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## Rapporteur

*Mildred Schmertz*

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As Peter Davey said, critical journalism is about selection and inclusion. Those of you who have laboured over your papers and have made careful remarks during the sessions, enriching the commentary in this seminar, will find that almost all of what you said or wrote has not found its way into my summary.

The segments of the discussion that have found their way into my brief discourse are those which I consider the most controversial, the most significant, the most well stated, or all three.

First I want to restate the basic structure of this seminar as it was put together by Suha Ozkan, Dennis Sharp and Ismail Serageldin. It was very carefully organised and it produced a very interesting outcome. It began with Dennis Sharp's Keynote address on the nature, methodologies and responsibilities of architectural criticism and was followed by the presentation of two major critical papers, each responded to, in counterpoint, by shorter critical papers and then after there was a kind of *ad hoc*, free style, random criticism from the audiences. In the papers and in the commentary, we thus saw criticism in action.

Later the seminar moved away from the discussion of critical models to the critical process itself and finally we discussed the art and craft of criticism. This discussion was done mainly by those who labour in the media.

So what have we learned? As Dennis Sharp reminded us, architectural critics play many roles and could play more, but not all critics aspire or should aspire to completely fit Sharp's model.

May I begin by flinging down the gauntlet and stating that an architectural critic is anyone with access to a printing press who wants to talk about architecture. He must sit down at his word processor and get on with it, learning by doing. Let us take for example Prince Charles. Should he not continue to be allowed to criticise carbuncles as he sees them, without certification from CICA?

To disagree further with Sharp's definitions, criticism need not focus solely on aesthetic values, it is never a disinterested endeavour, it is always ideological. The critic does not always work retrospectively, but often plays a watchdog role joining members of the concerned public in helping prevent the construction of buildings considered, inimical to the public interest.

I disagree with Dennis Sharp's suggestion that the critic help out the designer in the process of design. Could you imagine a more scandalous conflict of interest than for an architectural critic to serve as a co-designer of a building he will eventually review in the media?

Here is a plot for you inspired by Charles Moore. He mentioned the critics' Procrastes earlier in this seminar. Imagine an eminent architect who finds himself about to be cut and fitted once again into the critic Procrastes bed. As he cries to the critic for mercy, the critic answers, sharpening his knife, "Need a little help with your next design?"

I find fault with Dennis Sharp for calling to mind such ghastly scenarios, while overstating the qualifications and credentials needed to effectively perform the critical task. Apart from these caveats, Sharp's introductory lecture successfully served the essential function of defining comprehensively the value system within which all responsible architectural critics must work. So his paper, with the exceptions that I have mentioned, was a fundamental base for our meeting.

A second contribution also reflected the value system that was set up for this conference. Ismail Serageldin's papers is an excellent paradigm of architectural critical methodology. I won't attempt to assess or recall in detail the paper. I would rather very briefly mention how he appears to have thought it through and constructed it, in other words, how he performed the critical act.

He chose to describe two manifestations of the contemporary architecture of Muslim societies, the ver-

nacular and the modern urban aesthetic. He picked examples from each segment and this was set within a framework leading to his subject: Gordon Bunshaft's National Commercial Bank Building in Jeddah.

As a critical work, I would say that the paper had a thin veneer of objectivity, disinterest and detachment befitting its title "Architecture as Intellectual Statement". But nobody was fooled. Serageldin loves Bunshaft's building and he wanted us to love it too. So his article is polemical and slanted and leaves some things out and of course fails to convince everybody as Romi Khosla and his fellow discussants pointed out.

Khosla for example praises the building as form, but attacks it as symbol. Pamir thought that Serageldin did not adequately research certain questions such as user's satisfaction, among others. But the article itself, because of its strong position, its energy and its corroborative detail gave the discussants plenty to discuss, confirm or disagree with, as the best criticism always does.

A second major paper by Hasan-Uddin Khan helped develop a critical value system apart from the subject discussed in the paper. Khan spoke about critical concepts and the value systems they represent. He was dealing with the dual themes of universality and particularisation in the developing world. He said more about the themes than the buildings he chose as examples. It was primarily a discussion of contemporary critical ideas rather than of their objects. This was an appropriately conceived paper for a conference of this kind.

Challenged, I imagine, by Hasan-Uddin Khan's definitions of contemporaneous kitsch, Michael Sorkin followed with a counterpoint. Sorkin was inspired to bring us right up to date on the subject of popular culture. Not everybody was pleased to hear what he had to say. Somebody said to me, "What's Greenwich Village got to do with us" We heard about couch potatoes and ethicists and the rest.

Like Michael Sorkin, I am from New York city and it's the centre of our universe and I can say that he is telling it like it is. To try and make you feel a little better let me say that he exaggerates, but not much! His paper was brilliant, witty. He applied the most contemporary critical concepts and language. My only regret is that some of the words are so new; *couch potatoes* and some others that I think if we had a glossary the entire paper would have been more appreciated.

Later speaker after speaker strove to define critical values Chris Abel described imaginative teaching methods by which he brought to his Saudi architectural students a methodology which enabled

them to examine and transform a segment of their own vernacular.

Stanford Anderson made a very interesting point on the difficulties of critical analysis based on polar opposites, form versus symbol, tradition versus modernity, and so on. Again in the search for values, he said if we must choose between opposites we must be in possession of some truth. He cited Adolf Loos' attitude towards his work; Loos was able to span these polarisations by being open to new forms, to criticism and to innovations.

Pierre Vago reminded us with wisdom and eloquence that the architecture of no country would be worth a visit without its imported architectural treasures. To quote him, "Importation must be accepted, never rejected". Just as profoundly he added, "I worry when people say we must adapt to the local. What period is local?". These are profound questions.

Suha Ozkan gave us a devastating statistic. His native country Turkey has five percent of the population of Islam but 45 percent of the architects and yet in this country, with all these architects, critical discourse does not exist. He said, "That is because there is bread involved" and we all know what that means. He pointed out that it is important that the Aga Khan Award offer a setting for a rich critical process, an arena of discourse. This is a great resource not only for Turkey but for the rest of the Islamic world. Suha Ozkan hopes that we architectural critics will launch a movement.

Turning now to the media, I would just remind you that "the media" sometimes is made to sound like a great monster, a monolith, an undifferentiated instrument. This isn't so, the media takes many forms and there are a great many different kinds of people who write about subjects that are related to architecture in very significant ways. Those who are specifically involved in architectural criticism are often performing under considerable difficulties. They are performing a function that few people want. It is also necessary to say that journalists and critics are not as powerful as they may appear. As Charles Kneivitt reminded us, many architectural writers have to fold their criticism into articles that have other ostensible tasks. Most of them spend a lot of time begging their chief editor, the night copy editor or the publisher, to give them space to address an architectural question when other issues appear more urgent.

Architectural critics are even subject to readership surveys. If the publisher of a daily paper decides to see what readership an architectural column has and it turns out to be low, that architectural column can turn into a home furnishing and housewares column

in the next morning editions. These are the realities of the work of some of us that should be mentioned.

There seems to be a widespread assumption that architects can do no wrong and that architectural critics have to be trained so that they will support architects and the world will be a better place. I would like to question that assumption.

The assumption is that the critic should always be on the side of the architect, helping him in his battle against the ignorant client, the incompetent government and the indifferent public. The architect's foes are not necessarily all that bad and the responsible critic must often oppose the architect and oppose him in the public interest.

The most distinguished critics have the broadest vision of the public interest and fight the hardest on the public's behalf. The best critics give their critical support to outstanding architects who are concerned about the larger questions and who work in the public interest.

Having tried to set that right, I would like to thank the Award for giving architectural critics the chance to come together and learn from each other and talk about what we do. I hope we in turn helped the Award to formulate a critical process of judgement.