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Type—Prototype—Archetype: Type Formation in Architecture

Editorial

Issue 38 *Type–Prototype–Archetype: Type Formation in Architecture* is devoted to typology in the field of architecture and thereby to one of the most complex issues connecting theory, design, and practice. Now more than ever, the development of new residential and civil partnership models, the changing forms of communication, and the differentiation between the worlds of work and production following the introduction of Web 2.0 require the creation of new types in design, architecture, and urban development. The task of architectural theory is to describe, summarize and systematize these tendencies, which are often the result of spontaneous impulses and reactions to specific local situations, and to visualize their cultural relevance in a dynamically changing society.

The debates have long since moved beyond the point at which typology was stigmatized as an outgrown and thus old-fashioned and reactionary standpoint in the early 21st century with *mass customizsation*. Despite all prophecies, the opposite has occurred. This all-pervasive medialization of everyday life has led to the further differentiation of individual needs and as a result, to the emergence of novel types that have little to do with the hybrids that were discussed particularly in end of the 20th century. This applies both to the building level and to the level of concrete, architectural urban planning transformations. We are thus observing a process of type formation that is still nowhere near completion.

Typology should be understood as the science of building types and their specific arrangements, uses, and forms, as well as the process of type formation. Typology is a deeply modern issue whose beginnings, contrary to general belief, lie not in the Age of Reason (Boullée, Lequeu, Ledoux) and Enlightenment, but instead can be traced back far beyond the 18th century. The fact that typology first emerged in the Renaissance with the development of an urban morphology (palazzo, Zentralbau, villa) and a type grid is primarily obscured by the focus on industrialization and mass society, on Werkbund (Muthesius, van de Velde, Behrens) and Bauhaus (Gropius, Meyer). This means that typology is just as much a project of Renaissance humanism as it is a project of the „type-making machine".[1]

[1] Gropius 1981: 90.

In 1926, Gropius was still using the "necessities of life"—which he described as „the same for the majority of people"[2]—as a justification for the preoccupation with typology. On the basis of anthropology, he believed that type formation held a potential for social emancipation, which had its medium in the standardized and unitized production of machines, and aimed at the general living standards, in particular at the approximation of living conditions. However, in today's digitally and media-configured society, the aspect of the collective appears to take a back seat to the individualization of the concepts and processes of life. Particularly in light of today's re-conceptualization of typology, manifold questions arise as to the material-functional, linguistic-sociological, and ethical-aesthetic foundations. What are the parameters and mechanisms of type formation in general? Which can be found in the age of the analog machine, and how are these changing in today's digital and pluralistically conceptualized information society?

The interpretation of typology as a dynamic process of type formation leads us to a series of investigation fields and terms that are of central importance for shedding light on the issue. Especially for architecture, the question of *definition of the terms type and typology* arises. How can the terms type, prototype, and archetype, along with associated methods, such as variation, adaptation, and transformation, be defined in the field of architecture? *Definition of the terms type and typology* is a crucial part of the critical reflection of practices and goals, as well as the critical scrutiny of the often unconscious, ideological models and paradigms that guide everyday life as well as professional practice. This question arises from the fact that, where no two houses are alike, architecture has always followed the paradigm of mass customization. How is typology different from standardization and classification in architecture? What does this mean for the term of the type or prototype in architecture, as opposed to the type or prototype in machine production?

On the other hand, the standardization and unitization of structural components have likewise always been a part of architecture, even before the advent of mass customization. With the megaron house, the peristyle temple, or the basilica—all of which are building types that date back to antiquity—typology is one of the oldest techniques of architecture. This also has a material-aesthetic and structural-design side, where the standardized brick, roof tile, or column and the reuse of form elements were the prerequisites for type formation in spatial terms. Not to be overlooked is that in the first phase of industrialization, especially in England, resistance formed against this. John Ruskin, August W. Pugin or later, William Morris turned not only against the inhumanity of work done by the machine, but — in the name of gothic revival —against the early modern classicism and its typified and standardized elements. For these figures, type production meant the subordination of man to the mechanics of the machine, the opposite of the emancipation and freedom promised by modernity. In contrast, they propagated a craft-oriented and material-oriented production, which was understood to be more open to spontaneous, less schematic impulses of the craftsman. Thus, how do ma-

terial and construction contribute to typology in the field of architecture? If, according to Kant, the term *architectonic* can be understood as the „art of the system“,[3] then isn't typology simply one of the basic requirements of architecture? But what does *system* mean, what does *type* mean?

3 Kant 1996: 695.

Types are not created through invention, but are instead the results of developments that occur over extended periods of time. They reflect concrete models of representation, social order, and economic organization. In cases where typology comes under the influence of specific historico-cultural constellations, it is closely connected with issues of cultural identity. Type formation is identity formation—as can be seen with the Black Forest house (*Schwarzwaldhaus)*, the thatched East Frisian fisherman's cottage (*Fischerkate*), the traditional Burgenland farmhouse with a square courtyard (*Vierkanthof*), and the Venetian palazzo. Cultural identity occurs on the basis of types, and types give cultures stability. These characteristics of types are shared by ornaments, decorative shapes, and murals. What is the relationship between ornament and type? Ornaments are also typified figures that are easy to repeat, memorable, and, like types in architecture, have emotional effects beyond their use. Are ornament and type formation in a causal relationship, or perhaps a reciprocal one? Can a connection be drawn between the phasing out of classical ornaments in modern times and the simultaneous acceleration of type formation in the context of machine production, objectivity, and constructivism? Is there a causal coupling between the „search for a type“,[4] as Le Corbusier has called it, and the renunciation of ornament by modernity?

4 Le Corbusier 2001: 115.

Beyond their functional, design, and material aspects, types constitute the basic elements of a language of architecture. Christopher Alexander, Aldo Rossi, Oswald Mathias Ungers, and Aldo van Eyck brought these concepts back into consciousness in the 1970's. Like the tropes and figures of speech in rhetoric, types are stylistic devices of the language of architecture. Types tell us something about the time, purposes, customs, and culture in general. Types express architecture in layman's terms. With types, architecture leaves the realm of the elite and enters the mainstream. How does architecture speak through topology? How is meaning created through types? How does this relate to the techniques of drawing and imaging and, in turn, to ornaments? „Architecture or revolution “,[5] proclaimed Le Corbusier in connection with his houses in serial construction, his house model *Citrohan* and his „seaside villa built from type elements “.[6] Le Corbusier spoke of types as *choice products*. Type formation in the fields of architecture and urban development was one of the recurring topics of discussion at the International Congresses of Modern Architecture (CIAMs). As shown by the discussions at the CIAM congresses, type formation can be used not only as an instrument for the pluralization of society but also as a means for its control. In the latter sense, typology is aimed at socialization in a top-down process. Thus, to what extent is typology also a means of power, political power, and the control of the masses? What roles do architects, lawmakers, and local governments play in this context?

5 Le Corbusier 2001: 201.

6 Le Corbusier 2001: 184.

Typologies also contribute to the moods and atmospheres of places, like the morphological variation of Venetian *palazzos* shape the mood of Venice or that of the Upper Franconian sandstone facades creates distinctive atmospheres. A poetic potential far beyond organization and function is reflected in the varying repetition, in the transformation, combination, and recombination of standardized elements like windows and doors, supports and columns, stairs and ramps. Should we not interpret Alberti's call for *varietà in unitá*, or variety in unity, as an early attempt to not only define topology but moreover determine its sensual-poetic potential? What are the means for achieving this? What is being said? Is anything at all being said? What is typology's contribution to architecture, to a modern-day architecture? What are the methods and contents?

A characteristic logic concerning the use of types grows out of the changing requirements and the resulting ongoing repurposing and migration of types. This shows that types in no way define everything. On the contrary, they only create the necessary space for adaptation and change. Today, this applies primarily to the possibility for the adaptive reuse and renovation of existing buildings. Therefore, shouldn't new buildings be designed precisely for hybrid uses in order to allow for the programmatic adaptation of their use over the longest possible period of time? The question is, whether the hybrid, as incubator of the city of the 21st century (Holl), has since become its own type. Or is it simply an umbrella term for typological hybrid forms that are still in the process of differentiation?

Other topics include the primitive hut as archetype and the question of typological analysis and design methods, as well as the role of *Bauhüttenbücher* (lodge books) and *Baumusterbücher* (model books) in the development of authoritative types. In the context of modern times, questions arise regarding *algorithmic-parametric* design methods and thought processes in the sense of an „interplay between previously assimilated basic patterns ".[7] Architecture—as a system of „internalized patterns […] that allow all the typical thoughts, perceptions and actions of a culture to be created—and only these".[8] To what extent do patterns and types coincide? Or, are types just the forms through which the collective unconscious comes to view, embodying it, and thus becoming recognizable, without which, it would remain otherwise hidden? Types—as mirrors of the collective unconscious, as magical remnants of lost utopias, from which they derive their timelessness, and yet unsymmetrically and un-chronically designate the location of Foucault's heterotopias.

The essays collected here unfold a diverse picture of debates in their historical as well as current references. Not surprisingly, yet somewhat so in terms of the density of contributions, one can observe a shift in perspective since the 1970's and 1980's, the time of intense debate about the European city and its reconstruction. Today, when we note the return of interest in type formation, it is done on a different basis and at a higher level of reflection within the context of the questions about the post-industrial city, "Smart City", and sustainability. The essays presented here note a significant shift from domi-

7 Bourdieu 1997: 143.

8 Bourdieu 1997: 143.

nant morphological aspects (Ungers, Grassi, Rossi) to soft parameters, such as utility types, types of experience, or types of performance and atmosphere. The entire historical depth and theoretical breadth of the subject is manifested between two poles: a humanistic-anthropological approach and a technical-functionalistic approach. In the context of Type, Prototype, Archetype, Issue 38 examines typology as a process of type formation, thereby exploring the ideas that serve as rules for the models. It aims to cast a critical eye on the clichés and stereotypes that have been established in the debates surrounding postmodernism and the *digital turn*, and seeks to free typology from the hardened image of cataloged, formulaic knowledge and functionalist compartmentalization.

Curators

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