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Cher Bakema

après avoir reçu la lettre de B.P.H. de 27.12.60., j'ai conclu que B.P.H. n'a pas reçu mon rapport sur le congrès à Bagnoles sur C. Les rapports en deux langues étaient envoyés, quelques mois au moins déjà- dans le temps accepté par nous tous.

A cause du temps perdu, je ne permet d'envoyer personnellement mon rapport à tous les participants du Congrès à Bagnoles sur C.

Avec cordiales salutations

Hansen

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The Open Form in Architecture - The Art of the Great Number

The fact that instead of designing, I must write what I was to discuss at the Congress is again proof of the absurdity of the old system of the Closed Form concerning new problems, which in this instance concerns the conduct of discussion.

I feel that our meetings are necessary because we have an INTUITION that through our personal contact a new architecture is being born, but at the same time we FORGET that it is necessary to speak about the new architecture in a different manner than of that architecture in which we were brought up. Let us cast off the "general's uniform" and let us be willing to list ten to each one of us. Even should someone who has the opportunity to speak remain silent -- he has spoken in the opinion of all.

This concerns not only work at the congress but also work in the studio -- in cooperation with specialists, We must remember that PSYCHOLOGY IS TO BE THE BASIS OF THE NEW ARCHITECTURE. In this relation I propose that in undertaking its delivery we be at least bound by a horizontal organizational scheme, for due to the ballast of habit we may be unable to manage in the "circle". In the future the Open Form will bring us closer to the ideal "form of a table" in which the individual participants will be assured an equal standing. However, this form will also assume a latitude and modification in their number.

We had come to Bagnols sur Ceze in order to answer the questions WHAT do we have in common and HOW are we to fight for it? By WHAT, I mean the things that I disagree with in architecture as it has been up to now. HOW signifies the means which I consider proper and their application in realizing the new idea.

WHAT

ARCHITECTURE UP TO NOW:

1/ HAS NOT SOLVED THE PROBLEM OF NECESSARY QUANTITY - THE GAP IN THE QUANTITY OF APARTMENTS AND SOCIAL FACILITIES IS DECREASING VERY SLOWLY AND OFTEN INCREASING INSTEAD OF DECREASING,

2/ AS A CLOSED FORM DOES NOT ACCEPT CHANGES IN THE MODE OF LIFE, OFTEN BECOMES OBSOLETE BEFORE IT HAS BEEN REALIZED,

3/ BOADLY DISREGARDS THE TENANT'S PSYCHOLOGICAL DEMANDS, IS OFTEN INHUMANE,

4/ IS WASTEFUL OF FINANCIAL MEANS,

5/ THE "PLAY RULES" IN SO CALLED CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE SANCTION THE DISSIPATION OF GROUP TRAITS- THE PROBLEM OF COMOPOLITISM

Progressive architects who believe in the miraculous function of the Closed Form /in order to overcome the stalemate of QUANTITY/ have been designing minimum apartments for the past half century - ineffectually. The demand is constantly increasing and the standard of "quantity" housing is decreasing. Indeed. Even the most magnificent attainments of "small quantities" based on the Closed Form, like Velingsby or the Cite d'Habitation à Marseille, have for various reasons failed the test. It seems to me that Brasilia's Capital will be an antique before it is completed for it is based on the Closed Form.

The Austrian architect Hofman had a half a century ago solved the problem of the Closed Form in Bruxelles with all its consequences. The architect's role was that of a super specialist whose task was to solve the problem of the small quantity, who imposed the order of things from the scale of city planning to a button.

I am not an adherent of a compulsory evolution. However, I do believe that evolution may be accelerated. I consider the organic disregard of free polemics in architecture, or the simplification

of its elements, an anachronistic convention of the Closed Form as well as a repercussion of the traditional system of construction. The fact that life in a collective is most often a sad necessity and not a luxury resulting from progress is also the "wages" of the Closed Form.

HOW

I believe that, in a given material situation, the present "swelling" society which has an arsenal of means - the obsolescent Closed Form - can afford to build homes and public facilities in a sufficient quantity and on an increasingly higher standard.

That unfortunate problem of quantity, unsolved up to now, lies in the naturalistic manner in which the heritage of the Closed Form is taken over in order to solve other substances - THE LARGE QUANTITY. The sooner we cast off the shackles of the Closed Form, the form on the basis of which we have been brought up and consequently often do not perceive its deleterious effect, the sooner will we solve the basic task of architecture.

I consider that the problem of DYNAMIC QUANTITY can be resolved without lowering the standards by taking the OPEN FORM as a basis. It is the consequence ^{of the substance} mentioned above and the NEW QUALITY.

Acting in the convention of Open Form what will we understand by the terms QUANTITY or NUMBER - the FILLING IN OF THE GAP OF HOUSING AND PUBLIC UTILITIES LEFT IN LEGACY BY THE CLOSED FORM and KEEPING UP IN BUILDING WITH NATURAL INCREASE OF POPULATION.

The term QUALITY IN THE CONVENTION OF THE OPEN FORM should be understood as the RECOGNITION OF THE INDIVIDUALITY IN A COLLECTIVE.

The basic elements of the Open Form presented above are the meshed vectors which will form the new architecture. THE NEW NUMBER WILL PRODUCE NEW QUALITY and conversely THE CONCEPT OF THE NEW QUALITY WILL HELP US RESOLVE THE NUMBER.

The half century of reducing architecture to one decision has made it, and by the same token also ^{the} tenants, barren of the potential energy of self - determination. In order to act, we, architects, as well as future tenants must first "heal" the "illness" of the Closed Form. / For instance the conferences at Bagnols sur Ceze or the character of the term Team X./

The OPEN FORM unlike the Closed Form does not exclude the ENERGY OF THE TENANT'S INITIATIVE but on the contrary TREATS IT AS A BASIC, ORGANIC AND INSEPARABLE COMPONENT ELEMENT. This fact is of a fundamental significance to the TENANT'S PSYCHOLOGY and hence to the WORK OUTPUT. The rhythm of times - the elements of which are the attainments in the field of science, political changes, cataclysms and the functioning of the Closed Form which appears in a particularly drastic form in the faulty interpretation of industrial materials out of which emerges the monstrous shape of dull standardization - causes that the individuality become lost in the collective. The individual stands apart from the action. THE OPEN FORM IS TO AID THE INDIVIDUAL IN FINDING HIMSELF IN THE COLLECTIVE, TO MAKE HIM INDISPENSIBLE IN THE CREATION OF HIS OWN SURROUNDINGS.

It seems that SOCIETY SHOULD MAKE POSSIBLE / and not impose as in the Closed Form / THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL. There should be a SYNTHESIS BETWEEN OBJECTIVE, COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL ELEMENTS AND THE SUBJECTIVE INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS. This organic necessity of our society - THE MUTUAL PERMEAZION OF SUPERFICIALLY OPPOSITE ELEMENTS - will in result produce a more proper distribution of means assigned for this purpose, will aid in solving the problem of filling in the gaps of the lacking means and consequently will resolve, in an organic manner with the development of the individual as the basis of the whole / individualized society/ - the problem of quantity.

What elements should we consider objective and social? Those which we may attain only due to society. Subjective elements are those which we can and wish to resolve ourselves.

In the first group we include action based on area planning in the scale of a country, city planning on the scale of a region or city. In detail, it will mean the preparation of "sites" for "one family houses" on the first floor, second floor, third floor, fourth floor, etc., up to the top floor in a skyscraper. Preparation of "sites" for ~~background~~ construction will depend upon the solution of such elements influence of local conditions on the formations of city planning groups, the ^{as:} ~~for~~ ^{background} social living, a common means of communication, instalations, common roof etc.

THE CHOICE OF THE PLACE "WHERE" IN THE CITY, by way of answer to public information, WILL BE MADE BY THE TENANT. This is the first instance where the objective and subjective ~~and subjective~~ elements permeate each other. After the "site" has been chosen the TENANT DECIDES on the system in which the home is to be build.

HOW ? Here the second instance may occur where the objective and subjective elements permeate each other, that is if society will build homes on the order of the tenant /for instance the typical plan/. An architect or some other specialist, invited by the tenant, may participate. This phase of construction, in part or the whole of it, may be carried out by the tenant himself, or by some other energy but always at the decision of the tenant himself. This phase may be carried out successfully on a large scale only if it is previously properly organized and the material base, large and varied, is first properly prepared /industrial, semi-industrial materials and local materials/. This stage, from the viewpoint of the organization of the construction as well as of the establishing and development of the bases, should evolve gradually. Problems should arise and grow gradually and in this connection the answers would evolve

organically. The third instance of permeation, or in other words ^{the} the third stage of construction or still, the third and COMPLETELY NEW ARCHITECT'S TASK, demands additional preparation. A COMMUNICATIVE TRANSMISSION TO OUR PSYCHOLOGY OF THE ORGANIC AND BOUNTIFUL CHAOS OF EVENTS IN FORM RECEIVED BY THIS MANNER, NOT BY ELIMINATING SEPARATE FORMS / as in the Closed Form/ BUT BY RECOGNIZING THE SEPARATE COMPONENT ELEMENTS BY MEANS OF ADDITIONAL PLASTIC EFFECTS.

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE OPEN FORM will be therefore THE DISCERNIBLENESS OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE MULTIPLE AND DISCERNIBLENESS OF THE NUMBER. In housing we shall have a polemic of viewpoints on the creation of one's own surroundings, /characterized by an appropriate background. In social postulates these will be separate events /people, circumstances, etc/.

THE OPEN FORM differs from the Closed Form by RECOGNIZING CONCRETE PEOPLE / not the abstract so called "average"/, BY LEAVING A MARGIN FOR EVOKING ONE'S OWN LATENT ESSENCE. It is an individual-collective phenomenon and because of that multistratified and lively

The problem and scope /proportion/ of the permeation of subjective and objective elements depends upon the traits and needs of the group /community/. An enormous role is played by the distribution of material means, the living standard of society, the accessible material base and psychological elements.

It seems that DUE TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF COMPETENCES INTO THE " STAGE OF THE UNFINISHED STATE" AND THE "STAGE OF FINISHING WORK" WE COULD IN THE FIRST PHASE - "HEAVY INDUSTRY" - ATTAIN A GREATER EFFICIENCY / specialized industries/ THUS ATTAINING BETTER QUALITY AND LARGER OUTPUT. IN THE SECOND PHASE, "LIGHT INDUSTRY" AND THE CRAFTS - TO DEVELOPE THESE TWO FIELDS MORE FULLY AND MAXIMUM EXPLOITATION OF MATERIALS AND POSSIBILITIES OF SPACE, THUS RAISING THE GENERAL STANDARD OF HOUSING. THE THIRD PHASE IS THE FURTHER PROGRESS IN CULTURE AND ART.

By recognizing the very extensive substance, we enter upon the field of new esthetics in architecture - THE ESTHETICS OF THE OPEN FORM. As Dadaism in painting broke the barrier of traditional esthetics so the Open Form in architecture will bring us closer to the "ordinary, mundane, things found, broken, accidental" ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~. The role of the artist-architect is altered from the previous exclusively personal and conceptional role, imposing the Closed Form in the manifestation of which the substance plays a secondary role in which the form is defined beforehand and that most often for a non-existing persons the so called "average", a form in relation to which the tenant stands "apart" - to the Conceptional-Coordinating role. An all knowing architect must realize in the face of the high level of knowledge in present times that he does not know everything about himself, not to speak of hundreds and thousands of people. Hence, the architect super-specialist is obsolescent in present times.

The wealth of Open Form in architecture as well as its development will depend on the polemic of various component parts, comprehended as various individualities, playing the leading role in its substance, serving each tenant individually, not defined beforehand in its manifestation.

The Closed Form had created esthetics for its own use. The Open Form - THE ART OF EVENTS- will also look for its own methods of study, its own means of expression, its own esthetics. The Open Form, being the form of the sum of events - of the sum of individualities of a given group - should in consequence lead us to the expression of a ~~GROUP~~ GROUP FORM.

Taking into consideration the constantly broadening analysis of component elements, their mutual permeation as well as the indivisible structure of society, we approach the idea of COMPLETE, UNIVERSAL, WHOLE, CONTINUOUS SPACE - space of a different psychology a different and new morality.

I consider Otterlo one of the most interesting congresses in which I have participated. I was a little disappointed in Bagnols-sur-Ceze. But I should like to stress the fact that only to a slight degree. Aside from that, it was very interesting and above all useful.

Both were a polemic of individualities, a superimposition of elements, an intensification or clearing up of doubts, a surge of new truths in the face of the senility of the Closed Form.

It seems that preparing for the acceptance of the Open Form we must more carefully perceive, select, add, systematize THE NEW, what may help us in the solution of the basic, as I think, problems of which I have spoken above.

We had been drawn together by DOUBT. May that we supplant it with FAITH- and we shall then become Revolutionists.

/Oskar Hansen/