Regardless of their general knowledge, most people feel that the architect's function is that of a beautifier, some sort of exterior decorator, whose main forte is to dress-up a building after the engineer has resolved all the real problems. They assume this is analogous to the way in which we, the aesthetes, "aesthetics," which pertains to some dogmatic theories on balance, rhythm, proportion, composition, symmetry, or asymmetry.

This false image of architecture was created during the 19th century when we lost our sense of real values. In this period the architect was asked to put a roof over the heads of men. He was interested mostly in buildings. This approach became so self-centered that it completely negated function, structure, site, technology, cost, and moral responsibility. This attitude became more deeply entrenched because of the introduction of the concept that buildings, although not inherently adhered to by most schools until 1940; this educational system is the reason some architects nostalgically practice in this manner even today.

Unfortunately, even though this architectural approach has generally been discarded, the image which it created still remains in the minds of people in general. Also, the people with this image have placed architecture on the same critical basis as painting, music, and literature. Although the design elements are the same - space, structure, light, material, and construction - people in this critical approach completely ignore the psychological aspects, the sociological necessity and utilitarian needs which are essential to take into account in evaluating architecture. All of these elements should be orchestrated in such a manner as to resolve the inherent problems of architecture. The end result of satisfying the requirements of all elements has nothing to do with applied aesthetics, but is a direct expression of the problem and its solution.

For example, let us analyze the element of space within this context. We will find that it is not the same space with which the painter is concerned. Historically, the element of space has been in a continual state of flux, and most of the protests against today's architecture stems from the fact that the concept of space has changed from a series of sequential space-cell experiences to experiences of the interpenetration and transition of fluid spatial forms, which are dynamic rather than static experiences.

We are all familiar with single space-cell rectangles which are nothing more than typical rooms with four walls, floors and ceilings, with holes punched in the walls for light and view. In most buildings, these rooms are separate and distinct spaces entered abruptly from another space of similar singularity through a small opening. From the exterior these enclosed spaces form a cube which imposes itself on the landscape. This cube is an absolute beginning and end, and reflects only a total openness and total closure.

This new concept of space architecture has been made possible through the development of glass and steel and the genius of Frank Lloyd Wright. This new concept of space and space transition has been adopted by contemporary architects. They realize that this vital spatial concept can satisfy the spiritual needs of man within the disciplines of structure, materials, content, place, and time. No longer does the architect have to revert to the falseness of eclecticism in order to create an emotional statement.

Space concepts are difficult to teach and more difficult to comprehend. Actually, in design they are never fully realized until one experiences the building. The sense of three dimensional space, visually created by perspective drawings, on a two dimensional surface is practically impossible for a client to understand until the design is realized in a building. He can see the design most clearly through models, but here is must be understood that the magnitude of the space will multiply a hundred times in actuality.

This very limiting medium of representing three dimensions in two can be clarified to some extent by a verbal analysis of space form, space transition, space scale, and space character. In actual fact, basic considerations are all integrated to work as one, but, in order to simplify the explanation, they will be treated separately.

Space Form is concerned with the shape and size of the physical and psychological space. This size is defined by the natural landscape they are placed in (planting of physical plant life, such as a tree or a brick). The uses of the physical objects change the infinite space to a comprehensible form. For example, in New Mexico we have a skyscape of undefined limits in all dimensions, magnitude, and the infinity of this space is important psychologically in the individual's reactions to New Mexico. Some people in this space suffer from what is known as agoraphobia, which is a sense of insecurity, insignificance and loneliness due to open spaces.

In order to resolve this feeling, we can place certain materials around the individual, defining a space which he would feel safe in. This is the concept of space scale. The problem in using the fluid space concept is that this space becomes very intangible when one wall is glass. The space in this direction is not defined for it flows through the glass; however, I am convinced that this space does not continue to infinity, but stops somewhere beyond the glass wall. The question here is - how far beyond? Is it my feeling that it stops in a direct proportion to the rectangular volume consciously understood by the individual and suggested by the height and width of the physical objects.

An example of this theory is that if one is sitting in a space completely enclosed except for one wall being glass, the physical volume of the space is fifteen feet wide, sixteen feet long and ten feet high, but the psychological space is increased to a twenty-foot length, extending ten feet beyond the glass wall. The spatial extension is not, of course, this exact, for it varies with each individual's concept of the perfect rectangle. This psychological space form also changes dimensions due to climatic conditions (rain, snow, heat, and light).

It must be remembered that the architecture most of us have experienced was not concerned with this phenomenon, for space was always clearly defined and fixed.

Space Transition is concerned with the interpenetration of spatial elements through transitions from one area to the next, organized in a sequential space experience.

In the past one hundred and fifty years we have been accustomed to enter a building directly from an infinite space through a door into a room of tangible definition.

In designing with space transition, the spaces are organized into a series of experiences before one enters a total enclosure. For example, in the process of entering one would pass under an overhang which does not completely define the vertical space; then the ceiling appears low which partially defines the horizontal flow. The next space one might enter could have a changed form and definition of closure. Sometimes this might be a smooth series of space transitions. At other times it might be a sharp contrast. This would depend on the architect's intent in conveying a certain emotional experience. At Taliesin West F. L. Wright manipulates one through forty spatial experiences before entering the living room.

This theory of space expands the architect's palette and is the influence of architecture. No longer are buildings cubital statements with a beginning and an end, and outside and inside clearly defined. Now buildings can reach out and subtly integrate themselves into the landscape.

Space Scale is the psychological relationship of an individual's emotions to the space (a sense of being down or strength or weakness). This response is greatly affected by the number of individuals in the space, so that it becomes a fluctuating dynamic experience, giving life to the space. For example, if one person was alone in a space used as a gymnasium his response psychologically to that space would be totally different than if there were five thousand people within the same space.

The architect can establish a frame of reference to assist the individual in space scale. This is done by organizing column centers and the inherent module of materials he selects, such as block, brick, and plywood panels.

Space Character is the psychological atmosphere conveyed by the space, and is generally the result of the human activity within the space. For example, the same space form serving as a bar would generate a very different response from that used as a church.

The architect can intensify this human response to the space form by using materials which contain within themselves certain emotional connotation such as brick, concrete, and aluminum. For example, space which is defined by stone conveys a psychological response to an individual quite different from one which is defined by steel or glass. It helps us to determine the point of departure that the architect wishes to convey within the space.

There are many more ramifications to space architecture than are stated here, such as the time it takes one to travel through the space, the adding of color which might intensify the space form or even change it. The complexity of the subject makes a partial presentation necessary.
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