Ten Act Circus

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THE PARADE

Pilgrims, Jesuits, explorers, mercantilists, migrants, immigrants, theater troupes, and circuses – they were travelers in time, as we are travelers without time. The paths they inscribed have been paved, wired, and elevated...The parade is on.

Speaking at the Jerusalem Seminar in Architecture in 1996, the late Enrique Miralles related his role as an architect practicing around the globe to that of itinerant performers:

> *"Most of my work today happens to be outside Spain.... In such different places, you carry your own modus operandi with you and then develop the continuity from a core centroid that you discover within the site.... I feel that, when Japanese clients give commissions to foreign architects, it is reminiscent of the medieval period when traveling troupes of players went from city to city and village to village, representing via the theater narrative histories drawn from the outside world."*
>
> *—Enric Miralles, 1996 Jerusalem Seminar.[1]*

As it was for his predecessors in the parade across the global stage, the "means of proceeding" remains constant. Miralles deploys this operation upon the site to ascertain a "core centriod." Once discovered, this center of gravity establishes the basis of "continuity." Is this conjunction of a ubiquitous [site-less] process and a specific locale the making of a *critical regionalism?*

Act 1: Savage Reading

Kenneth Frampton's writings on regionalism are rooted upon the "unsentimental" establishment of "bounded domains and tactile presences in order to resist the dissolution of the late-modern world." The authentic and material underpinnings of this polemic perch precariously above the chasm of the anachronous.[2] Today, streams of information, capital and cultural codes flow across the wired paths of global exchange at a speed that frustrates the establishment of a local center. Construction accelerates, erasing ancient cities and leaving temporal, flaccid tropes in their place. Further undermining the cause of regionalism is its appropriation by financiers and developers. Strategic interpretations have been displaced in favor of a facile nostalgia. *Critical regionalism's* search for resistant tactics must be renovated in order to defy total usurpation or exhaustion. The world in flux escapes the purview of the architect, rendering inadequate conventional modes of practice but exposing the potential to locate architectural content along the back eddies of the worldwide information river.
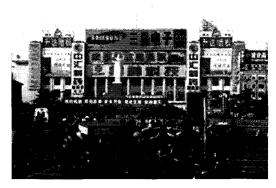

Fig. 1 Mao addressing the Capitalists, Chongqing, China 1999. Image from author's collection.

Act 2: Hey Rube!

> *"The absolute image of technology today is the non-image: an absence, the invisibility of all technical solutions. The extreme aspiration is that of the human as conjurer, who can make anything appear or disappear at will according to need or desire; who can travel instantly to any location by lighting up windows on the world, or by ever-faster self-propulsion."*
>
> *—Jean Nouvel 1996 Jerusalem Seminar.[3]*

The circus (the surviving form of Miralles' troupes) is summoned to defend Nouvel's invocation of magic, which was ill received at the *Jerusalem Seminar.* The *modus operandi* of these traveling performers will be examined to determine the means through which successful practice is sustained as they circle the globe. The model of a somewhat tarnished and tattered traveling association is chosen to discourage the formation of new polemics . Instead, the realm of the circus will be used to put forward both a view of current global practice and to revisit *critical regionalism's* role in the "big top."

On the bill are actually only eight acts [two disappeared during editing]. They are arranged to mimic the pacing of a circus programme, with longer headliner pieces interspersed with shorter "juggling" acts.

Act 3: The Circus

"He roped off a ring, and the Circus was born."[4]

An ex-military horseman, Philip Astley, founded the modern circus in the second half of the 18th century in Lambeth, England. A proficient trick-rider (which was a popular pursuit at the time), Astley discovered that if he stood on the horse's back and had it gallop in a circle, centrifugal forces would keep him in place. Astley cordoned off a ring on a piece of urban waste ground, and so began the circus.

As we will see in Act Eight, Heidegger's foundation story begins with hewing a clearing; the frame of this inhabitable precinct functions to "actualize" the site by throwing into high relief its particular characteristics. In contrast, Astley's ring defines an artificial boundary on a preexistent wasteland superfluous to the urban fabric — a *tabulae rasae.* Here it is the practice of performance rather than the architectural frame that "actualizes" the site, highlighting the cultural margin by appropriating it with a gratuitous occupation.

Act 4: (Cultural) *Esperanto*

"The parade is on. Spanish wire-walkers, Roumanian bar acts, American cowboys, Chinese contortionists, Czech animal trainers, Swedish acrobats, Red Indians, French clowns, Italian jugglers, English riders ... horses ... dogs... elephants... monkeys... bears ... It seems as if the whole world is represented in the procession which marches so magnificently across the ring. This is just as it should be, for the Circus is international. It is the only truly international entertainment that exists..."[5]

During 1896-97, Willison's *Great World Circus* toured India, Burma, the Malay States, Java, Siam, China and Japan.[6] How did this cultural practice travel with such success with only minor adjustments between venues? The circus operates as a cultural *Esperanto* or, as analyzed in Paul Bouissac's *Circus and Culture,* a metalanguage.[7] Four aspects that enable this cross-cultural communication include: actualization, transparency, redundancy and code inversion.

The actualizing function of the circus has been linked to its occupation of a wasteland site. This property of "bringing into being" occurs on the urban margin, on the outside. Bouissac asserts a similar function on the inside — an animation of the "cosmological" center. Here both ends of the cultural axis are manifested simultaneously, as in the juxtaposition of wild and domesticated beasts in a single act within the ring. This animated center represents the "totality" of our popular system of the world, i.e., it **actualizes** in one way or another all the **fundamental categories** through which we perceive our universe as a meaningful system."[8] Its inherent aesthetic pleasure is that of the miniature, which allows us to grasp the whole in its "totality" in a moment in time.

The second aspect is that of transparency: the spectacle occurs "before your very eyes." Here the configuration of seating-in-the-round operates as an inverted panoptican; the "authentic moment" of performance is surveyed in 360 degrees. Although the audience's attention moves back and forth between the preparations and the diversionary presence of the clowns, the entire set-up between acts is visible. Equipment is carried in and out, assembled and tested in full view. The perceived certification fosters a suspension of disbelief, and works to pacify the skeptics within the audience, allowing the subsequent performance to work its magic.

Transparency also occurs at the level of the props and apparatus themselves:

"Even the props must never be made to look anything else than what they really are. The apparatus of a bar act which is disguised as a pergola, or the perch which is made to look like a palm-tree, are ridiculous in the ring, though they may seem quite suitable for the Variety stage... for if Truth is sometimes stranger than Fiction, then Actuality can be more enchanting than Romance."[9]

Stripped of scenographic or illusionary references, the apparatus function as enabling devices (or vehicles), subsuming their identity to the performance at hand.

Redundancy is the third facet permitting the circus to be comprehended with ease cross-culturally. A repetitive structure permeates the fabric of the whole and the parts — the entire performance and each individual act of which it is composed:

a) Identification of hero

b) Introduction of a disrupting factor

c) Resolution or control of the disruption[10]

The circus act/performance proceeds from a structure to produce an object through the grouping of a set of events. This structured repetition utilizes Levi-Straus's mythical morphology to weave stories with universal themes. [11]

The fourth aspect is the play with cultural boundaries and convention through re-definition & inversion of codes. This is read in the act in which a tiger rides an elephant, or, in the antics of the clown. These language games transgress the boundary between sense and non-sense, annunciating phrases such as the Derridian "squared circle"[12] when hunter and prey disport in the same ring. Here the circus is the stranger — exotic and foreign — whose presence elicits increased awareness of cultural codes. This final aspect circles back to the first, as it also acts as a form of actualization, but of the limit rather than the center.

HEADLINERS

Act 5: The Acrobat

"The body of the acrobat, like that of the dancer, is still an instrument which expresses rhythm by motion; but this rhythm is the end itself. The movement develops like a Bach fugue, filling the mind of the audience with a sense of satisfaction in its own form rather than stirring the heart with hope or hatred or love."[13]

Le Corbusier likens the architect to the performer of the "high" form[14] — the acrobat subject to bone-crushing falls from the heights of the trapeze.
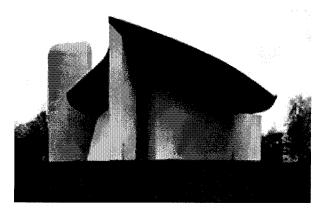

Fig. 2 The Punctum of Le Corbusier's Ronchamp. Image manipulation by Todd Benson, graduate student, University of Utah.

Every acrobatic act consists of technical feats of strength and balance combined with an aesthetic component of showmanship. Within the feats, the delineation of the form, the grace or the difficulty of execution heightens the satisfaction of the audience. The theatrics emerge in the "aesthetic packaging" that is often designed to mask the traces of (muscle) work involved, through the dissolution of the materiality of the body with a spangled leotard or full-body make-up. Here a crack emerges in the transparency of the spectacle. Our second headliner, the conjurer, also practices this obscuring of effort.

Act 6: The Conjurer

"Conjurers should find no place in the Circus, for ... 'trickery and the ring cannot be reconciled,' and the artiste who deliberately fakes his trick is despicable."[15]

Gauging from the quote above, conjuring had a similar reception by the circus as Nouvel's reference to it had at the *Jerusalem Seminar*. The magician's transgression of the metalinguistic principle of transparency violates a criterion establishing authenticity. The success of the magic act stems from the requirement that attention be focussed on the objects being manipulated, not the conjurer's hand movements (the process). The resulting manipulation of form does not imply work. This denial of "sweat" is also a negation of materiality.

Act 7: The Center Ring

This leads us to a discussion of the performance expected of the global architect. Can conjurers "find no place" in the critical practice of architecture?

The practitioner fits two profiles – the *"troupes"* (corporate, service oriented constructs such as SOM and KPF) and the *"headliner"* (iconographic personalities such as Gehry and Koolhaas). In both cases, the foreigner plays a dual role as a performer and a trophy. This is the economy of the circus animal act, in which an animal can perform and also be exhibited in a sideshow zoo during non-performance hours.

The foreign client typically courts the *troupes* for their technical expertise. Often a high-wire act, the dispensing of technology — both through objects and know-how — is a feat requiring an extraordinary sense of balance in judging both the feasibility of the execution and the maintainability once the tent is taken down.

A *headliner* architect is required for the signature building, the prerequisite status symbol for the new World City. As with the *troupes*, often the act entails an acrobatic component. But the *headliner* is on the bill equally due to his conjuring abilities. And while magic's *modus operandi* violates the conventional bounds of authenticity, it lends a certain immeasurable quality to the work. In this way *headliners* can protect their franchise.

Just as the magician protects their craft by having you look at the objects, not the hands, the architect's work must often look effortless. The designer is paid to leave an object and no sweaty fingerprints. It can be extrapolated that the greater dependence on process, the less the object can be privileged, and the greater the call for the *troupes* to dominate the performance. And, in the melange of financiers and institutions performing in the building industry big top, it is often the architect who plays the role of the clown *Auguste*.

Act 8: Living in the Extraordinary World of the Architect

SOM, KPF, Koolhaas, Ferrell, Foster, ... Botta, Rossi, ... Gehry, ... Miralles... and Nouvel...

The parade is on. Unlike the circus, the traveling troupes of contemporary practice leave behind a tangible record of their performances. Following the path of Willison's Great World Circus, this leg of the tour swings through Asia. The stops include emerging centers of production, where building is occurring at a rate that exceeds the design professional's grasp, thus creating a contextual tabulae rasae.
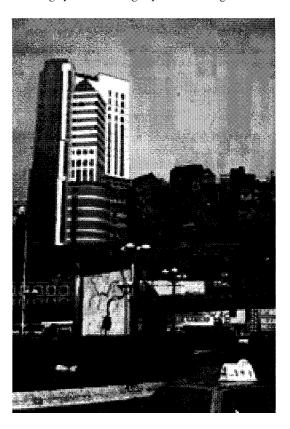

Fig. 3 Chongqing, China, 1999. Image from authors' collection.
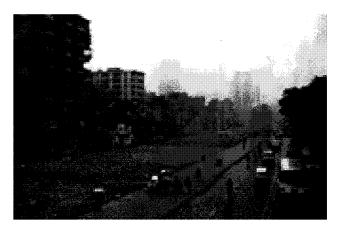

Fig. 4 Guangzhou, China, 1999. Image from authors' collection.

Actualization, transparency, redundancy and code contravention enable the circus to "act globally and communicate locally," requiring only minor adjustments per locality. We've finished the acts, and in the following subheadings these linguistic operations will be re-deployed upon the global practice of architecture. In the process, the place of critical regionalism in the construction of an architectural metalanguage will be assessed.

ACTUALIZING

The circus actualizes a wasteland site, a wasteland as perceived by the local inhabitants.

Modern shifts in time/space perceptions call geographical and cultural boundaries into question. As a strategy of resistance, the pocket or "bounded domain" has proved harder to define and implement. These concepts of limit and presence find their roots in Martin Heidegger's 1954 essay "Building, Dwelling, Thinking."[16] Heidegger's program for inhabitation takes place in three acts:

a) Realm of inchoate space — the dark forest

b) Orchestrated disruption – the making of the clearing

c) Denouement – nascent legibility of the individual trees

The linguist rendering of this "clearing" in the wilderness — a locale where meaningful communication can occur — is framed by tautology and contradiction.[17] Tautology is the collapse into the center of Frampton's criticism of modern spatial homogeneity. Likewise it could be read as Miralles' centroid — the coordinate of zero moment. Contradiction, the exterior boundary, is embodied in the nonsensical double negative in which incompatible realities coexistence.[18] Predicated on the limit, both Heidegger and Frampton share the predicament of action when the forest has previously been cleared.

None the less the architect can "actualize" what the host country considers superfluous — mining abandoned references to historical culture, context and space. The client often comes to the foreign consultant with a desire to model development upon Western ideas. These frequently have lost their currency in the developed world, ensuing in a reversal of roles such as that of a tiger riding an elephant. The foreign architect assumes the part of the circus and inhabits the cultural wasteland, thereby recycling the margin.

In contemporary China, the traditional neighborhoods (Hu-tongs) are being leveled for commercial mega-structures and housing slabs with modern plumbing. Rather than criticizing the rapid development of East Asia as "insensitive" urban interventions and "banal new towns," new plots must be created that "call into being a world."[19] If aimed at the "cosmological center," architecture can reveal both ends of the contextual and cultural spectrum. And yet, much of the production by renowned international practitioners imports formal devices that do not engage the disparate forces already parading in the urban ring. If both the exotic and domestic are allowed to co-habitate the ring, perhaps these practices can activate new paradigms of context.

TRANSPARENCY

Inside the big top, the performers throw into high relief elements of the "mineral category"[20]— weight, cohesion, rigidity, fluidity and light. Architecture's role in this act is analogous to that of the transparent circus props: "Props should not simulate anything or provide a background; they are machines on which, or with which, actual manifestations take place."[21]

In Schopenhauer's architectural schemata, "aesthetic moments" occur when these mineral elements are actualized. The tectonic object is a foregrounded phenomenological "presence" in which material, place, and craft are embodied, consummated by the natural agents of "light, water, wind, and weather."[22] Here the circus's metalinguistic categories begin to break down as transparency manifests architecture's fundamental categories. Frampton often cites the contemporary Spanish tectonic with its emphasis on materiality over information as an articulation of this grounding. The "aesthetic moment" held in an instance of material immanence lies in diametric opposition to Nouvel's conjuring.

Its counter-concept is the "atectonic," in which the transfer of structural loads is visually obscured or rendered opaque. In Hoffman's Stoclet House, we see Jean Nouvel's conjurer at work:

"At the corners or any other places of juncture where two or more of these parallel mouldings come together, the effect tends towards a negation of the solidity of the built volumes. A feeling persists as if the walls had not been built up in a heavy construction but consisted of large sheets of thin material..."[23]

The difficulty with Frampton's palpable moments is that they are often haunted by the presence of impalpable specters. Cultural developments towards de-materialization, including miniaturization and the privileging of "intellectual property" rights, presage a reality of weightlessness — a late-Marxist Goth. Amongst these developments, architecture struggles with the desire to lay bare its own spectacle. In contrast to the visual ring of the circus, the reality of the building production is much more difficult to certify. Contingent factors and economies of the building process disrupt architectural intent. This interruption is often ignored, suppressing the reality of construction behind a fictional veneer.

The world's airports and many corporate high-rises highlight the technology that brings them to fruition. These "technological expressions" allow architects to operate within a universal language, and perhaps to show off their rhetorical expertise. The light roofs, articulated joints and column bearings in Hong Kong's new airport frame a neutral and lucid international passage from Kowloon in Hong Kong to central London, extending through multiple transportation facilities.

The technology on display is tinted by magical realism, as it creates an illusion of technology rather than expressing the structure itself. This is a conjured or phenomenological transparency. If we follow this passage to future destinations, we might expect to leave behind the image of technology all together, and in the denouement encounter Nouvel's "invisibility of all technical solutions."

Stripped of the scenographic, architecture, like the circus apparatus, functions as an enabling device, subsuming its identity to the performance at hand. This aspect of transparency is clearly compatible with Frampton's seventh point on the architectonic/scenographic. The sheer scale of most international commissions delivers exhilarating opportunities to re-configure the program and orchestrate new urban solutions. Here Bernard Tschumi's proposed trans-programming in the Nara train station project is contrasted with the easy formal commodification of the Jerde Partnership "retail experience,"[24] Canal City Hakata being just one example. Tschumi's critical reading of the propositions of global consumerism informs a regional condition, rather than savaging it. Obviously this requires an expanded view of the authentic, albeit a difficult one. One possibility presented by the current discussion is to follow the linear plot line of the circus, from identification of hero to resolution. In this case the disruption is executed within the parameters of the conventional configuration of the authentic. A parallel can be drawn to Astley's ring: a "ready-made" clearing appropriated by movement held in check by natural forces. As with the gravitational centroid produced by horse and rider, it is the program rather than the architectural frame that "actualizes" the site. As a strategy for critical practice today, re-programming is moved from the margin and deployed to occupy the commodified center.

REDUNDANCY

The structured repetition of the circus act has economic parallels in global land development. Among the current crop of globetrotting professional "circus people," the *troupes* have a strong role here, well versed in the repetition and expectations of each act. The projects of

larger "three-letter" corporate firms are at times a "structured repetition," at times a "repetitive structure," and neither or both. The predictability of these projects, like that of the circus performance, works its spell on the audience who know going into the show that their expectations will be satisfied.

Turning this analogy from a statement of a current condition to a strategy requires a broadened view of what is "regional." Much of the discourse on regionalism does not engage the structural forces that engineer trans-global processes. Projects of the scale that mesh gears with these forces inevitably confront universal motifs as suggested by Levi-Strauss. Absent in most production to date is a re-interpretation of thematic programs in relation to the scale, pace and urban landscape in which they are "weaved." The major cities of Asia, for example, offer a rhythm and density that outpaces that in which many models of development, as "types," were bred. An engagement of these forces circulating through the site requires revamping conventional strategies. On one level this has happened, as foreign designers often realize more fluid and experimental forms outside of their home bases, which will be remarked upon in the closing subheading on *immunity*. But in failing to telegraph the powers of the specific venue, this formal experimentation is in excess of a critical stance. The myth of progress formally espoused often trumps a more subtle and long term view of an urban future. And yet, emergent strains such as the bio-technological wave in the work of Foster, Piano and Malaysia's Ken Yeang, suggest the development of resistant hybrids.

CODE CONTRADICTION

Inversion

In Asia the easy trade in language and symbols has been engrained in pop culture for many years. Foreign words are used as logos solely for their phonetic or aesthetic qualities. Often these playful appropriations front minimalist boutiques that now signify "high-end fashion" the world over. The influence of global media has created a menu of images for ready usurpation, leading to incongruous citations of architectural forms.

The foreign architect lacking fluency in the local vernacular constructs similar, involuntary gaffes. The inability of the designer to interpret the unstated structure or codes of the host culture is prone to appropriate the most ready symbols (and syllables). This results in a distorted interpretation, the nonsense of the "squared-circle," an elocutionary hazard.

Blurring

The increasing commodification of forms through the design media is eroding the contours of cultural codes. Perhaps the excessive visits by the circus will result in a cross-pollination of formal themes (an architectural Esperanto) and render localized resistance moot.

Employing the pluralism espoused in our circus analogy, Frampton's isolation of the authentic moment is rendered too hermetic. The performer is an interloper in the domain of *critical regionalism*, inverting its codes and toppling its assumptions. Tactics for actualizing a locale can be expanded to activate valences within the fluid exchange of capital and cultural symbols. Here architecture is consummated by economic and technical exigencies as well as via natural agents. Registering these immaterial forces will require some conjuring. Within the expanded performance, each act assumes the responsibility to locate a critical juncture that celebrates this cultural role, that of actualizing a broader and ever shifting "wasteland" with a new strategies and vision.

Immunity

Performances outside the purview of the architect's own domestic "cosmos" present "exhilarating possibilities." Released from the "obligations of respectable citizenship"[25] these set pieces sometimes achieve an incalculable presence of authorship. Upon seeing a completed Aldo Rossi project in southern Japan, Rem Koolhaas concluded that it was a purer, more "convincing" Rossi than could ever have been achieved in Europe. This seems to suggest that being "plugged in" to the culture at home actually inhibits the creative practice.

The privileged position of the foreign star is endowed with additional liberties, with expectations centered on performance. From the distance of the outsider, the designer can query the conventional wisdom of a society. The resulting critique and potential mixing of metaphors renders linguistic and cultural conventions perceptible.

NOTES

[1] Enric Miralles, "Discussion," in *Technology, Place & Architecture: The Jerusalem Seminar in Architecture*, ed. Kenneth Frampton (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1998), 53.

[2] This use of the word anachronous is intended to carry retardataire implications as opposed to a sense of timelessness. Kenneth Frampton, "Ten Points on an Architecture of Regionalism: A Provisional Polemic," *Center* 3 (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), 22.

[3] Jean Nouvel, "Presentation," in *Technology, Place & Architecture: The Jerusalem Seminar in Architecture*, ed. Kenneth Frampton (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1998), 83.

[4] Coxe, Antony Hippisley. *A Seat at the Circus* (London: Evans Brothers Limited, 1951), 23.

[5] *Ibid*, 21.

[6] *Ibid*, 34.

[7] Paul Bouissac, *Circus and Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976).

[8] *Ibid*, 7. Bolding mine.

[9] Coxe, 225.

[10] Bouissac, 25.

[11] This schema follows a pattern similar to Levi-Strauss's myth. See Claude Levi-Strauss, "*The Science of the Concrete*" in *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), 26.

[12] For more on the non-sense of the "squared circle" see Jacques Derrida, "Meaning as Soliloquy" in *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. David B. Allison & Newton Garver (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 19.

[13] Coxe, 194.

[14] The "flying trapeze" was invented in 1859 by Leotard, a young man from Toulouse. Training in his father's gym & pool complex, Leotard noticed the cords used to open and close the ventilators in the roof over the pool, linked them together with a short bar and used them to swing out over the pool for a good dunking. Corbu would have been sympathetic to the derivation of acrobatics from an architectural improvisation:

> An acrobat is no puppet.
> He devotes his life to activities
> in which, in perpetual danger of death,
> he performs extraordinary movements
> of infinite difficulty, with disciplined
> exactitude and precision. ... free
> to break his neck and his bones and be
> crushed.
> Nobody asked him to do this.
> Nobody owes him any thanks.
> He lives in an extraordinary world, of the

acrobat.

Result: most certainly! He does things

which others cannot.

Result: why does he do them?

others ask. He is showing off;

he's a freak; he scares us; we pity him;

he's a bore.

Le Corbusier, "The Acrobat" in My Work, trans. James Palmes (London: Architectural Press, 1960), 197.

[15]Edouard Perrodil, Monsier Clown (n.p.: Paris, 1889) as quoted in Coxe, 225.

[16]Martin Heidegger, Basic Writings : from Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964), ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, c1993).

[17]This discussion on tautology and contradiction was developed from Ludwig Wittgenstein's Tractatus logico-philosophicus, trans. D.F. Pears & B.F. McGuinness (London: Routledge & Paul; New York : Humanities Press, 1961).

[18]A good example is quantum physic's parallel wave & particle theories.

[19]In Heidegger's terms the literary analogies of plot and story fall silent, "A building, a Greek temple, says nothing... Standing there the building rests on the rocky ground. This resting of the work draws up out of the rock the obscurity of that rock's bulky, yet spontaneous support." ["On The Origin of the Work of Art," in Poetry, Language, Thought (New York: Harper & Row, 1971)]. Koetter Kim Architect's town planning for South Saigon can be read as attempt to construct a new narrative of urban development. To some extent, Fred Koetter's and Colin Rowe's book, Collage City, also works to locate a cosmological center.

[20]Building occurs at the mineral or lowest level of Schopenhauer's four stages of development — the mineral, plant, animal and human. See Arther Schopenhauer, Saemtliche Werke, ed. Arthur Huebscher. 3rd edition, Wiesbaden, 1972) vol. 1.1: 252ff, vol. 1.2: 476. Quoted by Joseph Rykwerk, The Dancing Column: on Order in Architecture. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, c1996), 9-10.

[21]Coxe, 18.

[22]Kenneth Frampton, Studies in Tectonic Culture: the Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture, ed. John Cava. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, c1995), 27.

[23]Eduard F. Sekler, "The Stoclet House by Josef Hoffmann," in Essays in the History of Architecture Presented to Rudolf Wittkower (London: Phaidon Press, 1976) as quoted in Frampton, Studies, 20.

[24]As the architectural heir of P.T. Barnum, Jon Jerde defines "experiential placemaking" through allusions of the theater's story telling tradition and its connection with the audience. Architecture is "a distillate of the fantasies that citizens collectively hold about their place." [Jerde Partnership: Reinventing the Communal Experience ... A Problem of Place, Process: Architecture 101 (Tokyo: Process Architecture Co., Ltd., 1992), 110]. The difficulty of this inheritance is the global homogeneity of fantasy. And, much of the work illustrates the danger of global practice becoming a literal circus. Operating in a more critical mode, the conceptual collages generated by the office for the Ise Shima mixed-use development in the Mie Prefecture display a provocative hybrid of diggings from Japanese culture, context and space, recycling even Wright's Imperial Hotel.

[25]Rem Koolhaas, "Architecture and Globalization" in Reflections on Architectural Practices in the Nineties, ed. William S. Saunders (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996) 236.