Research and discuss Rem Koolhaas’ effort to move beyond architecture as autonomous crafted objects through the concept of “scape” (architecture, landscape and infrastructure) and what the implications of this are.

Our ultimate gratitude to art.— If we had not welcomed the arts and invented this kind of cult of the untrue, then the realization of general untruth and mendaciousness that now comes to us through science—the realization that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation—would be utterly unbearable. Honesty would lead to nausea and suicide. But now there is a counterforce against our honesty that helps us to avoid such consequences: art as the good will to appearance. We do not always keep our eyes from rounding off something and, as it were, finishing the poem: and then it is no longer eternal imperfection that we carry across the river of becoming—then we have the sense of carrying a goddess, and feel proud and childlike as we perform this service.¹ Nietzsche, The Gay Science.

Architecture, it is said, is the craft of weaving science and art into built masterpieces.²

On the artistic side: aesthetics, representation, symbolism and cultural enrichment.

Science: functionality, structural integrity, technical innovation and strong building practise. Conceptual appropriation of science and art by architects, (via the social sciences and philosophy) influence and alter the outcomes of architecture.³

Modernism sought rationality through its belief in the infallibility of science. If, through rationality, society could not be improved, belief in the progress and accomplishment of the scientific method further motivated the modernists to keep trying. Post-modernism rejects the call for the improvement of society through science and rationality; claiming it will merely lead to tyranny.⁴ Perhaps prophetically, Nietzsche foreshadowed the post-modernist claim for reticence toward science. Art continues to move us, because it makes no claims against its fictional

disposition. In a post-modern, globalised milieu, science, due to its fallible nature, is incorporated into notions of art.

Globalisation, a late twentieth century phenomenon, is a term used to denote the mass proliferation of information, commodities and images across borders, regardless of cultural and racial differences. Employing the mechanics of the free market economy, the movement of global capital is inhibited only by infrastructural technologies that determine the speed of the goods delivery. The movement of people across the planet are also determined by those infrastructures. Sassen attempts to rarefy globalisation in terms of strategic sites: the places (non-virtual/virtual) where process and links materialise. Infrastructural technologies, often invisible, network and link everything. “Nothing escapes the panoptic reach of the new information system that oversees the emergent simultaneity of global cause and effect” writes Enwezor.

Globalisation, in its early conception, polarised observers. There were those who believed that globalisation would lead to cultural/architectural homogenisation and gentrification. Others argued that globalisation would have positive effects by way of highlighting differences in local knowledge and sensibilities. There appears to be consensus amongst architectural discourse that globalisation has created the latter. Lootsma, quoting Polo, claims that “we witness an artificial regionalisation, an artificially enhanced nature, where the local flavour becomes synthetic.”

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5 Ibid, p. 367  
9 Ibid, p.269.
synthetic nature, identity is solidified, not corroded, by the proliferation of goods and services from certain local cultures.

The consequences of globalisation on architecture, landscape and infrastructure are the focus of this discussion. It should be clarified that globalisation maintains an internal set of cause and effect whilst also influencing processes outside of its metaphysical, dynamic self. An example of this difference is the baking of bread in Northern Africa for export to Europe and the resultant shut-down of European bakeries. An external consequence of globalisation is the manifestation of urbanization, a city's attempt to modernise, currently most prevalent in Asia.

Urbanization records the dynamic dispersal and centralisation of people to and from urban centres. Urbanism, an alternative term for town planning, attempts to deal with issues of density and movement (through infrastructure) for populations in detailed relation to their territory. Koolhaas’ polemic: *Whatever Happened To Urbanism?* laments the demise of urbanism, which might have redirected people away from cities that have grown into metropolises, and in some cases megalopolises. Koolhaas argues, urbanism killed itself by belatedly rediscovering the virtues of the classical city as a model for metropolises; a kind of grand-scale critical regionalism. Modernist architects, with their insistence on progress, could not accept the notion of returning to an *older* format for contemporary cities. The role of creating cities was left to modern architects to the exclusion of the expertise of urbanism.

Having severed off the expertise of urbanism, the modern architect was then found stranded in the wake of post-modernism. Postmodernism had constructed a

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theoretical basis for dealing with disunity that modernism had created. Modernism failed “to transform quantity into quality through abstraction and repetition…all attempts to make a new beginning have only discredited the idea of a new beginning.” Utopianism is flawed. Only individuals, not entire societies, it seems, can be rational on their own terms. Bigness, simultaneously grafting ‘frozen music’, stifled the traditional notion of the People’s Architecture. The Corbusian megastructure supported urbanization whilst simultaneously killing urbanisms efforts. Bigness, whilst ignoring context, is “a kind of all embracing, all enabling technical support that ultimately questioned the status of the individual building.” Massive, continuous structures were possible through air-conditioning. The structures are so large they take on a logic and system of their own. The result is evident in Koolhaas’ most scathing polemic: *Junkspace*:

If space-junk is the human debris that litters the universe, Junkspace is the residue mankind leaves on the planet. The built product of modernization is not modern-architecture but Junkspace. Junkspace is what remains after modernization has run its course or, more precisely, what coagulates while modernization is in progress, its fallout. Modernization had a rational program: to share the blessings of science, universally.

We witness the failings of modernization to pre-empt the technological breakthroughs that have enabled globalisation: a process that potentially avoids ‘Junkspace’. With technology, (informational) infrastructures can avoid the process of urbanisation,

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12 Koolhaas, 1998, 961
13 Inherently on the horizon, utopia remains at a constant distance.
16 Koolhaas 1998, 504
17 Chuicha, 2001, p. 408
because people no longer need to work next to one another, shopping can be done over the internet, goods are held in strategically placed storehouses around the world, not in a single location. What are left are these large, empty, continuous buildings. Nevertheless, these large megastructures give rise to a new sensibility in regards to the landscape. Metaphorically speaking, these buildings become landscapes.

Where context is superfluous in modernisms rampant expansion, context is everything in post-modernisms vanguard against the mistakes of the past. The transgressing critical architect of genius is a thing of the past. Adhesion, collaboration and complicity are the order of contemporary, post-modern architecture. Connection with the operational is the only thing that could save architecture as a profession. What is the operational? Under the rubric of “new urbanism” the operational has been identified as function, program, processes, events, and utility. Koolhass’ “new urbanism” identifies the “staging of uncertainty,” the “irrigation of territories with

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19 Davidson, 1996, p. 161
20 Davidson, 1996, 161.
potential,” “discovering unnameable hybrids,” and most importantly, “the manipulation of infrastructure for endless intensifications and diversifications, shortcuts and redistributions – the reinvention of psychological space.”

Formal considerations take a back-seat, at times never present.

The instrumentality of design, (the reinvented psychological space), manifest by the palimpsest of mapping, is the apotheosis of the representation and stylization of landscape, infrastructure and architecture. The reinvented psychological space focuses on the making of landscape instead of the appearance of landscape. Furthermore, with the inclusion of ecology, the cohesion of the landscape as a whole is appropriated. Ecology, combined with the conceptualisation of architecture and infrastructure symbiotically related to landscape, introduces new paradigms for ways at which we might go about making landscapes. This process has been called the infrastructualisation or landscapification of architecture.

For example, the classic Parc De Villette where both the first and second prize winners treated the landscape as a fallen down skyscraper. Koolhaas’ entry even went to the extent of measuring the landscape the way you measure the square metres of a building. More recently, in the Downsview Park competition all finalists were asked to present a fifteen year phasing program as part of their entry. The notion of phasing, particularly as a graphic, asks for interdisciplinary action on the part of designers. Landscape architects must start working with scientists to develop an approximate, yet believable timeline for the growth of trees and migration of animals throughout landscapes. In both instances the emphasis is more cerebral that practical.

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21 Koolhaas, 1998, p. 969
22 Corner, 1999, p.164.
23 Corner, 1999, p. 164
24 Lootsma, in Corner, 1999, p. 259
New understandings of landscape, combined with the archaic whirlwind of postmodernism, call for the reflection of communities to be represented in landscapes and vice versa. A landscape, or a ‘place’, is meaningless, or placeless, unless time is taken to apply meaning to it. This relationship, however, is reflexively reflective. If our relationship to the world that we live in and the consequential understanding of the way the landscape might actually be, is governed by our thoughts, then at what point do we stop thinking to allow ourselves to build appropriate ‘place-ful’ shelters to live in? There is no answer to this question. Furthermore, the hyper-speed of globalisation and urbanisation do not allow us to think clearly about this process: it is occurring right now. However there have been a few attempts to describe the paradox.

Koolhaas, in *A Great Leap Forward* introduced and jokingly copyrighted (a dig at the free market) the term Scape© as:

an (exploded mountain, a highrise, and a rice field in every direction—nothing between excessive height and the lowness of a continuous agricultural/light-industrial crust, between
the sky-scraper and the scraped. Scape©, neither city nor landscape, is the arena for a terminal juxtaposition between architecture and landscape, the apotheosis of the Picturesque©.  

Scape© relies on the significant notion of Dialectics© “a method to understand and synthesise opposites” which collapses into Merge©: “a brutal collapsing of opposites to create new conditions.” What new conditions bring about Scape©? Sassen identifies centralisation and dispersal respectively. Wall argues that it is the heterogeneous peripheral/middle landscape. For Enwezor, it is the horizontal laboratory. In any case, Scape© is caught between the push and pull of the centre and periphery under the sway of globalised economic forces.

Angelil and Klingmann in Hybrid Morphologies and Moystad in Urban by Implication have gone some way in explaining Scape©. Employing the dialectical powers of Smithson’s site/non-site, Angelil and Klingmann present an argument for

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31 Sassen, in Davidson, 1996, p. 128.
33 Enwezor, 2003, p. 111.
the relationship between the cerebral and actual in regards to landscape.\textsuperscript{34} The site is the real conditions of a place, while the non-site is one’s interpretation of that place.\textsuperscript{35} Similarly, Moystad argues for a “Field of Architecture [that] is stratified, and its main strata in addition to architecture seem to be formed by infrastructure and landscape.”\textsuperscript{36} For Moystad “every single point in a field contains all the properties of the field...[and] has no clear boundary.”\textsuperscript{37} Moystad’s preference is for the dual definition of architecture as a field and as a practise, instead of using the term ‘field of landscape’, or even generic ‘field’. His reasoning for this is that “landscape cannot replace the historical city as the basic level of interaction. The historical city was built, it was man made. Landscape is not. We build architectural objects \textit{in} landscape.”\textsuperscript{38} This distinction between architecture and landscape has significant implications for the conclusions of both arguments. Both commentators recognise the machinations of globalisation as a process that blurs the distinctions between city and country.\textsuperscript{39} Nevertheless Moystad is insistent on an ‘urban landscape’ typology (as opposed to the natural) landscape as a way of describing the blurring process.\textsuperscript{40} Klingmann and Angelil on the other hand are content with the convergence of architecture, infrastructure and landscape, without employing further overarching concepts.\textsuperscript{41} The arguments can be shown graphically, firstly Moystad’s argument:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{34} Klingmann and Angelil, 1999, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, p.18
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, p.1
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, p.5
\textsuperscript{40} Moystad, 2004, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{41} Klingmann and Angelil, 1999, p. 20.
\end{quote}
Moystad argues, apparently quoting Angelil and Klingmann that “infrastructure to be a substratum both to architecture and landscape as well as being a mediator between them.”

(Figure 1) This statement is untrue. Angelil and Klingmann do not state as such on page twenty five of their article. In any case, the first image represents the traditional hierarchical conception of a cities structure.

Moystad argues: “this semiotic model would suggest architecture as the phenomenon with which we interact, both as users and as designers. Infrastructure would be the physical object underpinning the softer (software) architecture, and

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42 Moystad, 2004, p.16  
43 Moystad, 2004, p. 16.  
44 Ibid, p.16
(the urban) landscape would be the overall system of reference and the global form of the architectural system, or network.”

Lastly, Moystad’s argument turns from the graphical to the semiotic:

Planning: - turning into a reactive discipline focused on the management of what exists: urban management.

Urbanism/Landscape: - basically concerned with posterior evaluation. It would indeed be an ideology of accepting what exists – and then to analyze it in order to maintain a set of references: to cultivate the interpretant and to produce a constructive critique.

Architecture and Landscape Design:
- would be a proactive and cross scalar discipline: reading urbanism, collaborating with planners, real estate developers, users and owners, and acting through scenario building, programming and design of individual projects of architecture, landscape and infrastructure

The semiotic conclusion rests upon what Moystad calls the Peircean synthesis — a dialectical triad that overcomes the differences of landscape, architecture and infrastructure into the three categories planning, urbanism, architecture. These are the further overarching concepts discussed earlier.

45 Moystad, 2004, p.16
46 Moystad, 2004, pp. 16-17
In contradistinction, the Klingmann/Angelil interpretation of Scape©.

Firstly, they cite a link between architecture, landscape and infrastructure. (Figure 4) “The traditional city demarcates a figure against the ground of its surrounding landscape.”48 Here dual definitions of landscape emerge; the landscape upon which parts are constructed and the landscape as a practise of dealing with what occur between architecture and infrastructure.

Secondly, through the Hybrid Morphologies, links between the constituent parts are not eroded, but set free from one another.(Figure5) “In the contemporary city figure ground distinctions are revoked.” 49

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47 Klingmann and Angelil, 1999, p. 24
48 Ibid, p.24
49 Ibid, p. 24
Inline with Koolhaas’ conception of Merge© (“a brutal collapsing of opposites to create new conditions”) over dialectics, Klingmann/Angelil fragment infrastructure, architecture and landscape in an attempt to aptly represent the contemporary city. “The city as urban landscape increasingly evolves as a dynamic process, questioning the authority of self reliant architectural form…de-centering the notion of the architectural object as a closed entity,” write Klingmann and Angelil.\footnote{50 Klingmann and Angelil, 1999, p. 24}

The main difference between the Klingmann/Angelil versus the Moystad argument for the implications of Scape© result out of whether or not they recognise and accept the collapse of the dialectical process. Moystad, intent on maintaining the field of architecture as “a consistent and well-established concept”\footnote{51 Moystad, 1999, p.10} accepts and maintains the dialectical triad: thesis, antithesis synthesis. Dialectic – the mode of thought used as provocation of rarefied systems of apparent antimonies. The antimonies maintain their status, whilst simultaneously integrating by subcategories that transcend the boundaries of the conceptual dichotomy. In other words, categories share subcategories that relate to other categories. These subcategories may also require a priori reflexive concepts for their understanding. That is, concepts that is not noticeable in ‘the real world’ but help to explain processes that occur in that space.
The conclusion of which is the recognition of the “city [that] dissolves in this general urban fabric, this fabric, or tissue rather, seems to take on a life of its own, and ‘landscape’ in the sense of cultivated nature seems to offer a conceptual handle on the urban discourse.” Recognising the city/urban environment as a tissue or fabric, (as Alex Wall also does) remains a modernist endeavour.

Klingmann and Angelil’s hybrid morphologies recognise the inadequacy of the dialectical triad to explain the contemporary city. There are no antimonies. The categories dissolve like soap tablets in a dishwasher. Instead of creating new synthetic concepts in an effort to explain the blurring between country and city, the postmodernist, recognising the forces of globalisation, accept the interior and anterior fragmentation of infrastructure, architecture and landscape:

“The city is a system in motion, characterised by fluid conditions...[w]ith the dissolution of categories, an undetermined state is attained, that repudiates—as to the logic of a new spatial conception—firmly secured hierarchies.”

The rejection of city as tissue/fabric is supported by Koolhass:

“I find [it] interesting to understand the city no longer as tissue – more as “mere” coexistence, a series of relationships between objects that are almost never articulated in visual or formal ways, no longer “caught” in architectural connections.”

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52 Moystad, 2004, p. 10.
The implication of the concept of Scape© are important for the ongoing tensions between the tenets of modernism and post-modernism. Globalisation as the phenomenon of high-speed mass proliferation of information, commodities, images and people across borders leads to urbanisation. The urban environment in turn moves back out toward the countryside until the distinction between country and city become blurred. Postmodernism, with acceptance of science as a fiction is more equipped to deal with open, fluid conditions, whereas modernism is “caught” in architectural connections of frozen music. Freed from dialectical battles in a fallacious attempt to capture the perfected science, as Nietzsche argues, “We do not always keep our eyes from rounding off something and, as it were, finishing the poem: and then it is no longer eternal imperfection that we carry across the river of becoming.” Scape© implies the conquest of post-modernism over modernism, not simply as a theoretical manifestation, but also via globalisation, the actualisation that certain forces and processes are beyond the control of science and reason.
Bibliography:


