



Session 6  
Persistent Modernisms (Part 1)

Moderator: Professor Annmarie Adams

# Pete Goché: Postmodern Modernist

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## Strike a Pose<sup>1</sup>

The artist Pete Goché strikes a line in reference and obedience, in contradiction and disbelief. The line is reacted against, erased; it can be curved or straight, continuous or broken. The line becomes continuous throughout his work and is crucial to the work. In this essay, the line must persist as it does with the artist. This connective yet divisive tool offers unique crossovers and inspires a method for understanding this work which comes from within the artist. Connections are made across a line, oppositions are addressed across a line, dots can be connected with a line. The artist Pete Goché uses the aforementioned linear tools to question and critique the ideas of Modern architecture through the implementation of postmodern art.

Much Modern architecture uses what may be called a linear strategy for spatial/structural organization. By striking a line, Modernist architecture sets up an arbitrary relationship both to the outside condition and the internal development. William Curtis, in his work *Modern Architecture*, describes the linear organization of the Seagram building by Mies van der Rohe:

One approaches along a main axis between symmetrical rectangular pools flanked by ledges of marble. A portico is implied by the overhanging slab and this then guides one to the main lobby, a space of little consequence. Every detail of the interior design has been carefully considered in relation to the whole; and as at Lake Shore, attached vertical mullions have a variety of visual and symbolic attributes (266).

This technique organizes architecture and the proliferation of Modern architecture throughout the 70's and even today suggests that many architects have become fluent in this method. When this method is used,

it often becomes merely a formula or cliché because of its arbitrary nature. Once the formula has been identified it becomes an unsatisfying tool for both the artist and the architect unless the tool itself comes into question.

Artist/Sculptor/Architect Pete Goché uses this linear tool to question and critique the ideas of Modernist architecture. In his recent work the formula is ironically double coded. In other words, he uses the very methods of Modernism as a critique of Modernist practice.

In order to understand how the movements interrelate, the work of canonical high-Modernist architects such as Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier will be briefly examined for their use of this linear method. Likewise, the current state of the architecture community and the techniques of the industry must be addressed. Next, Goché's work will be "decoded" both in his early work as an architect and in his recent work as an artist. It will be shown how this linear technique is deconstructed through Goché's installations and then re-inscribed by the artist to make compelling postmodern sculptural installations.

## Minced Mies

In the essay "The Death of Modern Architecture", written by Charles Jencks, Jencks identifies the end of Modern Architecture as occurring on July 15, 1972 at 3:32 P.M. with the destruction of the Pruitt-Igoe Housing. This idea offers a parody of the one-dimensionality of Modernism with an ironic twist that an art movement could actually end at a specific moment. It is possible that it identifies the end of the pure belief in Modernism, but the actual process of making modern architecture is still alive. The tools Mies van der Rohe utilized in making architecture are very simple and in some respects that is what makes the process so ubiquitous. In Mies van der Rohe's work, the "parti", which can be defined as a diagram of the organization of a building design, is evident in the visible

understanding at the ground-plane. Often-times this “parti” is based on the grid of the city and then the grid is broken down into the building and further broken down into bays, then offices, then structure and finally even the desk may respond to this organizational principle. Inhabitants no longer trust this higher ordering principle because it does not respond to the human condition.

Le Corbusier had a different take on the matter concerning Modernism. In his architecture we see a set of criteria developed which govern decisions – ribbon windows, pilotis, free plan, roof garden, free composition of external walls (Trachtenburg 528). The strip windows and use of columns refer to the line, but the roof garden, free external walls and open plan are more difficult to consider in terms of the line. It may be argued that the garden and balconies/façade are lines of boundary between building and environment and the open plan connects one boundary to another – most likely to open cross ventilation. In this example the boundaries of the building are being connected through the open plan scheme.

This strategy offers an argument that Modernist work results from diagrams made up of simple rules and when those rules are understood they render lines, whether they are lines of organization, lines of boundaries, or lines of connection. Postmodernism reacts against using such devices as a means to an end because the devices, however creative their use may be, are not put into question – the devices are excepted without consideration beyond execution.

## Office Space<sup>2</sup>

The architectural office is a complex system and very difficult to purely categorize especially when it comes to design movements. For the sake of understanding the work of Goché, a few generalizations about practice have to be made and one of which is that a majority of contemporary architects working in the postmodern era are actually producing architecture using the Modernist rules identified above. The product may have the “look” of postmodernism, but the process is what makes a work postmodern. In an era where the rhetoric of an anti-Modern philosophy persists, it is strangely ironic that much of the work is still Modern.

In the discussion of Mies van de Rohe’s work a simple diagram is defined and the rest of the design is developed in reference to that metanarrative.<sup>3</sup> The Modernist-postmodern work (in contrast to the postmodern-Modernist work of Pete Goché) is merely replacing the

answers to the metanarrative with elements that can be characterized as postmodern. The elements that can be swapped into modern work with the label of postmodern usually appear as a product of postmodern design used in projects done by postmodern architects.

Works which exhibit this technique show how a line may be cast by an architect and the entire building design is based on that line, it may become a wall, a series of cabinets, maybe even a negative, but nevertheless it is this simple device that the rest of the architecture is based on. Consider, for a moment a work done by Helmut Jahn. In his plan for a building being produced for the reconstruction of Potsdamer Platz in Berlin Germany called the Sony Center, Jahn uses a line cutting diagonally through the center of the plan. In this work, the line is no longer held to the Cartesian space but is still used to manipulate the architecture around it.

When lines become the organizational device, the Modernist-postmodern architect exercises the method and that becomes the design principle. If the wall becomes the line element then the wall becomes very prominent, one would “hang” major elements such as atriums or corridors off of this device. A clear and effective building organization is developed. But this is a Modernist technique – nothing has been deconstructed, and the architecture itself, however strong, has an emptiness about it in terms of meaning.

One may question how important meaning is in architecture if it is nicely detailed, incorporates quality

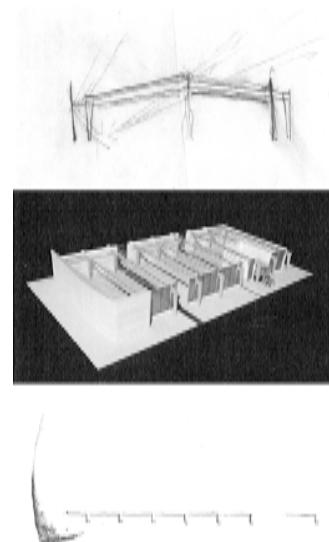


Figure 1 – Conceptual Drawings and Model by Pete Goché

materials, is cost effective, has locatable bathrooms, etc. After centuries of the evolution of practice, these considerations should be considered status-quo. Where the opportunities exist lie in the process of making work physical and must relate to a design philosophy.

### **Wearing the Architect's Hat**

Before leaving the architectural firm setting and starting his own practice that hybridizes art and architecture, one of Pete Goché's designs for an art production house was Stick's Inc. in Des Moines, Iowa.<sup>4</sup> This project characterizes a postmodernist technique that incorporates the line and deconstructs that element.

In the case of the parti at Sticks Inc, the idea is simple – take a pre-manufactured building system, similar to the Butler building, and shift the roof-plane from the structural system (fig. 1). This system deconstructs the peak of a roof as a single line that typically coincides with structure and enclosure. When the generally considered line of peak is recognized and the condition is considered, design opportunities are revealed.

### **Goché's Art**

Goché's work is ever-evolving and the line is still allowed to persist in his process. The work of art and the work of architecture both still happen in Goché's life and they infect one-another. It is fitting that installation work has become a major venue for artistic expression and the line is ever-present.

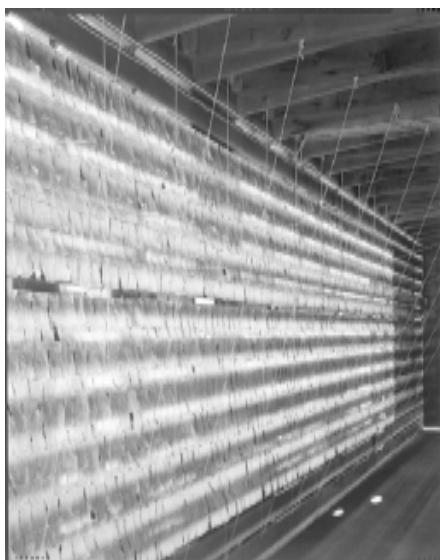


Figure 2 – Installation "Guest" by Pete Goché

In Goché's work *Guest*, he worked with a corn crib to create an installation that considered a highly linear space.<sup>5</sup> The name *Guest* comes from the word at the top of tickets used at a restaurant to write orders for food.<sup>6</sup> These tickets were saved over the course of many months and were then stapled in a grid-work on the slats of the corncrib. The effect of light is very striking (fig. 2). On top of the surface of tickets a complex weaving of lines exist. The artist explains the line-work as a spatial developmental tool. It is evident that, in this case, the device of the line keeps one from seeing the tickets on the wall as a two-dimensional work, but rather as a space. In a recent conversation, Goché describes the framing of experience as similar to experiencing nature – you do not understand it until something foreign is placed into that environment.<sup>7</sup>

In a recent study, done for a gallery exhibition, Goché stitched a thread through a series of craft paper sheets (fig. 4). The paper used to make this actually came from original sheets of craft paper used to cover and protect architectural drawings from the turn of the century. The pieces are palimpsests of time and had rips, tears, abrasions, etc. which harnessed that sense of time in which the line can respond to. These sheets of paper also harness a sense of protection and concealment that the design process has. This technique allows the line to be used to open up and reveal the process and in-turn the paper reveals the line as evident in the site analysis of a recent architectural project (fig. 8). The blurring of



Figure 3 – Post-installation "Guest" study by Pete Goché

lines between the practice of art and architecture maintain a dynamic balance, which mutually modify one-another.

The work also manifests itself in the act of crushing and stabbing that takes place in the work *Three Minute Sketch* (fig. 5). This product is less labor intensive and relies on the accidental moments that occur when the work has a more expressive nature. This shows how the technique does not require a time intensive process while exhibiting a dynamic form.



Figures 4&5 – Striking lines through deformed material by Pete Goché

Goché's success in manipulating this technique granted him an opportunity to address the Des Moines Art Center courtyard through an installation. In the work *Drift*, the use of the line is very allusive. The "search" drawing, as defined by the artist, articulates the line and the process of creating the work also relies on this line (fig. 6). In the drawing one can see the line and its deformation when intersected by the artifacts of the installation – candles formed by the artist. The drawing articulates the intrusion of the candle and the act itself was intrusive due to the nature of the space (fig. 7,8).

The candles themselves were cast on a stainless steel panel in a time-intensive series of wax pours. The inverted candles, where the flat surface becomes the top, floated in the reflecting pool and left the boundary at the surface of the pool intact by existing parallel to the surface. The candles gently roam the reflecting pool while the flame flickers.

The horizontal line of the pool was not the only boundary broken. At the edge of any body of water exists a boundary, especially at an art museum. The candles were distributed into the body of water by placing them at the edge and allowing them to naturally drift – in this case the boundary was respected. At the more public beginning of the installation Goché gently penetrated the barrier of the waters edge, with a smooth and calculated pace the artist walked through the shallow water while he lit each single candle until all were illuminated.

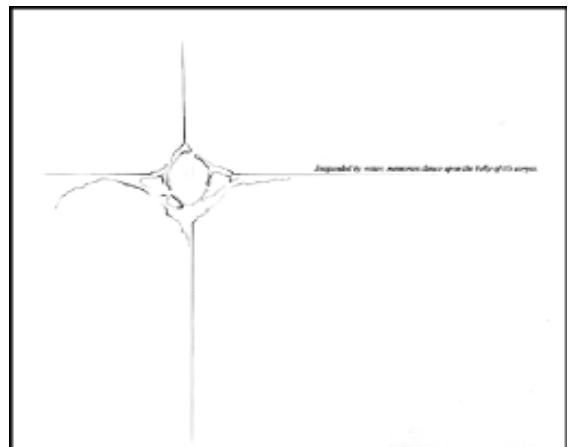


Figure 6 – Conceptual drawing for installation "Drift" by Pete Goché

## Conclusion

For every movement there exists a counter-movement and for every technique there exists a counter-technique which keep both design strategies and design products in-check. Goché's work doesn't supercede the typical architecture product, but it offers a re-consideration of the use of tools and how really subtle the difference may be between Modern and postmodern. There is a certain hypocrisy which exists when one denounces a method, yet uses the very same methods to produce work; sometimes inadvertently, sometimes on purpose. In Goché's work, irony replaces hypocrisy by using an available and time-tested method – but using it in a postmodern manner.

### Notes:

- 1 Madonna uses the term "striking a pose" as a way to identify a position. Once the position is identified, one may respond to it.
- 2 *Office Space* is a comedy movie which addresses the banality of office culture
- 3 A metanarrative is described in Lyotard's Postmodern Condition as an all-encompassing idea that is not questioned.
- 4 Goché did not finish this design; other architects at the firm Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture implemented the project through Construction Documents.
- 5 A corn crib is a structure used to store and dry corn where horizontal wood slats are used to hold the corn in while allowing air to circulate.

- 6 The restaurant is a small Greek restaurant named Olympic Flame that the artist frequents.
- 7 On May 1st Pete Goché and I shared breakfast while discussing the concepts of this paper

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### Photographs

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Figures 6&7 – Installation "Drift" by Pete Goché

# Individualism vs. community values in modern architecture: the shared traditions of Alvar Aalto and the Nordic architects

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Modern architecture seems to be dominated by larger than life characters, which are heroes for some and villains for others. These individuals have become such an integral part of how we view Modernism that it is almost impossible to separate their personalities from their architecture. This has lead many to interpret the values of Modernism as being based more on the personal creativity of the architect and less on a specific tradition that is shared by many architects. If this is true, then we should have expected to see the disappearance of modernistic ideas with the death of those who had established them. However, Modernism persists even though the masters are dead and their charisma no longer perpetuates the movement. Why is this? Perhaps Modernism has not been dependent on the ideas of a few individuals for its survival. Could it be that the presence of a handful of dynamic architects within the tradition has for too long overshadowed the broad acceptance of modernist values by the architectural community as a whole?

The dominance of personality over community can easily be illustrated by examining Alvar Aalto and his relationship with other Nordic architects. Aalto, with his idiosyncratic designs, is the classic example of the individualist modern architect. Many architectural historians, with the possible exception of those in Finland, focus primarily on Aalto and his achievement when talking of Nordic Modernism. There is surprisingly little mentioned of others from those countries that have made important contributions to the movement.

This may be explained, at least in part, by the fact that Aalto's career was to take him well beyond his native Finland. He was actively involved in the international architectural community throughout his life and completed major works both in continental Europe and in North America. This stands in sharp contrast with his colleagues, most of whom maintained small offices and

did not typically execute projects outside the regions in which they lived.

This paper will examine two specific works produced by Aalto, each from different periods of his professional life, and their relationship to the works of others. It is hoped that these "case studies" will provide some evidence in support of the idea that the Nordic architects as a whole should be seen as being part of a shared tradition. This study does not attempt to address individualism and community values within Modernism in a comprehensive manner. It is only a first step towards a greater understanding of these issues.

## First Case Study

The first work of Aalto's to be examined was built at the end of the 1920's. It was during this time that many Nordic architects made a dramatic shift away from Neo-Classical architecture and began experimenting with



Figure 1. The Turku Fair.

ideas that were, in large part, imported from Germany, Holland and other Central European countries. This new form of expression became known as Functionalism. Aalto was a leading figure in making this transition in Finland, but he did not accomplish this on his own. He was greatly influenced by the architect Erik Bryggman, who was several years older. Bryggman had already established a practice in Turku when Aalto moved there in 1927. The two became close colleagues and this eventually led to their collaboration in the design of the Turku Fair in 1929.

The Turku Fair is most significant in that it can be regarded "as the explicit introduction of Functionalism in Finland".<sup>1</sup> Although both architects were in the process of producing other Functionalist design at the same time, this was the first to be completed and seen by the public. The exhibition pavilions, which were used to display industrial products, were built from standardized constructions of inexpensive materials, which incorporated the use of prefabrication. The site plan reflected Functionalist principles in that pavilions were organized in long, open-ended rows. Advertising was completely integrated into the architecture and large sections of the pavilions were dedicated to graphic design. The two architects also created dramatic advertising towers to contrast with the long rows of low pavilions. This extensive use of graphic design was to become one of the hallmarks of Functionalist architecture.

That same year, the Swedish architect Gunnar Asplund was in the process of planning the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition. Although Asplund was given the dominant role in planning the exhibition, many other notable Swedish architects contributed to the project. This work can, therefore, be seen as representing the

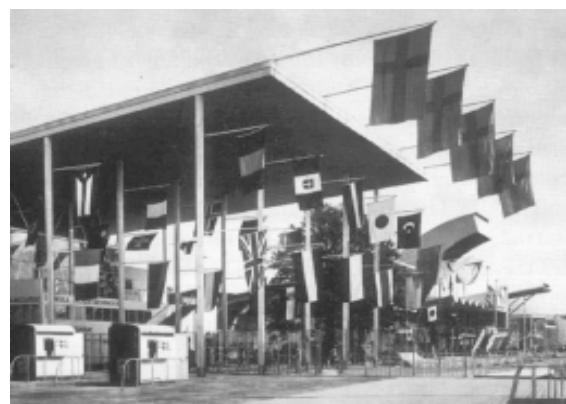


Figure 2. The Stockholm Exhibition.

collective ideas and aspirations of the Swedish architectural community at that time. The exhibition was to receive greater attention for its use of Functionalism, although it opened one year after the Turku Fair. This was probably due to the fact that the Stockholm Exhibition was considerably larger and the availability of greater funding enabled Asplund to produce a better quality of architecture. The Turku Fair had been quite small by comparison, and the inexpensive, temporary nature of the construction most likely hindered it from being viewed as significant. It should also be pointed out that the emphasis on industrial arts and modern dwellings at the Stockholm Exhibition, not industrial products as in the Turku Fair<sup>2</sup> probably gave it a greater public appeal, and therefore, more exposure. Asplund applied Functionalism to every aspect of the Exhibition's architecture, including the extensive use of advertising, graphic design, neon signs, flags and canopies. He did, however, depart from Functionalist ideas of site planning by using "an essentially traditional urban scheme, with esplanades, cul-de-sacs and buildings arranged to form streets".<sup>3</sup>

In comparing the Turku Fair and the Stockholm Exhibition, it can be seen that Aalto was working in close contact with other architects in the Nordic community in making the transition from Neo-Classical architecture to Functionalism. These architects as a whole made this transition not only in the exact same way, but at precisely the same time. It should be noted that this did not constitute a direct translation from what the Nordic architects had seen of contemporary Central European architecture. In these works we find a substantial difference in the application of graphic design. In regards to the Stockholm Exhibition, Wrede states:

Advertising and typography had of course figured in de Stijl and Russian constructivist projects and in Le Corbusier's little Nestle pavilion, but the Stockholm Exhibition marked their first inclusion in a large-scale environment. Observers from the period attest to the important shift it represented in how the new architecture was perceived by the wider public. Of the severe, puritanical, ideological architecture...was made something not only human but fun and enjoyable as well.<sup>4</sup>

So even from the inception of Nordic Modernism, a shared tradition was established as Aalto and many others began to create a common understanding as to

how new architectural ideas could be implemented in their work.

### Second Case Study

The second work of Aalto's to be examined is the Säynätsalo Town Hall (1950-52). Even though it is considered one of Aalto's most individualistic works, it shares much in common with the works of other Nordic architects from the early 1950's, namely the Student Housing for the Helsinki University of Technology in Otaniemi, Finland by Heikki Siren and Martti Melakari (1950-54) and St. Mark's Church in the south of Stockholm by Sigurd Lewerentz (mid 1950's).

The creation of these mature modern works came only after Aalto and his Nordic colleagues began to recognize the failings of Functionalism in the mid 1930's. Aalto was the first to define these misgivings in a speech entitled "Rationalism and Man" which he gave in Stockholm in 1935. He criticized the narrow constraints of Functionalism and called for an expansion of the idea of rationality to include all the aspects of human experience. A year later, Gunnar Asplund was to further condemn Functionalism for pursuing technology as an ends unto itself in his speech "Art and Technology".<sup>5</sup>

While Aalto's Säynätsalo Town Hall is best known for the organically formed terraces that lead to a raised courtyard, a more in-depth analysis shows that another key feature of the building was used by Siren and Melakari in the HUT Student Housing. The facade on the portion of the Town Hall that contains a residence and the entry facade of the Student Housing buildings are both divided into three distinct segments, each being slightly offset from the other, and constructed entirely of brick. The windows are almost identical in their clean

penetration of the brick and in their arrangement of square, fixed panes attached to narrow, vertical casements. Striking similarities are also found in the expression of the primary circulation spaces of both buildings. These spaces are clearly expressed as a separate, one-story element set in contrast to the multi-story masses that contain the buildings' main functions. The exterior walls of these circulation spaces are composed of large sections of glass, which are then covered with a series of vertical wooden rods, as if in an attempt to counteract the openness provided by the glazing. These two buildings provide clear evidence that Aalto, Siren and Melakari were participating in ideas that transcended individual creativity.

Aalto's town hall can be compared not only with the architecture of his Finnish colleagues, but also with St. Mark's Church in Stockholm by the Swedish architect, Sigurd Lewerentz. In both, one has only to look beyond the facades and into the primary interior space of each building to find the connection. The council chamber of the town hall and the sanctuary of the church, while not composed of identical elements, are nonetheless experienced by the user in much the same way. Upon entering either space, one first "feels" the characteristics of each interior long before there is an actual visual perception of the elements that create the spaces. This is due in large part to the distinctly low level of interior lighting. During the time that it takes for eyes to adjust to the dimness, one is forced to experience the spaces solely through haptic means. This haptic perception is fundamental to the way in which both spaces create a unique experience at the time of occupancy and a lasting memory afterwards.



Figure 3. Säynätsalo Town Hall



Figure 4. HUT Student Housing

In addition, both architects used brick throughout the interior in order to unify the floors, walls and ceilings. This is probably most evident in St. Mark's where the interior of the sanctuary is composed of heavy, rectilinear walls, which are set in contrast to the dramatically undulating vaults of the ceiling. By constructing both elements of brick, Lewerentz downplayed their individual, competing geometries and drew them together in a combined effort to create a strong sense of enclosure. At Säynätsalo, while the council chamber itself is a fairly simple space, the procession leading to it is not. Aalto responded by using brick to construct the entry floor, the stairway that leads up to the council chamber and the interior walls of the chamber itself. This provides an unmistakable continuity of space from the entry to the primary public space. (insert Figure 6 here)

Through this case study, it is possible to see that even one of Aalto's most individualist works continued to be part of the shared traditions of Nordic Modernism. This is not to say that certain aspects of the Säynätsalo Town Hall are not unique, but to truly understand the building as a whole requires a closer study of the

architecture being produced by Aalto's colleagues from the same period of time.

## Conclusion

In comparing Alvar Aalto with his colleagues, it can be seen that the ideas so often accredited to him alone have actually emerged from a larger community of architects. While this does not discount his personal contributions, it does reveal that much of what he accomplished was done so in conjunction with others. This would indicate that in order to completely understand Aalto's works, one should be aware as to the extent in which he participated in a broader Nordic tradition.

It is hoped that this study has shown that the works of a relatively small number of architects has for too long overshadowed Modernism. The values of Modernism should not be seen solely as the product of individuals, but as having emerged from an entire community of architects. Only when we begin to break down the 'cult of personality' that is so prevalent in Modern architecture will we begin to understand its persistence in today's world.



Fig. 5. Säynätsalo Town Hall, Council Chamber

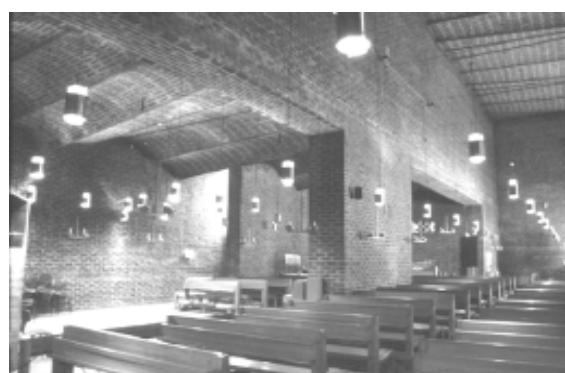


Fig. 6. St. Mark's Church, Sanctuary

### Notes:

- 1 Riitta Nikula, ed, *Erik Bryggman 1891-1955*(Helsinki: Museum of Finnish Architecture, 1991).
- 2 Riitta Nikula, ed, *Erik Bryggman 1891-1955*(Helsinki: Museum of Finnish Architecture, 1991).
- 3 Stuart Wrede, *The Architecture of Erik Gunnar Asplund* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1980).
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# **un coup de dés: language and modernity in the Catholic University of Valparaiso**

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The discourse of modernity is centered on the advancements of technology and industry, on the re-configuration of the world brought about by industrialization. Yet, this new configuration did not develop synchronically across the world. As Lefebvre would put it, "(u)never development is all-pervasive."<sup>1</sup> This is important, for these gaps in development—which are concealed by hegemonic discourses—reveal other sources and interpretations of the modern. It is within these gaps that we find the works of the Catholic University in Valparaiso (UCV), Chile. Their work departs from the authority of industry as the point of departure for the definition of modernity and for the development of a modern praxis.

Modern practices place technology at the center of all discursive and productive processes. The "spirit of the machine" coupled with its "quantity production" became the benchmark of a new aesthetic; as stated by Le Corbusier, in the modern world "(e)very man has the mechanical sense."<sup>2</sup> Any practice that detaches itself from a "mechanical sense" is thus considered as anti-modern; any practice performed at the margins of modernity as defined by industrial development and production, is thus seen as anti-technological. The voices and works of the Catholic University of Valparaiso elaborated along the margins of modernity, both territorially and discursively, fit both objections. Their work appears as anti-modern and anti-technological. Their "marginality" is understood as a by-product of the geo-political and developmental reality that structured modernity; their territory being outside the hegemonic centers of industrial and economic development. Their work, produced in an under-developed part of the world can only be the expression of the uneven-development that characterizes modernity. Yet their nonconformity with the modern is not exhausted on these grounds. The UCV occupies the margins for they offer a different

foundation of the modern. For them, modernity is captured through language, for language is the determinant factor of all and any production. Their epistemological<sup>3</sup> ground is that of *poetic discourse*. At first this appears as a contradiction, first, because it dissolves the union between science and technology. Second, because the "natural" separation between the poetic and the prosaic, between the subjective and the objective, between the "soft" sciences and the "hard" sciences, appears as one of the grounds of modernity itself. To establish a link between poetic discourse and scientific knowledge seems, for the modern sensibility, a contradiction for it radically alters the relationships with which we negotiate reality. Yet, there are solid grounds for such a radical re-configuration of production, such as the one performed by the UCV. It was not until the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries that the "spirit of the machine" became defensible in the architectural sensibilities of industrial countries. Industrial configuration, the union between science and industrial technology, did not reach architecture until late in the game.<sup>4</sup> The a-synchronic development between the building arts and industry remained unresolved. As late as 1935, Walter Gropius echoes this uneven development. In *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*, Gropius stated that,

"(o)ur age has initiated a rationalization of industry based on the kind of working partnership between manual and mechanical production we call standardization which is already having direct repercussions on building."<sup>5</sup>

We can see a resistance to the rule of the machine, to modernity as defined by the hegemonic discourses even in industrial countries themselves. Manual production, at least in the early Gropius, is connected to the idea of

craftsmanship, and as such it counters machine production. The “working partnership” between the modes of production (manual and industrial) is a gap in modernity, one that reflects the presence of pre-industrial forms/productions. In the end the forces of industry pushed to eradicate the notion of craftsmanship imbedded in manual production, and transferred it to machine production itself: language suffered a change in value. Gropius’ coupling of the hand<sup>6</sup> (manual production) with industry (mechanical production—which produces the new sensibility called modernity), is still a pre-form of industrialization, of the modern, for although it resonates within the core of modern discourse, it fails to abandon most if not all of the forms of production typical of a pre-industrial society. Modernity is full of these gaps; gaps that are covered to create a fiction with which to approach the physical world. It is this notion of *fiction*, of the discursive practice of modernity, of the use of language as a vital tool of production, what makes the Catholic University of Valparaiso truly modern. To fully examine the condition of modernity in architecture, we must examine these recurring pre-modern forms, these gaps. In them we will find the other discourses on modernity.

## Technology

The modern world is guided by science coupled with industry. This sentiment (for it is now so generalized that it has become a sentiment) developed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In his introduction to *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844) Engels states this sentiment “

...as soon as the immeasurable importance of mechanical power was practically demonstrated, every energy was concentrated on the effort to exploit this power in all directions, and to exploit it in the interest of individual inventors and manufacturers; and the demand for machinery, fuel, and materials called a mass of workers and a number of trades into redouble activity.”<sup>7</sup>

Architecture was one of these trades. The processes of industrial production demanded new forms. In architecture these forms were railway stations, penitentiaries, housing, industrial buildings, libraries, museums, etc. The 19<sup>th</sup> Century saw the debate between the traditional forms and production of architecture and the new demands brought about by technological

innovation and industrialization. It also saw the advancements in the field of engineering. These issues crystallized in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century with the triumph of industry as summarized by Le Corbusier and his machine aesthetic. The coupling of industry and technology (as defined by practical science) became the binding contract of modernity. Yet, Le Corbusier himself as well as most if not all early modernist architects, accepted the inherent contradiction of modernity: the dichotomy between industrial production and artistic production, as evidenced by Gropius’ relationship between industry and craft. They knew that the modern aesthetic of calculation brought with it a “new desire,”<sup>8</sup> the unity established by the creative process.<sup>9</sup> The separation between the arts and the sciences is a prime directive of industrial modernity, for it is the dynamics of technology itself; the arts being those techniques which await the dynamics of industrialization. The sense of unity that prevailed in the initial stages of modernity reveals the struggle, the discursive practice. It reveals the separation between the arts/craft and technology/science to be a technocratic construct. The sense of unity between the modes of production, can be understood as a resistance to industrialization, a product of pre-industrial mechanisms within the modes of artistic production. Yet, this sentiment, this struggle between modes of production is a part of modernity itself, and deserves our attention. Following this, the Valparaiso School rejects the “mechanical sense.” They do so, not as a rejection of technology and scientific inquiry, but because it fails to understand modernity on two grounds: first, for it fails to call for the totality of the work itself.<sup>10</sup> Second, for it misunderstands the forms of technology, finding in the “mechanical sense” a discursive practice. For the UCV technology is the basis of all modern practices. In this they follow the main discourse of modernity; yet, they depart from it in that they do not see technology solely as an industrial or machine event. The UCV sees language as the foundation of technology, for they understand language to be the first technology.

Language is a tool. To associate language with the expression of thought is a contemporary notion. This is already a developed form of language, one that presupposes an established group in which it operates. The social nature of language must be ascertained in the relational quality of its components: “a word (...) in isolation, has neither meaning nor pronunciation.”<sup>11</sup> It will be to deep a trap to consider the highly debated origins of language. Yet, we can consider distinct notions

to uncover its social root. The notion of rhythm, for example, is an important one, for the speech-melody is prime form of group recognition.<sup>12</sup> When Poe states that "verse originates in the human enjoyment of equality, fitness"<sup>13</sup> we must understand 'enjoyment of equality,' first as a social order. For it is only after the collective has been formed that we can ascertain this 'enjoyment,' as a shared value, that which brings us within the collective (fitness), or as an individualizing value, that which distances us from the collective. Language appears as a tool of social organization. We can trace this usage of language back the same century which brought us the industrial revolution, and locate it within the struggle between the arts and technology. Mallarmé's demand that the initiative of modernity "be given only to the word,"<sup>14</sup> signals a precise understanding of the radical changes brought forth by industrialization. We might be tempted in a world were the separation between the prosaic and the poetic acquires a razors edge definition, to confine Mallarmé's words to poetic excitation or ethereal considerations which depart the pragmatics of everyday life. To counter this, and to establish the importance of language during the radical changes of the industrial revolution, we return to Engels:

The defenders of the Ten Hour's Bill in the House of Commons has increased in numbers, the masses of petitions supporting it which pored in from all sides brought them allies, and on 19 March 1844 Lord Ashley carried, with a majority of 179 to 170, a resolution that the word 'Night' in the Factory Act should express the time from six at night to six in the morning, whereby the prohibition of night-work came to mean the limitation of working hours to twelve, including free-hours, or ten hours of actual work.<sup>15</sup>

Seen under prosaic light, Mallarmé's call becomes a social call. It re-establishes the condition of the poet as the conscience and guide of his/her society, for as in antiquity, images reveal themselves only to the engaged persona. This is the function of the poet, engagement. In antiquity, the poet was the recipient of the social history, he/she was the repository of information, of knowledge. The poet was the master of the word, "a craftsman's art."<sup>16</sup> What differences the Greek poet from the modern poets is his search for that *ideal* inherent in the visual form of the object itself.<sup>17</sup> The modern poet serves not as repository, but as critic, a modern Penelope

unweaving the fictions of contemporary discourse. Mallarmé points out, like most of the French symbolist poets of the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century do, that language is the battleground of modernity. Although his project is a extreme one, as George Poulet states, the metamorphosis of the world into a vocabulary: "a collection of terms with which it is possible, not, to be sure, to fabricate a new world, but irresistibly to suggest the existence of it by his song,"<sup>18</sup> Mallarmé reveals the power of language and thus presents it as a productive form.

The work of the UCV accepts language as a tool, developing its craft. The poet is the master-craftsman of the word. He/she engages the world through poetic discourse through *poiesis*. It is not that the Valparaiso School chooses poetic language over any other, but rather that because of its ability to manifest or unfold the full measure of inquiry, that poetic language becomes for the school the only possible language. *Poiesis* becomes a research tool, as a tool of inquiry. *Poiesis*, a making, presents an understanding that chains existence to language. This is far from mystical, subjective escapism or ideal contemplation. It is simply another system of observing reality. It is language directed at the world at large in empirical fashion. This most perceptive of systems allows us to resist discursive practices that aim at fixing our productions in a stable and classified world of social, political, historical and cultural contracts. It is this understanding of the empirical systems of research, scientific and poetic, what makes the UCV truly unique.

The works of the Valparaiso School (in the Open City or the *travesías*) present a precarious balance, an *agon*, between prosaic and poetic forces. It is understood that the prosaic activity of building floods the work of architecture with pragmatic reality. But it is equally



understood that poetic discourse constructs its inhabitation. Thus it is next to impossible to "present" the work of this school without falling into the "weaves" of poetic discourse. For the visitor this is the only connection to its inhabitation, and thus to its reality. For the dweller this is the only inhabitation possible. The social nature of language serves us here in order not to fall into a *reverie* of images. To be part of the Valparaíso School one must speak the same language. Spanish is the first sphere, but this is not enough, for one must speak poetic language. Why? For the UCV poetic language is simply a tool of living, of action. In order to dwell here one must use this tool. It determines many of their pragmatic decisions; take for example the construction of the *hospederías* (residences) in the Open City. It is next to impossible and almost pointless to describe this inhabitation, for it is a form of experience, an activity, and as such it resists description. The UCV is a world in tension, in *agon*. Always measured by the prosaic and the poetic. Poetic discourse enables inhabitation of the Open City, for it creates the full measure of its occupation—a space tensioned by the prosaic and the poetic. For those who are uninterested in poetic discourse, in occupying this space, for those who think that *poiesis* is mere decoration, the Open City appears at best as a study in form and building, at worst as a mere flight of fancy. The rejection of poetic discourse is the refusal of a particular way of experiencing the world; it is the denial of a real space, and is equivalent to a colonialist stance, the colonialist here being the pragmatist. The UCV relies on a poetic view of the world as the only possibility of fully inhabiting the world. This is stated with clear intent: *Poéticamente habita el hombre*<sup>Poetically does man inhabit</sup> This statement by Hölderlin forwards the notion of inhabiting the world from a clear



position, yet one that for the prosaic mind counters the shared common experience of existence. This shared common experience is nothing but the colonizing activity of the pragmatists, the utilitarian, who reduces the world to only half the measure: the prosaic. The reading of the poetic as opposing prosaic experience is already a pragmatic construct. To present *poiesis* as the main experience of reality is not, contrary to pragmatists' views, a reversal of the hierarchical understanding of how the world operates, but rather the acceptance of life as *agon*, that is, as constant battle. This nature of life as *agon* is precisely what the prosaic world attempts to hide. By living the world through a poetic existence we clash with the world and reveal like Mallarmé pointed out, the *woof of weaves*, the discursive practices of the prosaic world, its fiction. Only as such, as fiction, should we consider it as a determinant of a social condition.<sup>19</sup>

### Language

As early as 1844 Engels pointed out the characteristics of the great modern metropolis. Its condition of "colossal centralization" (concentration paralleling that of capital), extension, and, above all, estrangement:

"A town, such as London, where a man may wander for hours together without reaching the beginning of the end, without meeting the slightest hint which could lead to the inference that there is open country within reach, is a strange thing."<sup>20</sup>

Estrangement, the "isolation of the individual," from natural surroundings, from social structures, from production, is central to the modern condition. Estrangement is the condition of the great metropolis, the condition of modern living. It is, in Engels (and Marxist) view, what defines modernity. Engels concentrates on the social position and material needs of the lowest social elements: the proletariat, those who own nothing, just their labor, to reveal that same modern condition that presented as artistic sentiment, abandons the material reality—the misery and squalor—it produces. Distance, separation, this is the charge against the arts, against artistic ideals. The retreat of artistic production (mainly through aesthetics) into a world of harmonic values, of absolute eternal experiences, can be seen as a reaction against the supremacy of science and technology in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It is a reaction against a life of utilitarian concerns, a reaction against

industrialization. To deny that this reaction was a general experience in the arts, would be to disregard the triumph of Hegelian aesthetics. Yet, this detached approach—already so closely related to bourgeois ideals—has its 19<sup>th</sup> Century detractors.

As early as 1840 Edgar Allan Poe ponders on the conditions of the great metropolis in *Man in the Crowd*,<sup>21</sup> reaching most if not all of the points presented by Engels. The social classes are there, their hierarchy, their behavior and relationship towards each other and towards the city. He vividly depicts their modernity. But Poe's is no mere description—aesthetic distance—his, is empirical knowledge, engagement. In one of Engels most striking observations, he points out the external forms that mold the crowd. The 19<sup>th</sup> Century city was segregated in those quarters where the “happier classes”<sup>Engels</sup> lived, worked and played and that “verge of the city (...) where everything wore the worst impress of the most deplorable poverty, and the most desperate crime.”<sup>Poe</sup> Yet geographical separation, noted by Poe in his story, is but one of the many external forces/forms which configure the modern crowd; for it was structured not only through spatial means, that is, through the control of the forms of the city, but also through temporal means. Engels:

(the workman) usually receives his wages on Saturday evening (...) so he comes to market at five or seven o'clock, while the buyers of the middle class have had the first choice during the morning, when the market teams with the best of everything.<sup>22</sup>

Poe evidences this same understanding of the external forces that determines the crowd, perhaps not as straight forward as in Engels, but the fact that his account in *Man of the Crowd* spans a complete day cycle testifies to his understanding of the temporal frame of the crowd in modern society. Here there is no aesthetic detachment. This can only be grasp as experienced knowledge. A society, which sees value in universal forms, as depicted through its architecture sees the city as composed of civic spaces. This is the domain of the general public. Thus in order to control the usage of these spaces a society that respects the classical notion of civic space must recur to other forms of restriction. Temporal control, control of time is crucial for it allows for the regulation of space without actually intervening space itself. Poe

evidences this state of affairs, in the meanderings through and of the crowd, in his artistic production.

Poe's production is as modern as that condition which Engels described. With Poe we experience the urban position, immersion, no distance: he becomes the crowd, for he understands that in modernity, we all have become the crowd. Here we see the scientific mind of the birth of modernity, but also, and more important the crisis of the bourgeois persona as experienced by the artist. Artistic production collides with the modern world. This is astonishing, for it is 1840. The introspective distance of the bourgeois, who experiences the world as a contemplative object, soon to shed its aristocratic pretense and become a mere object of consumption (the gift of modernity to aesthetic ideals), gives Poe “an aching sensation to the eye.” The crowd generates in him a “craving desire” to be part of it. We are far from the detached and cool position of most if not all art of the period, content in being a mere object of ideal contemplation, holding fast to a pre-industrial condition. Poe, as pointed out by Benjamin, pre-figures Baudelaire's *flaneur*, who as the embodiment of alienation strolls the city streets with no interest other than that of the sheer force of circulation itself.<sup>23</sup>

We have used Poe here, for his impact on the French Symbolist poets, particularly Baudelaire, was immense; and through them it reaches the Valparaíso School. The activity of wondering the city is part of the pedagogical structure of the UCV. The school sets out Valparaíso as their laboratory, to the point that it is difficult to separate the school (its notions and activities) from the city itself.<sup>24</sup> This site specificity must be noted, for it is what they bring with them when they travel the continent.<sup>travesías</sup>

With an open eye, with the use of observation to capture what the school defines as the act, the student engages Valparaíso. In numerous occasions (formalized through studio and seminar exercises, or in the looseness of living the city) students are asked to stroll the city. First Year students for example, are given a photograph of a door. It is a door of a typical house in Valparaíso. They are asked to find the door. This is not an easy task, it has no immediate resolution, it cannot be done with one meandering. The task must be performed as a series of journeys through the city. These are but the first in a series of *travesías*<sup>journeys</sup> that students will pursue throughout their education at the UCV. The primary intent of this project is not to find the door, but for students to record through sketching the journey, one which allows them to plunge into the city and capture its acts. Their

meanderings are in between those of Poe's detective and Baudelaire's *flaneur*. Their study is charged with prosaic intent, to find the door, and they must find it. But the journey allows them to engage the city and discover not only the possibilities hiding within the city, Poe's detective eye, but the possibilities hiding within the journey itself, Baudelaire's *flaneur* activity. Architecture is exposed through the observation, engaged in the city; it is peeled, uncovered by the hand, through the sketch, and the eye. The *croquis*, the sketch, becomes the tool for the unfolding of reality. This tool, an original,

" is not a pedagogic method, a procedure to remember, nor is it a survey. It is the testimony of the first encounter, of the first pry into the activities, gestures and attitudes which in virtue of a present form appear to the eye."<sup>25</sup>

Like the poetic word which unfolds a new world by granting a new vision of the world, the sketch captures



the relationships between place and activity.<sup>el acto</sup> These activities, observation-sketch, are accompanied by the word. The sketch is always accompanied by written annotations, by the observation through language. The observation is thus captured in two forms: in visual form and in language form. Two worlds appear. The *observación*<sup>-observation</sup> requires a particular vision. This vision is forwarded by poetic discourse, and captured in present form<sup>-forma presente</sup> of space and time, through the sketch<sup>-croquis</sup> and through the word. Poetic discourse is thus thrust upon the city, made to engage it, to mingle with it. This takes several forms, from public performances of specific poetic pieces, like the one of Alonso de Ercilla's (1533-1594) epic poem *La Araucana* (1569), to poetic acts which generate from simple events, to built interventions in the Valparaíso, the Open City or the continent. The social nature of poetry, poetry made not by one but by everyone as Lautremont pointed out,<sup>26</sup> is here explicit. Poetry becomes socialized, manifesting as a social construct. What is less overt is the formal stance that this takes: the visualization of poetry through its spatialization. In the activity of poetic discourse, poetry captures space. It becomes visualized, manifesting in space. In this it steps into the arena of architecture and demands its action. As defined by the school, architecture is that which: *da cabida*<sup>27</sup>, that which gives space, brings together, gives shelter, gives extension, that which validates. Architecture is that technique charged with creating that *cabida*, that validity or capacity for the word. Architecture is thus subject of poetic discourse. The fusion of word, action and space becomes the primary activity of poetic discourse.

## Conclusion

By looking at modernity through language and not through technological advancements the UCV distances itself from the main architectural voices of the modern movement. Yet, by doing this, the school is able to position architecture within a wider arena of exchange. As Alberto Cruz, founder of the school, stated:

It does not constitute the foundation of architecture, neither functionalism, nor technology, with its marked preference for materials and systems; neither are the canons, nor other disciplines (economy sociology, ecology, etc.). (...) The foundation of architecture (...) is that which has the capacity to harbor their indications, be they of the functions, of the building methods,

of materials, or of economy, sociology, ecology, etc. But these indications are never its foundation.<sup>28</sup>

This condition of harboring the indications of technology if far from a rejection of technology. It is rather a position in relation to technology. In the arena of exchange (of techniques, methods, ideas notions, processes, etc.) between productions the UCV stands firmly in Architecture, and from there they establish these exchanges. This position and thus its relation to all other human productions is revealed in the school's definition of architecture as that *techné* which gives space to the collective, to its productions, to its technologies. The architects, who saw in the "machine aesthetic" a new principle for architecture, were simply seduced by the image; and in this seduction forfeited architecture's position within human productions. It is this pose, architecture position (harbor of human productions), somewhat prior to technology (machine technology) what makes it responsive to language, for language anchors the collective.

The age of modernity was launched by technology, by its radical transformation of human production. Yet, what the gaps in its discourse reveal is the dynamic condition of production itself. This is nothing new. But newness is not the goal of practices that unlike the machine seek to escape hegemonic discourses. The activity of these gaps is the violent acceptance of the dynamics of production. For the Catholic University of Valparaiso, it is the embrace of a raw condition of language. These activities, hiding within the breaks of modern discourse, make us question the hierarchies of our stable structures. Familiarity, that component of the technological world is not possible. This is so, not because the operational hierarchies of the prosaic world are questioned or denied, but because they are reorganized. These practices, like poetic discourse, do not attempt to substitute prosaic hierarchies with their own; they simply try to unlock these hierarchies in order to create *wonder*. The world regains its long lost sense of danger, of possibility. This is the quest launched by the modern poet, the song of the present: *Il faut être absolument现代*.<sup>Rimbaud</sup> "We must be absolutely modern." This quest, set forth by the poet, is the uncompromising acceptance of the present, of the work. For modernity is a time not of industry, but of *techné*, it is a time of the work.

#### Notes:

- 1 Henri Lefebvre, *Introduction to Modernity* (London: Verso, 1995), p. 235.
- 2 Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture* (1923) (New York: Dover, 1986)
- 3 The foundation and methods of scientific knowledge.
- 4 "... it was in that year (1855) that Sir Henry Bessemer invented a new method of making steel in quantity so that it could be profitably used for large building components." Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *The Pelican History of Art*, Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Penguin: Victoria, 1975), p. 169.
- 5 Walter Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus* (Cambridge: MIT, 1989), p.33
- 6 The sense of his "rationalization of industry," makes only sense if we take into account the existing dichotomy between the building arts and industrialization pointed out by Engels. Cf. Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (London: Penguin, 1987).
- 7 Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (London: Penguin, 1987), p.58
- 8 Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art of Today* (1925) (Cambridge: MIT, 1987), p. 110
- 9 The concept of *unity* is critical, for what characterizes modernity (in Marxist view) is precisely the dissolution of the unity between producer and production. This manifests in the form of alienation, the separation of the workman from the products of his work. This is the demand of the commodity.
- 10 In this, this notion is Marxists, if accepting alienation as a condition of modernity, they fight it by re-establishing a unity between the forms of production: a world of producers. They are anti-Marxist, if they refuse alienation as a defining quality of modernity, and call for a pre-industrial structure of production, supported merely by aesthetic considerations.
- 11 A Sommerfelt, "Speech and Language," in CH Singer/ EJ Holmyard/ AR Hall, *A History of Technology* (Oxford: OUP, 1945), p. 86
- 12 "All languages have characteristic rhythms, which are often more important than the correct enunciation of vowels and consonants. (...) We know the patterns—rhythms, almost tunes—of our language, and we know when to expect a certain type of speech-melody." A Sommerfelt, "Speech and Language," in CH Singer/ EJ Holmyard/ AR Hall, *A History of Technology* (Oxford: OUP, 1945), p. 87
- 13 Edgar Allan Poe, "The Rationality of Verse" in *Complete Tales and Poems* (New York: Vintage, 1975), p. 913
- 14 Quoted in *Vision in Motion*, Lazlo Moholy-Nagy (Chicago: Paul Theobald and Co., 1956.), p. 298.
- 15 Friedrich Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 190.
- 16 "The poetic act does not take place at the level of esthetic creation, but rather at that of inventive imitation—as a reproduction of experience or of earlier poetic models." Bruno Gentili, *Poetry and Its Public in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1990), p.5
- 17 Werner Jaeger, *Paideia* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1992), p. 10
- 18 Georges Poulet, *The Interior Distance* (Ann Arbor: U Michigan, 1964), p.273

- 19 "Social conditions are, as we know, determined by conditions of production. And when materialist criticism approached a work, it was accustomed to ask how this work stood in relation to the social relations of production of its time." Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," in *Cultural Resistance Reader*, Stephen Duncombe, Editor (London: Verso, 2002), p. 69.
- 20 Friedrich Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
- 21 First published in 1840, in *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*.
- 22 Friedrich Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 104
- 23 The *flaneur* is the particle that gives evidence to the city as a submerged, underwater, entity. It is the coloration of its movements, its forces, its flows. He is not interested in a didactic excursion, in a pictorial tour. The *flaneur* is not the sightseer, compromised by contemplative pleasure.
- 24 It has to be noted that Valparaíso serves as laboratory for the UCV, and that although the nature and importance of the relationship is rarely stated, it is to my mind paramount. The relationship between the city and the school's thought has morphological origins. The school is in symbiotic relationship with the city. One could argue that they are one organism, that the school is a mutation of the city.
- 25 "El croquis no es un método pedagógico, no es un procedimiento para recordar, no es una encuesta. Es el testimonio del encuentro primero, inicial de escudriñar las actividades, gestos, actitudes que en virtud de una forma presente que les da lugar comparecen al ojo en un grado de plenitud. A dicha plenitud que emerge de lo obvio, se le llama Acto." "Escuela de Arquitectura Universidad Católica de Valparaíso", AUCA vol.28 (Chile), 1975, p.42.
- 26 see Fernando Pérez Oyarzun, "The Valparaiso School," in *Harvard Architecture Review*, vol. 9, 1993 for a more detailed account of the poetic acts performed by the school in several cities across the world.
- 27 From a conversation with Alberto Cruz, founder of the school.
- 28 "No constituyen fundamento real de la arquitectura ni el funcionalismo, ni las tecnologías con sus marcadas preferencias de materiales y sistemas, ni los cánones, ni otras disciplinas (economía, sociología, ecología, etc.) (...) El fundamento propio de la arquitectura en cuanto arte es tal que tiene capacidad para acoger las indicaciones, ya sea de las 'funciones', de métodos constructivos, de materiales, o de economía, sociología, ecología, etc. Pero nunca tales indicaciones son sus fundamentos." "Escuela de Arquitectura Universidad Católica de Valparaíso," AUCA vol.28 (Chile), 1975, p.39.

# The Sugar-coated Architecture Pill Lingering Modernism in the Postmodern Children's Hospital

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The children's hospital is coextensive chronologically with the emergence of Modernism in architecture. While early twentieth-century children's hospitals used domestic imagery to convey older spatial attitudes towards health, the postwar hospital was self-consciously modern, with an arrangement (adapted from the designs for general adult hospitals) more scientific and institutional than its predecessor. In the last twenty years the children's hospital has become synonymous with Postmodern architecture. But ironically the characteristics of Postmodern design—the influence of popular culture, the use of shopping mall atriums, the partnerships with retail enterprises such as Disney, McDonalds and Starbucks—have been used to help kids and their families swallow essentially *Modern* institutions: large-scale, technologically oriented healing factories. Is Postmodernism simply Modernism disguised? Does the emergence of managed healthcare, retail therapy and environmentalism and their accompanying architectural forms constitute a strategy for the continuation of Modernism, rather than a break with it?

"The Sugar-coated Architecture Pill" examines the phenomenon of persistent Modernism by looking closely at current children's hospitals in Canada and the US. Recent Postmodern hospitals such as the Valley Children's Hospital in Madera, California (HKS Inc.) and the ground-breaking 1992 Atrium tower (Zeidler Roberts Partnership) of the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children provide case studies of how architecture is used to package medical care in order to sell it to healthcare consumers. Hospitals in New Zealand and Europe will be adduced to highlight North American developments from a unique international perspective.

This paper is drawn from "Medicine by Design," a multi-year study of hospital planning and construction of since 1945.<sup>1</sup> That study has shown that children's

hospitals may be the key in both understanding and rationalizing the change from the science-oriented Modern "hospital" to the patient-centered Postmodern "health center." The strategy, then, is to use hospital architecture to locate a shift in medicine from ideals of impersonal excellence, valid for adults and children, to a view that hospitalized children have a specific psychology that demands entertainment and diversion as part of good medical care.

Consequently, "The Sugar-coated Architecture Pill" argues that attitudes towards children and childhood have helped favour the adoption of Postmodernism in contemporary healthcare architecture as a way to combat the ogre of Modernist institutional design. That is, one of the aspects of Modernism that *persists* in contemporary health care architecture is the Modernist trend to remove authority from design professionals (architects) and place it in the hands of scientists and bureaucrats. Increasingly, I will argue, it is experts in childhood psychology—psychologists, and pediatricians—and not design experts who will be responsible for the built environment sick children use.

The paper thus addresses the conference theme of *Lingering Modernism* in two crucial, unexpected directions. First, it explores how *Postmodernism* disguises, replicates and promotes Modernism. Second it examines the ways Modern ideas about architectural design and practice—not just Modernist forms but Modernist architectural culture—persist in a building type with pre-Modernist roots and a Postmodernist future.

## Note:

- 1 Medicine by Design is a project at the School of Architecture, McGill University. It is funded by Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Hannah Institute for the History of Medicine.