THE SYMBOLIC FORM OF ARCHITECTURE

An investigation into its philosophical foundations and a discussion on the development of the perception of architectural form by modern theoreticians and symbolist architects

by
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(ABSTRACT)

This thesis investigates the concept of the symbolic form of architecture. It first focuses on the philosophical foundations for this concept in the works of Ernst Cassirer, Immanuel Kant, Conrad Fiedler, and Theodor Adorno. Then, the development of the modern perception of form in architectural theoreticians, where "modern" architectural theory evolved from an analogical state into a symbolic state, is examined: Karl Bötticher's concept of a *Junktur* and his attempt to transcend the presumed dichotomy in architecture between ornamentation and form is discussed; Gottfried Semper's concept of style and Alois Riegl's concept of motif are presented as reactions against what they saw as the mechanistic reliance on structure as definitive of form in architecture; Louis Sullivan's ornamentation is discussed as an attempt to integrate structure and ornamentation into a morphological whole; Otto Wagner's attempt to purge architecture from analogical responses through a strictly constructional basis for ornamentation is presented; and Adolf Loos' dismissal of decorative ornamentation, since it is an impediment towards true aesthetic judgment, is examined. Finally, a critical review of the symbolist movement in architecture, art, and literature is presented as a movement diametric to the symbolic development in architecture, since it glorified the analogical, and frequently the mimetic. The origins for how the symbolist movement became a denial of clarity center on Emanuel Swedenborg's concept of symbols, and how it was misinterpreted by the symbolists.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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PREFACE

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This thesis is a preliminary investigation into the concept of the symbolic form of architecture. As such, the concept of symbolic forms in general will be examined as a context in which the uniqueness of architecture as a symbolic form can then be addressed. Specific architectural references will be limited to approximately 1850–1920, since this was the time period in which "modern" architectural theory evolved from an analogical state into a symbolic state, while another architectural movement, the "symbolist," remained fixed in a representational state, as this thesis will attempt to document.

OBJECTIVES

The goal of this thesis is to come to a greater understanding of what makes architecture unique as a symbolic form. In addition to focusing on the philosophical foundations for the symbolic form of architecture, it is hoped that the ensuing critical analysis on the development of the perception of architectural form by "modern" architectural theoreticians from the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, and the discussion of the analogical basis for the symbolist movement in architecture, art, and literature, will help elucidate these philosophical constructs.

ORGANIZATION

The main text of this thesis is divided into five sections: Chapter One is an introduction to the main points of argument for this paper; in Chapter Two, the concept of the symbolic form of architecture will be examined, focusing on the contribution of philosophers such as Cassirer, Fiedler, and Adorno; in Chapter Three, the evolution of architectural form as it developed in modern architecture will be offered in support of Cassirer's belief that all forms must pass through an analogical state before they can become symbolic; Chapter Four deals with inverse of Chapter Three: the so-called "symbolist" movement in art and architecture, and how, concurrent to the modern movement in architecture, it became a denial of clarity by focusing on the analogical instead of the symbolic; and Chapter Five will conclude this paper by summarizing the results of this thesis, as well as introducing some additional issues for consideration.

LITERARY SOURCES

The primary sources for this paper are:

The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms (Volume I)
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On Judging Works of Visual Art
    by Conrad Fiedler (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1857)
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    by Gottfried Semper (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989)
Modern Architecture
    by Otto Wagner (Santa Monica, California: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1988)
Problems of Style
    by Alois Riegl (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992)
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    by Werner Oechslin (Santa Monica, California: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1993)
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    by Indra McEwen (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993)
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    by Paul Sprague (Princeton University, Ph.D.; Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, Inc., 1969
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The Symbolist Movement*: A Critical Appraisal*
    by Anna Balakain (New York, New York: New York University Press, 1977)

INTRODUCTION: THE NEED FOR MEANING

Is meaning possible in architecture without being representational?

This deceptively simple question became the driving force behind an investigation into the symbolic form of architecture. The seminal work in this journey is Ernst Cassirer's *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms.* In his treatise, Cassirer comprehensively classifies man as a symbolic animal who needs to provide meaning to "whatever is given to it," with the very structure of the human mind constituted to perceive in a symbolic way. Thus, meaning becomes a necessary, fundamental, and immanent requirement of humanity.

Now, does this need for meaning extend into the realm of architecture?

A form which is expressed through spatial, temporal, physical, and material means, which relies on and engages nearly all of the senses — would the need for meaning not be found there? Would something which is fundamentally human (the need for meaning) not be found in a form which is the most fundamentally human?

Since Cassirer never devoted a volume in the Philosophy of Symbolic Forms exclusively to architecture, or even to art, this does not mean that *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* doesn't address these questions.[1] A simple reason that Cassirer never wrote a volume exclusively on architecture may be that he just ran out of time. As Charles Hendel stated in the Introduction to *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms,* "additional parts [of his treatise] were to be expected as one progressed far enough in the quest for truth. Cassirer's attitude is in essence that the philosopher has an unending task never to be regarded as complete." (1:34) Regardless, it is my belief that not only does the existent *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* deal with architectural issues, it is fundamentally architectural.

First, Cassirer believed that while every symbolic form has specific features which are autonomous, there were also the universals which interpenetrated all symbolic forms. Cassirer's belief is best summed up when he stated "I rejoiced to learn that the art of poesy and the science of nature with its comparative method are closely related, both of them coming under one and the same power of judgment" (1:30). Thus, whenever Cassirer discussed a particular symbolic form, such as language or myth, it was implied that certain parallels could be made with any other symbolic form, such as art.

Second, the symbolic form of art is directly addressed throughout Cassirer's work. For example, Cassirer thought art should "be defined as symbolic language — as a concrete manifestation of the union of intuitive and structural form, in other words, as a schema" (1:54,15). Since Cassirer definitely

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[1]*The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* was published in four parts: *Part I, Language* (1953), *Part II, Mythical Thought* (1955), *Part III, Science* (1957), and *Part IV, Metaphysics* (posthumously published in 1996 from Cassirer's rough manuscript).

perceived of architecture as a subset of art[2], whenever he explicitly discusses the symbolic form of art, it is understood that Cassirer is also implicitly discussing the symbolic form of architecture.

Third, Cassirer believed in the distinct importance of art, which was not surprising, given Immanuel Kant's own position on the form of art.[3] For example, while acknowledging that all symbolic forms are schemata, Cassirer states that "the most direct and immediate apprehension of individuality and form is in art ... where the phenomenon is experienced as the whole being determinant of the parts and disclosing itself through them. Here form is both 'pure' and 'concrete' (1:20)." Cassirer's belief that art is the most immediate, direct, and encompassing of all symbolic forms is reiterated throughout *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms.*

Fourth, Cassirer heavily emphasized the importance of the interaction of spatial realities, temporal relations, and sensuous experience in *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms.*[4] And since architecture's very existence is predicated on multi-dimensional development, spatial "delineation," material expression, and most importantly, their interdependence, it is my belief that implicit in Cassirer's writing is a perception of architecture as the most direct and immediate symbolic form of art, and thus, of all symbolic forms.

Therefore, this thesis will be a preliminary investigation into the concept of the symbolic form of architecture, and will focus on what makes architecture unique as a symbolic form. Specifically, the development of the modern concept of form in architecture will be offered in support of Cassirer's belief that all forms

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[2]There are numerous passages in *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* where Cassirer directly links art and architecture together. For example, on page 96 Cassirer states: "the spatial unity which we build in aesthetic vision and creation, in painting, sculpture and architecture, belongs to an entirely different sphere from the spatial unity which is represented in geometrical theorems and axioms ... it [art] is conceived as a whole whose particular factors are dynamically interlocked, a perceptual, emotional unity."

[3]Cassirer's indebtedness to Kantian philosophy will be discussed in the following chapter. However, it should be noted at this time that for Kant, the "aesthetic consciousness," as a schema, possessed "a unique form of concrete fulfillment: while being completely engrossed with its own passing state it apprehends even in those momentary conditions that which is of absolutely timeless signification. Here at last the imagination can be perfectly satisfied; art is the manifestation of pure, concrete form." (1:20)

[4]Pages 93–105 of *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* offer a detailed discussion by Cassirer on the interdependence of space, time, and sensual experience in the aesthetic consciousness; however, on pages 100–101, the concept of a house is presented by Cassirer to elucidate the importance of this interdependence: "We may suppose the sensory foundation of the idea of space to lie in certain visual, motor, and tactile sensations, but the sum of these sensations contains no trace of that characteristic form of unity which we call 'space.' The notion of space is manifested rather in a kind of coordination which enables us to pass from any one of these qualities to their totality. The spatial 'picture' that we possess of a particular empirical object, a house for example, takes form only when we amplify a particular, relatively limited perspective view in this sense; employing the partial perspective only as a starting point and stimulus, we construct from it a highly complex totality of spatial relations. Understood in this light, space is by no means a static vessel and container into which ready-made 'things' are poured; it is rather a sum of ideal functions, which complement and determine one another to form a unified result. Just as in the simple temporal 'now' earlier and later are expressed as the basic temporal directions, similarly in every 'here' we posit a 'there.' The particular place is not given prior to the spatial system but only in reference to and in correlation with it."

must pass through two intermediate states of development — the mimetic and then the analogical state — before they can become symbolic.

Werner Oechslin's *The Evolutionary Way to Modern Architecture* will be used as a guide to explore the paradigm shift that occurred in modern architecture — a shift in which architectural form was perceived of morphologically instead of dichotomously. First, Bötticher's concept of a *Junktur* will be examined as an attempt to transcend the presumed dichotomy in architecture between ornamentation and form. Then, Semper's concept of style and Riegl's concept of motif will be discussed as reactions against what they saw as the mechanistic reliance on structure as definitive of form in architecture. Then, Sullivan's ornamentation will be examined as an attempt to integrate structure and ornamentation into a morphological whole. Next Wagner's attempt to purge architecture from analogical responses through a strictly constructional basis for ornamentation will be discussed. And finally, Loos' dismissal of decorative ornamentation, since it is an impediment towards true aesthetic judgment, will be examined.

Additionally, the so-called "symbolist" movement in the arts, literature, and architecture will be examined as a movement diametric to the symbolic development in architecture, since it ended up glorifying the analogical, and frequently the mimetic. The origins for how the symbolist movement became a denial of clarity will center on Emanuel Swedenborg's concept of symbols, and how it was misinterpreted by the symbolists.

Hopefully, these investigations will help elucidate one of the main implications of Cassirer's concept of symbolic forms regarding architecture, which is: today, meaning in architecture is *only* possible without representation. As transcendental schemata in the Kantian sense, only symbolic forms can unite intuition and understanding, the cognitive and creative, the objective and the subjective.

The salient question then becomes: "How?"

This is the part of the journey which, besides being the most difficult, will probably never end: How does one make a form symbolic?

In addition to Cassirer, some clues from Conrad Fiedler will be discussed, specifically his concept of actual vs. false perception, which he himself claimed to be paramount in the struggle.

The reward for achieving the goal of symbolic forms, as many of the participants in this debate discuss, is to open up a "new and deeper spiritual content." As Cassirer eloquently states, symbolic forms are the "true sources of light, the prerequisite of vision, and the wellsprings of all formation." (1:93). Symbolic forms constitute our world and our culture. "Through them alone we see what we call reality and in them alone we possess it" (1:111). Symbolic forms are the "highest objective truths" that are "accessible" to the human spirit. A symbolic form is a "true unity of consciousness, as a unity of time, space, objective synthesis, etc." (1:102). And this goal, this striving to become symbolic, is the potential for architecture.

Chp. I. Symbolic Forms

The various products of culture — language, scientific knowledge, myth, art, religion — become parts of a single great problem-complex: they become multiple efforts, all directed toward the one goal of transforming the passive world of mere *impressions*, in which the spirit seems at first imprisoned, into a world that is pure *expression* of the human spirit
— Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (p. 80)

Ernst Cassirer established that the human mind is constituted in such a way as to provide meaning to given input, with human consciousness giving "form" to "whatever is given to it." This is done through the different symbolic forms inherent in our mind: through art, history, philosophy, religion, etc. These symbolic forms have their counterparts as "symbols" outside of our mind, i.e., as individual constructs, such as Beethoven's *Fifth Piano Concerto,* or Louis Kahn's Salk Institute. True constructs are complete, unified entities, with each "particular" of the construct supportive of and definitive of the whole, and vice versa. The human mind takes "images" from a construct, and through the symbolic forms of the mind, provides meaning to them. Thus, every construct is inherently symbolic or "pregnant with meaning." And if every construct is inherently symbolic, then to make something blatantly representative is absurd, since it becomes an artificial, one-dimensional caricature of a multi-dimensional form.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN SYMBOLISM AND REPRESENTATION

However, before continuing our discussion of symbolic forms, it is important to clarify of the most crucial distinctions in Cassirer's philosophy, and that is his use of the word "symbol." Cassirer's concept of a symbol is not in accordance with the normative understanding of the word, as defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "a written character or mark used to represent something; a letter, figure, or sign conventionally standing for some object, process, etc."[5] It is obvious that Cassirer's use of the word "symbol" does not agree with this contemporary definition; and actually, this definition is the antithesis of what Cassirer meant when he discussed symbolic forms.

In Cassirer's philosophy the word "representation" would be the appropriate substitute for the conventional use of the word "symbol." Cassirer perceived representations to be "artificial," as "arbitrary," as "cloaks of an idea," or as "mechanistic reproductions" (1:52,86,108). Thus, the contemporary use of the word "symbol" (i.e., "representation") is incorrect since it is a one-

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[5]Definition #3.

dimensional imitation of a multi-dimensional form. Indeed, for Cassirer, "representation and truth seem entirely different things" (1:49).

The etymology of the word "symbol" is *closer* to Cassirer's use of the word symbol. "Symbol" originated in the Greek language as a construct of two words: *sym* (or "syn", a prefix meaning "with" or "together with") and the root of *bolos* (a throw). Thus, a symbol was a throwing (or putting) together into one piece.

A symbol is a unified construct. The "particulars" and the "universal" of a construct are one and the same thing. The form, structure, and aspects of a construct are supportive of and definitive of the whole. As Cassirer stated: "the whole is not obtained from its parts, but every notion of a part already encompasses the notion of the whole, not as content, but as to general structure and form" (1:101). Thus, every particular is definitive of the whole.

Now, contrast a representation to that of a symbolic construct. A representation might appear to be denotive of the whole; however this is false on many levels.

First, if the whole is already symbolic, why would a representation be needed to signify it? In other words, why is an indicator needed to tell you that something which is immanently meaningful has meaning? This is why a representation can't even be indicative of the whole. Since *every* particular "encompasses the notion of a whole" in a symbolic construct, then if *any* element of a symbolic construct were taken, that "one blow" would "strike a thousand connected chords which all vibrate more or less forcefully and clearly in the sign" (1:108). Thus, if a representative sign is needed to signify a whole, then that whole can't be symbolic, since not all of the parts are immanently symbolic.

Second, instead of imparting meaning to a construct, a representation actually impedes the symbolic. One of the major achievements of Cassirer's philosophy is his classification of man as a symbolic animal[6], with the very structure of the human mind established to perceive in a symbolic way. "Consciousness is a symbolizing activity. Hence one never finds in it anything barely given without meaning and referenced beyond itself. There is no content which is not construed according to some form" (1:57). And, not only does the human mind thrive on taking given constructs and distilling meaning from them through symbolic forms, these activities are fundamental *necessities.* Therefore, if a representation of a construct is given, then a supposed "meaning" is already presented and the individual is precluded from imparting meaning to it. The effect is that the human mind cannot be properly engaged since one's judgment is not made active; and subsequently, the human spirit is diminished.

And third, a representation disallows any new meanings to be imparted to an object. Both Cassirer and Goethe claimed that "form belongs not only to space but to time as well, and it must assert itself in the temporal" (1:31). Thus, by making something "artificially" representative, you are forever constraining its meaning to that one representation, which is, in effect, disallowing any new

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[6]See, for example, page 65 of *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms.*

discoveries of it — it becomes a passive, impotent thing. As Cassirer said, "nothing is really a symbol if it is only a mark of something already given and enabling us to talk about it again" (1:51). And the reason that we must talk about it again is that "human works are vulnerable, They are subject to change and decay ... in a mental sense. Even if their existence continues they are in constant danger of losing their meaning. Their reality is symbolic, not physical; and such reality never ceases to require interpretation and reinterpretation." (1:xiv).

These arguments reveal that a "copied" representation is even further removed from the symbolic. If a previous representation (such as a Doric column) is transposed onto a new object (such as a contemporary bank), it is being divorced from any meaning! Copying a representation is "recapitulating what has been given and never reveals or develops a meaning" (1:51). That is why a symbolic form can never be a "mere reproduction of a ready-made, given reality ... it is not an imitation but a discovery of reality" (1:51). No discovery is a copy. Thus imitative representation in design disallows any new discoveries, and it is definitely not symbolic.

A natural consequence is that every symbolic form must be autonomous. Each symbolic form "must be evaluated according to its own criterion of satisfaction ... it does not merely copy but rather embodies an original, formative power. It does not express passively the mere fact that something is present, but contains an independent energy of the human spirit through which the simple presence of the phenomenon assumes a definite meaning: an ideational content" (1:58, 78).

Clearly, the arguments mentioned in the previous paragraphs show that representation is the antithesis of the symbolic. A representation can never contain the "stamp of inner necessity" which is a requirement of all symbolic constructs.

SYMBOLIC FORMS AS SCHEMATA

Cassirer's development of symbolic forms is indebted to Immanuel Kant's philosophy. As Charles Hendel says in the Introduction to the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, "the recollection of Kant is ever-present in the pages of Cassirer's writing. Whenever he started any goal he went back to the philosophy of Kant as a base from which to proceed" (1:1).[7] And it is Kant's concept of transcendental schemata which became germane to Cassirer's concept of symbolic forms.

Kant divided the human mind into three "faculties:" reason, intuition, and understanding. The faculty of reason produces "pure" concepts independent of

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[7]However, this does not imply that Cassirer's philosophy is in complete accord with Kantian philosophy. As Charles Hendel later points out, while Kant was the primary "source of inspiration" for Cassirer, he was one of the many "rich sources" which Cassirer drew from in developing the "authentic originality of [his own] thought" (1:21). Thus, in extending Kantian thought regarding symbolic form, Cassirer definitely diverges from Kant in many aspects, a few of which will be mentioned later in this paper (for a more detailed discussion, please see the Introduction to *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*).

the senses, such as freedom, soul, or God. The faculties of intuition and understanding are based on synthetic *a priori* truths. Kant argued that the mind is structured to analyze data in terms of a particular set of *a priori* rules. Now, the *a priori* truths which comprise intuition, or more accurately, perception, are space and time. Because for Kant, space and time were not features of external reality, but features of the structure of the mind, space and time are the "irremovable goggles" through which we perceive the world. Further, there are twelve *a priori* truths which comprise understanding, including unity, plurality, totality, causality, and substantiality. As examples, causality relates things perceived in space and time in terms of cause and effect, and substantiality relates things perceived in space and time in terms of substance and attribute.

Now, the crucial point in Kant becomes "how we are to conceive of the *via media* between concept and intuition in the actual construction of specific knowledge by the human understanding? Kant states his proposed solution as follows:

> It is clear that a third thing must be given which must stand in a relation of being of the same sort with the category on the one hand and with the appearance on the other, and which makes possible the application of the former to the latter. The mediating representation must be pure (without anything empirical) and yet not simply intellectual; it must at the same time be sensuous. Such a thing is the *transcendental schema*.

The schema is the uniting 'representation,' the synthetic 'medium' in which the forms of understanding and the sensuous intuitions are assimilated so that they constitute experience ... But the schema is not merely the medium through which the sensuous and the intellectual are brought into unity ... 'the schemata of the pure concepts of the understanding are the true and sole conditions that make possible any relationship of the concepts to objects, and consequently the conditions of their having any meaning.'" (1:12,13)

Thus, it is Kant's idea of schemata which Cassirer was to develop his entire philosophy of symbolic forms around. For Cassirer, symbolic forms became the transcendental schemata, the unifying determinant of the mind. As Cassirer stated, "the schema is the unity of concept and intuition, the common achievement of both factors" (1:15). Thus, Cassirer took the "irremovable goggles of man" which Kant described and refocused them to see through symbols: "instead of saying that the human intellect is 'in need of images' we should rather say that it is in need of symbols" (1:50). Additionally, Cassirer's development of the relation between the "universal" and "particular" were also "derived from the doctrine of schematism" (1:15).

THE CAPACITY OF SYMBOLIC FORMS

Now, if the symbolic forms are "a means to new knowledge and discovery" (1:51), what is this knowledge that Cassirer talks about? What are the discoveries that symbolic forms allow?

First, symbolic forms "articulate and reveal the world of experience" by helping to relate things perceived in space and time, which is something that would definitely be expected of schemata (1:46). Second, man discovers

himself through symbolic forms. The symbolic forms are "roads by which the spirit proceeds towards its objectivization, i.e., its self-revelation" (1:78). Third, man perceives his spiritual self in relation to the sublime: "there is here a synthesis of world and spirit" (1:61). Thus, the symbolic is ultimately the sublime: "the search for and creation of ideal meaning in human existence — the ideal mode of thought which allows the eternal to be seen in the transitory" (1:65, 31). And a final function of the symbolic forms which Cassirer discusses is its role as constitutive of human culture.

Just as particular elements of a symbolic construct are constitutive of the whole construct, so too are individual human efforts formative of our culture *en masse.* Since the "nature of man is defined by his work, it is this work, it is the system of human activities, which defines and determines the circle of humanity ... every content of culture, in so far as it is more than a mere isolated content, in so far as it is grounded in a universal principal of form, presupposes an individual act of the human spirit." (1:44, 80) Thus, "the various products of culture — language, scientific knowledge, myth, art, religion — become parts of a single great problem-complex: they become multiple efforts, all directed toward the one goal of transforming the passive world of mere impression, in which the spirit seems at first imprisoned, into a world that is pure expression of the human spirit." (1:80

While Kant thought there was a prescribed number of forms of intuition and understanding, Cassirer believed that the number of symbolic forms was unlimited. In elucidating the symbolic forms, Cassirer felt he was "only started on a program and that there was no end to the task because no one can determine the limits of the spirit and life itself" (1:34).

Space is by no means a static vessel and container into which ready-made 'things' are poured; it is rather a sum of ideal functions which complement and determine one another to form a unified result
— Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (p.101)

THE OBJECTIVE AND THE SUBJECTIVE REQUISITES

Man fails to appreciate the role of language, tending to regard it as only a medium for expressing something that exists beforehand and not realizing that language is formative of the very world we live in
— Charles Hendel, Introduction to *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (p. 33)

Cassirer had argued that the objective and subjective, or the "universal" and "particular," are necessary components of symbolic forms; they cannot be dissociate elements since it is impossible for one to exist without the other. Whenever the subjective attempts to deny the objective, or vice versa, the dialectic is cut off. This argument is extended in detail by Theodor Adorno in *The Jargon of Authenticity*.

One of the main points in *The Jargon of Authenticity* is that jargon is the abuse of language; a lack of knowing the actual definition of words, their

etymology, or the proper context in which words should be used.[8] For example, if a meaning of a word has been developed primarily through philosophical discourse, this is not known or even desired to be known by the people who misuse the word. The result is that people end up using terms as representations of what they are trying to communicate rather than communicating directly with the knowledgeable use of words; language becomes a debased jargon or "existentialist babble. The order which this babble aims at is itself one that reaches for speechlessness of sign and command" (2:48).

As an example, Adorno claims that the word "statement" has been devalued into a jargon word; it has become representative of what it actually is. "Someone speaks and thanks to the elevated term 'statement,' what he says is to be the sign of truth — as if men could not become caught up in untruth. Prior to all content, this shift indicts 'statement' as soon as it wants to be such; it charges 'statement' with being a lie. If one adds to a 'statement' that it is 'valid,' then whatever at a given moment holds good, whatever is officially stamped, can be imputed to it as metaphorically authorized. The formula spares people the trouble of thinking about the metaphysics which it has dragged with it or about the content of what has been stated" (2:15).

This is exactly why jargon is representational rather than symbolic. A symbolic form doesn't rely on representation to dictate to individuals what they should think. If a representation is given, then a supposed meaning is already presented and the human mind cannot be properly engaged, or as Adorno says, "cognition fails" (2:62). In jargon, the sublime "pure ether of meaning" of symbolic forms which Cassirer described degenerates into an offensive "ether," where ultimately nothing has any relation to anything else — everything becomes a "caricature of what is natural" (2:19).

Hence, the use of jargon, especially in existentialistic thought, misrepresents critical theory by placing an emphasis on the subjectivity of the forms, completing forgetting or even purposively negating the objectivity of the forms, i.e., the universal. Thus, language, which Cassirer devoted an entire volume in *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* explaining should be a symbolic form, is degenerated into a representational, or analogical, state with "jargon." The symbolic becomes disassociated with the fluidity of time, the sublime, and ultimately enlightenment. Nothing can exist only "in-itself" — neither the objective or the subjective.

A direct consequence of this "reification" is in the realm of art. A total work of art, while autonomous, still contains an "understanding agreement between inner and outer" (2:141) elements. Thus, an autonomous work of art, as is true of all symbolic forms, is not disassociated from the objective. However, in jargon, "autonomous" is twisted to mean "isolated" or "in a vacuum." As Adorno states, in jargon there is presented "a gesture of autonomy without content"

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[8]The Oxford English Dictionary defines "jargon" as "unintelligible or meaningless talk or writing; nonsense, gibberish" (definition #3) and as "a barbarous, rude, or debased language or variety of speech" (definition #4). In *The Jargon of Authenticity* Adorno upholds both of these definitions of jargon, especially the latter, with an emphasis on the "debased" nature of jargon.

(2:xiv) and "the formal gesture of autonomy replaces the content of autonomy" (2:18). Thus, the use of jargon can prevent an artist from truly creating an autonomous, symbolic work of art. Therefore, what happens through the abuse of words definitely has its counterpart in the symbolic form of art or architecture.

Viewed in the context of Cassirer, Adorno presents a truly frightening concept: if the world is constituted of symbolic actions, what would happen if we were cut off from the symbolic through jargon — what is constituted then?

PERCEPTION: THE CRUCIAL ELEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SYMBOLIC FORMS OF ARCHITECTURE

The artistic impulse is an impulse of cognition; artistic activity, an operation of the power of achieving cognition; the artistic result, a sequel of cognition. The artist does nothing else than achieve in his own universe the work of a logical Gestalt-formation; herein lies the essence of every cognition.
— Conrad Fiedler, *On Judging Works of Visual Art* (p. 76)

One aspect of symbolic forms which Cassirer never fully explained was how an architect, or even an artist, specifically develops a symbolic form. What exactly is the process through which a symbolic form is developed? Conrad Fiedler attempted to answer such a question in his books on architecture and art,[9] where the process of developing architectural forms was addressed in depth.

Consistent with Adorno and Cassirer, Fiedler believed that the basis for all meaning in art and architecture was the creation of reality.[10] Art, as fundamentally formative of the world we live in, is fundamentally formative of reality: "the world develops through human activity in the forms of artistic expression" (3:169). Further, artistic expression is developed through our intuition; and perception guides our intuition. Therefore, for Fiedler, reality (which was tantamount to symbolic meaning) is ultimately formed through an individual's perception, and artistic cognition is the expression of an individual's perception of reality in a tangible form; as Fiedler stated, it is "our means of bringing the intuitive consciousness from its undeveloped and obscure state to definiteness and clarity" (4:4). Hence, since Fiedler believed that perception is the crucial element in the development of architecture, then his concept of perception, specifically his distinction between false and actual perception, merits a closer examination.

Fiedler emphasized a distinction in his writings between false perception and actual perception, with the former leading to "naturalism or mannerism" and the latter "to genuine artistic production" (5:xv-xvi). False perception is based on conceptual thinking, or

scientific facts such as mathematical calculations, measurements of natural proportions, visual demonstrations of natural operations, and the like. Although, the conceptual

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[9]See, for example, *Essay on Architecture, Nine Aphorisms from the Notebooks of Konrad Fiedler, On Judging Works of Visual Art,* and *Three Fragments from the Postumous (sic) Papers of Conrad Fiedler.*

[10]For example, Cassirer had stated that "like all the other symbolic forms, art is not the mere reproduction of ready-made, given reality ... it is not an imitation but a discovery of reality." (1:53)

> structures of these representations require logical, scientific exactness, they do not require a 'visual whole,' a logic in the pictorial construction of the creative construction of the creative configuration, nor, consequently, an artistic form ... to approach a work of art from that point of view does injustice to its very nature and leads to misinterpretation. The other type of nonartistic picture-making process, also based on conceptual activity, includes those pictorial representations which are made in accordance with predetermined, calculated, fixed rules ... intellectualized endeavors of this type ... usually result in pictorial mannerisms or creative sterility.(5:xvii)

On the contrary, actual perception, "independent of conceptual activities, is based upon an autonomous, freed development of perceptual experience, especially of visual experience, and ends in the creative configuration of works of visual art" (5:xvii). Furthermore, Fiedler believed that all artistic activity is dependent on actual perception and that true art (plastic) cannot be created without it. Indeed, Fiedler's conviction in the preeminence of actual perception in the development of artistic activity is evident not only in his belief that artistic activity is dependent upon the eye, but that it ultimately *originates* in the eye.[11]

As mentioned earlier, a natural consequence of symbolic forms is that they must be autonomous. However, autonomy doesn't mean that a symbolic form is executed in a vacuum. Cassirer believed that all symbolic forms, while autonomous, definitely were a product of a specific place and time.[12] Similarly, Fiedler believed that perception must be autonomous for it to lead to artistic cognition. Fiedler realized that man is influenced by his environment, and that "all influences to which the artist is exposed, and to which his contemporaries are exposed, no less, are to a certain degree decisive for the creation of a work of art" (5:20). As such, man benefits from the efforts of "those who preceded him" as a sort of "fixed capital" from which to build on (3:57). The distinction is that one should never let these past forms dictate the laws of a work of art or of the form itself, which must develop its own internal laws and the form from these laws.

Thus, it is obvious that Fiedler believed that artistic creations shouldn't be representational or mimetic for similar reasons that Cassirer did. Imitations of either natural or existing forms can only be "regarded as degenerations of the original formations;" signs or "ingenuous allegorical representations" are divorced from artistic substance; and the transposition of an element from an existent form onto another divorces meaning from either form, and art is lost. Ultimately, mimesis is the antithesis of a creative act, and the impetus, the "inherent necessity" driving a work of art is destroyed.

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[11]Fiedler was not claiming that the senses other than the eye play a negligible role in forming plastic art. As an example, Fiedler stated that "the eye alone does not produce visual images. The sensory organs help each other and the sense of touch seem indispensable for the creation of what we call a true visual image" (3:57).

[12]For example, in *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* Cassirer stated: "Nothing seems more certain than that every truly immediate content of consciousness has reference to a definite 'now' in which it is contained. And yet the content which we designate as the 'now' is nothing but the eternally fluid boundary dividing the past from the future. This boundary cannot be posited independently of what it bounds: it exists only in this act of division itself, not as something that could be thought before this division and detached from it." (1:98)

As stated earlier, Fiedler believed that artistic expression is exclusively an intuitive process: "the essence of art is nothing else than the development of the intuitive consciousness" (4:3). In this regard, Fiedler follows Kant in distinguishing between intuition and understanding (logic, rationality, etc.). However, Fiedler's philosophy diverges from Kant when he elevates intuition as a parallel "cognition" to understanding.

Since scientific cognition and artistic cognition are an "organization of sensory material into a thinkable whole" (3:158), they are both fundamentally symbolic forms. As such, while artistic cognition and scientific cognition have developed their own "language" unique to their respective forms, each of these languages has its complement in the other. As Fiedler stated, they are "not in conflict, but in parallel order" (3:148). Thus, artistic cognition becomes equivalent to scientific cognition. For Fiedler, this enlightenment revealed that the "principle difference between cognitive and creative activity no longer exists. So-called cognitive activity turns out to be formative and so-called formative activity turns out to be cognitive" (3:145).

The impetus behind this distinction by Fiedler was a desire to resolve a conflict in Kant's philosophy which he felt was unwarrantedly limiting: synthetic *a priori* truths. Fiedler thought that synthetic *a priori* truths were artificial boundaries, a "curtain before our eyes" constraining and limiting the creative impulse in man and "one of the most fatal misunderstandings in the history of human thinking" (3:70). But for Fiedler, there was no such thing as reality whose truth is known independently of observation. Hence, the faculty of reason, which produced pure concepts (i.e., concepts uncontaminated by the senses) was a myth perpetuated by Kant. As Fiedler stated, "everything not based upon experience is fancy" (3:75). By doing away with this myth, Fiedler hoped to do away with the inevitable result: that there are certain subjects that humans can never grasp — such as justice, immortality, freedom, etc. Thus, Fiedler thought he could nobly make the following claims: "no longer is there an area whose existence is supposed to be known to us but which we also know we may never enter. There is not the slightest justification for an ignorabimus" (3:89) and "what we believed an impenetrable and insurmountable barrier exists nowhere except in our imaginations and in the concurring imaginations of us all" (3:64).

However, is this really a resolution of the issue? Fiedler ends up stating that one of the reasons why there is nothing a human cannot have knowledge of is that neither an absolute being nor objective reality actually exists! Fiedler summarily dismisses both in the following statement: "the concept of reality other than relative reality is false, and that the assumption of an area of absolute being rests not upon rational necessity but upon an easily disproved conclusion" (3:75). Further, not only does Fiedler profess a belief in the exclusivity of subjective reality, but of subjective truth as well.

For Fiedler, there are no objective truths; "only overweening thought sees constants, immutables and eternals in concepts" (3:89-90). Since reality is created by the individual, truth is also created by the individual. "So-called truth is not something which man finds but something which he produces" (3:167). Fiedler tries to diminish the impact of these problematic positions somewhat by

stating that while "the assumption of an ultimate truth as the goal of intellectual activity is untenable; the activity itself is the goal" (3:22). However, as Cassirer and Adorno imply, one has to believe in something greater than oneself (i.e, objectives) to produce art.

While these views of Fiedler's are problematic, to say the least, they were the springboard for one of his most poetic positions regarding man's role in art: "in and through artistic activity an intellectual process reaches the climax of its development and becomes something which before and outside it, did not exist intellectually or otherwise" (3:37). Fiedler believed that while a work of art is influenced by the artist's experience, it is not based on any *a priori* truths or Platonic forms, such as the concept of "chairness." And since there are no ideal forms, it is up to the individual to conceive of and execute independent forms which are truly original. Hence, the cognitive act, "in the profoundest sense," becomes definitive of a truly creative act.

"Thus it is that art has nothing to do with forms that are found ready-made prior to its activity and independent of it. Rather, the beginning and the end of artistic activity reside in the creation of forms which only thereby attain existence. What art creates is no second world alongside the other world which has an existence without art; what art creates is the world, made by and for the artistic consciousness ... thus, the process which would otherwise seem finite becomes infinite; the cognitive activity of man becomes creative" (5:48, 3:90).

A necessary consequence of perceiving artistic cognition as a truly creative act is that it is fundamentally spiritual as well. As Fiedler states, creation is "spiritual appropriation to create an intellectual structure from the vast number of impressions to which he is subjected" (6:11). Thus, spirituality becomes the prime mover behind artistic, and architectural cognition. Indeed, "the essence of architecture, the type of spiritual activity expressed in the creation of architectonic forms is one of the age-old subjects of human reflection; it is the principal question we must consider in regard to the world of architectonic phenomena" (6:5).

As a fundamentally spiritual and intuitive act, actual perception can never be based on feeling. Fiedler believed that whenever feeling dominates, perceptive activity is impaired. Clarity of perception comes only with the subjugation of emotions. Clarity of a work of art comes only with clarity of perception. For Fiedler, the only emotions involved in a work of art are the passions which drive an individual to bring the work of art to fruition. It is the purposeful, driven mind, guided with perception, which "even in moments of the most intense sensory experience preserves unimpaired the calmness of objective interest and the energy of formative creation ... works of art are not created with emotion; emotion, therefore, does not suffice for their understanding" (5:31, 4:7).

A major emphasis in Fiedler's writing is relating how perception manifests itself in art. For Fiedler, the expression of reality (i.e., of symbolic forms) can be accomplished only in a complete, unified whole — in a total work of art. Thus, clarity of expression is the first prerequisite to "artistic Gestalt-formations." A second prerequisite is that it must be a "self-sustained unity of

form, in which all parts receive their artistic meaning only by their interfunctional relationship to the whole" (5:vii). A third prerequisite is that internal laws need to be developed which are valid in and only for that one particular work of art. A fourth prerequisite is that once an artist has begun creating a piece, there is only one direction which that piece can take; where "'this way and no other' becomes a necessity for" the artist (5:53). A fifth prerequisite is thus an absence of additive elements; every element in it should be necessary to express the idea, and "everything apart from the purpose of the creator is unessential" and should be purged from the work (5:1). Thus, creating a work of art is a "process of refinement in which the genuine is separated from the false" (6:49). Ultimately, a work of art is "a form in which existence appears as an understandable whole" (3:165).

Fiedler is clearly making a distinction between aesthetics and art. For Fiedler, anything which is not involved in the creation of an "understandable whole" can be classified under the label of "aesthetics." Thus, personal taste is aesthetics; "beauty" is aesthetics; a concern for the effect that a piece of art has on an individual is aesthetics. In architecture, traditional elements of design would be considered aesthetics: proportion, scale, rhythm, symmetry or asymmetry, etc. So, however pleasing an arrangement of these elements might be to the observer, these "tools" of the architect cannot be the generating factor for a work of art. Artistic activity is the "striving to change the infinity of sensory impressions into that form in which reality appears as a whole composed of definite parts" not the desire to make something pleasant (3:156). So, when an individual lets a supposed effect on an observer be the generator for art, it completely destroys any chance for art in that piece. "A circumspect philosophy of art, on the contrary, must approach art from the point of view of its inception and not concern itself with its effects, just as the true artist, engrossed in his work, never thinks about the effect of his work on others ... one cannot arrive at beauty at all as a principle of art, but only as a incidental, secondary effect" (4:5, 3:25).

Given this definition of art, Fiedler believed that very few buildings can truly be called architecture, since few buildings can "ascribe its origin to the desire for cognition and see its goal in the furtherance of understanding" (4:3). Instead, most "architects" rely on structure, materiality, or the effect of the observer as the primary generator for expression in architecture, procedures "alien to the artistic process of creation" (6:13). These procedures are inherently foreign to art because they are dependent on outside conditions as predeterminates for expression.

Now, this doesn't mean that structure or materiality is unimportant in architecture. Structure and materials, as tools, help inform the artist on how to achieve his objective, but they can never be the objective in architecture. As Fiedler stated, "technical skill as such has no independent rights in the artistic process; it serves only the mental process ... only when the structure has become a pure expression of form is the intellectual activity of formation completed and in the highest sense, product and possession of the human

intellect — only then is it a work of art of the highest intellectual substance" (5:56, 6:12).

True artistic creation in "architecture is characterized by an alteration of form whereby materials and construction continue to recede while the form, which belongs to the intellect, continues to develop toward an increasingly independent existence" (6:13). Thus, "material and construction gradually lose their identity and are reduced to mere means of expression for the form" (6:43). This may seem like a heady requirement for architecture, and it is. It is only by beginning "with that consciousness of the unformed in order to end with the formed," that architecture becomes art (6:41).

Art is always realistic, because it tries to create for men that which is the foremost their reality. Art is always idealistic, because all reality that art creates is a product of the mind.

> — Conrad Fiedler, *On Judging Works of Visual Art* (p. 60)

CHP. II. FROM ANALOGICAL TO SYMBOLIC FORM

Mimetic or analogical expression gives way to purely symbolical expression, which, precisely in and by virtue of its otherness, becomes the vehicle of a new and deeper spiritual content

— Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (p.197)

SURMOUNTING THE SHELL VS. THE CORE METAPHOR

In the first half of the 19th century, critical analyses of architecture were focused almost exclusively on the representational significance of buildings. And ornamentation, as the most conspicuous form of representation, was considered the most important element of a building. Because of this, historians though it was imperative to catalog the ornamental "signs" of ancient buildings. However, what inauspiciously started as an attempt to document the representational development of ornamentation in architecture gradually escalated into a heated debate over the historical origin of ornamentation, which, in turn, enabled a paradigm shift to occur in modern architecture — a shift in which architecture advanced from an analogical state into a symbolic state — from perceiving architecture dichotomously to morphologically. Werner Oechslin summarizes this development of thought in architectural theory — a development that was not always linear — in *The Evolutionary Way to Modern Architecture: The Paradigm of Stilhülse und Kern.*

In *The Evolutionary Way to Modern Architecture* Oechslin offers the metaphor of "Stilhülse und Kern" and explains how this metaphor was used by architectural theorists such as Karl Bötticher, Alois Riegl and Gottfried Semper, as an analogical tool to perceive architecture. In his essay Oechslin defines "stilhülse" as the "stylistic 'hull' or shell," and the "kern" as the "inner 'kernel' or core" (7:367). But, an underlying question is "The shell or core of what?" Oechslin never states what these terms were initially referring to, and so he never fully explains the metaphor. While the implied answer seems to be a nut or a seed, this might not be the most accurate of choices.

In *Socrates' Ancestor*, Indra McEwen traces the etymology of the word hylê to boat-building in ancient Greece, and implies that this single word was originally used to describe the identically perceived concepts of structure, covering, and form.[13] As she stated:

> It is significant that hylê ... was first, in Homeric usage and even later, forest or woodland, or more specifically, wood or timber. When Odysseus, the tecton, the boat builder, builds his boat in Book V of the Odyssey, assisted by the nymph Calypso, the

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[13]In *Socrates' Ancestor* Indra McEwen claims "the existence of an ancestral blood tie between architecture and philosophy ... that not only metaphysics but all of Western thinking was first grounded in architecture, and that, until the 18th century, the legitimacy of architecture rested on the preservation of that memory" (8:2,130).

> timber he cuts and fits together would originally have been hylê ... Archaeological evidence about how ancient boats were actually put together strongly suggests that when Odysseus build his boat, he built it in the image of the Homeric body of chrôs as living surface: epiphaneia ... Only afterward, if the shell so constructed appeared to need additional reinforcement, would he have added an internal structure. (8:49,50)

Thus, McEwen is implying that originally, there wasn't a distinction made between structure and shell, and it was only later that the hylê was "set up in opposition to the intelligent formative principle in the Aristotelian form-and-matter differentiation" (8:50). This division, then, persisted with the introduction of the word hülle into German. Thus, by the time Bötticher formalizes the metaphor of "stilhülse und kern," the division of structure, materiality, ornamentation, and form is perceived of as an innate condition of architecture, and an antagonistic dichotomy is established between ornamentation and construction with respect to form. This division is even further exasperated when the word style becomes attached to the word hull in stilhülse.

As previously discussed, the use of metaphors is precisely the predicament of an analogical state, since they constrain any form from transcending into a symbolic state. Thus, part of the quandary of some of the early theorists mentioned in *The Evolutionary Way to Modern Architecture* who were trying to deal with the question of meaning in architecture, was that they were being inherently prevented from developing beyond an analogical state by using analogical constructs. Hence, it is when theorists stopped using the metaphor that they were truly at the point of perceiving symbolically. It is ironic then, that Oechslin, when describing later theorists' perceptions on architecture in *The Evolutionary Way to Modern Architecture* continued to use the metaphor of stilhülse und kern when the participants themselves stopped using the terms.

Thus, this chapter will re-examine the works of key participants in Oechslin's essay, as well as introducing Sullivan and Loos as additional participants in this debate. First, Karl Bötticher's concept of a *Junktur* will be looked at as an attempt to perceive architecture morphologically. Then, Gottfried Semper's concept of style and Alois Riegl's concept of motif will be discussed as reactions against what they saw as the mechanistic reliance on structure as definitive of form in architecture. Then, Louis Sullivan's ornamentation will be examined as a process of trying to integrate structure and ornamentation morphologically. Next, Wagner's attempt to purge architecture from analogical responses through a strictly constructional basis for ornamentation will be discussed. And finally, Loos' dismissal of decorative ornamentation, since it is an impediment towards true aesthetic judgment, will be examined.

BÖTTICHER'S JUNKTUR: AN ATTEMPT TO TRANSCEND THE PRESUMED DICHOTOMY IN ARCHITECTURE

It was Karl Bötticher who first "coined the terms Kernform (core-form) and Kunstform (art-form) as analytical tools in his book *Die Tektonik der Hellenen* [1846]" (9:37). Bötticher, who was reflecting on the division in architecture between ornamentation and form, was ultimately attempting to reconcile this division by clarifying what he considered to be the constituent elements of

architecture. Thus, Bötticher was trying to show that this division was an arbitrarily imposed condition and should not be a presumed result of architecture.

Bötticher believed that both the core-form (the "structural or constructional function") and the art-form (the "sophisticated artistic veil articulating its purpose") (10:31-32) were reciprocal parts in architecture, mediated by what he called the *Junktur.* And the Junktur "should serve to explain the relation between the complementary parts" (7:379), "in which each part not only expressed its function symbolically, but also alluded to the meaning of the larger scheme" (10:31). Thus, the purpose of the entire whole would be found in the Hülle and in the Kern, and their interrelationship through the Junktur. Furthermore, through "analogous symbols" the Hülle would "'present succinctly' the 'spatial formative concept in the whole' given in the Kern" (7:379).

Now, exactly what Bötticher meant by the term Junktur is open to debate. Was it just a physical joint between the two elements — a means of joining two disparate elements — or was it part of a larger concept — a nascent form of transcendental schema?

Unfortunately, due to dearth of information on Bötticher, the answer to this question remains inconclusive and requires a more thorough evaluation. However, the evidence at this time would suggest that Bötticher's concept falls short of a truly morphological approach since he believed in a hierarchical categorization of the elements, which thus introduces a qualitative evaluation of the shell and core. Bötticher had determined that the core-form was primary and the art-form was secondary, since it was the constructional element which was determinant of form, and not the art-form. Thus, the shell became superfluous — a "'structurally unnecessary' decorative dressing of the Kern" (7:379). For example, Bötticher said that the "kern of every structural member, when stripped of its decorative attributes ... in its naked corporeality [is] fully capable of fulfilling all architectural functions" (7:379). Thus, in a hierarchical system, there would be a need for an actual physical joint to bridge the core-form and art-form, something that would not be necessary in a morphological approach.

For Bötticher, even the form is inherently dependent on constructional or material requirements. This view is evident in Bötticher's categorization of iron as the new material of our age, and subsequently, as the new form-determiner for modern architecture (cf. 10:17). Thus, a natural question which arose from this concept of Bötticher was, "Is it the material or the architect which determines the form?" Gottfried Semper specifically challenges Bötticher's precept with his development of the primordial motives of style, a further advancement towards a symbolic state.

SEMPER'S "STYLE" AND THE TRANSCENDENCE OF MATERIALITY

Style is the accord of an art object with its genesis, and with all the preconditions and circumstances of its becoming. When we consider the object from a stylistic point of view, we see it not as something absolute, but as a result. Style is the stylus, the writing

instrument with which the ancients used to write and draw; therefore, it is a very suggestive word for that relation of form to the history of its origin. To the tool belongs, in the first place, to the hand that leads it and a will that guides the hand. These, then, intimate the technical and personal factors in the genesis of a work of art

— Gottfried Semper, *On Architectural Styles* (p. 269)

Semper's concept of "style," as developed in works such as *The Four Elements of Architecture* (1851) and *On Architectural Styles* (1869), was not based on the normative definitions of the word, with style considered to be a prescribed form dependent on a limited manner of construction for its existence or as a whim of fashion.[14] For Semper, style was a nascent concept of symbolic form — it meant "giving emphasis and artistic significance to the basic idea and to all intrinsic and extrinsic coefficients that modify the embodiment of the theme in a work of art" (9:136). Semper distinguished the extrinsic coefficients as the "local, temporal, and personal influences that bear upon the work," and the intrinsic coefficients as the technical components, such as construction, technology, and materiality.(9: 28)

However, in contrast to Bötticher, Semper believed that the intrinsic factors were not the generators of style, but just the variables of style. Thus, as Semper stated:

> Architecture, like its great teacher, nature, should choose and apply its material according to the laws conditioned by nature, yet should it not also make the form and character of its creations dependent on the ideas embodied in them and not on the material? If the most suitable material is selected for their embodiment, the ideal expression of a building will of course gain in beauty and meaning by the material's appearance as a natural symbol ... Let the material speak for itself; let it step forth undisguised in the shape and proportions found most suitable by experience and science. Brick should appear as brick, wood as wood, iron as iron, each according to its own statical laws. (9:102,48)

For Semper, it was the four "primordial" motives which were responsible for "generating architectural form: hearth, roof, enclosure, and mound." (9:24). Thus, style is ultimately dependent on just a few essential motives with every architectural form expressing these motives in some manner or another. Further, according to Semper, these primordial motives all have a representational origin that is "universally valid" and still relevant today. For example, the primary motive *enclosure* is expressed through the origin of the *wall.* As Semper stated, "the wall is that architectural element that formally represents and makes visible the enclosed space as such, absolutely, as it were, without reference to secondary concepts ... [thus] the wall should never be permitted to lose its original meaning as a spatial enclosure" (9:254,127).

Further, Semper introduced the concept of geometric "authorities" as underlying primordial motives. Hence, each primordial idea should be

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[14]The Oxford English Dictionary defines "style" as: a particular mode or form of skilled construction, execution, or production; the manner in which a work of art is executed, regarded as characteristic of the individual artist, or of his time and place; one of the modes recognized in a particular art as suitable for the production of beautiful or skillful work (def. #21.a); fashionable air, appearance, deportment (def. #24.b).

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expressed in the few simple "authorities" of geometry that are found in nature: eurythmic-symmetrical, proportional, and directional authorities. Continuing the example of enclosure, eurythmy (radial symmetry) would be the best plan for a walled-enclosure since "eurythmy is closed symmetry and stands in no direct relation to the observer, but peripherally ... its essence is enclosure. It expresses the absolute concept of encirclement symbolically, and therefore alludes to the encircled as the proper object, as the center of the eurythmic order" (9:201). Thus, if an architectural construct is a total work of art, then the expression of one of these geometric authorities in a building would require that every other architectural element work in unison towards this one universal idea. Additionally, while Semper felt that there was a limited number of prescribed authorities, he believed that there was infinite manifestations of architecture, which resulted from the extrinsic factors of style.

The frequent abuses so easily made in painting and coloring should not be a reason to ban all color and simply to declare garish everything that is not gray, white, or pale earth.
— Gottfried Semper, *Preliminary Remarks on Polychrome Architecture and Sculpture in Antiquity* (9:69)

Another necessary component of style for Semper was color, as advocated in his *Preliminary Remarks on Polychrome Architecture and Sculpture in Antiquity* (1834). Semper's argument is based on four reasons: color reduces glare; an appreciation of color as an inherent trait in man; color is a natural by-product of protective materials; and color is an integral part of an aesthetic whole which helps impart meaning to a building.[15]

Semper proposed that color, when applied to building surfaces, has the beneficial effect of reducing glare in the human eye, regardless of climate. For this reason alone, color is viewed by Semper as a necessary element of architecture. This necessity of color differed from earlier positions held by O.M. Baron von Stackelberg and Jacques Ignace Hittorff, who thought of color as an additive, "aesthetically functional means of accenting architectural forms" (11:213). This subtle distinction between these two positions is evident in the following quote of Semper's (which has unintended irony today): "Whoever wishes to be persuaded how unsightly and offensive a naked marble

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[15]Originally, *Preliminary Remarks on Polychrome Architecture and Sculpture in Antiquity* was an attempt by Semper to refute the prevalent disdain of color in architecture at that time. Two of the most effective proponents of this latter attitude were Johann Joachim Winckelmann, who "outlined the aesthetic premises of the ideal with a definition of beauty based on pure form, exclusive of color" (9:4), and surprisingly, Immanuel Kant, who wrote: "In painting, sculpture, and in fact all the formative arts, in architecture, horticulture, so far as the fine arts, the *design* is what is essential. Here it is not what gratifies in sensation but merely what pleases by its form, that is the fundamental prerequisite for tastes. The colors which give brilliancy to the sketch are part of the charm. They may no doubt, in their own way, enliven the object for sensation, but make it really worth looking at and beautiful they cannot. Indeed, more often than not the requirements of the beautiful form restrict them to a very narrow compass, and even where charm is admitted, it is only this form that gives them a place of honor" (9:4).

monument appears in the southern environment should consider the Milan Cathedral, whose whiteness reflects the sunlight to the point of blindness, and which nevertheless appears icy in the shade" (9:60). Thus, Semper rejected an all-white building since it causes glare, and therefore, cannot be aesthetically pleasing; whereas Hittorff, who considered "white as part of the polychromatic spectrum," would have rejected an all-white building since aesthetics dictate against monotony in color (11:212).

A second argument of Semper's is that "the human delight in color is fundamental to our being, residing in our instinct for play and adornment" (9:14). This point is made by repeatedly by Semper throughout his writings and he "remained adamant in his belief that a deeply rooted appreciation of color was paramount to Greek artistic thinking and ... to all artistic activity" (9:13).

A third reason Semper espoused color in architecture arose from the use of protective coatings on materials. "Wood, iron and every metal need a coating to protect them against the corroding effects of the air. This need can be fulfilled quite naturally, in a way that contributes at the same time to their embellishment. Instead of a dull coat of paint, we could select a pleasant diversity of color. Polychromy thus becomes natural and necessary" (9:48).

Now, while these first three arguments might seem rather negligible today, Semper's most salient point in the polychromy debate regarding symbolic forms resided in his belief that color is an integral part of an aesthetic whole, a necessity which helps elucidate meaning in a building.[16] As Semper stated, "for those who only admire the *pure forms* of antiquity, color studies are necessary for a better understanding of these forms. They are the key. Without them, the coherence of the whole cannot be seen" (9:65). For Semper, color holds "the formal meaning [of a building] together" (9:15).

Harry Francis Mallgrave believes that the reason Semper was so emphatic about the importance of color in architecture was that he perceived the use of color as the crucial way in which a building transcends its materiality. As Mallgrave stated, "Architecture's denial and transcendence of its real or material basis thus became for Semper its highest ideal" (10:33). For Semper, the proper use of color in a building would morphologically transform the material, letting it become "pure form". Therefore, according to Mallgrave, when Semper talked about "'masking' the materiality of stone," he does not mean "covering" it up, but actually transcending it and integrating it into pure form. (cf 9:40)

Ultimately, this transcendence of materiality in style leads to beauty and spirituality in architecture.[17] Style, as a total work of art, is where beauty resides. As Semper stated, "The magic by which art in its most varied forms and

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[16]Semper was not the first to voice such an argument; various fragments of it can be found in writings by Christian Ludwig Stieglitz, Quatremère de Quincy, P.O. Brønsted, and particularly Jacques Ignace Hittorff, who believed that "color became the medium through which the building's importance and meaning became articulated" (9:11).

[17]For example, Semper believed that Greek architecture was "organic and spiritualized through [its] symbolic elucidation of its forms. It rejected everything that had no morphological purpose and avoided all unnecessary references to weight and support" (9:39).

manifestations makes an impression on the soul, so that it is completely possessed by the work of art is called beauty. This is not so much an attribute of the work as an effect, in which the most diverse moments within and without the object considered to be beautiful are simultaneously active ... Beauty seeks the constituent parts of form that are not form itself, but the idea, the force, the task, and the means, in other words, the basic preconditions of form" (9:197,183).

What remains controversial about Semper's work today centers on his concept of the origins of ornamentation. Fundamental to Semper's writings is his belief that ornamentation, as specifically created through the act of making textiles, was the genesis for architectural form. This belief led to Semper's famous statement, that the instinct underlying tectonic creation is "man's primordial urge to strike a beat, to string a necklace, to decorate 'lawfully'" (9:33). Thus, "architecture comes to be defined in its essence as an ornamental activity" (9:29). Semper's historical reliance on ornamentation as the genesis for form in architecture could lead one to misinterpret his statements to think that Semper is arguing for the importance of ornamentation (or the Hull) in opposition to or exclusion of the Kern. As stated before, Semper was attempting to reconcile the presumed dichotomy in architecture by arguing for a morphological approach to architecture, in which both the ornamentation and structure were perceived of as a whole. In arguing for the ornamental origins of architecture, Semper was trying to show that architecture, as a style, was fundamentally linked in the process of making, and thus, ornamentation was a human necessity. However, Semper's position is undermined through a normative application of the word "ornamentation" to his writings.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines "ornament" as: any adjunct or accessory (primarily for use, but not excluding decoration or embellishment); equipment, furniture, attire (Def. #1); or something employed to adorn, beautify, or embellish, or that naturally does this (Def. #2a). It is obvious that both of these definitions of the word "ornament" are contradictory to the concept of necessity. Definition #1 shows that color is an additive element, and therefore not integral to a total work of art. Definition #2a, treats an adornments as a sort of appliqué — as something to cover up a different object to try and make the latter beautiful — as if the latter weren't beautiful in the first place. This seems diametric to Semper's concept of the transcendence of materiality in architecture, and definitely not what he perceived ornamentation to be. In a total work of art, every element is beautiful, as is the whole; conversely, there can never be just one beautiful element in a total work of art, nor can a object be made beautiful by the addition of another, additive element. Thus, the normative understanding of the word ornament is diametrical to the concept of beauty, which Semper himself argued when he stated that "the presentation of beauty should never be the purpose of a work of art. Beauty is a necessary attribute of the work of art, as extension is to bodies" (9:52).

Further, it is Semper's ethnographic approach to architecture itself that is also questioned today. Semper, who was engaged in a debate with Alois Riegl over the origin of ornamentation in architecture, had argued that textiles were the genesis for ornamentation; whereas Riegl countered Semper in *Problems of*

Style (1893) by claiming that sculpture was the genesis for ornamentation in architecture. Both Semper's and Riegl's ethnographic basis for their theories. which contain some pretty sweeping sociological generalizations, seem somewhat simplistic and exclusionary.[18] Even if one puts aside the question whether either textiles or sculpture was ultimately responsible for the development of architecture, one is still left with the question of why textiles or sculpture weren't just one of the many cofactors contributing to the development of architecture — does it have to be an "either-or" proposition? Semper's ethnographic approach is further compromised with the questionable veracity of his "evidence." Semper's credibility was immediately challenged by contemporaries of Semper, who impugned his work as having an "unscholarly character," full of "imprudent archeological statements." This criticism has only increased over time, leading Harry Francis Mallgrave to state in the Introduction to *The Four Elements of Architecture* that "what is surprising is how little evidence he musters to support his views ... [offering] little explanation or documentation" for his "factual" statements (9:16).

RIEGL'S "MOTIF" AND HIS ANALOGICAL RESPONSE BASED ON GEOMETRY

For Alois Riegl, the word "motif" is akin to a symbolic form. Indeed, one of the most crucial points in all of Riegl's philosophy is how the word "motif" is interpreted and the significance associated with this word.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word motif to be: "in painting, sculpture, architecture, decoration, etc., a constituent feature of a composition; an object or group of objects forming a distinctive element of a design; a particular type of subject for artistic treatment. Also used for the structural principle or the dominant idea of a work."

Now, if motif is interpreted in Riegl's work to mean just an element of a design, then the connotation is of a limited, two-dimensional sort of end-product. Ultimately, this interpretation undermines the concept of human creativity since it denigrates creative acts to be perceived of as "mutations" of existing works of art. While this might seem like an unlikely consequence of this interpretation of "motif" in Riegl, this is precisely the point of view which David Castriota assumes in his Introduction to the *Problems of Style:* "In the hands of a creative artist, traditional forms could also be *mutated* to produce innovations as they were handed down or diffused transculturally. In the spirit of Darwin, Riegl sought to trace, map, and classify this evolutionary process and the phenomenal range of form or styles that it could engender" (12:xxvii). Hence, according to this interpretation, Riegl, though professing an autonomous creative spirit, is instead yoked to the idea that art is just a rehashing of existing pieces, with each rendering becoming further diluted from the original artwork.

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[18]As an example, in *Problems of Style* Riegl claimed that "the human desire to adorn the body is far more elementary than the desire to cover it with woven garments, and that the decorative motifs that satisfy the simplest desire for adornment, such as linear, geometric configurations, surely existed long before textiles were used for physical protection" (12:5).

However, if one interprets the concept of motif in the broader context of "forms," (i.e., as the dominant idea of a work) then this becomes parallel to Semper's concept of primordial motives. Riegl, like Semper, is then intimating that there are only a few, basic, immanent themes throughout time, and it is the goal of each individual artist to manifest these themes in their time through their own creations. If this goal is achieved, then ultimately their work of art will become timeless due to the primacy of the art form.

The solution as to which way to interpret the idea of motif undoubtedly lies in Riegl's concept of the will to art. For Riegl, "it was the ever-changing Kunstwollen (the will to art, sometimes referred to as will to form), an independent, unpredictable, but collective determination that fixed every changing style" (9:vii). Thus, it was the will to art which drove man to express the fundamental, universal themes of humanity — a "desire to give concrete expression to the most significant ideas and feelings of humanity" (12:81). Therefore, if a total work of art is for Riegl "the harmonious fusion of formal beauty and profound content" (12:82), then this undoubtedly tells the reader the significance that Riegl attached to the concept of motif: it is akin to a symbolic form.

Thus, when Riegl, like Semper, discusses words like ornamentation and decoration, he is talking about something more than just an appliqué. The Oxford English Dictionary defines "decoration" as: the action of decorating (to adorn, beautify, embellish); embellishment, adornment, ornamentation. So when Riegl says, "the Geometric style of the cave dwellers of Aquitane, therefore, was not the material product of handicraft, but the pure fruit of an elementary artistic desire for decoration" (12:33), he is not perceiving of art as an additive element, something to be applied in an ex post facto manner, as the definition would suggest, but as a fundamental artistic drive that in its essence is creative act, in whatever medium the artist has at his disposal. This is evident in the following statement that Riegl himself made, "All of art history presents itself as continuous struggle with material; it is not the tool — which is determined by the technique — but the artistically creative idea that strives to expand its creative realm and increase its formal potential" (12:33).

Another important point of Riegl's is that the creative act is fundamental in humans. Riegl claimed that the creative impulse is "an absolute necessity, a human urge so fundamental that it does not depend on anything else" (12:xxi). But while Riegl was trying to argue that the basic artistic impulse in man was not dependent on technology or materials for its existence, he didn't properly advance this point to its logical conclusion. If the creative act in man is fundamental, then it is fundamental at any level, regardless of medium *or* origin. So when Riegl says that "the creative drive in primitive people initially expressed itself primarily in sculpture" (12:32), this seems at once both a little naive and also limiting; why shouldn't the creative drive of primitive people have expressed itself in whatever medium was available to them; for some this would have meant sculpture, for others textile, and others painting, and still others, a combination of these, etc.?

Further, "Riegl was anxious to demonstrate the autonomy and freedom of an aesthetic urge in man" (12:xxii). However, Riegl's belief in the autonomous creation of human spirit didn't mean that creative acts were divorced from the world in which the artist lived in and the traditions and knowledge he inherited from the past. Indeed, Riegl thought that all art was produced in an "unbroken historical continuity of an underlying core of fundamental motifs" (12:xxii).

An integral part of Riegl's philosophy was that geometric forms are the foundation for artistic expression in man, something he labeled the "Geometric Style." The geometric forms were produced by the purely creative mind in man, independent of any prescribed meanings. It was only after these forms were expressed did man later attach meaning to them and give them "representational significance." Thus, representation arose out of geometric forms and not vice versa. The implication of this point is that for Riegl, geometric shapes are universal, and not the particular representations which individual men apply to them. However, Riegl subsequently contradicts this view when he discusses vegetal motifs. Riegl believed that "the first vegetal forms were probably created for their symbolic, representational significance" (12:52), then they developed into pure ornament. In other words, representation came first, then it was distilled into pure geometry through "geometric stylization." These two conflicting views regarding the role of geometry in architecture are somewhat curious.

**SULLIVAN'S DEVELOPMENT OF ABSTRACT ORNAMENTATION:
A DISTILLATION OF THE ANALOGICAL**

Subjectivity and objectivity, not as two separate elements but as two complementary and harmonious phases of one impulse, have always constituted and will always constitute the embodied spirit of art.
> — Louis Sullivan, *Kindergarten Chats and Other Writings* (13:17)

Louis Sullivan, a contemporary of Riegl, struggled in architectural form with the exact same questions regarding the role of geometry that Riegl had questioned on a theoretical level. Sullivan, like Riegl, also embraced both points of view on the role of geometry in architecture at different stages in his architecture.

As Paul Sprague documents in *The Architectural Ornament of Louis Sullivan and His Chief Draftsmen,* Sullivan's development of architectural ornamentation can be classified into three distinct periods: the first, from 1873 to 1890, was stylistic, consisting of "stylized plants and flowers" of Neo-Gothic origin; the second, from 1890 to 1918, was a combination of geometric and naturalistic qualities; and the third, from 1919 to 1923 was "random, centrifugal and contradictory" probably due to Sullivan's "decline in powers" (13:167-168). Additionally, Sprague argues that each period can be further subdivided into different phases. It is the second period and its phases, in which Sullivan's concept of ornamentation reached its fruition, that will be focused on in this paper.

During the first phase of Sullivan's second period (1890-1892) his ornamentation underwent its first important change, from stylization to naturalism. It is during this time that, parallel to what Riegl discusses, Sullivan's ornamentation was based on representational "vegetal motifs." Sprague offers the bronze door of the Getty Tomb and the unexecuted design for the Opera House Building as examples from this period, which show that during this phase, Sullivan's ornamentation was created for representational purposes, in accordance with or in imitation of nature.

In the second phase (1892-1895), Sullivan's ornamentation came close to adhering to the pure geometric forms which Riegl had described. "Sullivan had managed to purge his own architecture of most historical reminisces. This is evident in the basic geometric quality of the forms and masses of Sullivan's buildings of the early and middle nineties" during which his "plastic ornament came to be composed almost entirely of abstract geometrical forms," as can be seen in the "three-dimensional geometric decorations" of the theater in the Schiller Building and in the "geometrically painted decorations on the exterior of the Transportation Building" (13:38,194,181). As characteristic of this phase, Sullivan substituted "new geometric patterns" in place of "the plain ground which earlier had served as a foil for his plastic organic motifs" (13:179).

Then, in the last phase of the second period (1895-1918) Sullivan reintroduced organic forms based, not on nature or organic models, but on his own geometric forms which he had developed from 1892-1894. "The really significant alteration was from a purely organic ornament to an ornament in which organic and geometric motifs were mingled" (13:178) with the "sunken portions generally treated geometrically and the raised parts organically." (13:182). The best example from this phase would be the decorations of the Schlesinger & Mayer Bridge.

Now, what was the genesis behind theses changes? In *The Architectural Ornament of Louis Sullivan* Sprague argues that it was not due to Frank Lloyd Wright's influence, as popular lore has it[19], but to Sullivan's own developing sense of romantic vitalism. Sullivan, as a romantic vitalist,[20] was attempting to create autonomous ornamentation without completing purging it from an analogical response. As Sprague stated, "Sullivan's partiality to the organic

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[19]In *The Architectural Ornament of Louis Sullivan,* Sprague claims that "during the years from 1888 to 1893 when Wright was Sullivan's chief draftsman, Wright had little effect on Sullivan's ornamental growth. In fact, it is even possible to demonstrate that the change in Sullivan's ornamental style that Hitchcock supposed was due in part to the stimulus of Wright was actually set in motion before Wright entered the office" (13:115).

[20]Sprague differentiates between rational functionalists and romantic functionalists (vitalists). For example, "rational functionalism represented a point of view in which materialistic factors were normally pre-eminent as the determinant of architectural form. Such constituents as physical and utilitarian need, efficient circulation, structural requirements, and the nature of the materials employed were regarded as the functions demanding expression ... romantic functionalists, while not necessarily rejecting materialistic factors, chose instead to emphasize more subjective qualities" (13:14). Thus, the "romantic vitalists used the word [function] to signify a latent subjective essence or vital principle which is seeking fulfillment in visible form. The mechanistic rationalists, on the other hand, employed the word merely as another means to refer to the material and objective necessities to which a work of architecture should conform" (13:13).

analogy is well-known. Nature, in both its romantic and scientific aspects — as the true source of inspiration for the creative spirit — became the central theme of his *Autobiography of an Idea.*" (13:67). Thus, the development of his ornamentation in his second phase was Sullivan's attempt at working out what he felt was the appropriate level of analogical response within a delicate balance of subjective (vitalist) and objective (rationalist) elements in his work.

In going from a response that was imitative of nature, to abstracted geometricizations based on nature, Sullivan was trying to imbue his architecture with a more subjective response while still trying to represent in architectural form his belief in man as a creator, like nature. Not content with stopping there, Sullivan then developed his own abstract natural forms from geometry, so that man became a creator of nature. Thus, Sullivan in creating abstract autonomous ornamentation, came as close to the modern response as possible without doing away with an analogical relation to "Nature," albeit on the most generalized of levels.

Thus, Sullivan never seriously entertained the possibility of doing away with ornamentation, since it was the one element that he felt could convey this analogical response in architecture. As Sprague says, "Sullivan considered ornament a necessity for architecture if architecture was to remain a free art. For him, ornament represented the highest and finest expression of vitalistic functionalism" (13:40).

**WAGNER'S CONSTRUCTIONAL RESPONSE TO ORNAMENTATION:
AN ATTEMPT TO PURGE THE ANALOGICAL**

It alone [architecture] is able to make forms that have no model in nature yet appear beautiful to man. Even if these forms have their source in natural structures and their origin in the material, the result is so far removed from the starting point that it must be considered a completely new creation. It therefore cannot be surprising to hear that we should see in architecture the highest expression of man's ability, bordering on the divine. And rightly so! Proof of this lies in the mysterious and overwhelming power that architectural works have on man, practically forcing him to contemplate. Architecture, must therefore be described as the most powerful expression of art

— Otto Wagner, *Modern Architecture* (p. 62)

As evidenced in his statement from *Modern Architecture,* Otto Wagner is probably the first architect who can be labeled "modern," since he was the first architect who seriously attempted to purge architecture from analogical responses, whether they be Semper's primordial motives, or Sullivan's vitalistic links to nature. Wagner believed that construction played a determining role in architecture, and not the sociological motives for construction. So while Sullivan tried to explicitly draw a parallel in his architecture between man and nature as creators, Wagner never mixes the natural with constructive. Wagner truly believed that architecture was an autonomous form — while it might have a few aspects which have certain parallels to nature, it is fundamentally an independent construct. As Richard Streiter commented on Wagner's *Modern*

Architecture,

> After presenting a rather traditional account of architecture as emerging from utility and necessity and subsequently developing artistic form, [Wagner] couples Darwin and Semper in a sentence and criticizes the latter for lacking the courage to complete his theory from above and below; that is for making do with a "symbolism of construction" (primordial industrial motives) rather than construction itself as the starting point of architecture. In taking such an approach, Wagner interprets Semper's four conceptual motives literally as constructional elements in themselves, whose purpose it would be redundant to symbolize or represent with additional meaning. (10:33).

Thus, for Wagner, it is construction itself that should be glorified in architecture. As Wagner stated, the architectural "composition must clearly reveal the material of construction and the technology used" (10:83). A natural consequence of this approach is that the dichotomy which Bötticher had related between ornamentation and construction with respect to form dissipates. "Ornamentation" for Wagner becomes the means through which the constructional process of the form is related to the viewer. Thus, Wagner embraces Sullivan's belief that ornamentation is "of the surface, not on it" — architecture is thus perceived morphologically, with no fundamental separation between the interior and exterior of the building regarding form.

An example of this can be seen in Wagner's Postal Savings Bank (1903-1910), where the exposed bolt-heads on the exterior of the building, as indicative of the constructional process, became the "ornamentation." Thus, Wagner takes a necessity of the construction process and develops it into ornamentation. However, Peter Haiko impugns Wagner's treatment of the facade in the Postal Savings Bank as somehow fraudulent! Since the bolts "only held the panels in place during the first 3 weeks of construction while the binding mortar bed hardened," Haiko felt that they weren't necessary, and thus Wagner was trying to deceive the viewer.[21]

Further, Wagner was careful to distinguish that construction, while a determining force of architecture, was not the ultimate guiding force which Bötticher implied it was in his writings. For Wagner, it was the architect's subjective responses, which is what he called the "basic happy idea," that were fundamentally determinant of the form, as he explained in *Modern Architecture:*

> Everything has to be subordinate to his basic idea ... [once this idea is conceived, then] the architect selects, specifies, perfects, or invents that method of construction that most naturally fits his image of what is to be created and best suits his nascent art-form. (10:84, 94)

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[21]As Francis Mallgrave relates in the Introduction to Wagner's *Modern Architecture,* Haiko's harangue is that, "in essence, they were little more than decoratively treated formwork. Such an ornamental conception, says Haiko, is a clever reversal of traditional logic; the construction is not enriched with ornament expressive of its purpose, but rather the decoration (the bolt heads) is invested with a constructional meaning seemingly inspired by necessity. Haiko has termed this decorative artifice 'symbolic functionalism' in that the bolts represent the technology, economic, and time-saving attributes of this type of construction. It was the appearance rather than the reality upon which Wagner's artistic conception was based." (10:37). It is interesting to note that later, a similar approach to ornamentation by Louis Kahn was celebrated by the critics for its "honesty," whereas Wagner's approach was denigrated as fake.

Thus, while Wagner believed that "the artist has ... to show the construction clearly in the created art-form" (10:95), it was the basic idea which was the genesis for the architecture. Therefore, Wagner's concept of the "basic happy idea," is truly akin to Cassirer's concept of a symbolic form. Hence, it is Wagner, above any other individual, with his non-analogical response to architecture, that advanced architecture into a symbolic state. It is with Wagner that every element in a building becomes indicative of and supportive of only this basic idea, and not any ulterior meanings. It is with Wagner, that all elements of architecture, both the exterior and interior, are symbolically united in one autonomous form.

It is ironic then, that Oechslin, when describing Wagner's approach to architecture in *The Evolutionary Way to Modern Architecture* continues to use the metaphor of stilhülse und kern when Wagner himself moved beyond using the term. For example, Oechslin stated that "Wagner's architecture gradually detached itself from the Semperian language and 'peeled off' the shell, setting free, so to speak, the Kern of a modern conception" (7:368). While it is true that Wagner did finally arrive at what is called the modern conception, it is precisely this conception which is fundamentally opposed to an analogical or metaphorical response to architecture. Therefore, the concepts of shell and kern categorically do not apply. Thus, the following statement by Oechslin is very curious on many levels:

> When "Wagner spoke of the 'architectural development of the exterior' of the central pavilion of the War Ministry — of its 'combined motifs' stamping the building with its purpose — that corresponded to the function of succinctly presenting to the eyes the 'analogous symbols' that Bötticher attributed to the Hülle. It is clear that Wagner in no way thought to dispense with these architectural functions, which were indigenous to the tradition of classical theory" (7:395-396).

LOOS' DISMISSAL OF ORNAMENTATION, SINCE IT IMPEDES JUDGMENT

Each work of art has such strong inner laws, that it can only become manifest in one form.

— Adolf Loos, *Architecture* (14:6)

The concept of the "aesthetic idea," as described in the previous citation, is paramount to Adolf Loos' concept of architecture. The aesthetic idea, as Hans Christian Rott explains in *Loos Revisited*, which "could also refer to Goethe's use of the term *entelechy* in connection to the form of a work of art" (14:6), maintains form as the crucial element which allows true judgment to transpire in an individual. Thus, ornamentation in architecture, as an appliqué, should be abolished. As Loos stated in *The Luxury Vehicle* (1898), "to find beauty in form instead of making it dependent on ornament is the goal towards which humanity is aspiring" (15:36). Thus, as Rott develops in his article, Loos is ultimately opposed to ornamentation as an impediment towards true judgment, and not for the more mundane polemics often cited as the reason.[22]

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[22]The following are two such examples that focus on the polemics of Loos' dismissal of

In *Loos Revisited*, Rott explains that Loos' writings are a development of Kantian philosophy, and thus, they should properly viewed as an extension or "popularization" of the *Critique of Judgment.* As Rott states,

> When one looks at *Ornament and Crime* and goes beyond the polemics of the article, which was after all really meat to shock the professions and the public, and views it in the light of the *Critique of Judgment*, the power of the original article seems to be undiminished when used as a filter to view current directions in the arts and architecture ... what appears to be inconsistent and contradictory when viewed through the often simplistic criteria of architectural theory, could be quite logical and consistent when analyzed with a more powerful guide, as a coherent philosophical system might offer. (14:4,3)

Thus, due to the importance of Kantian thought in Loos, it would be fruitful to look at a few of the central points in Kant's *Critique of Judgment* that Loos developed his theory of ornamentation from, as Rott offers in his article.

As mentioned earlier, Kant divided the mind into three faculties: reason, intuition, and understanding. Intuition, or "re-presentation of the imagination," as opposed to reason and understanding, is the "faculty of presenting aesthetical ideas." As Kant said, "the imagination is very powerful in creating another nature, as it were, out of the material that actual nature gives it. We entertain ourselves with it when experience becomes too commonplace, and by it we remold experience, always indeed in accordance with analogical laws, but yet also in accordance with principles which occupy a higher place in reason." Thus, the schemata (or Cassirer's symbolic forms) help transcend intuition and reason by going beyond analogical constructs, so that "we feel our freedom from the law of association (which attaches to the empirical employment of imagination), so that the material supplied to us by nature in accordance with this law can be worked up into something different which surpasses nature." This is the essence of the creative act.

Further, Kant distinguishes between "free beauties" and "adherent beauties." Free beauties have no "presupposed concept of any purpose which the manifold of the given object is to serve, and which therefore is to be represented in it," thus any "judgments of taste" regarding such objects can be "pure;" whereas adherent beauties, such as the "beauty of a building (be it church, palace, arsenal, or summer house), presupposes a concept of the purpose which determines what the thing is to be; and consequently a concept of its perfection" is a "hindrance to the purity of the judgment of taste." Thus Kant distinguishes between the "satisfaction in the manifold of a thing in reference to the internal purpose which determines its possibility as a satisfaction grounded

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ornamentation, which seem somewhat simplistic given the broader and more fundamental context of Loos' position. The first is by Sir John Summerson, who stated, that "what Loos intended in his assault on ornament was not the elimination of ornament as such, but the elimination of waste — the waste of human labor and human skill (in this he showed himself a disciple of Ruskin). He believed also that as civilization advanced, ornament became psychologically superfluous. (16:6); and the second is by Kenneth Frampton, who claimed that "Loos' *ultimate* argument against ornament was not only that it was a waste of labor and material, but that it invariably entailed a punitive form of craft slavery that could only be justified for those to whom the highest achievements of bourgeois culture were inaccessible — for those craftsmen who could only find their aesthetic fulfillment in the spontaneous creation of ornament." (17:91)

on a concept" and the "satisfaction in beauty as such as presupposes no concept, but is immediately bound up with the representation through which the object is given." Therefore, to help purify the judgment of taste, the concepts of purpose must be kept subordinate to the presentation of the actual object." And here, form is paramount. As Kant states, it is through "the form of the object" alone that the judgment of taste remains free. "A judgment of taste, then, in respect of an object with a definite internal purpose, can only be pure if either the person judging has no concept of this purpose, or else abstracts from it in his judgment."

Loos, in an extension of Kant's thought, believed that ornamentation in a building impedes the "freed and pure judgment of taste" because its impedes the form. Loos perceived of ornamentation as a "charm," which, as Kant stated in the *Critique of Judgment*, detracts from judgment, since it detracts from a true perception of the form:

> A judgment of taste on which charm and emotion have no influence (although they may be bound up with the satisfaction in the beautiful) which therefore has as its determining ground merely the purposiveness of the form — is a pure judgment of taste. (14:15)

Therefore, it is "the importance Loos played on the formation of judgment" (14:14) that is the genesis for Loos' attacks on ornamentation; for him ornamentation is an impediment to a pure sense of judgment. Thus, all of Loos' attacks with regards to ornamentation as a lack of culture[23] are direct echoes of Kantian thought regarding charm.[24]

Every period had its style: why was it that our period has the only one to be denied a style? By "style: was meant ornament. I said, "Weep not. Behold! What makes our period so important is that it is incapable of producing new ornament. We have outgrown ornament, we have struggled through to a state without ornament. Behold, the time is at hand, fulfillment awaits us. Soon the streets of the cities will glow like white wall! Like Zion, the Holy City, the capital of Heaven. It is then that fulfillment will have come.

— Adolf Loos, *Ornament and Crime* (16:100)

THE QUESTION OF MORALITY

As mentioned earlier, one point of contention in Oechslin's *Evolutionary Way to Modern Architecture* is his codification of analogical terms that maintain a presumed dichotomy in architecture between exterior and interior, and which categorically do not apply in the modern context. Thus, when Oechslin stated that

> It seems obvious that the idea of the Kern-freed of all decorative accessories and in keeping with the idea of pure volume and the simple, readable "primary forms" that

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[23]For example, in *Ornament and Education* Loos states, "only those implements are ornamented which are dependent on a certain part of humanity — I call them the part devoid of culture." (14:12)
[24]That taste is always barbaric which needs a mixture of charms and emotions in order that there may be satisfaction, and still more so if it make these the measure of its assent. (14:15)

> were emphasized, for example, in Le Corbusier's *Vers une Architecture*-defines the essence of the modern architectural approach to form (7:368)

this seems questionable; while it is true that the modern approach freed architecture from all "decorative accessories," it is also true that the modern approach freed architecture from metaphorical concepts of hull and kern. Additionally, as seen in Wagner, and certainly reinforced with Louis Kahn, constructional approaches to form, in which tool-marks are treated aesthetically, is certainly acceptable to the "modern approach," since ornamentation is morphologically integrated. Thus, a certain type of ornamentation can be perceived of in a symbolic form as a necessary constituent.

However, there is another controversial point in *The Evolutionary Way to Modern Architecture*, and that is when Oechslin interjects the concept of morality into his metaphor*:*

> The metaphor ... distinguishes ... between the interior (Kern) and the exterior covering (Hülle) and presumes in its familiar usage a moral advantage and disadvantage: the Kern is good, the Hülle conceals and deceives. For modern criticism, the metaphor and its critical assessment could easily be affixed to historicist decoration. (7:368)

But is it really about morality? All questions about a moral distinction between inside and outside become obsolete when the distinction itself is no longer applicable. Thus, in the symbolic context in architecture, it is not that morality itself is not an issue, it is just that a moral, qualitative distinction between two equally important elements which are ultimately perceived morphologically absolves.

CHP. III. A DENIAL OF CLARITY: THE SYMBOLIST MOVEMENT IN ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Our only chance, in this world, of a complete happiness, lies in the measure of our success in shutting the eyes of the mind, and deadening its sense of hearing, and dulling the keenness of its apprehension of the unknown. Knowing so much less than nothing, for we are entrapped in smiling and many-coloured appearances, our life may seem to be but a little space of leisure, in which it will be the necessary business of each of us to speculate on what is so rapidly becoming the past and so rapidly becoming the future, that scarcely existing present, which is after all our only possession. Yet, as the present passes from us, hardly to be enjoyed except as memory or as hope, and only with an at best partial recognition of the uncertainty or inutility of both, it is with a kind of terror that we wake up, every now and then, to the whole knowledge of our ignorance, and to some perception of where it is leading us. To live through a single day with that overpowering consciousness of our real positions, which, in the moments in which it alone it mercifully comes, is like blinding light or the thrust of a flaming sword, would drive any man out his senses. It is our hesitations, the excuses of our hearts, the compromises of our intelligence which save us. We can forget so much, we can bear suspense with so fortunate an evasion of its real issues; we are so admirably finite
    — Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (p. 324-325)

It isn't that difficult to understand why Edvard Munch created his infamous painting *The Scream* (1893) — its symbolist context, whose essence is perfectly captured by Arthur Symons in the previous quote, left him no choice. The symbolist movement was, in effect, a mistake; it's whole premise was based on an erroneous understanding of the word "symbol." For symbolists, whose philosophical "foundation" rested in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, a "symbol" ended up becoming a "representation" or an "allegory;" this was the antithesis of what Swedenborg described a symbol to be, which was a form to illuminate reality. And in a further irony, a symbolist work of art, *The Scream,* has degenerated one step lower than a mere sign — it has become an icon.[25]

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[25]This process of devaluation began almost immediately after the painting's completion. "When Munch exhibited this painting [i.e., the final, which was based on an earlier painting and two pastels] for the first time, he gave it the title of his earlier painting *Despair."* (19:114). Munch's original intention was to capture the "memory of a sunset" by painting the "clouds as blood ... red as blood — no, it was coagulated blood." (20:35). However, critical reaction to the painting focused on the visual symbol of the scream "as a personification of a mood of despair," rather than on the subjective "mood in which it originated." (19:114). For example, Franz Servaes described it as "insane colors screaming together loudly in bloody reds and cursing yellows ... my staring eyes and screaming mouth are all that I feel. Staring and screaming, screaming and staring." (19:115). And, in Stanislaw Przybyszewski's 1894 monograph on Edvard Munch, the painting was associated with a "note that Munch wrote on a sketch dated: Nice, January 22, 1892, for the painting *Despair:* 'I was walking one evening on a road ... I felt an infinite scream running through nature.' One must keep in mind that Munch was referring to another earlier painting which is

The Screamer's "likeness" is ubiquitous in contemporary society; it has appeared as an inflatable doll, on mouse-pads, in magazine ads and billboards, even as an animated version "pitching" automobiles in television commercials. This truly is a stark realization of the warning that Adorno sounded about the horrors of jargon.

THE SYMBOLISTS IN ART AND LITERATURE

Who were the symbolists? Anna Balakain, in her book *The Symbolist Movement: A Critical Appraisal,* gives an excellent overview of the symbolist movement and its participants. As she stated, "to the French, 'Symbolism' still denotes technically the period between 1885 and 1895, during which it became a widely espoused literary movement. As a specific literary school, 'Symbolism' may be written with a capital 'S.' Critics in the Anglo-Saxon world, on the other hand, tend to think of French symbolism (this time it is best written with a small 's') in terms of the 'big four' of French poetry of the second half of the nineteenth century: [Charles] Baudelaire, [Arthur] Rimbaud, [Paul] Verlaine, and [Stéphane] Mallarmé" (21:3).

The Symbolist literary school, or *cénacle,* influenced "poets and critics of England, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United States who first shared the experiences and memories of the *cénacle* and then took back with them their own evolved versions of the attitudes and conventions developed in Paris. (21:9). These followers included: Azorín, Gabriele D'Annunzio, Stefan George, Gerhardt Hauptmann, the Machado brothers, Count Maurice Maeterlinck, Stuart Mill, George Moore, Jean Moréas, Rainer Maria Rilke, Hoffman Sthal, Arthur Symons, Emile Verhaeren, Francis Viélé-Griffin, and William Butler Yeats. Thus, "symbolism (with a small 's') emerged from the narrow fold of the French Symbolist School and became a European movement that eventually extended to America and as far east as Japan" (21:103).

This movement also extended into the field of painting, and included: Jean Delville, Paul Gauguin, Fernand Khnopff, Gustav Klimt, Max Klinger, Edvard Munch, the Nabis (Pierre Bonnard, Maurice Denis, Aristide Maillol, Ker-Xavier Roussel, Paul Sérusier, Félix Vallotton, and Édouard Vuillard), Odilon Redon, and Georges-Pierre Seraut.

While "much of what was to be known as symbolism abroad was based not on Symbolism but on a translation or interpretation of French symbolism that was in fact a mutation of the original ... the Symbolists and their international coterie agreed on accepting a common origin in the philosophy of Swedenborg" (21:9,11).

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entitled *Mood and Sundown"* (20:35). However, in concession to such popular associations, Munch formally changed the title of his painting in 1894 in Stockholm to *Skrig* and "consistently retained it thereafter." (19:115). And as Øivind Bjerke claims in *Edvard Munch and Harald Sohlberg: Landscapes of the Mind*, this act "transformed the painting from an open, symbolist work to an emblem symbolizing the art of screaming" (20: 33).

SWEDENBORG AND CORRESPONDENCES

Emanuel Swedenborg's most influential work was *Heaven and Hell,* originally published in 1758. Aside from his rather bizarre claims, the organizing principle of Swedenborg's philosophy was a belief in "correspondences."

Correspondences were "symbols, i.e., phenomena in the physical world that had a dual meaning, one recognizable to the earthly perceptions of man, the other to his spiritual ones" (21:13). Swedenborg believed in the distinction between "anterior" and "posterior" existence — in the inherent division of spiritual perception and physical (or sensual) perception in man. As such, "every natural, physical vision, 'all things which exist in nature from the least to the greatest,' has its penumbra of spiritual recognition" (21:13). And the reason that correspondences had these dual meanings was because they emanated from "the Divine being" as "the Word ... a bond between heaven and man" (22:95). Thus, "if man were involved in the knowledge of correspondences, he would understand the Word in its spiritual meaning. In this way it would be granted him to understand arcana [things which lie hidden] of which he sees no trace in the literal meaning. The Word does contain a literal meaning and a spiritual meaning. The literal meaning is composed of worldly things, while the spiritual meaning is composed of heavenly things. Since the bond between heaven and earth is by correspondences, this kind of Word has been provided, in which the details do correspond, right down to the smallest letters." (22:96).

The following excerpt from *Heaven and Hell* shows such examples of correspondences:

> In general, a garden corresponds to Heaven viewed as to its discernment and wisdom. So Heaven is called "the garden of God" and "Paradise," [in the Bible] and also, by man, "a heavenly Paradise." Trees, species by species, correspond to perceptions and insights of what is good and true, the raw material of discernment and wisdom. So the ancient people, who were involved in the knowledge of correspondences, held their holy worship in the groves (22:93).

Therefore, for Swedenborg, symbols definitely were not allegories, but distinct forms which had parallel existences; with the posterior, natural existence the means through which man could be illuminated about reality, or anterior, spiritual existence. As such, a "direct application of Swedenborgism would strive toward order and clarification in a world of confusion and mystery" (21:14). Indeed, as Colin Wilson states in the Introduction to *Heaven and Hell,* Swedenborg was "obsessed with making himself clear" (22:20). Thus, the role of the artist would be to try and clarify both the spiritual and physical meanings of correspondences.

THE SYMBOLISTS AND THEIR DISTORTION OF SWEDENBORG'S CORRESPONDENCES

However, the symbolists superficially interpreted Swedenborg's concept of the word "symbol" to mean mere "representation" or a "sign," as "the word evolved in the century following Swedenborg" (21:14).[26] Thus, at its core, symbolism

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[26]During the 1700s, a "symbol" was predominantly understood to be "a formal authoritative statement or summary of the religious belief of the Christian church, or of a particular church or

was a mistake. The symbolists were against clarity of meaning in a work of art from not clearly understanding what Swedenborg meant in his philosophy. As Balakain stated, "the one meaning in Swedenborgism that no one accepted was the definition of symbol ... the entire history of literature form Romanticism to symbolism and on to Surrealism is, on the contrary, indicative of man's shunning of order and his cult of the mystery of things unknown rather than of a desire to associate illumination with order or rationality" (21:14). Indeed, while Swedenborg emphasized that correspondences were the way in which heaven communicated with man as revelations (Cf. 22:95), he also emphasized that man was not to speak back to heaven through correspondences, but as succinctly as possible in their own "natural language." Swedenborg explicitly devotes an entire chapter on how man is to communicate with angels and God (cf. *Angels' Speech With Man,* Chp. 28), and he says that man should speak in his own natural language, for the divine being will understand this naturally. Thus, a misreading of Swedenborg would lead to the belief that man needed to use correspondences to reply back to heaven. What symbolism ended up becoming was a movement obsessed with indirect communication through representation as a means of escaping reality.

"On September 18, 1886, the poet Jean Moréas published in the literary supplement to the Paris newspaper *Le Figaro* the "manifesto of [literary] Symbolism" ... the manifesto outlined the principal ideas of an expressive mode based on the rejection of visual reality and the evocation of feeling through form" (23:5). Regardless of any idealism contained in this original manifesto or subsequent ones, such as the one by 1886 by the critic Gustave Kahn in the journal *L'Evénement* (1886) or by Albert Aurier's "Le Symbolisme en peinture - Paul Gauguin" in *Mercure de France* (February 9, 1891), the following elements all became integral components of the symbolist movement: a rejection of all reality, indirect communication, affinity with music, "decadence," an altered state of consciousness, and a currency of stock "symbols." Now, while not every artist believed in every element, and while not every element is evident in every symbolist piece, these elements were the prevalent constants behind symbolism as a whole.

Their erroneous understanding of Swedenborg's concept of symbols led the symbolists away from direct expression in art towards a veiling of meaning. The symbolists believed that an artist should never clearly convey what they intend; they should "suggest, never describe" (23:6). Thus, Mallarmé protested "against any word that gives dimension to objects and puts them within the direct grasp of every man;" in Verlaine's work "there is the will not to communicate the subjective state directly to the reader, but to veil the purely biographical by means of metaphoric devices;" and Baudelaire "lead us to a

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sect; a creed or confession of faith, *spec.* the Apostles' Creed" (*Oxford English Dictionary,* Def. #1.a). However, during the 1800s, a symbol came to mean "something that stands for, represents, or denotes something else (not by exact resemblance, but by vague suggestion, or by some accidental or conventional relation); especially a material object representing or taken to represent something immaterial or abstract, as a being, idea, quality, or condition; a representative or typical figure, sign or token" (*Oxford English Dictionary,* Def. #2.a.)

new definition of poetry: the poem becomes an enigma" (21:83, 62, 49). So, instead of creating a truly symbolic work of art, the symbolists idealized representational "enigmas." This indirect verbal communication led George Moore to state in exasperation, "What is a symbol? Saying the opposite of what you mean?" (21:95).

It was inevitable that the symbolists, who believed in veiling direct communication behind suggestive "signs," ended up relying on the same stock "symbols" which were used repeatedly by a multitude of artists so that there could be a clear (and ultimately direct) understanding on how to interpret what was being suggested. Thus, clarity of expression, which the symbolists had tried to suppress, eventually reappeared in a different manner through the codification of signs. Some examples of these stock symbols included closed eyes, "fragile inner landscapes," "shadowy horizons," classical mythical figures, nymphs, palaces, blood, and swans. As Balakain said, "there are so many swans running the gamut of the poet's desire to express purity, virginity, emptiness, sterility, and all the nuances of the beautiful but cold void [in symbolism that] by the time we reach Yeats there will be not one, but nine and fifty of them in *The Wild Swans at Coole.* Finally, the Mexican poet Enrique González Martinez suggests that it is time for someone to 'wring the neck of the swan!'" (21:104).

Perhaps the most prevalent "symbol" in the entire symbolist movement was not a swan, but the dream, or more accurately, the end of the dream, which came to represent death. In a majority of symbolist work, refuge from reality was sought in a dream state; in paintings, this was "conveyed through the motif of sleeping or dreaming figures with downcast eyes as in Redon's *Temptation of St. Anthony*" and in literature, through "'silence,' 'solitude,' and 'isolation'" (23:10,8). Fundamentally, "all these symbols suggest in various degrees of intensity, the desire to escape, not to a new abode but away from a place that is distasteful to the poetic spirit" (21:106).

This desire to escape reality in the symbolist movement was what came to be called "decadence," or their "basis for concern with the macabre, the target of their images of mortality ... a flirtation with death" (21:51,52). The symbolists filled the void that was left from their defiance of reality with the ending of reality instead.

This almost maniacal concern of the symbolists with "decadence," if not ultimately paralyzing their movement, ended up stymieing artistic production. There are only so many times that an individual can obsess over the phrase "soon you must die" (from *Schluck und Jan*), before one does, at least artistically (21:139). Other such "inspiring" mantras from the movement included: "One must little by little break all the ties which bind one to life, and which invoke such a waste of precious energy" (Gabriele D'Annunzio, *Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* 21:121); "man is unable to rise above human existence or even to shape it" (21:139); and "we realize the infinite insignificance of action, its immense distance form the current of life" (18:328). Once again, Arthur Symons (who was apparently oblivious to its farcical quality) provides one of the most inauspicious comments made by an advocate of

symbolism, "Arthur Rimbaud's acute awareness that this banal, daily world is somehow not the real one, and ... uses language to void the world and penetrate through it to something else ... and that 'something else' is nothingness" (18:266).

Not surprisingly, in order to escape these horrific perceptions of reality, some symbolists turned to drug abuse as the ultimate anesthesia of the mind. Baudelaire actually celebrates this behavior in *Le Poème du haschisch,* where he writes that "intelligence is illuminated through intoxication. Hashish then spreads over all of life like a magical varnish" (21:40). Thus, drug abuse was actually glorified as the ideal way to "create a symbolist image ... where the first object that strikes your eye becomes a speaking symbol" (21:40).

Another consequence of symbolist thought was their distortion of Richard Wagner's concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Unlike Fiedler's concept of a total work of art, which centered around the creation of reality and the basis for artistic value the degree to which all the elements are indicative and supportive of this whole reality, Richard Wagner's concept centered around the "emotional impact of a work of art, which resulted from the combined expressive qualities of its poetry, music, and visual content" (23:7). It is surprising that the symbolists, who supposedly believed in shrouding meaning and indirect communication, were able to apply an overly literal interpretation of Richard Wagner's philosophy; the symbolists took Wagner's statements about the "music" in art to literally mean that all art should become music. Thus, a certain sect of literary symbolism became overzealous in emphasizing how words "sounded" in a poem at the expense of all meaning. The musicality of words was stressed, and poetry literally tried to become "music through its appeal to the ear rather than in its inherent function or in its effect on mental associations" (21:64).

Paul Verlaine, on discussing this trend in symbolist poetry, said that "it is not verse anymore, it is prose, and sometimes it is only nonsense" (21:95). While some critics today would disagree with Verlaine's addition of the word "sometimes" in that statement, it is unfortunate that Verlaine's warning was not heeded and the "nonsense" was perpetuated even further by symbolists who believed in a literal analogy between sound and color in art. René sums up this view by stating that "if the sound can be translated into color, the color can be translated into sound and immediately the timbre of an instrument. The whole discovery [of symbolism] lies there" (21:94). George Moore wittingly retorted to these types of views by saying "A — green — no yellow!" (21:95).

APPLIED ART IN ARCHITECTURE

Symbolism eventually infiltrated architecture when the appearance of an object, rather than its substance, began to dominate the movement. "Known as Art Nouveau in France, Belgium, and Great Britain, Jugendstil in Germany, and 'Secession' in Austria," it relied primarily on ornamentation as the means for providing meaning in architecture (23:18). The proponents of the symbolist movement in architecture embraced almost the identical terminology, dependence on symbols, cabalistic rites, and bastardization of correspondences that the literary and artistic movements had produced.

For example, in symbolist thought in architecture a "total work of art" was distorted to mean the "sum of all the arts." Swedenborg had stated that everything on earth has its spiritual correspondence in heaven, which was the way the natural and spiritual worlds were linked; however, the symbolists misguidedly interpreted Swedenborg's statements to mean that everything on earth has a correspondence with every *natural* phenomenon. This meant that each work of art needed to correspond to all the other arts. In architecture, this led to the requirement that *every* furnishing in a building needed to correspond to everything else, and thus, the explosion of "applied-art" products in symbolist architecture.

As Jane Kallir states in *Viennese Design and the Wiener Werkstätte,* "exhibition work was the perfect forum for a *Gesamtkunstwerk,* with the architectural setting and accouterments deliberately calculated to complement the art (fine and applied) on display" (24:61). Two such exhibitions, one held by the Darmstadt Artists' Colony and the other by the Secessionists, most directly reveal this convergence of applied-art thought in architecture.

The Darmstadt Artists' Colony was formed by the architects Joseph Maria Olbrich and Patriz Huber, the sculptors Ludwig Habich and Rudolf Bosselt, and the painters Peter Behrens, Paul Bürck and Hans Chirstiansen to advance symbolist thought regarding a "total work of art." As a result, in May 1901, the Artists' Colony exhibited "its *lifestyle* and 'habitat' as a total work of art, under the title 'Ein Dokument deutscher Kunst'" (17:79-80). The cabalistic opening ceremony of this exhibition was designed by Georg Fuchs and Peter Behrens, and was called, appropriately enough, *The Sign.*

The point of convergence for the Secessionists' XIVth Exhibition of 1902 was Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. This exhibition, in an inversion of the previous attempts by symbolists to make poetry music, literally tried to make a piece of music architecture: Gustav Mahler "created a special arrangement" of the symphony; Max Klinger created a sculpture of Beethoven which was placed in the center of the exhibition room in the Secession building; Klimt "interpreted the symphony in a monumental frieze that was mounted high on the wall, just below the ceiling;" Josef Hoffmann designed the exhibition's installation and plan; and even the "incidental furniture and specially designed wall ornaments" were coordinated around the theme of a "three-dimensional 'symphony,' whose symbolic and decorative movements were distributed all around the room." (24:62; 25:12)

In his book *Josef Hoffmann,* Giuliano Gresleri interprets Hoffmann's installation as follows:

> To the classicism of the plan corresponds, then, a 'symbolic' and more random reading of the plan. The architectural axis from the entry to the monument is contradicted by the elaborate path which the visitor must follow: he clearly knows where the object of his curiosity is located, but that same object is continually denied him, accessible only after he pass through shadowy areas, where friezes, furniture, winged figures winking at him from a twilight zone, masks and totems make up the mystical procession of the *Sacred Spring.* (25:12).

Indeed, Josef Hoffman was the leading advocate of applied-art thought in architecture. Besides being a co-founder of the Vienna Secession, editor of the Secessionist periodicals *Ver Sacrum* and *Hohe Warte*, and a teacher at the Applied Art School of the Austrian Museum for Art and Industry in Vienna, Hoffmann also formed his own company with Koloman Moser and Fritz Wärndorfer in 1903 called the Hoffmann/Moser Wiener Werkstätte "for the design, production and marketing of high-quality domestic objects" (17:81), which were essentially "applied-art" products consistent with the symbolist concept of a sum of all the arts.

Adolf Loos adeptly satirized the "absurd lengths" (16:246) of the symbolist concept of a total work of art in architecture in 1900 in his essay *The Poor Little Rich Man*. "There Loos portrayed the fate of a wealthy businessman who had commissioned a Secessionist architect to design a 'total' house for him, including not only the furnishings but also the clothes of the occupants[27]" (16:8):

> [The businessman] went to a famous architect and said, "Bring Art to me, bring Art into my home. Cost is no object." The architect did not wait for him to say it twice. He went into the rich man's home, threw out all his furniture, called in an army of parquet-floor layers, espalier specialists, lacquerers, masons, painters, carpenters, plumbers, potters, carpet layers, artists, and sculptors, and presto, quicker than you could blink an eye, Art was captured, boxed in, and taken into good custody within the four walls of the rich man's home ... several times the architect had to unroll his working drawings in order to rediscover the place for a matchbox" (15:125–126).

Further attacks against symbolist thought in architecture were launched by Loos in essays such as *Cultural Degeneration* (1908), *Architecture* (1910) and *Ornament and Crime* (1908), and in lectures such as *The Viennese Woe: Die Wiener Werkstätte* (1907?). While Loos' attacks against symbolism were the most renowned, they were not isolated critiques. Armin Friedmann lampooned Koloman Moser in *Pleasures of the Secessionist Table*: for designing, among

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[27]While this request might seem like a farcical invention of Loos, it wasn't. During the symbolist hysteria, many such requests were actually assumed by architects. For example, Peter Selz relates how "Henry Van de Velde and Hector Guimard followed William Morris by actually designing their wives' costumes so that the very gesture would become an integral part of the environment. It even went so far that when Toulouse-Lautrec was invited to a luncheon at Van de Velde's house at Uccle, the choice of food, its color and consistency harmonized with table-settings, curtains and the whole interior" (16:246). Further, it was "literally forbidden to move any object in a Hoffmann-designed room from its prescribed place, as the Swiss painter Ferdinand Hodler learned when, on a visit to Vienna, he tried this and was immediately corrected by a well-trained servant." (24:22)

other things, "cream buns," "Secessionist puff pastry," and "poppyseed noodles" in a *Gesamtkunstwerk* table-layout for a Secessionist exhibition (26:60); Karl Kraus inveighed that even "the dirt off the street in their homes" was part of Secessionist designs by Hoffmann (26:90); and, Streiter optimistically referred "to this infatuation with symbolism only as a 'mannerism and affectation' and 'dilettantish arrogance'" (27:13). However, when symbolist thought and the concept of "applied-art" ended up having a longer staying power than anticipated, more severe reactions to it emerged. Eventually, the word "architecture" itself became so profaned "by its symbolic and stylistic associations of the Decadenz" that the word "Baukunst" was used instead as a replacement by many architects in the first decade of the twentieth century (27:14). "Literally meaning 'building-art' it signified a beauty that must be built-in and not applied, an art governed by necessity, construction and utility" (28:115). Even Otto Wagner changed the title of his book *Modern Architecture* to *Building-Art of Our Time* in 1914.

However, the most scathing indictment against the symbolists was inadvertently given by a symbolist himself, Charles Baudelaire. After reading Gustave Flaubert's novel *Sentimental Education — The History of a Young Man,* Baudelaire identified himself with the "fictional" protagonist, Frederick Moreau. *Sentimental Education* was Flaubert's satiric reaction against "esthetes" (or "dandies") who had no true artistic calling, dedication, or perseverance, and were subject to fashionable approaches to art, easily swayed by appearances rather than substance. In effect, *Sentimental Education* was an indictment against a movement such as symbolism. Thus, it is ironic that one of its leaders, Baudelaire, "thought of himself as a dandy" who was "so well depicted by Flaubert in *L'Education Sentimentale.* The dandy was the mid-century image of the lazy, egocentric man approaching middle age, yet with no real achievements to his record; opportunist in affairs of the heart; well dressed, although somewhat eccentrically; bored, so bored, having experimented with all ideas and experiences and having reduced them all to the same meaningless void" (21:50-51); so meaningless, that by the end of the novel, Frederick Moreau, as a "dandy," realizes that the greatest achievement of his life was the night he spent in a brothel.

AUTOCHTHONY AND THE END OF THE SYMBOLIST MOVEMENT

The end of the symbolist movement was just as nonsingular as the end of Frederick Moreau's life in Flaubert's novel; while there wasn't a distinct event which directly caused its demise, it was the underlying philosophy of the symbolist movement itself which produced the imminent conclusion to symbolist thought.[28] As described earlier, the symbolist movement, which was based on

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[28]Thus, the following are only catalysts to the decline of symbolism, and should not be considered the primary reasons for its demise: the discontinuation of *Ver Sacrum* in 1903; the ongoing critical attacks previously mentioned; the "power of style-shaping opinion [Riegl's *Kunstwollen*]" (29:109) which began to sour on symbolist work around 1905; and the "shift in emphasis" from "*hard* goods, such as buildings and furniture, to *soft* objects, such as garments and textiles" at the Wiener Werkstätte in 1911 (26:62).

an analogical (and frequently mimetic) state, instead of a truly symbolic one, relied heavily on representation in building. Therefore, it was inevitable that nationalistic representation would eventually be assumed into symbolist thought.

Autochthony, an attempt to impart a national consciousness into architecture, underlied the reappearance of neoclassical elements in symbolist architecture. Basically, it was an attempt to impart buildings of the present with qualities or elements from models of past, vernacular architecture. As Eduard Sekler states, "the English models often came from late medieval vernacular architecture, whereas in central Europe, later buildings, frequently influenced by the world of classical forms, presented themselves as models" (29:122). Autochthony, based in part on political insecurity and instability, consumed most of Europe "after 1906" (26:56). And the symbolist architects, such as Olbrich and Behrens in Germany and Hoffman in Austria, succumbed to autochthony. Thus, it is autochthony, and not "classicization," which ended the Secession, Jugendstil, and Art Nouveau movements in architecture.

The origins of autochthony in Austria, which was paralleled in other countries, were from a variety of sources. In 1901, Lichtwark "called for the cultivation of the vernacular in artistic education" in his book *Palastfenster und Flügelthür.* (29:121). Then, in 1902, Hermann Muthesius, on observing the trend in England, called for a "return to simplicity and naturalness in our civic architecture as it has been observed in our old rural buildings ... If we but remain attached to the autochthonous; and if each of us only follows his personal artistic inclination in an uninfluenced manner, then we shall soon have not only a reasonable but also a national civic architecture" (29:122). "In literature, from Anzengruber and Ganghofer to Rosegger and Schönherr, there were numerous parallels for the preoccupation with the world of the peasant, and it may be assumed that this arose not only from purely artistic considerations but equally for ideological reasons of the most varied colors: from 1904 onward, side by side with other movements of cultural reform, those for the protection of folklore and homeland ("Heimatschutz") gained increasing influence. (29:121). And, in 1912, Hofrat Dr. Adolf Vetter gave a lecture on *The Significance of the Werkbund Idea for Austria* in which he explained, "Whoever correctly understands the Werkbund-movement knows that in its essence it must be autochthonous and national" (29:122).

However, it was Paul Shultze-Naumburg who was the strongest advocate for autochthony. *Hohe Warte*, a newspaper edited by Josef August Lux, included the call for "preservation of townscapes and monuments, as well as folk art and for the protection of the nation's cultural heritage" (29:121). Shultze-Naumburg, as a regular contributor to *Hohe Warte,* was the leading voice for "culture works" [Kulturarbeiten]. Indeed, he published his own book of the same title in which he championed vernacular architecture. "The paradigmatic buildings illustrated in the *Kulturarbeiten* are mostly neoclassical and frequently occur in a rural context. The accompanying text left no doubt that there, one was dealing not merely with aesthetic questions but with an ethical and social problem: it called for a warding off of 'the raw and joyless

countenance of a depraved nation that distorts the sense of life into vegetating'" (29:122).[29]

Hoffmann, who had his own copies of *Kulturarbeiten* bound at his Wiener Werkstätte, was not quite so dogmatic in his implementation of autochthony. "In contrast to the doctrinaire advocates of autochthonous architecture who insisted unconditionally on vernacular forms — Hoffmann differentiated his formal language depending on whether he had to deal with a building in generally rural surrounding or with a suburban villa (29:134). Hoffmann's interest in rural life and folk art was evidenced as early as 1897, in his *Architectural Matters from the Island of Capri*: "The example of folk art, as it actually exists here in these simple country houses, exerts a great effect on every unprejudiced mind and lets us feel more and more how much we miss this at home" (29:479). However Hoffmann's interest in folk art and respect for tradition conflicted with his opposition to imitative design.[30] His resolution was to "incorporate the precepts but not the specific forms of the past" (26:56). Thus, classical proportions, motifs and compositions were combined with local materials in many buildings by Hoffmann from 1904-1915. The Kunstchau Exhibition (1908) and the Primavesi House (1913-1914) are both examples of Hoffmann's compromise between past and present architecture, while at the same time attempting to incorporate autochthony.

In the Primavesi house, the "sculptor Anton Hanak, Mrs. Primavesi and Hoffmann cooked up the idea of a house that would reflect, both in style and in the most exclusive use of local materials, regional peasant architecture. This was a *Gesamtkunstwerk* in a new key — a full-fledged log house, complete with thatched roof, cheerful, painted 'peasant' furniture and carvings, hand-embroidered bed linens, and even casually elegant silk robes that the Primavesi's frequent houseguests were supposed to wear to dinner. Every detail was designed by the Wiener Werkstätte to evoke a bucolic utopia, 'not the way it really was, but the way we dreamed it should be,' Mrs. Primavesi's daughter remembered. She also recalled, however, that her own room, with its busy blue-patterned wall-paper could be oppressive and that she sometimes felt compelled to retreat to the wood shed" (26:58).

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[29]Eduard Sekler states that "Shultze-Naumburg [eventually] became a leading ideologue of National Socialist cultural policies with books like *Kunst aus Blut und Boden* (1934)" (29: 511). Thus, both Sekler and Jane Kallir establish a direct link between the concept of Gesamtkunstwerk in symbolist architecture and that of "Hitler's totalitarian regime — the ultimate *Gesamtkunstwerk*" (26:22). (cf.29:122).

[30]An example of Hoffmann's opposition to imitative designs can be found in his essay, *Simple Furniture* (1901): "They forget that even the best copy will only be just a copy and that nothing can bring back the old value ... Yet it is man's greatest gift to will something himself and to create something new and personal (29: 483).

CONCLUSION

As Charles Hendel stated in the Introduction to *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, Cassirer unequivocally rejected any notion that cultural forms could be expressive of the spirit of a nation. In the section titled, "The Problem of the Ordering of Herder's Thousand Protean Forms and the Rejection of a Solution in National Terms" (1:41–43), Hendel explained that Cassirer, specifically referring to creative activity and art, "rejected ... national unity as a principle" since it is an inherently flawed attempt at trying to transpose an untranslatable idea developed from another symbolic form [historical theory], onto a disparate symbolic form [art]. Thus, the fundamental mistake which symbolist architects made was believing that autochthony in architecture was an objective universality of the symbolic form of architecture. However, it is the distinctiveness [or purpose] of each symbolic form which is the objective for that symbolic form:

> The universal function of art, for instance, is the same in ancient and in a modern civilization and not only for man in the civilized condition but in prehistory as well. It is a human function and it persists in the history of mankind. Self-expression in art is thus recognizable as art and not as something else in many different modes of expression of different peoples of the world. And there is a permanence and a continuity of every such cultural form not only in art, but also in religion, science, morality. (43)

Thus, within the context of symbolic forms, it is not only autochthony which is inherently flawed in architecture, but *any* attempt at trying to perceive of an *autonomous* concept from a different symbolic form, even if it is from another symbolic form of art, as if it were an objective reality of architecture. This idea lead to Loos' famous passage that

> A novel which makes a good play, is equally bad as novel and play. But it is an even worse cased, when two different arts can be mixed together, even if they display certain tangent points. A picture, which is useful for a panopticum ensemble is a bad picture. The salon tiroler [directly translated as a Parlor Tirolean; the current equivalent would be the dude-ranch cowboy] can be seen at Kastan, but not a sunrise by Monet or an etching by Whistler. It is terrifying however, when an architectural rendering, which by its qualities must be accepted as a work of graphic art — and there are really graphic artists among the architects - gets executed in stone, steel and glass. Because the sign of the genuinely conceived building is: that it has no effect in the plane. (14:6–7)

Thus, as was shown in this paper, every attempt at imparting "meaning" in architecture by extending beyond the autonomous objectives of architecture and trying to transpose disparate objectives from other symbolic forms, ultimately prevents meaning from being perceived in that architectural construct. From the symbolists, who tried to translate concepts of music, poetry, and religion into architecture — to Semper's and Riegl's ethnographic basis for meaning in architecture — to Sullivan's analogical basis of nature for meaning architecture — each of these responses is ultimately a denial of architecture as

a unique symbolic form since it relies on elements outside of architecture for its significance.

The underlying concept of the symbolic form of architecture is the idea that architecture can be a meaningful, symbolic form, but that the only basis for judgment in architecture is within the objectives of architecture itself. As Hendel stated, "in every case 'symbolic form' is a condition either of the knowledge of meaning or of the human expression of a meaning. In art, the image or the content has its significance in virtue of the formal structure according to which the creation of the work of art is made" (1: 53) Additionally, it is an architect's subjective responses to the objective truths of architecture which allow other individuals to subjectively transcend — not only to the objectiveness of architecture — but ultimately to the objectivity of what is fundamentally human and the human spirit itself. This is the purpose of the symbolic form of architecture, and of all symbolic forms.

An obvious question would now be what are the universal concepts of architecture which are autonomous and indicative of only this symbolic form, and what are the universals which penetrate to the larger category of the symbolic form of art?

It is hoped that this paper has at least provided an initial understanding in this regard. For example, Semper's discussion on the necessity and use of color as an element to transcend the materiality in architecture would be something that could be classified as an architectural objective, even though the use of color itself is used throughout the visual arts. Conversely, the geometric authorities as explained by Semper and the Geometric Style discussed by Riegl wouldn't be limited to just architecture, as Semper himself stated, but to all the visual arts as well.

Furthermore, as an initial investigation into the concept of symbolic forms of architecture, this thesis, of course leaves many questions that were discussed unanswered. For example, what exactly was Bötticher's concept of *Junktur,* or what precisely was Wagner's notion of the *basic happy idea*? These concepts would be very germane to an understanding of the objectivity and subjectivity of architecture, and so would merit additional research. Additionally, within the context of this paper, there are many natural points of departure for subsequent studies:

- the psychological aspects of symbolic form were not specifically addressed, so a point of discussion might involve Heinrich Wölfflin and his emphasis on the psychological aspects regarding aesthetics and "pure form."
- the concept of the genius loci would also be worth examining; both Wagner's *Modern Architecture (cf. MA:84)* and Loos' *Vernacular Art* (1914) would be fruitful sources regarding this issue.
- ideas of necessity in relation to aesthetics would also be worth examining; Wagner's statement that "something impractical cannot be beautiful" (MA:82), Sullivan's statement that "architectural ornament ... is desirable, because beautiful and inspiring" (AOLS:34), and Loos' essay *Architecture*, which distinguishes art and aesthetics based on necessity would be natural points of departure.

- an interpretation of what came after the modern movement within the context of the symbolic form of architecture.

Additionally, this examination generated many new questions that went beyond the scope of this paper, specifically regarding the concepts of truth, aesthetics, and morality and their relation to symbolic forms. Thus, future studies on the symbolic form of architecture would need to address these issues. Ultimately though, the concept of symbolic forms resides in concepts of truth and ethics. For example, as Charles Hendel related in the section titled "The Ethical Task" in the Introduction to *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1:64–65), that "implicit" within Cassirer's work was an

> ethical imperative which had been expressed openly in *The Essay on Culture*: ... We must learn our own personal responsibility in this matter. And the ideal to keep in mind [is] that of a genuinely "humanistic" culture. And it was the object of the *Essay on Man* to show what this meant in all the forms of human culture [i.e., symbolic forms] — myth, religion, language, art, history, science ... And the last paragraph of his book [*Essay on Man*] contains a summons to an ethical task, for "Human culture taken as whole may be described as the process of man's progressive self-liberation." (1:65)

Finally, the most obvious course of study would be to question the fundamental concepts of symbolic forms on a philosophical level. Since any criticism of symbolic forms is ultimately a criticism of Kantian thought, a true understanding of symbolic forms can only be possible by examining those who were opposed to Kantian philosophy on the same level of discussion which he himself engaged in.

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