pages 6.5 x 3.75 inches. The British army, the church and universities, journalists, judges and doctors all used it. Filofax became an essential element at the Queen's Military Academy Sandhurst: a "Troop Commander's Bible" was produced along with several other Filofax special additions. In 1976, Filofax was re-launched by David and Lesley Collischon who began to sell it by mail; a development and media insinuation which became the "Filofax" philosophy. In 1943 a British soldier had his life saved when a bullet ricocheted off the time organizer in his chest pocket: "a true case of the Filofax extending one's real time." It says so on the internet!3

But the filofax? What do you put in it, what do you note, what do you remember, what do you erase, rip out, remove, forget? Ultimately the Filofax, the PDA, is about content and I, like many, are worried about 'content'. Are the rumours correct? Are we losing the grip on 'content' because of increasing novelty, change - digital and other? Have our children already lost any grip there was to be had on content? Are we to blame text messaging, the X-box, and DVD players for that brevity which is now supposed to erase serious communication? Or has the grip on content, the notion of the superficial that it might invite, been a myth all along? Surely it is hardly a result of data flows and video gaming. Was there a time - a senior moment? - when 'time' itself had more content, more meaning, than it has now? Surely not? But are we to blame the futility of corporate riskaverse America for this? Has it seeped into architecture? The carnival which has become the semantically-challenged movement that now oscillates between the all embracing confusion, Postmodernism? Self-willed, all of us, are we as professors just guiding students into the emptiness of the tautologies we spring upon them?

These are the sort of questions I used to like to ask, but I'm

not sure how to keep on asking them when 'content' itself has become so thin. What has architecture to do with the way content has become so slippery, even fakable? And what of the word 'slippage'. Most Poststructuralists know what it means, or think they do. We live in 'slippage' daily with CNN, Fox News or the BBC; with a world become reality TV in front of our eyes. But we still behave as though this slippage doesn't quite work, hasn't really happened. Just like the world of disinformation? Why this delusion? What comforts does this bring us? What cognitive delusions do we need to keep our view of the world regular, unchallenged, and smooth?

I must admit, I hate a regular, unchallenged and smooth world. That's probably why I used to end up each year in Pakistan after teaching in Texas, in Peshawar on the border of the border of the world, the Afghan-Pakistan border. Why this deception? We read the sentences that condemn America, complain that it has not learnt the lessons, for example of King Lear. "The USA is a nation which tends to find failure shameful, mortifying or even downright sinful. What distinguishes its culture is it buoyancy, its robust exuberance, its doggone refusal to cave in, cop out or say can't. It is a nation of eager yea-sayers and zealous can-doers, in contrast with that bunch of professional grousers, scoffers and long-suffering stoics known as the British." Long-suffering stoic I may be according to Professor Terry Eagleton, but where is the buoyancy today, where is the exuberance, the resistance to sleepwalking into indifference?

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But let's come back to content. Architects, it is said, often with a comical nod, don't read: they turn the pages. Is this a myth, this un-reading architect? Have we forgotten the references and books of the world, the stories that often make and re-make our imaginations, the insights available for us to make further insights from and save ourselves? If architects really don't read that much – and this is probably true – what effect has the last 40 years had? Because there

is no doubt that the last 40 years has offered architecture a series of books, writings, texts, and ideas that have emerged, whether we are in any agreement with this or not, from reading and re-reading. The last forty years has introduced the notion of reading: reading culture, reading fashion, reading politics, reading architecture, reading life. Reading is meaning, whether we slip into something more comfortable or not. So do we not have a paradox?

Much of the development in contemporary architecture – questionably thin and sensationally gratuitous – has been supported by a set of readings which have now become part of the promise and pretence of that self-same contemporary architecture. Theoretical anxiety aside, the pretence is high, as is the 'archobabble'. And it is not going away despite appeals for a Post-theory world, Post-critical condition or the comfort of a theory-free zone and the Sokal hoax. We need reading like theory, to breathe, if but to breathe the zero in us all. We need it for self-reflection. We need it to invite us and then force us into a new awareness of our own selves. We need it for the practises that keep us from being our own worst enemies.

But if this is the case what happens to those of us who wish not to read much? Are we waiting until this intense bookish theoretical period passes? Or are we missing out on a participation which is trying to take the ideas and thinking of architects more seriously? To read or not to read? If architects begin to be taken seriously as thinkers and doers, would this not require us to be aware of the changing ideals in architecture? Some – perhaps a lot – of the confusion around this analog- digital divide might then be traced back to the way the loose thinking around Post-Modernism was so rapidly hijacked by architecture.

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"Theory overshot reality, in a kind of intellectual backwash to a tumultuous political era. As often happens, ideas had a last, brilliant efflorescence when the conditions which produced them were already disappearing."

- Terry Eagleton4

Postmodern theory was not only a powerful and plural set of self-inspired narratives (Eisenman – Tschumi – Libeskind – Graves – Vidler and so on) it was instantly a generalized, attractive notion. Architecture lost out to its own epistemological condition. Architecture lost ground to the urban geographers, the economists and sociologists who re-scripted social relevance through its socio-economic condition.

Postmodern mirrored the carnival architecture and its profession made of itself; the thin aesthetic mirrored itself into a thin aesthetic. This was useful for the retina-rebels and became a menu for architectural strategies, scaffolded symbolism and offered a legible public architecture before it was even accepted. Architecture's hijack of post-modernism was a cultivated and cultured immediacy. Confused by simple reading and semiotic theory, many architects, professors used the apparent legibility — which wasn't much more than turning double-coding into a useful tectonic or urban symbolism — of Postmodernism as a way to regenerate the regulating rules for the plan, the sequence, the section and the façade of the building. Many schools of architecture look now on hindsight to have been no different. The consequence

was a blueprint to take over the previous blueprint; another game of authenticity.

Whilst reading architecture ignored almost everything about semiotics and the arbitrary nature of the sign (from Saussure onwards) the useful play of misunderstood and instant signs allowed some universities to avoid the debate in any depth and accept a new production of architecture, which was in fact, much like the accepted previous production of architecture. Design order, poetics and regulation, a mystic set of parameters which differed slightly form professor to professor, could be taken forward (and backwards) as a strong legacy of Modern Architecture. Whilst some professors attacked the famous architects for gaming and being seduced by grander theory and the master narratives, many professors and instructors themselves got caught in similar gaming, at a lower level but one of increasing significance. This led to a narrowing of the curriculum and even the closure of the pedagogical routes within the university circuits. It partnered the narrowing of architecture's social dimension within the society.

This was the game of architecture played out in many universities during the 1980s and 1990s. Architecture was labour, sign and detail. Architecture was facade games, regulating lines, the danced order of control. But architecture was mostly sign. Theory had no place because an abused theory had already been put in place. Misunderstood Postmodernism thus passed and met Deconstruction. Then a strange thing happened. The unhappy and suspicious wavering and uncertainty of Postmodernism at some universities suddenly became a bulwark against Deconstruction. Again the same pattern worked. Deconstruction was only thinly acknowledged as a process, a condition, as a self-contesting thinking model - a series of triggers, inducers or notions - to understand the mechanics of architectural production, the semantic trap of a privileged discourse or tectonic promise. No, Deconstruction became another hijacked set of fascinations that were to be used where possible, and retreated from where necessary. Essential in all this, and this is no exaggeration, very little was read, not even those architectural critics who tried to work in the subject like Sorkin, Bennington, Baird or Wines.

Post-modernism was a simple semantic trap, easily unravelled. There is another trap around the corner, we breathe them and splutter. It is either diachronic, a horizontal, linear dimension, meaning it signifies something coming after Modernism. Or it is 'synchronic', a vertical, nodal point, meaning a condition that affects us all even up to the present. In architecture it has been hijacked in order to be used as both until it is a form of repetition. Use and abuse of some philosophical ideas that are not unconnected with the digital turn in society becomes the confusing sign of a mocked and scorned progress. But Postmodernism was and remains no joke, however useful the dreadful abbreviation POMO sounds. Outside architectural abuse, the Post-Modern condition is a contract we all deal with daily.

Glance if you will at Jean Francois Lyotard's book, Postmodernisme pour les enfants, (Post Modernism for Children). Resistance is both child-like and child-friendly. It is useful and inevitable. Just as misunderstanding can be responsible for the directions we take as much as accepted understanding and dogma. Useful it may have been to restrict and trim Postmodernism for architecture's own limited circles and internal debates, but this is no longer tenable. The conditions of the world's disaster areas, the conditions of war, conflict, terror, survival, climate change, global warming, sustainability, and the re-purposing - as they call it - of the global economy means a re-positioning of the validity of exchange. The HSBC bank warned the world a couple of years ago that it might be looking the wrong way. China and India are taking over faster than the bankers like to admit. The meltdown was closer, more awkward, more real than anything we've seen before. But Lyotard's thesis, above all, was an elegant contribution to the archaeology, epistemology and the validity of knowledge. It need not have sped into rampant plurality and anything goes. It could also have helped us consider whether we are or have been looking the wrong way.

Implied in Lyotard's thesis was an understanding of our own ignorance and arrogance in relation to knowledge. We know the thinkers who took this on further, who have suggested that the survival of our species might be dependent more on our hospitality to the other, to the one who thinks differently, to the enemy, than to the dedication of our own brilliance: Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. It is no joke either that the Postmodern Condition is used to explain and make fun of wayward Presidents, of the fall of Enron, of the suspension of the Geneva Convention in Guantanamo Bay, of the undoing of terrorism as well as the advances in deconstructing the power within professions like law, disciplines like geography and uncertainties like Modern History.

If we had time, we could trace this all back to books out of favour, to books once used to guide our directions, which we now do not recognise, to books out of print –including architecture books, to books that no longer find resonance but which may not be irrelevant to the way we can understand the movements that make us what we are today. But I am not particularly interested in the blame game, the small potato world of recrimination that we see in debates around the world on architecture, that we see every day in the polished concrete conference corridors of five start hotels in Houston, Toronto or Miami. You know the type: it was done better then, we thought better then, we were alive then. There was more meaning then than now. And so on.

Though many of us can have these moments, the feeling that things have been better at another time, it always promotes inside us the feeling of a time which was more authoritative, more real, a time that held more meaning than it does now. This might appear reasonable to support our own past lives but it is ultimately indefensible. We live within the meanings and interpretations we create now, we live within the inadequate and challenging conditions we create within the present.

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Architects use the phrases: 'modern mind', 'memory', 'emancipation', 'media', 'redemption', 'innovative use of technology', 'animated by sculpture rather than decoration'

and so on... as an encoded art that promises unknown, even timeless riches. Whereas novelists already practice an art of fidgeting, these phrases stick in the throat as endearing but not necessarily enduring features of an alternative modern world. Is this a Lazarus-modernism! In this version of language and architecture the architect has left Hollywood for good, died again and become a script-writer or journalist. But a screen-pulsing vitality and cinematic complexity do not automatically alter the vocabulary. Take a simple line like this: "in a clear understanding of the past lies the hope of the future." Any agreement with this sentence has to be made beforehand. As an aphorism it fails to close on itself for at least five reasons which are the five words: 'clear', 'understanding', 'the Past', 'hope' and 'future'.

Would it help us once more to unravel this language — metaphor and metonym - to support out own argument? For this we might trace the fetish for semantics in architecture from the 1920s Prague and Moscow Linguists onwards to the 1970s and 1980s and the emergence of pluralism and relativism in contemporary architecture. In this a semantic promise (with its base in linguistics) was hijacked and leapfrogged by critics, architects and historians. It was not necessarily the rush to code all buildings in the 1980s that signaled Postmodernism's decline; the decline could have been anticipated by the inevitable flattening of linguistics into a general coding game. In this race for the gratuitous sign, we forgot to research that which is left out as much as that which is included.

In architecture there is a history to the twentieth century made up of all the un-built projects. Many students begin to live again in the knowledge of these projects as potential buildings. They script architectural thinking as much as the buildings built and photographed for journals. We also forgot to debate with authors who have closed off before allowing themselves to open, with architects who have edited out works in order to edit in more acceptable works. We also forgot to identify the structures chosen, the repetitions, patterns and paradigms in order to identify those left out.

This all reminds me of the Milan Kundera novel Life is Elsewhere. "Life is elsewhere is," Kundera writes in his preface to the novel "a celebrated sentence of Rimbaud. Cited by Andre Breton at the conclusion of the surrealist manifesto. In May 1968," Kundera adds, "Paris students scribbled it on the walls of the Sorbonne as their slogan." Life is elsewhere! How often has architecture promised this? Decode it correctly and it's fine. Miss all the signs and you are out in the cold. How often do we think architecture and its ideas are happening somewhere else; not in our university. not in our city or town, not in our family and - this is the big one - not in our life. This is so desperately wrong. However much you decode it, the Holy Grail is not available. The Holy Grail has been cancelled, despite the secrets of the Da Vinci code. It was cancelled in the desert when the bomb was trialled. It was cancelled in Hiroshima, It was cancelled in Auschwitz. It keeps on being cancelled. More recently in 1989, when the Berlin Wall came down. Even more recently on 911. Or in the central square in Minsk: or on the Khyber Pass when the next sniper takes over from the one before.

Whatever historical period we are in, you are in, however much we think we have not been part of the greater ideas that have happened elsewhere, this is all so desperately wrong. Life is only elsewhere when we have let go of the present and reduce our vocabulary to words like oil, golf and cheeseburger. Life is only elsewhere when life looks back, sees a legacy and wants that legacy to be recreated in the present. Or then — more comforting - life is in that future which only we know — in our own privacy and soliloquy. Does the future last a long time? You bet! At present time travel is not an option though it might not be ruled out.

So if you think life is elsewhere, architecture is elsewhere rather than here, you might also think that we are in the realm of the Elvis-spotters: Elvis was here. I saw him. Where is he? Ah, yes sorry, you missed him. Elvis has just left the building. Think about it: Architecture has just left the building. Is it a paradox beyond us? Do we blame this on the Digital Being, the Cyber-self, the Internet Bug-crashers and Cool-hunters, The Digitally Fabricated beings and machines, and all those others so harshly caught up in developments

that happen half way across the world, but which happen in front of us on our screens? Events that happen whether we like it or not, whether we refuse them or reject them. Events which still unfailingly define us, like the students in Columbia occupying the architecture building in 1968, or those in Helsinki ridding the school of architecture of Alvar Aalto's work, attacking Aalto for being the 'capitalist's lackey' and announcing in mock agitprop seriousness: "We will build only on the ruins of Capitalism."

And a slow death in architecture wagged the dog as the dog began wagging the tail of some unknown future. Was it all there for us to see, and we missed it? What a bummer! Where is the *salon de refusés*, those who do not wish to participate? Are they condemned by the cynical quip, the talent for the put-down? Remember one of the most popular off-beat philosophical books in the early 1990s 'A Critique of Cynical Reason' by Peter Slotterdijk. Knowingness turns into cynicism when it cannot exit, when it comes up against the buffers. But do we make the buffers, the knots and obstacles to a direction that we are not sure about? How can we avoid the ache of knowingness when it all but cancels us out? How can we participate when we are told we no longer have the talent to decode the world? ><

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>< the theory-free zone

It is said – excuse the jargon - we are now in a Post-critical condition. That we have learnt to distrust any language we can apply to our acts. This too is blamed on the digital turn as if the excess and surplus of data and flow turns us into post-informational orphans. I am not so sure. I don't think the My Space, Facebook, or YouTube generation think like this. We – the belated analysts from the last century - invent this to calm ourselves, as if we can protect ourselves by the legacy of the past. It was important what we did then, but now, well it's all so transient.

Let's not be pulled in by this, so close to the cynical turn. A healthy nostalgia might be a useful rearguard action, present since The Renaissance. You know the pattern hoping to hold onto life until the unwanted parts of it pass. Passively aggressive this is, ultimately in philosophical terms, an ungenerous position. Meanwhile a life itself has passed. Anyone living through the Post-Soviet East European nightmare in the 20th century knows this. Anyone remembering the films of the Polish director Andrej Wajda knows this. Anyone knowing what goes out of print and fashion faster than you can say 'Deconstruction' knows this.

So while we live life elsewhere, think architecture done better somewhere else, should we not consider yet another zero, this After Theory world? What is this attraction to the idea of a world 'after theory'? What does it imply, what on earth does it mean? Why this seduction that has become the seduction of its own retreat? Can we explain it merely by the way intellectuals have hijacked and abused Postmodern theory, as in Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont's 'fashionable denunciation' of fashionable theory in their book called 'Fashionable Nonsense'. To that some will return. Yet the fatigue we seem to be witnessing in some architectural circles, especially those involved in education, we must remember, is a long fatigue. It is a fatigue with memory; a genetic mapping of slow intrigue and sly dispassion. This is not an ennui or boredom that has just appeared. This is not a disenchantment that has suddenly arrived because we do not understand Jacques Derrida. Nor has it just arrived because we now wonder why Marxism creeps in through the back door of intellectual journals in the US, from institutions like Yale, Harvard or MIT. Nor is this grand fatigue explained away by characterizing the two camps recently outlined by Michael Speaks in an article in the Architectural Record called After Theory.5

Speaks considers the two generations of critics and teachers who hold views on Deconstruction and/or Marxism as critical elites who many would agree, miraculously but often fraudulently, collapse 'theory' into critical architecture. Is it the fraudulent collapse of theory from philosophy onto architecture that has begun to worry us? And why now, are we really in a condition we can call After Theory? I would like to suggest that misunderstanding this fatigue and disenchantment today also misunderstands the way misreading, thinness and laziness have defined some of the architecture produced in the last 40 years.

How might we explore this? The fatigue we begin to see once more in contemporary architecture was set already in the 1960s and 1970s. Yet why are we now in a stage where some of us, professors, pranksters, architects and students, need this release from theory in what has become a generalized world? Is this a release only from some theory which we do not understand? Or is this a release from that alleged fashionable French theory? Are these the theories and ideas we have all seen abused and disseminated by a select group of intellectual-architects? Do we recognize

these without actually knowing what they are in order for us to now resist these architects who have used these theories for the stardom they create? And how easy is this to reject the carnival architectures that students so readily support from the images they see in the journals? Is this a non-theory stance or an anti-theory stance?

We cannot and should not avoid the obvious: if we attempt to think this in any deep way, this is still only a generalized mood. We are owners of a thin theoretical response to an intellectual impasse which quickly becomes a confusing emotional response to a theoretical impasse. Whatever answers we may wish to apply to these questions, whatever history we may trace back to earlier French thinkers like Levi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida or even Maurice Blanchot, we seem to be bystanders, all of us secondary to the condition that now distresses us. And on the bandwagon people jump, ready to disown ideas and theories that they once gamed with, played with and, in some peculiar non-architectural way, loved.



What are we in the schools of architecture to think of this? Do we mock it like so much of our exchange is mocked by the clever put-down, the art of the passive aggressive, that media talent for the weakest link and the talent for unlistening which goes forwards-backwards? Is this one more useful step to pass onto a neutral world, that unlikely degree zero that always comes along to attract us when language fails, when communication has collapsed, when architecture has become carnivalised? And are we now to blame only French theory? Or even Roland Barthes to whom we could return in his book 'Writing Degree Zero' if we need to support this: "All modes of writing have in common the fact that being 'closed' and thus different from spoken language. Writing is in no way an instrument for communication, It is not an open route through which there passes only the intention to speak."6

Architecture too: not that gentle route though which only our intentions pass. Architecture scripts us without us doing anything but looking upwards, refusing to jump. There is little doubt that we may have been fooled if we think architecture is about communication at all. What did John Summerson say in 1948: "Architecture is no longer required to give symbolic cohesion to society. Cohesion is now maintained by new methods of communication."7 This was long before the digital turn took the wrong-headedness of architects down the meta-architecture road. The question posed by those who wish now to reassess the legacy of French theory in architecture is not whether this theory has been inappropriately morphed. Excitingly, magnificently, it doubtlessly has. The question is also not whether these ideas grouped scandalously under the word 'theory' have been used as cheap and thin dazzling metaphors for new spectacular architecture. They have. The question is why we think that there are not other influential theoretical triggers or to use a term from neuroscience 'inducers' for a new architecture prior to French theory?

Each one of you – professor or student - can suggest theories that have been co-opted by architects and architectural movements. Each one of you know professors who have used, abused, understood and misunderstood, copied, adapted and hijacked ideas from others to make their own statements. Students watch and applaud others for getting away with this, for sliding a copy across a Professor's studio only to see it unrecognized and awarded an A. Pulling the wool over each other's eyes and blinding ourselves at the same time has been around for much longer than us. Surely it is not the fashionable abuse of ideas from elsewhere grafted onto architecture that is important, it is how creative and socially relevant all this has been and is going to be in the future.

So: why this Post-Derridean agony we ask? Why this agony with the Mille Plateaux by Deleuze and Guattari, the Pure War of Paul Virilio, the simulacrums of Jean Baudrillard, the hyper-realities of Umberto Eco? Does it take a full forty years for these ideas to spawn, and trickle – a diaspora of theory - into university departments and flat-line into thin contemporary studio architecture? What then is at play here in architectural education if we so readily applaud this debunking of a generalised 'theory'? Are we not happy to

see the grand conspiracy by those leading the discourse of architecture flushed out whilst they legitimate their own work by being supported by students in studios around the world? And then we get deans, professors and program directors announcing they'd like to get 'famous architects' to visit, as if momentarily the world outside comes into our own world. And what do these famous architects do: they set up studio to teach and convince students to design simulacrums of their own work. And what do these famous architects then do: create another degree zero as they continuously legitimate their work by publishing their own ideas and their students' ideas in forums that attract and seduce. Oh sly architecture about to return, in all your fatigue and ennui, is this what you want?



Perhaps the clue however to these degree zeros is in the fatigue and disenchantment. In a fatigue — any fatigue, any tiredness - all of us are implicated even if we wish to have the energy that takes us out of this ennui. Just like depression, we need the triggers to emerge out of this darkness. All of us — professors and students - know how long it takes, how easy it is to sink back. We are not separated by our own energy we are pulled down into it and by it. Is this why there is a willingness to attack, to dismiss and to dump theory; theory and ideas that are often so lightly held, so briefly read, and so un-thrillingly understood?

Are we unreasonable here? Should we not put in a word for those architects, professors and students who wish to retreat so quickly into an alibi for their own anti-intellectual attitude? Or is this a reasonable way to collapse on the dream — a lost dream — of an architectural reality? This condition undoubtedly comforts those seeking that 'realness' that finally returns architecture to what it is or was — the art of building and construction, the skillful and literal art of poetic and tectonic intelligence and the educated way of learning the codes to produce an architecture that is nothing outside what it is. The real stuff, the solid stuff, building according to structures courses, a building according to New

Construction theory, or building according the old dreams and new scripts. No wonder the applause is muted.

Yet we must really intervene here and ask: has it ever been different? John Summerson again: "There is an uncomfortable tension in the modern architect's point of view. He still stands off centre, designing diagrammatically, staking a claim for architecture rather than producing architecture, hugging the mythical coast of 'functionalism' and the 'calculated result'.8 The architect had, at that moment in 1948, according to Summerson, no alternative. Is there an alternative today? Why are we so important? Are we really sure we know what we mean by invoking this dream of a world 'after theory'? Is this the other degree zero nearer the French metaphor, that useful trope used to suggest and seduce us into the neutral? How many of us know exactly what a degree zero means: and should it have only a single meaning mirroring what we do when we contemplate such philosophical-literary ideas? Degree zero - does it not suggest an unbiased, an un-contaminated, a just world of the use of architectural sign? ><

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## × generation X is dead

There is no question, forget whether you are analog or digital, for those of you who already live in virtual communities on MY Space.com or Facebook this is irrelevant. Most of you, the younger ones out there, will be responsible for the difference between architecture of this century and architecture of the last whilst most others of us here will be pushing up daisies. This may lead to a new active urbanism, but this is not just spin. This is not a theoretical anxiety, digital cliché or life after theory. Generation X is dead. It's time for you to move in, to lead. You have a responsibility. And it may be heavier and more urgent than you quite realise.

I suggest this is not to attempt to right the wrong in a simple way but to acknowledge the golden rule of any pedagogical commitment and contract between student and teacher - to think is the first step in any act, including architecture. And to think clearly is the next step in any act, including architecture. But one cannot go without the other. Do not wait for the invitation to take on questions and ideas that are not clear or unformed. Within these questions lies the intelligibility of new systems, new resolutions and new responses to what are often, after all, old issues.

How to sustain life on this planet has always been an issue: because we have ignored it so much, it has become even a bigger, more urgent issue. For ideas to be active, for thinking to precede doing and become an act itself,

architecture is never elsewhere it is here and now to be questioned. And questions, as Kundera wrote in his preface, are already an answer in themselves for as the philosopher Martin Heidegger put it: "the essence of man has the form of a question." In other words do not lose sight of the question.

There you go again you say; another name so often used in the last century, another name that has become code for something else. Not quite. Do your homework! Do not take the opinion of others for granted. Martin Heidegger may be code for ambiguous Modernism, for an ambiguous relationship with the Nazi party in Germany and for the most difficult theory of being - ontology - ever written, called Being and Time. That may be so; but Heidegger has influenced almost all major thinkers including those in architecture over the last 40 years in some way. It is a name and a person that has influenced many of the architects some of you admire. some of you struggle against, many of you might idolise. In a strange twist of fate though, he hasn't influenced Bob Dylan though Heidegger has influenced almost all the architects practising the gymnastics and morphed architecture now associated with the digital turn.

Why? If you wish a little private study, take a look at the trio: Heidegger, Derrida and Tschumi. Or take that other trio: Hegel, Chomsky and Eisenman. Make your maps of knowledge, hubris, inference, ignorance and interference. Or have these architects too becomes paradoxes beyond us? ><

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Whenever I feel like this, sometimes at this stage in a lecture when the paradoxes outweigh the sense I can make of things, I turn back to the theatre poems of Edward Bond. I say 'turn back' because I have been unable to let go of these poems since I first got a copy of them in London in 1978. I was at that time a choreographer and writing my own poems alongside a performance I did for the Finnish television. And how did I become a choreographer? Like many things, randomly; in Paris I was living with a ballet dancer who just happened to be commissioned to prepare a ballet. Was it the

selfish gene in me that struggled to prove myself in modern dance? Or was I looking the wrong way?

Have we not all looked the wrong way at some stage of our lives? Haven't architects too? Looking back to one of the most influential - now almost forgotten - playwrights of the 20th century Bertolt Brecht, Edward Bond has this so say. He does this because too often in the theatre, as in architecture, life has gone elsewhere:

You sit and watch the stage Your back is turned – to what?

The firing squad Shoots in the back of the neck Whole nations have been caught Looking the wrong way

Are we so sure as we sit here looking back over 40 years of architecture, practice and education, that life is not elsewhere? Are we so sure that we may not be caught looking the wrong way? So how does it show itself in our daily practice? What then - exactly - is this theory in question when we speak about 'after theory'? It was not long before I began to realize that all talk of After Theory was useful. For 'theory' in many ways is so lightly-held, essentially fragile, tantalizingly so. It doesn't have to be a sneeringly-voiced set of confusing ideas that are considered interferences into the real, ipso facto – professional, practice of architecture. 'After Theory' could be yet another condition which tries to understand why and how theory has been so abused, an awareness that this is the stuff of eternity whether usefully or willfully abused. In fact, the very nature of the past ensures the university is more interested in the way this movement now helps clear the head from uncertainty. In this way resistance to theory can then be used to reinstate the old or lead the way once more. It follows any interference in architecture can be removed once more by the illusion of the real stuff. Fail in this though and a confused but selfsatisfying notion of the realness of architecture could reappear. In other words we forget to identify what has been left out of the pedagogical strategies in architecture as much

as what has been included:

I want to remind you
Of what you forgot to see
On the way here
To listen to what
You were too busy to hear
To ask you to believe
What you were ashamed to admit...

That leaves us all with the following question. Is theory ultimately considered an interference in architecture? Is it a prop, a useful tool, a trigger to the inventive architect or team? Is it helpful or, to the unimaginative blueprintseeking clone, an arrogant excuse? Is it only useful when it is flattened into the tyranny of the consensual, the pull of the normative? And these irritating interferences which professors can speak about, did they begin in the 1968 when Paris collapsed on the beach under the paving stones and Modern Architecture pluralised, or is this merely a narrative useful to explain the dissolution of a singular mythically operating Modern architecture of promise? And what now in a new century that has little memory to the way thinkers in the late 1960s and 1970s encouraged architecture of a wider brief? Is life so elsewhere then and architecture so close to zero? Is life so 20th century and architecture so about to recreate it?

You see, I love the way Americans use the word 'so' in their usage of English. This is so not like me, you say. This is so not cool, I hear. This is so not architecture! How many of us have so totally claimed of one thing or the other, of one enemy or opinion rather than the other, that this or that is so not architecture? Is this still that paradox beyond us?

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What does it mean to belong to architecture? To belong to architecture, to contribute within architecture, implies many things. To construct is not the only qualification for the participation and engagement in the world of architecture. Sometimes, in parts of Asia for example, not to construct is the most sustainable option. To find agendas not to build is beginning to save lives already lost to the future. The profession in a city like Karachi is privileged and alienated because of this privilege. It talks in codes, it designs in codes that come from Hulen Mall outside Fort Worth or Downtown Houston rather than anything to do with Karachi and its seaport legacy. A chief of staff in the army becomes an architect when he orders cluster bombs. This act erases parts of a city in favour of other parts of a city.

There are amongst architects and chiefs of staff warring ideologies which go on at all times. If we think we avoid them by resorting to nostalgia or detachment we are wrong: we are part of them even in silence, they define us especially within a university. But do we cancel ourselves out? Do our senior moments fight with junior moments? Does legacy attempt to cancel out novelty, or does novelty and change redistribute the legacy? The very existence of the dislike or distrust of one leads to the elevation of the other. The equation is simple: it is the survival of those that last the longest, not the truest, not the most able, not the most competent, not the most skilled, but those - as William Gass speaks of the 'timeless' within literature - with as many fans as possible. By fans, let us not mistake the code: he means power.

There is no coincidence that the 30th anniversary of the book The Selfish Gene recently passed. If we wish to understand why trends and debates survive in architecture, why oscillations form, why architecture is about faith rather than any science, why ideas die, go out of favour and return, we could do no better than read Dawkins' work. It has now become seminal. Will it remain so? Who knows? In fact it all depends how many fans it keeps. Just as Philip Johnson had fans, just as Peter Eisenman has fans, and just as Rem Koolhaas has fans. These architects blur into one. They seek to promote themselves; the selfish gene is at work. The fans carry that gene onwards. But remember - and excuse me for using this language - it all depends when the 'shit hits the fan'. In other words, it all depends when we wake up from the machinations of life elsewhere; whether Columbia, Yale or Ohio.

We build however every moment. We build in language, in code if you like, long before we draw the ideas that get us on our way, long before we listen to gurus who tell us to heed this or that, long before the ideas that self-correct and link us to the past or the present, long before we see the edifices go up taking whatever form, shape and trends they may take. Yet things, as we will all admit, are never always what they seem.

I am a little tired, like many of you especially students, of thinking there is a big divide between the analog and digital. Call them thinking systems if you like, but they are hardly antagonistic, on opposing sides. If I am not so fluent in the video game called Quest, it does not mean I am not able to appreciate the sophistication it may offer, nor the error-correcting strategies it invites. If you are not so interested in the Filofax it does not mean that you do not assemble your thinking in way that can be reversed, re-ordered and restructured. Re-assemblage, error correction, self-monitoring, playback, blowback and nodal confrontations are no privilege of one over the other. The vocabularies may differ but the strategies they offer and hold within do not: think of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. We can kill by the pen, the cursor or the fingertip. We can be just as bored by any of these.

Remember that program, that self-administering drug program for those wishing to be kept alive. Intravenously the nourishment drug is pumped into the body-still-alive. The installed software prompts the patient, now living to 140 years of age. "Press Yes, to continue. Press No, to delay the drugs. The answer 'Yes', means a lethal dose; it means to die. The answer 'No', means not to be fed; but this means death too. Either way, no win. The divided self wins by dying. The body-still-alive, or the corpse-still-dying is confused. What was it again? Yes, No, Yes, No. Zero. One. Zero One. Oh alright Yes.

The body of architecture dies.

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If I may be allowed to offer some suggestions, it would be this. We are presented as aging or young professors and teachers with a kind of fused pedagogy. The questions posed by these issues and others not studied in any depth here are, as far as I see it, as follows: What happens if the users and potential of the computer - including software, advanced visualisation systems, digital modelling and thinking - leads to a world shaped by teachers and professors reluctant to embrace or even grasp the digital turn? Think about it.

Lectures don't solve this. But the corollary of this is as follows: What happens to the potential legacy and significance of the past, if content is now so loose, if the past is re-cycled and history is less than 10 years old? What happens if ultimately the world is just a click away?

Life elsewhere then does not exist; it is inside us. It becomes a self-perpetuating menu of prejudices. We become the zeros and ones we warned ourselves against. The ultimate architecture degree zero though is the architecture of one. It is a singular architecture, a private soliloquy. Not necessarily though, the architecture of zero. But if it gets that far it will not only be the digital beings, the cyber-selves that are to blame. We will all be to blame.

Where then does inspiration and aspiration lie then for a school of architecture? Perhaps the clue is in this unnecessary either/or condition. The both/and - itself part of the Poststructural condition could be the most exciting part of the future, a future which because of its unique position and history this school could pioneer. So I am all for both, Look at me. Using my leather Filofax, buying a plastic one from Muji in Tokyo, letting my daughter customise it with a Hello Kitty sticker, whilst in my parallel world, my mirror-world, as William Gibson calls it, I am dealing with a publisher called Oxford University Press, but In Karachi, one of the most wildest and lawless cities of the world, assessing Islam, its art and misreading. Should we not celebrate the fusion and our differences, and are we not inevitably part of everyone else's 'difference engine' without fragmenting beyond any reality?

We cannot do this to each other. We should not do this to each other. We cannot let the past destroy the legacy of the present, nor can we let the novelty of the present destroy the legacy of the past with the flim-flam of lifestyle immediacy and derivative Tommy Hilfiger products. But in a way you see now how we are all immersed in code; architecture codes us as we attempt to re-code it. In a way, and there can be no denying this, we are all virtual workers in someone else's world. The young may wander from job to job. Americans, according to Richard Sennett, are supposed to go through at least 11 job decisions, is it by the age of thirty? No wonder our commitments are somewhat "contractual, contingent, impermanent and insecure."

But it does not mean our architecture will be this too.

My suggestion is this: that the oscillation, this fake dualism between the analog and the digital is already so much part of us – was always so much part of us – that we no longer know one from the other. In the words of the poet we no longer remember, the poet we no longer believe, "we do not know where the shoulder ends and the breast begins." Continually moving from the analog to the digital and back, from the Filofax to the Blackberry, might be one of the ways the 21st century will reinvigorate itself; its program, its agenda and its education. Do I have proof for this? At present no. But do we need proof?

Why this search for a scientific base to something with only the future to rescue us? The agony of trying to read architecture, intellectually, textually, sexually, whatever looks like the biggest excuse for architecture not being scientific! Yet it never has been. Le Corbusier still remains one of the greatest architects ever to have lived. But it's got a lot to do with the fictions this brilliant mystic turned into reality. Of course we can argue and abuse each other about this too. But surely this is one of the most privileged parts of education. To share ideas not fully formed, not worn out, not repeated until they are brain dead, but ideas that may be crucial to the way we can develop and survive. And yet to know when not to jettison the past is as important as knowing when to recognise the future.

Proof has a habit of never arriving until we are already there. Then we find we are living situations we only imagined. And once we live those situations we recognise not what we have left behind. These may have been paradoxes beyond us, but they are now paradoxes between us. Between the senior moments of legacy and the junior moments of novelty, we may yet develop to be something we thought we could never be. There is that hope.

I was reading Peter Brook's book about acting and theatre over the weekend. By now in his 80s, Brook is well known for a fused theatrical company that works out of Paris with many cultures, many situations and he always situates his theatrical work somewhere in between improvisation and research. He speaks about the door as a fundamental myth, there to be experienced only if one can pass through it intensely. He speaks also about the slyness of boredom. His words on the past should have some echo for us: "So the past is not to be arrogantly ignored. But we must not cheat. If we steal its rituals and its symbols and try to exploit them for our own purposes, we must not be surprised if they lose their virtue and become no more than glittering and empty decorations." Brook advises us of the constant need to discriminate. >

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frauds to ourselves

In 1991 in Buenos Aires I was invited to an architecture carnival. The time was post-modern ripened and 1989 had shifted architecture's import. Deconstruction was tilted and diagonally shafted around the corner and electronic walls were still clunky and uninviting. Software and Microsoft were still to come. But things were soon to change. These were the questions I asked under the title 'warnings against ourselves: 1 What imaginations has the 20th century favoured and why? 2 When will all this Be-Bop Modernism die? 3 What exactly will architecture be doing after the carnival? 4 Has all this immediacy turned into a cultural relativism and become a huge fraud played on ourselves?

I suppose I was interested in how we could become frauds to ourselves. I am still interested in that. In 1995 delivering a series of lectures called How Architecture got its Hump at Cornell I wrote my lectures as poems and proceeded to read them. So in fitting style I thought how to leave you with another conundrum. Perhaps it really is the subject of another lecture, or another shared discourse which will probably never happen at this University and instead become the subject of another small book carried under the crook of the arm and scattered discriminately through the desert. How these ideas though not fully formed make this book will to me be the most exciting part. So I leave you with a 4x4 conundrum. Are we still speaking in code?

A 4x4 in London is what you call an SUV; it is generally

abused to a 'Chelsea' tractor. On the hills of the sheep rearing farms where I go in the summer in the Scottish lowlands, a 4 x 4 is an off-road quad-bike used by the shepherds to round up the sheep. Young kids of 10 years old learn to drive cars this way. In Afghanistan, in Peshawar where the lands runs into the mountains, where snipers are wherever you think they are, a 4 x 4 is called a Taliban tank. It is the pick up with a double row of seats and a huge platform. On top, men in black, head to toe, toting Kalashnikovs rule Peshawar, Kandahar and Kabul.  $4 \times 4$  – such an innocent sequence of numbers. Just like zeros and ones!

So, four books read during the preparation of this lecture:

1 Being Digital by Nicholas Negroponte 2 Close to the Machine by Ellen Ullman 3 Pattern Recognition by William Gibson and 4 Jorge Luis Borges by James Wolley. And 4 other suggestions: 1 The Selfish Gene by Richard Dawkins, 2 Trout Fishing in America by Richard Brautigan, 3 Heavenly Mansions by John Summerson and 4 Life is Elsewhere by Milan Kundera. And four conceptual ideas to re-script the history of the 20th century 1 sampling – editing not censorship, ideas not full formed 2 the legacy of legacy – opportunism, patronage and fame, 3 shareware – the customisation of we-think architecture before and after the Internet, open source and life and 4 the art of the soliloquy – inner speech, Lev Vygotsky and why we speak to ourselves first?

And finally four directions for architecture to begin from zero. Firstly, an uninflected architecture, commonly known as a 'poor architecture – 'architettura povera' - this is the literalism and beauty of an art of architecture, it is the hidden unhidden poetics within the code. The codes are art history, tectonics, the labour and sweat of architecture; as if you can enter and decode the encrypted world from the 20th century, this is an architecture which operates like a supreme and effective edit between film clips. It may have nothing or everything to with architecture as you yourself conceive it.

Secondly a dangerous architecture: this would be a dangerously folded architecture that produces architecture of such spectacular immediacy that we enter a world fair. It is an architecture folded back on itself, digitally aided but not digitally invented. And it is an architecture that may lose sight of the fold and the theory of the fold in more and more digitally orchestrated and rhetorically challenged work. The fold is Liebniz first, Deleuze second, and the carnival of Bakhtin third. The first few decades of the 21st century may become a carnival of such images until it manages to shake off such trickery.

The third suggestion, a partial architecture. This is a partial architecture, an in-completed, expanded architecture. It is an architecture so desperate to mean something and take responsibility for some of the obvious ills and conflicts in society. Remembering the legacy of this is way back before the digital took hold on us, way back to indeterminacy and the mathematical principles of Heisenberg and Godel. Way back when? It is an architecture though that is not waiting for more information or entertaining software, nor is it waiting for more inventive fibre connections to the home, it is waiting for more imagination and invention.

And fourthly: beyond architecture. This may be an expanded architecture which forces us to engage in the sustainability of a world going out of control, pulling us back to the responsibility of our own insights. It is achingly urgent and we often don't find the words to express that obviousness. The success of this will have everything to do with how much we do not consume as humans, whilst we are invited to consume and expect more and more quality in the transfer of bits of information. >«

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So, Architecture Degree Zero? To be alive there is still such a desire to speak in this way: to start over, to think again, to re-question. Even to return to our own birth, that moment in the womb where all of us were the fastest swimmers. We were already then sperm-code and cyberorphans. If you think this is a battle don't. If you think you have enemies, don't. Extend more generosity to your own ignorance. I cannot put this better than the lines of Edward Bond again. Here the dramatist, better than any words of an

architect, is speaking about enemies:

He's entitled to his opinion
You fight to the death for his right to hold it

If his opinion is that your friend Must be rubbed out under the heel Will you fight for his right

To rub out your friend under the heel Although your friend will be forced To fight his friend and enemy?

Perhaps on the last page The plot of history is solved And it's shown how true friendship lay In killing your friend for your enemy's sake

But such paradoxes are beyond me.

Such paradoxes should be beyond us too. The analog-digital divide: what a comical divide this is. I hope we will all realise what it still means to send a letter, an email, a text. I hope we all realise what it means to mediate, negotiate and navigate and to remain alive within the education of an architect and the profession of architecture. I suggest the gentle method of 'abuse' put forward by the Irish novelist Samuel Beckett from his play *Waiting for Godot*.

The play is about two tramps called Didi and Gogo. Actually they may dress like tramps, but they speak like two professors. They are old but not old, they have slept in the ditch and don't know why they are still alive. They have a knowledge but it is now searching for new land. Cynicism is avoided by humour. Life is not elsewhere, it is the here and now, the ditch which we all try to climb out of. Should we hang ourselves today rather than tomorrow? No, let's do it tomorrow. I don't feel like suicide today. They need to speak to prove their existence. So they talk. And they talk. And they babble.

Probably one of the most significant plays in the 20th century precisely because, as Hugh Kenner the critic wrote, it is a play where nothing happens twice. Think of the last century; did nothing happen twice? Or is this about to be

repeated in the 21st century? Do yourself a favour and any chance you get to see this play, take it. Wherever it is on, in whichever language it is playing. It doesn't matter.

There is a scene where the two tramps meet again after the night before. They don't know how they have survived? Were they here yesterday? Was it yesterday? Why didn't they commit suicide yesterday? They need to pass the time. They decide to abuse each other, affectionately. I can't think of a better way to proceed in this comical divide between analog and digital. For all of us, triumphantly divided selves, and to avoid the attraction of cynical reason, let's follow Beckett:

Vladimir: Oh Pardon!

Estragon: Carry on

V: No, no, after you

E: No, no, you first. V: I interrupted you.

E: On the contrary.

E. On the contrary.

They glare at each other angrily.

V: Ceremonious ape!

E: Punctilious pig!

V: Finish your phrase, I tell you!

E: Finish your own!

Silence. They draw closer, halt.

V: Moron!

E: That's the idea, let's abuse each other.

They turn, move apart, turn again and face each other.

V: Moron!

E: Vermin.

V: Abortion

E: Morpion. V: Sewer-rat

E: Curate!

V: Cretin!

E: (with finality) Crritic!

V: Oh!

He wilts, vanquished, and turns away

E: Now let's make it up

V: Gogo!

E: Didi!

V: Your hand!

E: Take it!

V: Come to my arms.

E : Your arms?

V: My Breast!

E: Off we go!

They embrace. They separate. Silence.

V: How time flies when one has fun!10

One final story: It's 1978. The Pompidou Centre – known later as Beaubourg - has just opened. Roland Barthes, the Degree Zero essayist and other French thinkers have been interfering in the architecture and philosophy of Paris. Everyone is trying to read the environment and architecture as if it is a language. They are the same thinkers that have interfered and insignated themselves into world architecture circles. But back then Les Halles - the old Parisian halls for meat, cheese and flowers - had been demolished. The new scheme by Ricardo Bofil had just been built. It was a rough ride. People were dead set against Bofil's post-modern classicism. The hyperbole of reference looked weak. The thinness of content could not be explained within Paris. Bofil's aggrandised versions of an architecture of vista became authoritarian and uninviting. The project made Beaubourg look like a Palace.

That year, that summer, in the Comédie Francais, the French National Theatre, a performance of *Waiting for Godot* was being played. I was present. I take every chance to see this play wherever it is on in the world, in whichever language. The two tramps started abusing each other. It was amusing. It was about to get more amusing. There was only one enemy in Paris at that moment.

Vladimir: Oh Pardon! Estragon: Carry on V: No, no, after you E: No, no, you first. V: I interrupted you. E: On the contrary.

They glare at each other angrily.

V: Ceremonious ape!

E: Punctilious pig!

V: Finish your phrase, I tell you!

E: Finish your own!

Silence. They draw closer, halt.

V: Moron!

E: That's the idea, let's abuse each other.

They turn, move apart, turn again and face each other.

V: Moron!

E: Vermin.

V: Abortion

E: Morpion.

V: Sewer-rat

E: Curate!

V: Cretin!

E: (with finality) Architect!

The house erupted. The theatre exploded. The actors stood for moments, unable to get to their next lines. The enemy was clear: the Architect!



Forty years past, since 1968, brilliant and disruptive must lead to the next 40 years, equally brilliant, equally disruptive. In the gentle art of abuse lies a vibrant and challenging future for architecture. Let's abuse each other in the nicest way possible. Analog-digital, Lucas-Spielberg, Floyd or Zeppelin, Le Corbusier-Mies van der Rohe, Koolhaas or Holl, Foster or Ritchie, Snoop Doggy Dog or Eminem? And all you students out there: please go out and show us things that we – senior citizens like me - can no longer do. Reduce me by all means, and any of the bug-filled galacticos or geriatricos to senior moments, to zero if you like, but by doing so, go out and make a difference. It is your responsibility.





- Nicholas Negroponte, Being Digital, Vantage 1995, p.81.
- 2 DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY & ARCHITECTURE White Paper Submitted to the NAAB by ACADIA Julio Bermudez & Kevin Klinger (editors) 01: Digital Pedagogy :: A- Digital Foundations: Building a Base for Digital Futures 01: Digital Pedagogy :: B- Connected Courses: Methods of Network Communications 01: Digital Pedagogy :: C- Digital Curriculums: Effective Integration of Digital Courses 02 Digital Tools 03 Digital Production/Fabrication 04 Digital Visualization 05 Digital Projects: Defining Digital Architecture 06 Digital Design 07 Digital Representation: Architecture, Technology, and Representation 08 Digital Thinking 09 Digital Practices.
- 3 Filofax The Film: "I am you and you are nothing" Released in 1991, the movie is based on the story of Jimmy, a small gangster who breaks out of jail, because he has just won a ticket to the last baseball game of the World Series. A tragedy then cloaks the marketing manager of modern times Spencer when he loses his survival kit, his Filofax and all of its contents: money, identification cards, addresses, credit cards. Low and behold, Jimmy finds this Filofax and becomes Spencer, enjoying the higher pleasures of life, as the Filofax becomes the "open Sesame" to the world of higher society.
- 4 Terry Eagleton, 'After Theory', Allen Lane, 2004, p. 29
- From 'After Theory', Michael Speaks, Architectural Record 06.05: a sample of phrases would suffice here: ....the fundamental nature of the challenges confronting architecture in a world increasingly dominated by technological change and marketization.... .(schools have) largely failed to develop an intellectual culture that would enable students to make the best use of the skills in a market place that puts such a high value on innovation... (The grip that) these theories have on the intellectual culture of schools is so strong that until recently it inhabited the development of alternative forms of thinking... ..we need a new intellectual framework that supports rather than inhibits innovation... (theory) played a very important role....in the development of the intellectual life of architecture inside and outside of the academy ...theory's importance is now historical rather than a contemporary matter. As such, it has little or nothing to contribute to practice. ....theory is not just irrelevant but was and continues to be an impediment to the development of a culture of innovation in architecture....see also Eagleton After Theory, op. cit.
- 6 Roland Barthes, Writing Degree Zero, London, 1967,p.25.
- 7 John Summerson, The Mischievous Analogy, from Heavenly Mansions, (1948) Norton, New York 1963.
- 8 Summerson, ibid. p.200.
- 9 Peter Brook, The Open Door, Anchor, 2005, p 106.

"Peter Brook's career, beginning in the 1940s with radical productions of Shakespeare with a modern experimental sensibility and continuing to his recent work in the worlds of opera and epic theater, makes him perhaps the most influential director of the 20th century. Cofounder of the Royal Shakespeare Company and director of the International Center for Theater Research in Paris, perhaps Brook's greatest legacy will be The Empty Space. His 1968 book divides the theatrical landscape, as Brook saw it, into four different types: the Deadly Theater (the conventional theater, formulaic and unsatisfying), the

Holy Theater (which seeks to rediscover ritual and drama's spiritual dimension, best expressed by the writings of Artaud and the work of director Jerzy Grotowski), the Rough Theater (a theater of the people, against pretension and full of noise and action, best typified by the Elizabethan theater), and the Immediate Theater, which Brook identifies his own career with, an attempt to discover a fluid and everchanging style that emphasizes the joy of the theatrical experience. What differentiates Brook's writing from so many other theatrical gurus is its extraordinary clarity. His gentle illumination of the four types of theater is conversational, even chatty, and though passionately felt, it's entirely lacking in the sort of didactic bombast that flaws many similar texts. --John Longenbaugh

Samuel Beckett, Waiting for Godot, Grove Press, 1954

Roger Connah writer. teacher and independent scholar based in Ruthin, North Wales. His architectural publications include: The Piglet Years (2007), The House for De Kooning's Friend (2006), I am Architecture (2006) Finland (2005); 40 Young Architects from Finland (2002); Aaltomania ( 2000); How Architecture Got its Hump (2001); Welcome to the Hotel Architecture (1998); Writing Architecture (1989). Forthcoming: Exiles & Danced Furies, Zahoor ul Akhlag OUP (2009) Winner (with John Maruszczak) of the White House Redux international architectural ideas competition, Storefront, New York 2008.



## architecture degree zero

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