The Thesis, The Pendulum, and The Battlefield

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The architecture thesis is the rite of passage for graduating students of architecture in many American academic institutions. It is meant, in principle, to demonstrate mastery of architecture, both as a field of study and a profession, through a yearlong concentrated engagement with an architectural project, encompassing both a written and a design proposal. Much as the thesis marks a climax in architecture education, coming as it does at the culmination of years of studying the subject, it is reasonable to assume that it would be relatively easy to define, or in the least have explicit objectives and requirements that are readily enumerated. However, the architecture thesis has been from conception fraught with ambiguities and difficulties that seemingly defy explanation.

Thesis or "the idea of a final project as the cumulative experience to an architectural education is," Bruce Abbey notes "as old as the Beaux Arts system itself. Ever since the establishment of Blondel's Academy of Architecture in 1666 with the Prix de Rome as a goal, the conceptual basis for a final thesis has been explicit in the educational process of architects" (1996, 15). In the United States the introduction of a thesis requirement coincided with academic institutionalization of architecture education. When William Robert Ware (1832-1915) was asked in 1865 by MIT's president and founder, William Barton Rogers (1804-1882), to establish United States' first academic course of study in Architecture, the curriculum he proposed and implemented, after careful study of architecture curricula in Europe, "culminated in traditional fashion with a "thesis" project meant as the equivalent of the written theses with which students in all the other schools in the university completed their degrees (Wigley 1991, 20). This was an essential, if not indispensable inclusion, Mark Wigley argues, considering "the university is literally the space of the thesis. Since its origin at the beginning of the thirteenth century, its central activity has been the "disputation" in which "theses" would be defended" (9). The inclusion of thesis was, in a manner, Architecture's price of admission into academia.

Construing itself from the outset as occupying a "middle ground" in academia between "art and science, academic and professional, pure and applied, theoretical and practical" (22) architecture education has since tried to straddle the line between these self-provoked dichotomies in search of an illusive balance. The situation is not, of

course, unique to the United States. "Architecture entered universities as an acceptable subject," Nathaniel Coleman notes, "even later in the UK than it did in the USA, and when it did it found itself in a nether land between the humanities and the sciences, a position architecture education largely continues to occupy (Coleman 2010, 204). The self-perceived task of reconciling the humanities and the sciences broadly and the theoretical and the practical specifically play themselves out throughout the course of academic education in architecture, only to culminate in the architecture thesis, or as it is also called the design thesis.

Central as thesis has been to the academic legitimation of Architecture, it remains, paradoxically enough, the most contentious and enigmatic aspect of architecture education. "Design, and the design thesis, have always occupied," David Salomon notes, "an awkward position within the culture of the university" (Salomon 2011, 35). "Nothing," we are told, "reveals the paradoxical nature of architectural education more than the status, state, and function of the independent design thesis" (33). This is owing to the fact that "somehow, it must reconcile personal exploration with pedagogical agendas, combine the specific requirements of a project with a more general quest for knowledge, and fulfill the desire for invention with the need for professional competency–all the while advancing disciplinary knowledge" (33).

It is, of course, hard to imagine how, with minor modification, the same set of demands and requirements above are not made of theses in virtually every field of the humanities. Nevertheless, these are seen as particularly vexing and irreconcilable demands in architecture. Consequently, for reasons that are rarely if ever articulated, the design thesis appears, or rather is given the appearance of defying explanation and/or delimitation. Moreover, "the dilemma of the design thesis is," Salomon notes, "further exacerbated by the problem of establishing the limits of what qualifies as one today" (33). This "problem" is compounded by a curious refrain from engaging a formal academic discourse on the subject. It is difficult to find more than a handful of publications addressing the question of thesis in architecture with any degree of specificity. As Jarzombek notes "institutions, determined and weighed down by the long history of their pedagogical, ideological, and academic commitments, set up expectations about what is and is not a 'thesis' without those expectations ever being put into writing or expressed in words" (Jarzombek 1996, 6). Peculiar as this refrain is, this paper seeks, in part, to explore the reasons for it in a format that is palpably shaped by the refrain.

In so much as the question of design thesis has been, since its inception, entangled in the dichotomy of the theoretical and the practical in search of an illusive, in William Ware's words, "middle ground" (Wigley 1991, 20), unsurprisingly the debates for or against the thesis requirement in architecture curriculum are waged not over the

desirability, much less validity of the ideal, but the design thesis' inherent capacity to achieve it. A case in point is the virtual debate between Bruce Abbey's argument for and Kenneth Frampton's argument against the thesis requirement in the 1996 issue of Thresholds. In defense of the thesis requirement, Abbey notes: "a structured research component, i.e., a semester of thesis research, is absolutely necessary in order to establish the grounds for evaluation and viability of the design response. At the end of the process a convincing argument showing the connection between the research and the design proposal needs to be made by the individual student and at the very least the thesis should represent a summation of what he/she has learned and explored in the period of formal schooling" (Abbey 1996, 17). Arguing against the Thesis requirement, Kenneth Frampton notes the "fallacy of the architectural thesis is that it is supposed to validate a supposition that has been derived from a specific piece of research. Even with the best will in the world an enormous gap usually remains between the descriptive-analytic level of the research and the postulative, synthetic character of the project, so that, more often than not, little is effectively validated" (Frampton 1996, 21). David Salomon advances a similar argument in defense of the displacement of thesis from the architecture curriculum. "Most work done in preparation for thesis and the thesis itself, rarely, if ever, qualifies as "good" research; nor does it often obtain the goal of the scholarly thesis. The carrying out of literature reviews, precedent surveys, and site and programmatic analysis can only be considered research if they are rigorously pursued and knowingly contribute to an established body of knowledge or practices—a qualification that is difficult for an individual student to achieve in the time allotted" (Salomon 2011, 35). The issue here is not, of course, merely time allotted, since that is easily remedied, but a perceived flaw inherent to the thesis exercise.

What is palpably clear in the above, as well as many similar unwritten debates on the subject, is that at issue for either side is not an effective connection between research and design or else theory and practice. The point of contention between the two sides of the debate is whether or not the thesis exercise is capable of striking the desired balance or "middle ground." The historic roots of this debate and its point of contention are, it is important to note, much deeper than the question of design thesis per se.

Much as the inclusion of thesis in architecture curriculum was instrumental to its legitimization as an academic discipline, the demand for theoretical content in architecture, as a counter-balance to practical considerations, has been paramount to the legitimization and transformation of architecture from a medieval trade to a professional discipline at the outset of the Renaissance. Leone Battista Alberti laid the foundation in 1452 when he claimed: "I should explain exactly whom I mean by an architect; for it is no carpenter that I would have you compare to the greatest exponents of other

disciplines: the carpenter is but an instrument in the hands of the architect. Him I consider the architect, who by sure and wonderful reason and method, know both how to devise through his own mind and energy, and to realize by construction, whatever can be most beautifully fitted out for the noble needs of man, by the movement of weights and the joining and massing of bodies. To do this he must have an understanding and knowledge of all the highest and most noble disciplines. This then is the architect" (Alberti 1991, 3).

The proposition that architecture must perpetually seek a "balance" between thinking and making or else the theoretical and the pragmatic dates much further back to Vitruvius' proclamation in first century B.C.E. that "architects who have aimed at acquiring manual skill without scholarship have never been able to reach a position of authority to correspond to their pains, while those who relied only upon theories and scholarship were obviously hunting the shadow, not the substance. But those who have a thorough knowledge of both, like men armed at all points, have the sooner attained their object and carried authority with them" (Vitruvius 1960, 5). Being armed at all points has since proved not a simple metaphor, but an essential and critical tool for regulation of architecture. Cases in point are the canonical treatises on Western architecture since the Renaissance, formulated as each has been in response to a cultural paradigm shift. Each treatise sets out to rearm architecture anew by supplanting the prevailing architecture for its lack of sufficient armor. For Marc-Antoine Laugier, writing at the outset of the age of enlightenment, it was, as it had been for Alberti at the outset of Renaissance, insufficient theoretical armor that called for a new architecture. Proclaiming "there is no work as yet that firmly establishes the principles of architecture, explains its true spirit and proposes rules for guiding talent and defining taste" (Laugier 1977, 1), he placed the blame back with Vitruvius because "always avoiding the depths of theory, he takes us along the road of practice and more than once we go astray. All modern authors … give no more than commentaries on Vitruvius, following him uncritically in all his errors" (2). In turn, John Ruskin in 1849 would try to regain the balance that he saw lacking in the work of his immediate predecessors and contemporaries, noting "uniting the technical and imaginative elements as essentially as humanity does soul and body, it [architecture] shows the same infirmly balanced liability to the prevalence of the lower part over the higher, to the interference of the constructive, with the purity and simplicity of the reflective, element. This tendency, like every other form of materialism, is increasing with the advance of the age" (Ruskin 1849, 10). The proponents of Modernity and in turn Post-Modernity would attribute no less imbalance to the works of their immediate predecessors and contemporaries.[1] Of course, the desired balance has been as varied in definition as it has been illusive through time, in part because it is not so much a state, as it is a critical tool and a potent strategy for

displacing and supplanting the ideologically other, who perpetually and invariably is purported to speak with the voice of excess. Imbalance is the mark of alterity.

It follows, as a matter of course, that those purported to lack sufficient theoretical armor, in turn, dismiss the other for lacking sufficient pragmatic armor, or what amounts to same for imprudent theoretical excess. A case in point is the purported theoretical excesses of the 1980s and 90s, 'balanced' by the new pragmatism of the last decade.[2]

Lamenting the theoretical excesses of the 1980s and 90s, Michael Speaks argues "more perhaps than anything else, the certainty of theory vanguardism has retarded the development of a culture of innovation in schools of architecture, which requires a more fluid, interactive relationship between thinking and doing, as well as an expanded definition of what counts for architectural knowledge" (Speaks 2005, 74).[3] Silvia Lavin offers a similar assessment, noting "after their great flowering in the 1990s, history and theory are now content to rest on passé, post-structuralist laurels" which account for "the inutility of history and theory, not their instrumental value" at the present (Lavin 2011, 83).

As a counter balance, a new "pragmatic/entrepreneurial disposition," Michael Speaks notes, "has made a strong break with the avant-garde. Not simply another intellectual fad or crutch for architecture, however, this break requires that we re-examine in architecture the problematic relationship between thinking and doing" (Speaks 2002, 212). Prudently armed and balanced "interactively" in thinking and doing, a new class of "intellectual entrepreneurs and managers of change," we are promised, will "confront the fiercely competitive world thrown up by the forces of globalization" in search of the very balance that proved all too illusive in the 1980s and 90s, due no less to the purported theoretical excesses of the age (212).

In sympathetic response, Doug Kelbaugh agrees "with Michael Speaks that design theory is finally and fortunately shedding the negativism and nihilism of Deconstruction and Marxism" (Kelbaugh 2005, 19). However, he asks "let's continue to be theoretical, but in a more pragmatic way that addresses environmental, social, and economic problems and opportunities, as well as aesthetic issues … Let's stop the pendulum before it swings from too little theory to too much theory. Maybe a little balance--that would be radical" (19). Of course, the irony here is not so much that a little balance would be radical. Rather, it is the sheer number of times it is evoked as if for the first time and at that with recourse to a pendulum analogy that is not simply one among others. Voiced or not, the pendulum has been present and in operation from the moment theory and practice appear as dichotomies in architecture and at that inevitably in search of the "middle ground."[4]

Infinity reasonable and judicious as the search for balance or the middle ground is and commonplace as the distinction between theory and practice, thinking and making and all related dichotomies are in architecture - to the point of being synonymous with it - though these distinctions have a long history, though their genesis is no other than the genesis of Western metaphysics, they rarely if ever appear without the battlefield of ideologies in architecture. They are rarely if ever resurrected or resorted to for reasons other than the deprecation and exclusion of the ideological *other* as the voice of excess.[5] The middle ground is, in effect, a battleground. The perpetual appeal of the voice of reason for balance is, in effect, a battle cry. To heed the voice of reason is to concede and enter the battlefield in the cause of balance.

It is important to note here that the referent of the *voice of reason* is not a person. There is no one individual that voices it, much less possess it. Though it is repeatedly uttered through time, it subsumes and presumes all individual utterances as an inherited cultural strategy devised to control and regulate architectural production.

Much as the voice of reason perpetually seeks a 'balance' between the opposite sides of an analogical pendulum, the desired balance - the harmonious resting place of the analogical pendulum - is not readily marked and reached, in space or time. In its desire to mark the resting place of the analogical pendulum the voice of reason inevitably gets itself caught in a paradoxical swing and a self-contradictory movement on the bows of the very pendulum that it wishes to bring to rest in the name of 'balance.'[6]

The culprit is not the fabricated other - the voice of excess. If anywhere it is in time and history or time as history that the voice of reason meets (finds, makes, fabricates or is fabricated by) its other. The one that denies the desired *balance* is the very pendulum that explains things by analogy. It is the pendulum whose motion fabricates the opposing sides as such, i.e., any opposing sides - be it thinking as it is opposed to making or reason as it is opposed to excess. It is only after a certain pendulum-like motion in/of time, after a certain self-fabrication as what the other is not, i.e., after fabricating the voice of excess as its absolute other on the bows of the analogical pendulum that the voice of reason can wish for a unique identity on an assumed middle ground in the name of a self-professed *balance*. Yet, it is not possible to wish in rest what is owed to motion. The voice of reason is only what the voice of excess is not. To wish the demise of its other is tantamount to self-destruction. Yet, to wish the demise of one's other is also the will to survival, though only in so long as the balance is never reached and the pendulum never stops. Hence the voice of reason must forever seek and hope never to gain the proverbial *balance*. It must force the pendulum into motion in order to desire its rest. It must perpetually fabricate an other on the one side or the other in order to fabricate its own identity as the voice of reason. This paradox of reason is neither an accident nor the trace of an event. The paradox is just a trace - the one

that marks the condition of the self-fabrication of reason.[7]

One may, of course, judiciously ask at this point where does this leave the question of design thesis? Is thesis, by some inevitable necessity an invitation to battle, i.e., an invitation to (re)take a stance and (re)mark a spot on the 'field of thought' - or is it action - so as to have something to defend with all of one's might?[8] Not inevitably!

Could one, then, wish not to see difference as opposition, not to enter the battleground, and have no other to deprecate and chastise? This is a most difficult question inevitably posed from beneath the *pendulum* in motion, before any question of choice. The answer - should it be found/fabricated – may well lead us back to the battleground of ideologies. Is there no way out of this battleground?

There may well be no way out, i.e., no outside to this battleground. Yet there are the margins and the borderlines in between the one and the fabricated other from which one may view the battle insecurely.

Let us see if we can chart a *different* route for the design thesis; one that may or may not lead us from the middle ground to the borderlines.

Let us assume at the outset, as it is customary in many fields of study, that a thesis is a proposition, i.e., a theorem or a hypothesis regarding the nature of the phenomenon under investigation. If it is, it cannot precede the investigation. It cannot be formed before any observation. Such in the least is the rule of the game as it is played, for better or worse, in academic circles. Although a thesis, once formed, assumes or rather should assume prior investigation and observation, the latter does not have to assume by some inevitable necessity - academic or otherwise - the formation of a theorem as its end result. Investigation does not have to be *constructive*. It does not have to result in a thesis that is by definition an *affirmative* or a *positive* proclamation. The singularity of such an assumption excludes analytical or otherwise critical investigation to the extent that it may be neither constructive and affirmative nor destructive and negative. Criticism and/or analysis need not be the means to constructive proclamations. This distinction is of particular relevance when and if the phenomenon investigated is already a construct, i.e., the formal expression of a theory that may be original or what is not absolutely different, mimicked.

Criticism has historically played three interrelated, though distinct roles in architecture. In either role, analysis is criticism's point of departure. Directed at buildings, criticism plays a mensurative role. Implicitly or explicitly, it measures its subject against an ideal model or cultural norm. The goal is to affect conformity to the norm through negative or positive appraisal.

In theoretical discourse on architecture, criticism plays a similar role, though often

in preparatory anticipation of a new theory or norm. Directed at prior theoretical for-
mulation(s), criticism treats its subject as an ill conceived construct that it proceeds
to dismantle, if only to expose its blindness and weaknesses. This mode of criticism
is indispensably instrumental in preparing the ground for a new theory. The latter as-
sumes the role of a remedy to the proposed ills of the theories it selectively criticizes
and seeks to displace.

Criticism does not have to assume, however, an instrumental role with respect
to a new theory, worldview, or cultural norm. It does not have to be motivated and at
that highly selective. It can analytically treat its subject(s) as a cultural construct. It
can try to discover, not so much the weaknesses and faults of this construct, but how
the subject is construed, according to what norms and rules, under what conditions,
and for what purpose or end? As opposed to a search and destroy mission, criticism
can be expeditionary. It can be a resistive force to the hegemony of any one particular
worldview or ideational perspective.

It is in its third role as a resistive, analytical tool that criticism plays its most con-
structive role in the teaching of architecture, in general, and thesis, in particular.[9]

Although thesis may be, and it has been constructively defined in many fields of
study as a theorem or a hypothesis regarding the nature of the phenomenon under in-
vestigation, this definition cannot be readily used to structure investigation in the field
of architecture. It requires modification or in the least greater specification.

The required modification is in recognition of the fact that whatever is subject to
investigation in the field of architecture is, by virtue of being a cultural artifact, always
an elaborate construct already, i.e., the formal expression/embodiment of a theory.
The subject of investigation in this particular case is itself a theorem or a hypothesis.

Intended or not, architecture is always a theoretical construct, a form of speech, or
a cultural "myth" in the making.[10] Every edifice inevitably speaks of a thesis regarding
itself specifically (including the cultural conditions of its conception and production)
and architecture broadly (including the cultural conditions of architecture's conception
and definition). This is to say that, adhering to the general definition of thesis, an archi-
tecture thesis would have to be a theorem about a theorem, or a hypothesis regarding
a hypothesis.

This seemingly problematic definition does not have to imply that an architecture
thesis is necessarily an exercise in tautology. It could imply instead - and this is the
required modification - that an architecture thesis differs from a generic thesis inso-
far as it is not so much a hypothesis regarding the nature of the phenomenon under
investigation, as it is a posture assumed or a stance taken on the theorem that is the

phenomenon under investigation. It is different insofar as it seeks to understand not so much a thing, as a theorem with respect to which it must then position itself: affirmatively or otherwise. An architecture thesis is different insofar as it must first analyze in order to understand, and understand in order to construct again: in affirmation or not. The element of choice, it is important to note, is afforded the researcher or the investigator by virtue of the enterprise and not otherwise. This realization should be a primary pedagogical intent of the thesis exercise. The distinction that Roland Barthes introduced between the "producer of myth" and the "mythologist" is useful in this regard, in as much the former role, to be effective, presumes the latter role, i.e., "distinguish the meaning and the form, and consequently the distortion which the one imposes on the other" (2012, 239), prior to any proposal to (re) make a myth, in effect or not.

This brings us in turn to another difference, namely, an architecture thesis is in the end not a single, but a double construct: an intellectual construct and a formal construct (the two, of course are intertwined in that every intellectual construct assumes prior formal constructs and every formal construct assumes a prior intellectual construct). An Architecture thesis must be written twice, i.e., written and translated (the full force of both terms assumed).[11]

To demand that a thesis have theoretical content is at best tautological, and at worst a dictate that speaks eloquently of a desire for purity and innocence, i.e., an architecture outside of theory; an architecture of truths and facts. The dictate assumes the possibility of such a construct and along with it - most critically - the possibility of a clear distinction between thinking and making, theory and practice, insofar as it treats theory as a thing that can be demanded or added on by choice.[12] The most critical dimension of this dictate is not, however, that theory is a thing that may or may not be added by choice, but that it seeks to set certain aspects of architecture beyond the reach of theory.[13] In every distinction between the theoretical and the practical, much as in every search for balance or middle ground, there is the inevitable and inherent supposition that the practical is or can be non-theoretical, i.e., performable in the sanctity of a realm innocent of complicated intellectual positions and messy theoretical formulations: the mythical realm of facts and truths? If not, can we then find (make or fabricate) a building that is too functional as opposed to theoretical or too theoretical as opposed to functional? What will one mark and separate as functional or non-theoretical in such a building?

Assuming that there is no clear difference between the functional and the theoretical, that no historic practice has as yet managed to escape theory, how does one begin a thesis investigation, knowing that in the end one must assume a specific posture with respect to the subject of investigation?

One may chose one of two intersecting paths. One may begin with a set of assumption or preconceptions, the investigation into which requires the identification of an appropriate building type as the vehicle of investigation, and in the end, of expression.

Alternatively, one may begin with the building-type that is the subject and the projected end product of the investigation. In either case, the question to ask at the outset is not what patent 'theory' should the proposed building speak of, but what arcane theory does its type historically hide under the rubrics of 'function' or 'practical' requirements? What myth, in other words, does the type refuse to acknowledge as theory in the name of practicality or functionality?[14]

To find an answer one must reconstruct the genealogy of the building type under investigation - the genealogy of forms inseparable from the genealogy of the institution served. One must decipher the formal/architectural framing process by which the given institution turns its theory/ideology into myths and passes them on as functional and practical truths. One must analyze and critically evaluate the historic role architecture plays in establishing and effecting a given institutional/social order as the true, natural, and practical order of things.[15]

The pedagogical goal of such an investigation is not simply to attain a rudimentary understanding of architecture as myth(s) in the making, but above all the development of the type of analytical skills essential to deciphering the complex relationship between architecture and the culture industry it perpetually serves.

The aim of such an investigation, on the other hand, is neither to simply accept and promote a given institutional theorem/myth, nor to assume the luxury of rejecting it in favor of a different theorem/myth. To pursue either of these two routes is tantamount to seeking one's way back to the center of the battlefield. Though one may choose to follow either route, it is essential to first understand what it is that one is opting to defend or supplant. From a pedagogical standpoint, the defense cannot be, or rather should not be blind, i.e., conducted expeditiously and unknowingly under the guise of functionality and/or practicality.

Before any question of choice, it is essential to decipher and understand the mechanics of the particular and complex dialogue between form, function and ideology in the subject of study. It is only with this understanding that one may knowingly opt and then successfully pursue either of the two routes that lead, albeit differently to a constructive or affirmative proclamation, i.e., the center of the battlefield.[16] It is also with this understanding and only with this understanding that one may also choose an alternate route: not the affirmative (pro or con), but the analytic, i.e., the route that may

take one from the centerline to the borderlines.

One may choose not to promote a given institutional myth, i.e., cease to frame and present the myth as a natural given, or what is not fundamentally different, supplant the myth with another presented in the same guise. One may choose not to affirm but question, not to engage but to disarm. One may choose not to pose but to expose. The choice, nonetheless, it is important to note, is only afforded the investigator who does not presume theory an ornament of architecture's autonomous existence.

Neither of these choices, it is important to note, enjoys a privileged position. An affirmative position is not a repetition given the inevitable contextual variations. A counter position does not fundamentally differ from the position it seeks to supplant, in that it must rely on the same critical strategies as its other to exact the needed authority to supplant it. The analytic position differs from the other two only in that it seeks to expose what the other two must veil as the condition of an authoritative assertion. This position, however, can no more distance itself from the other two, as the other two can out distance each other.

The pedagogical interest in the analytic exercise - and we should not forget that the thesis exercise is above all a pedagogical exercise - lies in the fact that it mandates a conscious reevaluation of all the sacred presuppositions regarding spatial organization, the relationship of parts to whole, the inside to the outside, the particulars of volume and mass, solid and void, path and place, structure and material, ornamentation, proportion, scale, and others. This is by way of designing a building that in the end is all too familiar and yet all too alien, one that is neither a copy nor strictly an original, one that is neither simply good nor simply bad, neither simply theoretical nor simply functional, neither simply abstract nor simply concrete. A building that speaks silently of the designer's ability to willfully manipulate the language of architecture as opposed to faithfully re-produce its various speech acts.

The voice of reason, of course, would always try, by a certain internal necessity, to reduce and categorize such a building as too theoretical, too abstract, non-functional, unpractical, etc., not because it is, but because it is also not.

NOTES:

1   See Le Corbusier 1923 and Venturi 1966 and 1972.

2   See Varnelis 1999.

3   For echoes of this oft repeated emphasis on innovation, be it in thesis or as "a broader litmus test for architecture," i.e., "how does it help us to reenvision the world anew?" see Kazys Varnelis (2007, 13).

4   For an extended discussion of the origins of the distinction between theory and practice in architecture from the Greeks to the Renaissance see Stephen Frith (2003) and Marco Frascari (1988).

5   For example see Hatton (2004), Speaks (2002, 2005).

6   This is the same balance that has been the perpetual wish since Vitruvius (1960).

7   I am using the word trace in the sense Jacques Derrida outlines in Of Grammatology (1998).

8   For similar definitions of design thesis see Jemtrud (2011), Salomon (2011), Abbey (1996), Wigley (1991).

9   For a detailed discussion of this subject see Ameri (1995, 1999).

10   I am using the world myth in the sense Roland Barthes as outlined long ago in Myth Today, designating a motivated ideological construct that "transforms history into nature" (2012, 240).

11   I am using the word translation here in reference to Walther Benjamin's definition of the task in his essay, "the Task of the translator" (1978, 69-82).

12   Much of the recent anti-theory stance in architecture, exemplified by Speaks (2005) and others noted earlier, is a case in point.

13   One cannot help but hear echoes in this re-mark of Vitruvius' inaugurating divide, reverberating since from mouth to mouth, pen to pen, keyboard to keyboard and all resolutely without question or doubt (1960, 5).

14   Although myth and theory both seek to explain and thus assign 'meaning' to 'reality,' they are different in the sense that myth is a forgotten or naturalized theory, i.e., a truth.

15   For examples of the type of study suggested here please see the following studies of movie theaters (Ameri 2011), museums (Ameri 2004), and libraries (Ameri 1998).

16   The route that pursues the promotion of the institutional myth leads to what we

extol as good architecture. The route, on the other hand, that pursues the replacement of the myth with another myth invariably leads to what we condemn as bad architecture.

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