

The Defining of Space as a Design Objective
The Architecture of Aldo van Eyck
in CRIT 15, Architectural Journal,
Washington DC, s. 54-64

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The Architecture of Aldo van Eyck

By Casey Mathewson

"It is worth noting that the new historicists and eclectics whose habit it is to misquote the past, instead of coming up with a large variety of cocktails, produce—all of them together—little more than a single, standard watery monomix. What is needed is better functioning—on far more levels this time."
(Aldo van Eyck)

Equipoise (N. Equi + Poise) 1. State of Equilibrium 2. Counter-balance 3. Balance

No matter which school of thought one is closest to in design, we all approach a design project with an acquired body of knowledge and our own individual principles about design. And even if ideological differences in contemporary architecture make it appear that architecture is in a state of disarray, we are all seeking to attain the same quality in our work: Multiple Meaning in Equipoise (MMIE).

This particular definition of the quality which enriches architecture and fills it with meaning is the Dutch architect Aldo Van Eyck's way of explaining this phenomena, others have called it something else; all have hoped to define the same quality. Perhaps Kahn would have called it the "will to be, to express." Christopher Alexander discusses his "quality without a name" in a poetic and enlightening way, Anthony Vidler describes the essential qualities which remain the same through time in his typological approach, and Rob Krier seeks to define the elements of architecture which, together, constitute MMIE for him. So we see that many of the best architects of our time have striven to attain multiple meaning in their work. Although their individual design philosophies seem at first quite incompatible, they are all seeking to create a meaningful architecture which goes beyond the utilitarian concerns which make architecture different from other art forms. That is

Casey Mathewson is an architecture student in the Department of Architecture at the University of Oregon.

why Multiple Meaning in Equipoise is so important as a design objective: it is the quality which makes architecture rich and meaningful over time, the quality which we all hope to achieve in our architecture.

While the creation of multiple meaning in architecture may be seen as a design objective, it is actually the successful combination of all design principles at the same time. What is a successful combination? It is when a set of design principles which assure intrinsic meaning have reached what the word equipoise implies: a state of equilibrium, balance or counterbalance. It is when all issues are addressed well. When certain principles begin to determine a design project, they may be pursued to such an extent that other important principles are neglected. The design may lose its balance, important issues are not addressed. Holistic meaningful architecture must be highly developed and comprehensive at the same time. Much present-day architecture is highly developed in that it addresses some (usually arbitrary) design issues—but this does not make it whole and comprehensive. In fact, much present-day architecture deals with diverse principles but ends up general, vague and uncomfortable. Much Neo-Rationalist architecture of recent years is a sad example of how an incomplete set of design principles make for cold, literally inhumane, architecture. One senses here that the most important factor in design—human experience—has been rationalized right out of architecture.

We as designers need to identify a wide range of rich design principles and address all of them to achieve holistic "humanistic" architecture. This is the lesson inherent in the idea of Multiple Meaning in Equipoise. Understanding of this all-encompassing design principle is a key to creating powerful, meaningful architecture. MMIE could be summed up in one word: SYNTHESIS; MMIE is intrinsic in ar-

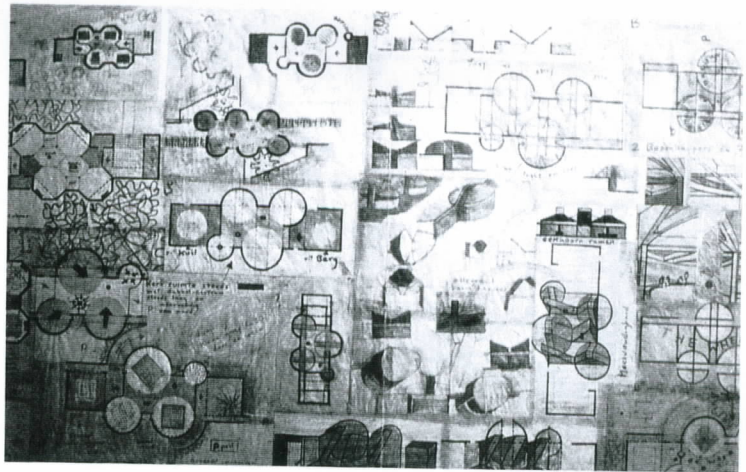
chitecture which is a result of the synthesis of a complete set of rich design principles.

"Multiple Meaning" implies that architecture will be experienced differently by different people at different times but some kind of meaning remains for all—holistic architecture will be new each time it is experienced, because meaning is intrinsic at all levels. This is what Van Eyck calls "functioning on many levels."

"In Equipose" implies that in determining the nature, or essence, of a given design project, some principles may be more important than others. A cyclic design process assures that other important design principles will be developed in later design cycles. Synthesis and MMIE both imply a clear whole which is comprised of a unified set of diverse design principles.

The architecture and theory of the Dutch architect Aldo van Eyck are particularly rich examples of how Multiple Meaning in Equipose can actually be attained in architecture. In analyzing his work of the past 30 years, one encounters a sound design theory which is comprised of a complete set of design principles which assist meaningful architecture. These principles are especially evident in his most recent work, the Hubertus House in Amsterdam. Van Eyck has defined some 23 concrete principles, some more fundamentally important than others, which together constitute his interesting design theory. Van Eyck has long recognized that architecture is a creative art; many of his principles are intrinsic in other art forms as well. We will see how Van Eyck operates with the essential elements which constitute architecture's autonomous language—a language which must be independent from other disciplines such as sociology or engineering—but his work transcends the essential utilitarian basis which makes architecture different from other art forms.

This tendency was crystallized in Van Eyck's theory as early as 1948, when he was



busy giving the ensconced first generation CIAM gentlemen something to think about:

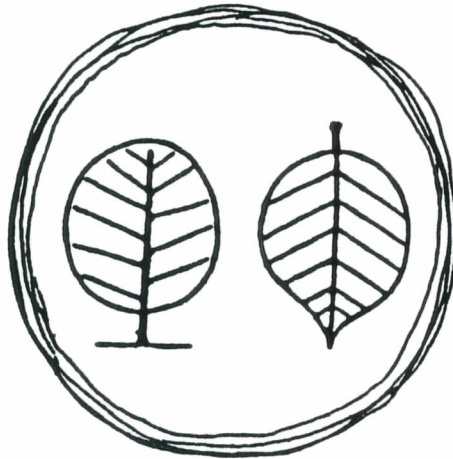
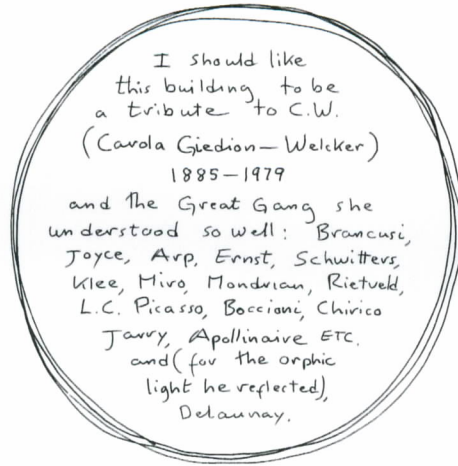
Defining of space

"Although architecture—planning in general—answers many tangible functions, ultimately its objective differs in no way from that of any other creative activity, i.e. to express through man and for man the natural flow of existence."

The most essential key to understanding Van Eyck is to know that his prime concern is the creation of meaningful places for people to be. This does not mean cute, cozy or warm cubbyholes in any way—it simply implies that human appreciation of architecture must be the prime objective of the design process. Van Eyck sums it up eloquently:

"Never cease to identify that which you construct with the people you are constructing it for—for those it will accommodate. Identify a building with that same building entered and define space—every space built—simply as the appreciation of it."

Van Eyck's "Great Gang"



Van Eyck, behind all his at first glance seemingly abstract and inconcise writings, is simply aware and convinced that architecture is not only building but poetry as well. His goal is to make us cognizant of this important insight. Michael Graves, in his introduction to a collection of his recent work, writes of the same notion, describing architecture as being comprised of utilitarian and poetic concerns. Aldo van Eyck has been talking about the same thing for years.

To understand Van Eyck's work one must know something of the man and the people who have influenced him. Van Eyck (b. 1918) studied at the Swiss Federal Institute of Tech-

nology in Zurich, (1934-42). This was not only the time of the Nazis, but also of Picasso, Hesse, Arp, Miro, Gideon, Brancusi and Gropius. Van Eyck was caught up in the powerful discourse taking place in the artistic community. He refers often to the "Great Gang," a group of 20th Century artists, writers and architects who influenced him greatly and helped him attain poetry and meaning in his architecture.

Artists of the modern movement were instrumental in forming Van Eyck's design process. It is in the essence of their work that the roots of his theory lie. Van Eyck realized that what he came to call Multiple Meaning in Equipose is not only important for good architecture; creative acts rely in MMIE for success.

To illustrate how MMIE is intrinsic in good architecture as well as in good poetry or painting we can look to specific examples of poetry and painting. When we have seen how MMIE and the principles which together comprise it are present in these rich examples we can then understand and appreciate it in the architecture of Aldo van Eyck and other architects of our time. We could then, always seeing MMIE as a primary design objective, begin to enrich our own architecture.

MMIE in Poetry, Georg Trakl's "A Winter Evening"

A Winter Evening

*Window with falling snow is arrayed,
Long tolls the vesper bell,
The house is provided well,
The table is for many laid.*

*Wandering ones, more than a few,
Come to the door on darksome courses.
Golden Blooms the tree of graces
Drawing up the earth's cool dew.*

*Wanderer quietly steps within;
Pain has turned the threshold to stone.
There lie, in limped brightness shown,
Upon the table bread and wine.*

... human appreciation of architecture
must be the prime
objective of the design process.

Trakl's interesting "A Winter Evening" relies strongly on many of the same principles Van Eyck utilizes to achieve multiple meaning. Most obvious is the paradox or "twin phenomena" as Van Eyck calls it, of Inside/Outside created between the feast inside and the snowy, eerie outside. Reading through the poem several times one almost begins to feel the freezing world beyond the door. Trakl understood the principle of "twin phenomena" quite well—he even provides a transition between the opposites, an "in-between" between the cold outside and the cheerful inside: the threshold which has been turned to stone. Many other paradoxical "twin phenomena" enrich Trakl's vision. Dark/Light; the dark paths beyond the door vis-a-vis the bright feast on the table. Warm/Cold; Trakl describes the cool dew flowing in the earth and the snow at the window, but inside a feast is about to begin in the warm well-provided house.

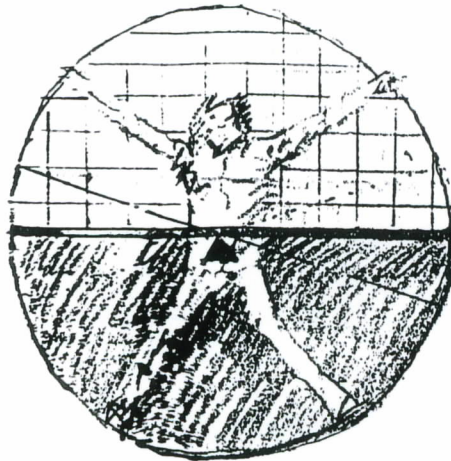
Trakl also images transition or "built homecoming," one of Van Eyck's most important principles. He implies a system of spaces which one passes through as one comes nearer to the house: one approaches on the dark paths, moves through the door and cautiously approaches the threshold. On the other side of the threshold lies security—the warm, bright feast on the table.

And, most importantly, Trakl's poem goes even farther. It attempts to help us understand our own existence. Trakl has included the most essential "twin phenomena" of all—Life/Death. He equates the wanderer with someone who has not yet found his own truth, essentially every person yet living—because one never finds "truth" (as Hesse showed us again and again). The wanderer transcends the door, comes face to face with the tree of graces and crosses a threshold which has been painfully turned to stone (a symbol for death). The feast inside symbolizes some kind of afterlife, not necessarily Christian.

The spirit captured in Trakl's work is eternal: the event described could take place in medieval times as well as in one of our modern cities. Trakl epitomizes the things which remain the same—the essences of being. By using new grammatic constructions to achieve greater descriptions, Trakl made a clear expression of his time. In striving to lend meaning to our existence, Trakl "went beyond" that which had been known up to his time and created a new statement.

Gradually one becomes aware of the many, many levels on which this poem is functioning. At the first reading one begins to sense the "twin phenomena" Inside/Outside. Using this as a point of departure, one begins to see the deeper meanings. Especially important to note is the descriptive clarity which Trakl achieves in these twelve lines, using only sixty words altogether. Trakl limits himself to very precise description and says everything with such virtuoso clarity that everything acquires deep meaning without becoming superfluous.

Trakl attains Multiple Meaning in Equipoise, his work remains rich and meaningful and an expression of his own time. Study of



Design "scale"



Picasso's "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon", 1907 (The Girls from Avignon)

Van Eyck's works shows that the same kind of quality—utilizing some of the very same principles (paradox, transition, zeitgeist) can also be achieved in architecture. MMIE is necessary for the real success of many creative acts—not just poetry or architecture. Music, sculpture and painting all utilize many of the same principles to attain multiple meaning. The painting of the early 20th Century offers a wealth of ideas which illustrate the notion of MMIE. MMIE in modern painting, Picasso's "The Girls from Avignon"

"The dilemma of the modern movement in architecture is that it missed the boat by sidestepping the philosophical implications of what came to light around the turn of the century and since, through the astounding intelligence, artistry and perseverance of a small number of artists and scientists in every media and field. What they discovered, unfortunately, hardly penetrated the minds of architects." (A. van Eyck, 1981)

Van Eyck keeps directing us toward other facets of 20th Century thought which have changed our basis for understanding the world we live in; he refers to R. Delaunay and Claude Levi Strauss as well as to G. Rietveld and Le Corbusier. As architecture is direct expression of cultural values, it must respond to "the implications of what came to light around the turn of the century and since." Van Eyck is certainly not, on the other hand, for the abrupt break away from tradition perpetrated by the architects of the "modern movement." A holistic architecture operates with the essential elements of architecture which have been passed on to us through time. It must at the same time, however, be an original expression of our own unique time—seen in the light of both the collective memory and the dynamic future.

The artists of the early 20th Century were especially attuned to this way of thinking. They created meaningful work which responded to the enormous changes happening in the world. The opening of the Eiffel Tower in 1889 marked the beginning of a new era. Robert Hughes has analyzed the effect of the tower on perception, on the way we see:

"Nobody except a few intrepid balloonists had ever risen more than a thousand feet above the earth . . . But when the tower was opened, nearly a million

The Cubists realized that perspective is a generalization about experience.

people rode to its top platform, and there they saw what modern travelers take for granted every time they fly—the earth on which we live seen flat, as pattern, from above. As Paris turned its once invisible roofs and the now clear labyrinth of its alleys and streets towards the tourist's eye, becoming a map of itself, a new type of landscape began to seep into public awareness. It was based on frontality and pattern rather than on perceptive recession and depth. This way of seeing was one of the pivots of human consciousness. . . . The characteristic flat, patterned space of modern art—Gauguin, Denis, Seurat—was already under development before the tower was built."

And this development went on at an ever increasing pace: most technological developments which would greatly shape our century were discovered in rapid succession soon thereafter: the recoiling machine gun (1882), the Ford car, the discovery of x-rays and rocket drive, the Wright brothers' first powered flight (1903) and Einstein's Theory of Relativity (1905). The rapid succession of changes generated a new way of thinking about the way we see.

The first artists to assimilate all of this into work rich in multiple meaning were the Cubists. Cubism was a radical departure from the theory of perception that had prevailed since the Renaissance. The Cubists realized that perspective is a generalization about experience. The fact is that one never experiences an object in a single glimpse. We are always moving; any sight is the sum of different glimpses. "Both the viewer and the view are part of the same field. Reality, in short, is interaction."

The first Cubist painting, Picasso's "The Girls from Avignon" (1906), is a good

example of MMIE in modern painting. In it, Picasso utilizes many of the same devices which Trakl and Van Eyck, and many others, have used to give their work meaning.

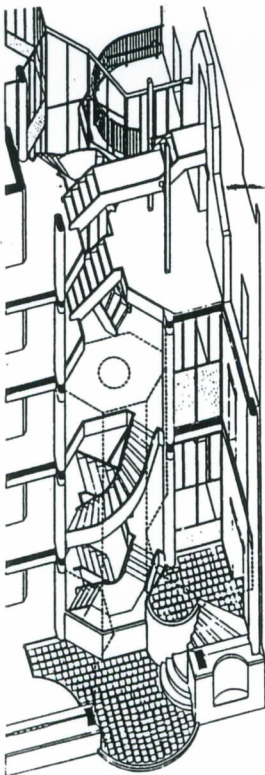
We have seen how paradox and "twin phenomena" enrich poetry; recognition of many of these same "twins" is one quality which makes this painting exceptional too. Picasso created a complex mosaic of Solid/ Void spaces by making it difficult to distinguish between opaque and transparent. Three of the "girls" appear diseased, the other two somewhat healthier. Spatially, Picasso's utilization of the curtain in the background creates a strong sense of Inside/Outside. This "twin" is enhanced even more by the fact that the viewers of the painting, us, are outside the inside of the painting's scope.

And, just as we have seen in Trakl's poem, this work gains more meaning each time one encounters it. One gradually understands Picasso's vivid depiction of an abstracted brothel. Robert Hughes has recognized that the painting is meant to be an allegory of venereal disease. Nothing about the gazes of the "girls" could be seen as welcoming—they are more like judges than prostitutes. The painting deals with a major problem of the time (penicillin was not discovered until later). We see that both Picasso and Trakl dealt with the real essence of being, with the "twin" Life/Death. Picasso too "went beyond" that which had been known up to his time and created a new statement.

We see that Picasso attains MMIE in his work by utilizing many of the same principles which had comprised art for centuries. But the combination of these known elements in a new setting makes for a new, unique meaning within the context of the old. And this is exactly the same synthesis which our own architecture must attain, if it is to be whole and of our time.

This is the lesson to be learned from Van Eyck's "Great Gang," their work went far

“Architecture need do no more, nor should it ever do less, than assist man’s homecoming.”



**Stair detail—
axonometric/section**

beyond that which was required of it—it strove to lend some meaning to the complex world in which it was created. The result: statements which remain rich and meaningful through time— Multiple Meaning in Equipoise.

MMIE as Design Objective in the Architecture of Aldo van Eyck

It is important to note here the basic difference between the art forms of poetry, painting and architecture. While poetry and painting may be full of meaning and powerful for some, they can also be absolutely meaningless for others and still retain their value as creative statements. But the very utilitarian nature of architecture makes it drastically different in this respect: architecture is inhabited by human beings. It cannot be esoteric or exclusive in the same way that art can. And Van Eyck, while drawing heavily from the lessons inherent in other creative arts, is more aware of this fact than a great many of our contemporary architects:

“For there is no such thing as a solid teapot that also pours tea. Such an object might be a penetrating statement (and perhaps still a work of art), but it isn’t a teapot because it can’t pour tea . . . The idea that architecture—buildings—should no longer help mitigate inner stress, but should instead, provoke it, is a hardly conceivable objective.”

This is a crucial point which must be made clear: Picasso, Ernst and Dali painted the fear, distress and insecurity of their world into their work and gave meaningful expression to their time, but this is not in any way the role of an autonomous architecture. Architecture which results as expression of the disquieting distress of our time is unsuccessful every time. A trip to visit contemporary architecture in northern Italy illustrates the failure of this approach vividly. The prime objective

of architecture is to provide meaning-full places for people to be, not places for them to be tense and insecure about their complex world. Actually, rather than embodying insecurity, as Mr. Eisenman would have us believe, architecture really has much more to do with providing security for man—shelter—physical and psychological. Aldo van Eyck recognized this years ago, before anyone had even dreamed of the term post modern: “Architecture need do no more, nor should it ever do less, than assist man’s homecoming.”

One of the most important hypotheses of Van Eyck’s theory is what he calls “the philosophy of the doorstep” or “built homecoming,” as we found it in Trakl’s poetry. Van Eyck emphasizes transitional zones in providing security and facilitating “homecoming”. He provides a concrete alternative to the theory of the CIAM, which usually dealt with interior space at the expense of exterior space:

“To establish the IN-BETWEEN is to reconcile conflicting polarities. Provide the place where they interchange and you provide the original twin-phenomena . . . Perhaps the greater reality of a door is the localized setting for a wonderful human gesture; conscious entry and departure . . . A DOOR IS A PLACE MADE FOR AN OCCASION. I think that is symbolical. And what is the greater reality of a window? I’ll leave that to you . . .”

Van Eyck’s notions of “twin phenomena,” of paradox, as well as “built homecoming” and “in-between space” are all inherent in this 1959 quote. One begins to realize that Van Eyck was years ahead of many developments which we normally associate with the post modern movement. Van Eyck even recognized the power of the city of history: “For years architects have been providing OUTSIDE for man, even inside. But that is not their job at

all; their job is to provide INSIDE for man, even outside."

The prolific Van Eyck has built a small number of powerful buildings. His best projects—the Amsterdam Orphanage (1957-61), the Catholic church in the Hague (1968-70) and the Hubertus House for Single Mothers and Their Children in Amsterdam (1975-80)—all took quite some time to complete. Van Eyck's care for detail and human experience makes his design process long and thorough. So it is that the creative energies of Van Eyck have been confined to but a few highly developed buildings.

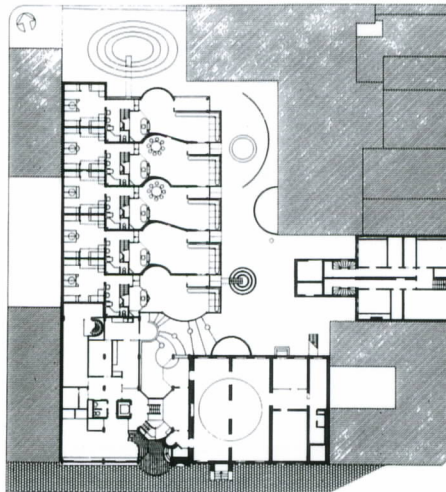
The Amsterdam orphanage, the Catholic church in the Hague and several other projects are the focus of other articles by the author. Van Eyck's most recent and probably his best work, The Mother's House in Amsterdam, is full of built examples of his design principles. This seemingly complicated building is easily understood—if we try to analyze it using the same principles which we found in the works of Trakl and Picasso (paradox, transition, zeitgeist . . .). Instead of totally discounting the architecture and art of the past 60 years as incorrect and inhumane, Van Eyck strives for a truly contemporary solution—an expression of our time and of the state of our society.

This house for families without fathers is a place where mothers and children find temporary shelter—a social center for fatherless families. It provides a place where families can gain a toehold and start over again. The project deals with helping people, with providing them with spaces in which they can heal and readjust—just the project for Van Eyck. Starting with the orphanage, Aldo's best projects have been those where a social element is involved—literally architecture which must deal with special human needs and problems.

The Mother's House is located on a busy street near the center of Amsterdam. While the orphanage stands isolated on the outskirts

of town, this is a sensitive urban site with older buildings on both sides. But instead of trying to directly respond to the styles of the neighboring buildings in a banal way, Van Eyck developed a new aesthetic which should express the special function of the house in our society and at the same time make it clearly a building of our time

Paradox or "twin-phenomena" is intrinsic in a multitude of ways here—all working together at the same time to create what Van Eyck calls "labyrinthian clarity". To take just a few examples of many, one thinks of (1) the dichotomy of New/Old formed between the Hubertus House and its context; (2) the "original twin", Inside/Outside "reciprocated" through the "in-between" of the entrance; (3) Solid/Void at the facade (the stepback marking the entrance is carved out of the continuous street facade); (4) the building is held together by the stair,



Mother's house—plan of major levels

Can architecture express that which is different in our society and perhaps even hope in the positive future development of “man” . . . ?

which makes it possible to sense the Whole/Parts relationship clearly; (5) High/Low and Dark/Light are all working together in the children's rooms; (6) Public/Private realms have been created with intermediate layers (the stair, for one) “in-between”; (7) Transparent/Opaque—the walls have been made into layers of planes, which, while sometimes quite transparent, create a greater feeling of security than a single pane of glass can provide; (8) Heavy/Light—Van Eyck sets his building on a heavy base, then lightens up this very base with colorful tiles and mirrors; (9)

Place/Space—by including all the above “twins,” Van Eyck, in his desire to include human experience in architecture, makes places out of mere spaces. He explains it well: “Space, in the image of man, is place; and time, in the image of man, is occasion. Space has no room, time not a moment for man. He is excluded . . .”

The notion of “built-homecoming” is clearly the generator of the entry system. Instead of being “sliced in half” by a simple wall, one moves up, then through layers of space (doors, bays, alcoves) before discovering the inviting stair and then eventually looking back out to the street and the city. The subtle layering utilized here is the essence of “built-homecoming”—it can be thought of as the “humanization” of transition. But built-homecoming doesn't stop at the entry—it happens again as one leaves the central public stair and arrives at the individual private rooms. The building is thought of as a city with the individual “blocks” of rooms being the houses. One “comes home,” or transcends security—giving layers, until one reaches the most private zones—the bedrooms.

Looking back to Trakl's poem, one is struck by the similarities in the principles, or images, utilized by both artists. Both isolate the act of crossing the threshold, the in-between, and make it an important focus in the composition. The central stair takes one nearer to the sky and the heavens. The almost sacred act of climbing the stairs toward some goal is not unlike the notion of wandering toward the threshold and arrives “home”—safe, secure and warm. Just as Trakl and Picasso “went beyond” what had been known before them in their striving to lend meaning to the complex world, Van Eyck shows how architecture can do the same thing—contain “multiple meanings in equipoise” and therefore be rich and meaningful over time.

Analyzed as a cultural statement, the

Mother's house—front elevation



building goes beyond its utilitarian function and contains powerful poetic qualities. Van Eyck's notion of COUNTER FORM is one generator of the "poetry" of the building. The complex has been conceived as the counter form, or as the mollusk for the shell, of the circumstances which generated it. Francis Stauren writes:

"The building itself as a whole engages with its context much as the component parts engage one another. Far from conforming to its neighbors, or accommodating itself to a supposed typological order, it is grafted onto its context in an equal but contrasting relationship."

Close examination reveals that the design responds strongly to the neighboring context, it strikes an interesting balance between old and new.

The new addition is broken into two sections. One recedes from the street and acts as a connector between new and old as well as the vertical circulation space. The other section fronts the street and has the same width and similar window sizes and proportions as the older building to the right, which is also part of the design. In this way Van Eyck integrates the context without copying it. After all, what use is it copying an old eclectic townhouse which was built under entirely different social conditions? Can (or should) architecture express that which is different in our society and perhaps even hope in the positive future development of "man" or should it be more a literal copy of other epochs as then, indirectly, of other social systems with entirely different social characteristics than ours? This is the question which Van Eyck addresses here, and only time will tell which answer, if any, is correct.

Van Eyck, in much the same way in which Picasso and Trakl did, is certainly "going beyond." His whole striving here was to create an architecture which helps make existence

meaning-full. The advent of a new "type," a "Mother's House" called for this particular solution, which may well be the origin of a new building type in architectural history.

The building is certainly functioning on many, many levels. Analyzing it one discovers new, previously unseen qualities which, all combined, create just the "multiple meaning in equipoise" we set out to define. By utilizing a complete set of design principles, many of which are common to all creative acts, Van Eyck creates a:

"... good building, one that has what it should have and hasn't got what it needn't have. This results when the multiple meaning (intrinsic ambiguity) of every twin phenomenon begins to replace the single one-sided false meanings of the separated halves. Meaning continually embraces further meaning. Since the meaning of one component carries that of its complement within it (forms its reciprocal extension), leading to the meaning of the other, this dialectic relies on a fast both-and instead of a faltering either-or. It depends on a more inclusive kind of thinking." (A. van Eyck)

Francis Strauven notes that Van Eyck has always worked in the conviction that an architecture which is built up on various levels out of metaphors of reciprocity can be conducive to the development of forms of reciprocity in human relations. Van Eyck, by including humans as the principle part of the design process, certainly "goes beyond" the utilitarian considerations normally equated with architecture. The result? Multiple meaning in equipoise. . .

Returning to our point of departure, to literature that is, we find that the notion of multiple meaning in equipoise being comprised of "twin phenomena" or "paradox" or "recipro-

Van Eyck's theory is a result of his striving to give lasting meaning to existence and life.

cators" has been dealt with extensively in the literature of the 20th Century. Hermann Hesse, in the *Steppenwolf* (1927), describes much the same quality:

"This division into wolf and person, into an emotional and a rational side or into lust and reason, with which Harry hoped to make his destiny easier to understand was a very blatant simplification . . ."

"Harry is comprised not only spirits of two but of a hundred, of a thousand. His life swings (as does every one's) not only between two poles, such as lust and reason. No, life swings between thousands, or better yet, between uncountable polar pairs (twin phenomena)."

It was Aldo van Eyck who first applied the principle of multiple reciprocity, so clearly illustrated in Hesse's work, to architecture. Van Eyck, seeing life itself as composed of uncountable polar pairs, conceived of an architecture which would be able to respond to as many reciprocal qualities as possible, hence the extensive use of color at the Hubertus House: "The spectral colours, in spectral alliance, form a single phenomenon, a multiple unity but not a twin phenomenon . . . The rainbow is my favorite color." We see once again that Van Eyck's theory, right down to its origins, is a result of his striving to give lasting meaning to existence and life. The beauty of Van Eyck is that he takes the elements of architecture which have been handed down to us in the form of "Kultur" or tradition and uses them solely to ameliorate the condition of 20th Century "man". This implies using the knowledge of history in an enlightened way, not blatantly copying it:

"I have heard that an architect cannot be a prisoner of tradition in a time of

change. It seems to me that he cannot be a prisoner of any kind. And at no time can be a prisoner of change."

Detailed analysis of Van Eyck's work reveals that he advocates a holistic, humanistic architecture which responds to much more than does most esoteric "Neo-Rationalism" or "Neo-Classicism." It is certain that, no matter how Van Eyck may be labeled and remembered, his work is among the best of our time. As a design process his "typology" of eternal humanistic concerns—derived from literature, painting, music and other creative art, is much more all-encompassing and meaningful than any "typology" of historical building type compositions. While humanistic concerns relating to existence always remain, the meaning of a particular building type is directly connected to its time. Understanding of both kinds of "typology" is essential if we want to make holistic, "humanistic" architecture which is of our time.

Van Eyck offers solid advice for the architecture of tomorrow—so "start with this" and "make the most of him!" [XV]

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