

Re-mark

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Forming the Idea

Abstract

This research considers the philosophies of identity politics, linguistics and aesthetic theory using inquiry as a method. It addresses three key questions. One, what constitutes architecture as the 're-mark' forming ideas? Two, how can phenomenology inform thoughts regarding the built environment based on the production of technique? And three, can architecture, as a mode of representation, conceptualize a sensory experience of space?

This presentation locates architecture as a corporeal form and the value of meaning derived from the exploration of architectural ideas. Many scholars have focused on the concretization of thoughts regarding building materials and how they are used to produce ideas. However, there exists a gap in the scholarly literature regarding how architecture is formed and how nature regarding architecture differs from the inevitable residue of economy that is the urban environment.

Discussions among architects suggest that practice must address how the urban environment will be situated in the future. This study initiates and invites a discussion about what it means to be natural, as well as the very nature of architecture itself.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to propose a different way of considering architecture as a means of representation. It does not attempt to explain the difference between the architecture of so called design 'masters' and those who practice techniques to serve the masses. Nor does it attempt to concern itself with the artful or ontological nature of architecture for this was the call of Roman Ingarden. This paper considers philosophies of identity politics, linguistics, and aesthetic theory in order to establish a potential ground from which one can adequately identify what constitutes architecture as a mode of representation. This inquiry focuses on the construction of architecture, as a particular modality informing corporeal practices derived from the exploration of **ideal reification** not the **production of ideas**. The question herein: does architecture consist of more than building objects?

In order to recognize architecture one must be able to recognize the totality of architecture as that which 'is' (the site), that which 'exists as' (the architect), and that which 'will become' (the architecture). If one is to understand the **Re-mark** of, within the totality of formed objects, one must address the 'crisis of representation' inherent to the practice of **forming** artifacts of technique. The crisis in question promotes the reification of ideas – merely the impression or image – to primary status, while relegating ideal reification – experience of collective thought – to non-reality.

Building objects are the Re-mark – impression of the signifier – of architecture because buildings are merely the reification of ideas. A crisis of representation exists because the design process is a series of reflective moments that are violently subsumed in the process of reification. Architecture, situated within the realm of made objects, represents the impression – not the thing-itself – because forming building objects within the built environment requires the temporal spacing (dislocation) of the Idea. The dislocation of architectural ideas represents a symbolic violence that is the inevitable residue because of economy.

I. Re-mark

Is it possible that the Re-mark, as building object, is the contingency of Architecture? Within the **totality** of architecture, building objects are the **contingency** because buildings are a means of **dislocating** meaning. Meaning is 'of', not derived 'from', the primary object (signifier) while buildings are secondary objects (signifier 2x).

A. Totality – Episteme (the Fivefold Structure).

I. Structure – Way of thinking regarding the system of representation.

What is the totality of Architecture? The totality of Architecture is the **Episteme** or overarching structure-defining conditions that allow the **Idea** to emerge as well as limiting its potential to be actualized. The Episteme, Fivefold Structure, is comprised of five fundamental moments:

I. Ideal 2. Substance 3. Meaning 4. Mark 5. Re-mark

The Five-Fold Structure is a way of thinking regarding the design of objects. I state here that the design of objects is not equivalent to making building-objects. The Five-Fold modality allows for the exploration and expression of design moments. The system was derived from an understanding of the linguistic sign; the five contiguous fundamental moments of the 'fold' correspond to five moments derived from the sign:

I. Symbol 2. Sign 3. Signified 4. Signifier 5. Signifier 2x

Within this framework the Symbol and the corresponding Ideal locate the first fundamental that posits the designer as origin of thought and making. The second moment is the Sign and the corresponding Substance that is the imaginary object or 'essence beyond recognition.' The Sign/Substance represents the Idea of design that is of the designer and only the designer. The third moment is the Signified/Meaning, which locates that design object (sketch) that is of the world but only recognizable to the designer. Once the designer can articulate meaning in a recognizable form, the idea is conceptualized becoming the Signifier/Mark of the designer. The 'Mark' of Architecture is architecture because it is of the hand of the architect.

"By the work; for to say that the work does credit to the master means that it is the work that first lets the artist emerge as a master of his art. The artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist. Neither is without the other." (Heidegger 17)

The final moment is the Re-mark/Signifier 2x, which is the building object. The Re-mark is termed Signifier 2x because the building is not of the designer therefore it is the image of the idea not the ideal. I state here that the Re-mark is the image or impression of the building, not the idea or the Ideal, because the building is a product of the professional practice. The professional practice seeks to produce buildings as the end in itself. To this end, post-modernists may suggest that the sign is no longer a valid means to understanding meaning or production. The argument herein is that meaning is of the Symbol and production is not of labor but of technique.

2. Post-Modernity

The language of the Sign is adequate to define the Fivefold Structure because the language locates elements in order to allow for recognition beyond the confines of architectural discourse. The classical era of the Sign became problematic historically due to the relationship of representation to the subject and capital. If architecture is situated as such then the majority of architecture could not be considered architecture because there exists virtually no relationship between the representation and the subject. The majority of buildings are reifications of ideas. Reification of ideas is the implementation and execution of building techniques. Ideas, as techniques to make, are differentiated from ideals in that ideals are of thought, reflection and making, which retain meanings derived from the initial design intention prior to the dislocation.

3. Location – Building object as Re-mark.

“The Signified is the concept, the ideal meaning; and the Signifier is what Saussure calls the “image,” the ‘psychical imprint’ of the material, physical – for example, acoustical – phenomenon.” (JD 10)

The **Mark** is of the designer making it the conceptualization of the Ideal, which is the designer. A vacillating temporal spacing exists between the moments. The temporal spacing that differentiates the Mark from the Re-mark reveals the violent disruption that dislocates meaning content as intended. The Re-mark, as building, lacks meaning because the practice of making buildings seeks efficiency as a means to acquire capital. The practice of architecture minimizes thought in order to facilitate production. Without thought, reflection, and making one cannot recognize the Ideal. Along with locating the presence of **différance** regarding the architect –exceptions noted – the Re-mark locates the necessity of meaning regarding the Mark of architecture.

B. Contingency – presence of *différance*.

“Thus the word *différance* (with an a) is to compensate—economically—this loss of meaning, for *différance* can refer simultaneously to the entire configuration of its meanings.” (JD, 8)

1. Lack of meaning (building does not need architectural value) deferred

Différance, in the case of Architecture, always and never refers to a building. Buildings, as constituted, occupy the space of *différance* – loss of meaning. If building objects operate because of capital, production and labor then they need not exist for the sake of Ideals. Ideals seem to be the dominion of the academy in which students generate, justify and explain ideas independent of capital – monetary gain. This introduces a dichotomy forged by meaning regarding the symbolic value of the term Architecture. The majority of buildings house little to no architectural value since value as assigned is a parcel of reification of ideas. Alternately, architects coordinate technical and material systems (structure, wall, window, mechanical, etc.) in order to facilitate the production of buildings as cultural images. So, are the majority of buildings architectural or cultural? How is meaning deferred in the context of the built environment?

2. Necessity of meaning (architecture needs meaning) differed.

Architecture, unlike buildings, cannot exist independently of meaning since architecture cannot exist independently of architects. The question of the nature of Architecture leads all to surmise that architecture is something beyond mere technique. To this end architecture becomes the privilege of a single human addressing the practical merits of a single design. An awareness that architecture exist beyond ordinary buildings is important. The crisis of architecture (not representation) is that architecture need not ever be associated with buildings. I stipulate that the episteme, as articulated, accounts for the inclusion of buildings within the totality of architecture. Currently there is no architectural necessity for buildings to ever be considered Architecture. Architecture, as a discipline of thought regarding the built environment exists within which architects theorize and criticize works. That which is generated, justified and explained is the ideas of students and a select membership of practitioners. It is difficult to suggest that students are generating Architecture independent of capital because cultural constructs assign meaning to buildings as such. But architectural competitions allow professional practitioners to generate, justify and explain their ideas independent of contractual duty. If one does not win a competition is one's concept no longer considered Architecture? Is the work of a student not to be considered Architecture? What are the grounds upon which either groups continue to design and engage in criticism? Students and competition entrants collectively criticize ideas they have conceptualized. The conceptualization of ideas allows for the recognition of meanings derived from the subject via thought (individual), reflection (collective), and making (time). I suggest that Ideas have a place within the practice. The underlying problem of architectural practice is the dislocation of meaning because *différance* reveals the misrecognition of architecture.

C. Dislocation – Misrecognition of the what.

I. Violence – Crisis of Representation.

Buildings, as artifacts of culture, are used as tools to reify power dynamics. The crisis of architecture has continued to utilize **reification of technique**, which pushes architecture farther away from Ideals. A self-inflicted – now internalized – violence has occurred because architects have become servants seeking the authority of economy. Representation – interpretation of thought – of architecture has been marginalized by thoughtless architects who seek merely economy. The makers of buildings using the title ‘Architect’ to attain privilege, status and economy have exerted violence – destructive natural force – against architecture as a discipline of thought regarding the built environment. The normalization of architecture as a **practice of technique** has endowed buildings and builders with the authority to assign use value to building objects. The use value of buildings for the sake of buildings has been misrecognized as Architecture. As stated, the Re-mark is merely the signifier 2x interpreted and produced by another, which severs virtually all meaning.

2. Signifier 2x – impression of value.

The Re-mark, situated as building, is the impression of value because buildings are just the commodification of the built environment. Architecture, as buildings, is nothing more than the trace of capital. The use value of the Re-mark is a derivative of ‘mass culture’. This is problematic in that architectural meaning and the process of conceptualization are indistinguishable. Architecture is a survey of culture that is idealized in order to inform a potential thought. If the process is reflective and interpretive, then culture is acknowledged – not necessarily understood. Therefore architecture is a reflection of the architect and the culture. The Re-mark is a reflection, not an interpretation, of mass culture because architects (professionals) and builders (developers and contractors) do not interpret culture in order to inform the built environment. If the process of determination (architecture) is not reflective, then buildings cannot contain architectural meaning as derived from thought, reflection and making. The Re-mark as postulated is generated, justified and accepted as commodity.

Buildings are the impression of architecture because the practice – reification of ideas – has been sanctioned to reify mass culture. The misrecognition of what constitutes architecture exists because a violent dislocation leads society (architectural and mass) to assign value to buildings, consequently positioning buildings as the reality of architecture. Buildings are the non-reality of architecture because once meaning is dislocated, an architectural reality cannot be recognized but remains recognizable. What remains is a commodification of impression, which is the non-reality of buildings.

II. Forming

Forming building objects creates the illusion of architecture as reality because the nature of architecture is bound to theory, criticism and making. Theoretical practice is not economically viable. Buildings are of economy because they exist in kind to facilitate the drive (flow) of capital. Architecture allows for the exploration and expression of the Ideal.

D. Forming – Reality of non-reality.

I. Totality – reduction to signifier 2x.

Within the episteme the Re-mark is reduced to an image. The image (general impression) of architecture lacks content because the process of making buildings (reification of technique) seeks to reproduce the image of mass culture. However, designers of the built environment continually re-represent buildings as the Ideal. When architecture is reduced to the reification of the idea, then practitioners have to justify their existence as reality. Architecture, as conceived by students and highly conceptual practitioners, presents ideas generated, justified and explained in thought. Therefore no title is required to imagine the reality of the architecture. The reality of the student is that the explanation is imbued with layers of meaning, which can be readily debated.

2. Nature – of meaning

Theory, criticism and making are the nature of architecture because the work of architecture can only emerge from an architect engaged in a process focused on generating, justifying and explaining something meaningful to the world. What then is the nature of architecture? The **nature** of architecture is the work of architects done meaningfully. Then what do architects do? Within any environment architects engage thoughts. I would posit that the nature of architecture is free of economy allowing for architectural making to become critical and reflective. Can work be meaningful without criticism and reflection? Differentiation amongst academic, practical and competitive design endeavors is the ability to secure architectural meaning, which is a derivative of the Idea. Without a semblance of the Idea architecture cannot ensure meaning. If the origin and meaning are traced through the Fivefold Structure then **Substance**, **Meaning** and **Mark** only exist as parcels of the Idea, along with the architect. The structure is a system of fundamentals that have no inherent meaning. The relationship between the moments and not the moments are responsible for meaning. Derrida suggests that meaning is differential. The Fivefold Structure allows for meaning regardless of the environment.

E. Illusion – Reality of culture is the impression of architecture

I. Natural – Not caused by architects (not of architecture)

The reification of technique locates the illusion of architecture because Re-marks – buildings – are not the dominion of architects. The territory of architecture, in reality, is that of the document not the building. If the document or text is that which is of architecture then Ideal reification is of architects. Buildings cannot ensure architectural meaning as a derivative of the sign. The natural reality of buildings as currently constituted: meaning reflects mass culture. Consequently, the Re-mark is the impression or image of that which mass culture will generate, produce and accept via practitioners of architecture. Mass culture will accept that which is familiar or recognizable with exception. Exception being the workings of the few that challenge preconceived notions of normal Architecture. Objects normalized therefore become the 'natural' of architecture.

2. Simulation – Hyper-reality beyond meaning content.

Building objects void of meaning cannot be criticized which leads to a simulation of architecture. The work cannot be criticized because it is produced (not crafted) to elude criticism. How is work produced to eclipse criticism? Buildings are produced for economy not for criticism. Therefore, as long as a building object performs for capital it will be accepted by mass culture.

Is this the 'end' of architecture? No. This is potentially just the **reification of culture**, which would be appropriate. Appropriate in that architecture is limited to the capacity of membership and breath of capital to respond beyond the purview of the collective. Since the collective will is of capital then the collective capacity must only realize servitude. If the natural reality of architecture is a product of mass culture then is the artificial reality architecture of the potential of Ideas?

F. Allusion – the object of perception.

I. Exploration – Potential of phenomena.

If the reality of architecture is the illusion which lacks meaning but is accepted then what constitutes the non-reality or artificial? The allusion of architecture is artificial because it is architecture produced by students, competition entrants and highly conceptual practitioners, and because the work refers to something beyond buildings as a means to recognize itself. The allusion in the case of architecture is the awareness of a phenomenon that situates the work in the world. Works of this nature engage the world of meaning through the process of thought, reflection and making via the fundamental moments of the Fivefold Structure. These works exist independently from the built environment but have the potential to inform the built environment. Projects of this nature (artificial or non-reality) express a will in order to inform how the built environment marks (affects) humans, as humans mark (influence) the built environment.

2. Expression – will of the architect (being-for-itself).

The meaning expressed is the architect as projection upon the built environment since Substance, Meaning and the Mark only exist as parcels of **Ideal reification**. The architect, as thinker and maker of material objects, can explore conceptions of space in the studio where architectural exploration occurs. The studio, not the office, is the location where theory, criticism and making engage the Ideal independent of buildings. In the studio, a designer's motivation is thought, which is criticized in order to make the Mark. The Mark is Ideal reification.

3. Ideal – Phenomena (The **Five-form Framework**).

What are the **Phenomena** of architecture? The Phenomena is the conception of space that alludes to conditions that allow for Ideal reification to emerge. Therefore, the Ideal is the Phenomena of architecture as conceptualized. The Phenomenon is the representation of thought imagined by the designer, criticized and actualized as the interpretation of phenomena. Phenomena are realized through architectural exploration. The Five-form Framework is a way of thinking regarding the exploration of Phenomena. The Five-form Framework is comprised of five contiguous, overlapping intervals:

1. **Survey** – investigation of the physical site.
2. **Privilege** – the designer's experience of life and the site.
3. **Interpretations** – that which one values represented architecturally, not the architecture.
4. **Re-craft** – the body of work within the framework of that which is sited.
5. **Conveyance** – exchange of thoughts in the world via conventions of making.

The Five-form Framework allows for an understanding of design sites. Design sites encompass the physical site, designer, means and methods of representation as well as the object of design intent (Mark or client). As a framework it was derived from an understanding of a design process that allows for recognition of sites at various scales and material realities. The five contiguous intervals of the form are not autonomous intervals because the design process is not necessarily linear. Just as the fundamentals of the Fivefold Structure fluctuate, creating an internal friction (phenomena), the intervals, as a way of thinking about existing sites, fluctuate. Design intentions are realized as phenomena because the Fivefold Structure and the Five-form Framework cohabit the space of theory, criticism and making.

III. **Ideal**

In order for the aesthetics of human space to be actualized, designers must begin to question their intentions. The nature of architecture is only recognizable as Idea reification because the allusion is bound to the maker's intentionality. The Idea is the realization of phenomenal architecture. It is not possible for phenomenology to inform the built environment independent of architectural ideals. The ideal is what allows architects to explore the potential of phenomena to affect the built environment. Buildings are the realization of culture. Architecture is the actualization of phenomena.