

## Three Words for the Near Future

by Luigi Prestinenza Puglisi

I get the impression we are living in a rather special epoch, a watershed; and as with all such periods we feel somewhat out of our depth.

Nostalgia and historicism are behind us now. It is a mechanical and academic concept of life. We now understand that our epoch has little to do with beautiful walls, rhythmically aligned windows on a façade, or a nice urban design. No longer do people alight in Italian city squares comprising town halls with clocks placed at the centre of their façades - not now that we can do the paperwork by email and consult our portable phones for the time. We are convinced that it no longer makes sense to design traditional series or rows of houses with their immaculate façades because the traditional family has all but disappeared; and anyway, people in the morning no longer inhabit the day zone of the house, and in the evening they no longer go to the night zone. We know that national and municipal borders no longer make any sense and that architectural idiosyncrasies will soon be done away with. Europe already consumes the same goods using the same currency, we all have the same offices, the same banks, the same shops, and soon we shall all be speaking the same language. When I first went to London, it was quite an event for me. For you it will just be routine. As for your children, they won't even think about it; for them it will just be an everyday necessity like going shopping at the supermarket.

We know that in this new society our rapport with space, time, and tradition will change. We are aware of our future. And yet although we have understood what to leave behind, we still do not know what road to set out on. Forward we go, but every now and then we turn around either because we realise that some roads lead to nowhere or because we can see that others lead to ruin.

It is curious how just one or two years ago there seemed to be more certainties. I can recall the enthusiasm of architects at the dawn of the new millennium. Leading magazines –*Domus*, *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui*, *Architecture*, and *Architectural Review*, to name just four: an Italian one, a French one, an American one and an English one– all celebrated the new millennium with optimism. Gehry's Guggenheim in Bilbao and Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin had just been inaugurated. And at the University of Columbia a few young architects were beginning to experiment with electronics: Greg Lynn and Asymptote among others. These same two architects were selected for the American pavilion at the Venice 2000 Biennial Exhibition (the Biennale) presided by Fuksas and baptised with the rather impish title *More Ethics Less Aesthetics*. This Biennale, for the record, had the merit of ousting a class of Italian caryatids who had frozen all architectural production and debate. You should have seen them as they walked around the gardens of the Biennale mumbling and grumbling in utterances usually attributed to little despots overcome by events: What will it all lead to?... Call this architecture?... I'd like to see them complete these projects... We're dominated by foreign influences...

Let's face it, a year or two ago there was more euphoria. More hope.

And then, as is the case with all revolutions, however small and insignificant they might be, we discover how all that glitters is not gold. For example, certain leaders, who in the more heated moments were up there on the barricades, now hurry to make pacts with old adversaries in order to get their share of power. And, vice-versa, we see the defeated running to the winners claiming that they were not all that contrary to the new order after all, that truth said they had always studied Koolhaas, and that they had always favoured Zaha Hadid. And on it goes, a never ending story in which 50 million Fascists turn into 50 million anti-Fascists overnight, and 50 million Christian Democrats turn into 50 million anti-Christian Democrats. But Fascists and Christian Democrats they remain. Today, a few thousand academics have become anti-academics. Can we believe them? I doubt it. You need only look around you to see that little, if anything, has changed: as usual, there are the scapegoats –Gregotti? Portoghesi? Grassi?– and everything goes on as usual. To be honest, owing to a few small changes, now Casabella is more readable. Universities are offering courses in modern architecture. Young Italians are given more breathing space to carry out their research. And people are less put out when a foreign architect hosts a conference or is given a commission.

At the same time, as is always the case, we are beginning to notice how some research, upon which excessively high hopes had perhaps been pinned, is producing scarce results and is coming to nothing. I'm thinking, for example, of the research on electronically-designed amorphous forms by Greg Lynn or the NOX. For a while, we had deceived ourselves that research into these complex, blob-like shapes would open up new frontiers of living, exchanging the concept of wall with a more interesting concept of membrane or skin. Today we are far less hopeful, and we are beginning to see that the concept of membrane is not necessarily connected to that of the complex shape.

But is this reason enough to declare failure? No, certainly not. To begin with because, as I shall attempt to demonstrate shortly, we are living in a period characterised by a plurality of often-conflicting research programmes, all of which are interesting and innovative.

But also because the failure of an experiment is inevitably linked to the dynamics of any evolutionary process.

Freeman Dyson, one of the sharpest epistemologists of our time, explains why. He says that history has shown how a high degree of failure of human ideas coupled with the very high death rate of scientific research projects are the result of an inevitable discrepancy between model and reality. He concludes that if one invests one's future in a single powerful and complex idea, one is almost certain to have used energies and resources inefficiently. If, on the other hand, one invests in a number of conflicting programmes, one is certain, at least statistically, of getting something right. Thus, instead of stopping or going backwards, we can find the drive to continue.

Some will ask if progress, no matter what, is really necessary. And is so-called progress really progress? Or wouldn't it be better to stop a while, take note, and go back if necessary?

Walter Benjamin, commenting on Klee's *Angelus Novus*, a painting in which an angel is pushed on by the wind as it looks backwards, warns: "there is an angel that appears to be distancing itself from something that it is looking at. With eyes and mouth wide open and wings unfurled, this must be what the angel of history looks like. Its face is turned towards the past, and where we see a succession of events the angel sees only catastrophes piled incessantly on top of each other at its feet. The angel wants to remain, it wants to awaken the dead and put the broken pieces back together again, but a tempest from Paradise has caught hold of its wings; it is a wind so strong that the angel is unable to close them. The tempest blows incessantly toward a future to which the angel has turned its back. Meanwhile the pile of ruins rises in front of him in the sky. What we call progress is this very tempest."

The text that I have just read to you could have been of recent writing, not because of sanguinary episodes like the destruction of the Twin Towers and the war in Afghanistan which we are all aware of – after all, wars have always existed, especially during moments of so-called peace – rather because of the link between violence and speed. This explosive mixture is unique to our electronic civilisation that speeds everything up, multiplies images, and has us experience live even the most distant events. As a result of this new media, it is as if we were living inside a single nervous system in which we need only touch a peripheral ramification for us to feel its immediate effects. Never before have we loaded, psychologically speaking, all of the world's problems on our backs. We are distressed by the ecological disaster in Nepal, we are concerned about the Palestinian crisis and its repercussions in Europe, and we are aware that if there is an economic crisis in Japan or the United States it will not be long before we, too, feel its effects. Rather like Jesus on the Cross, we are forced, day in day out, to suffer the problems of the world.

Distressed we ask ourselves whether it might not be worth turning back. Back to the tranquillising spirit of the Hovis commercials, back to the village-cum-city where there is a concrete interrelation with 7 thousand people rather than an abstract one with 7 billion people. And, as architects, we ask ourselves if this progress, this electrification of our habitat with its myriad images, fax machines, and computers, this obsession of ours with speed punctuality, efficiency and precision, might not merit, in the home and in architecture, a moment of opposition, a moment of resistance.

In fact, if you look carefully enough, the anti-globalisation movement could be interpreted in this light, rather like the attempt to stop the wind from carrying away the angel of history. The aim would be to return to a healthier rapport with speed, by slowing it down, with nature, by discovering her again, and with tradition, by giving it the value it deserves.

These needs can not and will not be ignored. At the same time, however, we can not help but notice that we run the risk of succumbing to another illusion. That is, thinking that the past is what our memory would have us believe. It simply isn't so.

The past is also unbearable; a source of anxiety and distress. If it isn't one big catastrophe –as Benjamin saw it, who, as a Jew, was forced by Nazism to commit

suicide– it certainly has little to do with the wide-eyed dreams that we build during some of our more nostalgic moments.

If we really want to dream, better dream about the future. A dream into the future is a project. As Persico said, it is the only project that allows us to conceive architecture as the substance of things hoped for, a prefiguration of a world which not only do we evoke, but which we also build, however small the work. It might not change the world, but with its tension it might get our message across, our message of concrete hope; one of vision, experiment and communication.

So let us try and find three words that will remove us from the quicksand of nostalgia and cynicism, thus giving substance to this hope. They are three: one negative and two positive.

## 1. No Logo

The first word is NO LOGO. I thought long and hard before proposing this, partly because I didn't want it to be confused with the NO GLOBAL (anti-globalisation) movement – indeed they are very distant both in terms of generation and ideology. I had also come up with NO STYLE, but for reasons that shall be made clear to you later on, I opted for NO LOGO.

NO LOGO, which means exactly what it says, is against products that are bought and sold not so much for their intrinsic value but rather because they are fashion items.

Logos were the brilliant invention of stylists who, by conferring a product with an image that was far superior to its objective value, were able to sell their products at extortionate prices. The reason you pay so much for your Cartier bag is not because that is the true value of the bag, rather it is because you want to let everyone know that you have enough buying power to be able to afford such luxury goods.

I want to state in advance that I have nothing against the use of an object for communicative, let's say extra-disciplinary, purposes, nor do I have anything against the snobbish nature of those who like to show off their status; foolish people have existed since time began. But there's more, there are too many people who pretend not to show off, but who in actual fact show off in an even more unbearable manner.

The problem is not a moralistic one. It lies in the tautological short circuit: the name on an object or its immediately recognisable nature help show how the object has been made by that name, with the consequent annulling, or resizing, of research into shape and communication.

The evolution –or involution if you prefer– of the logo is the CONCEPT. You buy a product because it represents an unattainable but consolatory way of life. And so I buy NIKE, not so that everyone knows that I belong to a particular social or cultural group, but because I am taken in by the illusionary system that the NIKE product represents. That is, a sport-oriented way of life, a certain ethic, a way of behaving in front of nature... In this way, I feel I am embracing a philosophy that does not correspond to my way of life exactly, but is only a projection of the imagination, in short – wishful thinking. The object therefore is a mask.

Architecture does not have such explicit logos as the ones we find in fashion. Although the Star System does tend to move in the direction of the logo –That's an Eisenman! That's a Gehry! That's a Hadid!– we are never able to establish with any certainty to what extent certain common features in a series of buildings actually derive from a slackening on the part of the creator, or whether or not they are a coherent part of a personal research, which almost as a physiological necessity works on experimenting with similar and/or recurring themes.

With architecture, the danger of falling prey to banality lies with style.

Granted, style in itself is not necessarily negative. Edoardo Persico rightly claimed that every era and every person should have their own style. The outer image of a man of the twentieth century can not be the same as a man from the fifteenth century. Likewise, a building from the electronic age can not resemble one made during the industrial age. We all have a style of sorts, and this is welcome.

But –and this is the point– if style does not match the inner self then it is no more than a mask, in the same way that the CONCEPT is a mask. I can dress in the clothes of modern man and yet be a troglodyte. I can dress as a jockey and yet not know how to ride a jade.

Unfortunately, there has always been confusion at all levels in architecture between style and substance. Modern offices have been wrapped in stylistic façades, while any research on the building's function has been avoided, it being enough to produce futuristic forms.

Leon Krier and Philip Johnson respectively are experts in interpreting architecture in this rather gloomy fashion. Leon Krier, helped and sponsored by Prince Charles, creates buildings and villages that look as if they have come out of the Middle Ages; of course state-of-the-art technological systems and garages are kept out of sight. It is the I-do-it-and-I-don't-tell-anyone logic of the puritan. Philip Johnson sees architecture as a rapid alternation of styles: all new yet all the same. It is the apotheosis of form, never mind who lives inside. All is permitted. The imperative is to be modern while casually passing from International Style, to Post Modern, to Deconstructivism, to blobby architecture. It is the I-say-it-but-don't-do-it logic of the snob.

However much Krier may seem different to Johnson, they both display a worrying divide between form and content. Neither of the two seems to ask, even superficially, what life today represents, what man's relation to space is, or what his rapport with technology might be.

Both of them, rather than solving problems, are the problems. Hence the meaning of NO LOGO. No to representation and theatricalisation. No, in short, to a view of the world which, like in Matrix, is purely illusionary.

If this is a no said with conviction, we cannot help but look at three worrying facts.

First of all, the problem-free rise of a new contemporary style, the Electronic Style or Super-modernism as coined by the critic Iblings.

Having been transformed into a formal mask, as was the case with International Style following the 1932 exhibition at the MoMA, it runs the risk of becoming a new vulgate, din-dins for all so to speak.

Architectural discipline, which does not work on simple imagery but on the problems, contradictions and opportunities of life, might as well retire. It is no coincidence that the 1932 exhibition offered the market only a part of the research carried out during the twenties and thirties, and what's more, it trivialised it too. To the detriment of further research into the heredity of geniuses the likes of Chareau,

Haring, Scharoun, Mendelsohn, Buckminster Fuller, and Duiker who did not fit into the stereotypical style prepared by the MoMA.

The second cause for concern is the packaging of old buildings with futuristic forms. There are no large design projects today that do not embrace the new. Even Bofill. But then again, if you look closely enough, the old comes out. This happened during Fascism with Piacentini or Del Debbio's buildings: they were apparently new but in actual fact they were obsolete.

And it is no coincidence that a common utterance today is: we're living in a pluralistic era, styles no longer exist, avant-garde no longer exists. Beware! These utterances are not said to justify a rightful plurality of serious, real and authentic research. They back a formal cynicism. They are the work of clever old hands. They are said to place a noble Persico on the same level as a shameful Ojetti, or to put the unbeatable Terragni or the noble Figini and Pollini with the despicable Calza Bini or the conceited Vaccaro, much in fashion these days, unsurprisingly. Someone who is modern, as Professor Zevi rightly pointed out, is someone who knows how to transform the crises of their epoch into value. And, beyond a suffered and disturbed modernity, he added, there is no value.

A third cause for concern, even if relative, comes from an analysis of the work of many students. All too often they dig out a book with photographs of projects by some leading architect, and copy them. Alternatively, they sit behind a computer and reel off scores of amazing projects. As I was saying, my concern is only relative; after all students have always been known to plagiarise projects by their betters. That is what the learning process is all about: the young imitating the old. Another aspect of the learning process is that of using technological instruments for producing meaningless shapes born quite by chance, but which nevertheless satisfy our eyes. But beware; in Italy there is a trend towards the formal, the eclectic, and to architecture by design. I would not want this generation to run away from a building industry in crisis by seeking refuge in over-elaboration, thus losing all technical ability, and becoming producers of images which some other technician would have to give substance to. I wouldn't worry, someone might say, Arup will take care of it.

## 2. Multiculturalism

The second word for the near future is multiculturalism. Here too, please do not mistake me for an anti-globalisation protestor. I have a firm belief in the cultural values of the West. I was born in the ancient Greek city of Catania. I am proud to see the thread that goes from Heraclitus to Plato, Erasmus to Bacon, and from Kant to Feyerabem. However, as with all westerners, I am aware that our culture has flourished and continues to do so for the simple reason that it has always known how to incorporate other people's points of view; it has been self-critical. It is one of the only cultures, if not the only culture, whose principal of tolerance and dialectic exchange represents a fixed and irremissible value. If you think about it enough, this is so true that our most steadfast and structured conceptions, by this I mean scientific ones, are actually based on the principle of falsification. True, that is, until proven otherwise. The paradox being that scientists and researchers, contrary to what may happen in traditional or totalitarian cultures, are paid not to prove existing theories, but to put them into question.

It would not be too far fetched to say that ours is a culture based on crisis, or rather crisis management.

So it is as a result of this hypocritical behaviour that we have metabolised Arab, oriental, pagan, Indian, Persian, Christian, Jewish, esoteric and exoteric cultures, all very different in their own right.

It is similar to what Wright did. Prior to his succession of masterpieces which started in 1936, he spent two decades metabolising first European culture with his 1909 trip, then Japanese culture with the Imperial Hotel, then the Angeleno houses of Mesoamerica, and finally International Style with the 1932 exhibition in which he was humiliated and emarginated. What did Wright's Japanese houses have which was so Japanese? Was there anything Mesoamerican in Hollyhock or Storer? Everything and nothing. Simply because they had been strained by a culture that had made them its own.

Now take a look at the House on the Waterfall: you will identify the trip to Europe, considerations about the International Style, Japanese and also Mesoamerican culture. Perhaps, but they have all been rebuilt from scratch.

The reason I have given you this example is because this is how I see globalisation. The only difference is that Wright's architecture represents the strong urge of a genius to start afresh at the age of 69. Globalisation, on the other hand, is an inevitable movement of its time.

Take a look at what is happening in Russia, China, or India, and you will understand where humanity's destiny lies.

This does not mean that the process is simple and without costs: globalisation will crush traditions, it will eliminate entire ways of life, and it will rid the world of local dialects and etymons. But the invention of writing also caused similar confusion, to the extent that the pharaoh was said to have cursed the man who had invented hieroglyphics because he had destroyed poetry and oral tradition.

Nor does it mean that the West always behaves in the best of ways. Although I do not believe that blame for the wrongs of globalisation lies entirely at the feet of the West – very often the problem lies with the corrupt governments of countries who are said to suffer globalisation – you just have to read Naomi Klein's 'NO LOGO' to get an idea of how avid and criminal western multinationals and governments really are.

But problems can be solved. You need only look at the evolution of history, and if you go back far enough you will realise that the process does tend to be a positive one, albeit depressingly slow and with distressing backwards steps.

However, if, despite all of these inevitable problems, globalisation will know how to absorb the plurality of local worlds then it will bring with it an enriched system of life.

I try to see it as two sides of the same coin.

On one side of the coin is the standardisation of behaviour. Airports, hospitals, and service systems that all tend to become one and the same. After all, what is the difference today between Fiumicino and Heathrow, or between Singapore's airport and the one in Hong Kong?

All said, this homogenisation, which has been studied by Marc Augé in the book "Non-Places.", has a positive and calming effect. We now know that wherever we might be in the world, we can count on the level of services and, probably, on the same level of security. Who amongst us would feel safe waiting in an African airport managed using LOCAL criteria?

The search for standard, rational and global levels of service requires innovative ability and research. First of all, we must consider the role of electronic technology. Think, for example, of how banking functions have spread on a global scale thanks to the credit card or the cash card. Alternatively, think of how the distribution of books has changed as a result of online sales. Not only in the sense that online sales mean that you can buy a book now using enormous databases at any time, any day and from anywhere in the world, but also in the sense that competition to giants such as Amazon has made high street booksellers change their approach by transforming themselves from the haughty dust-covered venues of the past into welcoming anti-virtual areas where you can touch and read a book while sipping a cup of coffee.

So it would be a mistake to view homogenisation as only a loss. Rather it represents a continual rejuvenation –and this is positive– of the tried and tested models of the past. If you are still sceptical and you consider homogenisation to be a McDonald's subspecies, to get an idea of the opportunities that await us, have a read of William J. Mitchell's marvellous book E-TOPIA.

But without even mentioning the technological opportunities, homogenisation has already taken place. I was very much impressed by the work of a reporter who travelled the world and, in each country, convinced one couple to put all the furniture from their house into the street so as to photograph them all together.

Well, the vast majority of people, be they Russian or American, Polish or Neapolitan, had similar furniture, i.e. they had a similar way of life.

Why should we see all this as negative? Why can we not see it as the fulfilment, however small, of a principal of equality and homogeneity which, to cite just one example, town planning and architecture of the 1900s fought for?

I believe we can discuss this openly. There is no room for the stupidity of anti-globalisation protesters or ecologists.

These same protestors are people who instead of going to McDonalds, go to the 'trattorias' of Little Italy, order a pre-prepared plate of pasta re-heated in the microwave and are convinced that it was made by Grandma Giulia. And they'll pay double for the privilege.

As we said earlier, there are two sides to the coin of globalisation. Whereas the first represents uniformity, the second represents diversity. It produces what Americans call a melting pot, where men, traditions and customs of diverse origins tend to maintain their individuality, no matter how much they might seem to correspond or merge together.

Diversity is also capable of producing positive values and extraordinary hybrids. This has happened throughout history, with the Hellenistic and Roman civilisations, and with post-War American culture. And it continues.

The top names in contemporary English language literature are foreign, with Indians and Pakistanis leading the way in linguistic and narrative invention. One such author is the recent Nobel Prize winner Naipaul.

Diversity eliminates provincialism; we have to accept each other. I remember the fear and curiosity I felt when I entered a Chinese restaurant thirty years ago. Today, Italians who only used to eat pasta no longer hesitate to eat different, even exotic, food.

This is why I think that localism in architecture is a regressive utopia. It does not take into account the real changes in behaviour of the population, or the wealth of exchanges and interrelations. I am also critical of the Regionalism proposed by Kenneth Frampton, i.e. architecture that responds to the needs of place and context so as to be polemically opposed to globalisation; it is similar to the pre-prepared pasta reheated in the microwave that we were talking about earlier.

Dutch architects such as Koolhaas have a far more interesting position; using these themes they try to establish a critical dialogue. Within the architecture that they produce, they introduce multiculturalism, and sometimes multiethnicity, i.e. the different ways in which our complex societies make us use space.

### 3. Ecology

The third word is ecology. Here too I need to make a preliminary remark. I am not an ecologist and I detest environmentalists almost as much as superintendents. I am quite unable to understand the fanaticism with which they defend trees and gardens while at the same time they forget all about the more general conditions of life of our habitat. I do not like their anti-industrial attitude and their cave-dweller and remissive approach to the environment. I hate their lies, even if they do have good intentions, and I was pleased when an ex-environmentalist scientist, whose name I forget (I think he was Swedish), denounced them in a book that is having considerable success. In spite of all the complaints voiced by the Greens, average life span is increasing, we live comfortably, energy sources are aplenty, and the hole in the ozone layer is getting smaller.

So everything is hunky-dory then. Absolutely not. Problems exist, and you can say it loud. But they can not be resolved by a whingeing culture, so marvellously stigmatised in Hughes' magnificent book.

Every one of us, and above all those of us who live in large cities, knows how much smog we take in, how much time we lose in traffic jams, and how much noise we have to put up with. We also know that in developing countries, to whom we export the worst of our technology, these conditions are much more critical. In India, China, the Middle East, and in the Eastern countries, noise is infernal, smog has exceeded all safety levels, and traffic is so chaotic that only a local driver can get it together. But there is more to pollution than meets the eye. It is also present as we waste time queuing in post offices, or as we stand at a bus stop, or as we drive around looking for a parking place, or as we sit uncomfortably listening to a university lecture, or in the corridor of a downtrodden hospital.

This is what I mean by ecology; it is the rapport between man and his environment, not just his natural environment, but also and above all, his artificial environment.

So if this is the case, what is the sense of forbidding the construction of a parking lot so as not to fell a tree, when the parking will produce infinitely greater benefits than the tree? And why do we look for small fragments of nature within the metropolis, which is an artificial product, if these compromise more significant achievements?

Here too, I have the impression that the Dutch are a good point of reference. To begin with because they have created an excellent artificial landscape, which they have obtained, in part, from the sea, but also because they have always worked on both concepts –nature and architecture, artificial and natural– trying always to relate them one to another. Think of the MVRDV pavilion for Hanover. The construction cleverly multiplied both public space and green. Alternatively, think of Meccanoo's library in Delft where an artificial inclined plane served both as open green area and as the roof of the library.

We could continue with Koolhaas, Arets and West8. In each case there is a marked tendency to try and keep building and nature together.

I have the impression that most contemporary architectural research is moving in this direction, with success. Eisenman, Wines, RoTo, and Morphosis, and Holl to name but a few. And Zaha Hadid, who not only designs a pavilion at Weil am Rhein in which path and construction merge, but who also designs a museum for Rome in which there is no longer any difference, other than intensity, between building and urban space.

All of the projects I have mentioned so far use, for want of a better term, traditional construction techniques. Today, thanks to technology, we can go beyond this.

We can think of space as more than just a container outlined by walls, but as a theatre for the interrelation of man and environment; we can consider sensors that control the amount of light, thus optimising energy and visual efficiency. We can think of an environment that changes in line with changing needs, even psychological, of those who inhabit it.

Architecture can change from being cold and unchangeable to vibrant and changeable. Buildings can be sensitive beings with which to interact, objects can adapt to our way of inhabiting space, a space that transforms into our second skin.

Almost certainly, the consequence of this revolution will be the dematerialisation of containers. Stable, immobile, and deaf walls will lose their weight, gain in lightness, and acquire, in the same manner as a nervous system, intelligence. They will project themselves towards nature and the surrounding context of which, finally, we shall be able creatively to capture light, sound and smell.

Thus we will give substance to the intuitions of forward-thinking architects of the sixties and seventies: the Archigrams of England, the Metabolists of Japan, the Situationists of France, and Archizoom and Superstudio in Italy. And we shall be able to fulfil these intuitions because today we have greater means at our disposal.

Nevertheless, as I mentioned at the beginning, in recent years we have noticed how an excessive electrification of the planet does come with its problems. Namely that living inside a global nervous system, from which one can not break free even for a moment, produces unbearable anguish. That the speed imposed by technology can be a source of irrepressible anxiety; and that the speed of the aeroplane, upon which we have become dependent, has to be placed alongside that of the sloth.

A modern ecological vision will need to find some kind of compromise by creating spaces for those who want to go fast and also for those who want to go slow. But this will have to be done without looking back, without thinking of uncontaminated landscapes which are no longer a part of our world, if anything because we have already changed them.

And, as architects, we will have to come to terms with one fact: in buildings of common production that have no special architectural quality, the cost of the structure has gone from 80% to 20%, whereas equipment costs have risen by 35%, and the trend is upwards. It will continue to rise with the advent of so-called

intelligent buildings in which computers allow for new forms of environmental and safety controls.

What should we do to make sure that this intelligence would include not only the technical intelligence of the engineer but also the human intelligence of the architect? This will be the task with which you will be able to measure yourselves by.

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