

The Twenty- Ninth Lecture

A Rite of Founding.



The new buildings on Rice Campus had, until this time, been characterised by relatively beautiful exteriors and modest interiors. It was explained to me that this was because the Building and Grounds Committee did not mind spending a bit extra to add to the quality of the University, as a whole campus, but did not see the point of going overboard inside.

"These were, after all, only classrooms and laboratories".

I was led beyond this position by two imperatives. The first was the impulse of the Building and Grounds Committee who told us that "JOA had been given this contract because **"You were the only architects who had an idea about the interior"**. I had, from them, as well as the Faculty, a brief of the sort originally given to me by Paul Judge. The Computational Engineers also wanted 'break-out' places where they could meet, as if on a street, with chairs and tables arranged to work and talk publicly as if in cafes. Research on 'break-out' working was gathered from Apple, in Cupertino. Having already made such studies by visiting places in Europe and the USA, during the Judge project, JOA felt capable of contributing to this ambition. However, because these things were as yet, conceptually unformed, there was no definite portion of the building budget reserved for this 'internal' purpose. It was left to us to propose.

My second imperative needs little evocation. Here I was in the very epicentre of the 'edge-city' lifestspace hurricane which had swept away the city of facades, of public realm and of public transport. Here I was being asked to invent a 'walker's world' where, "outside the hedges" (Rice patois) that sort of lifestspace was nothing but a fading memory. Back in 1992 Russia was in ruins, China had not yet assumed superpower status in the commerce wars, and 9/11 was unimaginable. I fondly imagined that the USA could now turn inwards to survey her lifestspace, cindered by the economic furnace of the Cold War, and work towards creating a more peaceable, civil and humane way of living. I imagined that ideas of my sort might be useful to this recuperative ambition. Looking back on it shows how little time History seems to leave, as it left so little to the early 20C Moderne, for such ambitions.

Not that the late 20C lifestspace was all bungalows. During our first visit, my very first excursion had been to Kahn's Kimball, in Fort Worth. Rima and I found it, narrating the ruin of Architecture, by the side of a suburban intersection. I read the maker's i-d plate on the doorway of the aircraft coming back to Houston and was impressed by its great antiquity! American commerce worked its capital hard. Some hours before our departure for London, we realised that we had not seen the centre of Houston and asked if the hotel shuttle could take us there. There were more men on the forecourt parking cars than in the lobby dealing with guests. Their young chief, who hailed from Beirut, looked at his watch. It showed one-thirty p.m. "Oh", he said, "You missed it".

What he meant was not that we had missed the shuttle, but that we had missed Down-Town. He explained that people only walked on the streets for the lunch-hour, between 12 Noon and one o'clock. Outside of that they were in the tunnels. Well, this was our only chance, we explained, so he sent us anyway. It had been raining, but stopped when we asked the driver to put us down "near a subway entrance". He drove away. I could see no subway sign. So we asked at the door of an office-skyscraper and were ushered into a giant atrium across which, next to the shoe-shine stand, glimmered a small sign. There was no public access to this subway. Like much else in Houston, it was 'private'.



Edge City can now joke about its condition - advertising automobiles as both the cause and the cure, like a shelf of pills. The facade of Edge cCity, the public face that makes a public space, is the bill-board raised far above the 'rancho-cottage' hutlet below it. The Venturis, 30 years ago, proposed to create an 'architecture' from this. They failed.



The wind hits these high cliffs with the same air that lofts a jumbo jet. Houston does not experience hurricanes, but it has high winds, and the same sun as Cairo. It blazes from the mirror-glass.



Was this to clean the air from the pollution pumped out by automobiles and their gasoline refineries?

We descended to walk under the street. I had read about the wide passages and sunken courtyards, open to the sky, of a largely underground city lately built in Montreal so as to ameliorate its bitter winters. Houston's subterranean equivalent was a mere drain down which circulated people trolleying what looked like piles of banknotes. These small pipes kinked and wandered like English country lanes. An intersection was the occasion for a sandwich bar.



A prayer answered. Only five inches fell in this rainstorm. 8" (200 mm) fell in one day of the summer of 2000, flooding the entire city. Houston lies only 15M (50'0") above the nearby Gulf of Mexico. The records of the Campus showed that it had sunk 9'0" in 90 years. It was due to pumping out the aquifers - an act that was still legal, even now, under the 'unscientific', laissez-faire, laws of the city.



People treated us as graciously as Southerner's always do, but, architecturally, this was dismal. Even so it was the case that no new skyscraper attracts any tenants until its developer digs his own, private, tunnel to connect to what is best understood as an unusual 'utility' - a people-plumbing device.

This unseemly burrowing was brought on by a striking lack of climatological science used by the Developers of the late 20C CBD. The wind hits the flat side of a huge slab of curtain walling with the same air as it hits a cliff in any other latitude. Only, in Houston, this wind can be charged with as much rainwater as an industrial douche. For most of the year, when it is not cloudy, the sun shines with the same violence as that of Ancient Egypt, whose equinoctial latitude Houston shares. To separate huge towers by wide forecourts, with no covered public routes, is a lifespace-design formula which makes the walker's world even more uncomfortable than that of the open prairie. What else was there but to tunnel between these tombstones to a lost urbanity - monuments to an lifespace-design more 'primitive' than that of any 'savage'?

Being entunnelled, instead of on a Downtown street, in one of Houston's balmy tropical evenings, was also, I was told, the way to avoid the gangs of youths that made the centre of this city a nocturnal no-go area. As the work-day ended, the limo's emerged, like surfacing frogs, shouldering their metallic armour between the only 'pedestrians' - Blacks in ear-flaps warming at the slatted air-conditioning vents.

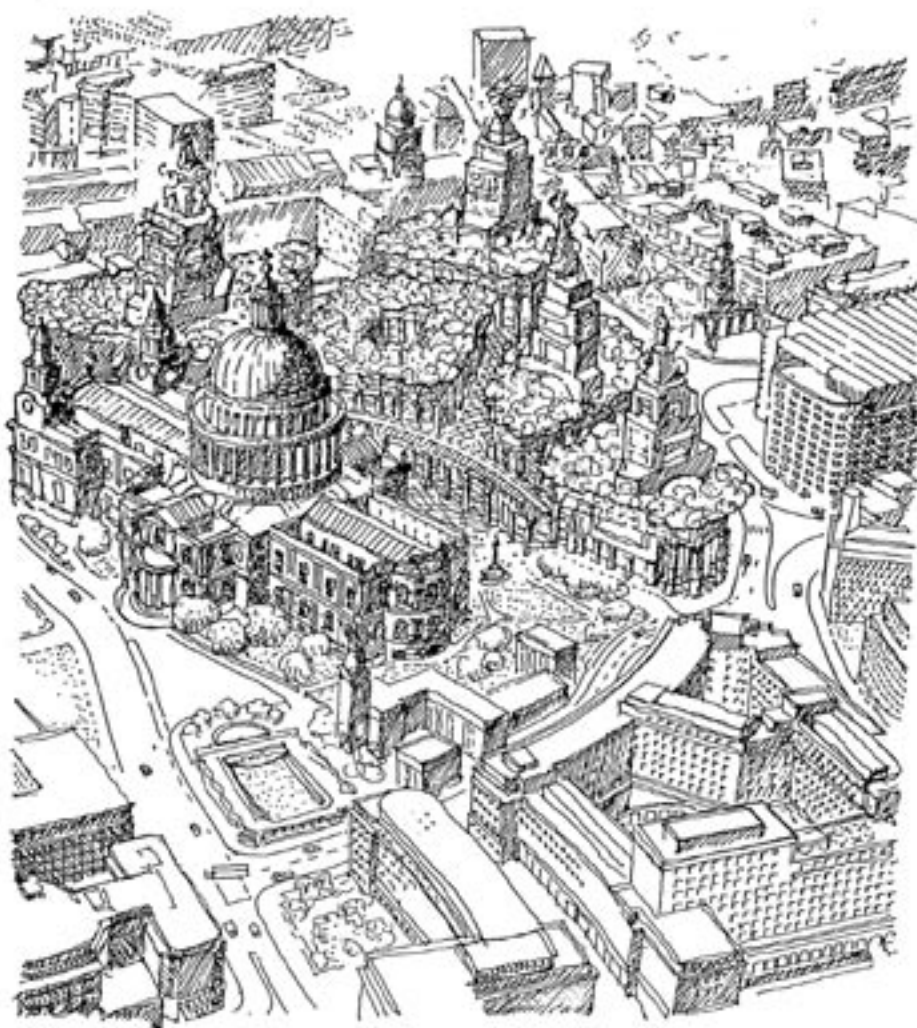
The American City as a real estate pinball machine. But Houston's 'table' is curiously rigged. The Developer must look-out for the distracted wiring, outlined in red, of the pedestrian tunnels. These can tip his field towards a jackpot, fertilising his rent-harvest with walkers who shun the streets, laid out on a tight Spanish-Colonial grid.

We had been kindly received by Ken Kennedy of the Rice Faculty of Computational Engineering, who, on mounting one of these monoliths to show us the latest in video-conferencing, had confirmed what floor we were on by **reading the altimeter** in his wrist-watch. We could see, from this elevation, the **'blast-zone' in the immediate vicinity of the central towers**. It was covered in automobiles that were parked, as one's feet told one when descending, on the **broken floor-tiles of demolished buildings**. This 'cordon sanitaire' of devastation was, it seemed, a necessity. It was compared to the vacant plot next to a piece of oil-refining plant. One could not renew a 'cat cracker' while it was still in operation. **A new machine must be built before the old was demolished**. Such was the pace of redevelopment in Houston, with its **15-year amortisation cycle**, and such the imperative to an Architecturally-redundant novelty, that these mirrored obelisks must stand in a field of such ruins as they, too, must soon become. There was a brutal, if pre-frontally-challenged, heroism in this field of economic war.

I ruminated on the culture which could tolerate such ephemerality. Was this really the outcome of America's manifest destiny - mankind's second chance? What was the 'purpose' of this insatiable mastication of the lifestance? What could it be beyond the drive for revenue, encouraged by the State to enslave all of its citizens to a form of War, or, as Bismarck might have put it: "diplomacy by 'other' (fiscal), means"?

Of course, we also, in Britain, (that post-war reflection of the USA seen down the wrong end of a telescope), had skyscrapers. Ours were **mere footstools compared to those of Houston**. In the old, Roman-walled, City of London, financial engine of the recently-deceased British Empire, their height was not allowed to block a view of the metropolitan cathedral of St. Paul's. This peculiar fiction descended from an older, **more serious, law which had been enacted in 1889**, when Captain Otis's engines were already carrying his passengers past the 200'0"-mark in Chicago. **Our law insisted that a Londoner might build higher than 100'0" (30M) above the footway, but not inhabit any such elevated chamber**. To overcome this law it was necessary to obtain the permission of all landowners within a quarter of a mile. The argument behind this was that it was inequitable to appropriate excessive quantities of floorspace. **The result was a city of magical beauty - high enough to be grand but not so monstrous as to be gross.**

This law, and all of the other laws which inscribed the architectural iconography of urbanity, such as the projection of entablatures over the common land of footways (now illegal), were repealed in the 1950's. The fleets of misty banking palaces, moored in their ocean of glistening cobbles, were replaced by Gropius-style rent-slabs.



St. Paul's and Paternoster Square.

Showing four stylus-buildings with public atria around a central social building and a curved portico to the North side of the Cathedral. (Notes: The Pencil-towers on the stylus building's are shown rotated on plan so as to give big roof garden areas. If the Atrium below is also rotated it would produce larger floor-plate segments around the Atrium).

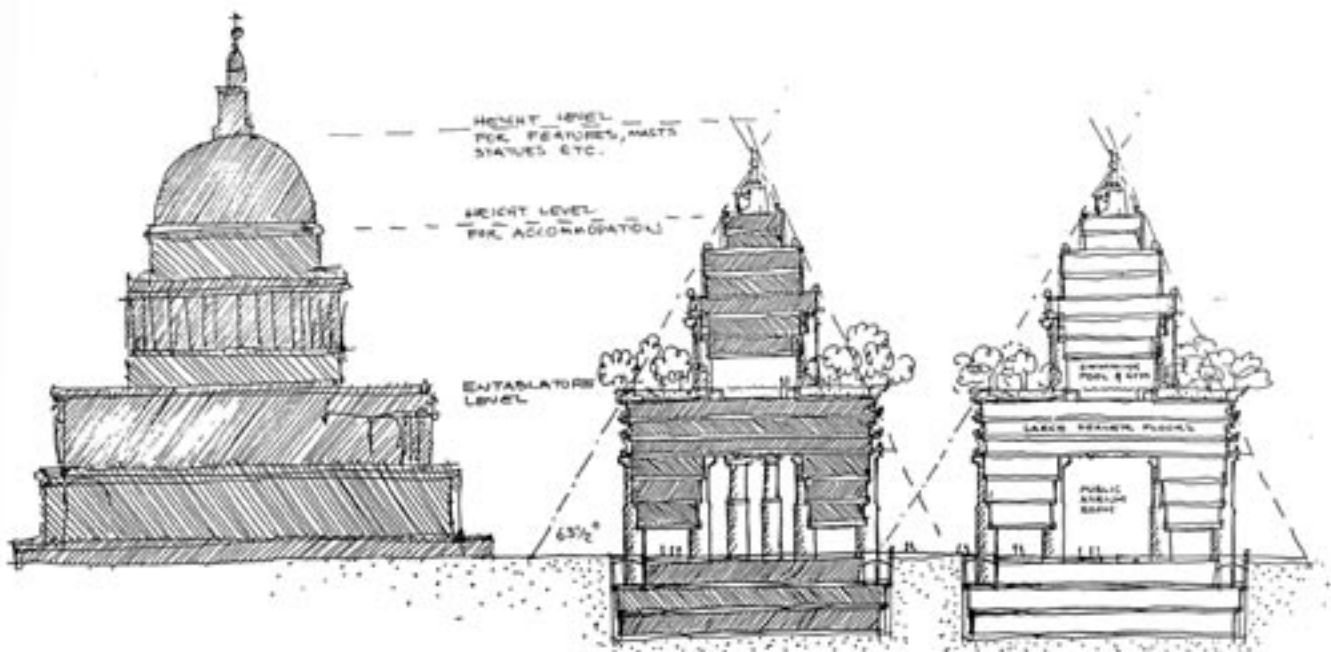
My main ambition for Paternoster Square was to invent an architectural version for London, of the urban-planning strategies that I have described. I centred my plan on an 'urban park' of giant 6th Order columns who would perform all of the three Vitruvian functions of Serving, Walking, and Talking. Part of this Forest of Infinitude could be covered over with glass, etc. Surrounding this general-purpose social focus, of the sort recently given the prize for 'best urban intervention of the year' (Covent Garden) would be city blocks of a design new to London (and perhaps anywhere else). I called these 'Stylus Blocks'. Peter Buchanan, writing in the Architectural Review, called these proposals "the only original ideas in British Planning since the War".



By the time JOA were asked to design in the 'Square Mile' it was ruled by the Planning Culture that I have already described. The Post WWII Establishment had, 50 years after the advent of Mittel-Europa's cultural collapse, followed it into the Welfare Positivism of the 1950's. Even the exiguous geometries of the 'daylighting angles' had withered, by the 1980's, to the point that no one seemed to use them any more. Perhaps this was as well. They were so architecturally meaningless that I had been obliged to inform one of my employers that his excellent firm had mis-applied them for 25 years, losing 50% of the floorspace due to his clients.

Our main Planning guideline, in one of the great cities of the globe, was a picturesque confection called the "St. Paul's Heights". These were a rag-bag collection of serendipitous 'sight lines' designed to prohibit any new building from interfering in a really quite large number of 'views' of the Cathedral taken from as far away as the Royal Park of Richmond. The judgment of what constituted 'interference', whether with the background, foreground, or lateral ground of 'Christopher Wren's Dome' was, as it must be with anything 'picturesque', entirely intuitive. St. Paul's, to this a-historical generation, was treated as some fortuitous natural feature, like a mountain. It was, in reality, another mechanism of control serving that devious Establishment whose purpose was to ensure that nothing should 'appear' which made sense, and especially to that large spectrum of the population who performed all the novelties of a democratic state, like voting and having opinions capable of coherent argument.

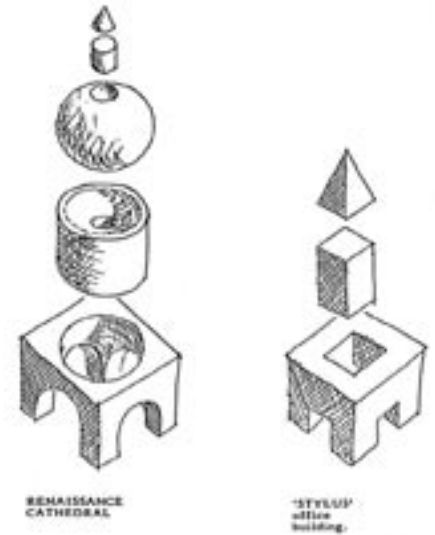
While it might discomfit the Post WW II planning culture, I knew, from my understanding of the Italian Mediaevo-Humanist city, that being irrationally-shaped does not preclude being conceptually-structured. Order and clarity can be immured inside chaos to the advantage of both. The working-out of the geometry of these plot-shapes would have needed clever designers. But I wanted to make the simple point that the normative narrative of the Fluvial History, from source to sea, could be mapped-onto this site - debouching South - towards the cathedral. I also wanted two circulation cultures, the inner, via the giant atria, and the outer, on the streets.



The 'originality' of my proposal was that instead of treating St. Paul's cathedral as a sacred cow, a remnant from some ancient, unrepeatable and alien planet called 'History' I took it as the source, the root from which the City of London should grow a new body. This was not the superficial Neo-Classicism of the Connoisseurocracy. I took the 100'0" (30M) height of our forest trees and the level of the main cornice of the cathedral as the 'ground-level' of that 'Arcadia' which was carried by the Entablature-Raft to the place of the New Foundation. Above this I raised buildings which were concave, attenuated, and 'lesser' than the globular fullness of the great temple to St. Paul - the patron of London whose name descends, arguably, from SPQL - Senatus et Populusque Londoniensis, and whose location is on the spot that the Colonial Senate met. Inside and below the advent level of the Raft I planned great atria which narrated the history of the evacuation of the Mountain of the Genius Loci, by the cataclysmic Act of Inception. These 'entabled' gardens could be actually touched and smelt, instead of destroying cities with parklands that could only be gazed-upon through Corbusier's plate-glass walls.



St. Paul's surrounded by 'Stylus'-Blocks shows how the maximum permissible development of city lands is possible while not overwhelming the skyline. Indeed it closely resembles the 'look' of London from the time the cathedral was built up to a half-century ago, before the repeal of the Building bye-Laws.

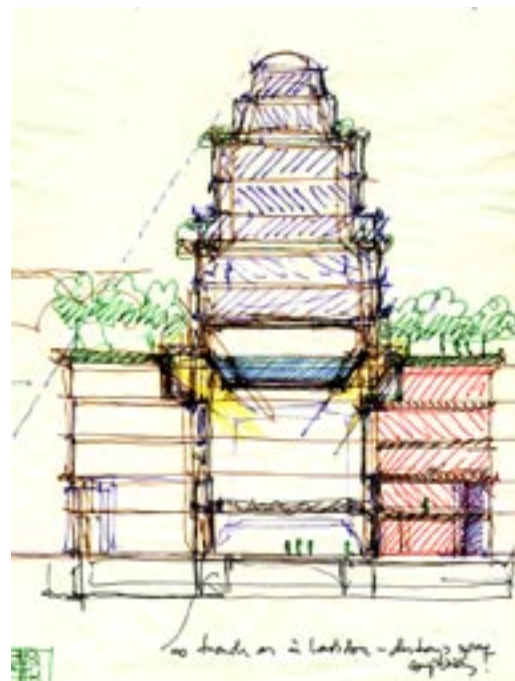


St. Paul's is on the left, the 'Stylus'-block on the right. Its genesis was simple. I filled the plot up with floors of accommodation.. Then I cored-out its centre and raised this up to make a 'pinnacle'. The two diagrams are genetically congruent, but the Stylus is iconically 'lesser'.

The maximum site-coverage in the City of London, even in the 1980's, was 6:1. The 'Stylus' filled the plot up to its boundaries for six floors and then cut the centre out to form an atrium. Lionel March's 'Cambridge Law' means that this evacuated centre is but a small fraction of the total floorspace. So I took this 'apple-core' and placed it over the Atrium, with a clear-storey to let in some light, so as to form a 'spire'. This simple idea, which is easy to turn into legislation, can be applied to any plot-ratio. 12:1, the plot-ratio then obtaining in New York, would give a street facade of 10-12 floors (which would mean a wider street) and a 'spire' that would be much higher than one created by London's 6:1. As with all classical architecture, it is not metrical dimension that 'counts', but proportion and iconic 'meaning'. This can only be legislated by icons and words, not by numbers.



At the top I illustrate the Raft of the Advent carrying its cargo of the Hearth-cone of ashes containing the germ of the new fire. It is surrounded by the New Corn. It has landed on the Forest of the Time of Infinity. This is still half-immersed in the Liquidity of Chaos, the other received analogue of temporal infinitude. The 'conversion' of this 'received' iconography into 'Stylus'-blocks shows an intermediate 'mythic' state of a forest of columnar islands populated by winged beings and the final conversion into a city of irregular blocks, roof gardens and 'entablated' pinnacle-forms.



Daylight through the Entablature-Garden level. I show a swimming pool at 'Arcadia'-level. Garden, trees and bathing - all at the level of the Raft of the Advent.

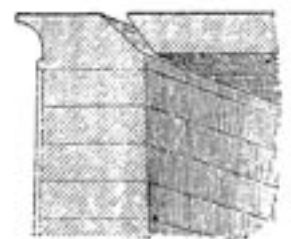


FIG. 159.—Auxiliary light-holes in the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, Description, iii, 26.

A daylighting technique from the beginnings: Karnak, Egypt.

'Stylus' was a play on 'style' used colloquially to merely mean 'on message', and the instrument that left the marks in clay or on paper that constituted writing. 'Stylion' also meant, In Greek at least, an Architectural column.



I filled the lower floors of the plot up to the building line. This provided arcades along the main pedestrian flows. It also prevents windy downdraughts from the set-back 'pinnacle-skyscraper' above. This 'street-base' contains the public atrium as well as supporting the largest Entablature-Garden. This Plot-Ratio is 6:1 - the normal one for the City.



A rough sketch showing how the 'Tower of Palaces' can itself employ 'palaces' of increased, and differing heights, whose effect is to bump-up the Plot Ratio, or, in other words, the rent revenue. The effect is traditional. JOA's ideas provide a Modern rationale.

In 1987 I was designing, For Standard Life of Edinburgh, a proposal for their site just outside the limits of the City of London - on Finsbury Square. I rotated blocks of floors by 45° on plan. The smaller cube above allowed slits of light to penetrate the corners of the atrium to the cube below. The pinnacle-mound of the entabled 'pyre' was broken, in the manner of Alberti's Palazzo Rucellai, into superimposed 'buildings'. Yet these diminished more slowly than a simple set-back all round. This saved floor-space while still 'pyramiding the pinnacle'. Each of these 'separate buildings could have a little greenery and balcony space outside of its 'ground floor' as well as a large inner room at each 'new' (entabled) ground' level.

Nothing is more depressing than the combination of the hugeness of the skyscraper and the squalid pokiness of its individual rooms. The white-collar 'Meritocracy' looks out from their seats at the computers of the commerce-wars and sees nothing grand or ample, nothing to persuade them that the future holds anything more amiable than their antheap of labour. The late 20C city is a dismal travesty of modern urbanity.

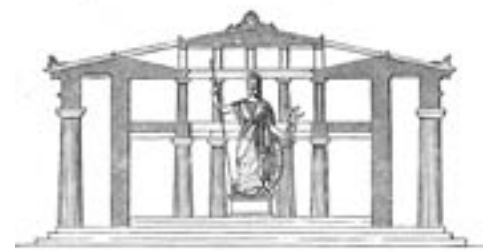
Breaking such towers into superimposed buildings of the size of a decent Palazzo, introduces an architectural scale with a combination of grandeur and domesticity. Each 'building' achieves an easily-visible external, and even more so internal, identity. The termite-pylon becomes a Tower of Palaces.

But, without a Client who had attained some literacy in the iconography of Architecture, and who could understand how to take conceptual advantage of the landscape, or even lifespace, of my architectural inventions, I was continually bumping my seething skull up against the brain-dead ceiling of late 20C Architecture and the 'mauvais foi', or bad faith, that lay behind its 'fiat nihil'. The function of Architecture, as opposed to mere construction, had always been to 'publish' a class of 'eminenti'. The eminenti of the 20C were, historically, no longer either Aristocrats, Priests, or even Plutocrats. It was the Age of Democracy. Its architecture had to published 'the people'. But, as my researches had proved, it had not done this.

It had avoided the issue by reconfiguring Architecture itself so that, for the first time in the 9,000-year history of my medium, it laboured with a novel determination to 'publish nothing'.



A 'section' cut through the 'Tower of Palaces' shows how each 'palazzo' surrounds its 'hollowed-out space of the cataclysmic advent' and is carried on a 'New Ground' marked with an 'entabled garden'.



215. Section of the Parthenon. Scale 30 ft. to 1 in.

Section through a conjectural restoration of the Parthenon showing the daylighting-slots. As with much archaeology, the roofs and ceilings are destroyed and hard to reconstruct.

Here, in Texas, in a place familiar to the English, and yet unlike England, a chance was opening for a **frontal attack on the most closely guarded of all taboos** - the **inner contents of the 20C Entablature**. What was the **germinal fire** that lay hidden within the 'enrafted heap of ashes'? What could be legitimately '**published**', in these late days, of the '**cargo**' of Modern, 20C, Architecture? Was there, even, anything there at all?

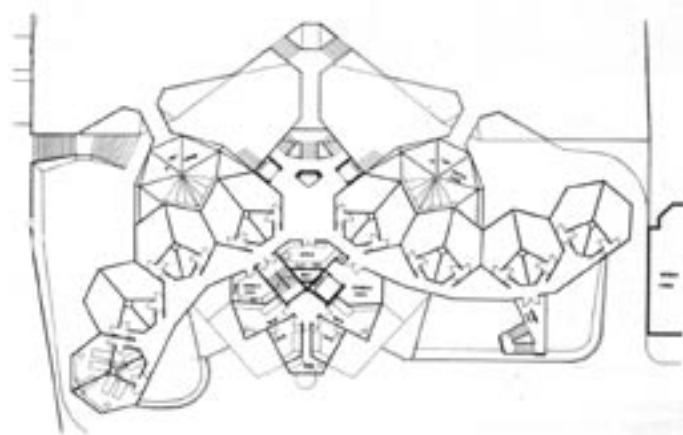
To that end, and to the advantage of my instructions from my University Clients to make some '**social space**', JOA proposed a '**deep**' building.

This was a lesson learned **on my very first building** - the 'bungalow' warehouse-workshops at Poyle and Kensal Road, Amazed by their low price of £11/sq.ft. and £16/ sq ft respectively, I had come to understand that this was merely because they were a great, deep, **bag of space** enclosed mostly by a surface which no one cares to observe and which could be cheap - **the roof**. Deep buildings equal cheap space. Cheap space equals more space. More space equals 'space left over', which can be that **Cinderalla of spaces**, '**public space**'. Big, interior, public spaces, if they are not to be just warehouse-barn places, **would also need 'fixing'** in some way. Everyone knows this. Everyone, even Architects, knows that the cheapest way to 'fix' an interior is to **give it a diverting paint scheme**. **The only people who absolutely reject this 'easy way out' are Architects**. This is, **one has to say**, because if Architects were to allow this simple remedy, they would lose professional control of the 'appearance' of that important part of a building - the one that their Client actually pays for - its inside. **Anyone can propose a mere 'paint scheme'**. The Interior would be lost to rank amateurs, chairmen's wives and, most repugnant of all, '**interior decorators**'. It is why one always finds that the parts of any 'building inside', that has remained under the control of a late 20C architect, **will be foolishly expensive** because it is surfaced in '**real**' materials (like brick - **which has no business inside**) even if these have been sliced so thin as to constitute a veneer getting-on for a wall-paper. I example the sliced onyx of the Mies Pavilion, in Barcelona, that cost 25% of the pavilion - the last word in up-market aniconic vulgarity.

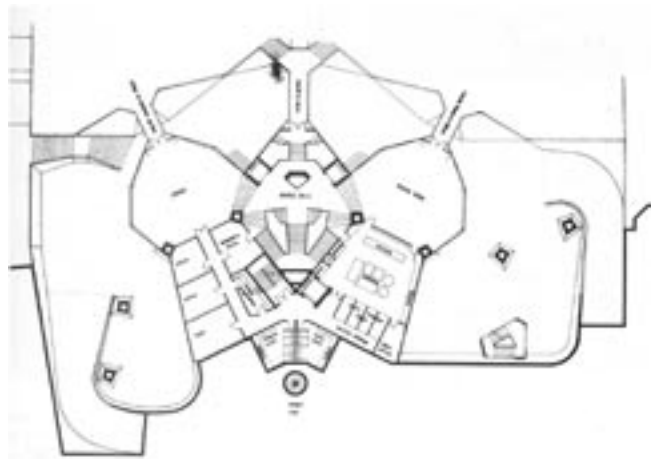
I knew, therefore, that if I '**made a barn**' inside this project, I stood a chance of a **cost-effective 'paint job'** - and, while running the risk of being '**displaced**' by some **dauber**, at least an opportunity to use my '**big bang for the buck**' decorative technologies for a crack at that **soft underbelly of the 'great taboo'** - the Entablature. This deep-building strategy give Duncan Hall **more external covered arcade** than on any other Rice building. It gave the New Architecture of Rice Campus a new, far higher, standard for **internal common space**. I described this on **pages 27-14 & 15** as the '**working**' of the '**Seven-Fold Weave**'.

Not that this would have satisfied a Functionalist' from the 20C's architectural orthodoxy. He would **refuse, point blank**, any descent from the 'Beaux-Arts'. He would want the plan of any building to be generated as directly as possible from a schedule of rooms ordered by their correctly functional adjacencies. The means to this end is called the '**Bubble Diagram**'. **Deliberately starved of any formal devices** except the **meaningless grid**, and **painterly jugglings with a Bauhaus picturesque**, my class of 1958 siezed upon the Bubble Diagram as an **epiphany of Functionalist Reality**. So celebrated has this **infantile Hymn to Convenience** become that, 50 years on, in the 21C, it is now taught to primary school children as the **haptic fount and illiterate origin of Architecture**.

My own **liberation from its thrall** dates from the design of our first '**complex building**' as the climax of the first three years of the five year course. It was an Hotel at Richmond-on-Thames. I **gazed for many days** at the '**bubble diagram**' of its preferred room adjacencies - relationships which I knew from the inside, having '**gofered**' for Clough Williams-Ellis at his Hotel in Portmeirion, in North Wales.

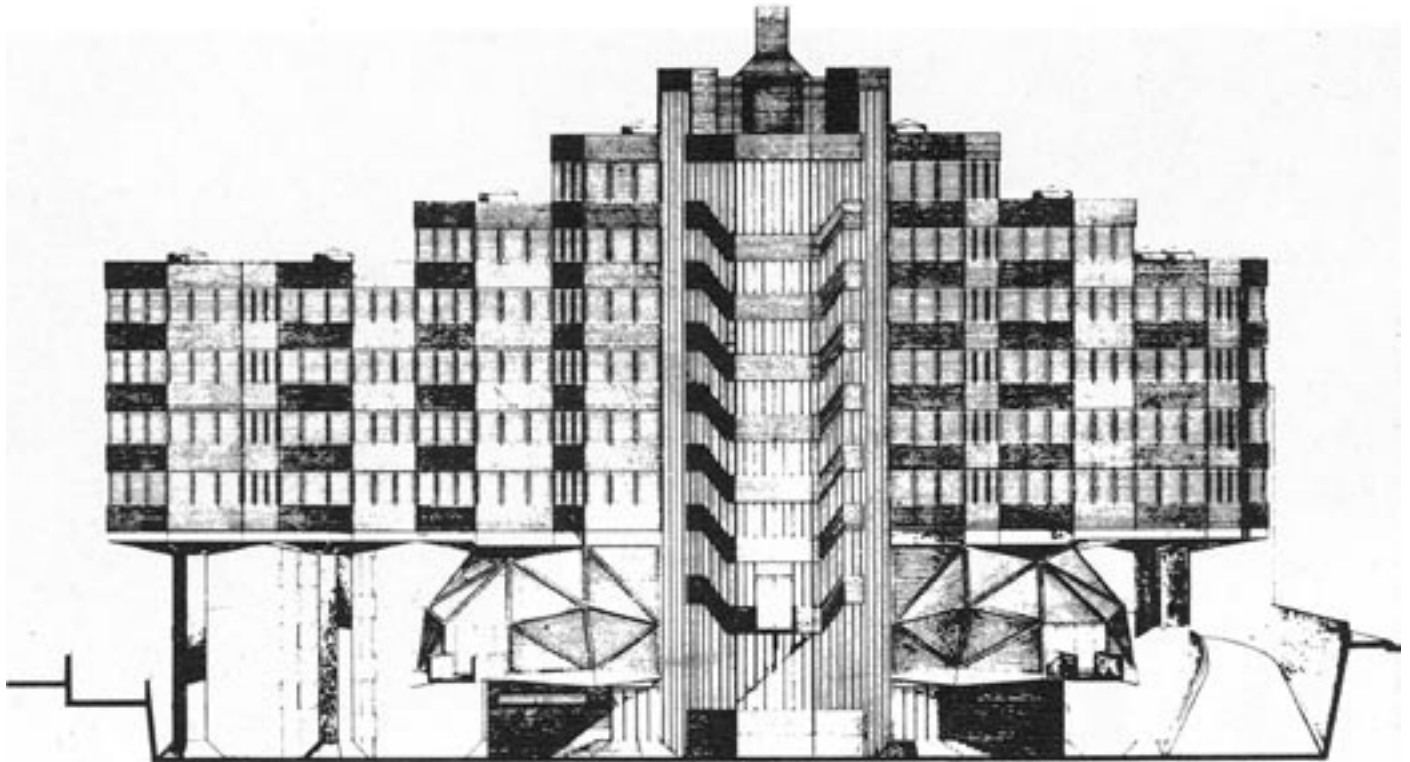


This was as close as I could get to a 'Bubble-Diagram Architecture'. My necklace of nesting heptagons ensured that maximum ingress of afternoon sun which accompanied a view over the river. Its vibrant, insectoid, pseudo-Vitalism successfully published that this Plan owed nothing to any humanoid ambition.



By the paucity of the public rooms one might assume that the guests were spending most of the day away, only returning to sleep. During this dark night the river would be invisible and the boats garaged. But one did not pass a mid-20C architectural course by thinking realistically about the natural habits of human-kind.

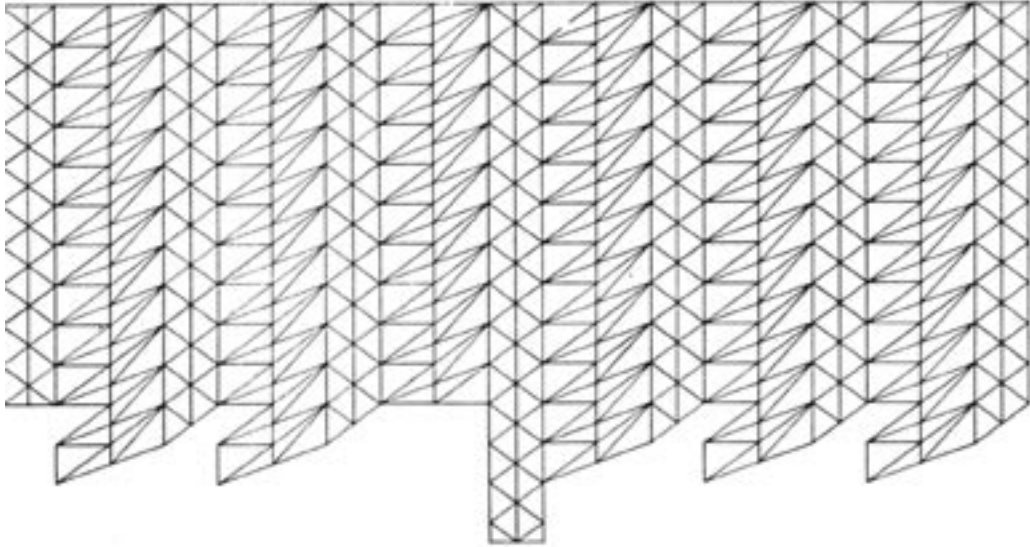
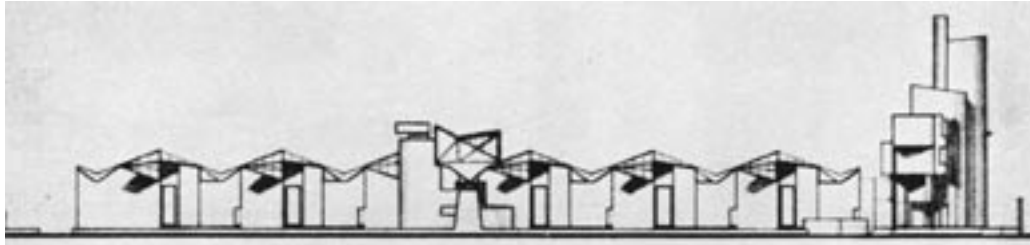
The master-stroke of my final conclusion was to design the mirrored pairs (one backs-to-backs en-suite toilets to economise on the drains) of hotel rooms as **seven-sided heptagons**. These, I discovered, do not nest as did the hexagons used by the then **radically fashionable Buckminster Fuller**, but broke free to form a curve. The fact that this gentle meander was **entirely free from any human agency** recommended it to my Tutors. It reflected that carefully-nurtured state of ignorance of any **'academic' architectural culture** which was the ambition of the Post-War Profession for its neophytes. We were being trained to bring into being the culture of the **wholly-new state of universal welfare** whose greyed-out precondition was to **submit to any law** save that of one **made by a Man**. **It mattered not which others were pressed to service**. A popular resource was D'Arcy Thompson's "Growth and Form", which related geometry to vertebrate and crustacean physiognomies. But any formal resource would do, providing its 'architecture' was **not that invented by man for his own use** over the previous nine millenia.



Facing squarely into the South-West and the setting sun my all-glass Bucky-ball 'Dymaxion' Living Rooms and bedrooms would have fried the guests alive. It would have added peeling furniture veneers and skin cancer to a stay filled with the delights of viewing an endless succession of white-painted (because not yet plastic) river-cruisers. But my admiring Architectural Critics all betrayed that natural orientation of 20C 'mauvais foi' which was to look firmly away from what they, as Modern Architects, called 'the built world'. What, in one of humanity's greatest cities, fount of capitalism and the greatest Empire ever made, could be more worth viewing than its axial drainage ditch (the Tamesis), and some micro-yachts?

*Other signs of the assiduous student of the 'received' modernity was my elevation of the hotel rooms on 'look-no-hands' structural pillars like tall lily-pads. These combined the influences of Corbusier (**piloti**), Frank Lloyd Wright (**Johnson Wax at Racine**), and Buckminster Fuller (**Dymaxion House**). This *recherché* correctitude extended to ensuring that every guest space, from sleeping to dining, **faced south-west over the River**. The Clean Air Act, forbidding open fires, was enacted in 1954. London's air, smoggy for 150 years, was rid of asphixia by 1958. Yet in that same year, when I composed this homage to Modernity, that city, **the power that had created the greatest empire in the history of man**, in which we would all, more than likely, be working for the rest of our lives, **was still judged to be 'bad'**. Like all Englishmen, we knew that **Nature was 'good'**. It was natural, in this perverse, Alice-in-Wonderland, culture, to focus the whole form of this building onto the contemplation of the Thames, **the largest open drain of London's hydrological cycle**.*

I found, however, no sign of Corbusier's "rushing rivers and rolling fields" under my lily-pad 'piloti'. I discovered there only that predictable archaeology of dingy grey concrete automobile ramps swept by roof-level winds that allowed the acoustic pollution of the High Street to flow all over the quiet river-bank. Conscious, also, of the 'style-vibes' to which the intelligent student will respond, I erased the windows as the proscenia for a human presence. I veiled the entirety of this giant lens with closely spaced horizontal slats. This would prevent any view of my 'machine à habiter' from being subjected to a too-obvious occupation by human beings - a fate which would have trivialised its alien majesty. My bubbly building was a bug-eyed monster which, while focussing its gaze away from even the modest pseudo-'village' of Richmond, offered only a 'blinded' pupil as the doorway to any reciprocal unmasking of its own interiority.



With all of this going for my keen assimilation of the of the late 20C zeitgeist, I was gratified to see it published, on the 125th anniversary of the Architectural Association, as a representation of the late 1950's. Nor, thinking about it later, was I surprised to see the late James Stirling, the most mutely ineffective of our part-time Tutors, busy with his notebook as the scheme hung in the 1958, end-of-year, exhibition. Not that Richmond was his primary inspiration for the Leicester Engineering laboratories which catapulted James Gowan and he to stellar notice in 1963. That title must go to the 1958 design for a warehouse by Edward Reynolds, who died of stomach cancer soon afterwards,

I met, in 2002, a clever and energetic graduate from the Royal college of Art. He was designing a range of furniture made from some recycled rubbery substance. After learning that I studied in the 1950's he gazed upon me as on some rare antique, exclaiming:

The inventor of an original idea used to be judged more important than those who imitated him. Not so in the 20C. Venturi collaged from Renaissance History, Stirling collaged from 20C Modernism. The trawl-nets of 20C archaeology bring fresh cargoes all the time. The talent of the late 20C was to subtly transform these 'objets trouves' into novel configurations. Reynolds' skewed glass roof and sculpted bauble of an administration-block was made flesh in Leicester, in 1963, by Stirling and Gowan.

"But that was the Golden Age!". Who knows if some innocent in the hands of the Academy of Today, securely historicist in its Neo-Modernism of the 20C, is not drawing inspiration from my bubble-headed denizen of the Corbusian Arcadia. *Et in Arcadia bubble-O.*



Reading from the left: the 'Restaurant Building' with arches on two floors is new. "Whittaker House", the big white 'Palladian' composition imitates an unbuilt design from the 1760's by Sir William Chambers. "Hotham House", in red brick, imitates "the style of a 17C English Country House". The red-brick next to it is Heron House, a restored original of 1716. The Palm Court Hotel, beyond the new archway with Venetian windows above, which stretches along to the tower on the far right, is a "remodelled original from the 1850's". Compositionally this is collage. Seeking authenticity, it copies a 'genuine' original'. The effect is amiable until one sees that the drop-in ceilings are as old as the exterior. To be both 'new' and 'old' at the same time is difficult. The result is not so much trying as tiring.



Our river-side site at Richmond Bridge was eventually designed, in 1984-7, by Quinlan Terry. His disposition of the site is **physically humane** and picturesquely composed. Sadly, however, **his architecture is a fake**. If "art is a lie that reveals the truth" then a fake is the 'lie that hides it'. The construction of a project like this, by an Architect who hides inside **some lonely myth** that the '**Five Orders**' were divulged, **virgo tabernaculum**, by God to Man, was one of those **many trivialisations** which finally betrayed the semantic ambitions of the **1960's**. It has been understood, for as far back as the Renaissance, that Architecture is **more than the sum of its lithic manifestations**.

If there is one late 20C project that I find offensive above all others, it is Terry's great Richmond composition. Whereas all other 20C 'styles' patently trash the idea of a literate Architectural culture, Terry seems to promote it. Raymond Erith, whose practice he acquired, had a certain genius and much taste. Terry has only the ability to copy 'originals' in a way that travesties them entirely without his mentor's gentle wit. With 'friends' like this literacy needs no enemies.

Unfortunately, it has remained **beyond the wit of man to decipher of what that 'more' consists**. Terry's Richmond leads us away-from rather than towards that much-needed decryption. But better Terry's necrophiliac animations, I suppose, than one more naked 'truth' of the inner world of dust-heaped polystyrene ceiling tiles, fluorescent strip-lights and photocopiers which prepares the man in the nylon shirt to **suspend whatever values he practices at home and go out and 'do business'**.

I look, now, upon my academic years, as my opportunity (as my Tutors noted at the time), to **exhaust most of the known 20C styles**. This infertile adolescent apprenticeship saved both the Public and myself the pain of having built any of these professionally-admired inventions. One would like to think not, but it is very arguable that this **extended emasculation is the best that should be expected** from the adolescence of a Profession with such a capacity to wreck the human lifespan.

Now, however, after forty years of support from no-one but my Professional collaborators, my Clients and my Industrial Inventors, I was possessed of formal devices that I knew would, as my letter of sixteen years insisted, "work". But what they would work to finally invent/reveal/create was not yet "known by proof".

I therefore took the foot-print of the Texan building and threw over it the sort of roof I always try to use: something **big and all-enveloping** which slopes the rain 'outside' to gutters. The Texan Contractor himself choose to reify this as industrial corrugated floor-decking laid to a slope of 22.5°. Judging by the sub-contractors struggles, this was a use which its original inventors never foresaw. Clad externally with insulation the roof was finished in the **biggest Roman tiles that I could find-** in this case from Mexico.



The floor of the 'River', down the Valley of the Republic, was one stage lower than this 'working floor' of plywood sheets. The concrete corsetry of a 'yoked column' can be seen on the left. The floor is held on one pillar that then splits into two supports via a short beam that 'yokes' them together. The four pillars below straddle the access corridor which makes the base, or podium, of the 'Walk-in' variant of the Sixth Order.



The full height of the 'Valley' is measured by the 'Tumbling Stream' Social Stairs. The temporary wooden stair is on the left. It saves the builders from damaging the proper metal stairs on the right.



In 'La Nausée' Satre's hero contemplates a gnarled tree root with dawning horror. The horror of rawness is salutary if it inspires us to cultivate a sense of the 'cooked'. I like to think that this sheet metal cathedral of cement 'inspired' my Building and Ground Committee to do what they had never done before: commission some large-scale 'iconic engineering'. This was a decision that they followed-through with an expedition to view our work in Britain. No European or British Client was ever so thorough, or ever got such a good interior from JOA. It is an ironical fact that most Architects prefer the photograph on the left to the finished interior on the right. They no longer understand the difference between a concept and a finished work. It is that the concept must be worked-up and worked-out to become a 'work' of Art. It helps also, in this 'work' to enjoy iconic literacy.

The bare, corrugated, galvanised steel soffite gave the interior of my vast cavern a scale that the Building and Grounds Sub-Committee discerned was unique within Rice Campus. They walked, one morning, down this valley of 'tin' and cement, prior to their regular meeting. I looked down on them from a high balcony, and waved to their dark blue suits. It was a large gesture of the sort Texans enjoy. They saw that this space, gifted by the 'Republic of the Valley', could be turned to the advantage of their University.

Yet I doubt if anything much would have happened without a chance encounter generated by the very opposite of what happened during the Judge contract. In Cambridge, I and my design team were always locked out of the first part of the monthly meeting between the University, the Private Benefactors and the Cost Consultants. We the Architects, who were legally and operationally in charge of the on-going building contract, had to listen to muffled voices, once for over an hour, talking, and not without emphasis, about money. The result of this paranoid privacy concerning funding was that, half way into the contract, money promised by a benefactor failed to appear. The iconic erasure of the Judge interior was the result. All remaining iconic engineering was 'wiped' so as to make the P-C point that "only an academic building" (as it was denigrated by a member of the Client Body) for training business managers would remain a humble supplicant, dressed only in dung-coloured wood and beige plaster, in keeping with its proper station in the sumptuary pecking order of Cambridge U.

The groundbreaking of the Computational Engineering Building wove bright disco-lasers in a synthetic mist that rose inside a darkened tent. The Hon. Anita K. Jones, Class of '74, Director of Research and Engineering, in the U.S. Department of Defense, spoke from a lectern graced by the huge grain of my favourite veneer, shutter-ply Douglas Fir. Walking away afterwards, Kent Anderson asked if I had time to attend an ad-hoc gathering of the Funding Sub-Committee. We sat down opposite brass plates engraved with the names of Margaret Thatcher, George Bush Sr., Francois Mitterrand, et al - to whose use Lovett Hall, as the most beautiful public building in Houston, had been put for the July 1991 G7 meeting.



By the time the project had reached the stage shown on the previous page, this floor was still budgetted with carpet tiles and the ceiling was flat sheetrock painted beige. The Building and Grounds Committee responded, with a natural enthusiasm, to the potential of the crinkly tin shed interior. The vaulted and decorated ceiling and the decorated terrazzo floor resulted from a last-minute budget increase of one per cent. The project became a building fit for human beings by the sort of price fluctuation that a construction manager can lose or gain in a few weeks of good or bad administration.

I had little to add to their deliberations until, towards the end, Kent asked me to describe the design. Taken by surprise, and relaxed by that informality which America encourages, I told them of JOA's transformation of the Hypostylar Forest of Infinity into a grid of 'Servant' columns. I told them of my enfleshment, via the 'Republic of the Valley', of the Computational Engineering Faculty into a theatre of real people, with bodies under the 'talking heads' that they otherwise saw on their computer-screens. Finally I told them of how one could inscribe the interior with graphical texts that would discourse at (hopefully) the level of intellectual activity which the University projected for this Faculty-Building. Steve Shaper, who had also been mainly silent, came up after we rose to disperse and briefly observed that he liked modern art, especially of the abstract sort, and found my last idea interesting.

There the matter rested for the next seven months, until, in December 1995, the Committee walked through JOA's cathedral of industrial metal. We all knew, by this point, that if there was to be any 'iconographic engineering', it was now or never. I began to make some calls - seemingly without effect. Then, as I was despairing of having anything but carpet-tiles and a flat beige ceiling, I got a call to a breakfast meeting with Steve Shaper. We talked about what could be done. Finally, he said, above the jelloid muzak of the Marriott Medical's breakfast room, "I would like to give \$100,000 for you to make some Art in your interior". The meeting of the sub-committee was the next day. I had already received a quotation of exactly that sum for a vaulted ceiling, done with Scanachrome's electronic paint sprays that JOA had used for the V&A exhibition: 'A Gothic Passion'. I got the impression from Steve, that he liked my Video-Fresco monoprinted tiles. But I calculated that if the ceiling was not inscribed during the main contract, then it never would be. Columns can be inscribed later, even being treated one-by-one while the building is occupied. I hired some computer-time at 24/7 Kinko's and wrote-out my proposition.

The committee met (that time) in the ugliest room on Campus - an epiphany of 'third way protest culture' designed by the Faculty of Architecture. The benches writhed, snaking around under randomly-skewed fluorescent striplights. The furnishings were All-American Sweet's Catalogue. The Faculty Architects added 'Age of Trash' ketchup. Everyone was equal because equally 'de-centred'. A Speaker had no idea where to stand, or to which quarter he should speak. I was especially pleased that this Committee voted its money to my project while sitting in this frivolous exercise in that substitution of anarchy for democracy which destroys the very grounds of the tragic drama of human being. I like to think that its p.c. ethical squalor spurred them to add the extra \$70,000 for a terrazzo floor to the 'River' and 'Delta' of the Republic of the Valley. But maybe they were going to do this anyway.

The point of this history is that the **iconic fiasco of the Judge** was **directly due to the paranoid level of privacy** surrounding the funding of that project. The 'Old Europe' of the **fin-de-siecle** still harboured a **communistic disapproval** of the level of **personal wealth** needed to fund a major building project. The **iconic success of Duncan Hall** was the product of a **novelty that was allowed to emerge** from an American acceptance of large personal wealth, *per se*, together with the acceptance that such excess implied the burden, usually **pursued with some enthusiasm**, of personal patronage. If I had not been asked to **sit-in on the Rice Funding Committee** none of what follows would have occurred and my whole half-century of effort, my **ultimate point and purpose as an Architect of note**, would still be as 'not proven' as it was when I flew to Houston, and away from Britain, in February 1992. I could **not have scripted** these lectures from a position that had been **realised, in the real world, with real clients, a real building, at a real cost, at least once.**

Nor was there any **advice, appropriating a specious ethological authority** and delivered in a **plummy voice contemptuously ignorant of 20C art and design**, advising me to "retain the services of a reputable painter". In Texas, if one **says one can do something** one is expected to **go out and do it.** My long drawn out manoeuvres and the **Texan's taste** for what I came to call a 'radical conservatism', had given me that **benign gift of the USA - a 'second chance'.** If I failed this, I would have **no-one to blame but myself.**

I returned to London and proceeded in that usual state of intuitively-structured activity which is typical of attempts at novelty.

One looks backwards for guidance at what one knows is possible and forwards to what one knows leads to failure, **without knowing, precisely, the path to success.** I decided that **my medium would be hand-painted water-colour.** Not that this was a medium which I had ever mastered to the level of some who worked in my own office. Nor was my technique in any way comparable to any of the Russian graduates from their Architectural Academies, one of whom was the Tanya Hunter that I usually asked to paint our design presentations. I **knew only** that although the final ceiling would be 'painted', in some way, by a computer-controlled machine, that I wanted to **avoid the flat and featureless colour made by the computer itself** when it merely 'filled' a defined field with a hue - however precisely formulated. I had **spent 200 hours, in 1972,** at the very **beginning of the history of my design bureau,** painting coloured lacquers in order to discover the precise shade of 'leather brown' wood-work to which this early Client had instructed me to **reduce all of the symbolically pregnant polychromy** that I wished to gift to their son. During this labour I had found that my ambition could only be satisfied if I **painted one transparent lacquer over another.** A colour (even a brown) that was achieved in this way had a **liveliness that could not be reproduced by mixing all of the tints in the same tin and smearing them on - as do 99% of 'decorators' and mechanically-mixed 'paint systems'.** It is not, in fact, possible to use this **'over-glaze' technique with water-colour,** but a **similar chromatic diffraction occurs 'automatically' within the medium itself.** When the damp colour dries **on a textured paper,** the suspended pigments are separated by the **small peaks and hollows of the surface.** They **dry-out in this segregated state,** producing an effect with the **chromatic surface energy** nearing that of the late-19C paintings of Impressionism that developed the more laboured technique of 'Pointillisme'.

The danger in my choice of medium was that each of the many hundreds of panels of colour that I was eventually to apply, some mixed and painted in my bedroom in the Marriott Medical Hotel, could only be painted-on once. It was a technique that needed the whole design to be precisely conceived and exactly executed, colour by colour, **with no turning-back.** Like the **buon fresco so foolishly prescribed, and so swiftly denied,** by the English Connoisserocracy **who had abandoned me, and their own Neo-Classicising 'project', at the Judge Institute, Each little panel of this whole, huge design, once painted, was fixed for ever.**



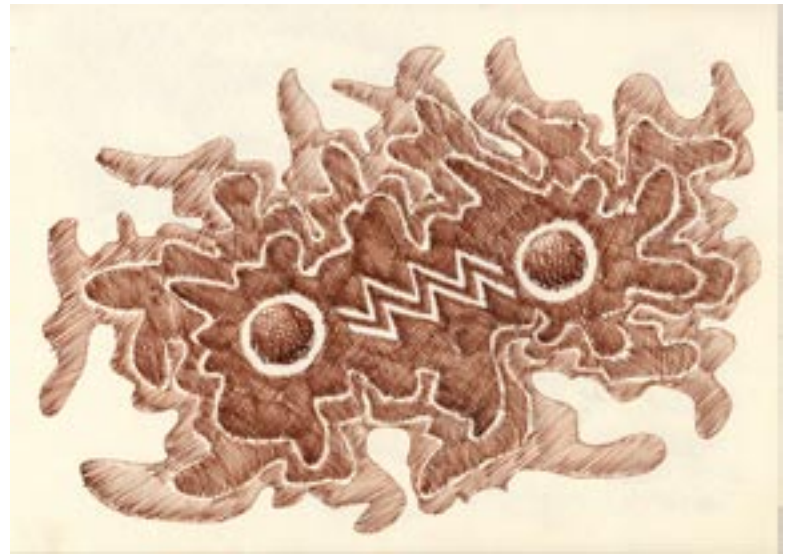
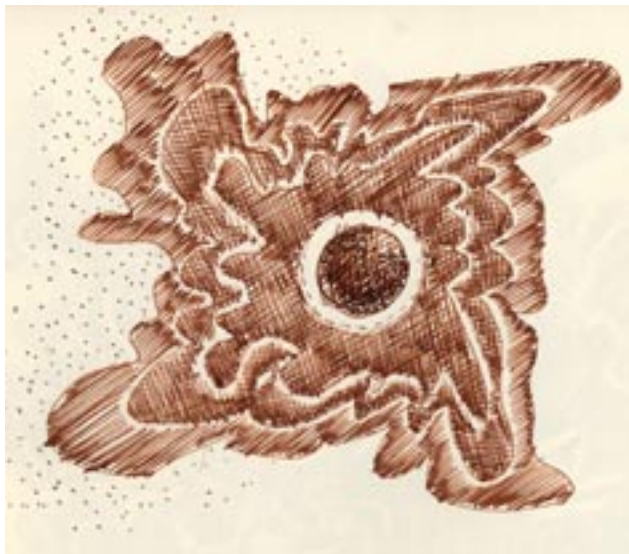
'Nursery colours" were what one sophisticated Client of mine called the palette chosen by the Client Committee. What else could one call pink blue and white? But it has a lovely 'wooden-top' (a brainless toy) ceiling.

One can not retain the *pristine freshness of fresco, or of water colour's primary crystallisation*, if they have to be soaked back to white and re-coloured. It is this *quality*, of a project well conceived and precisely worked-out, year upon year, that is typical of all of the greatest Cities, and the *Architecture that makes them 'Urbane'*. It is a quality that is no longer admired by the Architects of today. The taste of this moment prefers the *'Art'* to the *'Work'* in the *Work of Art*. But this is because the working out of the concept not only *reveals*, with unerring accuracy, what the concept actually is, but *inscribes* that 'whatness' - for ever. What could justify such a *fear of being fully, and permanently, explicated* except he fear that there was nothing to declare'.

After this, I could no longer avoid facing the question to which my long Odyssey always led me. What was it that I could find if I cut away the flat plane of the ceiling (caelum) with my chisel (coelum)? In Cambridge University I had tried, while working for that Anti-Modernist English tendency who had always supported my previous efforts, to mediate this peculiar 'cargo' through the Western mythologies of the Hellenes. No such polite 'Humanitas' was proposed by any of my Rice Client Body. Nor, enamoured though I was of these wonderful histories, was I going to raise the imperishable spectres of the creatures deployed by Inigo Rose (whose father, he told me later, had, as a very young man, taught art at Rice itself!

I relished the opportunity to essay my narratologies via the medium proper to my time, the abstract design that the aniconic Establishment of mainstream modernism should have been exploring and perfecting during the 83 years lost to the invention of a narratologically enriched architecture since Aby Warburg's 1912 coinage of 'iconography'.

I found myself needing to design, somehow or other, that original phenomenology of inception which must be revealed by the stripping-away of the coffered trabeations to reveal the 'Cargo of the Rafted Entablature' which adverts the cataclysmic Moment of Inception, the Time of Beginning. This must, evidently, begin at the beginning - in short with that 'Nothing' which must provide the paradoxical ground, that is to say secure foundation, for whatever it is that has Being. I drew a circle with a white rim and a black centre, surrounded by a shapeless cloud. Then I drew another, next to it. Then I drew a zig-zag which joined them by an aimless route. It was a neuronal axon, seeking its mate - which turned out to be the mirror of itself.

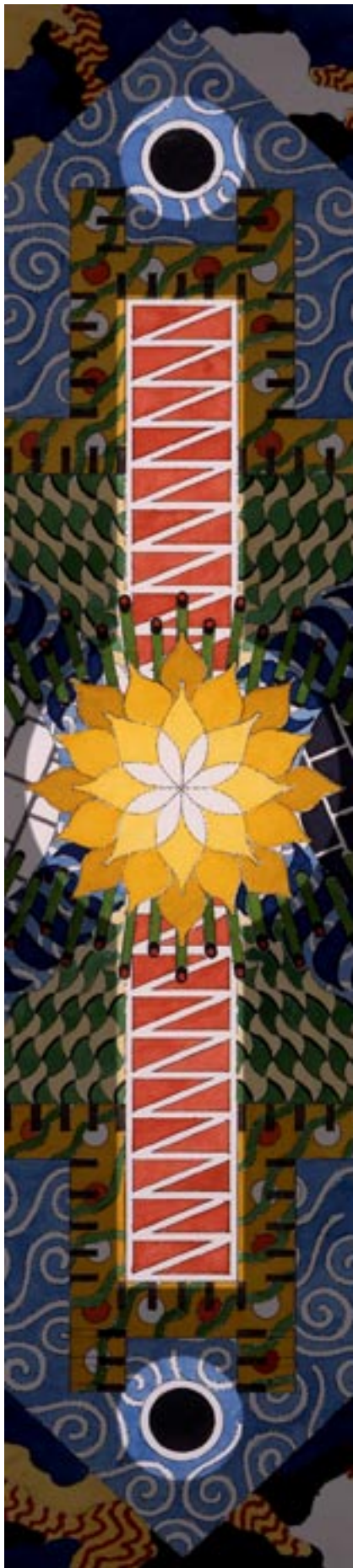


How does one render an image (icon) of Nothing? Not, surely, with a white page. That would be a literal 'sheet of paper', and not even an image at all.

'Nothing' at the moment of its coming-into-being in the coming-into-being of its 'other'. What could that be but another Nothing. Is this the basis of the impossibility of there being Something when before there had only been Nothing?

Drawings are the origins of all icons, as such. They may imitate Nature but the active hand, reaching out to grasp an image (like the solar arms of Akhenaton, or the arrows of Antique Greek sight), is the medium by which icons are created. Icons can never be invented by the haplessly 'perceptive' optic, or its mechanical parody: the camera. The reason is that the right hand which held the first stone tools, 2,500,000 years ago, initiated the social revolution mediated by the speech-culture that came to roost in the left hemisphere. Drawing draws on that neural highway to the unique symboliferating skill of language. The spatial and optical capability of the right hemisphere is not passive to this discourse. Its contributions build onto those of the left, extending its manufactures into regions of syncretic complexity. The optical and spatial can never displace the hand and the word from their generic role in any iconography.

Architects who conceive of generating 'iconic' buildings by writing spatio-visual programs for computers merely prolong the inscription of the deliberate illiteracy and profound iconic opacity which the late-20C imposed upon the human lifespaces.



'Twinning Nothing' was the secret of its 'iconisation'.

'Nothing', on its own, is hard to 'image'. It is so with any abstract idea. But such notions come into the mind along with their anti-thesis or 'other'. Life is also 'not-death', black is also 'not-white'.

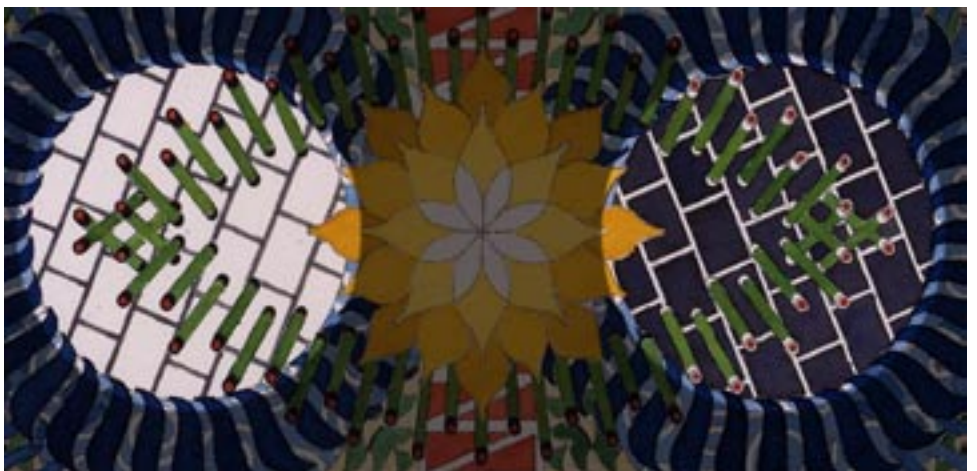
But what is the 'not-nothing' of Nothing? Can it be a 'something'? I did not think so. Nothing's eat Somethings for breakfast. Nothings are too powerful, too Absent, too Negating. Only another Nothing could confront, could balance, a Negation. But two Nothings, as we are taught in primary arithmetic, are impossible. The effect of this mirroring of Negation, which occurs when the path of a nervous synapse joins the monadic sphere of the One to its identical Other, revealing to both all-encompassing imperatives the impossibility of such a conditon, could be the singular catastrophe which seeded Creation (out of Nothing).

Drawn-out in the formal geometry proper to a work that has been 'worked', this becomes a synaptic zig-zag, red with fiery blood, which joins two deathlike discs of black to centre on the catastrophic flowering of a state of Being which explodes - not out of nothing, but out of the Negation of Nothing. I was determined that this 'cargo' which I was uncovering would make some sort of sense, even if it was violent. I had too much invested in my journey of discovery to compromise its truthfulness.

My age was no more violent than those which had gone before. But it had the ability to become so.

Science was the truth which was overwhelming all others, often by avoiding the questions older ethics sought to answer. But if that was the truth of our time then the conceptual function of Architecture was to bring, by the advent of the Entablature and its Cargo, such truths as we knew and supported, into the public domain. Semantically, the inscriptional field of any large building could (and certainly 'should'), never be one-sided. Discourse is argumentation. The only fear in this process is that it should fail due to iconic illiteracy. So what better place to start than a great University.

I drew the origin of Being as the whiteness which, chromatically, is the totalisation of all of those hues that Newton showed combine into light itself. I graduated this from paper-white, that is from a centre without any chromatic substantiality, to outer rings of floriations growing gradually more ochreous. This is the transition from pure 'Being' itself to the Solar furnace - its incarnation for us Earthlings. But this is only the light by which we see and believe that we achieve enlightenment.



In the Beginning there was Nothing. Coming into Existence with its Opposite - Negation - resulted in the cataclysmic outflowering of Being.

Being manifested as fire and its light needed matter to become dark. Matter, for humans, has become a page upon which to write the relentlessly symboliferating texts by which our culturally-conditioned being grasps reality. The universe is a book, a library, a warehouse of stacked-high bales, like blocks of stone, filled with understandings that slowly fill the horizons.

Science teaches us that although *to see* is necessary to Science's radical primitivity, *proof* also lies in the mediation of its *facticity* by the abstractions provided by a textual organisation. I drew this as two 'planets that bracketed the 'sun'. One was in *light*, the other in the *shadow* that proves to us the *peculiarity of being* that is *not light* but *matter*. These planets were then 'humanised' by being divided into the orthogonal fields on which we inscribe the texts with which we humans have slowly built the planet into the *temple of knowledge* that we *understand*.

Round these there coursed a huge serpent whose segments were dark blue waves. This was the 'thalassosphere' whose existence was a pre-condition of life and in whose blind darkness the spinal creatures that now we are had their lowly genesis. This blue sign, adapted by mathematicians for that of *Infinity*, was also intended to represent the hydrological cycle in our atmosphere as it courses around the dark and light sides of our planet like the blades of a turbine powered by the central energy of the sun.



The serpent images water in many iconic traditions. Twisted across itself it is also the concrete original of the sign of infinity in mathematics. Here I take it to sign the 'thalassosphere' of the oceans around our planet. Turbine-shaped waves course around as the hydrological cycle - powered by the central energy of the sun.

Upon this I found myself 'over-printing' a shape like the 'Mandorla', an eye-like intersection of two arcs which can also represent the feminine organ. Green tubes with blackened ends whose hollow interiors were red, radiated out, eccentrically, from the central conflagration. These were the hollow reeds of the raft that had carried the germ of one half of the 'truth-workings of the project' safely encased in its conical hearth-fire of ashes. They also recalled the hollow reed in which Prometheus carried his clandestine fire to the Men that the Gods wished to punish for their duplicity, impiety and deceit.



The 'ruin' of the Oriental Raft as its ember-carrying 'canonic logs' blasted apart into the shape of a Mandorla-eye by the advent of the germinal ember in its hearth-fire 'cone of ashes'.

The Western myth of the Ark that carried the advent of the New Foundation proposes an inconclusive end to its voyage. Athanasius Kircher shows it slumped on the slopes of Ararat, slack-jointed after delivering its germinal cargo. Like the rest of the iconographies invented by the West, whether of Judaic or Hellenic origin, the iconic syntax of the Ark was so one-on-one naturalistic that it collapsed, unable to discourse persuasively with the abstracted iconics of Science. Other cultures, whose technology was not so powerful as that of the West, have the paradoxical ability to provide more lively iconic hybridisations with Science. I have already instanced that of India, whose Vedic cosmogony parallels that of the West's much more recent discoveries of evolution, both onto- and phylo-genetic.

I had already tested, in my Judge project, the potential of the **naturalistic iconography** of the Western tradition. It had **failed catastrophically**, pitching my project into that limbo which yawns between **Moderns incapable of any iconic literacy at all**, and **Neo-Classicists whose only real kingdoms are history-books, country-houses and sunburnt ruins**. The **role given to the Ark in the Vedic narrative** followed, more persuasively, the **phenomenologies of evolution in which the vehicle of any seed is consumed by the final act of germination**. The 'raft', or 'nest or reeds' as **Kuiper** describes it, is **sundered and scattered by Indra's spear of light** in the way that any vesicle protecting the germinal agents will be consumed when the generative event occurs. Thus, **in the Architectural 'translation' of this Time of Inception**, the raft-beams of the Entablature are **exploded and scattered by the Coming-into-Being**, forming a frame to it like the lashes of an eye, the **peripteros of a cella**, or as **Indra McEwen** suggests, in 'Socrates' Ancestor', the **oars of a galley**.

This Vedic phenomenology of destruction and inevitable renewal was the model of the political economy of the Moguls. Each new dynast was obliged to build a new palace-economy the size of a city like Fatepur-Sikri, that made Versailles look like the hunting-lodges from which the palaces of the West descended. But this, while it might explicate the truth of the natural world, could no longer suit the West and the culture it has imposed upon the globe. Given the physical powers of Western culture, one can no longer look forward to a phenomenology of a 'natural' level of destruction and renewal. The Western state, with its gross capacity for destruction, is fated to continue until the end of time. The figure of a raft which remains intact, that contains, constrains, carries and circumscribes the central events, proposes this, if anything, more awful, truth. The Ark that the West has launched, let us say for convenience over the last 600 years, beginning with the Italian Renaissance, has learned how to float freely on a flood which it seems, itself, to generate and which it fears to allow to subside. We can no longer contemplate, with the equanimity of the Orient, the wreck of the Western Ark upon some unseen, submarine, Ararat. Our monstrous vehicle, empowered by Science and Technique, has gathered so much into its hold that it navigates with the entire globe as its 'cargo'.

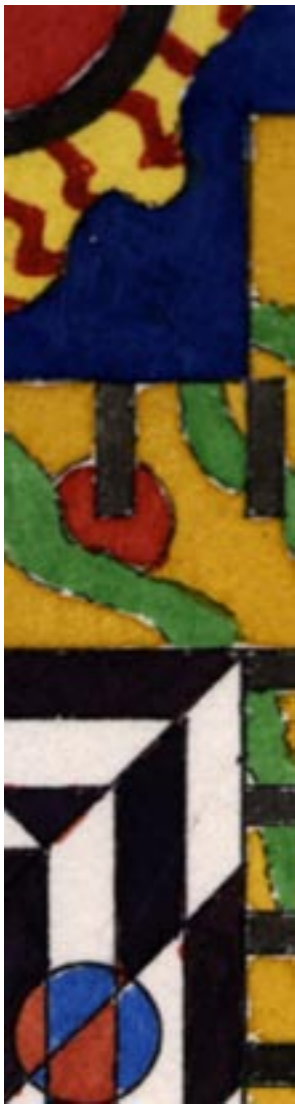


The Raft of the Occident powered by a temporality that owes nothing to Nature. Borne aloft on its 'trabes' cored by red discs of inner power it carries more and more, approaching the whole Earth, within its 'hold'. Unlike that of the Orient, the Raft of the Occident can never enjoy the luxury of dying to be re-born. It is condemned to live for ever.



My A1 watercolour on the floor to the left. A x 32 times enlargement on one of the fabric strips to be wrapped around the ceiling tiles.

Many threads weave the vessel of the West. I choose, in this version of the Occidental Raft, to inscribe its 'trabeated' limbs with a phenomenology of the metricated time that has detached itself entirely from all the actual, natural, phenomena of diurnal, lunar, solar and astral interval. This Time is the time of the chronometers that the West constructed to enable their global, colonial, circumnavigations. It is different to the time of the Orient that, while capable of the exact measurement of natural phenomena, never constructed a machine capable of sustaining time as an autonomous mensuration. This autonomous time is not the atemporal stasis of the hypostylar Forests of Infinitude. The intervals of Autonomous Time are regular. But they are not the same, as are those of the time before Time. For that pre-ontological state, reified by the Hypostyle, existed with neither extension nor period - only Infinitude.



One 'tile'. Water-coloured infills to hand-drawn black outlines look 'imperfectly' lively.

What marks the difference between the two exactitudes is that although the metricated time of Western History is regular and without regard for the varieties of natural events, it has come into being in the theatre of the existent cosmos and therefore measures real time by being situated within the temporalities of Nature. I en fleshed this idea by inscribing the Raft of the Occident with the intervals of a measure, etched like that of a draughtsman's scale, whose gnomonic shadows etched a landscape of green rivers and yellow sands across which passed the red and white discs of solar and lunar time. I made it so that the shadowed footsteps of 'chronometric', Western, time were not those of the discs.

This raft cargoes the four quarters of the old home of the 'genius loci'. This was the submarine mountain, guarded by the 'serpent of inertia-infinity' whose vast, lightless, bulk had harboured the 'dark sun' of "that which was always there". I show the mountain divided into four by the generative event of the Time of Inception. The burst-open cube is lodged into the four quarters of the trabeated craft. Signed as a chequer-board of black nights and white days, the diurnal crystallisation of the divided mountain harbours spherical caves of fire and ice. This fractured home, like the shattered raft that carried the adventitious ember, is all that remains of the history of the Black Sun of the Genius Loci. For, in joining with the Cargo of the Raft, both were subsumed into the novel being that is the Architecturally-mediated body of the Institution.



The four quarters of the 'genius loci' signed by the resistant mass of the mountain of 'that which was always there' were blasted apart by the cataclysm of the New Advent. They lodge in the corners of the Raft of the Occident. The bubble-'caves of fire and ice' can be seen in the single 'ceiling-tile' to the left.



When the blue 'canonic logs' are cut away they reveal the red Beams of Being that core the trabeated raft of the Entablature. Stripping the ceiling reveals, like a projection on the vault of the sky, the Adventitious Cargo whose role is to combine with the 'genius loci' to become the New Foundation. This shows, inter alia, the Raft of the Occident, supported by the eight red discs of its own Beams of Being, beating a Time that is not that of Nature.

The trabeated framings of the Occidental Raft project outwards into beams which recall the handles of a fereculum or stretcher.

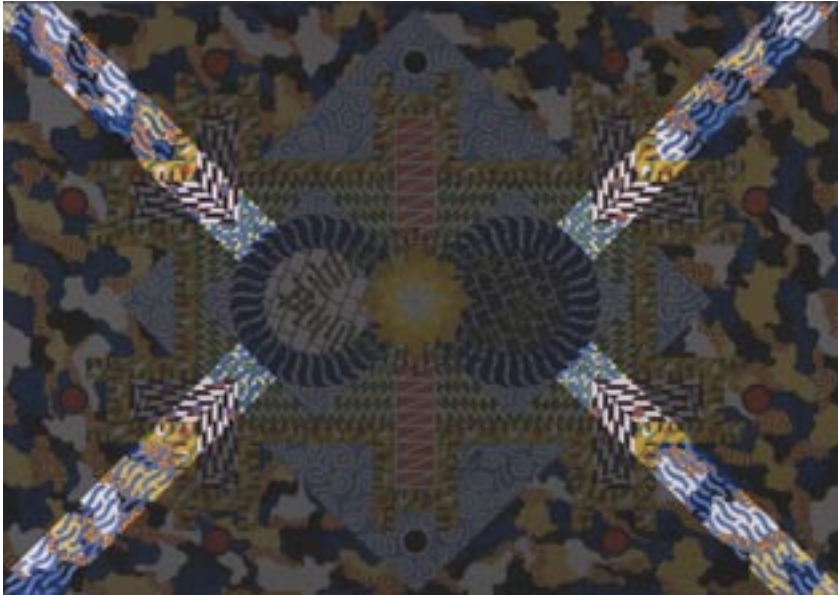
The Raft is supported by **eight red discs** that 'power' the Raft of the Occident in the way that the **canonic beams** of the **building's own entablature** evidence their **fiery cores**. Considered as **'uprights'**, as elevations used to be called in the Early English Renaissance, the **handled ends** resemble **six gates** whose **honorific nature** is marked by **horned processes**, constituted by **divided pyramids of green leaves**. Horns are characteristic of the **apotropaic guardians of doorways**. Leaves are **both icons** of the **aboriginal abodes** carried by the **enrafted roof**, as well as the **bed upon which rests the ashy hearth-cone - home of the adventitious ember**.



The 'handles' of the 'fereculum'-stretcher also read as six doorways topped by apotropaic 'horns' constituted of the green leaves that also bed the ontic hearth-fire.



The Raft of the Occident flies across the Earth signed, as it was in antiquity by many cultures, as a square. But this is now that oceanic blue, wisped by clouds, that is seen by the Astronauts sent by NASA - just down the road from Rice.



These are the the four rivers that extend, immediately from the four quarters of that black and white crystallisation of diurnal time which was the Mountain of the genius loci, but ultimately from the central, ontic, churning. Their serpentine waves beat outwards, hoping to receive a contact and return, with an equal frequency, to the lively being of the New Being. Like all creatures, the New Institution is both Narcissistic and Projective. It hopes, above all else, for that discourse which will both relieve its existential loneliness and lead, for that it must, to procreation.

Eight red discs 'power' the Raft of the Occident in the way that the canonic beams of the building's own entablature evidence their fiery cores. They 'fly' it across a blue square in which sport the white scrolls of clouds and water. The Globe is here re-situated archaically, as the four-square farm-stead or 'field' that has represented the Earth in many ancient cultures. Only in this case, in accordance with the view from outer space, the Earth is presented as a Blue Planet floating against a randomised background of territories whose amorphous boundaries lodge the absolute darkness of black against its enfleshment as a 'night' of darkest blue and the absolute energy of white against its corporeation in a light of ochre. These are the first four colours to be named in most languages. Some name no others. Interspersed within this logical field, infinitely extensive as it is infinitely broken and incapably entropic, fissured wisps of an alchemical catalysation in bands of fiery red and yellow.

The final figure is of four 'rivers' that emanate from the ontic 'churning'. These are inscribed as blue waves which, after 'springing' through, or under, or from the quadrated mountain-blocks, travel on outwards into the entropic pastures of the yet to be and the having been. They bear some quality which seeks to engage, inform, react and contact. They seek to extend the Being of that which has Come into Being. I do not depict what their object is, They are processes which being axial yet also serpentine, project the signatures of of extension and return, discourse as well as Narcissism.

I was aware that this design, when compared to that invented by Inigo Rose for the Judge, had about it a certain 'inhumanity' and lack of patent acculturation to the graphical inventions of the Western Tradition. While this would have sunk it without trace for my Judge project, with its Anti-Modern, Connoiseurocratic, Semi-Classical Clientele, it raised not one murmur in a USA where 'design', as such, has a long history of existence even at High School level.

Design, in that curriculum, is understood as more than merely the fagged-out, 'Anglo-fogey', History of (Consumerist) Styles. In US high schools, according to Mark Jarzombek's study, it is also taught as the composition of shapes and colours abstracted from any naturalistic, let alone historical, figuration. Houston was close to the Pre-Columbian graphical plenitude of Central America. Houston was embedded within the translation into Hollywood Westerns of Spanish cattle-culture by immigrating Eastern Europeans. Houston was not so far from the 'Indian Blanket' manufactures of the US Frontier. Nor was Texas foreign to the lost splendours of the Franco-American early 20C 'Moderne'. Houston was 'primed' to accept what had proved entirely impossible in English Architecture. In my own island Modernity merely meant cheap, proletarian, or techno - whether High, Green or both. A radically abstracted, as well as conceptually symbolic, aesthetic had proved, for all sorts of reasons, simply inconceivable in, "But John, 'Art' must be Meaningless", Britain.

JOA normally returned to Houston after four weeks. I managed to get this extended to five and we arrived with a knock-down 1:50-scale model calculated to fit into the ample overhead lockers of the grand old Boeing 747's of Continental Airlines. Our columns were cardboard tubes and our walls were foamcore. My first exposure was to the Committee, now returned to their normal, cubic meeting room. Surviving this, mainly on promises to perform, the Committee then walked to the cathedral of corrugated steel, where the tiny model now stood, on a table, in a void 50 times its size. Crouching down, one could view the interior, papered-over with my roughly-sketched designs. Then one raised the eyes to what it would replace. I was asked by Lee Jamail, the only lady on the Committee, to use the black and white version chequer-board of the quadrated mountains, rather than my brown and white alternative. I happily agreed with the clarity of this decision. Brown is a colour that one should avoid whenever possible. Nature is brown enough without browning culture to close down the lexical synapse.

AFTERWORD for the TWENTY-NINTH LECTURE: 'A RITE OF FOUNDING'.

JOA had, by now, in 1994, for Rice, an even more capable 'Architecture' than at Cambridge, back in 1991, when we had essayed the iconic inscription of the Judge Institute. Its ultimate purpose then, as now, was to serve to 'hold' some ideas in focus within the hubbub of the quotidian chaos - in short to 'fold' the 'vita contemplativa' into the 'vita activa'. Back then, I entertained some faith that I would be able to rely on others to help me. I now held, after the ruin of my English career, no such illusions. If I was to "foul up in Texas", as my amiable Houstonians put it, it would be on my account - ALONE.

In Cambridge JOA had offered, as the Adventitious Cargo of the Entabled Raft, the phenomenologies of Somatic Time and Sociation, all mediated by the Hellenic iconography professed by the Neo-Neo-Classical fraction of the Judge Client Body. It had proved indigestible. In the congested chaos that is Britain, one no longer theorises the 'ideal city' or the 'ideal' human lifespace. Here I determined to do the iconic engineering entirely myself. Cambridge had taught me that I was on my own. Neither Critics nor Painters knew more than I about these iconographies. The Architects of the Renaissance were given their iconographies by the Writers, the 'Savants', but at least the Practitioners 'painted' their own Iconics. It was time for my Profession to do the same.

The so-called Post-Modern Classical fashion had failed to create any inscriptive technique beyond the usual naked bodies floating in the aether. The Western iconic technique had been, ever since Egypt, always too 'humanistic'. The abstractions of Science had undone an iconics that had always been underqualified to mediate a Metaphysic. It was surely time for 'Modern Architecture', after a half century of iconic illiteracy, to take advantage of the abstracted symbolics invented, in the early 20C, during the crisis of 'Modernity' itself. One needed the 'Modernist authentication' of these techniques to help break the taboo upon vocalising anything other than the mutely physiocratic body of 20C lifespace-engineering. I had also 'proved', in the Victoria and Albert Museum's Summer Exhibition of 1990-94, all of the technologies needed for these huge, and necessarily inexpensive, graphical inscriptions.

As to my choice of subject, especially for the 'uppermost', President Kennedy had first announced the moon-shot project when standing on the dais of a Rice University Graduation Ceremony. At the Houston Space Centre, an unfired Apollo Rocket lies in a field of long grass. Its pipes and tubes follow a zoomorphic curve and swell (such were the gigantic pressures it was built to bear), like the entrails of some animal or the ruined limbs of Ozymandias, King of Kings. Being of bronze and other incorrodible metals, it will never decay.

One may easily rehearse the 'Time of Advent', or (the Big Bang'), in such a place. In Texas one thinks of beginnings, not of endings. It is not 'Yurrap'!

