

I would like to contribute only with three points to architectural history as social history.

I learned: Only the real problems with their pressures give the motivation to look for other goals, other ways to solutions, other methods, other forms of messages and other kinds of involvements.

Architecture does not exist in architecture, but in the heads, in the feet, in the hands of man. It is an abstraction which is not allowed to think that architecture consists only in itself - without people.

That what generations of historians of art called objective is in fact a subjectivism - a position in which there only exists the historian himself.

At first fighting in action groups in the heart of the cities, then in the workers quarters of the Ruhr-district I learned, that perception of architecture within the different classes of society is diverse.

I would like to give you three examples describing architecture as a social fact.

1. "The citizenry of the middle ages banded together in protective and self-aid fellowships against the threat and suppression of land-owners. Within the cooperative organization every citizen took over a defined task: building the town wall, the town militia, fire department and other municipal responsibilities. He assumed responsibility for street cleaning, lighting, sanitation, disposal of dirt by daily cleaning and rinsing of the pavements and for repairs of the streets. Thus the street was not a matter of service by the town, but an object of self-aid, maintained by each inhabitant who cared for it as if it were his property. There was no division between private and public matter, because every citizen and every guild member considered himself as representing the public. The neighbour used the street in the way he used his property, all functions of his home could be moved into the street. The number of citizens not native to the town increased. Streets became increasingly used by non-neighbours and by vehicles. Having been regarded more or less as private front yards, the streets became public property and were laid out and maintained by the township"★.

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★ Günther Kokkelink/Rudolf Menke, Die Straße und ihre sozialgeschichtliche Entwicklung - ein Gespräch: Bauwelt 68, 1977, Nr. 12 (Stadtbauwelt 53), S. 344/58 Hier: S. 355/56.

This analysis demonstrates that the street has been shaped by its functions. Mere admiration reflects lack of understanding of the functional value of architectural structures.

The anatomist knows that every structure in the animal body is shaped by the function it serves. Motions, gestures and mimic convey messages for other people. Unless these complexities have been resolved, art historians should refrain from speculation.

The consequences of the changing social facts are to be seen - we find a lot of visual phenomena, which we cannot explain without knowing their social substance.

For instance: Stefan Muthesius showed to us how you can read the status of the owner of house-facades.

Modesty of a facade, care of a house - they are social facts and can be explained by methods of sociology and psychology.

Architecture consists of social facts; if they are ignored then there can be no real research into architecture.

2. In a study my wife and I have tried to define architectural factors in view of their psychological impact upon the individual and upon groups ("individual psychology" and "social psychology").  
Of the 24 separate factors that we have been able to identify, I will select one.

*The ground floor window:*

- When windows are at ground floor level, people feel like participants of life on the outside.
- People have no feeling of distance, they experience the street from the same eye-level like pedestrians - their experience of reality is alike.
- From a room in the house, from safety, one can chat with a passer-by.
- This way of communication is very important for children. The mental umbilical cord between mother and child is important during certain phases of development. Children need, at certain phases of their mental growth, their mother's affirmation every several minutes. Is she within reach, she does not have to stop work, but will interrupt it for a short time.  
Wherever structures are hostile to children, thresholds and long distances between mother and child, they find insufficient affirmation. Therefore, the growth of their self-confidence and their assurance of learning and thereby the quality and volume of learning will suffer. Most of these architectural elements are difficult to describe. But I believe that it will be part of our work to find words for facts that we perceive visually or subconsciously.

Our goal is to verbalize perceptions that we have made using not only one but all our senses.

3. If all architecture is man-made, I don't see why we continue to describe architecture in terms unrelated to the way in which it is perceived by the inhabitants and the majority of mankind. To put it differently and positively: I believe that scientists have the task of defining the effects of architecture.

Perception starts at the level of an individual trotting down the hallway of a building at 6:30, turning off, as completely as possible - at least at this time of the day -, any claims for attention which this structure may present.

The other extreme of perceiving architecture may give another example.

A writer describes the psychological impact during a scene in which a group of workers pay a high degree of attention to a particular building.

I took it from a novel entitled "Union of the Firm Hand" by Eric Reger, published in 1930 (reprinted 1976; Scriptor Kronberg):

"The executive building was steep roofed, with thick, dark walls, shooting up from the narrow street. Its many projections of rough hewn stone gave the impression of violent and deterrent defiance. The small group of steel mill workers stood before it looking at the invincible fortress. Their necks ached from looking up; the rows of windows interrupted by pilasters were disturbing and rejecting, the large stone surfaces stretched discouragingly wide.

There was no fixed place to concentrate upon.

They did not even know behind which of the windows were those of the directorial offices. Amidst this knotty architecture all glass looked evenly cold, dark and impenetrable, like the hollow eyes in a blind man's face" (S. 190).

Personally for myself this has a consequence: Before prolonging the tradition of speculation about architecture, I would like to try to explain architecture with all methods we can use - putting forward architectural science as a science and no longer as a belief, like a certain kind of religion.

I suppose:

Not having a knowledge of the complexity of the presence, we are not able to give better and helpful explanations of the past and the future.

We should develop methods combining social science and history of architecture - I believe - is a *special kind* of social science.

The aesthetic side is not separate from the social side - I suppose: this is the same fact.

I suppose that many scientists use the term aesthetic in the sense of a Killer-phrase that will stop social research.

The workers perceive in the *psychological expression* the meaning of the *social conflict*.

A message whose content we can explain in the level of sociology has a peculiar presentation in the level of psychology.

Against the cynism we see and feel in the city-development processes, we shall put the fundamental, detailed and precise critic and the contraposition of the positive areas with their social structures which can mark the starting point for social developments in future.

The other side of this complex may be perhaps: Having no knowledge about the social substance, scientists have no interest in them.