NYIT

REWRITING

about Architecture

Alberto Campo Baeza

REWRITING

about Architecture

Alberto Campo Baeza

NYIT

REWRITING ABOUT ARCHITECTURE
1st Edition in English 2020

by Estudio Arquitectura Campo Baeza
Almirante 4, 5ºB. 28004 Madrid
www.campobaeza.com

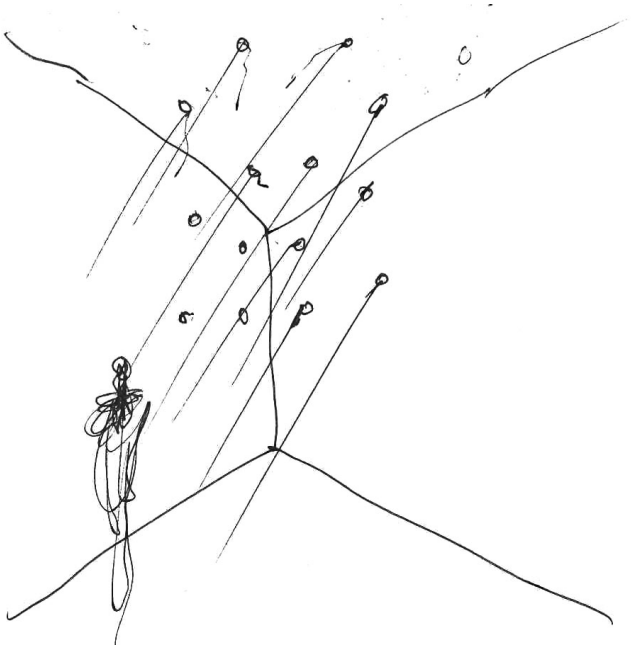
Author: Alberto Campo Baeza
English translation by: Penelope Eades
Editors: Alejandro Cervilla García, Alfonso Guajardo-Fajardo Cruz and
María Pérez de Camino Díez

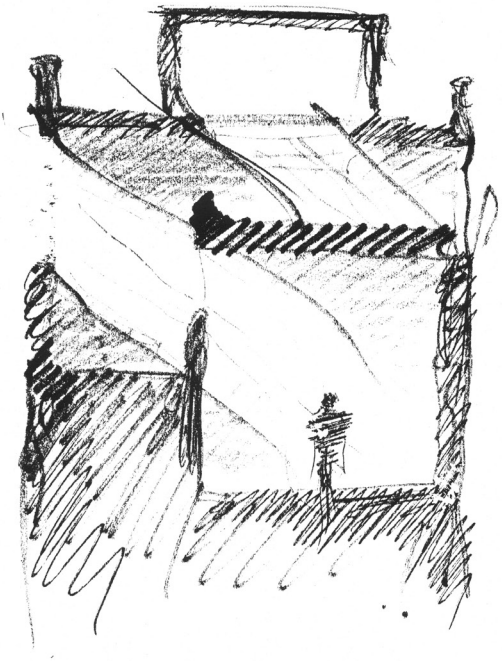
ISBN: 978-84-09-23326-7
Dep. Legal: M-25252-2020

Printer: StockCero, S. A.
Printed in Spain

INDEX

PREFACE





MM.

March 12. 88

REWRITING
Preface

"The final coat, that last touch that is nothing and yet so much, that light stroke of pumice stone that smooths and polishes."

Ortega y Gasset, *Ideas and Beliefs*.

Often, as will doubtless have happened with many of you, on re-reading your own texts from long ago, if written in Word and you read them on screen, you will have introduced more than one correction. It could be a letter or a word, a line or an idea. When after a certain time we closely examine our own writings, we discover with greater clarity their successes and failures.

Following a long interval, I have been re-reading many of my architectural texts –the most essential ones– and I see that I have made so many corrections of all kinds that I have decided to rewrite them.

I have decided to do this with the set of writings that I consider to be the core texts in architecture: on Beauty, Light, Time, Memory, Universality, Intellectual Enjoyment and Wisdom.

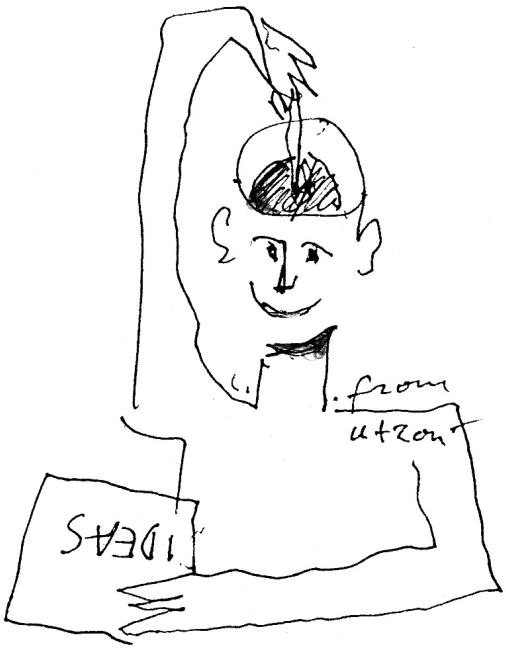
In writing about Intellectual Enjoyment I spoke of the satisfaction of rereading a text. And now I am discovering that writing it again, rewriting it, is even more satisfying.

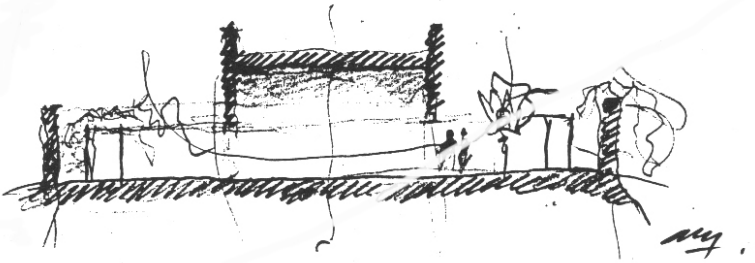
Rewriting is like perfecting a poem, where each finely tuned stanza and word can tell us much more and sound much clearer. Like tuning a musical instrument, which, while remaining the same, acquires the ability to sound much better after tuning.

As Borges says: “I send my work to the publisher so that I can stop correcting.”

I initially had doubts about taking the decision to rewrite my texts, thinking how complicated the whole process would be. But I must confess that, to my surprise, quite the opposite has occurred. Tidying and fine-tuning my texts by rewriting them has turned out to be a most enjoyable experience, an unexpected gift.

To rewrite is to start all over again, like being born again. With this positive spirit, I have embarked on this work that is giving me so much satisfaction. To be able to correct my mistakes, to start over again, what a great gift of life!


IDEAS
from
utzon



BEAUTY

Relentlessly seeking beauty

"Quid est ergo pulchrum? Et quid est pulchritudo?

Do we perchance love anything but the beautiful? What then is the beautiful? And what is beauty? What is it that allures and unites us to the things we love; for unless there were a grace and beauty in them, they could not possibly attract us to them?"

Saint Augustine, *Confessions*. IV.13. 44

PURPOSE

After many years working as an architect, teaching as a university professor and putting my ideas on paper, the reason why I pursue my work, I must confess, what I truly seek with all my heart and with all my soul, relentlessly, is *beauty*.

Can an architect confess this so overtly? Can any creator state outright that what he is seeking is beauty? That is what poets and musicians and painters and sculptors, all artists, do.

But I am convinced that by achieving beauty in architecture with this "art with necessary reason", as the classics used to say, we succeed in making a happier place for mankind.

Beauty, Venustas, together with Utilitas and Firmitas are the three principles whose fulfillment Vitruvius demanded from Architecture. Achieving Venustas, having previously fulfilled the requirements of Utilitas and Firmitas, is the best way of making people happier, which is not only the aim of Architecture but that of all creative work. Sáenz de Oíza explained it better than me in "The Dream of Paradise" when he said: "I

declare that the works of Architecture are instruments for transforming reality into a splendid and regained Paradise from which through our own fault we were expelled and which we have again been readmitted to thanks to the powers of transformation of Architecture". Venustas, beauty, as a means to regaining Paradise lost, happiness.

Similarly Carvajal spoke of "orderly beauty" and his "desire to create efficiency and beauty at the same time such as only true architects seek to do". "The beauty that we contemplate, being ours, we can use to engender beauty, operatively, in our works. Thus beauty becomes a driving force and not just a consequence".

Over the past number of years I have written about many of the masters of Spanish contemporary architecture and, in attempting to summarize all that seemed to me most substantial in them, I developed a collection of texts under the heading of beauty. Bald beauty for Sota, volcanic beauty for Oíza, chiseled beauty for Carvajal, rebellious beauty for Fisac and beauty itself for Barragán. It was my understanding then that beauty was the cause and the aim of the creative work of the masters. And now, with the passage of time, I see it with ever greater clarity. Beauty!

REASON. CERVANTES, GOYA, GOETHE

Beauty in architecture goes hand in hand with reason. I have defended and still defend reason as the architect's primary and principal instrument to attain beauty. Although this may be true for all the arts, it is imperative for architecture.

Cervantes. Those who have read *Don Quixote* do not usually pause at those exceptional pages in which Cervantes prefaces his universal work. And Cervantes himself confesses that he wrote the prologue later. He also confesses that it is the piece of writing to which he devoted most time. Thus he wrote: "Idle reader: thou mayest believe me without any oath that I would this book, *as it is the child of my brain*, were the fairest, gayest, and cleverest that could be imagined". So, having made it clear that reason

was his principal work tool, he declares his unshakeable desire to capture beauty with it.

When I wrote that architecture is a built idea, I was merely making the claim that architecture, and any creative work, must be the product of thought, of reason, and of understanding, as we read in Cervantes.

And when that reason is missing, then bizarre architectures appear which, being so often against nature, produce the amazement and the adoration of this ignorant society of ours that bows before these works as if they were the temples of a new religion.

Goya. “The sleep of reason produces monsters,” Goya tells us in the marvelous aquatint that presides over the office of the President of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando. It is number 43 of the 80 etchings that make up the series of Los Caprichos published by Goya in 1799. Goya also wrote a lesser known text, in the form of a list of comments, the original of which is conserved in the Archive of the Prado Museum. In that text, commenting on etching 43, Goya writes: “Fantasy abandoned by reason produces impossible monsters”, but goes on to say that “united with her, she is the mother of the arts and the origin of their marvels”. In other words, reason needs imagination to open the doors to beauty. How could we not agree with Goya!

God forbid that I should wish to compare myself with Cervantes or Goya, but it is with this spirit that I have wished and still wish to build all my works: trying to conquer beauty with all my soul, with the weapons of reason and of imagination. “With the dour desire to endure as the primary impulse of creation,” as Paul Eluard tells us. With the intention of remaining in the memory of humankind. Or as Federico García Lorca said with such simple and lovely words: “I write to be loved”.

Goethe. And it would seem that Goethe agreed with Cervantes and Goya in defending reason as the best pathway to beauty when, referring to the painters of his time, he said that “they must dip their brushes into the bottle

of reason". Of course, he then adds: "and architects into Winckelmann". Tired of the unreasonable digressions being produced around him, Goethe, with these emphatic words, strongly advocated the recovery of reason.

PLATO AND SAINT AUGUSTINE

Reason as man's primary tool in achieving beauty. But what is beauty?

In "The Banquet", Plato proposed beauty as *splendor viri*, the splendor of truth. Over the centuries further nuances were added to this proposal by other thinkers who, carrying on from Plato, fine-tuned his words with the most interesting of accents. Jacques Maritain sums it up very well: "*splendor veri,* said Plato, *splendor ordinis,* said Saint Augustine, and *splendor formae,* said Saint Thomas". However, coursing through the veins of all these formulas is an irrepressible ambition to discover deeper explanations. If truth must be at the heart of all architectural creation that aspires to beauty, how could we consider order and form to be less important? Truth, and order and form. "Form, as we well know, is not something superimposed; it is generated by the very material that reveals itself in it", as José Ángel Valente so wisely wrote when honoring Chillida. How could we as architects not subscribe to form as the "material that reveals itself in it" in achieving beauty?

And I cannot resist mentioning here Saint Augustine's considerations in identifying beauty with the Supreme Maker:

"Late have I loved you, beauty so ancient and so new: late have I loved you.
Lo, you were within me and I was in the external world
and sought you there, and in my unlovely state I plunged into the beauty of your creatures .
You were with me, but I was not with you.
They held me back far from you, which if they did not have their existence in you, had no existence at all.
You called and cried out loud and shattered my deafness.
You were radiant and resplendent, you banished my blindness.

You were fragrant, and I drew in my breath and now pant after you.
I tasted you, and I feel but hunger and thirst for you.
You touched me, and I am on fire to attain the peace which is yours."

INVESTIGATION, PRECISION AND TRANSCENDENCE

Let us not, however, go off on intricate philosophical or theological tangents but return to the route that leads to beauty via architecture.

And indeed, the motto on the shield of the AA Architectural Association London says: "Design with Beauty, Build in Truth", which is an accurate summary of what we are discussing right now.

On the occasion of his Doctorate Honoris Causa conferral by the University of Oporto, I was asked to write a text on Alvaro Siza in which I enlarged on what I consider to be his three principal qualities as an architect –as a factor of beauty more than anything else– being the three characteristics that I consider as inherent in all architecture that participates in that longed-for beauty: an investigative nature, poetic precision and the capacity to transcend.

Investigative nature. One reaches beauty in architecture in the wake of rigorous, profound work that can and must be considered as a true work of research. Beauty is something profound, precise and concrete that rocks the very foundations of human civilization, which makes time stand still and ensures that the created work remains durable in time and in the memory of man. For beauty in architecture is not something superficial, vague or diffuse, but the work of real research.

Not one of my projects has ever been just *another one*. In each and every one of them I have given my all. Each new project has been and is for me an opportunity to seek and find beauty. Each and every one of them has been conceived and designed and built with maximum intensity. With the intense conviction that architecture is the most beautiful work in the world.

I have said *no* many times to many projects in which I wasn't given enough freedom or which I considered were not interesting enough to devote my time to them. Some may call this pedantic. But I believe this is the only way that one can create, that one can live creating, living with the intensity that makes this life worthwhile. All creators understand this very well: poets and writers, musicians and painters and sculptors worth their salt.

When Xavier Zubiri was awarded the National Research Prize in 1982, in his acceptance speech he thanked the Spanish people for being capable of understanding that philosophy is a true labor of research. On many occasions I have recommended to my students that they replace the word philosophy with the term architecture in that illuminating text and they will discover that the result is surprisingly close. Because architecture is a true labor of research. And as Zubiri himself advised in his address, quoting Saint Augustine: "Seek as those seek who still have not found, and find as those find who are still seeking."

Poetic precision. And the beauty we are talking about comes to architecture hand in hand with precision –that same precision with which poetry is chiseled. When I defend the poetic nature that all architecture in search of beauty must have, I am not defending something vague and diffuse. I am looking for the precision required in poetry to achieve beauty, which is the same precision that I look for in architecture.

María Zambrano defined poetry as *"*the word in harmony with the number*"*. What better way to define the precision inherent in poetry. A word, which in one position says nothing special, when placed in the right place is capable of moving us and making time stand still right there. The same is true, with the same precision, in architecture. Because if poetry is words conjugated with precision, capable of moving the hearts of men, so too is architecture with its materials.

Capacity to transcend. Beauty in architecture appears when it is capable of transcending us. Architecture that achieves beauty is an architecture that transcends us. The true creator, the true architect, is the one whose work

transcends him. Stefan Zweig explains this so well in “The Secret of Artistic Creation”: “There is no greater delight or satisfaction than recognizing that man too can create imperishable values and that eternally we remain united to the Eternal through our supreme effort on earth: through art”. Zweig, like Saint Augustine, links beauty with the Supreme Being.

Moreover, that beauty that transcends us is not something unachievable or simply reserved for a few geniuses. I always try to convince my students that to achieve beauty is a possibility. It is possible to achieve works that are caressed by the “sound of a gentle whisper” with which the Divine Presence was confirmed in the sacred scriptures and which in architectural creation is the sign that beauty is present.

In Chapter 19, 11-12 of the *Book of Kings* we read: “The angel said to the prophet Elias: ‘Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by’. And Elias went out. And behold, a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. And there in that gentle whisper was the Lord.”

So it is that same gentle whisper, the *silibus aurae tenuis* as Saint Jerome writes in the Vulgate, that we architects yearn for our works of architecture, and what all creators long for. It is a clear sign that there is beauty in our works when they are worthwhile.

UTILITAS, FIRMITAS, VENUSTAS

How could architects not understand that the truth of the idea generated by the fulfillment of function and construction is essential if we are to achieve beauty in architecture? As Vitruvius famously stated: reaching Venustas demanded the prior and exact fulfillment of Utilitas and Firmitas.

Utilitas. “When it is said that Architecture must be functional, it stops being functional because it only attends to one of the many functions it has”, Oíza wisely stated.

Ósip Mandelstam at the beginning of his superb “Dialogue on Dante” says, referring to poetry: “Where a work can be measured by the yardstick of narration, the sheets have not been used, that is to say, (if I may be allowed the expression) Poetry has not spent the night there”. So, in this very pedagogical way, Mandelstam explains the crux of the question in artistic creation. The narrative elements must never be central, nor should they be in architecture. The Utilitas demanded by Vitruvius as a primary condition, the function, must be fulfilled and well accomplished. But architecture is something more, much more, than merely the perfect fulfillment of function. Function in architecture is the narrative.

When Bernini reveals the white marble of the ever so beautiful *Proserpine kidnapped by Neptune*, above and beyond the description of the scene and beyond the loveliness of the sculpture, the essence of what he is doing here is demonstrating his capacity to make the hard Carrara marble appear soft, morbid. He manages to dominate the material, to bend and tame it; something so much more universal than simply representing a scene. The strong hand of Neptune grips Proserpine’s delicate thigh and this is what is most interesting about this sculpture, how he manages to make what is hard appear soft. Once again the creator is conveying a universal theme that goes far beyond the mere narration of a story, something more than just a sculpture. In each and every one of his architectures Bernini seeks and finds something more than the mere perfect fulfillment of a function or the mere perfect construction. He seeks and finds beauty.

Firmitas. And if in order to achieve beauty in architecture the timely fulfillment of function, Utilitas, is important, no less important is its good construction, Firmitas.

Viollet le Duc in his *Entretiens sur l´Architecture* defended the construction, Firmitas, as the fundamental basis of architecture. He called for the

judicious and adequate expression of materials in order to attain beauty in architecture. Beauty emanated from a well conceived and well constructed structure. “Any form that does not adapt to the structure must be repudiated”. It is the structure which, as I have repeated so many times, in addition to bearing the load and transmitting it to the ground, establishes the order of space; that establishment of the order of space, which is a central theme in architecture.

Venustas. And finally, of course, after the precise fulfillment of Utilitas and Firmitas, as prescribed by Vitruvius, necessarily comes Venustas, beauty.

PANTHEON, ALHAMBRA, BARCELONA PAVILION

Let us now take a look at some buildings that in the history of architecture have clearly materialized the ineffable beauty that we are discussing here.

Few buildings in history have the quality of making us lose the notion of time like the Pantheon in Rome. Not only does it fulfill its universal function to perfection, not only is it extremely well constructed, but it is also of undeniable beauty. All the great creators have acknowledged that on visiting it. Suffice it to quote Henry James describing the memorable scene of Count Valerio kneeling inside the Pantheon illuminated from above by the light of the moon. The scene is quite beautiful. In that marvelous story, *The last of the Valerii*, the Count states: “This is the best place in Rome. It’s worth fifty St Peter’s”.

The Pantheon in Rome is an extraordinary container of beauty, of total beauty. If we stand with our backs against the wall inside the Pantheon, we feel that the space still fits inside our visual angle and therefore, inside our heads. Its 43 metres in diameter make possible the miracle that is the result of the application of precise measurements by Agrippa’s architect, Apollodorus of Damascus, to whom it is attributed. The same dimensions were wisely used by Pedro Machuca in the courtyard of the Palace of Charles V in the Alhambra many years later. And the very same dimensions

I myself, having discovered the secret, used in the white elliptical patio of my Granada museum.

In terms of Utilitas the Roman temple is universal, so universal that it still remains a space for the future. There is no other architecture in Rome so future-oriented.

And in terms of Firmitas, it is so firm, so well constructed that it always emerged unscathed from the onslaughts it suffered. After its construction by Agrippa it suffered such a great fire that Hadrian had to reconstruct it. And even Domitian and Trajan were involved in it. And nothing happened, as Douglas Adams said of buildings destroyed and built again: “it is always the same building”. And indeed the Pantheon, its beauty, is an idea, a built idea, precise in its dimensions and in its proportions and in its light. An enduring and eternal beauty. It is always the same building.

And if we were to speak of the light in the Pantheon we might never finish. Suffice a reference to Chillida embracing the column of light that entered through the oculus, who described the sensation: “the illuminated air was lighter than the rest of the room”. Perhaps what he felt, what he touched, was the breath of that *gentle whisper*.

Another paragon of Beauty is yet another architecture that was constructed, destroyed and reconstructed so many times while still remaining always *the same building*: the Alhambra in Granada. Built by Yusuf I, reconstructed by Mohamed V, and restored by Leopoldo Torres Balbás in the last century. What could I at this stage add to what has been said about the Alhambra? We have to go back to the lyrical passages that those vizier-poets of the emirs of Granada recorded on its walls. Ibn Zamrak puts the words in the mouth of the Alhambra itself, in the decoration of the fountain in Daraxa’s garden, such lovely words as these: “And he has granted me the highest degree of beauty, so that my shape causes the admiration of the sages” and without the least hesitation he continues: “for never have any eyes seen a greater thing than myself, neither in the East nor in the West and in no time has any king, neither abroad nor in Arabia”. And we would never

finish if we were to continue with the beautiful inscriptions of the Alhambra. Beauty speaking about beauty itself.

Then there are the words dedicated by Barragán: “Having made my way through a narrow and dark tunnel of the Alhambra, I was delivered to the serene, still, solitary and delightful courtyard of the myrtles of this ancient palace. It contained what a well crafted garden ought to contain: nothing less than the entire universe. I have never forgotten that memorable experience and it is not by chance that from the first garden I did in 1941, all those that have followed humbly attempt to echo the immense lesson of the wisdom of the Alhambra of Granada”.

Of course if we are to discuss contemporary architectures full of beauty, capable of resisting time, physical destruction and their reconstruction, then we must speak of the Barcelona Pavilion of Mies van der Rohe, which appears to have been built only yesterday. Or tomorrow.

The Barcelona Pavilion is not only a synthesis of the principal conceptual achievements of modern architecture, but, in addition, a prodigy of beauty. A simple podium in Roman travertine, at just the right height to transport us into another world. A light slab for a roof, perfectly tensed, and supported by cruciform pillars –like dancers *en pointe*– which, on account of their form and brilliance seem to vanish. Exquisite walls of extraordinary onyx that serve as an epigraph to time with abstract signs moving with the freedom that the continuous space affords. And all with the precise measurements and proportions: nothing over here, nothing over there, and the miracle takes place. Architecture that has conquered beauty forever.

These three examples of architecture are capable of resisting time and reconstruction while always remaining *the same building*. Not only that, in all of them time stands still. In all of them past, present and future are there, suspended: time suspended for beauty to emerge. In all of them we observe what Michael Bockemül expressed so well when referring to Rembrandt: “he converts the conceptual understanding of the canvas into

its visual perception". These three works of architecture convert so well their conceptual understanding into visual perception.

The three architectures cited here corroborate to what extent architecture is a built idea whose beauty remains forever, it is indestructible.

MIES VAN DER ROHE, LE CORBUSIER, WRIGHT

But I could not end this discourse without mentioning, albeit very briefly, the words of some of the great masters of contemporary architecture, Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright, who, of course, constantly alluded to beauty as the ultimate goal of architecture.

Mies. Mies van der Rohe spoke prolifically about beauty. In a well-known text of his titled "Build in a beautiful and practical way. Enough of cold functionalism!". He tells us: "It seems completely clear to me that, on account of our modified needs and the appearance of new mediums that technology has placed at our disposal, we shall attain a new class of beauty… I do not think that we will ever again accept beauty for itself". And emulating Plato and St. Augustine, he repeats: "Beauty is the splendor of truth".

And he goes on to ask: "And what in reality is beauty? Most certainly, nothing that can be calculated, nothing that can be measured, but rather something ineffable. In architecture, beauty –which is equally necessary in our time and continues to constitute an objective, as it has been in previous ages– can only be achieved when something more than the mere finality is taken into account." How could we not agree with him?

LC. And Le Corbusier was not to be outdone in his defense of beauty: "The architect, by his arrangement of forms, realizes an order which is a pure creation of his spirit. Through forms and shapes, he affects our sense to an intense degree and provokes plastic emotions. Through the relationships which he creates he wakes in us profound echoes, he gives us the measure of an order which we feel to be in accordance with that

of our world, he determines the various movements of our heart and our understanding. And it is then that we experience the sense of beauty".

FLlW. And of Frank Lloyd Wright so many things could be said concerning beauty. But let us here just echo the final sentences of the manuscript found on his desk on the day of his death. In it he tells us: "Architecture, the greatest of the arts, begins there where mere construction ends and the dominance of man is imposed". And he goes on to say: "The human being appears dependent on inspiration from a higher source. Because neither through legacy nor instinct does man attain beauty". And he continues: "Only when the spirit of man becomes conscious of the need for the benediction of beauty, beauty attends and architecture appears, the greatest of mankind's arts. And in the same way, sculpture and painting and music." And he finishes with the very explicit statement: "When man proposed that beauty would enter his buildings architecture was born".

MELNIKOV, BARRAGÁN, SHAKESPEARE

However following this incursion into the idea of beauty in Mies, Le Corbusier and Wright, for very personal reasons, I cannot leave out three other figures: two architects and a poet.

Melnikov. Konstantin Melnikov is the Russian architect and contemporary of those masters who best defines that beauty that some of us architects strive for: a bare, radical, essential beauty: "Having become my own boss, I begged architecture in turn to take off her marble dress, remove her make-up and reveal herself as she is, naked, like a young and graceful goddess; and, as corresponds to true beauty, renounce being agreeable and obliging".

And Barragán. And for similar reasons, once again I turn to the words of Barragán. The universal Mexican maestro expresses himself clearly in relation to beauty in his Pritzker acceptance speech, 1982: "Mr. Jay A. Pritzker stated in a press release that I had been chosen as the recipient of this prize for having devoted myself to architecture as a sublime act of

poetic imagination. Consequently, I am only a symbol for all those who have been touched by beauty. It is alarming that publications devoted to architecture have banished from their pages the words beauty, inspiration, magic, spellbound, enchantment, as well as the concepts of serenity, silence, intimacy and amazement. All these have nestled in my soul, and though I am fully aware that I have not done them complete justice in my work, they have never ceased to be my guiding lights".

And Shakespeare. I have searched the poets for explicit references to beauty. And I have returned once again to Shakespeare, using a well-known bilingual edition. And when I found that the word beauty did not appear, as in that prestigious edition in Spanish only "beautiful" or "lovely" figured, I returned to the original English and there is hardly a sonnet in which the word beauty does not appear, that the traitorous translator did not dare to translate as beauty. Are they so afraid of the term beauty? How could Shakespeare not speak of beauty? He starts his first sonnet with "That thereby Beauty´s rose might never die". And he ends his last sonnet, number 54, with "O how much more doth Beauty beauteous seem". The term Beauty literally invades Shakespeare's texts with its weapons. No wonder. Just as all of us would like beauty to invade our works.

HUNGER FOR BEAUTY

After all these observations one ought to consider if beauty is or is not necessary, if it is or is not useful. Nuccio Ordine, in his brilliant essay on "The usefulness of the useless", defends the need for useless beauty. Of course we could defend the contrary: that beauty is useful to satisfy the hunger pangs of the soul, the hunger for beauty that is in everyone. Of course beauty is useful, indispensable. Man hungers for beauty. Venustas, compatible and complementary to the usefulness of function, and good construction, is what really interests us.

Einstein summed it up rather well: "I am in truth a solitary traveler, and the ideals which have lighted my way and time after time have given me new courage to face life cheerfully, have been Beauty, Kindness, and Truth."

BEAUTY, FREEDOM, MEMORY

Is not memory the deep and inexhaustible well for recognizing where beauty appears? How could someone devoid of memory recognize the fact that something, especially architecture, is part of beauty?

How could an architect be blown away by a Mies van der Rohe if he had not previously known of Palladio, or the Pantheon in Rome, or the Greek temples?

How could a painter admire Rothko without having adored Velázquez and Goya?

Today, fully immersed as we are in the third millennium, we are in no doubt about the depth of beauty in the paintings of Rothko or in the architecture of Mies van der Rohe. It is clear that the concept of beauty has not only opened its doors, but with the guiding hand of understanding it will always remain open.

And evidently all this is largely true of architecture. Nonetheless it may be as difficult for society to understand Rothko well as to really understand Mies van der Rohe. One of the merits of the masters of modern architecture has been managing to convince society that beauty was to be found in their works, that they were the bearers of beauty. Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe and Frank Lloyd Wright knew this very well and tried to do so and almost succeeded.

In short, to capture beauty in architecture, and to be able to demonstrate it as such to society –beauty!

FINALE

In my architecture I have pursued beauty vigorously. I have sought beauty with tireless dedication. I have chased after beauty desperately. I have searched and still search and will continue to search for beauty unto death or until I kill her. To kill her with love when I find her because I have put my heart and soul into the endeavor.

The search for beauty always involves the search for freedom. Seeking in architecture the freedom arising from the radicalism of reason, in accordance with the desirable dream, always leads to truth resulting in beauty. The English poet Keats said it perfectly in the well-known lines of his Ode on a Grecian Urn:

“Beauty is truth, truth beauty, –that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know”.

LIGHT

Architectura sine luce nulla architectura est

On the material nature of light. On light as matter and material.

“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: And God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.”

Genesis 1: 3-5.

When an architect finally discovers that light is the central theme of architecture it is then that he or she begins to understand and starts to become a real architect.

Light is not some vague or diffuse thing to be taken for granted just because it is always there. The sun does not rise for everyone, every single day, for nothing.

Yes, although we may no longer subscribe to corpuscular theory, light is nonetheless something specific, precise, continuous, material. It is the most measurable and quantifiable matter, something physicists are well aware of, but the fact seems to pass many architects by.

Light, like gravity, is unavoidable. And it is fortunate that this is so, since the history of architecture is defined by these two primeval realities: light and gravity. Architects should always carry with them a compass to measure the direction and angle of light and a photometer to measure the quantity of light, just as they carry a tape measure, a spirit-level and plumb line.

If the struggle to master gravity continues to be a dialogue, from which the material construction of architecture is born, it is with the addition of the search for light, and the corresponding discourse, that this dialogue

reaches the most sublime levels. It is then that one discovers the essential truth that only light and light alone can truly overcome and conquer gravity. So, when the architect manages to trap sunlight, thus penetrating the space formed by structures of greater or lesser mass which need to be rooted to the ground to transmit the primitive strength of gravity it is that very light that breaks the spell, making the space float, levitate and soar. The Hagia Sophia, the Pantheon and Ronchamp are tangible proofs of this wondrous reality –of the triumph of light over gravity.

Light has as much material substance in architecture as stone. We tend to think and write that builders in the Gothic period accomplished veritable marvels with stone, making architecture work to its utmost to attain more light. Properly speaking, we should be saying that what Gothic architects did was to work with light as matter, as another material. Since they knew that the sun shines diagonally, they stretched their windows, raising them up to trap those diagonal, nearly vertical rays. They foresaw the possibilities available to us today. Rather than organizing stone to trap light, Gothic architecture can be seen as a desire to organize light, material light, in order to create spatial tension.

We know that matter cannot be created or destroyed, it can only be transformed. That is why, instead of the term modern materials, it would be more accurate to say materials used in a modern sense. In this way we can include centuries of thought which we can then enjoy sifting through. As always, when all is said and done, it's just a simple question of reasoning and thought. Thus was stone, plain old stone, transformed into the most modern of materials in the hands of Mies van der Rohe. Steel and sheet glass were not born out of nothing. These two materials, which have revolutionized architecture, have always been there, latent. Today, the conception of new ideas enables them to produce spatial miracles.

Might we not then think that the secret lies in a profound understanding of light as matter, as a material, as a modern material? Could it be that the moment in the history of architecture has arrived, that tremendously exciting moment when we finally confront light? "Let there be light! And

there was light". The first material created, the most eternal and universal of materials is thus identified as the central material with which we can build and create space. Space in its most modern sense. So the architect once again recognizes himself as a creator, as a master of the world of light.

"The luster and gleam of the stone, though itself apparently glowing only by the grace of the sun, yet first brings to light the light of the day, the breadth of the sky, the darkness of the night. The temple's firm towering makes visible the invisible space of air."

Martin Heidegger. "The Origin of the Work of Art".

SINE LUCE NULLA!

On light as the central theme of Architecture.

When I propose the axiom "Architectura sine luce nulla architectura est", I mean that no architecture is possible without light. For without light, an indispensable material would be missing.

If I were asked to give three prescriptions for the destruction of architecture, I would suggest: 1/ covering over the central opening in the Pantheon dome, 2/ walling up the glass block facade of the Maison de Verre and 3/ closing the openings which illuminate the priory of La Tourette.

If, so as to protect the Pantheon from the elements, the new mayor of Rome decided to cover over its crowning oculus of nearly nine metres in diameter, a lot of things might or might not happen. Its skillful construction would not change, nor would its perfect composition; its universal function would not cease to exist; nor would its context, ancient Rome, notice (at least not on the first night). All that would happen is that the most wonderful snare that man has ever laid for the sun, to which that heavenly king joyously returned day after day, would be eliminated. The sun would burst into tears and

so would architecture, (because, after all, they are rather more than just friends).

If Doctor Dalsace's grandson had walled up the facade of La Maison de Verre for security reasons a lot of things might happen. Or they might not. Its construction would remain untouched. Its composition would remain intact. With good electric lighting, it would continue to function without a problem. The immediate environment, the city of Paris, wouldn't know anything about it, even after the first night, given La Maison de Verre's private, not easily accessible location. All that would happen is that a most wonderful container of clear, diffuse light would be destroyed, a container that achieved its splendor thanks to the subtle and wonderful mechanism of the glass block, which surreptitiously allows light to pass through, transforming it into pure glory. Darkness would fall on the house, and architecture would be plunged into utter despondency.

If a new Dominican monk at La Tourette, zealously seeking a way to improve concentration levels, were to cover up the cracks and holes in the monastery chapel, many things would happen, or stop happening. Its robust construction would not change. Its composition would remain untouched. Its sublime functions would continue, although they might become more *concentrated* in the candlelight. No one in the surrounding area would know, or it would at least take a long time for word to get out. Only the alarming stillness of the roosting pigeons would eventually alert the local country folk to the sacrilege that had been perpetrated there. The overly concentrated space would have darkened and the monks would find to their amazement that the luminous Gregorian chant was sticking in their throats. The monastery, and the architecture along with it, would have entered into a long, dark night.

Covering over the central opening in the Pantheon dome, walling up the Maison de Verre glass block facade and filling the openings in La Tourette Chapel would signify an end to architecture, and history too. And the sun would refuse to come out again. Whatever for? The fact is that architecture without light is nothing; it is less than nothing.

“‘Spring is coming. I want to see the light!’ And he sent his daughter-in-law Otilia to open the windows before closing his eyes forever.” Goethe’s last words before his death.

LIGHT TABLES

On how light is quantifiable and qualifiable

Lorenzo Bernini, a magician of light if ever there was one, drew up his own tables to measure light accurately, which were very similar to those now used to calculate structures, Meticulous and precise. The master knew that, like all matter, light can be measured and classified; it can be scientifically controlled.

What a pity that on Bernini’s return from a tiring and fruitless trip to Paris in an attempt to build the Louvre, his young, absent-minded son Paolo lost his tables. On the 20th October 1665, Bernini was quite relieved to be leaving the city of light, which had treated him so badly, but discovered to his horror that he did not have his tables, which were more valuable to him than the Law itself. He searched for them in vain. Chantelou, the punctilious, reliable chronicler of the trip to France made no mention of the unfortunate incident in his felicitous narrative.

It is reported that many years later Le Corbusier managed to acquire some of the key pages of that valuable manuscript in a secondhand bookshop in Paris, and knew how to use them cleverly. And he too was able to control light with great precision.

However, while capable of stirring our emotions and making us tremble in our innermost being, light is more than a feeling.

Light is quantifiable and qualifiable, whether with Bernini’s tables or those of Le Corbusier. Or with a compass, solar cards and photometer, Or with scale models or the most perfect computer programs now available. It is possible to control, tame and dominate light.

The mechanisms, the snares with which architecture traps light, with their well-defined dimensions and proportions, are the cause of that spatial tension, the inimitable beauty of works that constitute the best history of architecture.

To change the small diameter of the skylights in the baths of the Alhambra, either reducing or enlarging them, or to change the height of the horizontal upper plane of the *continuum* that is Farnsworth House, by enlarging it or decreasing it, would be sure recipes for destroying two brilliant pieces of our culture.

That is because continuous space, with Farnsworth House as its archetype, is also a question of light. The break in tension produced by doubling its interior height would not be so much an error of compositional dimension as a break with the clear and exact amount of light, of transparency, which permits space to accurately speak of continuity, achieved with such great effort by the Modern Movement. It took Mies van der Rohe many long years to build such an esteemed piece. To achieve the difficult continuity of continuous space, it must be controlled, its dimensions and proportions mastered so that light can efficiently sweep through them.

Thus one can affirm that light is quantifiable and qualifiable, controllable. With man as a yardstick; for in the end, it is for him, for mankind, that we create architecture.

“This open and secret temple (the Pantheon), conceived as a sundial. The hours were to circle the center of its carefully polished pavement where the disk of the day was supposed to rest like a golden buckler; there the rain would make a limpid pool from which prayer could spiral like smoke toward the void where we place the gods.”

Marguerite Yourcenar, *Memoirs of Hadrian.*

TRIAL BY FIRE

On different types of light

We have already discussed the seductive quality of the Maison de Verre thanks to light and how dark it would be without it. With everything else intact (construction, composition, function, and context), it would nevertheless be nothing without light, less than nothing. But, can you imagine if Doctor Dalsace's grandson, tired of so many visits and finding the light we have described as divine to be a trifle dim, decided to replace the great glass block wall with a technological and transparent curtain wall made of the biggest and flattest sheet glass he could find on the market? Many things would happen then, perhaps too many. Among other things, all the ugliness of the Parisian courtyard where it is located would be invited inside the defused space.

To avoid this, anticipating the disastrous results, it might occur to him to use the Gothic windows taken from the demolition of the nearby St. Denis church. Things would take on another hue, or rather, other colors. The invasion of angels with trumpets and biblical figures would block out the view of the bare courtyard and would transform the well-known space into a pure celestial glory of a thousand colors.

So this very same space, with identical dimensions, construction, use and context, has appeared in our imagination in various forms: dark at first, then very light and finally gloriously colored; three different spaces and one true one, the original: merely by changing one material, light. Merely by changing its quantity and quality.

The architect of the Maison de Verre, Pierre Chareau, used light as a material, knowing that it had to be given a physical definition. To say the word light in the same way as one might say the word stone is to say almost nothing; it is only the beginning. Of course, most architects never move beyond this first stage of definition, which accounts for the results they achieve.

There are many kinds of light and we shall discuss some of them now; whatever its direction, horizontal light, vertical light, or diagonal light. Whatever its quality, solid light or diffuse light.

In the old days, when people needed to take light from above, what I call vertical light, they could not, because if they made openings in the roof, water, wind, cold and snow could enter. It was not a question of risking death just to obtain light. Only the immortal gods in the Pantheon dared to harness it. And in their honor, Hadrian commissioned that lofty architecture to anticipate the achievement of vertical light.

Thus, throughout the history of architecture, light has always been horizontal, taken horizontally, piercing the vertical plane –the wall– as was logical. Since the sun's rays fall diagonally upon us, a great part of the history of architecture can be read as an attempt to transform horizontal, or diagonal, light into light that might appear to be vertical.

This is what was achieved in Gothic architecture, which should not be understood simply as the desire to obtain a greater quantity of light, but fundamentally to achieve light that was qualitatively more vertical, in this case diagonal.

Similarly during the Baroque period, architects tried to twist light with ingenious mechanisms in order to convert horizontal light into a light that would appear as vertical light, and sometimes was by reflection. By taking one more step and achieving greater verticality than in Gothic structures. The magnificent transparent Baroque light achieved by Narciso Tomé in the beautiful Toledo cathedral is a masterful lesson in this very achievement.

The type of light –horizontal, vertical or diagonal– depends on the position of the sun in relation to the planes that make up the spaces tensed by that light. Horizontal light is produced by the sun's rays as they penetrate through holes in the walls. Vertical light is produced when the sun enters through holes in the upper horizontal plane. Diagonal light is produced when the sun passes through both the vertical and horizontal planes.

This means that the possibility of vertical light entering climate-controlled spaces was not achievable until the advent of large-scale flat glazing. Thanks to the option of constructing the upper horizontal plane, which is drilled and glazed, it has become possible to introduce this vertical light. This is one of the keys to the Modern Movement, to contemporary architecture, in its understanding of light. These are the skylights in the upper horizontal plane, now a regular feature of contemporary architecture.

I don't know if the architects of the Alhambra Baths were aware of the wonder they had produced when they made those star-shaped openings in their domes. These were used not only to illuminate an area that demanded a certain degree of discretion, but also basically served as a natural outlet for the steam from the baths. However, above all, they were, perhaps without knowing it, allowing the entry of solid light that would slice through the air and steam like a knife. It is fascinating to spend some time in those rooms and watch the sunlight move and change as it streams in. It would be even more exciting to bathe there. Even now, it is still possible to see spaces of this kind in certain Turkish baths dating from Constantinople, where the intersection of solid light and steam makes the material nature of this white light all the more palpable.

I don't know either whether or not Le Corbusier, who was to later use solid light with such effect, was aware when he constructed the unequaled Ozenfant studio that what he was really constructing was a treatise on diffuse light. The ingenious construction of the small, glazed saw-tooth roof produced a material plane of diffuse light across a continuous translucent roof. Then, in alignment with the angle of large panes of glass, and with the necessary arrangement of lines, he created that amazing trihedron of diffuse light which has not yet received due consideration from contemporary Architecture. That diffuse light which reaches its maximum state in the previously-mentioned Maison de Verre.

Obviously that particular solid light can only be taken in when the architecture is oriented towards the south so as to receive the perfectly apportioned light that is cast upon it. It is this dramatic southern, solid,

cast light, when properly handled, produces the most spectacular effects capable of taking our breath away.

In the same way, diffuse light is normally taken in by orienting the architecture towards the north to obtain a serene and peaceful, reflected, diffuse light, the light that produces restful, calming effects.

Bearing all this in mind, we understand that we can search for and use the various qualities offered by light depending upon its orientation in space and time. We can, therefore, tell the difference between the clear, blue morning light, when we look towards the east, and the warm, golden light of dusk when we look towards the west, knowing that both types of light are basically horizontal.

In this way, we could continue to delve into concepts and nuances relating to light in architecture, such as transparency, backlighting, shadow or darkness, luminosity and color.

And we should also mention that characteristic of light as matter in constant movement, following the solar rhythms marked out periodically by Nature. With man and for man, this light gives its life to the service of true architecture.

“And rising one morning, with the rosy dawn, he went before the sun and spoke to it thus: You great star! What would be your happiness if had not those for whom you shine?”

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

WITH MANY LIGHTS AT THE SAME TIME

On the combination of different types of light within a single space.

Just as Edison would later invent electric light, (how difficult it still is to use it wisely!), Gian Lorenzo Bernini, the greatest master of light, invented

something equally simple; the work of genius known as *luce alla bernina.* Using various sources of visible light he first created an environment with diffuse, homogeneous light, generally from the north, with which he illuminated and gave clarity to a space. Then, after centering it geometrically in relation to the shapes, –bang!– he would step in at a specific point, hiding the source from the spectator's eyes, producing a funnel of solid light –*luce gettata*– making it the protagonist of the space. The contrast or counterpoint between the two types of light, creating a furious tension in the space, produced a first-rate architectural effect: solid light in visible movement dancing over an invisible, diffuse light in calm stillness.

The Greek architects Anthemius of Tralles and Isidorus of Miletus did the same thing without the aid of the Neapolitan's universal tables. The great miracle of their Hagia Sophia, more in terms of light than size, is its fabulous dome. The sun throws its rays in diverging directions, and due to their distance from the ground, they arrive as if they were parallel. So what is happening in the interior of Hagia Sophia, which receives light through all its high windows as if lit by many different suns? What is happening when the rays of light converge inside, producing those incredible effects? The simple secret is found in the exact dimensions and thickness of the windows, which infuse reflected light with nearly as much strength as direct solid light, and the effect is there for all to see. The secret formula of the miracle is the canny combination of both sources of light, direct and indirect.

Light, like wine, as well as having many varieties, shades and nuances, does not favor excess. The combination of various types of light to excess, just like wine, reverses the possible quality of the result.

The appropriate combination of different types of light, when one knows them, offers infinite possibilities in architecture. Bernini and Le Corbusier knew that well, as did Anthemius of Tralles, Alvar Aalto, Hadrian and even Tadao Ando.

FINALE

On how light is the theme

Finally, is not light the *raison d'être* of architecture? Is not the history of architecture the search for, comprehension and domination of light?

Is not the Romanesque a dialogue between the shade of the walls and the solid light which penetrates its interior like a knife?

Is not the Gothic an exaltation of light that ignites unbelievable spaces with rising flames?

Is not the Baroque an alchemy of light in which the wise addition of diffuse light breaks through solid light, making it possible to create indescribable vibrations within its spaces?

Finally, is not the Modern Movement after breaking down the walls, a flood of light that we are still trying to control? Is not the contemporary period the time when, finally, we have all available means to dominate light?

Deep reflection about light and its infinite possibilities must be the central focus of the architecture of the future. While Paxton's intuitions and Soane's successes were a prelude to Le Corbusier's discoveries and Tadao Ando's experiments, there is still a long and rich road to follow. With light at the heart of it all.

If I am able through my work to make people feel the rhythms set by nature, harmonizing spaces with light, tempering them with the passage of the sun, then I believe that what we call architecture is all worthwhile.

TIME

The suspension of time

On time. On the ineffable detention of time

"Burnt Norton" is the first of the *Four Quartets*, one of T.S. Eliot's key works. In its first six lines, the word *time* appears seven times with surprising reiteration:

"Time present and time past/ Are both perhaps present in time future,/ And time future contained in time past./If all time is eternally present/All time is unredeemable."

And Benedetto Croce seems to sum it up even more concisely: "All history is contemporary history, it is the past seen through the eyes of the present".

This time that poets and philosophers express so well, the time of Eliot and Croce, is the time that architectural creation wants to capture. Because this time is the central theme of architecture.

In this text, I would like to analyze why some architectural spaces are able to stir up such an inner commotion within us. Although it may seem an abstract concept or theme more properly pertaining to poetry or philosophy, this concept of suspension of time occurs with an especially real and palpable force only in architecture. After all, architecture is the only artistic creation that surrounds us, that we enter into and that we move around in. When we stand before or inside certain architectural spaces, time seems to stop, suspend itself, and become almost tangible.

There is no denying the profound emotion –the suspension of time– one feels on entering the Roman Pantheon. There time stands still and we are moved. I still shed tears every time I go back. I often mention to people the deal I've made with my students for many years now. When

they visit the Pantheon they have to send me a postcard, a *cartolina illustrata* with a picture of the inside, telling me whether or not they cried. All of those who have written have cried. I've amassed a good collection by now.

I will never forget how, when my building for the Caja Granada headquarters had just been inaugurated, one of the people who worked there recalled having wept on entering the central space for the first time. Right there, at that very instant, time stood still. I must confess that, years later, every time I return there and enter that space, my heart still skips a beat, and even more so if the sun, up to its usual tricks, alights upon and strolls over its alabaster walls.

Architects must deepen their understanding of the architectural mechanisms that make these results possible. I'm still trying to reach that perennially elusive beauty that every artistic creation seeks to embody. And this is what architecture is all about.

It might be helpful to consider how architecture, in comparison to other art forms, is the only one whose creations are capable of physically enveloping man, its protagonist. The experience of being able to stand inside a work of art in flesh and bone pertains solely to architecture, and is impossible to produce in the other arts.

If a space built with gravity, with materials possessing an unavoidable gravitational weight is tensed by light –light which itself builds time– so that we are moved through the physical, beyond the physical, then we can properly say that we have attained architecture. Architecture happens when we succeed in stopping time in the constructed space: when it seems that time itself is suspended.

Time is a central theme of architecture: time that is structured by light; capable of stopping our hearts or tying them in a knot, much more than the forms of a passing style or the exquisite adornments of the best

construction. Utilitas and Firmitas only acquire their full meaning when Venustas, Beauty, is attained.

Time in Architecture can be analyzed from many perspectives and that is what we are about to explore.

THE TIME OF UTILITAS. FUNCTION

There is a time that refers to the capacity of ensuring that the function for which the building was erected will endure. A time relative to function: use, utility, Utilitas, of making a building carry out the functions for which it was commissioned and, moreover, of being adaptable to different functions over the long haul. When I was a student we learned this in terms of the *architecture of cases* versus the *architecture of boxes*.

The case meets the requested function exactly, but it can't be used for anything else. A knife sheath cannot be used for a spoon and vice versa. If the question is changed, the answer is no longer valid. This tends to happen when, in addition to the specific nature of the function, the dimensions are bound within certain settled parameters. A social housing building, even if it is resolved to the last millimeter, will most certainly not serve for any other purpose.

The box, in contrast, can admit many different functions over time. Obviously, the larger the size of the space, the greater the number of different functions it can allow. Boxes endure the test of time better than cases do.

Time is kinder to boxes than cases. And kinder still to large boxes rather than smaller ones. Berthold Lubetkin was right when he proudly proclaimed that he did no more than build boxes, shoe-boxes in concrete. Boxes, little boxes, big boxes.

THE TIME OF FIRMITAS. CONSTRUCTION

There is another time that speaks of physical duration, of the effective combination of materials that culminates in the most perfect construction of architecture. Firmitas means firmness, strength, and a well-constructed building will be able to last many years and remain on solid footing for a long time. All of the great masters of the past have been, furthermore, great builders.

I am particularly interested in the duration of the foundations of some buildings throughout history. The ruins, the worthwhile ones, are the traces of the architecture that was built there. And in them you can clearly read the architect's idea. They provide the ground plan of that architecture that has been able to remain in time.

THE TIME OF VENUSTAS. BEAUTY

The time of Venustas is that which can be suspended, that stops when we encounter beauty. It is the most difficult to control, but for that reason it is what most interests us.

All great writers on architecture have sought to come up with a few universal rules that would not only serve to transmit certain forms or styles, but also emit a beauty capable of moving men deeply on viewing their works.

It is a difficult enterprise. Just as happens with many excellent cookbooks in which nothing is spared to provide every last detail and consideration regarding a recipe, the exquisite dish still requires a skilled and passionate chef. No recipe can guarantee the quality of the cooking. The same thing is true in architecture; one needs a good head, a good hand and one has to have a talent for it.

THE TIME OF MEMORY. PERMANENCE

Another thing is the time that the building is capable of remaining in men's memory: a built work's resistance to oblivion, or in other words the thing

that secures its trajectory into architectural history, which has little to do with current fashion or passing fame. Those of us who are no longer children have seen lofty names and works that mean nothing today. The phenomenon, controlled and exaggerated by the press, still works at full strength. Many of the names that make up today's architectural *A-List* are sure to disappear tomorrow, their fame short-lived. They will never remain in men's memory.

But there are other, quieter sorts of architecture that are much more eloquent and capable of transcending our tendency to ephemerality. Above and beyond fashion and vanity, our aim should be to erect more profound architecture for history. Such architecture has a different rhythm, and belongs to truth and beauty in fullest sense.

The time of memory –of permanence– is the "difficult desire for duration" ("Le dur desir de durer") which Paul Eluard spoke of poetically and which is so profoundly rooted in the will of every creator: the will to transcend. Picasso put it so eloquently: "I am tired of being modern. Now I want to be immortal."

And it is memory that enables us with the passage of time to value more highly those works of architecture that are truly worthwhile. In that wonderful volume *War of Time* by Alejo Carpentier, time passes simultaneously backwards and forwards. Carpentier manipulates time in such a way that only the novel, imagination guided by memory, can achieve; so it is that on his death, Don Marcial at the feet of Ceres, starts going back in time, living his life backwards to his birth. Sentences such as "the furniture was growing taller" and "when the furniture had grown a little taller still" and then: "but now time passed more quickly…" are Carpentier's tricks of the trade to explain this backward progression of time.

Doesn't something similar occur when we return after a long period of time to some of the best artistic creations and suddenly we understand them perfectly? Not only that, they seem even better than they did before. So it is that, like Marcial in *War of Time*, I read the poems of Horace and Virgil

with so much more pleasure than I did when obliged to read them as a child. I used to learn and now I learn too. And I enjoy. And here and now, just like that, time appears to stand still.

In a very special way this is what occurs with architecture. On my most recent visit to the Pantheon time stood still when that stream of light, travelled across the deep coffers of its bare dome at something other than physical speed and I felt it with much greater intensity than on the first occasion many moons ago. Thus, we architects must remind ourselves that the possibility of stopping time, of halting the sun as Joshua did, is something that we are capable of, just as we are capable of creating something that transcends us.

HISTORY

There are many buildings in History with that special capability of causing us to lose our sense of time.

The Roman Pantheon is the example *par excellence*. Well built, and a perfect embodiment of the universal function endowed to it by its creator, the Pantheon is also overwhelmingly beautiful. All of the great creators have understood that when they have been inside. Suffice it to quote Henry James when he recounts the memorable scene of Count Valerii kneeling inside the Pantheon as the sun struggled through the heavy clouds above with the rainwater making the light from on high material. Exquisite. Or Piranesi's engravings of the Pantheon that should in the libraries of all architects.

And if I were to give just one example of contemporary architecture, it would be Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House. A small, white, sublime piece, capable of giving continuity not only to space but also to the history of architecture. It belongs, with its radical beauty, to an architecture without time, capable of generating, like the Pantheon, the desired suspension of time.

THE BLUE-EYED ROTHKO

Every time I enter the Olnick Spanu family home in Manhattan my heart skips a beat: there in front of me, I see a painting by Rothko, my favorite painter, in an unusual size and color. Its small dimensions and blue and green tones completely blow me away. A good friend of mine, with whom I often discuss this painting, tells me it is *the blue-eyed Rothko*. He's right. I can testify that there, in front of this wonderful painting, time stops, it disappears.

It happens that painting, like architecture, shares this special capacity to carry us away and suspend time. I'll never forget my first visit to London when, with Sáenz de Oíza, my beloved teacher and Spanish master, we stood in front of Velázquez's Venus of the Mirror in the National Gallery. Time, space, desire –everything– disappeared. In that brief infinite lapse we stood as if in divine rapture.

MUSIC CAPABLE OF STOPPING TIME

Peter Phillips, director of The Tallis Scholars, in an interview he gave in early spring 2011, before performing Tomás Luis de Victoria's *Requiem* in New York, spoke of "suspended time".

In that interview, the words flowed from his mouth as if in a cascade: intensity, sobriety, profundity, precision, simplicity, clarity, but above all, suspension, referring to time. When asked where his musicians had sounded best, he replied: the Sydney Opera House by the master Jorn Utzon. It could not have been otherwise. Utzon's sublime architecture welcoming Victoria's marvelous music.

The concert, devoted entirely to Tomás Luis de Victoria, and commemorating the fourth centenary of the Spanish composer's death, was long, but I would say that for all of us who filled the packed church of St. Mary the Virgin in 46th Street, everything happened in a second. Time stopped there, in the way that only beauty can make possible.

SORT OF DISAPPEAR: CINEMA

And while we could survey all artistic creations and discover that the crux of the matter is always the same, namely reaching man's heart through his head, I am going to limit myself to a couple of examples of how film, the seventh art, is also capable of stopping time.

An unforgettable scene comes to mind: the white plastic bag floating in the air in the film *American Beauty, s*omething so elemental magically transformed by the work and grace of a young director, Sam Mendes, into a masterful piece. Given the supreme beauty of something so simple, we all cry with Wes Benly and Thora Birch. There, time disappears and our heart dissolves in five infinite minutes.

Of course, Billy Elliot expresses it still more clearly in that "sort of disappear" that he repeats twice when the panel asks him what it is that he feels when he dances. With a stroke of genius, Stephen Daldry summed up something as abstract as suspended time in artistic creation so precisely in that short phrase!

THE SECRET OF ARTISTIC CREATION

Architecture, painting, literature, music, and film are, in fact, no more than the creative works of human beings which redeem us and make this life worth living.

Edgar Allan Poe in his "Philosophy of Composition" captured this suspension of time so well:

"I kept steadily in view the design of rendering the work universally appreciable. I should be carried too far out of my immediate topic were I to demonstrate a point upon which I have repeatedly insisted: that beauty is the sole legitimate province if the poem."

“Truth, in fact, demands a precision, and passion, a homeliness (the truly passionate will comprehend me) which are absolutely antagonistic to that beauty which, I maintain, is the excitement, or pleasurable elevation, of the soul.”

That “pleasurable elevation of the soul” is precisely the suspension of time that we are referring to here.

Our works go on to “transcend material and limited life”. Stefan Zweig, in that essential text I have quoted so very often, “The Secret of Artistic Creation”, manifests this with such force: “There is no greater pleasure or satisfaction than recognizing that man is also capable of creating everlasting values”.

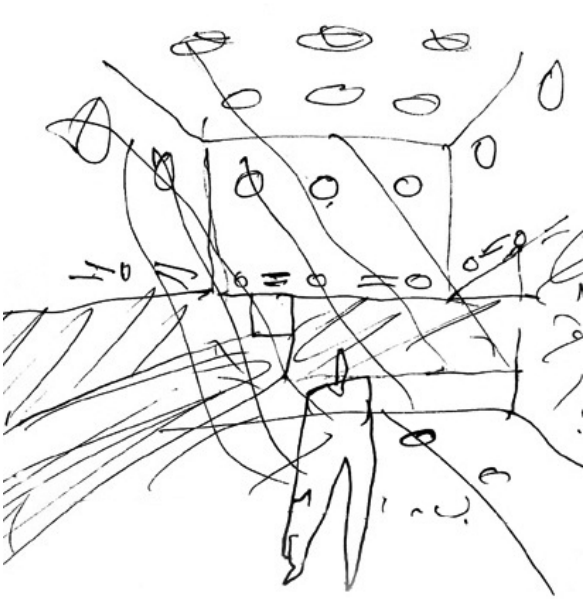
Works that are worthwhile transcend us; they transcend their creators and no longer belong to us. They already belong to the memory of men.

Paul A.M. Dirac, 1933 Nobel Laureate and one of the great physicists of our time, proclaimed, “Beauty and truth go together in theoretical physics”. Could today’s architects, instead of musing on vanities, concur with the poets, philosophers, and physicists in the primacy of the pursuit of truth, and attempt to actualize this all-too-possible miracle of the suspension of time?

Le Corbusier, in simpler language, spoke of the “unspeakable space,” and on other occasions, of how the “most useful buildings were those that fulfilled the desires of the heart.” The master was so very right.

And as we started with one poet, T.S. Eliot, we will conclude with another, William Blake. In his “Auguries of Innocence” he proposes: “To see a world in a grain of sand, / And a heaven in a wild flower, / Hold infinity in the palm of your hand, / And eternity in an hour.”

Eternity, suspended time, is what we would like to achieve with our architecture.



INTELLECTUAL ENJOYMENT

On intellectual enjoyment in architecture

An overwhelming sense of joyful radiance.

How can I express in words the overpowering feeling of intellectual enjoyment that has occasionally possessed me in recent times? Time and again, something related to culture touches us in such a special way that we are possessed with an intangible quality that I have termed intellectual enjoyment. Many of you reading these words will understand perfectly what I am speaking about.

As this very special *je ne sais quoi* has been happening to me lately, I decided to write down my thoughts on this none too original discovery. And I discovered that what we call intellectual enjoyment, intellectual satisfaction, intellectual pleasure, tends to happen more frequently and more especially as one gets older. The enjoyment I get from reading Homer's *Odyssey* is quite distinct from the joyful wonder I felt the first time I came across it. And that deep and profound feeling happens with a frequency that quite surprises me. It is like a joyous radiance that quite takes your breath away.

Plato said to a young apprentice in philosophy: "The burning impetus that propels you towards the reason why is beautiful and divine; but while you are still young, practice and train yourself in those philosophical efforts that do not appear to serve a purpose and are what the crowd calls idle talk; otherwise, truth will escape your grasp". That very stage of renewed youth is where I would like to be when speaking of the intellectual enjoyment.

MEMORY

I know well that all this is largely due to memory. As the years go by, our memory fills up in such a way that relationships often occur between things and events, which becomes a reliable source of this intellectual pleasure.

And, like a well, this memory needs to be replenished with the water of knowledge, which requires time and deep study. That devotion to study, regarded as an obligation in our youth, becomes a pleasure in later life.

Saint Augustine speaks of the enormous space of memory, the *aula ingenti memoriae*. The memory that is not only able to accumulate new knowledge but, better still, to bring it all together. Who has not been surprised on recognizing common themes or ideas in authors that would seem to have nothing in common? To recall –to re-collect– is to travel to the heart, to put the heart back in someone or something that happened.

And St. Augustine speaks so clearly of memory that we have only to transcribe his wise words:

“And I enter the fields and spacious halls of memory, where are stored as treasures the countless images that have been brought into them from all manner of things by the senses.”

“Men go forth to marvel at the heights of mountains and the huge waves of the sea, the broad flow of the rivers, the vastness of the ocean, the orbits of the stars, and yet they neglect to marvel at themselves. Nor do they wonder how it is that, when I spoke of all these things, I was not looking at them with my eyes–and yet I could not have spoken about them had it not been that I was actually seeing within, in my memory, those mountains and waves and rivers and stars which I have seen, and that ocean which I believe in –and with the same vast spaces between them as when I saw them outside me.”

TIME

I still remember the frisson of excitement on reading “Burnt Norton”, the first of T.S. Eliot’s *Four Quartets*, and Jorge Manrique’s songs on the death of his father came into my head and into my heart. When I put the poems of Eliot and Manrique together before me, even the order in which they spoke

about time, past, present and future, were the same. And the same desire was there.

Whereas Eliot (1888-1965) writes:

“Time present and time past / Are both present in the future time / And time future contained in time past. / If all time is eternally present / All time is unredeemable.”

Jorge Manrique (1440-1479) had long before written:

“And so we see the present / as if at some point absent / and finished; / if wisely we judge, / we’ll know the not yet now / is past.”

It would almost seem that Eliot had read Jorge Manrique’s couplets on the death of his father and was feeling something similar to the intellectual enjoyment we are talking about. Past, present and future.

And it has finally dawned on me that the doxology of the “Glory be to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” that we Christians frequently repeat closes with “as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end,” which is the same way of understanding the poets’ time past, present and future.

I must admit that I have since searched and found poems and poets working with the same structure on time. Even Shakespeare has joined the encounter with poems like his Sonnet 129: “Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;” And such encounters are the reason for the intellectual enjoyment we are talking about. Any poet reading these lines will understand this perfectly.

The universality of the human being in time and space is so clear that unsurprisingly on reading the beautiful poem “The Three Oddest Words” by the wonderful Polish poet, Wislawa Szymborska, I was rendered speechless by the words: “When I pronounce the word future, the first

syllable already belongs to the past." With less material than architects, with almost nothing, how is it that poets can have so much strength?

ARCHITECTURE

In architecture we find intellectual enjoyment in many moments, the three principal ones being, in my view: moment of conception, final moment and moment of recognition.

Conception. The generating idea.

The moment of conception, the moment an idea is born. This happy idea is no chance occurrence. Quite the contrary, it tends to happen when, faced with all the ingredients, the architect starts thinking, researching patiently almost always over a considerable length of time and produces an idea as a result. An idea capable of being materialized. In his book *A Beautiful Question,* Frank Wilczek, Nobel prize-winner in Physics in 2004, refers to *incarnate* and asks the question: "Does the world incarnate beautiful ideas?". In that joyous moment when one knows that potentially everything is already resolved, the idea is so powerful that it is generally the cause of enormous intellectual enjoyment.

It is the moment that we have so often called inspiration. When following a battle in our thoughts, with our inner selves, in which we architects look for that added something capable of substantiating a new work, inspiration appears at a very precise moment, the vibrant instant we call inspiration; then everything is turned upside down, a thousand Handelian trumpets sound, and our being is invaded by that intellectual enjoyment so difficult to describe and so easy to recognize. And the idea is born that is capable of bearing fruit, of materializing.

Final. The built work.

The final or nearly final moment of a work that we have conceived and initiated very often produces that intellectual satisfaction. There is no

satisfaction comparable to what one experiences when the built work reaches the stage when those spatial operations, which the architect has conceived in his head, explained in his writings and expressed in his drawings, become reality. I must confess that I shall never forget the emotion I felt on seeing for the first time the sunlight shine through the open skylights in the central area of my Bank of Granada. I cried openly like a child, like Ulysses on hearing the bard's song. Not only was I witnessing the entry of that solid, real, material light; it was something much stronger. That slowly moving light placed the whole area in tension and made it resound divinely, just as music does when the air comes in contact with a musical instrument. It was the very history of architecture recalling other related episodes that I had studied so many times.

When my mother baked a flan, it was a time of celebration at home. And just before taking it out of the oven, where it lay in its *bain-marie*, we children observed the ceremony of introducing a knitting-needle into the almost set liquid. If it came out with even a touch of the mixture adhering to it one had to wait a little longer, as it was still a little too liquid. But if it came out clean –oh, so clean– this was proof that it had set. And it was party time.

That is what happens to me with my works. And having mentioned my experience with the Granada box, which was built many years ago, I must tell you of my latest, as yet unfinished, experience. Before me right now, a space that promises to be, that will be something marvelous: the main area of the sports pavilion for the University Francisco de Vitoria, which is just about to set. It is almost there, but we have to wait just a little longer for the needle to come out clean. The structure is beautiful, now entirely painted white. The two translucent northern walls give a marvelous light. The two southern walls, white inside and out, reflect and qualify this equally marvelous white light. A facade, inside and out. The remaining elements will also be white. I can imagine it, I can already see it, all filled with an extraordinary light. Just like a *boîte* à *lumiére,* which is what it is. And I know that it won't be long now, not long at all, before the needle comes out clean, when the baked flan is set. And I know that right then that feeling of intellectual enjoyment will invade us all.

Recognition

The moment of recognition in architecture, on visiting a significant work for the first time, is the cause of great intellectual enjoyment. To recognize, on viewing for the first time a work of architecture that we had never seen with our own eyes but had studied so many times, in chapter and verse. This moment of intellectual enjoyment occurs when we witness at first hand something which is already familiar to us. We architects are very well acquainted with this. I shall never forget the first time I entered the Pantheon in Rome. I cried.

This intellectual enjoyment produced by architecture is somewhat akin to what is known as the Stendhal syndrome, an impulse provoking a rapid heartbeat when we are faced with a particularly beautiful work of art.

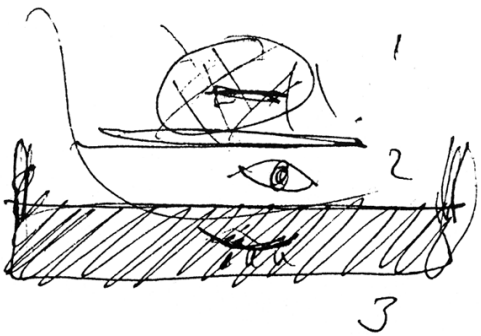
It is named after Stendhal, who, on visiting the Basilica of Santa Croce in Florence in 1817, wrote in his book *Naples and Florence: a journey from Milan to Reggio:* "I reached this emotional turning-point where those celestial sensations of Art are met with passionate feelings... Everything spoke so vividly to my soul. As I emerged from Santa Croce, I had palpitations of the heart. Life was drained from me. I walked with the fear of falling to the ground".

FINALE

Not long ago, I heard on the radio Ángela Núñez Gaitán, a woman from Seville who is director of the restoration department of the Vatican Library. When she described the emotion, the fear, the day she held in her hands the autograph of Petrarca author of *Il Canzoniere*, she was merely describing the intellectual enjoyment of someone for whom that was an almost unthinkable gift. That overwhelming sense of joyful radiance, which we mentioned at the outset.

I'd like to finish off on a musical note. The story goes that when Handel's servant used to bring him his cup of hot chocolate in the morning, he often

found the maestro sitting there with large teardrops on the paper before him, smudging his recently written notes and the servant would stand there stock-still while the chocolate went cold. I have absolutely no doubt that the maestro was in a complete trance, in a moment of sheer intellectual enjoyment. Perhaps that is why, when we listen to the “Rejoice Greatly” from Handel’s *Messiah*, we cannot but feel that rejoicing, that jubilation, that intellectual enjoyment.



to dream

to live

to die

MEMORY

Aula ingenti memoriae

"Memory is the faculty of the mind that stores and remembers the past". That is how it is defined by the Spanish Royal Academy. Memory is a necessary tool, essential for every creator, and especially for every architect.

Memory is the main tool with which reason and, by extension, the human being works. With memory, man can do everything, or almost everything. Without memory we can do nothing, and less than nothing. And architects less still. Like a needle without thread.

OUR MUCH MALIGNED MEMORY

In order to write about memory, about the memory of an architect, I have decided to start from memory, from my own memory. In the words of Quintilian, "man's most powerful and effective tool".

In its day, in the chapter of my book *Principia Architectonica*, entitled "Mnemosine vs Mimesis" I already highlighted several themes relating to memory that now appear here in greater detail.

I see clearly that in our time, the age of computers, with the capacity that these artifacts have to accumulate vast quantities of information, it is more necessary than ever to have a tool capable of ordering all that information and, after studying it, producing what we understand by learning, and then making it effective in order to reach the knowledge of wisdom. That marvelous tool is memory. Greater, much greater, than the hard disk of computers. Memory, helped by reason, is infinitely superior to any other instrument.

For this reflection on memory, I have resorted to texts as evocative as T.S. Eliot's *What is a classic*. And I've turned to my old friend Saint Augustine,

because if there is anyone who has written copiously and very well and very clearly about memory, it is he, especially in Book X of his *Confessions*.

The clear distinction that T.S. Eliot makes between information, knowledge and wisdom, describes to perfection the value of memory in obtaining the coveted goal of wisdom. In “What is a Classic?” he writes: “In our age, when men seem more than ever prone to confuse wisdom with knowledge, and knowledge with information”.

I still remember how, when I was a child at school, we used memory as a very effective learning tool. “Let from its dream the soul awaken,/And reason mark with open eyes/The scene unfolding,/How lightly life away is taken,/How cometh Death in stealthy guise,/ What swiftness hath the flight of pleasure/ That, once attained, seems nothing more/ Than respite cold;/ How fain is memory to measure/ Each latter day inferior/ To those of old.” I write by heart these verses by Jorge Manrique that I learned at school, and I am almost frightened by the accuracy of my memory. What can one say about the beauty of these couplets? With each passing day they seem more beautiful to me.

And yet in these past few years, memory has become maligned. They say that we used to learn like parrots, and that an education based on memory was inadequate. How wrong they are. Memory, together with reason, is more than just a useful tool; it is essential for intellectual life, and for the life of the architect.

I tell my students repeatedly that reason is the first and most important tool with which an architect works. And I am also telling them today that by this I mean reason assisted by memory.

MEMORY CONNECTS

I have written more than once that, after such a long time together on my bookshelves, my books speak to each other. This is also true of the ideas

stored in our memory. They relate to each other in a mysterious way, and new ideas emerge from them.

In 1770, Mozart listened to Allegri's *Miserere* and on his return home he promptly transcribed it from memory, not to copy it but to draw inspiration from it.

In 1655, Rembrandt traced the edge of the *lithostrotos* with a ruler in his etching of the *Presentation of Jesus by Pilate*. And Picasso in his *Ecce Homo*, where he paints the same theme as Rembrandt, the *lithostrotos*, drew on his memory and copied it, and he performed the same operation using his ruler to achieve a perfect horizontal line. All very architectural. Both knew that the horizontal plane at eye level becomes a perfect horizontal line.

Mies van der Rohe visited the Athens Acropolis in 1950, and since then applied the theory of the flat horizontal plane that, at eye level, becomes a line. And he ended up raising that horizontal plane aloft, floating, in his Farnsworth House, and in so many of his other works.

Alvaro Siza is a pure reminder of Alvar Aalto in his early works, in his beautiful Boa Nova Tea House in Matosinhos. And his restoration of the Chiado district in Lisbon is a clear memory of Rome.

And, where would Barragán be, as he himself pointed out, without his memory of the Alhambra?

And one wonders how could even Le Corbusier have designed his Ville Savoie without his long stay at Eileen Gray's E1027 in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin?

For all of these architects, memory plays a crucial role. Furthermore, memory purifies. Of the best architects we remember above all their finest works. The less important ones we tend to forget.

ON INTELLECTUAL ENJOYMENT AND MEMORY

On intellectual enjoyment I have written: “I know well that all this is largely due to memory. As the years go by, our memory fills up in such a way that relationships often occur between things and events, which becomes a reliable source of this intellectual pleasure”. And, like a well, this memory needs to be replenished with the water of knowledge, which requires time and deep study. That devotion to study, considered an obligation in our youth, becomes a pleasure in later life.

Saint Augustine speaks of the enormous space of memory, the *aula ingenti memoriae.* Memory that is not only able to accumulate new knowledge but, better still, to bring it all together. Who has not been surprised on recognizing common themes or ideas in authors that would seem to have nothing in common? To recall –to recollect– is to travel to the heart, to put the heart back in someone or something that happened.

And St. Augustine is so clear when he speaks of memory that we have only to transcribe his wise words:

“And I enter the fields and spacious halls of memory, where are stored as treasures the countless images that have been brought into them from all manner of things by the senses.”

“Men go forth to marvel at the heights of mountains and the huge waves of the sea, the broad flow of the rivers, the vastness of the ocean, the orbits of the stars, and yet they neglect to marvel at themselves. Nor do they wonder how it is that, when I spoke of all these things, I was not looking at them with my eyes – and yet I could not have spoken about them had it not been that I was actually seeing within, in my memory, those mountains and waves and rivers and stars which I have seen, and that ocean which I believe in – and with the same vast spaces between them as when I saw them outside me.”

THE POWER OF THE SOUL

We humans have memory, understanding and will. That is what we learned as children. This was referred to in scholasticism as the powers of the soul. And it is easy to understand how memory, aided by understanding, reason and will, is what makes creative work possible and in a very special way, the work of architects.

A sage is someone who not only accumulates information in his memory, but after suitably processing it, makes these data his own as knowledge and retains them. And then he uses them appropriately and efficiently. And the place where that data and knowledge is stored, processed and used is memory.

An architect, a good architect, a wise architect stores information and knowledge in his memory so that, when suitably processed, he can design with rigor.

Memory is capable of recording and storing what is worthwhile from history, from the general history of humanity, and from the history of architecture. Memory has the capacity to supply that distilled, processed information to architects, so that we do not invent gunpowder.

Taking a leap forward requires the momentum we receive when, with one foot in the air, the other leans firmly on the ground, on memory, and so we finally attain knowledge, wisdom.

To dream –and to design is to dream– one has to first accumulate the material with which to build those dreams.

THE BELLY OF AN ARCHITECT

The Belly of an Architect was a gorgeous film by Peter Greenaway, starring Brian Dennehy in the role of the architect Stowrley Kracklite, set around the Pantheon in Rome.

And Saint Augustine, in Book X of his *Confessions*, with its profound pedagogical significance, describes memory as "the belly of the soul*",* where everything is digested (Rainer Sorgel uses the term *ruminated*), in order to feed man, the soul of man.

It may well be that Francis Bacon, the philosopher, had read Saint Augustine's text, when he spoke of books in his essays and in particular in his essay "Of Studies": "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested". How could a philosopher like Bacon, who sometimes seems so distant, hit the nail on the head with such precision?

THE MEMORY OF THE HOUSE

I was asked at the Venice Biennale 2012 to focus on *common ground*, which I immediately understood to be memory. Since I was asked to center on the house, I decided to investigate the memory of the house.

"An architect is a house". This is the name under which I developed one of my last academic courses at the ETSAM in Madrid. And I used it again for that small pavilion within that Biennial: An architect is a house.

What and how is the memory of the house? What is an architect's *common ground* when he creates a house? I must confess that every time I build a new house, all the great houses in the history of architecture parade through my memory. Not to copy them, but, assisted by memory, to take a step forward and attempt to do something different and better.

From Adam's house in Paradise, as Joseph Rickwert described and studied it for us, to the prehistoric caves. And Abbot Laugier's primitive hut. But also Palladio's Villa Rotonda and Adolph Loos's Villa Moller. And Soane's house in Lincoln's Inn Fields in London. And so many others.

The houses that one thinks of are sometimes the ones that architects built for themselves. Even if occasionally, as in the case of Mies van der Rohe's client, Mrs Farnsworth, the client's name may figure in the title.

And to order and center that work, I link the houses of the history of architecture to the four elements of Greek philosophy: earth, air, water and fire. These, when translated into dwellings, can be the cave and the hut, the boat and the ruin.

The cave, which first Semper and then Frampton identified with the stereotomic, embodies our dwelling on earth. Heavy architecture speaks of man's dominion over the earth. We identify it with earth as the pre-Socratic element that best suits it.

The cabin, to which Semper and Frampton assigned the attribute of tectonic, addresses the concept of a change of place, the possibility of deciding where man wishes to settle. In short, it speaks of freedom. And air will be the pre-Socratic element that we link it to.

The boat, the raft, immediately reminds us not only of Noah's ark where the inhabitants of the earth survived the Universal Flood, but also of Le Corbusier's Villa Savoie, or Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House, because both houses float and sail. I myself, in my House of the Infinite, presented the upper horizontal stone plane as the deck of a grounded ship facing the Atlantic Ocean, facing the infinite sea.

FROM TRACES TO RUINS

Ruins are the material, indelible traces, and the memory of the architecture that stood there once upon a time. These traces are the embodiment of the architects' ideas with exact measurements. They are, let me say, the memory of what was there.

When archaeologists discover, analyze and value a ruin, they rarely speak of architecture. Yet it is architecture, the most fundamental element of it,

which appears there. The most basic thing about the creation of architects, its traces, is what causes ruins to exert such a power of fascination over us. What attracts us to ruins is the intensity of those few basic, radical elements of architectural creation.

What is the mysterious power that so directly connects the beginning and the end of a creation? Ruins display the very essence of architecture, the structure. Because when we talk about architectural ruins or traces, what we are talking about is the structure that establishes the order of space, which is central to architecture, the most essential thing that has been able to resist time. Just like the skeleton in the human body, ruins, traces, are the memory of that architecture that strongly evokes the spaces that had been built there.

FINALE

To conclude I will return once more to St. Augustine who ventured to speak of architects in chapter 12 of Book X of the Confessions entitled: “On the Recollection of Things Mathematical”. “I have seen the lines of architects, the very finest, like a spider’s thread; but those within me are still different, they are not the images of those lines which the eye of flesh showed me: he knoweth them, whosoever without any conception whatsoever of a body, recognizes them within himself.”

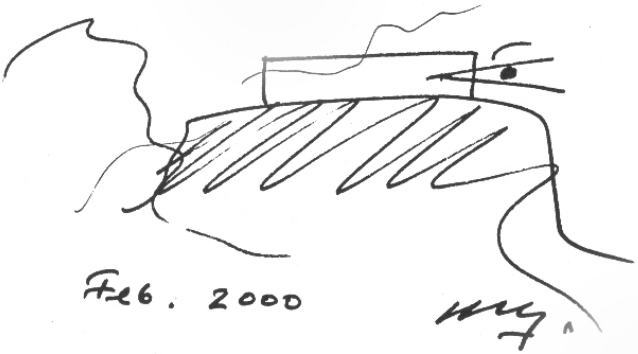
How I would have liked to have talked with a man with such a keen intellect as the Bishop of Hippo about the plans of architects drawn, as he tells us, with lines as delicate and subtle as a spider’s thread. Precise lines and detailed plans, essential elements in the creation of architectural works that constitute the memory of architecture.

I will conclude with a quote from Cicero’s *De Oratore*, in which I dare to introduce the terms architects and architecture, *architecti* and *architecturae*, instead of *oratori* and *rhetoricae*, since memory is a necessary tool for all architects.

“Memory is a firm perception of the spirit of things and of words and their placement. It is extremely necessary to the architect. And not without cause is it the treasure of discoveries and the guardian of all parts of architecture”.

(“Memoria est firma animi, rerum, et verborum et dispositionis perceptio. Est haec maxime architecti necessaria. Nec sine causa thesaurus inventorum atque ómnium partium architecturae custos”).

And so Cicero concludes, and with him so do we: “It is beautiful what Solon says in a verse, that he grows old learning many things every day. In truth, there can be no greater pleasure than that of the intellect”.


Feb. 2000

UNIVERSALITY

On surrender and universality

T.S. Eliot, Ortega y Sota.

All creative work, including architecture, requires a degree of individual surrender, of depersonalization, if one is to achieve greater universality. So we are told by our protagonists: a poet, a philosopher and an architect.

And well might you ask: what is the connection between a poet, a philosopher and an architect? What has T.S. Eliot to do with Ortega and Gasset, and with Alejandro de la Sota?

T.S. Eliot (1888/1965) was an American by birth who became a British citizen and writes poetry like the angels. Ortega (1883/1955) is a clear and transparent Heideggerian. And Sota (1913/1996) is a laconic, Bachian Spanish architect.

The three could well have known one another because they are contemporaries. Had this happened, they would have been surprised to learn how much the poet, the philosopher and the architect had in common. If we were to ascribe a single adjective to each of them, one could call T.S. Eliot transparent, Ortega clear and Sota laconic.

And all three coincide in their respective genres –poetry, philosophy and architecture– in the demand for a certain sobriety of expression, a certain surrender of the individual, as a prerequisite for attaining the universality that every creator longs for.

T.S. ELIOT

In his essays “What is a Classic?” and “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, T.S. Eliot stoutly defends the need for the extinction of personality in his work in the interest of greater universality. The first wonderful text is a speech he delivered in 1944 as the first President of the Virgil Society of London. The second text dates from 1919, and in it we find many of the arguments that had previously appeared in the former.

“When an author appears, in his love of the elaborate structure, to have lost the ability to say anything simply; when his addiction to pattern becomes such that he says things elaborately which should properly be said simply, and thus limits his range of expression, the process of complexity ceases to be quite healthy, and the writer is losing touch with the spoken language.”

Try exchanging the words author and writer with the word architect.

“There comes a time when a new simplicity, even a relative crudity, may be the only alternative.”

“Now, to some extent, the sacrifice of some potentialities in order to realize others is a condition of artistic creation, as it is a condition of life in general.”

“In short, without the constant application of the classical measure, we tend to become provincial.”

T.S. Eliot uses the term *provincial.* I don’t know if in English the term *provincial*, has the same pejorative connotations as the word *provinciano* in Spanish. But the poet’s idea in his search for the universal is very clear.

“A distortion of values, which confounds the contingent with the essential, the ephemeral with the permanent.”

“But my concern here is only with the corrective to provincialism in literature.

The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality."

"There remains to define this process of depersonalization and its relation to the sense of tradition. It is in this depersonalization that art may be said to approach the condition of science."

The page references correspond to the beautiful edition of T.S. Eliot's two texts, translated by Juan Carlos Rodríguez and edited by the National Autonomous University of Mexico in 2013 under the title: *Lo clásico y el talento individual*. (*The Classical and Individual Talent*). It is an edition well worth acquiring. Lying next to it on my table is another little gem: the original edition in English of "What is a Classic?" edited by Faber & Faber in London in MCML, 1950.

ORTEGA

In an essay "En torno al Coloquio de Darmstadt", written in 1951, Ortega said:

"In effect, style, has a very peculiar role in architecture, which it doesn't have in other arts, even in the purer arts. Paradoxical though it may seem, that is how it is. In other arts style is merely a question of the artist: he decides – with all his being and with a level of decision-making that runs deeper than his will and consequently acquires an aspect of necessity rather than free will – for himself and unto himself. His style does not and cannot depend on anyone else but himself. But the same is not true of architecture. If an architect produces a project with an admirable personal style, he is not, strictly speaking, a good architect."

In 1951 an architectural congress was held in Darmstadt which was attended by Heidegger and Ortega. And surprisingly Ortega dares to directly criticize that style of personal architecture, *provincial* in Eliot's terms, with such clarity. It reminds me of the work of an extraordinary architect like Gaudí,

and how his excessive personality takes from the universality that we find in maestros like Mies Van der Rohe or Le Corbusier.

And Ortega goes on to say:

“The architect finds himself in a relationship with his art, very different from the bond formed between other artists and their respective works. The reason for this is obvious: architecture is not, cannot be, must not be an exclusively individual art. It is a collective art. The genuine architect is an entire people, which provides the means of construction, its purpose and its unity. Imagine a city built by ‘amazing’, but dedicated architects, each out for himself, and his own individual style. Each one of these buildings could be magnificent and yet the overall effect would be bizarre and intolerable. In such a scenario, far too much emphasis would be given to an aspect of all art which has not been sufficiently remedied; its capricious element. Its capriciousness would manifest itself naked, cynical, indecent, intolerable. We would not be able to see the building as part of the sovereign objectivity of a great mineral body, but displaying on the contrary the impertinent profile of someone who is doing whatever he feels like.”

It would seem that Ortega’s words could have been uttered today regarding much of the arbitrary, capricious architecture that we see being built right now.

SOTA

“One tires of seeing beauty and the grace of things (perhaps they are the same) being pursued with added embellishments, knowing the secret is not there. My unforgettable friend J. A. Coderch used to say that ultimate beauty is like a beautiful bald head (Nefertiti, for example), from which one had pulled out each and every hair, lock by lock, with the pain of ripping them out, one by one. Painfully we must tear from our works the hairs which impede us from achieving their simple, simple end.”

These expressive sentiments from the Spanish architect Alejandro de la Sota are the closing words from the book on his work (Pronaos Ed. Madrid 1990) that define so well the views on architecture and life itself of this true maestro, who began each day playing a Bach sonata.

Sota's architecture has that extreme elegance of the precise gesture, of the exact phrase, that so accurately touches silence. The silence of his work and his personality is gifted with the difficult capacity to fascinate. So close to poetry, to poetic breath, to hushed music.

Sota's architecture is encapsulated in the Gymnasium of the Maravillas School in Madrid. This superb building is impressive in its extraordinarily terse, pithy, absolute simplicity. So much so that for non-architects it goes unnoticed and it may be hard for the layman to understand the beauty contained in it. For the same reason that it not easy to understand Mark Rothko's painting. This simplicity of the most logical architecture led Sota to say: "I believe that not making architecture is a way of making it". And when asked about the Gymnasium of the Maravillas School he simply replied: "It solved a problem."

A little more and we could hear Sota saying that "architecture is not a turning loose of emotion but an escape from emotion", which is what T.S. Eliot wrote about poetry.

How could we fail to recognize an identical universal breath in our three creators? As the years go by, I must acknowledge the great intellectual enjoyment produced by the inter-action of these characters and these issues in one's memory. How great and profitable is the passage of time!

NOTA BENE

And, just when I thought this text had concluded, Gombrich appears. Well, it's not as if E.H.Gombrich, whose wonderful text *The Preference for the Primitive* I am acquainted with for such a long time and is on my desk, has just appeared out of the blue. Simply that I periodically reread a selection of

very special texts that I keep together on a shelf of favorites. I have written many times of the enormous intellectual enjoyment of returning over the years to one's sources.

The book opens with a quotation from Cicero that says everything: "However, though they captivate us at first sight, [they] do not afford any lasting pleasure; whereas we are strongly attracted by rough and faded colouring in the paintings of antiquity".

Cicero, *De Oratore* III.xxv.98.

And Gombrich remarks: "The more the artist knows how to flatter the senses, the more he will mobilize defences against this flattery".

In the end, this preference for the primitive is a clear expression of the need to surrender excessive individuality in order to attain universality.

Or, as my old friend, the Russian architect Melnikov said:

"Having become my own boss, I entreated Architecture to throw off her gown of marble, remove her make-up and reveal herself as she really is: like a goddess, naked, graceful and young. And to renounce being agreeable and compliant, as befits true beauty."

WISDOM

On the wisdom of the architect

"Wisdom is the reflection of eternal light."

"There is [in wisdom] a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear, unpolluted, distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, keen, irresistible, beneficent, humane, steadfast, sure, free from anxiety, all-powerful, overseeing all, and penetrating through all spirits that are intelligent, pure, and altogether subtle. She is more beautiful than the sun, and excels every constellation of the stars. Compared with the light she is found to be superior, for it is succeeded by the night, but against wisdom evil does not prevail."

Wisdom 7: 22-30

"She reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and she orders all things well."

Wisdom 8: 1

T.S. Eliot makes an accurate distinction between information, knowledge and wisdom. First in his poem Choruses from The Rock, written in 1934, and later in his landmark essay "What is a Classic?", the text of the keynote address before the Virgil Society in London on October 16, 1944.

In "Choruses from The Rock" he writes:

"Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"

And in "What is a Classic?" he writes:

“In our age, when men seem more than ever prone to confuse wisdom with knowledge, and knowledge with information.”

I am an increasingly fervent admirer of T.S. Eliot. Maybe for the same reasons that Octavio Paz gives us in his acceptance speech for the T.S. Eliot Prize: “The magnet that attracted me was the excellence of the poem, the rigor of its construction, its depth of vision, the variety of its parts and the admirable unity of the whole”.

Besides being a wonderful poet and a wise one at that, T.S. Eliot was a true sage. Because I must confess –a daring confession indeed– that what I, who only know that I know nothing, would like is to become a wise architect, as my teachers were. And when talking to my students about beauty, in the same way that I tell them that they, as architects, can also achieve that beauty which is not reserved for exceptional beings, I also tell them that they can become wise, that they can attain wisdom. Let me explain.

Being equipped with all the information is very good, because if we filter it and order it judiciously, we can achieve knowledge. “That is a very knowledgeable person”, we sometimes say. But that is not enough. Because afterwards, if you are unable to process that knowledge, it is of no use. But if we *cook* it, if we develop it for a specific purpose, it becomes activated, it becomes truly useful. Which is what the wise do.

I am convinced that, like beauty, wisdom is not reserved for a mere few. All the wise men and women I have met have turned out in person to be normal, simple and direct; in a word, humble.

INFORMATION

Today we have more sources of information than ever thanks to IT resources. I have never known where those thousands of people are, who produce and order and put such a quantity of information at our disposal. Google and its like are admirable. They provide and make available to us comprehensive and orderly information that makes some people think

that libraries are no longer essential, although this can never and should never be so. But if the Library of Alexandria was on fire, all that would be required to remedy the disaster is for someone to have had the precaution and patience to store all that digitalized information that occupies so little physical space.

I remember my last sabbatical year at Columbia University in New York. Every day I spent a long time studying, in its marvelous Avery Library, which is where the School of Architecture is located. I was the only one who had books on my desk and who wrote by hand, hastily filling up my notebooks. The others were buried in their computers, in sepulchral silence, isolated by their headphones and illuminated by the divine light of their screens. I never saw anyone get up to consult a single book or write anything by hand.

And all that overwhelming information is now available to the millions of users, people who more often than not waste their time with nonsense on their smartphones and tablets.

Because information is still simply information. If it is not processed, it remains like an inert material. It might help to turn someone into a scholar. On the scale of being informed, knowing and understanding, they remain on the first steps of the ladder leading to wisdom.

KNOWLEDGE

But if information is processed, ordered and developed, one gets to the next stage, which is knowledge.

Whenever I'm writing a text, the first thing I do is prepare a script. Of course, before that I have to find a good excuse to tackle a particular topic. In this case, it was reading the wonderful text of T.S. Eliot's "What is a classic?", which quite by chance I happened to receive as a gift twice in the same week, in a delightful little edition by the National Autonomous University of Mexico in 2013. And to crown it all, in today's post I received from Germany

a second-hand copy of “What is a classic?” by T.S. Eliot in English, in the Faber & Faber fourth edition, May MCML, printed in Great Britain by R. Mac Lehose and Company Limited, The University Press Glasgow. A real gem.

When we take on board a considerable amount of information and store it in our memory, it can later be studied and related to a topic with the result that we attain a certain amount of knowledge of the subject in question – what we have always understood as studying a subject.

And so I view a school, in my case a school of architecture, as an instrument not only for the transmission of information but also for its development. It is an instrument for the creation of knowledge, and for its transmission. Like coffee beans that need to be selected, toasted, ground, and filtered with hot water in order to achieve that final delicious potion. And, perhaps, having tasted that splendid coffee, the neurons awake and even lead one on to wisdom.

I have been studying the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius (121-180 AD) for several years, written in Greek by this stoic emperor. I have acquired 44 different editions in several languages, and it goes without saying the enormous enjoyment it gives me every time I go back to them. But I assure you that I still *know nothing* about this amazing person, or about his work, although I have dared to publish something about him and the numerous editions of that wonderful text.

I remember as a child I always saw my father studying. And I used to wonder, with all that he knew, why he was still studying? My father was a surgeon and for a time Assistant Professor of Anatomy at the Faculty of Medicine in Valladolid. His career was brilliant. And he was a true sage who was an example to us all his life, never ceasing to study. And that is what I now try not to stop doing.

“Knowledge is science, the know-how provided by many data, combining induction and deduction, which does not tell me what it is, but what I can

do. Science tells me what I can do, but not what I should do" –the words of Emilio Lamo de Espinosa in a clear article on information, science and wisdom. It is wisdom that deals with the ultimate meaning of our existence. Without wisdom, science is no more than an archive of instruments. And he concludes by saying: "We are swamped with information, with solid scientific knowledge, but almost completely starved of wisdom".

WISDOM

According to T.S. Eliot, after information and knowledge, comes wisdom. But what is it really to be wise? To know everything about everything? To know everything about something? Because once we know a great amount of things relating to a particular subject, we surely could take one step further, we should attain something more.

Maybe it would be something like a doctor's diagnosis. Having gathered all the patient information, which is then filtered by the doctor's knowledge, this should lead to an accurate diagnosis, capable of solving the problem.

In the *Book of Kings*, we are told how the young King Solomon asks God for his listening ear and how God grants him the gift of Wisdom. "Now, O Lord my God, you have made me king instead of my father David. But I am but a boy, and I barely know how to behave. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong."

God was pleased that Solomon had made that request, so he said to him: "Since you have asked for this, and not long life or riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the death of your enemies, but for discernment in administering justice, I will grant you what you have asked for. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, as no one before you has had nor will ever have again."

That is why, when we speak of wisdom, we have to quote King Solomon, the wise Solomon. Wisdom as the capacity of discernment.

ON THE WISDOM OF ARCHITECTURE

Of course, some of you will say: what is an architect doing talking about wisdom? Why? What for? I am doing it because, among other reasons, I think that to make the best architecture possible, it is necessary to be wise. “He who knows only medicine doesn’t know medicine”, said Marañón. Well, he who knows only architecture, doesn’t know architecture, say I.

I remember well my teachers, the architects who were my teachers at the School of Architecture of Madrid, who were truly wise. How discerning they were about architecture. They combined professorship with being extraordinary architects. They were true teachers. Their project critiques were classes where one talked about everything. Philosophy or History, Music or Poetry were all topics that emerged in the most natural way from their rich pool of wisdom. This was more than information and more than just knowledge. This was wisdom.

And those teachers were wise. Francisco Javier Sáenz de Oíza in his apocalyptic classes, Alejandro de la Sota in his quiet classes, Javier Carvajal in his precise classes, Julio Cano Lasso in his delightful classes and Miguel Fisac in his classes without classes. All of them were true sages. They all had a capacity of discernment about architecture, and about life. Of each of them, it could be said that they were a fountain of wisdom. I would like to be like them.

So too were those egregious professors under whom I studied a selective course at the Faculty of Sciences, Madrid, in the 60s, which I will never forget. Enrique Gutiérrez Ríos, Salustio Alvarado and José Javier Etayo Miqueo were true sages in such complex subjects as Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics. They were so wise that not only had they acquired the knowledge of such topics, but they communicated it to us with crystalline clarity, with convincing conviction.

I recently published a text on “Project design is Research: a Project design is a work of research”, because I firmly believe that it is so. I would like

that text, like this one, to be like depth charges. In that text I describe how, more than thirty years ago, I dared to present a project of mine under construction at the time, the Library of Orihuela, as the Research Project for my candidature for the Chair of Design. And all the members of that generous tribunal, full of wisdom, with Oíza and Carvajal at the head, understood it perfectly and accepted it as a work of research.

ON THE HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE

How can we not understand that the History of Architecture, with capital letters, is full of architects who were sages?

Ictinos and Callicrates (5th Century BC), the Greek architects of the Parthenon of Athens were true sages. The Parthenon, and before it, the Acropolis, were creations out of time; they were of yesterday, today and tomorrow. Not surprisingly, both Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe were photographed in front of those ruins, as a testimony to their timelessness, and in recognition of the roots of their architecture, which is ours.

And, was not Apollodorus of Damascus (50-130 AD), architect of the Pantheon of Rome, a true sage? Definitely. The structural and building operation of this architectural marvel can only be the result of a privileged architect's head. Every time I go back to study and analyze the Roman Pantheon, I continue to learn.

And what can we say of Marcus Vitruvius Pollio (80-15 BC) with his *De Architectura*? How many times in word and deed have we not used your Utilitas, Firmitas and Venustas?

Andrea Palladio (1508-1580) was so wise, that in addition to making first-class architecture, and writing the *Four Books of Architecture*, he has continued to influence architects to this day. And so it is that Mc Kim, Mead and White (1869) designed the most representative buildings of Columbia University in New York.

When Michelangelo (1474-1564) officiated as an architect in the Campidoglio, he showed how wise he was, making the world visible, making it emerge in that unequalled space. And to crown it all, there he placed our Marcus Aurelius on horseback in the center of the world, to make that spatial operation even more visible.

And so great was the wisdom of Sir John Soane (1753-1837) that, to contradict the architect of the Pantheon, in proposing his lightness *vis-à-vis* the heaviness of the Roman dome, he makes the light of his suspended domes slide down the edges, causing them to float. If this is not wisdom, let God come and take a look for himself!

And Le Corbusier (1887-1965) and Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969) what could we say of these two old sages? The two of them were proudly photographed on the Acropolis in front of the Parthenon, as if wanting to bear witness that they, the great modernists, have their feet, their roots, in history and in this way are revolutionizing the world and building new history.

And even Jorn Utzon (1918-2008), like an old druid, who withdrew with his wisdom to his house in Mallorca. We can still hear the echoes not only from his Sydney Opera House, or from Can Lis, but also from his "Platforms and Plateaus", a key text published in 1962 that has influenced so many architects.

FINALE

In *The Banquet*, Plato advised us: "It would be a happy state of affairs, Agathon, if wisdom were something that could flow between us through mere contact, from the one who is full to one who is empty, like water flowing along a strand of wool from a full cup to an empty one".

If we are to do things in the best possible way in life, in all fields, including architecture, we should try to approach wisdom; we should try to be wise. This involves not only having all the information, developing it and acquiring

knowledge, but above all, on attaining that wisdom, employing study and discernment to make it the best, or better than the best.

And if we started out with T.S. Eliot as our guide, we're returning to him again. Because in a nutshell, this business of being wise is nothing more than being able to bring together present, past and future time: what the poet proposes in "Burnt Norton", the first of his *Four Quartets*:

"Time present and time past / are both perhaps present in time future / and time future contained in time past. / If all time is eternally present / all time is unredeemable."

ADDENDUM

Recently a rare gem fell into my hands, Aristotle's *Protrepticus*, translated into Spanish in 1983 by Alberto Buela in Argentina. In that wonderful text, in its fragments, wisdom is spoken of with such clarity that I would recommend my readers and my students to exchange this text "On the Wisdom of the Architect" for that of the Greek philosopher. They would certainly benefit from it.

The Emperor Marcus Aurelius was inspired by Aristotle's *Protrepticus* to write his *Meditations*, and Cicero to write his *Hortensius*. And St Augustine had explored the *Hortensius* before writing many of his admirable texts.

I cannot resist transcribing and sharing with you some fragments of that *Proteptic* by Aristotle:

Fragment XXXVIII

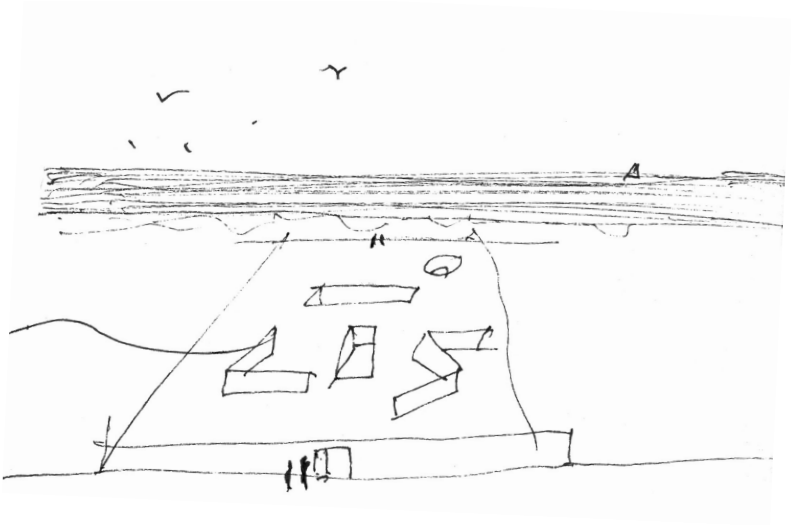
"That wisdom is the greatest of all goods and the most useful of all things is evident from this: we all agree that the most virtuous among us, who is by nature the best, should be the one to lead. And that it is the law alone that directs and has authority, that which is the expression of wisdom and the manifestation of wise thought."

Fragment LIII

“We ought, therefore, not to flee philosophy, if it is, as we think, the acquisition and use of wisdom, and wisdom is among the greatest goods; and if in pursuit of gain we run many risks by sailing to the pillars of Hercules, we should not shrink from labour or expense in the pursuit of wisdom.”

“Nothing is more desirable than wisdom; this alone seems to be immortal, this alone to be divine.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY



BEAUTY

RELENTLESSLY SEEKING BEAUTY

Address of admission to the RABASF. Ed. Mairea Libros, Madrid, 2014.

Poetica Architectonica. Ed. Mairea Libros, Madrid, 2014.

Arhitext 241. Bucarest, 2015.

Textos Críticos. Ed. Asimétricas, Madrid, 2017.

La suspensión del tiempo. Ed. Fundación Arquia - Los libros de la Catarata, Barcelona, 2017.

Relentlessly seeking beauty. Ed. Divisare Books, Rome, 2017.

Sharpening the scalpel. Ed. Arcadia Mediática, Madrid, 2019.

Memoria del Curso Académico. ETSAM UPM, Madrid 2019-2020.

LIGHT

ARCHITECTURA SINE LUCE NULLA ARCHITECTURA EST

Lichtfest, Licht und Architektur. Ingolstadt, 1992.

Circo 07. Madrid, 1993.

Architecti 18. Lisbon, May 1993.

Domus 760. Milan, May 1994.

Taller 7. ETSAN, Pamplona, 1994.

Diseño Interior 38. Madrid, September 1994.

Ehituskunst 13. Tallinn, 1995.

Opus Lucis (Catalogue. Hilario Bravo). Cáceres, 1996.

La Idea Construida. Ed. COAM Madrid, 1996.

Rivista Tecnica 3 - 98. Lugano, 1998.

Cosa Mentale. Paris, 2010.

Textos Críticos. Ed. Asimétricas, Madrid, 2017.

Memoria del Curso Académico. ETSAM UPM, Madrid 2019-2020.

TIME

THE SUSPENSION OF TIME

Principia Architectonica. Ed. Mairea Libros, Madrid, 2012.

Cuadernos TC 112. Valencia, 2014.

Textos Críticos. Ed. Asimétricas, Madrid 2017.

La suspensión del tiempo. Ed. Fundación Arquia - Los libros de la Catarata, Barcelona, 2017.

ENJOYMENT

ON INTELLECTUAL ENJOYMENT IN ARCHITECTURE

Domus 1006. Milan, October 2016.

Lectio Magistralis. ETSAM UPM, Madrid, March 14th, 2017.

Textos Críticos. Alberto Campo Baeza. Ed. Asimétricas, Madrid, March 2017.

Lecture. Clarkson Chair. University of Buffalo, USA, April 6th, 2017.

La suspensión del tiempo. Ed. Fundación Arquia - Los libros de la Catarata, Barcelona, 2017.

Sharpening the scalpel. Ed. Arcadia Mediática, Madrid, 2019.

MEMORY

AULA INGENTI MEMORIAE

Memoria del Curso Académico. ETSAM UPM, Madrid, 2019-2020.

UNIVERSALITY

ON SURRENDER AND UNIVERSALITY

Aires Mateus, Colección Arquia Documental 36. Barcelona, 2018.

Lecture Homage to Ignacio Bosch. Valencia, May 3rd, 2018.

Lecture, Pabellón de Barcelona. May 26th, 2018.

Lecture, Technische Universität München. July 6th, 2018.

Palimpsesto Architectonico. Ed. Asimétricas, Madrid, 2018.

Lecture, CUA University. Washington, October 26th, 2018.

Lecture, ETSAB. Barcelona, December 18th, 2018.

Lectio magistralis, Santo Tomás de Aquino, CEU. Madrid, January 28th, 2019.

Sharpening the scalpel. Ed. Arcadia Mediática, Madrid, 2019.

Architects on Architects. Ed.Hirmer Verlag, München, 2019.

Lectio Magistralis. DHC Universidad Lusíada, Lisboa, May 12th, 2020.

Lectio Magistralis. DHC Universidad Nacional de Rosario, June 2020.

Walton Book. CUA Washington, 2020.

WISDOM

ON THE WISDOM OF THE ARCHITECT

Lecture, Technische Universität Wien. March 7th, 2017.

Lectio Magistralis, Academic year opening UPM 2017-18. Madrid, September 8th, 2017.

Palimpsesto Architectonico. Ed. Asimétricas, Madrid, 2018.

Proyecto y Ciudad nº9. Cartagena, September 2018.