The Need for Concentration

Condition 4: The district must have a sufficiently dense concentration of people, for whatever purpose they may be there. This includes people there because of residence . . . (p200)

When we deal with cities we are dealing with life at its most complex and intense. Because this is so, there is a basic esthetic limitation on what can be done with cities: A city cannot be a work of art . . . (p372)

The Kind of a Problem a City is . . .

Cities happen to be problems in organized complexity, like the life sciences. They present ‘situations in which a half-dozen or even several dozen quantities are all varying simultaneously and in subtly interconnected ways’. Cities, again like the life sciences, do not exhibit one problem in organized complexity, which if understood explains all. They can be analyzed into many such problems or segments which, as in the case of the life sciences, are also related with one another. The variables are many, but they are not helter-skelter; they are ‘interrelated into an organic whole’ . . . (p433)

Why have cities not, long since, been identified, understood and treated as problems of organized complexity? If the people concerned with the life sciences were able to identify their difficult problems as problems of organized complexity, why have people professionally concerned with cities not identified the kind of problem they had? . . .

The theorists of conventional city planning have consistently mistaken cities as problems of simplicity and of disorganized complexity . . .

These misapplications stand in our way; they have to be hauled out in the light, recognized as inappropriate strategies of thought and discarded . . . (pp434-435)

Because the life sciences and cities happen to pose the same kinds of problems does not mean they are the same problems . . .

In the case of understanding cities, I think the most important habits of thought are these:
1. To think about processes;
2. To work inductively, reasoning from particulars to the general;
3. To seek for ‘unaverage’ clues involving very small quantities, which reveal the way larger and more ‘average’ quantities are operating. (pp439-440)


1962

ALDO VAN EYCK

Team 10 Primer

Team 10 was originally formed as a working group of younger architects to prepare for CIAM X, the tenth and last meeting of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne, held in Dubrovnik in 1956. Of the members, Aldo van Eyck (b 1918, Driebergen, The Netherlands) was perhaps the most poetic yet articulate in suggesting ways past the dull, hygienic emptiness of Functionalism and the Athens Charter. More concerned with architecture than urbanism, his work combines Modernist idealism with a sense of multivolt reading and surprise more characteristic of Post-Modernism. His buildings include the Children's Home, Amsterdam (1960), Sculpture Pavilion, Arnhem (1966) and Housing, Zwole (1977).

Space has no room, time not a moment for man. He is excluded.

In order to ‘include’ him – help his coming-home – he must be gathered into their meaning. (Man is the subject as well as the object of architecture.)

Whatever space and time mean, place and occasion mean more.

For space in the image of man is place, and time in the image of man is occasion.

Today space and what it should coincide with in order to become ‘space’ – man at home with himself – are lost. Both search for the same place, but cannot find it.

Provide that space, articulate the in-between.

Is man able to penetrate the material he organizes into hard shape between one man and another, between what is here and what is there, between this and a following moment? Is he able to find the right place for the right occasion?

No – So start with this: make a welcome of each door and a countenance of each window.

Make of each place a bunch of places of each house and each city, for a house is a tiny city, a city a huge house. Get closer to the shifting centre of human reality and build its counterform – for each man and all men, since they no longer do it themselves.

Whoever attempts to solve the riddle of space in the abstract, will construct the outline of emptiness and call it space.

Whoever attempts to meet man in the abstract will speak with his echo and call this dialogue.
Man still breathes both in and out. When is architecture going to do the same?... (p101)

Take off your shoes and walk along a beach through the ocean’s last thin sheet of water gliding landwards and seawards.

You feel reconciled in a way you wouldn’t feel if there were a forced dialogue between you and either one or the other of these great phenomena. For here, in-between land and ocean – in this in-between realm, something happens to you that is quite different from the sailor’s nostalgia. No landward yearning from the sea, no seaward yearning from the land. No yearning for the alternative – no escape from one into the other.

Architecture must extend ‘the narrow borderline’, persuade it to loop into a realm – an articulated in-between realm. Its job is to provide this in-between realm by means of construction, ie to provide, from house to city scale, a bunch of real places for real people and real things (places that sustain instead of counteract the identity of their specific meaning)... (p99)

Awareness of this in-between (in-between awareness) is essential. The ability to detect associative meanings simultaneously does not yet belong to our mental equipment. Since, however, the meaning of every real articulated in-between place is essentially a multiple one, we shall have to see to it that it does.

Our target is multiple meaning in equipoise...

Awareness of the in-between creeps into the technology of construction. It will transform not only our ideas as to what we should make, but also as to how we shall make it – including our technological approach. It will be there in the body, the members and the joints of whatever we make... (p103)

Space and time must be opened – interiorized – so that they can be entered; persuaded to gather man into their meaning – include him.

By virtue of what memory and anticipation signify, place acquires temporal meaning and occasion spatial meaning. Thus space and time, identified reciprocally (in the image of man) emerge humanized, as place and occasion.

Places remembered and places anticipated dovetail in the temporal span of the present. Memory and anticipation, in fact, constitute the real perspective of space; give it depth.

What matters is not space but the interior of space – and the inner horizon of the interior.

The large house-little city statement (the one that says: a house is a tiny city, a city a huge house) is ambiguous and consciously so. In fact its ambiguity is of a kind I should like to see transposed to architecture. It points, moreover, towards a particular kind of clarity neither house nor city can do without; a kind which never quite relinquishes its full meaning.

Call it Labyrinthian Clarity

Such clarity (ally of significant ambiguity) softens the edges of time and space and transcends visibility (allows spaces to enter each other and occasions to encounter each other in the mind’s interior).

It is kaleidoscopic.

The In-between Realm is never without it... (p41)

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Aldo van Eyck and Theo Bosch, Zwolle Housing, 1975-77

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