

-Me Thirty-
first lecture

A "Flowering"



Life in Houston became, by the mid-20C, almost entirely air-conditioned. It is possible to live without refrigerated air. But, apart from the discomfort and lassitude, all of one's possessions made from cloth, leather, paper or any other organic material, will be invaded by moulds, bacterias and sundry termites. A not-very-sensible compromise would be to keep one's possessions in refrigerated cupboards while one lived more or less naked. Cooling the air has the benign side-effect of wringing the moisture out of it - so ensuring that the moulds die of thirst. A less aimable side-effect is that this drying removes all of the delightful scents and aromas of Houston's tropical flora. Not for the Hustonian a seat by an open casement, sniffing the magnolias in the garden. Going outside is now the only way for the Houstonian to engage with the genius loci in her olfactory reifications. Houstonians, when they eat out still stay inside. My team and I always sat outside for our evening meal at one of Houston's many restaurants. Our shirts drooped limply, and our skin glistened wetly, as the dewpoint was passed. It was like sitting inside a stomach - a novel experience for us frozen-fingered Brits, and not entirely unpleasant. Yet, for at least half of the year, the climate is benignly Mediterranean. So I proposed to add to the qualities of my four external source-balconies by not only 'signing' them iconically, but by also denoting their far-flung attributions with an exotically-appropriate flora.

This could easily be done because whenever there was an open balcony it followed that there was no roof. So the capital of the hypostylar column was 'un-rafted'. These were, at 9'0" (2.7M) across at the mouth, the largest of JOA's jardinières. Provided with internal drainage, and accessed from two upper terraces that also accessed the local mechanical plant rooms, it was easy to fill them with earth and maintain them with plants. Being out on any one of these four terraces, knowing that the plants had been chosen because of their associations with these cultures so distant in either space, time or ethos, and smelling their odour, if not even fragrance, is one other way to place one's body in that conceptually-extended State of Being at which the whole of JOA's Architecture aims.

I illustrate, first, the Eastern, Vedic' source. The photograph shows how easy it is to access the giant capital-vases from the upper terraces. These two 'unraftered' columns bracket the 'source-balcony' and are signed with the distant culture chosen to serve as one of the many 'origins' of the River of Somatic Time that flows through the home of this Faculty.



The only external terraces that are accessible to the users of the Faculty are those on the third floor, between the two inscribed columns. The bracketing pair of terraces on the Fourth floor can only be reached from the large 'Servant Attic', under the sloping roof, that surrounds the upper space of the Republic of the Valley. These upper terraces provide working space for the masses of cabling needed to serve this Faculty of Computational Engineering. It gives easy access to the two huge vase-capitals, in which will be the plants for, in this case, the 'Vedic Source'.

The ancient Vedic 'engineering' of matter signed five states.

The lowermost, or fluid, could be represented by the bowl, which contained it, known as a *khumba*. Above this, to represent the solid, earthy, state emerging as plants often do from bowls, I placed a schematised leaf from the *ficus religiosa*, or pipul tree. Above this is the only 'synthetic' icon that I use. It is that eye, within a mouth within a hand which I would have used for the internal inscriptions of the Judge columns and did use on the columns of Den Haag. It is a central icon representing the mediation of speech, borne on air, which is the mediation of language between vision, or light, and physical touch, or matter. Above this is the familiar fiery wheel of the 'cakra', signing the 'fire' of sight. Above that, again, is, as always, the curved sheen of the black capital.

On this terrace this shiny black 'column-head' can be assimilated to the fifth, impalpable, element of the 'ether' posited by the Vedic antique.



Jane Anderson Curtis, who practised landscape design and horticulture in Houston, enjoyed choosing native plants which shared something with the Orient - such as Wright's *Acacia* as a later descendent of the Nilotic "Gum Arabic".



Schizacyrium scoparium is a wonderful pink-hued giant grass.



The fluffy white seeds of *Andropogon Ternarius* would lodge in one's clothing - showing who had been out-of doors!



The four states of matter signed in 'Vedic' guise are inlaid in dark blue (black was too violent) and white glazed bricks. This detail shows the striations of the four different colours of bricks from St. Joe's brickworks in New Orleans. Note the 'coursing tiles' that also striate the flanks of the Mountain of the Genius Loci.



The uppermost of the 'Northern' icons signs the element of fire, or light. It is a triangle (inscribed in triplicate). It derives not from this esoteric 'eye of the Deity' but from the Ember of Enlightenment in the Cone of the Hearth Fire that is brought by the Raft to the submarine site of the (superannuated) Mountain of the Genius Loci. One sees, in the ribboned banner, the 'forked' Serpent of Resistance and Inertia. The banner's text describes the out-flowing of a New Time. (cf next page)

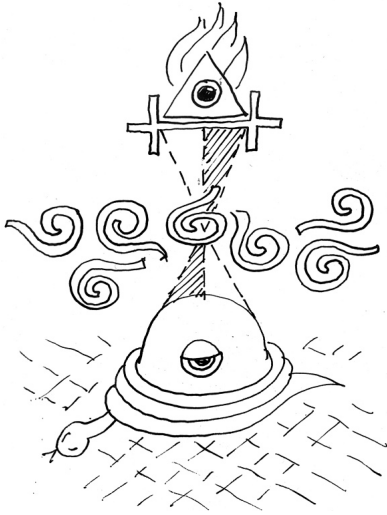
The Northern 'source-terrace' is signed with icons whose origin is the Italian Renaissance, closest to the contemporary culture of the founders of Rice University. These icons were the first of the four sets. For the liquid base I chose merely the sinusoidal curves of the waves (albeit in three (tridentine) bands) whose mathematical computation would set the West on her ballistic way.

Walking to the right when facing the Vedic terrace brings one around to the Northern face of Duncan Hall. This overlooks the main car park. Many of the Professors and Students use this to enter at the beginning of the day. The unwindowed walls shield the two raked auditoria. One can see the black algae of Houston's damp climate already leeching onto the limestone concrete sills. But the brick stays clean. Algae like the alkalis in cement.



For the terrace of the Renaissance Jane Curtis prescribed a musk rose named after William Shakespeare. The 'musk' rose has long been the subject of conjecture. It is the 'original' rose described throughout history, but remains botanically imprecise. A most useful icon with which to conjure ideas!

A larger illustration indicates that not only is this rose a climber, but its blossom has a simple, primitive aspect that has resisted that triumph of horticulture over propriety which recalls the torsos of weight-lifters.



For the earth I chose a cube. I wanted to show it in an **orthogonal projection** - as the Renaissance perspectivists liked. But my **medium of brick modules** was too **orthogonal** itself! For **air** I chose the **spiralling form of clouds and waves** that so fascinated **Leonardo**, and that we now know from satellites.

Finally, for **fire** I adopted the **sign** of the **equilateral triangle**, which descends directly from the **'pyra'** of the **hearth fire**, Hestia and the **architectural pediment**. The architectural equivalent of the **triangle containing an eye** on the **US one dollar bill**, so popular in Western iconologies, is the **'lit ember'** in the cone of ashes **carried** by the Entablature to the **'place of inception'**.

'Architecture' of the Seal of the Republic. The raft of the Entablature, carrying the 'social' ember, the 'light' in the hearth fire of the Adventurers, is registered over the Mountain of the Genius Loci, guarded by the serpent of infinite resistance. The *columna lucis*, which opens the mountain, releasing the 'black sun'. Time, the *Novus Ordo Saeclorum*, flows out as the human history of Somatic, lived, Time.



The **'eye'** is the coming of the **light** at the moment of **birth**. If the **role of the eye** is to be **further narrated**, its **role is to combine** with its **targeted and long-sought 'other'**, the **'black sun'**, which has **lain buried** inside the **Mountain of History**, that **accumulated sedimentation** of days and nights. Its **ambition** is to **release the Arrow of Time**, The **"Novus Ordo Saeculorum"**, here **figured** by the **unwound Serpent of Infinity**, to run, **like a river**, between **source and sea**. This **same narrative**, between the **black cave of Negation**, **from whence all springs**, and the **infinity of the Ocean**, into which **all disperses**, is **rehearsed up and down** this sequence of the **five 'States of Being'** inscribed onto each of the **four pairs of columns bracketing** the **Source-Terraces**. Each **inscription**, by **stretching space**, and **especially Time**, to the **quarters**, **enlivens** the **Citizenry of the Valley**.

Liquid at the bottom. cubic solidity above, then the spiral of air and finally the pyra of fire. Simple shapes with arcane meanings.



Buxus Sempervirens, or evergreen box, is the material for the sculptures that intrigue the public but can offend some horticulturalists. Jane Curtis, prescribed that it should grow 'wild' and unscissored.



Dwarf Rosemary is tolerant of heat and even drought. It makes a sturdy planter-species. Its mythology is rich as well, a benign effect on memory is anciently believed, as was its decoration of Aphrodite as she rose from the foam.

The column-capitals are small 'islands' from each distant 'source-land'. This pair sprout with the primordial vegetation of the 'Italian Renaissance'. Jane Anderson Curtis, our Houstonian Landscape Architect, chose, for these North-facing planters, a base of evergreens, like the evergreen oaks that are the mark of Rice Campus. But, in the smaller compass of the vase-capital, *Buxus sempervirens*, or Common Boxwood, would, instead of being carved into topiary, grow 'wild'. A Musk Rose, named after the William Shakespeare that has proved to be the most enduring English legacy of the Italian Renaissance, would climb over the rambling hedge plants. Dwarf Rosemary would drape from the lips of the smooth black vase-capitals.

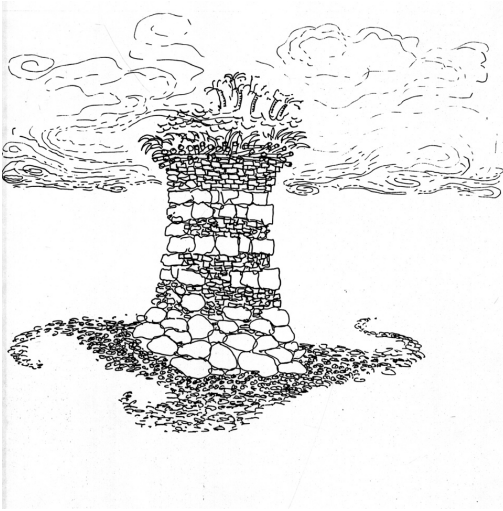


As with the civilised dispositions of the 'weave' technique of space-planning, the honorific, or 'significant', focal space is that of the 'source-terrace' while the physical circulation is displaced to the side. Space 'flows' through them both, but the main conceptual axis of the building is freed from physical work so as to be 'iconically engineered'. A curved segment of the 'infinity-figure-eight' of ground cover can be seen in the foreground.

This, the West-facing source-terrace of the Ancient Hellenes, opposes that of the Vedic, some 300'0" (100 M) down the building's long axis

Reading from the bottom upwards, Okeanos is here denoted, as were the mask-like figures of the Hellenic personifications, by his attribute - the trident of Poseidon. He was the brother of both Zeus as well as the subterranean Pluto. The phenomenology of the watery Delta, with its three-arched Portus, triangular plan and patte d'oie of three rivers, is tridentine.

Above this I inscribed the six seeds of Pluto's pomegranate that were eaten by Persephone, or Thyone as she is more unusually called. Her lack of discipline arrested the harvest until a pact was struck between her subterranean abductor, and her mother, Demeter whose interest was the fruits of the soil. Persephone's half-yearly sojourn in the cold, dark, bloodless court of Hades, her admirer, made the six months of Winter.



The columnar planters of the 'source-terraces' recall the myth of the 'islands of primordially', left high above the city streets by the departing flood of night.

An equally extravagant conceit provided the Hellenic figure for the airy, gaseous, state. These were the two white bands tied to the staff of Hermes, the psychopomp who guided Persephone on her abortive return to the Earth's surface. Hermes was the only male Olympian to gain his ends without physical violence. He is the deity of all forms of discourse, from bargaining to geometry. His is a practice wedded to the medium of the Air on which he delivers his persuasive arguments, travelling, as does speech, on winged feet.

The uppermost territory of fire, or sight, is signed by zig-zag lightning-bolts, attributes of Zeus - both the most domineering of the Hellenic Gods as well as the most likely to be deceived by this region of imagery, realm of false impressions.

The fifth horizon is once more a shiny black vase. Its curves contain, as vessels do, both a liquid and a genesis from which spring plants chosen to sign, on this terrace, that they source amongst the Ancient Hellenes. Myrtus Communis "Nana" will be surrounded by a conjunction of that ancient Greek complex of the Acanthus and the Palmette. These took the form of "Bear's Breech", Acanthus Mollis, and some Palmate Sabal Minor.

The position of these column-capital planters, set high on striated cliffs and isolated like islands, brought to mind the mythoi, concerning the City-planning techniques of Leon Battista Alberti. Their fronds would toss in the wind and rain as if suffering the gusts of the Flood out of which the isola-blocks of the 'city' rose as the dark waters subsided. When the sun rises, each morning, to shine into narrow streets, the city rises out of the darkness of the night. Buckets clatter on stone floors as they rehearse the departure of the inky liquid of darkness. Their last streams stain the carved faces of stone walls. These Terraces sign the tributary springing-places of Duncan's River of Somatic Time. I wanted the 'nymphaea' of these streams to not only be impacted by the physical floods of wind and rain, but for these twin towers to actually 'live' with the exotic vegetation of their remote cultures. For anything, even 'time', to flow there must be a pressure of difference: a 'distance' for the imagination to discourse from the Then to the Now.



The Palmate Sabal Minor and the Acanthus provided two of the natural forms out of which the Hellenes inscribed the surfaces of their lifespace.



The sturdy leaves of the Acanthus Mollis will be easy to recognise from below, as will their towering inflorescences.



Myrtus Communis 'Nana' softens the sculptural muscularity of Palmette and Acanthus.



I decided to stretch the sourcing-story of the Southernmost Terrace to the Pre-Columbian culture of the Maya. Reading upwards, I inscribed that they conceived of the founding medium as liquid. Nor were they the only culture to figure the shell of a tortoise as that solidity upon which the Created found a firm rest. This solidity they then conceived, again in common with many others, as a cubic Earth.



The Mayans conceived of the founding medium as liquid. Nor were they the only culture to figure the shell of a tortoise as that solidity upon which the Created found a firm rest. This solidity they then conceived, again in common with many others, as cubic.

Reading upwards, the earliest Meso-Americans, the Olmecs, signed this cubic solidity as a field of corn. Here one may recall the very diluvian quality of the earliest fields of that culture, down by the gulf of Mexico, where the tropical water-table was lowered by canals and the fields raised from the excavations. The regulated moisture enabled them to obtain more than one crop of corn in the year, even though cultivated without draught animals or ploughs.

My next inscription was that of 'sky-bands'. These figured the sky as an arch, a figure they share with Egypt but can justify by the commonplace analogy of sky with shelter and roof. I can not argue that this figure is specifically 'airy', but it has a corporality which gives 'air' its middle place between the earthily solid and the fiercely cosmic.

My final figure, which represents fire very literally, is of the bundles of fire-sticks that were used to not only kindle fire by drilling, but in augmenting its initial flame. Their most dramatic use was on the turning of one of the Mayan 'ages' of 52 years into the next cycle. Here, as the midnight stars reached the vertical, a sacrificial victim was parted from his heart and fire kindled in the cavity. The ritual was considered essential for the continuation of time and the turn into the next 'katun-age'.

The sequence of the Mayan 'state-horizons', from the bottom, is signed as :Turtle=Liquid, Corn-field = four-square Earth =Solid, Sky-bands=Air, Fire-sticks=Fire and the Black Capital=Thought. These 'vases' would flower with Agave, and the distant precursors to corn and tobacco, all set off by the red amaranthus.



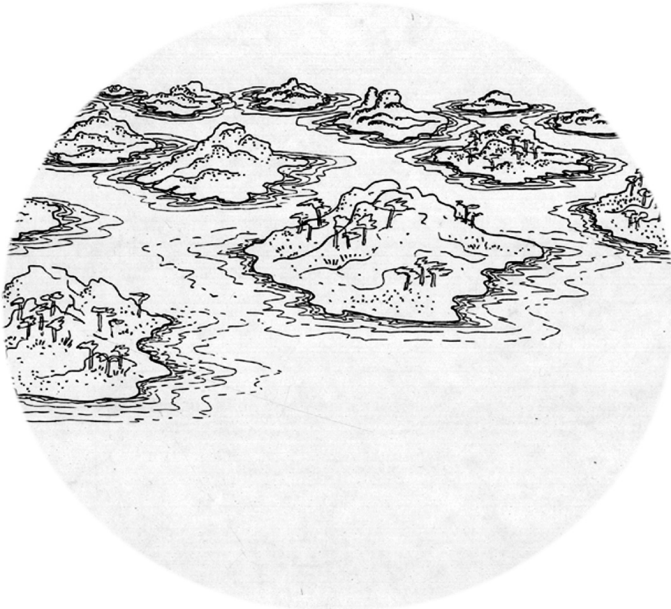
Zea Mexicana, the PreColumbian ancestor to contemporary 'Corn'.



The Agave was both the source of the mayan 'pulque' a refreshing, fermented drink, as well as a fibre used for weaving.



Jane Curtis, specified that the drooping red flowers of the Amaranth hang over the edges of the black vase-capitals

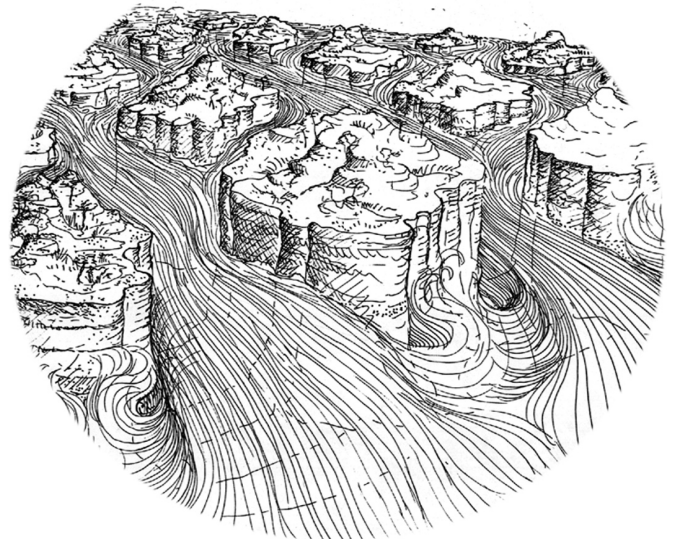


The islands of Arcadian innocence, the home of Rousseau's unspoilt 'primitives' exactly mimic the island depicted by J. B. Huet and published, with approval, by Corbusier. The pre-natal state of amniotic suspension is congruent to that Infinitude before the existence of Space as distance and Time as loss. I still like this image as one of those which can serve to explain the meaning of the roof-garden. It is both what was before the landing of the Ark, as well as the conical heap of the 'New' that was carried by the Raft to the 'Old', but still virginal, Submarine Mountain.

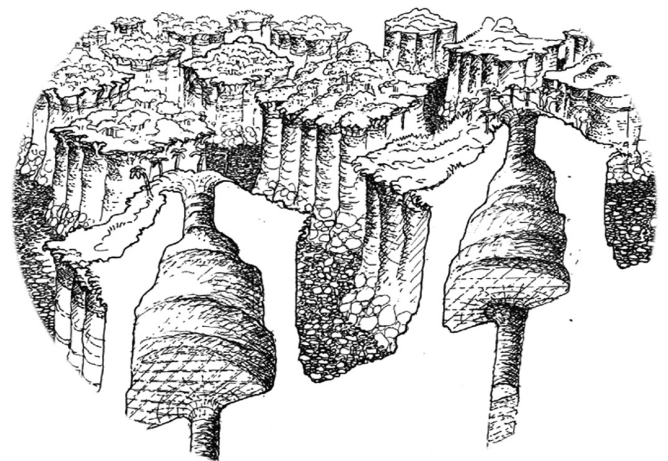
Building Duncan Hall, which included being encouraged to describe the Cargo of the Entablature, enabled me to propose a more complete narratology of Architecture. It enabled me to discern congruences between hitherto disparate histories, such as that of the Time of Inception, described on the Shaper Ceiling, and the Ontogenetic Narrative inscribed on the external source-balcony columns. I was reminded of a mythical origin for the 'City of Rooms', described in the Seventh Lecture, 'Babuino', which I had used to describe the city-planning techniques invented by Alberti for the Italian Mediaevo-Humanist city.

I could equate the tufted tops of the 'totem-columns' of the distant, originary, cultures, with the isolated islands populated by Man in a state of Rousseauian, savage, 'purity' akin to the pre-natal state of suspension in the amniotic fluid. Then I could map this onto the icon of the submarine mountain, in the Vedic cosmogony of Kuiper. The departure of the 'sea', in the 'city of rooms', described a phenomenology of birth. Combining the narrative of the Vedic myth with my own allowed me to provide a more persuasive decipherment of the 'hollowing out' of the interior of the submarine mountain.

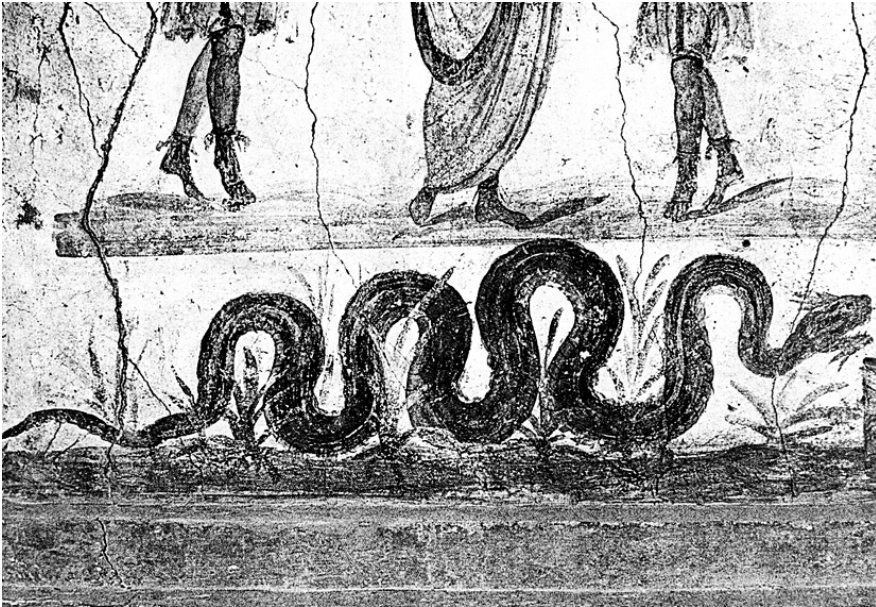
Kuiper's narrative sunders the submarine mountain with the advent of the conical heap of ashes, hearth of the 'New', figured by the sacrificial pyre of the Pediment, cargo of the rafted entablature. If the cavitated isola-block is mapped onto Kuiper's submarine Mountain of the Genius Loci then the departing waters become



The retreat of the Flood is the birthing onto the dry, gravity-oppressed medium of the hard, unyielding, earth. It impels the inhalation of the first breath - medium of the cry which is simultaneously expelled as the first 'word'; the first vocal communication with the 'other'. The icon of water is the serpent. The protective coils of the Serpent of Resistance are unloosed when the mountain is breached. They flow away into the river of Somatic Time - the time that flows, as does History, and living, from beginning to end, from cthonic aperture to ocean.



The historia given in my mythoi for the origin of the City of Rooms proposed that the submarine mountains were excavated by the fallen primitives in order to 'cover' their exposure. The history has the lameness of those given to explain the origins of Architecture by Vitruvius and the writers of the Italian Renaissance. To 'explain' the building interior as an item 'left behind' by the vitalisation of the 'germinal', the 'dark sun', of the Genius Loci, is a more literate symbology, if a less literal iconography. Iconically, a narrative is best if consistently symbolic rather than helped-out by pseudo-anthropologies.



The genius loci of the Roman house as a bearded snake, abyssal symbol of water and infinite time, 'grounded' the Ancient Roman household. The advantage of demonstrating the innermost of our fears is that we learn to live openly with them. This is more noble than suppressing them.



Hapy, the deity of the Nilotic flood has a beard and breasts. He lives in a cave and is bounded by 'watery' serpent. All of his attributes are literal to his fecund role.



congruent to the **sundering of the giant snake Vrta** who protected the **mountain** with its coils of infinite resistance. The **snake, loosened, like the outflowing amniotic 'sea', flows away** to become the **'river', the 'arrow' of Historic Time.**

The **icon of the genius loci, in Rome, was a cthonic agent of the underworld, a serpent.** It was considered **auspicious if a house had a domesticated snake.** Not only did the **snake eat vermin, it served to embody the lares and penates, the household deities.** This reptile was **occasionally bearded, becoming an icon of age.**

Here I can also recall the **Egyptian god Hapy.** He was the **embodiment not so much of the Nile itself as of the inundation whose swirling waters fertilised the earth.** He is drawn, **unusually for one of the lithely elegant, tightly-muscled Egyptian deities, with an ample, potentially 'pregnant', stomach.** More **uncommonly still, although he is masculine, and bearded like an elder, he sports female breasts to recall the fecundity of his Nilotic irrigations.** He often **crouches, a posture convenient to the cave in which he is supposed to dwell.** He is well-qualified to **play the part of the 'black sun' for he is already combines male and female, is the agent of a flooding river and lives inside a mountain encircled by a snake.**

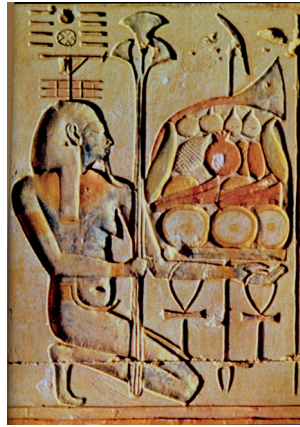
He was the instance of an appealing pseudo-iconography. He wears on his head, something that looks like a **raft** and that carries a **table** on which, in the instance above, is **'offered' the feather of Maat, goddess of the truth and 'the right'.** What could be more **congruent with 'that which came from afar' and constituted 'the fire' of a new enlightenment, a new truth, carried on an entabled raft of the Entablature?**

Sadly this **decipherment was no more than the sort of formal pun which the Egyptians themselves enjoyed.**

I seized on this as Maat's feather of the 'truth' of the way of law, offered on a table which was riding on what was described as a "bundle of papyrus reeds". Could that not be a raft?

Sadly it turned out to be the emblem of a Nome on a temple-signboard above the glyph for a field quadrated by irrigation-runnels! Hapy was a deity whose fertilising energies had to be corralled to serve the local interests!

Suspicious of the perfection, of my decipherment, as well as its lack of 'Vedic' dynamism, I discovered, after researching, that the glyph of the 'raft' is in fact an irrigated field - rather more appropriate to a deity of the annual inundation. The centrally-legged table, which occurs in many pictures and hieroglyphs is, in this case, a 'standard', a sign-board, used to hang or support the hieroglyphs of deities or, in the case of Hapy, the district, or Nome, through which the river flowed.



Hapy surmounted by his irrigated field glyph and the emblem of the 15th Nome.

Disappointed, I must be content with Hapy him/her-self as an Egyptian version, and a colourful one, of the Mountain of the Genius Loci. Certainly he/she is more rewarding than the heavily-limbed, luxuriantly-barbered semi-nudes that pass for the River gods of Italian Renaissance Hellenism. Hellenic cosmogonies were already too anthropomorphised in Antiquity to be able to mate with 20C science. The 15C pushed them even further towards Naturalism, rendering it certain that they would fail to be capable of being abstracted to parallel the ideas used by the Natural Sciences.



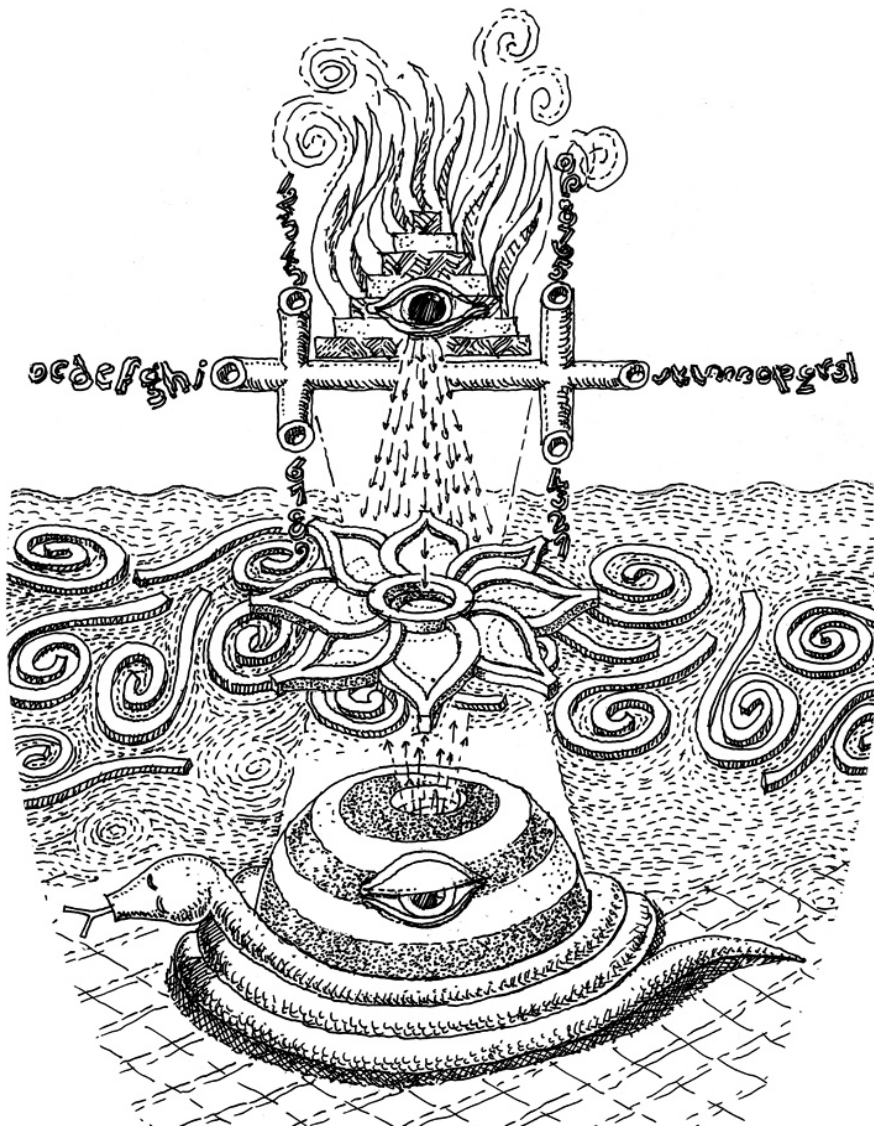
Hapy's watery blue skin can be seen better here, along with the papyrus-reed basket on which he offers the fruits of his fertilisation. His Nome-standard has been defaced, leaving only his raft-hat that turned out to be a plan of canals.

Thus, as the annual flood of the Nile abates, and the 'Ararats' of the New Earth rise out of the water, they receive the Bennu-Bird who alights from a land of fire. The Phoenix is well-congruent with the adventitious ember, within its cone of ashes, flying-in on its peri-pterally supported Entablature. But there is no history, in the many Egyptian cosmogonies, of a 'third agent' which acts to conjoin the adventing 'fire' with the emerging Earth - and certainly nothing as narratologically compelling as the Vedic Ontogeny, or as architecturally pregnant as the sequences of its Vedic iconology. The Egyptian mythoi is as 'picturesquely' limp and literal-minded as that of Athanasius Kircher's Ark of the Old Testament. Both lack the realism of Kuiper's Vedic version, in which one knows, by experience, that an agent wielding a Columna Lucis is needed, in the real world, to 'take' the critical decision. All major projects need an (usually solitary) Agent of Inception, even if, like Indra, he, or she, then does nothing else at all!

These complexes of ancient symbols bring me ever more more firmly to the idea that the submarine mountain, when used to decrypt the Architectural medium, is more than a merely physical Ararat, a heap of stone, that passively receives the Ark of Noah or the Entablature of roof-beams (as it is commonly interpreted). Both are, for Architecture, icons with more rewarding meanings.

In titling the lower half of the conjunction "the Mountain of the Genius Loci", I interpret it as an accumulation over time. It is for this that I give the mound an horizontal layering of the black of night and the white of day. I give it a mounded form, rather than the pyramidal sharpness of a geological upthrust, to represent the idea that it both a heap that is old and worn-down, as well as an accumulation whose purpose is to encase and protect a seed, or an egg, or some focal entity whose 'fire' is as yet, unlit. The serpent coiled around it adds to this meaning of a mounded 'nest' containing a germinal presence. When the hump is split open by the vertical downthrust of the Columna Lucis two things occur. In the first place, the Raft of the Adventurers is shattered and destroyed. In the second, the Mount, though sundered, becomes the foundation out of which rises the five-stage vertical narrative of Ontogenic and Phylogenetic temporality. In Kuiper's cosmogony, both New and Old are 'broken' by this novel entity which, in architectural histories, is the new building. Neither the New nor the Old succeed in 'erasing' the other. In this way neither the one or the other remain in splendid, and victorious, isolation. Only the child of their union, a novelty containing them both, survives.

In life as in the history of cultures, to be fertile is for the individual to perish while the genealogy extends its 12 billion year history. Extinction follows when either only the Old or the New triumph to the fatal defeat of the other.



This drawing brings together 10 of the 12 icons described in the First Lecture. It narrates the moment when the wandering Raft of the New finds the Mound of the Genius Loci and the Columna Lucis conjoins them, resulting in the birth of the 'Lotus' - the second of the five-stage ontogeny.

Using this iconic analysis one can say that Corbusier's narratology is one of an unconsummated union. The massively muscular raft of the Unité hovers endlessly above its site. It refuses to mate with it. Corbusier wishes to preserve the earth under his building as the "rushing rivers and rolling fields" of an unreal state of pristine virginity. To achieve this unnatural state of eternal, adolescent, foreplay Corbusier is prepared to destroy the whole of the city itself. Corbusier's ethic signifies a culture which no longer understands the fundamentals of human existence. It no longer understands that continuity is a cycle in which the individual instances are cataclysmic events which come into being only to pass on into un-being as and when the next wave springs forth from them. The beauty of an architectural iconology derived from Kuiper's cosmogony is that it very accurately matches, in its powerful and ancient symbology, what we know, scientifically, of the evolution of our genus and its individual instances. By using this symbology to inscribe these truths into our lifespaces, we ensure the invention of a 'Constant City' - a locus in which 'capital' is secure.

It is 'secure' because the Theory of the Constant City' is not founded upon the ephemera of fashion but upon the phenomenology of the 'Being' of its citizens. If this can be sufficiently determined, then the capital invested by one generation will receive its dividends from their successors. It is ironic that in order to achieve this economically sensible condition we must break out of the vicious circle in which present lifespaces-design is held. We must become iconically literate. No ideas can be represented in the plastic and visual media without knowing their iconic etymology. We must learn how to invent ways of connecting these icons to the science of machines, which is the foundation of Modernity. We must invent the proper syntax or 'style' for this new iconics. I would not inscribe, in public, an image of the more naturalistic sort shown on this page. It is for the literate to understand. I have found that naturalised allegories, however much they may appeal to some, bring nothing but trouble. It was, for example, the 'naturalism' of the iconography used for the Judge ceiling that led to the 'fiat nihil' - the semantic erasure of the entire interior. Symbols brought to a high degree of abstraction are, for better or worse, the 'style of our times'. They are ambiguous to the point of obscurity. This can be thought-provoking. But what can that be but an imperative to pursue a general iconic literacy?

The combination of semantic reticence and syntactic ingenuity smooths the path from allegory to symbol. It is a transition desired by the Modernity of the West. The history of mid-20C Abstract Expressionism charts an attempt that ended in failure. It was all syntax and no semantic.

Looking up at the Shaper Ceiling one may map the 'columna lucis' of Kuiper's narrative onto the neuronal axon that joined Negation to its 'Other' - setting-off the cataclysmic advent of History. The adventitious ember, inside the cone of ashes carried by the raft, can be drawn as an eye, as it is in the Great Seal and many other iconographies. If, as well, the 'Black Sun' buried in the Mountain of the Genius Loci, is also drawn as an eye, then it can be mapped onto the 'Other' black disc of the Shaper Ceiling. This lower eye can be drawn as closed or half-closed, as in dreaming.

It is the work of the columna lucis, which is the original column, to join the eye of fire, which is the 'moving' eye of the New, to the unmoving, closed, eye of the Old. When this has occurred the Black Sun gestates and is 'born' onto the surface of the Waters of Contingency as a 'lotus'. This, again, is congruent with the iconic narrative of the Shaper Ceiling where the cataclysmic advent of Being is shown as an ochreous floriation.

I can now move on from these primarily 'vertical' narratives to the major horizontal narrative of the Republic of the Valley, which is, after all, the one giving conceptual form to both Duncan hall and Cram's Campus Plan.

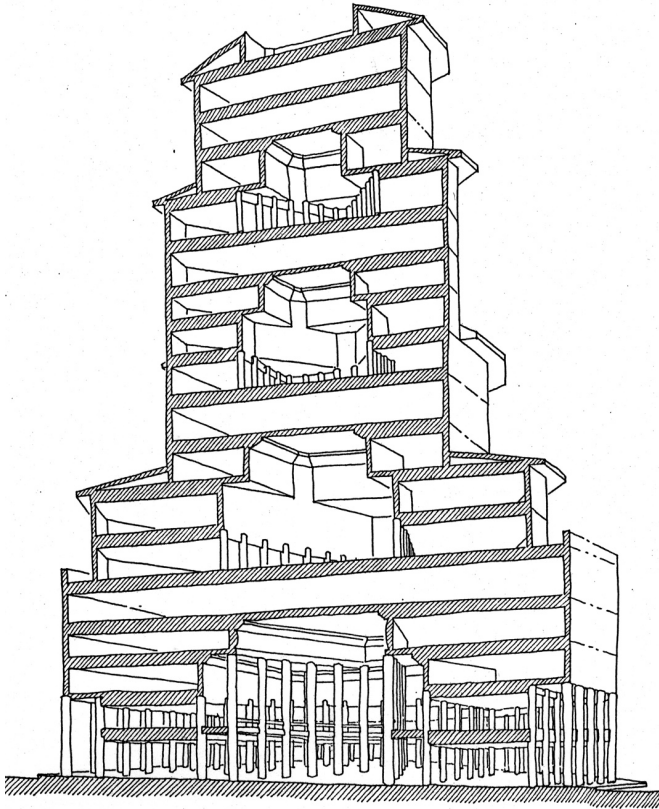
A phenomenology of Somatic Time would, as its name suggests, follow-on from that of a Time of Inception. Beginnings, it would seem, are vertical, their consequence, History, is horizontal. One must first build the 'mountain'. Then inseminate it with the Raft, then flow through it the Republic of the Valley as the history of somatic time. These will give the entire building its spatial and formal body. Then, so as to explicate the authenticity of these manoeuvres to the keen minds of their human users, it is necessary to inscribe these processes on the visible surfaces of the main internal volumes. One must situate them all on the firm foundation of an infinity of Nothingness, and so on, all the way along to the most literal and banal consequences by which we may know them to be carnally truthful.

One may object to the "carriage" of what Reyner Banham called such "cultural loads". Yet, one advantage which his aniconic generation had not yet discovered was that these iconic 'burdens' have such power to lift the human spirit that they do not need an architecture of solid stone, or board-marked concrete that is as costly as polished marble, or raw steel that is more costly than polished marble, or good oak beams or any and all such authentically real, true and solid slabs and slices of matter. One may 'fly' an iconically-levitated landscape on nothing more materially rare and precious than painted and patterned concrete and plaster.

My architectural project escapes the laboured strategies employed during the 20C, and especially after WWII. The majority of humans both desire, and are best advised, to live in what can be generically termed 'cities'. These can be settlements of diverse size. Size is not critical. The critical factors are being able to walk in calm places that are also functional in the sense of being needed for life: such as mechanisms needed for housing, working, socialising, transportation and so on. Walking the dog in a nice leafy park is not a substitute to the contemporary 'city'. A city has also to be a place in which this 'walking' is as good for the mind as it is for the body. Calm is not dead-calm. Calm is the pre-requisite to thinking and talking.



The two black 'holes' of Nothing and its antithesis joined by the neuronal strike of the Columna Lucis out of which flowers Being like the floating Lotus. Only narratives capable of radical abstraction can be used in Modernity. The Western tradition was too naturalistic. It is why it was abandoned during the early 20C.



My own 'long-view' skyscraper - described already on the pages of Lecture 29 page 07. I find the view from tall buildings depressing. One sees ant-hills of rooms void of any but the conceptually puny gestures of our technophiliac times. I would prefer to work in a building whose floors grouped around internal chambers, of generous size, that were inscribed with conceptual landscapes whose ideas lifted my spirits.

I do not claim this as an original idea. But no one could disagree that, at the beginning of the 3rd Millennium, it appears to be a more and more unattainable one. The ordinary reason for this is the mistake made, back in the early 20C, when litespace-design rejected the iconic role that Art had always played in Architecture, and proposed (as did James Stirling in "This is Tomorrow"), that all of the functions hitherto discharged by Art could now be met by physical engineering. This proposition met with Establishment approval during the Cold War. Today, with 'Deconstruction', it is the new orthodoxy. It has already bred several generations of iconically-subliterate Architects. The genius of Stirling, ironically, proved the exception. Not that he ever 'made sense'. So the problem of how to live together remains not merely unsolved, but increasingly degraded by the very actions of the professionals who create the human litespace.

Corbusier always advised that an architect should reveal "the longest view". When this is applied to the interior of buildings it results in the sweeping away of walls. It is an inconvenient, socially oppressive, and iconically problematic technique. When applied to the exterior of buildings we find that the sociable 'rues corridor' are holocausted by the visual rays emitted by Corbu's glass-walled towers. Corbusier's calm advice is "that no-one will notice this Death of Deco-ration" behind the screen of climax-forest "verdure" planted upon the Cemetery of Urbanity which he recommended.

Ethically all that Corbusier is wanting to do, and everyone else who gazes on gardens through plate glass, is to escape from a man-made world he does not like. Such people are not looking towards 'Nature'. Nature is not a category that has come into existence so that it can be gazed-upon from the 26th floor. To believe that Nature is a spectacle placed before us by God for our amusement is to be profoundly ignorant of Science. 'Nature' goes on whether we gaze upon her or not. People gaze out over Nature because they want to look away from Culture. Corbusier personified an attitude to cities which lay behind their furious, and often gratuitous, destruction during the two world wars, a destruction that continued unabated for 20 years of rudderless 'comprehensive development' afterwards.

My 'escape strategy' is also based upon 'long views'. But mine are not the sad little recourses of Corbusier's positivistic 'engineering'. I do not pretend that an upward view of atmospheric gas, seen through dusty glass, is a reverie upon the cosmic dimensions of our human capacity to think, imagine and reason. This is because I know that in the recent past even the Western eye had control of the means by which such reveries could be 'engineered'. But I, like anyone else today, also knows that this machine of perspective into a library of Hellenic and Biblical myth collapsed (as JOA illustrated in our design for the year 2000 V&A Exhibition of 'Victorian Visions'), under Darwinism, Science, Technology and the mass media that promoted the 'Utopian' culture of the late 19C. JOA's project has merely been, if one may put it so simply, to take up the baton that the 20C dropped and to carry it on from where Architecture chose to abandon the collapsed iconography of the West and substitute pseudo-engineering.

JOA uses, as our principal medium, the brilliant graphical syntax invented at that very same time: the early 20C. We use, for our content, whatever will stretch the imagination in space and time. In this way the 'picture-plane' becomes, as it always has been, a door into conceptual landscapes whose boundaries are defined only by our iconic literacy. The Orders return to what they always were for the function of Venustas. They were never the puny props of a merely physical construction. The Order is an over-big, (seemingly) solid, frame that steadies (an ever more necessary need) the picture plane as it achieves its projective focus.

If JOA's project succeeded, it would recover the ability of Architecture to 'discourse rationally' once more within lifespace design. More importantly, it would enable us to build cities into which persons would want to migrate inwards as well as to remain inside. For it would be only in such places, as it had always been for the last 9,000 years, that the 'view out' was the most extensive, penetrating, and liberating.

Interestingly, I received a proof that this had actually occurred.

Some years later, it was reported, by a Professor of Computational Engineering with a scientist's mind, that he had observed how people sat when they filed into Meeting Room No 1. It is a long room on the third floor, situated in the classical 'place of power' on top of the main, honorific, doorway facing Lovett Hall. It has a double volume over its central half. Two lower ceilings cover the extreme ends of the long table which runs parallel to its three window-bays. My informant told me that he often counted more people sitting with their backs to the windows than facing out over the live-oak trees.

This intrigued him because he, like I, knew that Rice Campus was regarded (which even the BBC in far-away London once reported), as one of the finest urban parks in the USA. Why did not most people sit both where the natural light would illuminate their papers, and where they could raise their eyes to the leafy tops of the live-oak trees? His conclusion was that they preferred to change the focus of their gaze to look up onto the Steve and Sue Shaper ceiling which was visible through the glazed upper half of the two-storey inside wall to Meeting Room No.1.

It is a rare 20C room in which persons prefer to sit looking back into it, rather than out through the 'picture window' at some fragment of Nature 'unspoilt by man'. Every 20C architect of note has been rigorously suburban in his enthusiasm for glass walls and the holocausted overplanting of the ruined city which lies within their ferociously anti-urban purview. When more people sit looking-in on what they have created than sit looking out and away from it all, we will know that Modernity has created a lifespace which can turn back the suburban tsunami that is drowning the globe in trash. Wherever they may be, people will look at what interests them the most. When people look-in on their own lifespace, rather than away from it, we will know that its design has been able to make them satisfied with themselves, and the values, which are always mediated iconically, that they see inscribed into their own lifespace.

How different, I thought to myself, to the 'End of Painting' inscribed by Mark Rothko, two miles down the road in the Menil Museum. I first learned of this suicidal ambition when lecturing at the Slade School, in London. Tess Jaray, who had invited me, had remarked, in passing, that "All of the students here want to 'Paint the Painting to end Painting'". Rothko had installed eight off-black canvases on the eight walls of an octagonal building with a flattened pyramid of a roof. One presumes that he, or at least its laid-back architect, Philip Johnson, knew that this was the preferred form of the Roman Tholos-tomb, the Christian baptistery and the Islamic tomb. Its circular plan and lifted ceiling denied any dominant horizontal axis and threw the imagination onto cogitating the vertical line up and down the centre of the space. 'Up' was a cement cone. 'Down' was a 'carpet' of ruffled grey cloth quilting. Any iconic clues are as determinately denied as they are by the walls. A square of water is outside. Out of this rises, rather promisingly, a small pyramid. Unfortunately, its prismatic body was reduced to comedy as it balanced on its pointy nose, like a performing seal, a broken-topped obelisk.



Painted during the Napoleonic wars, Caspar David Friedrich's "wanderer above the sea of fog" has laboured to climb a huge mountain to attain his view. Dressed as a gentleman, yet Romantically hatless, he contemplates objects which, were he to remain immobile for 150 years, he would recognise as the smoking ruins of Europa. This is a culture which could no longer gaze upon its works with any pleasure. The 'Wanderer' fails the 'Gluteus Maximus test'.



Kaspar David Frierich's "Woman at a Window", gives the feminine equivalent to the fogged-out Wanderer. She turns away from the dismal room, with planks the width of Wellingtonia trees. There is a total absence of any furnishing, let alone 'iconically-structured inscription. She gazes onto a river with boats - yet another means of escape from a culture that neither she nor the 'Wanderer' can bear to view.

My way of working has always been practical, if not exactly empirical. My best ideas are always the product of having to work, not in libraries, but immersed in the strangeness of practical action. Contrary to the beliefs of the technically challenged humanists of the 20C, practical work is necessary not to damp down and curb the fevered imagination of the 'artist' but to lift him out of the beautiful cemetery of History that Humanists find so hard to escape.

But it is the rare Architect who is asked to design a whole city. So the 'scripting' of these Lectures could have ended at this point were it not for an accident that caused me to 'discover' the first city to be radically planned and entirely rebuilt, in Europe, during the 20C. Finding myself in it, finding myself admiring it (even though it is far from beautiful in any received sense), and discovering its history, led me to realise that here was a totalising city-plan, made in the early 1920's, which contained all of the strategies that interested me. Moreover its bones had actually come off the paper to be built, along with much of its superstructure. It is true that after WWII its area-planning and architectural culture had changed. But the spirit of its original plan had not been destroyed. It was as if the contemporary city was wreathed in the mists of ignorance, rather than the smoke and dust of demolition.

The most striking thing about it was to realise that here, right at the beginning of the 20C, when all of the supposedly radical preconditions for the much trumpeted revolution in lifestyle were in position, an old city had been totally re-planned, from the ground up, as well as largely built. It had accommodated all these 'radical technicities' within a cultivated understanding of lifespace design that had neither the need nor the ambition to achieve a 'radical break' with the received design culture. It proved what will come to be understood - that the so-called Modernity of the 20C was not so much an advance as a holding operation, conducted behind an ever-thickening fog of dissimulation - mainly to obscure an extraordinary collapse into a seemingly heightened degree of incompetence in city-design.

The black canvases deny any prospective 'escape' - either literal or conceptual. The same denial marks the primary 'views' into any vertical dimension. Outside, the broken column reinforces this loss of a discourse between the 'above and the below'. All that remains of coherent iconics is the tank of water. But this is presented with such a banality of detail that it must be easy to believe that it has some 'ulterior' genesis, like cooling the hammering air-cooling compressors that chatter-away close by. The Rothko-Menil complex is a requiem to an Architecture with no use for painting as much as it is to a painting with no use for architecture. The mating of the two has been banned since WWII so as to make human beings sufficiently fed-up and depressed that they have to go out and buy the sad fetishes on which the traffic of our victorious consumerism depends. Places like the Menil are the paradoxical 'flower' of this culture - a hothouse of blooms that cultivate uselessness, ugliness and meaninglessness. Such 'GalleryArt' offers a relief to the 'Michaelangelo Lampshade' pulp-mill of Consumerism by offering nothing, absolutely nothing for Commerce to copy, plagiarise and bowdlerise. GalleryArt is the 'paradoxical poison' that the wealthy must learn to 'tolerate' when they are sated by the pabulum of Consumer-Comfort.

One of the more pleasing things about JOA's enterprise at Duncan Hall, is that one may remove oneself from the absolute and utter iconic illiteracy of both the architecture and the decoration of the Rothko 'chapel' with the certain knowledge that painting has an intellectually lively, huge, extended, coherent and authentic place close by.

I christened Meeting Room No.1 the "Test of Gluteus Maximus". G. Maximus was not some unknown Roman architectural critic. It is the muscle that supports our buttocks as we sit to think and talk. Its orientation can measure success or failure in lifespace-design.

The next question was whether these architectural phenomenologies could be useful to the constructed tracts of our endless 21C cities themselves, at the largest of scales?

AFTERWORD for the THIRTY-FIRST LECTURE: 'A FLOWERING'.

I had 'proved' all of the ambitions that my old tutor, Bob Maxwell, had called "an impossible dream". Duncan Hall had giant, decorated, columns supporting a ceiling that was cut away to reveal its conceptual 'cargo'. The interior, the most important part of any building to its buyers and users, introduced them to 'chromatic deprivation'. Not only did they feel this novel sensation, but by it, that their lifespace could 'mean something'. While, at first, naturally unsure as to the ethical status of these novelties, both Professors, Undergraduates, and the Public of the city of Houston eventually took Duncan Hall to their hearts, and even, as I learned through the 'Test of Gluteus Maximus', to their minds.

The only group to exhibit a firm and unyielding disapproval, measured by banning their Freshmen from entering this 'dangerous' interior, were the Professors of Architecture. Not to say that they were not found, by the Security Guard, creeping about the interior very late at night. Like all Censors, they must suffer corruption to protect the innocent. Wishing to learn more of this curious antipathy, I attended one the Faculty's Thursday evening 'outsider' lectures. This was given by Dave Hickey, a self-styled Renegade Art Critic who'd HQ'd himself, as part of his 'up yours' Populism, in Las Vegas. I heard him laud Vegas and Hong Kong. I do not remember his reasons but, looking back on it his main and certain reason would have been to 'epater les sophomores'. A special strangeness was, for me, attached to the occasion because he looked uncannily like Peter Smithson, Britain's best known Renegade Young Architect of the '1950's and '1960's. Peter was my nominal Fifth-year tutor. I do not recall if Peter had a full-length black leather Gestapo-style trench coat. Vegas-Gestapo was Hickey's, rather than Smithson's style. Peter was less 'eager'. But that is the English for you.

Hickey's advice to the 'innocents' who had to be protected from my interior, was to "forget about", and I quote, "long-term planning, or any 'planning' at all". "Go with the flow" was his message. The equally black-clad Architectural Professors fawned upon this oracular genius, fresh from the architectural trash-can of Vegas. I asked him if he knew Peter Smithson and got a defensively provincial basilisk stare. Another curiosity for me was that I had only just got off the plane from Hong Kong, Los Angeles and Las Vegas where I had been 'on the inside' with the Developers and Designers of the £M500 Battersea Fun-Palace project. Hickey was lecturing on Ralph Adam Cram's Rice Campus, a brilliant piece of long-term planning mediated by a Building and Grounds Committee that, very deliberately, contained no Architectural Academics. Vegas itself was planned down to the last detail - even removing clocks and adding extra oxygen to the air-con to keep the punters 'punting'. Such mendacious 'teaching' disgusted me. Adolescents like to revolt. It is not for their Professors to feed them predigested vomit. I walked back to the Marriott Medical Hotel that night, across the dry 'St. Augustine' grass, feeling physically sick.