The Invisible in Architecture

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With regard to the invisible, there is a theological and philosophical tradition as old as the distinction between truth and untruth. A cloak of invisibility has always been the favourite guise of the truth. The truth was something you had to strive for. The invisible was the infinite, the absolute, the unreachable, and it was seen as being one with God, with the Platonic Forms of the True, the Beautiful and the Good, with the ghost in the machine or with the *Weltgeist*. Faith in the invisible truth has been so steadfast that five hundred years of Humanism, two hundred and fifty years of Enlightenment, a hundred years of Modernist creative destruction and twenty-five years of Post-Modern radical doubt have proved insufficient to unmask it decisively. The invisible truth has invariably seduced the rational biped.

Our intention in celebrating the Invisible in Architecture is not to uphold this tradition of an 'underlying', invisible truth. We cherish no iconoclastic longing for a pure, bare essence, uncontaminated by the deceit of representation. It is not our aim to reinstate a spiritual transparency. This book is the result of our wish to react to a culture whose products appear more and more to be nothing but representations. Seeing is believing, as the proverb would have it – but now literally so: seeing is the only believing. The truth still seduces, but invisibility is no longer its favourite stratagem. We have abandoned the metaphysical perception of the universe that made us long for the reality behind appearances. When the contract on this essentialism expired, all we had left was the image, the sign. From that moment onwards, the truth lay in the image itself and must hence also be sought there. Truth now no longer seduces through image, but *as* image. And that is quite a different matter. Once the arbitrary relation between image and meaning, between signifier and signified, was discovered, the way was open for total manipulation and fictionalisation of the image. In these times, the signifier has supplanted the signified, the representation has usurped the original, the semblance has displaced the essence, and verisimilitude has ousted truth. Deprived of its former metaphysical certainties, the eye, that actively searching, documenting organ, has taken on an immeasurable importance. The visual now seems to determine the entire agenda of existence. Our life owes its rhythm to a bombardment of images. This optical cadence is not all there is, however. Inevitable though it is that the visual opens the way to the truth, the time is now ripe to refute its pretention to *be* the truth. And if there is one medium, one art form, that can prove useful for the purposes of this refutation, then it is surely architecture. The simultaneous double role of architecture, as both participant and critical bystander in the process of advancing simulation, is thus our guiding theme. What is visible? The sign is visible, not the content to which the sign refers; the object is visible, not the action taking place in and around that object; the elegant, unique signature is visible, not the humdrumness of collective manners; the solution is visible, not the problem; our Brave New First World is visible, not the peripheral Third World to our south and in the ghettos of the affluent West; and the Self is visible, not the Other in that self's selfness. In this book, however, we shall not continue to attempt to probe the truth behind the visible in such a cut-and-dried, dialectic way. That would do meagre justice to the complexity of that truth. Oppositional thinking must make way for complementary thinking. Instead of bewailing the gulf between visibility and invisibility, we would prefer to emphasise the connection of the two by an intervening transitional zone. That is the region where we may fruitfully seek the invisible *in* the visible, and where we can escape the documentary pretentions of images by exploring the agendas concealed in them.

This book also aims to offer a cross-section of contemporary pluralistic architecture – not so much a Who's Who, as a Who's What and Why, of present-day architecture. For that purpose, we must cut right across contemporary culture. Most architects offer immense resistance – with renewed force in recent years – to the view that their work is ideologically loaded, that it has political consequences and that their formal choices and spatial concepts institutionalise relationships of power. This book's explicit aim is to probe and to discuss these particular dimensions of the craft, and thereby to stimulate debate on the social motives that give added legitimacy to, and receive added legitimacy from, architecture. Perhaps the architect's goal should be not to make political architecture, but rather to make an architecture with politics. In other words, should an architect's thinking about social constraints and possibilities not manifest itself in her or his work? Therefore one thing we would like to emphasise in this book is the

considerable potential of architecture as a medium of dialogue on current social conditions – and, of course, on potential alternatives.

Gradually, the entire architectural discourse has come to centre around design. Design discourages critical thought and action – and by probing the politics of design, the present book aims to rehabilitate precisely those attitudes. Architectural and urban design will be considered not only as affairs of autonomous, poetical inspiration (which can of course be a source of much pleasure) but as *loci* where individual artistic creativity intertwines with cultural, social and economic processes. We hope this book will stimulate a form of criticism that has a bearing on (architectural) practice; and vice versa.

Criticism must never be an indulgence, a let-out for an otherwise autonomous *métier* that unblinkingly and unthinkingly throws off one masterpiece after another. Criticism of that kind lives on a reservation, out of touch with the rest of culture. We hope to make it clear that there exists a kind of criticism that really does enmesh with society, a criticism that forms part of a practical strategy. Criticism should not be primarily about other criticism, but about the object that was its original *raison d'être*. That is the only way to break out of the vicious circle of academic scholasticism. Real criticism is marked by intellectual generalism, and does not confine itself to its own specialist idiom.

Architectural criticism often takes a passive stance, reflecting on the work but refraining from any explicit standpoint. It operates introvertedly, from the viewpoint of the architect or of the architecture, while the critic herself or himself hides behind marginal notes on the architectural object. When architecture is intrinsically empty of any stimulating philosophical, ideological or poetic vision, then criticism, too, usually lacks the power to escape this emptiness. Criticism degenerates into project documentation, becomes entangled in quasi-profundities or starts describing its own impotence and alienation. Such criticism is little more than a travel guide for the omnivorous cultural tourist. But, even when the object of criticism is not ostensibly 'about' anything, that criticism should surely not ape its object's superficiality. Perhaps this calls for effort, independence and nerve – or at least some other angle than the usual architectural jargon. Criticism must create a picture of reality through its own cogency. It must maintain an independence towards the object of its attentions and not merely take sides. When architecture tends towards endless mystification, towards a rhetoric of functionality, beauty, force, utopia, communication, cultural fragmentation or (by contrast) tranquillity and order, a rhetoric that casts a smoke-screen over the real social forces within which it operates, then criticism must act as the conscience of that rhetoric and make the doubtings visible. Only such criticism can elevate architecture to a mainspring of intellectual and moral understanding, and at the same time promote an architecture that demonstrates this understanding in practice, in the kind of use the building sanctions. Such criticism can bring architecture into contact with a public sphere that is more than just a market or the sum of private interests. The present book must be seen as an attempt at such criticism. It argues for cultural analysis as the backbone of architectural discussion, and for architecture itself as a cornerstone of the ongoing cultural debate. It advocates the creation of conditions for a new scholarly and critical mentality.

None of the architectural intelligences discussed in this book is to be interpreted as the exclusive product of an ideological, economic or geographical context. After all, intelligence and talent travel beyond the frontiers of their origins. However, the result of their expression is never located in a historical or cultural vacuum. Nowadays there is a widespread interest in the creative achievements and ingenious practical solutions of architecture. We would like to widen this interest to cover the world in which architecture is practised, and how that practice is defined by institutional and social factors. It is this world and these factors that generate the meanings crucial to the functioning of the architecture and thus vital to its proper understanding. The influences and pressures must be recognised, even when they are denied. We must escape the rigid dichotomy between 'us' and 'them', between architecture and the world at large. Our conviction that these spheres are really interdependent will accompany us throughout this book.

A fair treatment of today's kaleidoscopic architectural culture will inevitably be a tangle of intersections and overlaps. We intend to bring countless 'inherent' aspects of the craft, such as buildings, models, drawings and the accompanying architectural jargon, into relation with matters usually regarded as being external to it, namely politics, culture and economics. On the one hand, this intention reflects our wish to approach architecture architecturally, i.e. in accordance with the specific laws of the discipline and with respect for the profession's attainments. On the other hand, we wish to probe the programme behind the architectural discipline – a programme which may be latent, implicit or explicit. In other words, we are

prepared to raise questions about how architects could or should go about their business.

We must move from a situation in which reality tolerates criticism in a non-committal way towards a situation in which criticism is a match for reality. Thus the question is not how architectural criticism can serve architecture, but how architecture can be a medium of critical activity. This book is an attempt to sketch the world as it looks today on the basis of its architecture. To achieve that, architectural criticism must be taken to the elliptical point at which this genre completely undermines itself, and makes way for a different, conceptual mode of criticism that is not primarily occupied with media, genres and disciplines but with issues that concern us all – issues in whose service media, genres and disciplines can be deployed. Amid 'this century's most important art form' (Berlage), amid the star-struck profession, amid the pluralism of today, and amid an ocean of ostensibly autonomous and isolated built objects, the gaze is inevitably held by the 'luminous' architecture – the kind of architecture that can be seen to stand out in the spotlight of media attention. This book hopes to reveal the cultural shadow of that architecture, the invisible in architecture.

At first sight, this book may look like a labyrinth, a myriad of *faits divers*. In fact, our subject matter has a specific if somewhat complex conceptual structure, and this will take a little explanation. Firstly, we have identified eight 'vectors', current dimensions of interest and debate in both architecture and culture at large. Secondly, we have divided the contemporary pluralistic spectrum into three 'strategies', three prevailing ideologically motivated approaches to contemporary architecture. Together, these variables form a matrix of 24 'positions', and this is the backbone on which the subject matter of this book is structured. On partly subjective grounds, we have associated each of the positions in the matrix with a specific architect or bureau; and for each of these architects or bureaux, the book includes an essay, a project description, visual documentation and a selection of quotations from the architect(s) concerned.

Our eight 'vectors' are as follows: **durée, context, border, topos, programme, space, identity and representation.** Durée is the long term. Context is the situation in which the long-term factors become concrete. Boundary is the transition between context and object. Topos is the place contained by the boundary. Programme is the *raison d'être* of the place. Space is the container of the programme. Identity is the cultural value of the space. Representation is the form in which this value re-enters the discourse and so reproduces the durée. The vectors are concepts which have the potential of bridging the gap between practice and theory. Besides being terms that crop up in the ongoing intellectual debate, they also form part of the architect's theoretical frame of reference. Hence not only are these vectors aspects of a concrete reality, but they provide points of entry to a less concrete (but equally real) invisibility. The vectors are not just instruments for seeing architecture through the eyes of an architect. They are, rather, tools with which we can break out of the constraints of a specific and perhaps biased architectural vision; like all tools, their value must ultimately become apparent in use, by yielding results.

One could argue that these eight vectors form the core of the reaction against Modern Architecture that has taken place during the last twenty-five years. The internationalism, utopianism and universalism of the Moderns has made way for a situational ethics. This historical transformation has extended to all aspects of society. But architecture, as situation-creator *par excellence*, is directly caught up in this change and has in fact made a considerable contribution to it. It is not insignificant that Post-Modernism has developed into a movement above all in architecture. Issues of duration, context, boundary, place, identity and representation figure repeatedly in philosophy as well as in architecture. We could even argue that programme and space are 'Post-Modern' notions, in the literal sense of the word. After all, for the Moderns, with their love of flexible structures, the programme was often nothing more than a retrospective addition to the architecture. In their emphasis on architecture as a 'platform' or a 'facility', they left the programme for others to think about. And this brings us to the Modern space. New technical resources made it possible for the Modern architect to achieve the ideal of an isotropic space. Modern space was no more than a precondition for existence. And although the adulation of space in countless writings might lead us to expect otherwise, the whole discourse was aimed at a breakthrough measurable in *time*. That was the utopian progress and the vertical uplift. Our recent concern for the Other, for our fellow being, is actually a manifestation of the renewed currency of the space theme. When mankind proved incapable of actualising utopia, his puzzled gaze turned to the environment of that failed

enterprise. It turned out to offer plenty of material for investigation.

A final reason for choosing these eight vectors is that they enable us to side-step the problem of cultural incommensurability. When anthropologists and philosophers realised that every time and every cultural entity has its own interpretation of reality, making it difficult to penetrate elsewhere with our own cultural frame of reference, they also discovered that there were some subjects – actually dimensions of existence – about which everyone, regardless of culture, had either a conscious or an unconscious opinion. Thus no sooner did universal theories become impossible, than they discovered universal themes. By concentrating precisely on universal themes of this kind, it becomes possible for us to penetrate everywhere. True, this is theoretical imperialism. But the eight vectors are also illuminating categories, which enable us to peer into architecture and society. Moreover, they indicate exactly the extent to which the whole conceptual framework of architecture is currently under fire. They are also compelling: no wonder they have become the subject of furious debate.

This book falls into eight main divisions, corresponding to the vectors we have defined; each division contains an introduction in which we explore the nature of the vector in greater detail. The three 'strategies' we mentioned, which intersect with each of the vectors, also deserve a more detailed examination; and we have chosen to discuss them in this main introduction, below.

During the last thirty years, the purpose of architecture has been redefined. Architecture has abandoned many of its utopian pretentions and has found itself faced with the challenge to survive in a building process that is increasingly carved up into specialisms. The architect's self-respect could only endure with the role of artist replacing that of saviour. It is this artistic reorientation that runs like a thread through the past few decades of architectural history. Structurally speaking, this re-orientation can be broken down into the three dominant strategies we have already mentioned. Firstly **archaism,** the retreat into the 'dumb' architectural object. This strategy places its emphasis on the durable *thing*. Archaistic architecture is *touchy-feely*. Secondly, **façadism,** a belief in style. Style proves capable of reconciling antagonisms at the level of form. This strategy places its emphasis on the representative *image*. Façadist architecture is *looky-glossy*. Finally, **fascinism** supplies experiential suggestions, whose content is a condensed expression of an issue but not a challenge to it. This strategy places the emphasis on a certain *atmosphere*. Fascinist architecture is *brainy-flashy*.

The architecture discussed in this book is an *architecture autre*. It is, without exception, of high practical, aesthetic and intellectual quality. It is, also without exception, more than just the solution to a pragmatic problem: it also addresses social issues. It bears witness to the courage needed to take risks, to enthusiasm and endurance. But architecture, even architecture that is not satisfied with an unquestioning acceptance of the client/investor's wishes, is to a substantial degree socially affirmative. This is quite simply because it serves a practical end and because it is so expensive. It unavoidably nestles into a cultural politics of consensus and status quo. By distinguishing the three strategies, we hope to show how architectural projects can bear witness to a critical capacity as well as to affirmative action. There are some questions we shall pose in each case: how does the work relate to what it institutionalises, how far does it respect the public domain, and what is the role of the work's author?

Archaism The first strategy is Archaism. Archaism hopes to barricade itself against the destructive force of racing Modernisation. It refuses to accept the consequences of endless acceleration and tries to find a way of resisting it. Archaism seeks an escape from historical dialectics in the 'primitives' of existence. It studies the enduring attributes of the topos with the aim of thereby giving mankind his identity. Archaism resists Modernism by appealing to a timeless prehistory in which man supposedly still lived in innocent symbiosis with his cosmos. Although this strategy is unavoidably a representation of the symbiosis instead of the symbiosis itself, so that the cerebral aloofness of modern man continues to apply with undiminished force, it does in fact offer a 'way back'. The real object, the authentic thing, the phenomenology of space and material, the innocence of ritual: these are things we share with all peoples in all times. And that is where Archaism aims to lead back to.

Archaism places itself outside the Modern dialectics between form and content. All that matters is substance. It has an aversion to design. It insists on an architecture of reality, an architecture you can feel – feel with your eyes. We can also describe this strategy in psychoanalytic and biological terms. Archaism represents the unconscious, the *id*. Architecture that accords with this analysis does not work at a cerebral, cognitive, logocentric, rational or purposive level, but seeks its existence in the organic, phenomenological, symbiotic and holistic. These are areas that are difficult to treat discursively (although that does not apply to theories about this architecture!). You could perhaps compare archaism with the eighteenth-century romantic longing for the condition of the noble savage in his primitive hut. But it goes much further: in the interests of achieving a primal state, it would have us give up the consciousness that has made us into the aloof and calculating creatures we are. For some archaists, it even implies a figurative return to the maternal lap, to the womb. In some ways this architecture bears an unmistakably erotic tint, in that it strives to produce an almost orgasmic release through (the eye's) caressing of the object of adoration.

While the archaistic *id* can be understood in Freudian psychology as the libido, its neurological counterpart is the mid-brain, the reptilian substratum of the human spirit. Archaism appeals to the seat of the passions, the limbic system. Archaism is the architecture of *homo faber*. As such, it concentrates on the solid stuff, the touchstone, the centre of cosmology. Its method is a return to the *thing*, the *referent*, the *ground* on which all else is based. The main philosophical problem that besets archaism is that the return to roots and to mythical consciousness involves forgetting all that has taken place between 'then' and now. The past is romanticised. Interpersonal relations are offered up in favour of supracultural categories which can only be experienced individually, in lonely silence. Meanwhile, the (tectonic) world gets by perfectly well without the individual.

To identify archaism, take note of the following paradigmatic soundbites: *traditions, authenticity, essence, phenomenology, niche, Geworfenhei, immediacy, nearness, thingness, presentness, tactility, Heidegger, unconscious, eternity, place, texture, material, ground, métier, canton, autarchy, landscape, path, tectonics, haptic realm, silence, loneliness, modesty, harmony, participation, use, human scale, ontology...*

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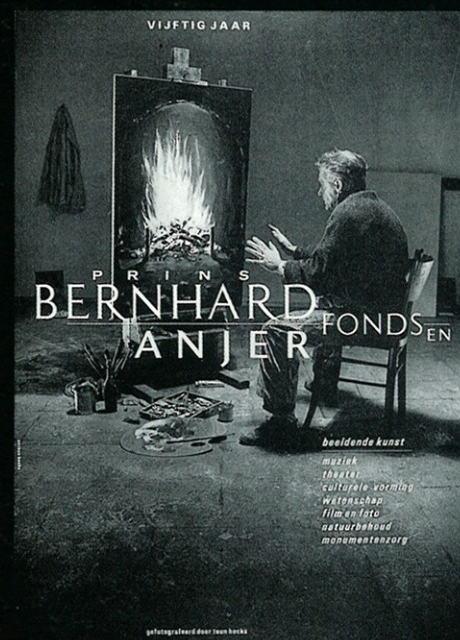
Façadism The second strategy, Façadism, operates largely within the dialectics of form and content. It is most tellingly exemplified by the 'decorated shed'. This strategy defines our environment principally in stylistic terms. Functions are represented by a stylised narrative couched in terms of ornament and figuration. The narrative, be it metaphorical, critical or speculative, is thereby separated from the substance and expelled to the surface. The façadist approach concentrates in general on the Semperian *Bekleidung* and is thus not necessarily restricted to the outer surface of the volume. Surfaces are treated in an overtly communicative way; the architectonic signs are like pictographs.

In psychoanalytic terms, façadists operate at the level of the *ego*. They wish to engage every user in a dialogue by means of multiple coding of form and meaning. They aim to attract everyone into the communication process at his own level. The façadist architect believes he controls the semantic scenario of his building, just as the ego has control over cognition. This architecture is thus in a certain sense humanistic. It places its trust in meaning – and in the happy ending. The façadist strategy is based on correspondence thinking, i.e. on the faith that the meanings 'behind' the signs are based on universally valid agreements. Man still forms the centre, even if he is just an anonymous consumer.

Façadism appeals to the cortex. It is the architecture of *homo sapiens* and *homo significans*. It is cognitive and assumes a reasonable communication of meaning. As such, it concentrates on meaningful *images*. Its method is the use of many separate *signs*. The work guards consciousness against doubt.

Façadism is not interested in the critical evaluation of its signs. The context offers all kinds of meanings, whether mythical or rational, and these territories are regarded as interchangeable. The presence of at least *some* meaning is the ultimate criterion. In the first instance, façadism seems to rely on a strongly developed consciousness of everything to do with meaning and communication. But when we examine this consciousness more closely, it seems to relate largely to the operation of the meaning process and not to the cultural causes and effects of that operation.

Facadism allies itself with the world as it is. It lives in harmony with the liberal tradition. History knows only gradual variations, not breaks or sudden changes of direction. Facadism seems to believe in democracy as the mitigating circumstance of capitalism, which offers everyone an equal chance as long as he or she takes the initiative. Its practitioners believe in open, free and meaningful communication in which the consensus functions by majority. The New World exists thanks to the people.

To identify façadism, take note of the following paradigmatic soundbites: *representation, iconography, common sense, democracy, life-style, marketing, communication, Rorty, language, semiotics, sign, Jakobson, surface, varnish, eclecticism, visuality, city, monumentality, volume, classicism, dressing, figuration, decor, ornament, authorship, ratings, pragmatism...*

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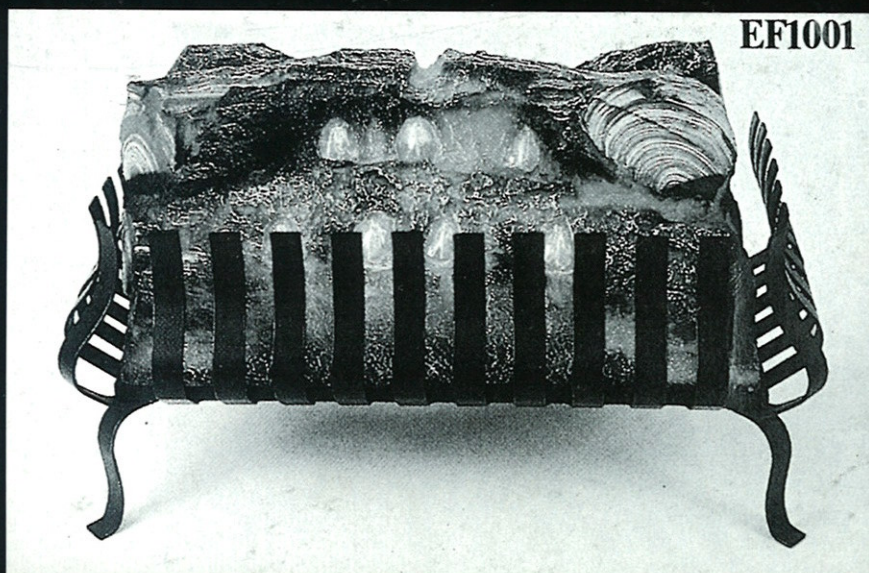
Regal Limited advertisement: 'If you (...) wish to create an impressive centre-piece for the living-room, a Regal Log will create a cheerful atmosphere of warmth and luxury, without the inconvenience of actually burning logs, and costs very little to run.'

Fascinism The third strategy we call fascinism.

Fascinism denies the dialectics between form and content. For this strategy, the surface is the deepest thing there is. The author, as genius and as producer, no longer exists. Intentionality makes way for modality. Representation *is* reality, in an endless semiosis. We can never stop this process, only succumb to it in fascination. How does the global village work? Despite its inhabitants, with autonomous chains of meaning-assignation and social processes. Fascinism treats us to a bombardment of images torn largely from a variety of historical and functional contexts, obscene fragments. And although fascinistic architecture harbours a vein of criticism, an intrinsically valid aesthetic revolt against the uniforming terror of teleology and system thinking, its nihilism makes it a ready vehicle for a 'charismatic' politics.

The architecture of fascinism is a construction in name only. It is dematerialised on all sides into a communication medium in which it is possible to 'write' meanings of every kind. Hence this tendency is 'post-historical', post-humanistic and post-structuralist, outside dialectic history, beyond Utopia and intertextual. What remains is a universe of signs that may be viewed positively as the source of an immense freedom, or negatively as a terror of simulacra in a pluriversum of so many different micro-meanings that every distinction is erased. However you look at it, it is a waste of time seeking anything 'behind' anything else – and certainly seeking truth behind a form.

The fascinists represent the dominion of the superego. It is not insignificant that they agitate keenly against the paralysing effect of too much knowledge, and long for a new innocence. Fascinists know too much. Taking into account a whole complex of social, cultural and technological factors, they aim at an architecture that is up to date. Everything must be represented in this architecture (as a person or as an architect, you must spare no effort to follow the news). In negative terms, the superego is your own Big Brother. The media keep watch on everything, and even mould reality to suit the image. There is no escape from this condition, and architecture that does no justice to it is, intellectually speaking, utterly irrelevant. In positive terms, this architecture of the superego is a hypersensitive expression of what is actually going on in our culture. All in all, viewed positively or negatively, the superego stays on top: you, the architect, cannot know how things are, no, the here and now of current reality is always one step ahead. Anyone who wishes to disobey is suffering from hope for the past or yearning for the future (or vice versa). Hence fascinism is free of nostalgia, but by no means free of other impositions. Mandatory submission to the 'course of things', to a historical/futurological *Zeitgeist*, is a present-day variant of the seductions of totalitarianism. Hence this strategy is vulnerable to the same criticism as has been applied to cultural relativism: it offers no moral criterion to help us chart a course into the future. At the same time, the fascinist refuses to recognise the ethical choice implicit in this observation. Nothing is true, and not even that – everything is relative except that. Fascinism appeals to the extensions of the cortex, to the eye of television, to the binary brain of the computer, to artificial intelligence. Fascinist architecture is a feverishly progressive architecture, aimed at an impassioned *mood*, an architecture for *homo cyberneticus*.

To identify fascinism, take note of the following paradigmatic soundbites: ***post-humanism, metropolis, periphery, interface, fragment, rhizome, difference, Derrida, intertextuality, Barthes, speed, mobility, dromology, Virilio, atopia, simulation, nomadism, excess, hyper-reality, cyberspace, grotesque, dislocation, folding, event, tracing and mapping, elevated, skin, fire, obscurity...***

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Jan Dibbets transformed the TV set in an electronic fireplace. For this time pure fire was transmitted. No introduction, no commentary. 24 min. TV as FIREPLACE. 1969

The heuristic matrix of eight vectors and three prevalent strategies gives us twenty-four intersections on which we can dispose a similar number of architectural oeuvres. Of course, this does not imply that the twenty-four architects have nothing to say about other intersections than that on which we have placed them. On the contrary, the speculative power of these designers would probably surpass every classification applied for the sake of argument. Partly for this reason, we asked our chosen architects to make a statement about all eight vectors, in order to clarify their positions (in some cases we have culled these statements from the published literature). Thus you will find a spread containing twenty-four statements, one from each architect, preceding each vector introduction.

In our interpretations of the individual oeuvres, we sometimes stick our neck out rather far. Therefore, to give a hearing to both sides of the argument we have included a documentation of at least one much-acclaimed or much-discussed project by each architect. We have also compiled a number of each architect's most important past statements, sometimes together with statements by apologists, exegetists, colleagues and rivals. This structure offers unexpected alliances, counterpoints, pure presentations, fictive dialogues and imaginary press conferences – all intended to clarify someone's standpoint and to make this heard in the current debate on the issues concerned.

In addition to the twenty-four monographs, this book includes thirteen scholarly or critical articles and eleven interviews with various architects. Our intention in including these articles is, on the one hand, to chart out the intellectual context of the architectural debate, and on the other hand, to create an arsenal of arguments that can prove useful in this debate. As an extra stimulus to this debate, we have provided additional comments, questions and answers in the margins of the articles.

The eleven interviews reproduced in this book gave us an opportunity to ask directly about motivations and mentalities. But they also reveal a variety of styles of talking about architecture. These styles demonstrate the relationship between discourse and form. In publications on architecture, the reader is all too often confronted with speechless objects, reduced moreover to two dimensions as photographic reproductions. To avoid this situation, we considered it worth creating verbal contexts, in which the architectural forms are given a voice, so to speak, through the voice of their makers. Conversely, we have striven to use the pictures not merely as illustrations to decorate the text, but as critical notes in themselves.

To sum up, this book aspires to being a documented interaction of practice and theory, of main and marginal text, of documentation and manipulation, of styles of speech and of thinking, of image and text, of description and criticism, of scholarly and practical disciplines, of quotations and dialogues. We hope that our readers will be able to use this material not only as a means of simultaneously refining and adding edge to the cultural debate, but also in developing new design strategies.

We can well imagine that after reading this book, you may believe that every architect who tries to do something more than build an illustration to an investor's brochure is a present-day Sisyphus. However much the architect does to create a new world, or to express an idea in form, someone is always going to try and pick holes. The reader will understandably raise his hands and ask, 'What is it you actually want, then?' With this in mind, we have chosen to present an outline of our standpoint with respect to the current state of affairs at the end of this book. This exposition takes the form of an epilogue in which we argue the case for an open architecture.