

10 ISSUES OF *Ra*, REVISTA DE ARQUITECTURA

Jorge Tárrago Mingo

With this issue *Ra, Revista de Arquitectura* reaches its first 10. It is an appropriate moment, despite such a short history, to look back briefly. It is not about a celebration, nor a self-gratifying examination –this new issue adds nothing to the editorial line taken then, but rather serves to thank and recognise all those people who have contributed, for the great effort which it takes to create an academic journal of these characteristics in the immense publishing panorama that surrounds us. As the habitual lyrics sung and popularized by the group “Golpes Bajos”, “bad time for poetry”, that one must remember is the title of a poem by Bertold Brecht, (an expression that the Royal Academy of Language (RAE), already includes in the dictionary to explain the adjective “bad”).

And it is not precisely the publications that try to bring to their pages architecture of thought, debate, or reflection, those that fill the bookcases of the bookstores. This is not a pessimistic vision, as is the poem of Brecht, rather the contrary. It seems pertinent to recover here the encouraging words of Fritz Neumeyer (*Ra* 6, 2004) who asserted that architecture does not truly exist for those architects obsessed with image, or objects, or intoxicated with space. Only those for whom architecture is familiar, and not alien, and who do not fall into presumptions or into sensitive aesthetics, are able to have a world view through architecture. To contribute to this effort is more than sufficient. Not long ago, a good friend of *Ra*, who still, paradoxically, has not published any article, vehemently encouraged us to continue, though against the grain, on this path. The first issue of the magazine was published in February of 1997 as an inseparable supplement to another one, *Re, Revista de Edificación*. *Re* was already established, and then had reached 24 issues and at present have 36. Jose Luque Valdivia (1, 1997) and Jose Manuel Pozo (2, 1998) both coordinated the first issues. Iñigo Beguiristain, under the guidance of an editorial board formed by Miguel Ángel Alonso del Val, Juan M. Ochotorena and José Manuel Pozo, to which Mariano González Presencio joined shortly thereafter, coordinated the next two issues (3, 1999/4, 2000). Laura Martínez de Guereñu took over the coordination of the following issue (5, 2003). Starting with issue 7, published in 2005, Maristella Casciato, Luis Fernández Galiano, Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, Jorge F. Liernur, Carlos Montes Serrano, Stanislaus von Moos, José Antonio Ruiz de la Rosa and Carlos Sambricio joined the original editorial board, forming in this way a more extensive scientific commission of international reach. Since 2006, *Ra* is member of FAST-IP, *Federation of Architectural Studies Independent Publications*, a federation of non-profit academic journals, of which *Future Anterior* (GSAPP, Columbia University), *Thresholds* (Department of Architecture, MIT) and *Springerin*, a magazine of art and culture published in Vienna, are also members. In addition, this path has allowed its indexing, first in 2005 in the *Avery Index for Architectural Periodicals*, and recently, since 2007, in the Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI). Both are benchmark data bases in their fields. And *Ra* is, at the moment, the only indexed Spanish journal of architecture of the 29 in A&HCI, along with prestigious, recognised journals with a long history such as *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, *Architectural Record*, *Architectural Design*, *Journal of Architectural Education*, *Lotus*, *A+U*,... among others.

We must also recognise the work of Igone Santesteban, Elena Peña, Ana Gozalo, Izaskun García Ederri, and of all the architecture student collaborators who have spent time to prepare editions of the journal. *Ra* began in 1997 with an editorial, the only one until now, signed by Juan Miguel Otxotorena, Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Navarre, where the opportunities were explained, as well as the benefit of the birth of the new supplement. That text, we can say, is still totally valid today, and also printed on the flap of the cover:

“*Ra* aspires, from here, to build an apt forum for the expression of the results of academic study and debate in relation to the diverse areas of interest in architecture and the city typical of the university vision: understanding them as cultural realities of unquestionable importance and impact and an object of careful attention, study and research.

Ra seeks to serve as a channel, in particular, for the intellectual production of the departments of Theory and History, Urban Planning and Architectural Projects, although from the beginning it has been open to articles and collaborations from other professional and educational institutions.

And it seeks to enhance that one perception of architecture that does not lose sight of its cultural dimension, in the widest sense of the word, the only limitation being to avoid fully descending to the publication of projects and current work in the area of design and built projects, more suitable to other publishing circles and thoroughly covered by so many other accredited, experienced and solvent magazines”.

Indeed, in these 10 issues the journal has published articles from the research of the departments of Theory and History, Urban Planning and Projects at the School of Architecture at the University of Navarre (ETSAUN), and have had collaborations from researchers worldwide, some of whom have also been in the classrooms of the School. It would not be right to name here some, considering them more relevant, while forgetting so many others. At the end of this issue we provide the indexes that testify to the wide and diverse origin of all of them. Equally, the commitment to the heterogeneity of the subjects, avoiding therefore a monograph, has been fully conscious and consistent, considering it to be the best way to reflect the cultural dimension and, in a certain sense, the unorthodoxy of architecture, if we understand this as a revitalising factor and constructive value.

In this issue number 10, we offer the Spanish version of “The Status of Man and His Objects: A Reading of The Human Condition” by Kenneth Frampton, given in the book that takes the title precisely from the content of the article “Labour, Work and Architecture: collected essays on architecture and design”, (Phaidon Press, London & New York, 2002). Although published originally in 1979, Frampton supervised and revised in detail the original text with Carlos Naya in attendance, selecting, in addition the images that accompany it. In “The Status of Man and His Objects: A Reading of The Human Condition”, Frampton takes as a point departure the concepts of work and labour, public and private, that come from the reading of the well-known text by Hannah Arendt, to define the situation of architecture in the contemporary society.

Rubén A. Alcolea Rodríguez, on the other hand, in “From the city to compressed air. Genesis of the modern photography of architecture”, demonstrates the original, close relations between photography and architecture since the discovery of the new technique in the mid-19th century. And how photography and photographers, even better than the actual architects, after portraying the city, were able to take a better reading of modern architecture with the exhibition “Film und Foto”, organised by the German Werkbund in 1929.

Luis Rojo de Castro offers a “personal reflection, free and unorthodox” about one of the trips, rather the drawings made on the trip (or redone later) by Le Corbusier, a long voyage that in 1929 would take him to South American soil and that many authors consider to be a decisive point of reflection in his theories. In “[Ideograms]. Precisions on “precisions”, the relationship between critical thought and the projects of the master is established from some of these drawings, full of meaning beyond the immediate or evident.

Francisco González de Canales develops in “Experiments with oneself. 1937-1959” the concept of domestic self-experimentation from the voluntary or involuntary exile of architects and artists in the middle of the last century. Some noteworthy examples, or rather pretexts are: Casa de Isla Negra by Pablo Neruda and Germán Rodríguez Arias, an exiled Spanish architect; the cabin in the middle of the Swedish forest, The Box, by Ralph Erskine; Eames House in Los Angeles; the self-built house in Sedona by Max Ernst; the Malaparte house by Adalberto Libera; the glass house by Lina Bo and Pietro M. Bardi in Sao Paulo; the house in El Pedregal by Juan O’Gorman; the also self-built house in Castlecrag by Ruth and Wilfried Lucas; and the Smithson house in Fonthill.

Francisco Gómez Díaz brings us the biography and work of the exiled San Sebastián architect in Cuba, Martín Domínguez Esteban. The article “Martín Domínguez Esteban. The work of an exiled Spanish architect in Cuba” should have been part of the presentations at the VIth International Congress “History of Modern Spanish Architecture” (T6 Ediciones, 2008). In any case, the more than remarkable work of an architect who, for some of the reasons that are detailed, and until more or less recently, had gone relatively unnoticed in the history of modern Spanish architecture, is presented here.

In “Two fragments of OTAYSA in the Universidad Laboral of Seville: five gymnasiums and a dying workshop”, José Joaquín Parra Bañón thoroughly dissects the gymnasiums and a workshop in the group of educational buildings projected at the beginning of the 50s by the Oficina Técnica de Arquitectura e Ingeniería (OTAYSA), formed by the brothers Felipe and Rodrigo Medina Benjumea, Alfonso Toro Buiza and Luis Gómez Estern, for the Universidad Laboral of Seville. Original and recent photographs, along with original and redrawn plans, accompany the story, at times stormy, of the use and also the abandonment of this proposal, faithful to the ideas of the Modern Movement.

Finally, José Manuel Pozo, writes “The opportunity of a Congress: reflections of a scissors”, an article on the last Congress, “History of Modern Spanish Architecture”, the VIth edition, which took place in March of 2008 under the title “Crossed Glances: exchanges between Latin America and Spain in Modern Spanish Architecture” in which recognised researchers on both sides of the Atlantic participated. Roberto

Segre, Jorge F. Liernur, Carlos Ferreira Martins, Fernando Pérez de Oyarzún, Enrique X. de Anda Alanis, Helio Piñón, Alberto Sato, Javier Martínez and Federico Deambrosis gave the main presentations at the congress, along with a dozen papers and a hundred attendees. There the glances exchanged between Spain and Latin America, architecture and exiled Spanish architects and the role played by Latin American editorials were presented and debated mainly. Finally, the indexes of all the articles and their published authors are included, 10 issues to date.

To all, thank you very much.

THE STATUS OF MAN AND THE STATUS OF HIS OBJECTS

Kenneth Framptom

The only philosophy which can be responsibly practised in the face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption; all else is reconstruction, mere technique. Perspectives must be fashioned that displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices, as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light.

Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 1947

THE ARCHITECTURAL COROLLARIES OF LABOUR AND WORK

In her book *The Human Condition*, significantly subtitle 'A Study of the Central Dilemmas facing modern man', Hannah Arendt designated three Activities –*labour*, *work* and *action*– as being fundamental to the *vita activa*. She established at the beginning of her argument the particular meaning that she would consistently assign to each of these terms. Of labour she wrote:

Labor is the activity which corresponds to the biological process of the human body, whose spontaneous growth, metabolism, and eventual decay are bound to the vital necessities produced and fed into the life process by labor. The human condition of labor is life itself.

Of work she wrote:

Work is the activity which corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence, which is not embedded in, and whose mortality is not compensated by, the species' ever-recurring life cycle. Work provides an 'artificial' World of things, distinctly different from all natural surroundings. Within its borders each individual life is housed, while this World itself is meant to outlast and transcend them all. The human condition of work is worldliness.

In her definition of the public and private attributes of the *vita activa* –the former having a dependency on the latter– Arendt amplified further her unusual distinction between *work* and *labour*. She argued that labour by being a constantly transforming but repetitive procedure –akin to the cycle of biological survival– is inherently *processal*, *private* and *impermanent*; whereas work, by virtue of being the precondition for the reification of the world as the space of human appearance, is by definition *static*, *public* and *permanent*.

An architect could hardly fail to remark on the correspondence between these distinctions and the fundamental ambiguity of the term 'architecture'; an ambiguity that finds reflection in the Oxford English Dictionary in two significantly different definitions –first, 'the art or science of construction edifices for human use' and second, 'the action and process of building'. These definitions with their potential hierarchy latent even in the etymology of the Greek term *architekton* –meaning chief constructor– proffer themselves as paralleling the distinction that Arendt draws between work and labour.

The designation 'for human use' imparts a specifically human, if not humanist, connotation to the whole of the first definition, alluding to the creation of a specifically human world, whereas the phrase 'the action and process of building' in the second definition clearly implies a continuous act of building forever incomplete, comparable to the unending process of biological labour. The fact that the dictionary asserts that the word 'edifice' may be used to refer to 'a large and stately building such as a church, a palace, or a fortress' serves to support the work connotation of the first definition, since these building types, as the 'representations' of spiritual and temporal power, have always been, at least until recent times, both public and permanent. Furthermore, the word 'edifice' relates directly to the verb 'to edify', which not only carries within itself the meaning 'to build' but also 'to educate', 'to strengthen' and 'to instruct' –connotations that allude directly to the didactic character of the public

realm. Again the Latin root of this verb–*aedificare*, from *aedes*, a 'building', or, even more originally, a 'hearth', and *ficare*, 'to make'– has latent within it the public connotation of the hearth as the aboriginal 'public' space of appearance. This aspect persists even today in the domestic realm, where surely no place is more of a forum in the contemporary home than the hearth or its surrogate, the television set, which as an illusory public substitute tends to inhibit or usurp the spontaneous emergence of 'public' discourse within the private domain.

Within the corpus of modern architectural theory, no text is more aware of the respective statuses of architecture and building than Adolf Loos's essay 'Architecture 1910', wherein he characterizes the eminently biological, innate and repetitive nature of vernacular construction in the following terms:

The peasant cuts out the spot on the green grass where the house is to be built and digs out the earth for the foundation walls. Then the mason appears. If there is loamy soil in the vicinity, then there will also be a brickworks to provide the bricks. If not, then stone from the riverbanks can be used for the same purpose. And while the mason places brick upon brick and stone upon stone, the carpenter has established himself nearby. The strokes of the axe ring out merrily. He makes the roof. What kind of roof? One that is beautiful or ugly? He does not know. The roof... His aim was to build a house for himself, his family and his livestock and in this he has succeeded. Just as his neighbours and ancestors succeeded. As every animal which allows itself to be led by its instincts, succeeds.

Loos was aware that, like the pure instrumentality of engineering, this rooted vernacular had nothing whatsoever to do with the traditionally representative role of architecture. Later in the same text he wrote:

Only a very small part of architecture belongs to art: the tomb and the monument. Everything else, everything which serves a purpose should be excluded from the realms of art... If we find a mound the forest, six feet long and three feet wide, formed into a pyramid, shaped by a shovel, we become serious and something within us says, someone lies buried here. This is architecture.

THE PUBLIC REALM AND THE HUMAN ARTIFICE

While the representative scope of architecture had already become severely curtailed by the turn of the century, the space of public appearance could still serve not only to house the public realm, but also to represent its reality. Where in the nineteenth century the public institution was exploited as an occasion on which to reify the permanent values of the society, the disintegration of such values in the twentieth century has had the effect of atomizing the public building into a network of abstract institutions. This dissipation of the agora reflects that mass society whose alienating force stems not from the number of people but from 'the fact that the world between them has lost its power to gather them together, to relate and to separate them'.

While the political life of the Greek *polis* did not directly stem from the physical presence and representation of the city state, Arendt emphasizes, in contrast to our present proliferation of urban sprawl, the spontaneous 'cantonal' attributes of concentration:

The only indispensable material factor in the generation of power is the living together of people. Only where men live so close together that the potentialities of olfaction are always present can power remain with them, and the foundation of cities, which as city-states have remained paradigmatic for all Western political organization, is therefore indeed the most important material prerequisite for power

Nothing could be further from this than our present generation of motopia and our evident incapacity to create new cities that are physically and politically identifiable as such. By the same token, nothing could be more removed from the political essence of the city state than the exclusively economic categories of rationalistic planning theory; that theory espoused by planners such as Melvin Webber, whose ideological conceptions of *community without propinquity* and the *non-place urban realm* are nothing if not slogans devised to rationalize the absence of any adequate realm of public appearance within modern suburbia. The manipulative and 'apolitical' bias of such ideologies has never been more openly expressed than in Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, wherein the author asserts that the Americans don't need piazzas, since they should be at home watching television. These and similar reactionary modes of beholding seem to emphasize the impotence of an urbanized populace who have paradoxically lost the object of their urbanization. That their power grew initially out of the city finds corroboration in Arendt's conception of the relations obtaining between politics and built form:

Power preserves the public realm and the space of appearance, and as such it is also the life-blood of the human artifice, which, unless it is the scene of olfaction and speech,

of the web of human affairs and relationships and the stories engendered by them, lacks its ultimate *raison d'être*. Without being talked about by men and without housing them, the world would not be a human artifice but a heap of unrelated things to which each isolated individual was at liberty to add one more object; without the human artifice to house them, human affairs would be as floating, as futile and vain, as the wanderings of nomad tribes.

It was a similar realization that the monuments of the Ringstrasse, built around Vienna during the second half of the nineteenth century, were nothing but a sequence of 'unrelated things', that caused Camillo Sitte to demonstrate that each of these isolated public structures could be restored to being a *res publica* in itself. In his *City Planning According to Artistic Principles* (1889), he revealed how the fabric of the medieval town had had the capacity of enclosing as a single 'political' entity both the monument and its civic piazza.

THE PRIVATE REALM AND THE RISE OF THE SOCIAL

While Arendt acknowledges that the rise of modern intimacy and individualism has largely eliminated the aspect of privation from the term 'privacy', she nonetheless remains aware that a life excluded from the public realm is still 'deprived' by virtue of its being confined to the shadowy domestic interior of the *megaron*—that traditional single-cell volume of the Greek peninsular, whose very etymology reveals the household as the domain of darkness. Unlike the Greeks, who despised the individual domain or *idion* as the province of idiocy, but like the Romans, who valued the interdependence of both realms, Arendt conceives of the private as the essential 'darker' ground that not only nourishes the public realm but also establishes its experiential depth.

At the same time she recognizes that the rise of the social—to which the intimate is of course related—has had the ultimate effect of impoverishing both the public and private spheres and with this the mediatory capacity of built form to articulate one from the other. Arendt argues that the flowering of the social art form, the novel, after 1750 effectively coincided with the progressive decline of all the public arts, especially architecture. The ultimate triumph of the social in collectivized life has, as Arendt puts it, given rise to a 'mass society[that] not only destroys the public realm but the private as well, [and] deprives men not only of their place in the world but of their private home, where they once felt sheltered against the world and where, at any rate, even those excluded from the world could find a substitute in the warmth of the hearth and the limited reality of family life'.

This thesis, as to the loss of the private realm at the hands of the social, finds some corroboration in the fragmentary writings of the Mexican architect, Luis Barragan, who has criticized the overexposed landscape of the contemporary suburb in the following terms: 'Everyday life is becoming much too public. Radio, TV, the telephone all invade privacy. Gardens should therefore be enclosed, not open to public gaze'. Elsewhere, Barragan continues:

Architects are forgetting the need of human beings for half-light, the sort of light that imposes a tranquility, in their living rooms as well as in their bedrooms. About half the glass that is used in so many buildings—homes as well as offices—would have to be removed in order to obtain the quality of light that enables one to live and work in a more concentrated manner.

Arendt's insight that the triumph of labouring society has condemned man to perpetual movement finds a further echo in Barragan's text wherein he asserts:

Before the machine age, even in the middle of cities, Nature was everybody's trusted companion... Nowadays, the situation is reversed. Man does not meet with Nature, even when he leaves the city to commune with her. Enclosed in his shiny automobile, his spirit stamped with the mark of the world whence the automobile emerged, he is, within Nature, a foreign body. A billboard is sufficient to stifle the voice of Nature. Nature becomes a scrap of Nature and man a scrap of man.

This tendency towards global reduction, not to say of a total fusion, between man, machine and Nature—latent in the processual triumph of industrial production—finds its ideological corollary in the behavioural sciences, of which Arendt has written:

To gauge the extent of society's victory in the modern age, its early substitution of behaviour for action and its eventual substitution of bureaucracy, the rule of nobody, for personal rulership, it may be well to recall that its initial science of economics, which substitutes patterns of behaviour only in this rather limited field of human activity, was finally followed by the all-comprehensive pretension of the social sciences which, as 'behavioural sciences', aim to reduce man as a whole, in all his activities, to the level of a conditioned and behaving animal.

THE DUALITY OF THE *HOMO FABER*: ARTIFICE VERSUS INSTRUMENTALITY

The dependency of the human artifice on the work of *homo faber* stems from the intrinsic durability of objects and their capacity to withstand (*Gegenstand*) both the erosions of nature and the processes of use. As Arendt has written:

The man-made world of things, the human artifice erected by homo faber, becomes a home for mortal men, whose stability will endure and outlast the ever-changing movement of their lives and actions, only inasmuch as it transcends both the sheer functionalism of things produced for consumption and the sheer utility of objects produced for use. Life in its non-biological sense, the span of time each man has between birth and death, manifests itself in action and speech, both of which share with life its essential futility... If the animal laborans needs the help of homo faber to ease his labour and remove his pain, and if mortals need his help to erect a home on earth, acting and speaking men need the help of homo faber in his highest capacity, that is, the help of the artist, of poets and historiographers, of monument-builders or writers, because without them the only product of their activity, the story they enact and tell, would not survive at all. In order to be what the world is always meant to be, a home for men during their life on earth, the human artifice must be a place fit for action and speech, for activities not entirely useless for the necessities of life but of an entirely different nature from the manifold activities of fabrication by which the world itself and all things in it are produced.

No other passage in *The Human Condition* formulates the essential duality of the *homo faber* so succinctly as this—man as the maker split between the fabrication of useless things, such as works of art, which are ends in themselves, and the invention and production of useful objects, which serve as various predetermined means to a given set of ends. For Arendt, *homo faber* is at once both artificer and tool-maker; the builder of the world and the maker of the instruments with which it is built. Where the one addresses itself to the 'what' of representation and reification—that is to say, to that object of commemoration which Loos was to consign to the province of art—the other concerns itself with the 'how' of utility and process, in which tools tend, at least in the modern world, to be the 'sole things to survive the occasion of their use. Nothing reveals this second condition of production more than the machine fabrication of goods for consumption, nor the first than the cyclical history of built monuments which, from inception to demolition, testify to a continual transference of value from the past into the future.

The ambiguity of architecture—its status as 'edification' or as 'building' and often as different aspects within the same physical entity—reflects the parallel ambiguity of the *homo faber*, who is neither pure artist nor pure technician. In a similar manner, representation and commemoration can never be entirely prised apart and the present embodiment of past value already assures its availability for the future. All signification in built form thus embodies a sense of immortality. This much Arendt attempts to make clear in her discussion of art:

In this permanence, the very stability of the human artifice, which, being inhabited and used by mortals, can never be absolute, achieves a representation of its own. Nowhere else does the sheer durability of the world of things appear in such purity and clarity, nowhere else therefore does this thing-world reveal itself so spectacularly as the non-mortal home for mortal beings. It is as though worldly stability had become transparent in the permanence of art, so that a premonition of immortality, not the immortality of the soul or of life but of something immortal achieved by mortal hands, has become tangibly present, to shine and to be seen, to sound and to be heard, to speak and to be read.

While fabrication invariably terminated in the ancient world in either an instrument of use or an art object, it came with the emergence of empirical science to insinuate its process into the methodology of research and, with this deviation, to remove itself from the traditional teleology of artifice in favour of achieving the abstract instruments of cognition. The Renaissance, split between the liberal and the mechanical arts—already anticipatory of the industrial division of labour—led to the rise of the *homo faber* as a man of invention and speculation; of which the architect and *uomo universale*, Filippo Brunelleschi, was one of the earliest examples. As G.C. Argan has shown, this rise of the *homo faber* as architect resulted in widening the incipient division between invention and fabrication and led to the degradation of the traditional craftsmen into the status of the *animal laborans*:

Brunelleschi thought that a new technique could not be derived from the past, but must come from a different cultural experience, from history. In this way he refuted the old 'mechanical' technique and created a new 'liberal' technique based on those typically individualistic actions which are historical research and inventiveness. He abolished the traditional hierarchical form of the mason's lodge where the head was

the co-ordinator of the specialized work of the various groups of skilled workers who made up the lodge of the masters. Now, there was only one planner or inventor; the others were merely manual laborers. When the master mason rose to the status of sole planner, whose activity was on a par with the other humanistic disciplines, the other members of the team of masons fell from the rank of *maestri* in charge of various aspects of the job to that of simple working men. This explains the impatience of the masons and their rebellion against the master mason who had become 'architect' or 'engineer'.

This willful creation of distance between conceiving and building pervades the entire Renaissance. It was as much present in Brunelleschi's invention of perspective or in his machines for the building of the cupola over Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence in 1420, as it was in Galileo Galilei's invention of the telescope in 1610, with which men first established the proof of the Copernican universe. The effective split of appearance and being that was the consequence of this proof, served to institute Cartesian doubt as the fundamental basis of the new scientific perspective. As Arendt has written:

The Cartesian method of securing certainty against universal doubt corresponded most precisely to the most obvious conclusion to be drawn from the new physical science: though one cannot know truth as something given and disclosed, man can at least know what he makes himself. This, indeed, became the most general and most generally accepted attitude of the modern age, and it is this conviction, rather than the doubt underlying it, that propelled one generation after another for more than three hundred years into an ever-quicken pace of discovery and development.

Just as the shift to a heliocentric model of the universe was developed with the aid of an optical tool –the telescope– so the *homo faber* came to his place in the modern world through a re-evaluation of his traditional role. From Galileo on, he was not so much valued for his product as an end result but for his process as a means to an end. As Arendt shows, fabrication, which had hitherto disappeared into the product, now became an end in itself since pure science was not interested in the appearance of objects, but in the capacity of objects to reveal the intrinsic structure lying behind all appearance. It abandoned the passive contemplation of objects per se for the instrumental penetration of the laws of nature. This effectively reversed the traditional hierarchy of contemplation and action –a shift which, as Arendt shows, had profound consequences for the object of architecture:

As far as homo faber was concerned, the modern shift of emphasis from the 'what' to the 'how', from the thing itself to its fabrication process, was by no means an unmixed blessing. It deprived man as maker and builder of those fixed and permanent standards and measurements which, prior to the modern age, have always served him as guides for his doing and criteria for his judgment. It is not only and perhaps not even primarily the development of the commercial society that, with the triumphal victory of exchange value over use value, first introduced the principle of interchangeability, then the relativization, and finally the devaluation, of all values... It was at least as decisive that man began to consider himself part and parcel of the two superhuman, all-encompassing processes of nature and history, both of which seemed doomed to an infinite progress without ever reaching any inherent telos or approaching any preordained idea.

This shift from the 'what' to the 'how' found its reflection in the division of engineering from architecture during the Enlightenment; first in Colbert's categorically anti-guild creation of the various royal academies for the arts and sciences including the *Académie Royale d'Architecture* (1677), whose 'architectural' graduates were to dedicate themselves solely to the 'what', that is, to the reification of public structures commissioned by the State; and then in 1747, with Perronet's creation of the *École des Ponts et Chaussées*, whose 'engineering' graduates were to concern themselves largely with the 'how', namely, with the processal means of gaining permanent access to the realm. That these two aspects of the *homo faber* had already become professionally divided over the defence and siege of the walled city may be gauged from the fact that according to Michel Parent and Jacques Verroult, 'In the sixteenth century the defence of towns and castles was the work of *architects*. The word *engineer* remained reserved for those who not only built the siege machines but also handled them'. The progressive invasion of the city of artifice by the machine –first the siege engine and later the locomotive, and then of course the electric tram and the automobile– accompanied the ultimate dissolution of the walled city in the middle of the nineteenth century. Aside from its monumental rhetoric and its simultaneous reduction of honorific built form to the status of being a rentable commodity, the Ringstrasse that came to replace Vienna's fortification in the second half of the century was coincidentally the initial proving ground for the horse-drawn tram.

Deprived by Cartesian doubt of its faith in the received culture of the Renaissance, architectural theory was compelled to search for its authority in the knowledge of an objective archaeology. At the same time it began to look for its creative principle in the all-encompassing processes of nature. Thus while architects began to record and emulate the surviving models of antiquity, natural law came to be asserted as the prime universal principle. Our modern concepts of archaeology and history were both the outcomes of developments such as these. Stripped by science of its magical coalescence, the modern world began to fragment. Since appearance now belied truth, it became necessary to regard form as being separate from content and to this end the modern science of esthetica came into being with Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* (1750). At the same time architectural theoreticians, such as the Abbé Laugier in his *Essai sur l'architecture* (1753), began to advocate 'natural' primitive structures of self-evident lucidity. Pure reduced structure became the paradigm of architecture, and light came to be regarded as a metaphor for the illumination of reason itself.

The ascendancy of the bourgeoisie, the rise of the social and the intimate, the rediscovery of antiquity, the duality of light and nature as the sublime emanance of the Supreme Being, and above all the influence of Rousseau and Newton combined to distract architecture from the task of realization and to project it into either an archaeologically remote past or an unattainable utopian future. This ideological distraction is prominently displayed in the works of Etienne Boullée, who imagined spectacular masses of masonry, at the scale of natural escarpments –vast megaliths of prohibitive size, penetrated by endless galleries of often inaccessible space– Is it not just such a figure that Arendt had in mind when she wrote of the *homo faber* renouncing his traditional calling in favour of the *vita contemplativa*? 'All he had to do was let his arms drop and prolong indefinitely the act of beholding the *eidōs*, the eternal shape and model he had formerly wanted to imitate and whose excellence and beauty he now knew he could only spoil through any attempt at reification'.

While architectural theory tended toward total dematerialization, as in the writings of Laugier, or toward the surreality of sublime, unrealizable form, as in the images of Boullée, engineering proceeded to work upon nature and to subject its untamed wastes to a measured infrastructure of metalised roads and embanked canals. Its province was now no longer the bastions and counterscarps of the fortified city, but the viaducts, bridges and dams of a universal system of distribution. Its technique not only outstripped the performance of traditional materials and methods but also afforded a more explicit form of structural expression –one in which structure was transparently penetrated by process. From now on architecture looked to such structure for much of its symbolic substance –and we find a late neoclassical architect such as Karl Friedrich Schinkel totally ignoring contemporary architecture on his first visit to England in 1826 and recording instead the distributive and productive achievements of the time: the Menai Straits suspension bridge and the 'processal' mill buildings of Manchester.

THE ANIMAL LABORANS AND THE FUNGIBILITY OF THE WORLD

The brute concentration of natural labour-power, as though it were akin to water power, preceded, as Robin Evans has attempted to show, the late eighteenth-century development of industrial production as it is now generally understood. The workhouse as a place of production, secrecy and moral improvement (this last being nothing more than forcibly obtaining 'desirable' behaviour from the human animal) was fully instituted long before the invention of such important productive instruments as Newcomen's engine or Arkwright's spinning jenny. That this workplace was invariably a closed world only served to emphasize the essential *worldlessness* of labour for all that the privacy arose primarily out of a need for industrial secrecy. It was in any event a hermetic domain, where deprivation in the original sense was coupled with the work ethic and placed at the disposal of the machine. In the earliest workhouse the imprisoned vagrants, who had hitherto only been subjected to pillory, were punished for their nomadic idleness, after the mid-sixteenth century, by being forced to engage in both useful and useless production. Useful in the sense that Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon project of 1797 –to cite a highly developed workhouse type– was a machine for the extraction of improving labour from those 'on whose part neither dexterity nor good will were to be depended'. Useless in the sense that William Cubitt's treadmill installed in the Brixton House of Correction in 1821 powered a rotating windsail on top of the mill house that indicated only too well the inutility of the prisoners' efforts.

The fundamental worldlessness of the *animal laborans* that manifested itself in the eighteenth century with the 'blind' mechanical production of the workhouse and the mill was paralleled in the twentieth century by the equally blind processes of mass consumption. As Arendt has written:

In our need for more and more rapid replacement of the worldly things around us, we can no longer afford to use them, to respect and preserve their inherent durability; we must consume, devour, as it were, our houses and furniture and cars as though they were the 'good things' of nature which spoil uselessly if they are not drawn swiftly into the never-ending cycle of man's metabolism with nature. It is as though we had forced open the distinguishing boundaries which protected the world, the human artifice, from nature, the biological process which goes on in its very midst as well; as the natural cyclical processes which surround it, delivering and abandoning to them the always threatened stability of a human world.

Arendt goes on to argue that the modern age has increasingly sacrificed the ideas of permanence and durability to the abundance ideal of the *animal laborans*, and that we live in a society of labourers inasmuch as the labour-power has been divided in order to eliminate from the thrust of its natural metabolism the 'unnatural' and conscious obstacle of the human artifice –the original object of the *homo faber*.

That the *animal laborans* cannot construct a human world out of its own values is borne out by the accelerating tendency of mass production and consumption to undermine not only the durability of the world but also the possibility of establishing a permanent place within it. The science fiction forms projected by the utopian urbanists of the twentieth century have arisen out of either elitist or populist attempts to reify industrial process as though it were some 'ideal' manifestation of a new nature. From the futurist architect Antonio Sant'Elia's *Citta Nuova* (1914), of which, to quote from the *Manifesto of Futurist Architecture*, he stated that 'our houses will last less time than we do and every generation will have to make its own', to Constant Nieuwenhuys's spontaneously dynamic *New Babylon* (1960), where urban change would be so accelerated as to render it pointless to return home –in each instance we are presented with equally kinetic images that project through prophetic exaggeration the fundamental place less tendency of our present urban reality. Nieuwenhuys wrote:

There would be no question of any fixed life pattern since life itself would be as creative material... In New Babylon people would be constantly travelling. There would be no need for them to return to their point of departure as this in any case would be transformed. Therefore each sector would contain private rooms (a hotel) where people would spend the night and rest for a while.

From the point of view of machine or rationalized production, architecture has been as much affected as urbanism by the substitution of productive or processal norms for the more traditional criteria of worldliness and use. Increasingly buildings come to be designed in response to the mechanics of their erection or, alternatively, processal elements such as tower cranes, elevators, escalators, stairs, refuse chutes, gangways, service cores and automobiles determine the configuration of built form to a far greater extent than the hierarchic and more public criteria of *place*. And while the space of public appearance comes to be increasingly overrun by circulation or inundated at the urban scale by restricted high-speed access, the free-standing, high-rise megaliths of the modern city maintain their potential status as 'consumer goods' by virtue of their isolated form. At the same time the prefabricated elements from which such forms are increasingly assembled guarantee the optimization of their production and consumption within the overall industrial economy. Their potential for rapid amortization, convenient demolition and replacement begins to invalidate the traditional distinction of *meubles* from *immeubles*, a diffusion of meaning that was first announced in the nineteenth century, with the wholesale 'removal' of structures intact. In a related but more immediate way automation imposes equally processal conditions on all industrial design, for it tends towards the servo-mechanization of consumption, wherein machine rhythms amplify the fundamental tendency of life to destroy the durability of the world. In this manner even the worldly category of use is to be absorbed by consumption inasmuch as use objects –in this instance, tools– become transformed by abundance into disposable 'throwaway' goods; a subtle shift whose real significance resides in the intrinsic destructiveness of consumption as opposed to use.

The consequence of all this for contemporary architecture is as distressing as it is universal. Elevated on freeways or pedestrian decks or alternatively sequestered behind security fences, we are caused to traverse large areas of abstract, inaccessible urban space that can be neither appropriated nor adequately maintained. In a similar way we are confronted by piazzas whose hypothetical public status is vitiated by the vacuousness of the context, or alternatively we are conducted down streets evacuated of all public life by the circulatory demands of traffic. We pass across thresholds whose public-representative nature has been suppressed or we enter foyers which have been arranged or lit in such a manner as to defeat the act of public promenade. Alternatively we are caused to depart from airports whose processal function defies the ritual of

leave-taking. In each instance our value-free commodity culture engenders an equivalency wherein museums are rendered as oil refineries and laboratories acquire a monumental form. By a similar token public restaurants come to be rudely incarcerated in basements, while schools find themselves arbitrarily encased within the perimeters of windowless warehouses. In each case a ruthless cultural reduction masks itself by the rhetoric of *kitsch* or by the celebration of technique as an end in itself.

THE IDENTITY OF CONSUMPTION AND THE WORLDLESSNESS OF PLAY

The earliest concentrations of labour-power, beginning first with the workhouse and then with the mill, brought about the uprooting of agrarian populations who then became as alienated from their traditional culture as they were from the objects of industrial production. This loss of 'vernacular' was to return to haunt the descendants of these populations as soon as they became the 'emancipated' consumers of their own output. While the specific form of 'worldlessness' that resulted from this induced consumption varied with successive generations and from class to class, the initial loss of identity enforced by the conditions of industrial production was eventually sublimated, irrespective of class, by an identity to be instantly acquired through consumption. The phenomena of *kitsch* –from *Verkitschen*, 'to fake'– appears with the advent of the department store, around the middle of the nineteenth century, when bourgeois civilization achieves for the first time an excessive productive capacity and is brought to create a widespread culture of its own –a culture that was to remain strangely suspended between the useful and the useless, between the sheer utility of its own puritan work ethic and a compulsive desire to mimic the licentiousness of aristocratic taste.

While Marx, writing just before mass consumption began in earnest, projected the eventual liberation of all mankind from the necessity of remorseless labour, he failed to account for the latent potential of machine production to promote a voracious consumer society wherein, to quote Arendt, 'nearly all human 'labor power' is spent in consuming, with the concomitant serious social problem of leisure'. In such a society the basic problem is no longer production but rather the creation of sufficient daily waste to sustain the inexhaustible capacity for consumption. Arendt's subsequent observation that this supposedly painless consumption only augments the devouring capacity of life, finds its corroboration in a world where shorter working hours, suburbanization and the mass ownership of the automobile have together secured for the realm of consumption the ever-accelerating rate of daily commutation within the megalopolis, a situation in which the hours saved from production are precisely 'compensated' by the hours wasted in the consumptive journey to work.

The victory of the *animal laborans* with which Arendt concludes her study of the dilemmas facing modern man turns not only on the reduction of art to the problematic 'worldlessness' of free play, but also on the substitution of social gratification for the fabricating standards of function and use. For, as Arendt has argued:

Nothing perhaps indicates clearer the ultimate failure of homo faber to assert himself than the rapidity with which the principle of utility, the very quintessence of his world view, was found wanting and was superseded by the principle of 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'.

While utility originally presupposed a world of use objects by which man was significantly surrounded, this world began to disintegrate along with the 'tool-making' tendency of each object not to be an end in itself but rather a means to other objects and other ends. As Arendt has put it, at this juncture 'the 'in order to' has become the content of the 'for the sake of', ... utility established as meaning generates meaninglessness'.

Art, on the other hand, –as the essence of in utility– and this of course includes the non-functional aspect of architecture –is rendered world less in such a society, insofar as it is reduced to introspective abstraction or vulgarized in the idiosyncratic vagaries of *kitsch*. In the first instance it cannot be easily shared and in the second it is reduced to an illusory commodity. If, as Arendt insists, the world must be constructed with thought rather than cognition, then inasmuch as it is not essential to the life processes of a labouring society, art loses its original worldliness and comes to be subsumed under play. This, of course, raises the problematic question as to the conditions under which play may be considered to be worldly. Be this as it may, freedom in labouring society is perceived solely as release from labour, namely, as play, and it is Arendt's recognition of this fact that makes her text such a perceptive, if partial, critique of Marx.

Marx predicted correctly, though with an unjustified glee, 'the withering away' of the public realm under conditions of unhampered development of the 'productive forces of society', and he was equally right, that is, consistent with his conception of man as

an animal laborans, when he foresaw that 'socialized men' would spend their freedom from laboring in those strictly private and essentially wordless activities that we now call 'hobbies'.

THE HUMAN CONDITION AND CRITICAL THEORY: A POSTSCRIPT

Given Hannah Arendt's scepticism as to the redemption promised by the Marxist prognosis it will no doubt appear extraneous to compare her discourse to the critical theory of the Frankfurt School. The reserve which Arendt publicly exercised in respect to this school of Marxist criticism should be sufficient caution against making such a comparison. Yet despite the disdain she seems to have felt for those whom she regarded as renegade Marxists, a common concern and even method may be found to relate the arguments developed in *The Human Condition* to the socio-cultural analyses of the Frankfurt School. It is clear that both Arendt and the Frankfurt School were equally obsessed with the interaction of structure and superstructure in advanced industrial society, even if such terms were entirely foreign to her thought.

These qualifications accepted, one may argue that the succession of the Frankfurt School, specifically the theoretical progression that links the later thought of Herbert Marcuse to the writings of Jürgen Habermas, takes up a number of themes that were either suppressed or suspended at the conclusion of *The Human Condition*. Amongst these issues one may arguably posit two. First, the problematic cultural status of play and pleasure in a future labouring society after its hypothetical liberation from the compulsion of consumption (Marcuse) and, second, the problematic possibility for mediating the autonomous rationality of science and technique through the reconstruction of the space of public appearance as an effective political realm (Habermas).

If one derives from *The Human Condition* the implication that a highly secular, labouring and industrialized order must inevitably prevail in either state-capitalist, capitalist or socialist societies, and if one posits some future state in which the 'fatality' of an ever-accelerating consumption is, in some measure, redeemed, then the question arises as to what are the minimum environmental priorities that such a transformed state could realistically envisage?

While the *vita activa* in the ancient sense would no doubt initially remain in abeyance, some upgrading of the private habitat, essential to the quality of domestic life, would surely assert itself as a priority once this life was no longer subject to either rapacious consumption or optimized production. For while it is true, as Arendt asserts, that from the point of view of nature it is *work* rather than *labour* that is destructive, this observation overlooks that qualitative dimension of consumption beyond which 'man's metabolism with nature' becomes even more destructive of nature than *work*, beyond that frontier that we have already crossed, where nonrenewable resources such as water and oxygen begin to become permanently contaminated or destroyed. At this juncture, labour, as optimized consumption, stands opposed to its own Benthamite cult of life as the highest good, just as privacy per se, as the quintessence of labour and life, is undermined by the productive reduction of all built objects to the status of 'consumer goods'; a threshold that has again been reached in the mobile home industry of the United States.

Human adaptability notwithstanding, the basic criterion of privacy asserted by Barragan, posits itself not only as the necessary 'figure' to the public ground but also as the only standard by which a *balanced and rhythmic* life for the species could eventually be maintained. The urban consequences of applying such criteria as economic densities would be to spontaneously create the boundaries of a 'negative' urban form – namely, some kind of public realm, even if this would not immediately constitute a 'world' in the Arendtian sense. That the public space of the medieval city was the physical counterform of the private fabric Arendt herself has recognized in her assertion that it is the exterior perimeter of the private realm that effectively shapes the space of the city.

As to art, that is to say, as to the symbolization of common values and the manner in which they might be represented, this immediately introduces the cultural dilemma of 'play' and the extent to which communal expression may or may not be reified. Permanence is not the absolute precondition for reification, music being an obvious exception, as Arendt herself acknowledges: 'In music and poetry, the least 'materialistic' of the arts because their 'material' consists of sounds and words, reification and the workmanship it demands are kept to a minimum'.

Twentieth-century avant-garde art has frequently resorted to collective play or at least to aleatory forms of art as the necessary expression of an essentially 'social' and dynamic future, although in many instances innate 'labouring' values have assured that nothing could be achieved save the tautology of production itself. While this strategy may capitalize on the indisputable authority of instrumentality, the parallel tenden-

cy of art to survive through the reductive assertion of its own autonomy is yet a further illustration of the general tendency of a labouring society to move toward privatization. It is hardly an accident that both of these avant-garde strategies first emerged in the early years of the Soviet Union; the former, the *productivist sensibility*, being typified at its most extreme in the self-referential films of Dziga Vertov where the production of films about production exemplified production itself; and the latter, the cult of *autonomous structure*, being reflected in the general artistic formalism of the period. The failure of this avant-garde to find its ostensible public led to the familiar withdrawal of the Soviet state into the *kitsch* of social realism. Only the repressed *Proletcult* with its political theatre and its programme for the 'theatricalization of everyday life' retained some lucid potential for a collective realization of an alternative culture.

Whether architecture, as opposed to building, will ever be able to return to the representation of collective value is a moot point. At all events its representative role would have to be contingent on the establishment of a public realm in the political sense. Otherwise limited by definition to the act of commemoration it would remain exactly where Adolf Loos left it in 1910. That this commemorative impulse would remain alive even in a labouring society became manifest after World War I in the numerous memorials to the 'unknown soldier', those testaments to an unidentifiable somebody whom four years of mass slaughter should have revealed.

Nothing less is outlined in *The Human Condition* than the teleological abyss that has progressively opened up before the path of industrialized man. That Arendt and the Frankfurt School perceived the same void but drew different conclusions from it may be sensed in the following passage from Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization*:

The argument that makes liberation conditional upon an ever higher standard of living all too easily serves to justify the perpetuation of repression. The definition of the standard of living in terms of automobiles, television sets, airplanes, and tractors is that of the performance principle itself. Beyond the rule of this principle, the level of living would be measured by other criteria: the universal gratification of the basic human needs and the freedom from guilt and fear – internalized as well as external, instinctual as well as 'rational'... Under optimum conditions, the prevalence, in mature civilization, of material and intellectual wealth would be such as to allow the painless gratification of needs, while domination would no longer systematically forestall such gratification. In this case, the quantum of instinctual energy still to be diverted into necessary labor... would be so small that a large area of repressive constraints and modifications no longer sustained by external forces would collapse. Consequently the antagonistic relation between pleasure principle and reality principle would be altered in favor of the former. Eros, the life instincts, would be released to an unprecedented degree.

While this utopian projection of a future where 'the elimination of surplus repression would per se eliminate if not labor, then the organization of human existence into an instrument of labor' does nothing if not stress the life-bound values of the *animal laborans*, Marcuse's recognition that the cult of *productivity* as an end in itself is the primary impasse of industrial society brings him surprisingly close to Arendt:

Efficiency and repression converge: raising the productivity of labor is the sacrosanct ideal of both capitalist and Stalinist Stakhanovism. The notion of productivity has its historical limits: they are those of the performance principle. Beyond its domain, productivity has another content and another relation to the pleasure principle: they are anticipated in the processes of imagination which preserve freedom from the performance principle while maintaining the claim of new reality principle.

That one day such a reality might still be achieved seems to be anticipated to an equal degree by Arendt's appraisal of the earliest Russian Soviets and Jürgen Habermas's prognostications for the future of the *vita activa*. The two relevant passages are given below, the former from Arendt's study of revolutionary politics entitled *On Revolution* and the latter from Habermas's essay, dedicated to Marcuse on his seventieth birthday, bearing the title 'Technology and Science as Ideology'. Of the Soviets, Arendt was to write:

The councils, obviously, were spaces of freedom. As such, they invariably refused to regard themselves as temporary organs of revolution and, on the contrary, made all attempts at establishing themselves as permanent organs of government. Far from wishing to make the revolution permanent, their explicitly expressed goal was 'to lay the foundations of a republic acclaimed in all its consequences, the only government which will close forever the era of invasions and civil wars'; no paradise on earth, no classless society, no dream of socialist or communist fraternity, but the establishment of 'the true Republic' was the 'reward' hoped for as the end of the struggle. And what had been true in Paris in 1871 remained true for Russia in 1905, when the 'not merely destructive but constructive' intentions of the first soviets were so manifest that contemporary witnesses 'could sense the emergence and the formation of a force which one day might be able to effect the transformation of the State'.

And was it not just such a transformation that Habermas had in mind when he attempted to establish the following necessary limits for the emergence of a truly scientific rationality?

Above all, it becomes clear against this background that two concepts of rationalization must be distinguished. At the level of subsystems of purposive-rational action, scientific-technical progress has already compelled the reorganization of social institutions and sectors, and necessitates it on an even larger scale than heretofore. But this process of the development of the productive forces can be a potential for liberation if and only if it does not replace rationalization on another level.

Rationalization at the level of the institutional framework can only occur in the medium of symbolic interaction itself, that is through removing restrictions on all communication. Public, unrestricted discussion, free from domination, of the suitability and desirability of action-ordering principles and norms in the light of the socio-cultural repercussions of developing subsystems of purposive-rational action –such as communication at all levels of political and repoliticized decision making processes– is the only medium in which anything like 'rationalization' is possible.

We are confronted in this complex passage with an existential political perspective that for Arendt and Habermas alike is the only possible vehicle for the rational determination of human ends. Such a decentralized 'cantonal' conception tends, I would submit, to return us to the dependency of political power on its social and physical constitution, that is to say, on its derivation from the living proximity of men and from the physical manifestation of their public being in built form. For architecture at least, the relevance of *The Human Condition* resides in this –in its formation of that political reciprocity that must of necessity obtain, for good or ill, between the status of men and the status of their objects.

FROM THE CITY TO COMPRESSED AIR.

GENESIS OF THE MODERN PHOTOGRAPHY OF ARCHITECTURE

Rubén A. Alcolea

Before architects resorted to photographers to spread their work internationally, photography, whose practice has been tied to architecture since its beginnings, played a key role in the birth of the modern avant-garde. Perhaps this is a more interesting aspect, since at the end of the 1920's, more specifically between the years 1927 and 1929, a moment of special importance for the definition of the concept of modernity that would be used extensively by the fine and visual arts and, by extension, by modern architecture. Like architecture, in the first decades of the 20th century, photography underwent a radical transformation. Photography evolved from the pictorial images with which the 19th century was characterised to the so-called straight photography, in that the scenic effects were replaced by precision, the sharpness of the image and the indiscriminate use of photomontages as a creative process.

The avant-garde photographers, attracted by the construction associated to architectural modernity, began to be called "photo mounters". In essence, on these occasions, the reality photographed is already present, and the only mission of the artist, his only task, is to "mount it", "compose it" in order to make it a work of art. The possibilities of photomontage, or rather photographic construction, connect literally, starting then, to architecture. And at the same time, from these visual compositions, architecture obtains the necessary arguments to carry out buildings, or projects often not constructed, made on plans or lines in space.

The opening of one of the biggest exhibits of modern photography occurred in 1929. The exhibit, presented under the somewhat generic title "Film und Foto", sought to recognise the work carried out by photographers worldwide. One of the most interesting photos is that of Jan Kamman with the generic title "Architecture". It is a negative, composed from several shootings. In this work Kamman confides in the juxtaposition of images, all of them in the same frame, using a superimposing process. It is not accidental that this same image was used by Moholy-Nagy in his book, *Von Material zu Architektur*, published the same year as the exhibition. On this occasion, Moholy-Nagy included, at the bottom of the photo, the true dream of modern architecture: "The illusion of space interpretation is assuring superimposing two photographic negatives. Perhaps the next generation will really see buildings like this one, when an architecture of glass and compressed air is developed". It seems that the myth of that New Architecture is still, in essence, inexistent and invisible architecture, made solely of air and, perhaps also for this reason, the only absolutely modern one.

[IDEOGRAMS] PRECISIONS ON "PRECISIONS"

Luis Rojo de Castro

[Ideograms] is a free and unorthodox personal reflection on one of the many journeys of thought that have taken place –and take place, between Europe and Latin America. A journey between both continents, initially linear, but that later multiplied to give rise to a system of reflections, echoes and even deceptions that widened their meaning exponentially. An intense journey in itself, but that I will try to intensify even more as a way to make evident the fundamental relationship between critical thought and projects, between ideas and things, words and drawings, or between theory and practice, to urgently dissolve such unnecessary differentiations.

The architect makes few things with his own hands. For that reason it is necessary to vindicate thought –and, therefore knowledge, as his habitual work material. Nevertheless, the paradox always remains in which the thought of architecture, its knowledge, is systematically and obsessively centered on the material world of things and objects, its production and transformation. And, for that reason, the work of the architect is necessarily trapped in a circular motion that takes it from ideas to things and from things to ideas about things.

This pendulum like geometry of going and coming makes for an effective analogy of architectural thought. In architecture, understood as one more expression of the production of culture and social activity, the anxieties of rationality with the contaminations, errors and random interferences characteristic of any real context are entwined. On the one hand, the models of thought and control describe the facts and the procedures amplifying the guidelines of a coherent explanation of these; on the other hand, the continuous contact with real, more complex surroundings distorts any system of internal laws, increases the complexity of the models and opens the route to indetermination and randomness in production and in thought.

For this reason, it can be clearly stated that in architecture, the messages and their contents barely follow linear guidelines attributable to vectors or rays. On the contrary, they are spread following a model more similar to that of waves. And the obtained answers are not univocal but multiple and deformed, altered by superposition and contamination that allow for complex discourses to be constructed whose meaning is neither evident nor unique. This occurs with the trip to which I am going to refer, taken by Le Corbusier in 1929, from Paris to Buenos Aires and Montevideo, and the description of which I cannot conceive of a more appropriate metaphorical model than that of waves, nor a more accurate audible figure for the description of its effects than that of an echo.

Insistently invited both by the avant-garde and the learned and accommodated bourgeoisie of both cities in the previous years, Le Corbusier finally traveled to Argentina in October of 1929, at the bequest of Blaise Cendrars and Victoria Ocampo. He gave, over the course of several months, an extensive and intense series of ten conferences in diverse academic institutions linked to architecture and mathematics. Ten massively attended conferences in which he dealt with, none other than and in his own words, an analysis of the "present state of architecture and urbanism".

The unconditional reception of his conferences that Christmas, the informational character of the presentations and the magnetic personality of Le Corbusier combine to create an enthusiastic atmosphere in which the architect offers a complete diagnosis of the state of the question: he identifies the illnesses of the city; analyses the crisis of urbanism and urban sprawl; describes the present needs of living, hygiene, infrastructure, displacement, sunlight and ventilation of houses; he expresses, in technical and commonly used terms, the problems of the obsolete cities and poses, finally, the solution to all these questions through the model of the "Modern City".

But the trip soon suffers unexpected consequences and begins to foster a sequence of echoes. And the orthodox proselytism of the initial message becomes blurred when in contact with some contextual circumstances that make their singularity valid.

MARTÍN DOMÍNGUEZ ESTEBAN. THE WORK OF AN EXILED SPANISH ARCHITECT IN CUBA

Francisco Gómez Díaz

Martín Domínguez went into exile in Cuba after the Civil War, where he remained until 1960 when he left to a second exile after the triumph of the Revolution, this time to the USA. The fact that his degree was not recognised forced him to collaborate with diverse teams of professional young people, making a career that was not always seen as his own. Buildings such as Radiocentro CMQ or the FOCSA are among the

most emblematic of La Habana, leaving projects unbuilt such as the remarkable El Pontón or the Edificio Libertad.

TWO FRAGMENTS OF OTAISA IN THE UNIVERSIDAD LABORAL OF SEVILLE: FIVE GYMNASIUMS AND A DYING WORKSHOP

José Joaquín Parra Bañón

The heterogeneous work attributed jointly to the architect founders of the OTAISA company, is almost always remarkable but not well-known nor sufficiently known, with still many undiscovered or analysed. The Universidad Laboral de Sevilla is, if not their most suggestive and complete architectural work, their riskiest, most complex and open of all the projects directed by Rodrigo and Felipe Medina, Luis Gómez and Alfonso del Toro while they were associates. Conceived in 1952, work began in 1954, and it was partially running in 1956, it was still being built in 1965 and was discontinued as a labour institution in 1972, when the educational activity stopped. Its architecture, although damaged by deterioration and the traumas of the refurbishing, is still valid and continues to draw attention. Arrangements, structures, relationships, facilities and shapes not very common in the Spanish architecture of the postwar period, were proposed in this eccentric system of buildings, in this set of areas and compatible environments to certain linguistic ideas of delayed rationalism, indebted to some compositional and functional proposals of the Modern Movement, to some of those ideas adapted to the local conditions and demands of the developers. There are more than a few units that have been demolished of the set of buildings that made up the original complex, always unprotected against the urgency of the renovations inconsiderate to patrimony and abandoned to changes. Few of the buildings have not been transformed to the University of Pablo de Olavide, a public institution that uses it today as its main campus. Of all the original architecture projected by the OTAISA company there are two independent buildings that stand out: the Gymnasiums and the Workshops. The following text essentially documents and analyses this endangered architecture.

THE OPPORTUNITY OF A CONGRESS: REFLECTIONS OF A SCISSORS.

ABOUT THE CONGRESS "CROSSED GLANCES, EXCHANGES BETWEEN LATIN AMERICA AND SPAIN IN THE SPANISH ARCHITECTURE OF THE 20TH CENTURY"

José Manuel Pozo

Although it seems surprising to declare, we could say that the Congress ended on the eve of its start, when, in El Polvorín de la Ciudadela de Pamplona, the two exhibitions that had been organised to accompany the Congress opened. Since what they showed was so graphic that later discussions did nothing but corroborate what the panels of the exhibitions displayed.

One of them was a set of recent works from Argentina. Several panels displayed images of the work of young Argentine architects, through which an attempt to give an idea –incomplete, and at the same time not generalised, of the cultural coordinates of the architecture that is created now in Argentina, and through which it, in some way, very light and questionable, the most general panorama of Latin America was attempted to be shown.

But in spite of the dubious representativeness attributable to that sample of architecture, from such a wide continent, with cultural, geographic and economic situations that vary so much from Mexico to the Patagonia. Nevertheless, the contrast with the other exhibition made it much more interesting and representative than thought initially, as we will indicate later.

The other exhibition had another set of panels in black and white that showed works created in different countries from Latin America (Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico, Chile, Cuba...) in the first half of the 20th century.

The amazing exhibit, the strength and interest of the works gathered in this exhibition, and even the "unity" that was perceived in it, contrasted with the confusion of ideas and weakness that the first exhibit showed. It reflects the present situation of architecture in Argentina (and Latin America generally), and the urgent need they have to look towards Europe again, as they did then, to recover the vigour which they previously enjoyed.

From this to what was cited earlier: the key to understanding the "exchanged glances" was perceived in El Polvorín de la Ciudadela: Spain and Latin America need each

other, they influence and support each other. In the Fifties the architecture of Latin America showed the Spanish architects a path already taken by them before, and that was possible and familiar, partly due to the cultural proximity, partly because some of the protagonists were exiled Spaniards. The architecture of Mario Roberto Álvarez, Ricardo de Robina, Juan Sordo, Wladimiro Acosta, Niemeyer, or Costa was very attractive to the Spanish architects of the fifties, in spite of the technical difficulties that making that type of architecture could cause, in some cases, due to the technical gap that Spain then had.

One could argue to what extent those works were known, but it is indisputable that they are previous to many of the best works of Spanish architecture from the fifties and in which one can see clear similarities. Many of those had been published in Spanish journals then. In addition, the trips between Spain and the old colonies were not infrequent either, in both directions, partly because of the inevitable and intense ties that exiles, forced or voluntary and caused by both the Spanish civil war and World War II, forged over the ocean.

That exhibition, in the introduction of the Congress, presented the participants with the evidence that, in the Fifties, Spanish architects followed behind their contemporaries in Latin America and that many of the more famous and pioneering works of our fifties had references from overseas. Extraordinarily similar, just as the other exhibition offered contrast, with no lesser evidence, that while Spanish architecture from then has continued to progress and take firm steps in constant progress, the architecture in Latin America seems to have lost all its push, and meanders, confused and now erratic, without a course, lost in local whims, research of "natural" materials, or the search for outdated nationalism, from which it is unlikely that a new path can be made, or in banal imitations, without content, of magazine formalisms.

For that reason it was indicated from the beginning, with a certain exaggeration, that we could have ended the Congress the eve of its beginning, since when it opened the path crossed in these fifty years had already been seen, and there was material about which to establish a discussion, that in fact began in the rooms of El Polvorín de la Ciudadela. In view of the two exhibits, one could conclude that in the fifties, Spanish architecture had much to admire about what Latin America had been doing since the Thirties. Although it is true that it remained to be seen if that learning had indeed occurred, and how it had taken place, that was in fact the objective of the calling of the Congress; at the same time the benefit was perceived, or rather the necessity, that now the influence in the opposite direction could occur so that the architecture of Latin America can return to be what it was. The discussion would also fit here about how to do this, but this was outside the aims of the Congress (equally as was the exhibition about present Argentine architecture, in a certain way, outside the temporary framework of the Congress, although it was very illustrative and instructive).

As a tribute to that teaching of decades ago in favour of Spain, and as a timid reimbursement, a publication about the work of Wladimiro Acosta appeared at the Congress, prepared from previous work done in Buenos Aires in 1986, organized by the Facultad de Arquitectura, Diseño y Urbanismo (FADU), on the occasion of the tribute paid to this figure. He is an architect that we could consider to be Spanish-Argentine as he was the son of a Spanish exile, who had taken refuge in Odessa, Russia, where Wladimir had been born. He later fled from Russia to live his second exile in Argentina, changing his name to that of Wladimiro.

Acosta carried out very interesting works, by which it is probable that he was known in Spain in the fifties, but in Argentina of course he had real importance. For that reason, and his "Spanish" origin, is of itself, in some way, the dual relationship and influences that the title given to the Congress alludes to. Besides the interest of Acosta being Spanish-Argentine and of the quality of his works, the preparation of that edition, that is improved from that created in Buenos Aires in 1986, is also symbolic of what here today can and must always be done to be a little consistent with that forced and very beneficial exchanging of glances, in parent-child relations.

THE CONGRESS

It is already becoming habitual in these Congresses that, as presentations are given, and in the debates, it is clear the need to study contemporary architecture (and not only Spanish), in greater depth which is known generally very superficially and opinions are often formulated without previous knowledge and analysis of relative documents and circumstances, whose existence is unknown. That has been especially obvious in the present case, due to the great diversity of different circumstances that affected each region of Latin America in the years considered and the different nature and intensity of its relations with Spain. In any case, two figures stood out in the exhibitions and debates the first day, who at the end of the day were shown to be dispro-

portionate in relation to the subject of the Congress; they were Josep Lluís Sert and Félix Candela. They were the object of attention more for the importance of their activities in Latin America than for their influence in Spain, scarce in both cases, then and now.

Already of itself an interesting contribution from the Congress, attending to the importance of the negative impact it had on the development of our architecture, according to some Spanish historians, “good” exiles, that the talks in the Congress came to refute once again.

Thus Roberto Segre (La Habana) devoted his speech, with which the Congress opened, to present and to discuss the opportunity of the Sert Plan for La Habana, of whose opinions Francisco Gómez Díaz (Seville) openly differed in his speech and in the later talk; that discrepancy, together with the North American origin of the Sert proposal, sidetracked the discussions towards urban-historical analyses that were interesting, but somewhat outside the subjects of debate of the Congress. And that after all did not shed too much light on the debated question. Ferreira Martins (São Paulo) also centered his presentation on a Sert project, although he warned of the scarce “Hispanicity” attributed to the proposal of that for the Motor City in Brazil. But in spite of that it was a very interesting presentation; since Ferreira, with the pretext of that “project” promoted by the Vargas government (developed in the midst of the World War), made reference to urban-planning proposals of Reidy, Costa and Niemeyer, that had weight in Spain, where urban planning as a discipline was beginning to be developed, and where the waking up of architecture and the growth of the cities due to the incipient industrial development that was taking place. And although it is an influence, as Ferreira himself indicated with “impact and exchanges that the presentation hardly suggests”, are not for that reason less real; or rather that, indeed for that reason, they show with determination a field of research which should be examined closely, since, as I dared to point out in the introduction of the Congress book, those “impacts and exchanges” indeed occurred. Because one cannot doubt the influence of Brazilian architecture on that of the Spain of the fifties; and to certify that, it is sufficient, as I pointed out in the aforementioned text, to remember the criticism that Luis Moya, one of the outstanding judges of the Spanish architecture scene in the fifties, made in 1952, in the pages of the *RNA* journal. He warned against the imitation of Niemeyer which he observed in the work of his colleagues, from his point of view, that influence and that of others (to which he generically described as functionalists) meant a serious danger to the architecture that had to be done in Spain. As I dared to indicate in that introduction, if time has discredited Moya’s error considering that “functionalist” influence harmful and detrimental, that he came to jokingly caricature Niemeyer’s “brisoileis” as “ear flaps that we put on the mules so that they see in one direction only”, he was not mistaken, however when he denounced the increasing weight and influence that architecture of “non-Spanish” origin had in Spain, much to his chagrin.

If, as we indicated, the presentations about Sert did not shed excessive light on the relationship between Spanish architecture and that of Latin America, and the growth and maturation of the former, something similar happened with the presentations that talked about the other triumphant exile: Candela; Gómez de Cozar (Seville) and González Pendás (New York) speak of him and his work in their presentations, in which, from the study of his personal correspondence and theoretical and technical writings, and his conferences, showed his political convictions, the feelings and personal drama of the architect, his love-hate relationship towards his mother country, and the influence that all that inner world had, in their opinion, on his architecture and his brilliant creations. Nevertheless, as was shown in the discussion that followed their presentations, both speakers gave excessive importance to those writings as an expression of his ideas or political-social convictions, leaving a bit to the side the analysis of the real relationship of these with his way of doing things, and attended scarcely to the small preoccupation that they seem to perceive in Candela towards the social problems that surrounded him, like the rational construction of the city and the pressing housing problems in Mexico, which also occurred in Spain. This justified his participation in the later debate that placed the importance of Candela in doubt, indeed because his work had no relation at all to the great problem of contemporary architecture.

One of the more representative papers of the Congress was that of Jorge Francisco Liernur (Buenos Aires) who devoted his presentation to the project and the construction of the School of Argentina in the University of Alcalá of Madrid, a work by Horacio Baliero and Carmen Córdova, and developed between Buenos Aires and Madrid in the Sixties, with the support and participation of Spanish architects of the stature of Feduchi and Moneo. Liernur, who on the other hand had participated in the design of the Congress, and to whom the title is partly owed (crossed glances), not only pre-

sented the content and development of the project of Baliero and Córdova, relating it to the social and political situation of Argentina, but strived to show not only the importance that building had on the rebirth of Spanish architecture, that is conserved (recently it has been included on the list of three hundred works of contemporary architecture in Madrid that should be conserved, created by the COAM), but in making us also see the influence that Baliero’s trips to Spain had because of that work, and what he saw here, and its influence on his later works in Argentina.

In that framework, the expression “development from a scissors” was especially suggestive that Liernur used to graphically characterise the relationship between the processes of Argentine and Spanish architectural thought of then and now, locating the central point of the mechanism in the years in which the project they analysed was carried out. That is the idea that, on the other hand has been stated that seemed to be discovered in view of the content and meaning of the two exhibitions shown in parallel to the Congress: we learned from them in the fifties and now, we the Spanish architects are the ones who must help the Argentines.

A smaller note than made by Liernur to observe the investment produced in that “development of scissors” was the substitution in Argentina of the protagonism of the Argentine publishing house Nueva Visión by that of the Spanish one of Gustavo Gili. It was an accurate decision, because the publishing houses of Argentina, Uruguay and Mexico were, in the 50s, and until almost the 70s, the channels by which many of the fundamental texts of modernity arrived to Spain; something that Javier Martínez (Pamplona) and Federico Deambrosis (Milan) covered extensively on the second day of the congress, reinforcing the theses of Liernur, contributing interesting data on the matter, that reinforced the “exchanging glances” title. For example, one of the most important publishing houses of that process: Poseidon, had been founded indeed by a Spanish exile: Joan Merli, who years later returned to Barcelona, moving the publishing house to Spain, while changing the direction of the influences between both worlds.

Although not reflectively sought, the publication of the monograph on Wladimiro Acosta can also be considered a success.

The presentations of Alberto Sato (Caracas), Fernando Pérez de Oyarzun (Santiago de Chile) and Enrique X. de Anda (Mexico) contributed interesting data about concrete episodes related to the history of architecture of their countries bound to the inclusion of exiled Spanish architects and artists who let us glimpse the possibility of later research about their accomplishments and of the role they may have had as a stimuli for Spanish architecture, starting with the relationships which they may have had with their mother country and with those whom they left behind. But the presentations in themselves did not help much to feed the debate about that role or on its protagonism, because they were limited to stating works that those Spaniards carried out where they were received. In any case, those references serve to help us realise what those who arrived thought and to imagine the starting point for those that remained when the economic and social situation of Spain allowed them to resume the march of technical, aesthetic and formal progress.

To finish with this hurried summary of the Congress, it is necessary to talk about one of the more interesting subjects among those debated, but that was not specifically dealt with in any paper; it is one that refers to research methodology, about which diverse participation took place and a certain debate.

Doubtlessly architecture responds to the society to which it serves, and it is not scientific to study it as you could with an artistic creation, fruit of the whim of the author, and absolutely separated from time and social circumstances. But the debate is to establish what type of documentation and data must be collected or considered at the time of judging an architectural work or rather an architectural moment.

Liernur defended the need for an analysis of architecture that goes accompanied not only with a simultaneous knowledge of the poetry, the painting and literature, the cinema... but also the contemporary political situation and the economic, sociological parameters... of the moment. Doubtlessly it is a study that would allow for a very rich exegesis of the works but that also has its danger; on the one hand with an already classic expression, “that the trees do not let you see the forest”; on the other hand, that this would demand for an excessively complex set of data, that is not always provided; but that in any case, would make the research difficult and extremely slow, leaving in the air the doubt, also classic, if this is not one of those cases in which “the best thing is not enemy of the good”.

On the other hand, nothing guarantees that the realities that those data refer to had really affected the work or the architecture in the way that one thinks, either superficially or the whim of the architect, or for unforeseeable reasons of any kind. One cannot try to analyse architecture on the margin of architecture as if it were the product

of a mood or as if it were the irremediable and reflective consequence of intellectual and political premises, accepting a fate of “boulletian” architecture of “intellectual” style: of ideas, shapes, as were discussed in the actual Congress, when considering the excessive role given to the writings of Candela in relation to his works by Gómez de Cozar and González Pendas.

In any case the content of that deeply rooted discussion, only outlined here, glimpsed at the end of the Congress as a possible framework or subject for the next one, that could even be prepared with previous seminars in which the topics were chosen to be discussed in the Congress. So that even with the Pamplona seventh edition, in 2010, those seminars could be carried out previously, in 2009, in very distant places: USA, Argentina... so that many scholars and historians from very diverse places and opinions could participate and provide their ideas.

Finally, as a summary of that seen in the Congress and the exhibitions that accompanied it, without doubt Spain and Latin America continue looking at each other because it is their natural vocation. Spain cannot renounce its condition as mother country of Latin America, nor Latin America to have us as such, in spite of the indigenous movements and of their real independence; and now, in 2008, they should look more than ever towards our architecture, trying to approach our achievements and our way of doing things, and I think that the intelligent ones, in fact, do so. But that cannot make us forget that not long ago the mother country also needed the aid of her children, in years of disease and shortage, to be able to go forward and to arrive where it is now. We cannot leave the scissors in the sewing box: in that educational effort not only does its architecture grow and with her the society to which it serves, but also ours.