A Comparative Analysis of Two Contemporary Positions:
Toward a Design Strategy

by

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THESIS STATEMENT

Contemporary investigations in architecture have reinstated architectural history as a source of language and content. Within this inquiry into language, the Italian neo-rationalists and American post-modernists have developed antithetical positions with which they intend to reestablish a socio-cultural discourse. Prominent proponents of these positions in both theory and practice are Aldo Rossi and Robert A. M. Stern. As exemplars of the two extreme positions, it is possible to contend that their productions are similarly based upon:

1) the figurative tradition of architectural history, and

2) the expression of the figurative tradition of history through the interpretation of architectural type and typology,

and that, a design demonstration of the positive aspects of the two positions will produce a theoretical and operational strategy for design today.
The intention of this thesis has evolved subtly, but significantly over the course of the semester. In its initial state, the thesis proposed to establish rule structures for neo-rationalism and post-modernism, and subsequently test the validity of each with a design problem. Because of discrepancies between architects within these positions it was felt that a proponent of each should be selected for analysis. At that point both the worthiness of defining a rule structure for an individual as well as the merit of delving into two discrete experiments was questioned. Currently, the thesis is designed to isolate the virtuous characteristics of neo-rationalism and post-modernism and posit a method by which these characteristics might be realized in a single design solution. In order to achieve this, a procedure will be undertaken that: 1) establishes history as the repository of architectural language; 2) demonstrates how this language is expressed through architectural types; 3) relates type to both the work of two proponents of the positions as well as the design problem at hand and ultimately; 4) describes a theoretical means by which to approach the imminent design phase. It should be emphasized that buildings are essential to this investigation because, as any word or product of culture, they are full of intention and meaning. It is hoped that this thesis presents a framework through which to discover a definable design technique that embraces both the poetic and functional essence of architecture.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part One - Historical Background
  The Figurative Tradition
  The Significance of Language
  Character and Structural Types

Part Two - Comparative Analysis
  The Use of Type
  Building Analysis
  Critical Appraisal

Part Three - Project Documentation
  Bank Typologies
  Conclusion
  Design Strategy

Presentation
Historical Background

Introduction

The current condition in architecture is strongly influenced by an urge to oppose the tenets of Modern Architecture. Both the neo-rationalists and post-modernists have developed theories based on the use of historical memory, the reestablishment of a socio-cultural discourse, and the expression of architectural type and typology. These propositions do not constitute a new ideology in this regard, but merely fragments of them. Practitioners representing both positions seek to reconnect architecture with a heritage that was interrupted by the International Style, which suppressed purely figurative and historical precedent (Le Corbusier, an exception, was figural). Hence, the notion that they represent a reaction against Modern Architecture is inspired by the readmission that:

architecture even has its natural signs; because the signs (language) of nobility, of majesty, depend in no way on human intuition. It is in no way by Virtue of convention that grand and simple forms awaken in us all those impressions of meditation and respect, and engage us in deep and serious reflection.

de Gerando, Des signs et de l'Art, 1800

Though capturing the spirit communicated by the work of Ledoux and Boullee, this expression of the poetic/linguistic potential in architecture firmly binds the philosophies of neo-rationalism and post-modernism.

From this beginning we must consider the manner by which the two stances achieve diametrically opposite positions within a singular theoretical context. Rudolf Wittkower has provided a
clue toward understanding how this situation has evolved:

It is too often overlooked that the architecture of the past was a language of visual signs and symbols which architects used in a specific context, and the same grammar of architectural forms may therefore serve entirely different purposes and convey vastly different ideas.
By wandering through the annals of centuries past it is easy to recognize what Honoré de Balzac meant in claiming that "architecture is the register of human history". Guy de Maupassant expresses this understanding as well, although he elevates this rather special dimension of the art of architecture to that of an epic with the prose:

across the centuries architecture has received the privilege of symbolizing every period, of summing up by means of a very small number of typical monuments the way of thinking, feeling, and dreaming of a race and of a civilization.

This perception seems curious in consideration of the representational potential of architecture with respect to other visual arts. Painting and sculpture have certainly been more directly thematic in their expressions through the ages, yet, architecture stands as the "book of human history". Why is this so? It may be stated that of the arts, only in architecture (and music) does the process of representation relate historically as a tautology in which the rendition of facts is of architecture itself. Thus, architecture is, so to speak, a discourse on a discourse - a uniquely self-referential system. This being the case knowledge related through architecture was found in its own history, even though it was ultimately associated with all history. Supporting this assertion are the ruins of Antiquity and Vitruvius' Ten Books on Architecture that supplied the corpus of information inspiring the rise of Renaissance architecture and, furthermore, provided
succeeding generations with a sense of life all'antica. In this thesis we are concerned with the characterization of architectural representation or, more appropriately, the figurative tradition of architecture.

In order to establish the precise nature of the 'figurative', it first must be defined — here it relates to "the expression of one thing in terms of another with which it is, or seems to be, analogous". The figurative tradition in architecture consistently maintained its authority through various transformations and manifestations to the extent that architectural ideas may be examined in terms of an historical continuum. Due to this condition, the positions to be dealt with below may be seen to represent historical developments as well as to perform within an evolutionary process. To understand this process, recent reformation involving the figurative tradition must be addressed.

In history, few moments involved ideological mutations that led to figurative revolutions. Modern Architecture, however, has accomplished this by rejecting the past as a figurative resource — breaking the established historical course of architecture. The vocabulary of the new architecture was exclusively composed of industrial and technological referents, previously held outside the realm of architectural representation. Through this development, a 'foreign' language of icons was introduced by disregarding the whole body of figurative sources. As such, a figurative shift resulted from the metaphorical loss of center whereby traditional elements of architecture were displaced by a new 'modern' vocabulary of essentially non-architectural elements.
Current reaction against the proliferation of this 'foreign language' of elements would indicate that it has failed to become a discourse capable of addressing society at large. The introduction of a new language, virtually devoid of known messages, now seems to present a questionable and, at best, difficult proposition. Is it not possible to communicate architecturally without touching the collective memory through architectural means? In his *Monde Primitif* .... Antoine Court de Gebelin refers to the first expressions of architecture in terms of language as follows, "this art which speaks to the eyes, which depicts for sight what the word depicts for the ear". Hence, Court de Gebelin believes that the symbolic origins of a language are found within the elements of architecture. He could not have accepted an architecture that denied this linguistic heritage.

Presently, in the aftermath of the period characterized by such a figurative rupture, architects experience for the first time a distance from this heritage. As a result there currently exists little consensus on how one 'makes' architecture or, in fact, how architectural education should be undertaken. In light of the gap in the historical continuum caused by Modern Architecture, Jorge Silvetti describes the choice facing architects to restore continuity. He states that:

if the abstract, hermetic, figurative propositions of Modern Architecture fail to move and transform man, or, more prosaically, just do not seem to engage the beholder in its arcane discourse, and if those propositions rely heavily on the introduction into architectural language of elements foreign to it, the only apparent possibility is to close that door, after which one is left inside with the only pertinent elements: namely architectural elements whose proof and verification in practice can only be derived from history.
In choosing 'history' as an alternative how can we "find the appropriate figurative language?" \(^\text{12}\)

**The Significance of Language**

To examine how languages operate in establishing communication it is helpful to consider the main functions of language. K. Bühler has identified three primary functions of language:

1) the expressive function - i.e. the communication serves to express the emotions or thoughts of the speaker.

2) the signaling or stimulative or release function - i.e. the communication serves to stimulate or to release certain reactions in the hearer (for example, linguistic responses) and,

3) the descriptive function - i.e. the communication describes a certain state of affairs. \(^\text{13}\)

These functions may be related to the metaphoric, symbolic, and constructional signification of architectural elements and forms as linguistic devices. In this way Boullee's Entrance to a Cemetery, a triangular portal, represents death; Johann Kasper Lavater's cornice symbolizes a head; and rustication describes a process of masonry construction. Each use of language may involve either the expression or suppression (equally valid) of a given function. In design an architect consciously and unconsciously makes decisions that involve the uses of language, both verbally and figuratively. Louis I. Kahn's project in Dacca evokes a mysterious and sublime feeling that also surfaces in his verse:

\begin{quote}
Spirit in will to express 
can make the great sun seem small. \(^\text{14}\)
\end{quote}

The function of language that describes the contemporary
state of architecture does not seem to be evident in this explanation. Conveniently, Karl Popper has defined a fourth function of language as an addendum to Buhler's functions, that captures the prevailing mood. His functions include:

4) the argumentative or explanatory function - i.e. the presentation and comparison of arguments or explanations in connection with certain definite questions or problems. 15

This representation provides a basis for the development of Italian neo-rationalism and American post-modernism in terms of a linguistic function. Ironically, the argumentative function was posed by Popper just two years before Robert Venturi published Complexity and Contradiction in the early years of Rossi's and Stern's careers. What Tafuri speaks of as the "return to language" is thus also characterized by a 'use' of language. Consequently, the figurative tradition of architecture has been embraced as a means to confront "certain definite problems" of Modern Architecture.

To further our analysis, it is interesting to note distinctions between traditions of spoken languages. Understatement, a tradition in English and Italian, might be associated with the desire of neo-rationalists primarily residing in these countries to achieve a quality of silence with their projects. In contrast, Americans have a tendency to exaggerate and propangandize with language (e.g., Mark Twain) in ways that relate to the manipulation of architectural elements (words) by post-modernists. Both positions utilize specific rhetorical operations on architectural language in their attempt to reestablish the socio-cultural dis-


course interrupted by Modern Architecture. Although it is possible to review periods in architecture through techniques of rhetoric, an examination of architectural type and typology is more suitable for evaluating the positive aspects of neorationalism and post-modernism.

Character and Structural Types

The notion of type, first described in Quatramere de Quincy's Encyclopédie Methodique, has been present in history as a concept since the moment Man found shelter. In this sense type is intrinsically related to the basis of architectural language. Indeed, through type, the core of architectural knowledge becomes evident. Quatramere de Quincy introduces type in the following fashion:

"Type" comes from the Greek word "typos", a word which expresses by general acceptance (and thus is applicable to many nuances or varieties of the same idea) what one means by model, matrix, imprint, mold, impression, figure ...  

By celebrating the techno-functional and mechanical aspects of building orthodox modern architects rejected known paradigms tested over the course of history. In repressing language they disrupted the collective discourse developed over time through typologies. A failure of Modernism might be considered to have occurred due to the lack of knowledge 'produced' about its own nature in the process of the attempt to transcend the figurative program. Efforts to reiterate the figurative tradition have been undertaken with a new awareness of architectural types. In providing a mechanism with which to engage in an accessible language, typological references are again understood to be
related to cultural values and societal needs.

The notion that type has informed architectural theory since the late eighteenth century has been convincingly elucidated by Anthony Vidler. He comprehensively describes the two primary roles type has played in influencing architectural production:

First, by rooting architecture in a notion of first principles, either in nature or industrial production, it has provided an ontology, so to speak, for the legitimacy of design in an age which has largely discarded the ancient theory of imitation and absolute beauty. Second, when assimilated to the emerging theories of typology in the natural sciences it has provided a ready basis for the generation of entirely new species of building demanded so insistently by the rising consumption and production society. Thus, the elements of architecture, their rules of combination, and the characteristic form of the resulting building type were, in some way, seen as similar to the generation of types in nature.

In addition, Vidler outlines two essential ideologies of type that are critical to later analyses in this thesis.

The classical theory expressed by Quatramere de Quincy involves the identification of platonic forms as symbols infused with character. In this view the Temple, presented as the perfect realization of the primitive hut, is filled with iconographical significance as a type. Freemasonic architects believed that the reintroduction of typological forms was analogous to the "reconstruction of society itself". The fundamental importance placed upon iconographic character in relation to society parallels the similar sentiment expressed in Robert Venturi's books and urban proposals. Needless to say, it is this sensibility that informs a considerable number of younger American architects. The second form of type is what may be termed the generative theory. This view is founded upon the Abbe Laugier's description of the primitive hut, an imaginary construct representing a logical principle
of form. Understanding the structural logic of the hut, opposed to the symbolic character of the Temple, J.N.L. Durand seized upon the generative potential of combining architectural elements and forms. Examples for composing with the 'parts' of architecture are extensively supplied in Lessons at the Ecole, a work which remains a valuable source in the continued search to develop new ways of resolving formal problems.

To elaborate on the distinctions between character and structural types it is worthwhile to bring G-d's House and Adam's House to light. G-d's House represents the divine origin of architecture, containing all the symbolic qualities of virtue described by theorists from Vitruvius to Le Corbusier. As mentioned earlier in reference to Robert Venturi, the perceived symbolic content or character of architectural languages greatly influences Robert Stern. On the other hand, Adam's House cannontes the natural (as well as mythical) origin of building. Consistent with this viewpoint is Aldo Rossi's understanding of the function of architecture to serve as 'construction' for persistent social needs. The Abbe Laugier expresses this notion as well, "Architecture originated in necessity, [and that] resulting architecture gives pleasure with efficiency of a thoroughly platonic kind". One cannot deny that the readings obtained in scrutiny of the hut and Temple are clearly decipherable. The hut conveys merely material content of columns, roof, entablature, and ultimately of shelter, while the Temple inspires visions of ritual, worship, and civilization. Post-modernists recognize the symbolic properties of styles - interpreting type as a designatory characterization of history. Neo-rationalists do not recognize styles as such
because stylistic invention generally involves linguistic transformations that are not based upon structural types - they explore metaphoric and syntactic possibilities by classifying typical forms. In sum, the theories of structural and character type find their place in contemporary epistemology. Following a procedure that traced the reestablishment of figurative tradition, the significance of language, and the expression of typology, the particular positions of Aldo Rossi and Robert Stern, that represent neo-rationalism and the post-modernism may finally be discussed.
Comparative Analysis

The Use of Type

There are two things to consider when discussing style in architecture, the style of the epoch, and the style of the artist. On one side, that which constitutes a sort of distinct idiom, the words and rules of a language; on the other side, the choice and the manner of expression.

Léonce Reynaud, 1860

Reynaud identifies an ideological split in regard to style that is relevant to the discussion of Rossi and Stern. The words from his Traite d'architecture provide a sense of the distinct typological operations involved in design. It is fair to say that Rossi seeks to use only the "words and rules" from the figutive language, while Stern concentrates on the expression of a particular culture or client through his 'maniera'. Clarification of the two architects' use of type is essential in reviewing their work.

Aldo Rossi uses type to investigate formal sources and syntactic methods that he feels are critical to history. By accumulating this knowledge and representing it in his work he attempts to address the foundation of architecture. As such, Rossi's typological procedures invite the possibility of semantic readings that achieve a kind of metaphoric plurality. With these operations a logic is determined that in turn, verifies the initial use of forms. His elementary school at Fagnano Olona is a clear example of this process. Using symbolic "houses" as a basis for analysis, Peter Eisenman has isolated this quality in a very understandable, but extremely acute manner:
The first of these three houses is the religious - the Baptistry, derived from the theocentric world; its eight-sided plan has become a form in the collective. It appears often in Rossi's drawings. Each time there is a small square window with cruciform mullions; often the shadowy head of the humanist poet is at the window. Here is the first transposition. The mullions become bars and the baptistry becomes a contemporary prison for the poet. Then there is a second transposition. The baptistry form also appears in reality as a library in the Children's School at Fagnano Olano (fig. 11, 15). The theocentric "house" becomes a humanistic "house". But then the drawing makes us aware of another meaning. For the bars also become a crucifix and at times the poet appears to be hanging from the mullions of the window. And then there is the final transposition. The mullions on the same window at the ante-chamber at Fagnano Olano frame a chimney placed directly in its view. The library now becomes the ante-chamber of the death camps and the light fixtures now seem as gas jets. Thus library-building and baptistry-drawing lose their actual function and actual place. In this suspension a reverse process of history is begun; the drawing begins to give the building a new meaning.

Though Eisenman has no trouble in recognizing this content, one wonders whether it is accessible to society at large. It is important to realize that Rossi is consistent in producing these effects with structural types rather than character types. According to Rossi, he does not create the forms and metaphors described above - he believes that they are already there. In his own words:

Now it seems to me that everything has already been seen; when I design I repeat; and in the observation of things there is also the observation of memory. I design my projects with a discrete sense of affection for each one but I reduce them to things that surround me: country houses, smoke stacks, monuments and objects, as if everything arose from and was founded in time; in this, beginnings and endings are confounded.

Rossi is thus concerned with the authenticity of formal types and the morphology of the city. He interprets type as the "rational, universally understood", non-individual, classical form."
For Robert Stern, history is viewed as a product of culture. The environment is consulted as a store of symbolic references used to initiate a cultural discourse. This discourse only becomes accessible if one has "a confidence in the power of memory (history) combined with the action of people (function) to infuse [the environment] with richness and meaning." Stern attempts to achieve communication with both a literal and transformational representation of forms. In this manner, he relies on character types translated through "idiosyncratic and temporal icons".

Where Rossi's compositions connote a "permanance beyond people" Stern's projects strive to capture the moment as a benchmark in history.

The relationship of character types to styles has been explored extensively in the nineteenth century. One of Stern's mentors at Yale, Vincent Scully, has been instrumental in reawakening interest in this subject. He identifies certain shortcomings in the reuse of architectural languages in The Shingle Style:

Adapted evocations of past disciplines were called to the support of a culture apparently unwilling any longer to sustain its own – or unaware of the possibility of sustaining them.

Robert Stern's preoccupation with the shingle style as well as the Art Deco indicates that somehow he believes that society will accept an eclecticism now that did not hold a century ago. This sentiment is based upon his assertion that:

1) buildings that refer to other buildings in the history of architecture are more meaningful than those which do not (this used to be called "eclecticism")
2) buildings that refer and defer to the buildings around them gain strength over those that do not (this might be called "contextual integration")

3) buildings that associate with ideas about specific events which caused them to be made are more meaningful than those which do not; the pursuit of specific images to convey ideas about buildings is relevant to design. 

A stance that encourages reliance on the character of buildings is not without precedent. Quatramere de Quincy framed a method for the expression of character involving "the choice, measure, or manner of ornaments and decoration", and L.A. Dubut codified the use of ornament. In following Venturi's lead, Stern works toward establishing a model for the exposition of character types.
Building Analysis

In accordance with the exposition of the contrasting use of typological referents above, it follows that the buildings and projects of Aldo Rossi and Robert Stern may be studied in terms of the manner in which they interpret typology. For this particular inquiry two buildings, considered to represent their author's positions, will be analyzed qualitatively.
BuILdIng analysis  rossi  stern

typological reference
contextual link

narrative

hierarchy

construction/materials

color

Elementary School of Fagnano Olana

Agglomeration of literally represented types.

background building

block is metaphor for birth, life, work, and death

Community spaces emphasized, wings are insignificant

bearing brick, poured conc.; stucco

connects context.

Lang House

Connecticut

1974

form type reference in front; el. not present in pan. object in landscape.

blocks refer to a plethora of periods, unrelated to user.

determined by open, closed; served, servant space

plywood; stucco

contrasts landscape.
Critical Appraisal

Architectural history for Aldo Rossi involves the use of a cataloque of design elements and forms, rather than of styles. He extends Quatramere de Quincy's definition of type to that of an urban morphology. In doing so, he pursues an autonomous architecture that evokes the sublime and exudes a timeless authority. With respect to Rossi's polemic, Rafael Moneo explains that:

The genuine value of the autonomy of architecture is that it allows for an expression of society in which architecture is an indispensible instrument for the production of the framework necessary to civil life.35

Through his use of forms to encourage metaphorical experience Rossi ultimately expresses a compelling silence in his work. In Lord Jim Joseph Conrad offers a glimpse of this quality so intangibly haunting in Rossi's drawings and buildings:

there are moments when our souls, as if freed from their dark envelopes glow with an exquisite sensibility that makes certain silences more lucid than speeches.

Literary reference is relevant to Robert Stern's interpretation of history and typology as well. John Gardner has written the following in a highly illuminating, though unintended representation of Stern's position:

When modes of art change, the change need not imply philosophical progress; it usually means only that the hunter has exhausted one part of the woods and has moved to a new part, or to a part exhausted earlier, to which they prey have doubled back.

Aesthetic styles - patterns for communicating feelings and thought - become dull with use, like carving knives, and since dullness is the chief enemy of art, each generation must find new ways of sliding the fat off reality.37
The reintroduction of the figurative tradition in architecture has assumed two distinct positions. The neo-rationist position, described with the buildings and thoughts of Aldo Rossi, involves the logical and natural derivation of typology through the internal consistency of architecture as 'construction'.

This is based on:

1) a specific, limited knowledge, and
2) the truth of civic experience.

The post-modernist position, presented with the productions of Robert Stern, is posited upon an interpretation of character types understood to be objects of consumption. Such sources are subject to the contingencies of history. Hence, architectural language is opened to external codes that are often intended to convey ironic or perverse meanings.

Inherent problems with Stern's work have persisted for at least the 200 years since the first literary identification of type was published. Specifically, no legitimate philosophy of symbolism exists so that the representation and valuation of character types become a matter of personal taste—not semiotic theory. Because of this difficulty post-modernists are prone to what Quatramere de Quincy has described as 'abuses' of architectural language. He strongly contends that individual excesses with language are not accessible to society due to an obscuration of potential messages, "as with languages there are many ways [in architecture] to speak against the rules of grammar."\(^{37}\)

Aldo Rossi also may suffer from an inaccessible rendition of the figurative language. He does not address the perception that
a pure and abstract 'philosophical' language is beyond the competence of modern man to decipher. In reality Rossi's reduction of the Classical language to an absolute, fundamental essence does suggest omnipotence. The Galaratese block in Milan seems endless in its geometry and, indeed, relentless in its political overtones - Where will it stop? By emphasizing order, clarity, and certainty the neo-rationalists express the preeminence of the law. In contrast, the post-modernists use architecture to represent individual freedom beffiting the American way. To this effect Robert Stern uses language in a personal fashion - stressing the individual in society.

At this juncture, both positions may be construed to be representing positive directions in architecture because they attempt to reestablish a socio-cultural discourse through the resignification of architectural language. Conversely, the effectiveness of these movements may be said to hold limited possibilities for the future due to the respective interpretations of type as deriving from either the Temple or the primitive hut, but not both. If practitioners force the figurative language much beyond the current extremes of heuristic reason they will "reduce it to almost nothing" and "decompose architecture entirely."38
STRUCTURAL TYPE: BANK AS CAVE - RELATES TO IMAGE OF STRONGBOX OR VAULT (SECURITY)

SULLIVAN ALSO ASSERTS SYMBOLISM

FLY STATE BANK SPRING GREEN
CHARACTER TYPE: BANK AS TEMPLE — REFERS TO TRADITION OF GOLD STORAGE IN GREEK TEMPLES

McKIM, MEAD, AND WHITE


94. Bank of Montreal, Brandon Branch, 1913-1914.

(Photograph: Roth)
CHARACTER TYPES: ORNAMENT AND ORDER

LOUIS SULLIVAN

NATIONAL FARMER'S BANK,
OWATONNA, MN

CEILING DETAIL

THREE BALL MOTIF-
INDICATES MONEY
LENDER OR FAWN
SHOP.
ORIGIN TRACED
TO TWO SOURCES

1) LEGEND OF
ST. NICOLAS-
HE TRADITION-
ALLY GAVE
3 BAG-
SHAPED PURSES
TO 3 DAUGHTERS
OF NOBLEMEN.

2) MEDIEVAL COAT
OF ARMS - ORIGIN
ALLY 6-11 BLUE
ROUNDELS OR DIS
EVOLVED FROM
DISKS TO BOWLS
TO BALLS, FROM
BLUE TO GOLD.

AMMI B. YOUNG
CUSTOM HOUSE,
BOSTON

DORIC ORDER-
REPRESENTS
SOBRIETY,
IMPERSONALITY
MASCUINITY, AND
RATIONALITY
ALL ARE
ASSOCIATED
WITH BANKING
Conclusion

While assimilating the information above, certain curiosities arise concerning the singularly coded use of type. In fact, as demonstrated by several of the banks, it is rare that types are used at the exclusion of one another. Initially it seems rather surprising that the different aspects of typology are expressed so vividly in the guise of Aldo Rossi and Robert Stern's designs. One need only to examine the heuristic basis for Italian neo-rationalism and American post-modernism in terms of cultural, political, and literal traditions to understand why this is so. Buildings inspired by these positions present the spectator with what is intended to be a representation of facts relevant to a specific people, after all, truth is what merely seems to be factual:

On that point, Socrates, I have heard one who is to be an orator does not need to know what is really just, but what would seem just to the multitude who are to pass judgement, and not what is really good or noble, but what will seem to be so: for they say persuasion comes from what seems to be true, not from the truth.39

Plato, Phaedrus

The problem of what truth to ascribe to plagues students of architecture today. Studio curricula are generally influenced by either programmatic, stylistic, or pragmatic concerns that limit the inclusiveness of the final outcome - repressing any realization of the fundamental qualities of Firmness, Commodity, and Delight. In an attempt to retrieve this body of qualities in the Age of Reason, Quatramere de
Quincy and Blondel founded theories of architecture based upon configuration (form), ornament, and construction. These theories called for the amalgem of type as the characteristic form of a classified species, and type as the symbolic referent. They sought to discover the ideological region where utility (function) and symbolic representation intersect—a most appropriate endeavor today in light of the present exclusivist interpretations of typology. One must proceed with this pursuit carefully, for even slight deviation from a thoughtful course will prevent the accomplishment of a truly balanced expression of type and possibly result in a distortion of the language of architecture. Our goal, then, is to find a comprehensive 'truth' in which both the primitive hut and the Temple are rendered self-evident.
Endnotes

1 Robin Middleton, "The Beaux Arts," Architectural Design Profile #17, p. 58.

2 Rudolph Wittkower, Art and Architecture in Italy 1600-1750 (New York: Scott, Foresman & Co.), p. 266.


4 Ibid.

5 Skolimowski, p. 171.

6 Webster's New College Dictionary


8 Silvetti, p. 12.

9 Silvetti, p. 15.


11 Silvetti, p. 17.

12 Michael Graves, from closing benediction to University of Houston lecture, November 1982.


14 Romaldo Giurgola, Louis Kahn, Complete Works, p. 165.

15 Popper, p. 135.


18 Vidler, "The Idea of Type," p. 93.

19 Vidler, p. 97.

20 Vidler, p. 105.

21 Vidler, p. 97.

22 Ibid.


25 Eisenman, p. 23.


27 Rossi, p. 15.


31 Rossi, p. 72.

33  
Stem, p. 775.

34  
Porphyrios, pp. 124-127.

35  

36  
Joseph Conrad, Lord Jim

37  

37  
Porphyrios, p. 126.

38  
Ibid.

39  
Silvetti, "On Realism...," p. 12.

40  
**Design Strategy**

Having understood that the entire block across from Market Square presented a suitable context in which to test the stated aims of the thesis, the site was determined. In altering the course set by the bank type analyses above it was suggested that a bank would not be the highest and best use of the property due to the close proximity of other banking establishments as well as the relative inability of a bank to provide a critical mass of labor-intensive activity. To resolve these issues and encourage commercial interest in the surrounding district, the Houston Commodities Exchange was proposed. A program synthesized from those of the Chicago Board of Trade and the Commodities Exchange Corporation in New York entailed a labor-intensive institution that could stabilize the social, financial, and urban environment of the Market Square area. In so doing, the Houston Exchange would act as a gateway from the late 19th century fabric to the rising contemporary skyline to the south.

While maintaining this attitude toward the context, the thesis directives concluded above continuously informed the decision-making process. The process was initiated by a historical survey of the commodities exchange - similar to that previously undertaken for banks - that is included in the presentation. From this basis, a unified representation of architectural type as the characteristic form of a classified species, and type as the symbolic referent, was pursued. Finally in reaching a design solution, it is posited that an accessible concept of type, i.e. a commodities exchange, may be endowed with character through function to realize a coherent symbolic expression.
A COMMODITIES EXCHANGE
MARKET SQUARE
HOUSTON, TEXAS