RICE UNIVERSITY

ANALYSIS IN HOUSTON AND
DESIGN FOR A COMMUNITY IN HOUSTON

BY

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ABSTRACT

THE INTRODUCTION IS AN EXPLANATION OF MY IDEA OF ARCHITECTURE AND
MY METHOD OF APPROACH. IT IS A SYNTHESIS OF MANY REFLECTIONS ON
ARCHITECTURE--THE CITY, THE ARCHITECT AND ESPECIALLY MY OWN PERSONAL
APPROACH TO DESIGN. MY IDEAS ARE FURTHER DEVELOPED BY A SERIES OF
NOTES WHICH FOLLOW.

IN THE INTRODUCTION I CONSCIOUSLY SET FORTH MY METHOD OF ARCHITEC-
TURAL CREATION. IT IS NOT COMPLETE. IN FACT I COMPARE MY REFLEC-
TIONS TO THE IDEAS WHICH A PATIENT MAY LET FALL DURING PSYCHOANALY-
TIC TREATMENT.

PROFESSOR ANDERSON TODD GENEROUSLY ENCOURAGED ME TO SPEAK AND HELPED
ME IN THE WRITING OF THESE RELECTIONS.

THE SECOND PART PRESENTS A STUDY OF HOUSTON IN WHICH MANY ESSENTIAL
ASPECTS OF THE CITY ARE ANALYZED: THE CAR, THE PLAIN, THE FREEWAY,
THE BAYOU, THE SLUMS. INCLUDED WITH THE OBSERVATIONS ARE SOME
SKETCHES WHICH ILLUSTRATE AND CLARIFY WHAT IS VERBALLY EXPRESSED.

THE OBJECT OF MY STUDY WAS TO OBTAIN A KNOWLEDGE OF HOUSTON WHICH
WOULD ALLOW ME TO EXECUTE AN ARCHITECTURAL PROJECT, A PROJECT
RESOLVING SOME OF THE DEFICIENT ASPECTS OF URBAN LIFE AND ENHANCING
SOME OF THE POSITIVE ASPECTS.

THE PROCESS WAS A SLOW ONE. MY STUDY WAS MADE BY GOING ALL OVER
THE CITY, LOOKING CLOSELY AT IT, TALKING WITH THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE
THERE, AND LIVING MYSELF WITH SOME OF THESE PEOPLE. THROUGHOUT MY
STAY I TOOK NOTES AND MADE DRAWINGS SO THAT I MIGHT BETTER UNDER-
STAND THE PROBLEMS OF THE CITY AND TAKE A POSITION ON THEM.
Since I was a student newly arrived from another country, my point of view was as that of one culture in contrast with another culture, and as that of one architect in relation to other architects. This situation could not be changed, and I did not try to hide it. It was more important to have a desire to understand and a sincerity of expression than it was to determine an absolute truth.

The analysis of Houston was made by strictly applying the method described in the introduction. The main conclusions are:

1. Houston, as other cities in the United States, is a city of the car. The grid is not a structure designed for the car. But with the freeways and the bayou the driver may dominate the city instead of being dominated by the city.

But at the same time the car itself brings a way of living, stating and limiting the social exchange. The Houston man lives in a solitary and indifferent mood.

Technology helps this existing indifference. A social approach is obtained through work, but it is not enough to provide an urban community and then a national one. Only the freeways show within their space a living urban community inhabiting a common space.

2. Architecture is created without considering geography, the passing seasons, or the outside space. Therefore architecture does not help man become conscious of the urban space (the plain and the sky). Exceptions are the Museum of Fine Arts and again the freeways. Architecture is developed from the outside to the inside and not from the inside to the outside.
STILL THE PURPOSE OF ARCHITECTURE IS TO PLEASE MAN IN AN ESTHETIC WAY AND NOT TO HELP HIM PERCEIVE THE WORLD IN WHICH HE MOVES, THE WORLD TO WHICH HE BELONGS.


THE LAST PART, "THE PROJECT," IS THE PLAN FOR A COMMUNITY OF 9,000 WHICH WOULD EXIST IN THE CHIMNEY ROCK AND WESTHEIMER AREA. TO ELABORATE ON THE PROGRAM, DEMOGRAPHIC FACTS OF THE TRACT CORRESPONDING TO 91-E HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED AND PROCESSED BY A COMPUTER TO OBTAIN SQUARE FOOTAGE FOR THE COMMUNITY FACILITIES.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis in Houston</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Car</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Plain and the Sky</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Freeway</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bayou</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Meeting</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweetness</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweetness in Opposition to Life</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghettos</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions for a Project</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION
This thesis is an idea and a method.
My idea of architecture.
A method of approximation to that architecture.

This is shown through the development of a theme:
Study of the city of Houston and
Project of a Community in Houston.
The conclusions of this study are expressed tacitly
in the various chapters.

Architecture is to harbor life. It has nothing to impose.
Its capacity to shelter is the measure of its mastery,
of its beauty.

Life—hate, tenderness—occurs in space.
As in painting, where the protagonist is color,
in architecture, it is space.

Here arise the subjects which preoccupy me: life and space.

Architecture gives splendor to an existing truth.
It does not obscure it.
Neither does it invent a subject matter, it expresses it.
CITY

LIFE AND SPACE OCCUR INTENSELY IN CITIES.
THE ARCHITECT WHO IS CAPABLE OF INHABITING HIS CITY, THAT IS,
HE WHO IS CAPABLE OF KNOWLEDGE DOMINION
WILL BE ABLE TO CREATE SPACES TO HARBOUR LIFE.

IN HIS OWN CITY THE ARCHITECT IS NOT A VISITOR, A SPECTATOR.
HE LIVES, FEELS HIS CITY.
INSTRUMENTS: PERCEPTION AND EMOTION.

NAKED. WITHOUT PREJUDICE. A MAN WITHOUT A POSITION TO DEFEND.
INGENUITY.
EVERYTHING MUST BE MADE TO PARTICIPATE. NOTHING MUST BE ABANDONED.

ANYTHING MAY BECOME IMPORTANT AT ANY MOMENT.
PLACES SHOULD BE REMAINED IN.
IF A GOOD SKETCH IS MADE, SPACE WILL BE CAPTURED.
IF ONE LOOKS AT THINGS, PEOPLE AND ONESelf, LIFE WILL BE CAPTURED.
ARCHITECT

THE GROWTH OF AN ARCHITECT LIES IN HIS INCREASING ABILITY TO SEE. PENETRATION. CAPTURING OF TRUTH.

ARCHITECT: DETECTOR OF THE PROBLEMS OF A CITY. WHERE THERE IS A PROBLEM OR A TRUTH TO DISCOVER, THERE IS A PROJECT. WHEN THESE DO NOT EXIST, ONLY A GAME EXISTS: A PLASTIC GAME, A TECHNICAL GAME.

DOZENS OF PLACES, OF DAYS, OF SKETCHES, OF NOTES. INSTRUMENTS: A NOTEBOOK AND A PENCIL.

UNTIL A PROBLEM APPEARS WHICH REPEATS ITSELF TIME AND AGAIN. THIS PROBLEM IS THE ARCHITECT'S FIELD OF WORK. THE ARCHITECT'S FIELD OF WORK HAS MUCH THAT IS INTIMATE AND MYSTERIOUS. IT IS PERSONAL.
Obscurity

That my preoccupations may be banal?
That I may remain outside of my time?

Precisely, I am risking my destiny each time.
Others try to secure a place among the architects of the epoch.
They try to do that which is safe.
They flee from the mysterious, the difficult, the illogical.
They are "objective."
They make synoptic drafts and charts so as to make no mistake.
So as not to remain in darkness.

I am only compelled by my own darkness.
When I am no longer afraid of darkness, I shall move in it like a lord.

To conjure contradictory facts in the darkness is not something to be avoided, it is desired.
This brings doubt and the necessity of truth.
OBJECTIVITY AND SUBJECTIVITY

I DO AWAY WITH THESE TERMS.

A GREAT POET IS HE WHO REVEALS A TRUTH.

TRUTH IS AN UNQUESTIONABLE FACT, A TRUE FACT. OBJECTIVE.

OF GREAT PRECISION.

FOR EXAMPLE, THAT TO LEAVE IS TO DIE A LITTLE.

THIS IS A TRUTH OF A PRECISION WHICH IS NOT NUMERICAL.

SUBJECTIVITY AND TRUTH DO NOT OPPOSE EACH OTHER.

I SUBSTITUTE FOR THE TERMS OBJECTIVITY AND SUBJECTIVITY:

USE OR NON-USE OF PERCEPTION AND

USE OF NON-USE OF EMOTION.

THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW HOW TO USE PERCEPTION AND EMOTION FALL BACK ON NUMBERS FOR SUPPORT. SO AS NOT TO REMAIN IN "DARKNESS."

THE QUESTION LIES THEN, IN THE SELECTION OF AN INSTRUMENT.

THEY SAY THAT ARCHITECTURE IS A SCIENCE OR A TECHNIQUE.

I SAY THAT ARCHITECTURE IS AN ART.

THE ACTIVITY IS DEFINED BY THE FORM IN WHICH IT IS CARRIED OUT.
SITUATION

IN THE DARKNESS OF CONTRADICTION I CAN ASK: WHY?
I REBEL AGAINST THE PROBLEMS ABOUT WHICH ARCHITECTS QUESTION THEMSELVES.
I REBEL AGAINST THE SOLUTIONS TO THESE PROBLEMS.
I WOULD LIKE TO RECREATE EACH THING: TO FIND ONCE AGAIN ITS ESSENCE AND ITS REASON.
I WISH TO FIND THE PROBLEMS. I WISH TO FIND THE SOLUTIONS.
NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION.

1 My idea of architecture is not a decalogue for my defense. It is not to sell projects. Nor to appear strong and brilliant before men.
Someday, I hope my strength will lie in silence and ingenuousness.
This thesis is not apostolic. It is a narrative. Perhaps a manifesto directed to myself.

2 Emotions are a vital reality.
Perception is an efficient apparatus.

3 This work is never finished.
Penetration will always be insufficient. We have to open.
We can never say: now I have the whole truth.
First we see the most obvious necessities: buying and selling.
Afterwards we detect the need for tenderness, or perhaps the power of sound.

4 I do not want to go down in history for my ability with structures, with volumes, with acoustics or with the electronic computer.
At the end I want to know that I was increasingly more of a man, living the cities.
That I was truly myself.
Only that can give truth and beauty to my architecture.
How does one organize dozens of sketches and observations to generate architecture?

Observations:

On the first floor of the Tennessee Building, in the Plaza del Zócalo and in the Marta Faz Gallery there are no windows. There are distances to walk. There are different levels.

Consequences:

People stand out against the background. There is enough time to see them move. They go up and down. They are, in this way, entrapped.

Doubt:

Why is it good to entrap the human figure in space?

New observations:

The face and the body are vehicles for encounters. An encounter announces communication and I, because I suffer from chronic loneliness, know that communication is good. To give splendor to this good, architecture exists. Herein lies the supreme beauty of those places.

I can have no prejudices then. Love for the curve or for the straight line.
FOR A CERTAIN GEOMETRIC PROPORTION.
FOR CERTAIN MATERIALS.

EACH THING THAT IS USED EITHER SERVES OR DESTROYS AN IDEA.
THIS IS BEING UNCONVENTIONAL. THIS IS TO BE RIGOROUS.

BUT THE UNIVERSITIES TEACH MODERN ARCHITECTURE
TEACH STYLE,
MODERN STYLE.
BECAUSE THEY TEACH SOLUTIONS.

THEY TEACH THE TRUTH, BUT THEY DO NOT TEACH HOW TO FIND THE
TRUTH. I HAVE SEEN PEOPLE OF OVER THIRTY, PLAYING WITH LITTLE
PIECES OF CARDBOARD, AS IF THIS WERE THE MOST DIGNIFIED AND
SERIOUS MISSION. WE HAVE TO START BY THROWING THE BOOKS AWAY
AND GOING THROUGH THE TRASH.
WE HAVE TO PUT OUR HEARTS ELSEWHERE.

6 A RECOMMENDATION FROM THE "EXPERTS" ON CITIES WOULD NOT BE
ENOUGH TO MAKE ME PREOCCUPY MYSELF WITH THE CAR. I WILL DO
THIS ONLY WHEN THE PROBLEM BECOMES ALIVE WITHIN ME.

7 I HAVE SEEN MY TEACHERS BECOME ANXIOUS WHEN FACED WITH OTHER
ARCHITECTURES. THEY DECALOGUES THREATEN TO CRUMBLE.

8: I AM NOT IN AGREEMENT WITH THE KIND OF SUBJECTIVITY OR INTUI-
TION WHICH HIDES BANAL GAMES.
IF TRUTH AND SUBJECTIVITY DO NOT OPPOSE EACH OTHER, WHY DO WE
NEED OBJECTIVITY?
TO MEASURE. BUT THIS IS AFTERWARDS.
WE NEED OBJECTIVITY TO CONSTRUCT THE HOUSE, BUT NOT TO CREATE IT.
9 You can understand communication if you understand privacy.
You can understand the urban if you understand the provincial.
The sky and the plain, the country and the city,
The freeway and the grid.
And I ask why. Always why.
And because I discover the answer, I learn to use the car in
my project.
For each contradiction there is a decision for my project.
Because I know that the pieces of the puzzle must fit somehow.

10 When I design a project, a complete one, I draw many things that
are not a product of my "living." They are things learned in
universities, in professional offices. They are "recommended"
solutions.
In this way the project has a precise appearance. Farce, ink
truth.

At the university the teachers demand projects with the appearance
of total truth: a mistake.
What I am not able to discover, the history of the study, the
past, all these assure another beginning.
This is more important than the blueprints themselves.
In this sense, the road followed is more important than the
results.
COMMUNITY

A COMMUNITY IS SOMETHING IN WHICH THE MEMBERS CO-PARTICIPATE. THEY PARTICIPATE IN THINGS HELD IN COMMON: GOVERNMENT, LAWS, ADMINISTRATIVE LIMITS. THEY FEEL REPRESENTED, THEY AGREE TO HATE OR ACCEPT...
AND OTHER THINGS WHICH THE EXPERTS COULD SAY.

BUT, FOR THE ARCHITECT, WHAT?

THE PROTAGONIST OF ARCHITECTURE IS SPACE.
THE COMMUNITY, ITS MEMBERS, CO-PARTICIPATE IN THE SPACE OF THE CITY.

HOW IS THIS IN HOUSTON?
HOW IS THE CITIZENS' SPACE?


HOW DOES A PERSON APPROPRIATE SPACE?
HOW DO MANY PEOPLE FEEL IT A THING IN COMMON?
On the problem given by visiting critic Hisaka I made a study prior to the project. (A school of architecture and journalism on a hill on the Ohio State University campus.)

The strength of a hill lies in the possibility of offering a vision of 360 degrees. Circumvolution.
The strength of this hill lies in the possibility of being able to see the other side.
This is the reason for going up the hill.

-The quality belongs to the community not only to the one group that uses the building.

-Architecture is to give splendor to this quality not to hide it.

-The building, like the hill, should link the green areas of the university.

Three reasons for a free first level, in favor of the spectator.
On my arrival, Houston, like Miami, seemed to me like a half-built city, due to the distance which exists between the buildings. Enormous stretches of ground for parking cars, plains of concrete. Wide avenues. And no man's land: grass and trees.

Houston is a city made for cars. This gives the image of the city. Busses go empty. Nobody on the streets. No sidewalks.

This has a certain sadness for the foreigner who walks. At night the buildings are illuminated. Reefs of light and color in the great night.

One wishes to go there but there will be no one. Perhaps a cafeteria, but Americans stay so little time in them.

Downtown nobody stops, unless it is to cross the street and disappear. Sometimes one looks into the cars. Green light, they go on their way, faces and legs disappear.

Parties dissolve. Nobody talks after dinner. Everyone is always on the move.

My entire body revolts. I wait for the football match: seventy thousand people together in one space.
Work from eight to five. An interruption for a brief lunch. Shops and offices do not close. Nothing is paralyzed.

From five to eleven nobody sleeps.
Everything has been marvelously simplified: American efficiency.
Kings go to Houston for heart surgery.

I have the feeling that many things can be accomplished. Liberty has been conquered with this efficiency: now in one place, now in another.

Many hours are available after work.
Distance does not hinder.
Nobody runs in the street. Everyone walks.
Corner of Westheimer and Chimney Rock.
Posts for cables
    cables for traffic lights
    traffic lights for cars.

Total propaganda for drivers.
Three petrol pumps.

Architecture is practically non-existent, flat, retiring, without a presence of its own. It seems provisional.

Thousands of places are like this. Cars and propaganda.
In Houston business runs on wheels.

What are the mechanisms of a car, of driving?

In these places you do not look into the distance from your car. There is nothing to see in the distance. Things that are near attract attention. These places are not for the car: cross-roads, stops. Nature is small, for a different speed: the speed of a pedestrian, of a bicycle.

San Felipe near Voss. The street is slightly sunken, which coupled with the non-existence of things near by makes you look up, all of which makes the space of the sky become present, makes you aware of it.
On the crossing of Main, Fannin and Holcombe, the names of the streets are different from those on the buildings. Thus the car is driven in a fluid. The situation which exists downtown, where the spaces are obvious and the addresses rigid, does not exist here. The general space becomes perceptible and dominates smaller spaces. This perception is influenced by time. This is the order of this triple crossing, an order given by the car.
PARKWAY WITH NORTH BOULEVARD. PEACE, FRESHNESS, THE SINGING OF BIRDS.
THIS IS NOT FOR THE CAR.

WHEN CARS ARE AT HAND, YOU USE THEM MORE.
AS WHEN LEAVING MY FLAT I ALWAYS FIND THE CAR, AND USE IT EVEN FOR BUYING CIGARETTES WHICH ARE ONLY SIXTY METERS AWAY.
THIS IS THE MECHANISM OF TV, YOU BEGIN TO BE A PRISONER.
THE PLAIN AND THE SKY

You can see towers of more than seventeen stories from enormous distances, in Houston. In this way they testify to the existence of the plain. Day and night.
In the daytime light and shadow co-operate in the distant visualization of the tower. To see them you must be at an elevation of thirty feet.

There are four areas with towers: Downtown, Medical Center, Sharpstown and San Felipe near the Buffalo Speedway.

When you travel on the Southwest Freeway, on its ups and downs, these areas become associated in our eyes. They form a system.
The sky becomes a complement to the plain. How?

As a city, the sky is made meaningful by its life:

- Sun, stars
- Planes, satellites
- Clouds, water

Without these, it is inert and occult.

The most beautiful machine is the airplane. By its design: physical law. Amateurs prefer old planes because it feels more like flying. And foremost, the airplane is beautiful because it reports the existence of the sky and of faraway places.

Alabama and Buffalo Speedway. The buildings act separately. They create perspective. The skyline helps you become aware of the sky. This occurs because there is no continuity in the buildings, no matter what distance they are from each other.

The example, the sky is present in the interior parking space of the Adams Petroleum Center.
Rice Stadium. The setting sun penetrates beneath the mass, therein lies its continuity.
The stadium is not a screen. The sky becomes present though its life: color, light.
Other buildings in Rice do not have this possibility.

When buildings are of different heights, there is virtually no limit above, only the sky.
Great distances, nothing is closed in, we look to the horizon but our gaze is slightly raised: to the sky. Here the buildings co-operate in different directions, they are not continuous, they do not close space in.
THE FREEWAY

There are no traffic lights or stops.
Height to see the city and the faraway towers.
Orderly traffic. You drive tranquilly.
Everything is anticipated. The exists of the Freeway are often a spatial situation.

The Freeway is also recognized from the outside.
It sections the city, makes it seem less interminable, limits zones spatially.
It creates, in its loops, free zones to be seen.

The Freeways are the gates of Houston. When you leave the inner loop, you feel the ending of the city.
In other cities, in ports, there is something of this: it is a door. A port means the sea and the distant world. Every language is spoken. In Houston this is blocked. You cannot see it. You do not participate in its life.
Someday this could happen to the bayou, with the freeway, Houston hiding its small geography: the cult of private property.
The freeway spans the city in a few minutes. The sections are joined together—young people from Lo Valledor do not know Santiago. Everything remains imprinted in our eyes: cemeteries, factories, houses, streets. Architecture is more than ever a temporal art. It occurs in time. The space belonging to Houston is that which the freeway gives. Below the city. On the horizon the towers, the plain. In Valparaiso the city is also on the hills. It is always with you.

That is why, on the freeway, I become owner of the city. It is my city. Outside, I have nowhere to go, I am a foreigner, an outsider again.

Houston seems like a fish bowl to me. One moves in any direction, to the limits of the sphere, but there is no beginning or end. There is nothing significant in the limits. The arrival by plane is different. The airport is a gateway, and at the end of the Gulf Freeway, which leads us into the city, is the town. All this has great beauty, has meaning.

In regard to knowledge, mastery and belonging, I have referred to them when speaking of people (Project 64) and of the home. Here, through the freeway and the towers, they become flesh of the city.
THE BAYOU

IN ITS BRIDGES AND ROADS THERE IS DISTANCE AND TIME TO SEE.

NATURE FOR THE CAR.

THE CITY SHOWS ITS DELICATE GEOGRAPHY.

PROPAGANDA CEASES.

SOLITARY HOUSES AND PARKS REMIND ME OF BEING A FOREIGNER: THEY ARE ALONE.
KNOWLEDGE

THE ARCHITECTURE OF HOUSTON IS NOT CONCERNED WITH THE LANDSCAPE OF THE CITY. IT IGNORES IT.

THE BUILDINGS DO NOT FACE ANYTHING. THERE ARE NO WINDOWS.

THE FACADES OF BUILDINGS DO NOT RECOGNIZE DIFFERENT CONDITIONS: SUN, VIEW, NEIGHBORING SPACE.

IN INTERIORS IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE IF ONE IS IN THIS POINT OR THAT.

AT THE UNIVERSITY, STUDENTS DRAW UP PROJECTS "TO BE USED ANYWHERE."

I FEEL THAT THE MIES MUSEUM CAPTURES A PIECE OF HOUSTON, WHICH TO ME IS A DISCOVERY, A VALUE.

HORIZONTALITY, DISTANCES, CARS, TREES, CHURCHES, A LOT OF SKY.

AND WITHIN, SOMETHING TAKES PLACE WHICH IS SIMILAR TO WHAT OCCURS IN THE FREEWAY: KNOWLEDGE, MASTERY, AND THE BELONGING IN THE CITY.

AS IN THE FREE LOTS USED FOR PARKING CARS, LOTS WHICH YOU CAN SEE BEYOND.

IN OPPOSITION TO THIS, THE HERMETIC DOWNTOWN, THE MYSTERIOUS DOWNTOWN.

SEARS, ON MAIN STREET, WHERE YOU ARE NOT AWARE OF THE CITY.
Inside Sears there are only things. One doesn't know where the stairs are, nor how many floors there are. It's not the spaces which lead you, but the signs. Only faces belonging to people. Only one good: the block can be penetrated and its interior explored: the blocks' inside becomes the dominion of the people.
Tennessee Building. It frames sections of the city in an upward direction, the sky. You are at the exterior, without being outside. It can be encircled: knowledge of its location and neighboring streets. In the portico the figures acquire a presence of their own: slope, distance and an appropriate background. (Conditions which exist in the Plaza del Zocalo, Mexico, and the Marta Faz Gallery.)
Porticos of the old Houston. They do not frame the city. Linear walking.

They are not a system, they are interrupted.

They only give shadow, making the street pleasant.

The sidewalks of Santiago as opposed to the Tennessee Building, all of which give us knowledge.
THE MEETING

MACHINES SELL NOW. IT'S WONDERFULLY EFFICIENT.
They sell everything.
They are substitutes for people, who will therefore be able to
produce, not to serve.
But they destroy a type of encounter.
And they do not sell tenderness.

The ladies converse with the man who sells in the 7-11.
Not with those who sell in the shopping center.
They speak with each other at the laundry, but not downtown.

Men speak in the cafeterias.
The drive-ins (theaters and cafeterias) destroy other encounters.
Houston is a city that is always new.

The clothes are always new.  
Sanitary fixtures and cars are new.  
So that flowers may always be new, they make them out of plastic.  
Old women dress like little girls.

Thus, in Houston, time does not pass.

Everything must look good.  
This is a rule of commerce, of supply and demand.

How long will Houston have to wait until its bricks get old?

Everywhere air-conditioning has been provided. Hence, no windows.  
In the Houston interiors there are no seasons.
THE CITY

THE HOUSTONIAN THINKS OF HIS CITY.
THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE THINKS.
THE CHARITY COMMITTEE THINKS.
THE ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS THINK.
THEY PUBLISH REPORTS, STATISTICS, COLORED MAPS, RECOMMENDATIONS.

THEY THINK IN TERMS OF GROWTH, OF APPEARANCE, AND ALSO IN FINANCIAL TERMS.

BUT THEY DON'T SEEM TO KNOW WHAT A CITY IS.

WHAT IS A CITY?

I HAVE ENVISAGED THE HOUSE AS THE CITY: A MEETING PLACE.
A MEETING WHICH ANNOUNCES: I AM SPEAKING OF MYSELF TO YOU.

YOU ARE SPEAKING OF YOURSELF TO ME.

THE MUTUAL GIVING OF SELF.

THE MEETING IN WHICH MEN CAN BEST REVEAL WHAT THEY ARE.
ARCHITECTURE EXISTS FOR THIS. TO SHELTER THIS FULL LIVING, THIS INTIMACY.

"AND THE GREATER THE CITY BECAME, THE GREATER WAS THE INTIMACY OF MEN." (ARCHITECT ALBERTO CRUZ)
Houston is a city with privacy.
The privacy in which men must not show what they are.
The privacy which is a defense against intimacy.

Here is a conspiracy of silence. They do not need to raise walls between their houses.

Those from Houston have conquered their independence at the price of communication:

"No Parking Any Time"

They turn their backs on life.
They are afraid of ugliness.
**Sweetness**

It is surrounded by the pretty.  
It builds around dignity.

It has painted the whole city a stupid pink.  
It believes in the Warren Commission.  
Nobody knows where the whore houses are.  
They make-up the dead.  
The architecture of Houston is decoration.

The newly born are slightly ugly: to be nice they have to grow up.  
The same thing happens with projects.

But the teachers become nervous. They wish to see them beautiful  
in a few days. They order you to draw...  
And they don't let them grow.
TRAFALGAR WEST. ARCHITECTURE CO-OPERATES WITH THE EXISTING BAD TASTE.
ALL STYLES OR YOUR MONEY BACK!
FRENCH, TUDOR, SPANISH, GEORGIAN, MEXICAN. EVERYTHING NEW. JUST PUT UP FOR SALE.

Architecture, as in Chile, is a flourishing business. The students prepare gleefully to commercialize it.

There is no thought.

But in other places serious things take place, life is at stake.
Sweetness in Opposition to Life

The doctors, full of blood, operate an open heart.
The heart pumps blood all over the walls of a hospital in Houston.

Two beings with a painful past.
They don't want to do anything that is not real.
In this adventure one could commit suicide, and the other would be left alone.
Life begins to bloom for them here.

My sweet existence looks ugly beside it.
It is not I who is living my life. And it is badly done.

March 13th. The police charge into Alabama.
The children who survive in Singapore have their stomachs filled with paper.

March 19th. The city of Houston has given five hundred dollars for the Alabama march.

Those from the Peace Corps give two years of their life.

Last week Rice had its own small march. Adolescents want to be able to think for themselves.

At Texas University nine negro children go round and round a sitting white man, for one week: five hundred dollars for Alabama.
MARCH 24TH. THOUSANDS OF VOICES SING SPIRITUALS FOR THEIR LIBERATION. THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN MURDERED AND THOSE WHO ARE ABOUT TO BE.

"I HAD SEEN IN THE NEWSPAPERS THE DESPICABLE FACE OF THAT STUPID KENNEDY..." (PABLO NERUDA)

THE WEAKEST, WITH THE HEAVIEST LOAD: A POETIC SIGN FOR HIS PEOPLE.

A POETIC SITUATION INASMUCH AS IT REVEALS THIS TRUTH IN REGARD TO LIFE.

MEANWHILE, THE ARCHITECTS OF THIS WORLD ENGAGE IN PLASTIC MASTURBATIONS. STERILITY. UGLINESS. THEY GIVE NOTHING.

LE CORBUSIER HAS AN ANSWER.

"AN ACROBAT IS NOT A PUPPET
IT CONSECRATES ITS EXISTENCE TO AN ACTIVITY
FOR ALL OF WHICH, IN PERMANENT DANGER OF DEATH,
HE PERFORMS MOVEMENTS OUT OF SERIES, IN THE LIMITS
OF DIFFICULTY, WITHIN THE RIGORS OF EXACTITUDE, OF PUNCTUALITY,
...RISKING TO BREAK HIS NECK, TO BREAK HIS BONES,
KILLING HIMSELF WITH ONE BLOW.
NOBODY HAS ASKED HIM TO DO THIS.
NOBODY OWES HIM ANY GRATITUDE.
BUT HE HAS PENETRATED IN A UNIVERSE OUT OF SERIES,
THAT OF ACROBACIES.
RESULT: OF COURSE! HE DOES THINGS THAT OTHERS CAN'T DO.
RESULT: WHY DOES HE DO IT? THE OTHERS ASK THEMSELVES;
HE IS PRESUMPTUOUS; HE IS ABNORMAL; HE FRIGHTENS US
WE PITY HIM;
HE BOTHERS US!"

QUOTATION FROM LE CORBUSIER
Houston has its ghettos.

Neighborhoods in which all eyes are black and teeth intensely white. The children are funny. And adolescents erotic.

There are chairs in the corridors. Flowers in pots, which an old man put there so as to possess nature.

The young think of their destiny and talk in the street.

A woman straightens her hair with a hot iron and paints it yellow. Tired of being what she is she paints her face with white powder.

Chartres and Holman streets. The ghettos are a city within another. Cities with schools, parks, commercial centers, cars everywhere, empty lots.

DECISIONS FOR A PROJECT
My proposition is not for the whole of Houston, not for each block. That would be a conventionalism, and I do not wish to make Houston uniform.

Others propose other things for Houston and they express them in their projects.

To select a place was to select a strategic area, to give the space of the city to a group of people.

The people of my space will use the freeway very much, due to the location.

From this site you can see the towers in the distance.
FACING THE PLAIN:

A TOWER FROM WHICH TO SEE FAR AWAY—LIVING STARTS ON THE THIRD FLOOR,
AND TO BE SEEN FROM AFAR, THE HEIGHT IS MORE THAN SEVENTEEN STORIES.
YOU LOOK FOR LIGHT AND SHADOW ON THE FACADES.

A SKYLINE THAT HELPS YOU SEE THE SKY FROM THE GROUND, DIFFERENT HEIGHTS.

FOR THE CAR, WHICH IS COMPRESSED ON THE GRID:

TIME
DISTANCE
PERSPECTIVE
NATURE

THE SUNKEN STREET WHICH HELPS US LOOK FAR AWAY;
THERE ARE NO DEAD-END STREETS. THERE ARE BRIDGES FOR PEDESTRIANS; THE LIVING UNIT HAS ITS OWN PARK,
IN WHICH THE CAR DOES NOT PENETRATE.
THE CAR IS NOT A VICTIM OF SMALLER SPACES; THE MOVING CAR AIDS IN THE PERCEPTION OF THE SPATIAL ARRANGEMENTS.
Privacy at home.

Meetings in places where cars are not parked.

Two steps in the learning of encounters:

Neighborhood life
Apartment buildings

1. Elevators, circulation, halls
   Laundry, cafeteria, 7-11,
   Swimming pool, park

Downtown life, masses
Community buildings

2. Commerce
   Theaters
   Offices

But the home, like the city, is a meeting place
A showing of faces and bodies.

The disemboweled building
Where each situation has its expression.
IN OPPOSITION TO THE CURTAINS AND WALLS WHICH SHELTER US FROM THE SUN:
THE BUILDINGS FACING NORTH-SOUTH
THE LOGGIA, A ROOM OF THE HOUSE IN WHICH THE CITY IS PRESENT
CONNECTING THE HOME AND THE CITY
THE SUN AND FRESHNESS.
THE SUN'S RECEPTACLE. SUN THAT MEANS SKY WHICH ORIENTS (IDEA OF NORTH-SOUTH), WHICH MARKS THE HOURS OF THE DAY AND THE PASSING OF SEASONS.

IN OPPOSITION TO THE INTERMINABLE GARDEN CITY, WHERE NOTHING HAPPENS:
DENSITY
A SUM OF GARDENS, A PARK
A SUM OF HOUSES, GREAT BUILDINGS WHICH GATHER PEOPLE TOGETHER
THE Labyrinth NEIGHBORHOOD OF THE WEST IS GIVEN AIR BY OPENING TWO OF ITS STREETS
LEAVING THE EXISTING HOUSES ON THE EDGE OF THE LOT GIVES A GOOD LIMIT TO THE PARK
BUT FACING THE STREETS AND IMPORTANT CORNERS, THE PARK IS ALLOWED TO SHOW ITS PRESENCE IN THE CITY.