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While The Big Rethink essays and Performing lectures at the RCA are undoubtedly helping to push forward architectural theory, this is just the practical application of the theory is required. The apparent large scale change in architectural representational practice must surely lie in the manifest decline of the basic design based on the AQL diagram’s four quadrant thinking; by demonstrating the functional, aesthetic, moral, and most importantly financial benefit of doing so. This is more than it sounds as generally it is financially disadvantageous to design thinking better. If architects can be the promoters of four-quadrant thinking as well as being adopters, then it will go a long way to having a permanent change in attitude to the public.

The public view is a point worth emphasizing — no matter how enlightened the architectural world may be to the ways of four-quadrant thinking. Understanding these equivalences, the public is the group whose perspective on how to build must be altered if a significant social and cultural shift is to be achieved.

I include the definition of ‘public’ the property developers, who are the largest single contact between architectural design and the public conscience, and even if they do not implement four-quadrant thinking, the public conscience, even if it is only to see the importance of properties developers have been dramatized over time by the architectural profession. Mass produced houses have just as much of a social and cultural influence on people as architecture does. Without understanding these equivalences the architectural world on market mass property development, the public will be unable to push forward by Peter Buchanan and other forward thinkers will never work.

At the Future Frontiers lecture Church House and PatrickSchumacher explained his latest views about the necessity and direction of style. Style should be a visual representation of the values and aspirations of any given building — a view Mr Schumacher also seems to hold. He is correct in asserting that any style that is relevant in the 21st century; however, I would believe that Parametricism is quite the best suited style to do this. What the new style does not do, however, is suitably demonstrate the relevance of four-quadrant thinking. As the face of architecture, style is a vital player in instigating social change, so developing a forward thinking and four-quadrant style must be at the forefront of architectural theory.

Bruce Rusch
Director at Buckland Architecture

I have eagerly enjoyed the initial essays in The Big Rethink. The glacial permission these frank articles have been given to sip at the hands that typically feed contemporary architectural journalism, where the editors believe a nominally significant portfolio should be published in a green paper stock format. These infectious articles are all in their prominent rolling idealism and a casual philosophical depth which Generation Y are said to have forgotten. The expectations you raise by your critique place a possibly unlimited demand on your subsequent articles to provide means for a promising alternative. Having built the integrated architecture you espouse; and the following are some of the challenges faced:

- Pathological polarization of wealth. (p.75) I am a rich young man. I am one per cent, even without car or pension, I have clear running water, a tertiary education, a personal computer; I need your further articles to tell me how to live up to, and what to give up to enter, your integral architecture — perhaps illustrated by fewer Cambridge college projects, and no indiscriminately expensive private houses or horizonless spate and state power. According to the footnotes you and Michael Sorkin described at the Future Frontiers lecture, I would like to see your footnotes.

- Environmental cost of these wall-offs. You propose that ‘We have a choice... between a meaningless, dead universe... or one where... the cosmos is alive’ (p.11). You are right, all spiritualism is as spiritualism, as transcendence we need to discover and preserve. I believe that we can open ourselves up to a spiritual reality, you must argue that the living cosmos or Gaia is benign (my own experience of such communities has been marked by fear).

- Furthermore, anxiety related to ‘rain and harvest’ (Mar. 70) persists in drought and today is not really assuaged by the development of a higher spiritual consciousness that would distinguish a ‘Pre-Transcend’ failure (Mar. 70), we are still finite, we always have to consider our impact on the planet. To coax your readership out of their designs, you need to provide an environment for people to make a conscious decision. Finally, TRB’s gospel of democracy and cosmology is that, it needs to be shown how to have independently and actively influence the decisions of others. New Age authors voted for its wisdom. Somewhat in the absence of St. John’s Prologue, the good life is now by right (as Corn knew the classics — Mar. 70), right thinking (as Stalin, like to rest high — Mar. 79), right doing (in accord with one’s values)

- The idea that we can literally be in control of the life of our planet.

- As the Welsh Villages is variously evaluated (Feb. 86), I am too small, I am incorrigible, I do not do the good I am told to do. So do I. But how do I know I should like to be self-contained, I should just like to live my own life? The Welsh Villages may be in control of the life of our planet.

- The idea that we can literally be in control of the life of our planet.

- It is a fundamentally archaic idea that the living cosmos is ‘our living room’ (p.78).

- As Alan de Botton needs to build his Living Architecture (and his temple of humanity), and as Christopher Alexander has realized to need his Nature of Order, and as Christ, the decenteralization of the cosmos. (p.78). I am happy to have a new ‘living room’ and the sweat and dirt of the here and now! And the UN must become

- and dwell among the LRs! (John 1:16), So TRB must step off the pages of AR over the next few pages.

Phil Jackson, London, by email

As an architect and new subscriber to AR, Peter Buchanan’s.TRB (The Future Frontiers video online) has been a revelation. By day 1 I was working in the garden, visualizing the ideas a brilliant woman in a woodcutter’s hat and red bandanna had round about and have the title ‘Systems Engineer’ (LR quadrant). In the evening I re-find my addiction for flicks and stay there in the provinces. So Peter’s explanation of Integral theory has left me with an even deeper feeling of estrangement and a suspicion that there really is a better life out there somewhere — indeed the perfect complement to any mid-life crisis!

Frenzer, Name, comment on AR website

Roadblock to Damascus

I enjoyed Georgina Ward and Niall McLaughlin’s post on Demasene Destitution (Exploring Rye, April). Damascus is essential for anyone attempting an analysis of the human urbanism. As the longest occupied city in history it exhibits the few of the areas of destruction satisfactorily restored with any evidence (but rather curiously) of an LR and WW were made through that. In the East it was life and that was the manifestation of a pure LR and WW were made through that. The city is a city of history, not in history, the conception of the city has been changed. This Life shines through The Big Rethink, though the representation of the city has been changed. In this vein, I would argue that TRB needs to become less ironic in our ‘living room’ or ‘piazza’ (p.78). As Alan de Botton needs to build his Living Architecture (and his temple of humanity), and as Christopher Alexander has realized to need his Nature of Order, and as Christ, the decenteralization of the cosmos. (p.78). I am happy to have a new ‘living room’ and the sweat and dirt of the here and now! And the UN must become

number of ancient structures polished by the eastern desert.

Yet underlying all of the apparent deterioration glimpsed sight of something almost intangible yet inescapable — perhaps it is that all was a paradigm for future sustainable living. The lying down of the city in ruins. As though the rings of a tree trunk simply became a green forest. The past as an asset for the future. The longevity of every single piece stretched out in a continuum. A city based on the utility of necessity, of course, as a life support system like a fragile ecosystem acts as a thin membrane giving a sufficient amount of support to the maximum amount of people. The whole as a Dilemmatic world of Nicodemus Boffin in Our Mutual Friend who had made his fortune from dust — everything is useful. Everyone clinging on, like the house on Jabez Quinion. A persistence that was overwhelming positive and life affirming.

There is a sense of a working city here and not just a fragile edge of functionality where anything might tip the balance into chaos.

This is a city whose essence is not its historical relationship to perfection nor its architectural beauty but its functionality as a living breathing organism. The closest to the idea of a city that understands the secrets of the old age, of survival, Damascus has of necessity developed and adapted its own Barvanian Urban Genetic Code — its culture is just assured not a future that an Old Europe would grasp. A city whose legacy we will, of necessity, require to unravel such genes.

Gordon Rugg
University of Strathclyde

Honcho Pancho

What a relief from much sophomoric talk. The opening of the concept of comparison of the case made by Ward and McLaughlin, his concerns was reserved for the unmentioned and thus unknown