ICONOGRAPHY
OF THE EMBLEM
OF THE
WAR OF THE ARTS OF PEACE.
(pages 17, 18 and 19
of
LECTURE 31
in
VOLUME TWO:
"SPRING"

It is well-known that Hitler painted urban scenes with a 'Stile Pompier' architecture and flaneurs dressed to suit. D'Annunzio, an earlier devotee of Fascism, liked fast cars, aeroplanes and trashing "the past". But, as quips the Protagonist in the film 'Ridicule': "Not everyone born in a stable is a horse". The difference between these men and the norm is that both turned to extreme violence to satisfy their ambitions. Hitler made war on the Slavs so as to build Ideal Cities (whose form he discussed with Speer), to be inhabited by his Master Race. Hitler was doing nothing new. In the Ancient world a defeated 'city' was ploughed into the ground, its menfolk killed or enslaved, its women impregnated, and a colony of the victors constructed. The sadness of it is not that human beings have always been the most dangerous animals around, but that the Ancients left behind better ruins than Fascism - and Communism too.

Moreover, by one of those strange turns that make History so diverting and the future so hard to predict, making war is no longer a possible way of re-making the human lifespace. MAD, or 'Mutually Assured Destruction' has rendered the conquered real estate permanently radioactive. The impossibility of war as, in Clausewitz's words, "Diplomacy by other means", has shaken the foundations of the state itself. Theorists as diverse as Lewis Mumford and Karl Schmitt would agree. Was building the Doomsday Machine part of Marx's Materialistic future when he predicted the "withering away of the State"? I leave this answer to the experts, but one doubts it.

"If", in the words of the World Bank's Christine Lagarde, "We are to avoid Mediocrity", and engage in "bold new initiatives", we must do so under the governance of democratic institutions whose capability to act no longer has the force of imminent physical extinction as their authentication. Consent must be given to radical restructurings because that is what is wanted by those who will enjoy its benefits. It would appear that instead of making war on others to benefit ourselves, we must make war upon ourselves if we wish for radical improvements.

So, instead of sallying forth to murder hundreds and thousands of innocent neighbours merely get-up enough political steam to re-plan our own shambolic cities, we now have to find 'another way'. Could anything be a more grotesque indictment of the ability of advanced societies to 'govern themselves'?

With this in mind as I began to look around for some means to 'flag-up' the idea of a 'War of the Arts of Peace', I discovered that the Domain Name 'artsofpeace' had never been reserved. I was, to put it mildly, astonished. Surely someone, in the almost four decades since the commercialisation of the Internet, would have wanted 'artsofpeace'? It does rather confirm that Peace is no substitute for War. Or to put it otherwise, to the English-speaking cultures Peace is merely the Absence of War. This must surely change. Competition between individuals and between their larger social institutions is never going to 'wither away'. If it cannot be carried on by the traditional process of making war then 'Peace' is the new Field of Mars. So I bought 'artsofpeace' and then proceeded to the next stage, its 'flag', or, more interestingly, its 'Iconocrypt'.

The obvious acronym 'AOP' hardly showed great inventive energy. It was mono-semantic and too similar to OAP, though why we downgrade age is a mystery. Apart from being physically weaker I prefer turning 80 than 18.

Putting AOP in an oval, even with "Janus" spirals like JOA was not enough. So I tried changing the frame, making it into a big letter 'C', for "Camera (Lucida)". The framing letter 'C' then turned into the Greek letter 'Pi'. At this point I tried the cartouched acronym (AOPi). Nothing special. Then I tried it Vertically. At this point the iconics got very much more interesting.

The Greek Pi turned into the icon for "constructed-ness" described on pages 13 & 14 of Lecture Four "The Great Escape". Then the letter 'O' of 'of', a rather slight word, turned into something much more powerful. By placing it inside the icon of constructed-ness it acquired three levels of iconic semantic. There was the intrinsic meaning of "Enclosed-ness". Then there were the two narrated mythemes of the "Columna Lucis" as the commencement of the Time of Advent, and the "Camera Lucida" as the final achievement of the Rites of Architecture.
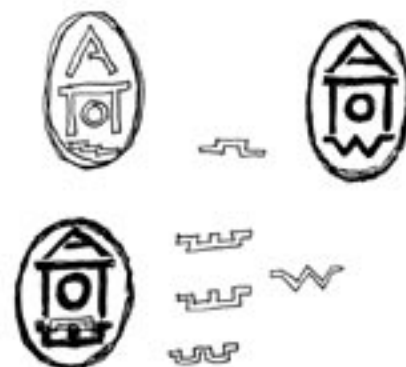
The letter 'A' also acquired two levels of iconic semantic. By being placed 'in front of', that is to say above and over the 'Pi'-framing, it became another one of the Four Figures that describe the intrinsic meanings of any 'building-event'. In this case it was that of 'sheltered-ness'. The Architectural mytheme of the "pyra", Pediment or Aetos was also acquired if the 'Pi-frame' was read as an 'Altar'.

By continuing with this newly-acquired, but fragmentary set of iconic meanings the possibility also proposed itself that the 'o' denoting 'of', if moved into the ashy pyramid of the Pyra/Cone of Hestia/Hearth Fire became the White Sun/Golden Germ carried by the Adventurers to the New Foundation. 'Completing' the sequence of the Four Figures would invoke the quality of Established-ness manifested by the stylobate, or raised and level floor.

Then, at the very lowest, opposite end of this Narrative of the Time of Advent, this Stylobate of Established-ness might be allowed to 'read' as the Heap of History. The iconic semantics explored in these Lectures were crowding-in so thick and fast that it was becoming hard to assimilate them all.

Yet their exploration proved surprisingly easy to assimilate formally. The Letter 'A'-cum Pyra/Cone of Hestia, when provided with a 'solar disk' morphed into the letter Omega. This made the acronym for Arts Of Peace (AOP) into the entirely Hellenic Alpha-Omega-Pi. But this was not merely 'stylish'. It could also carry the idea that the Pyra containing the Hearth Fire was the advent of the 'Arts' of the Arts of Peace and that these Arts spanned from Alpha to Omega. It was this Advent, at the Time of Inception, that brought into being the Columna Lucis which, after beginning the Rites of Architecture, brought into being the Camera Lucida: the home of the New Foundation that would be the 'Peace' which was the final ambition.

At the lower end of this cryptogram the 'stepped pyramid' which was the usual icon of Established-ness 'split' or 'twinned into the Letter 'W' for 'War' and its inverse, a Mountain for the Heap of History.

This twinning could also be read as the inter-twining snakes of the Chaos/Nun//Infinity/Vrtra/Ocean that provide a mytheme for both the Downward and Upward 'Vertical Phylo- and Onto-genetic Narratives' (Lectures 16 & 17), as well as the Horizontal narrative of the River/Arrow of Somatic/Eschatalogical-Historical/ Socio-genic Time.

I resisted making the 'omega' too literal and realised that what I wanted it to mean was the 'buried' fire in the ashy Pyra. I related this to the burial chamber in a pyramid. the 'bar' of the 'A' became the access passage to the 'cave'. The last icon to be designed was that for the Black Sun that lies buried within the submarine Heap of History. I first drew the Black sun as a circle, then a black ring around a white centre. I finally settled on a black square around a white one. These 'suns' are like seed-pods from which larger processes spring. I chose the square because it is the Black Sun that sources, in due process, the Camera Lucida, which is definitely cubic.

Ranging A-O-P vertically initiated the inscription of such an extraordinary richness of superimposed meanings that it appeared inevitable that this icon would be adopted as the cryptogram for the 'Wars of the Arts of Peace' and that this would be the title of a putative 'Movement', if there was to be one, to which the 44 Lectures would provide the Study-Materials. For the 'what' of an idea is no better studied than through the when, why and where of its Aetiology, its history of invention.

The resultant iconocrypt pleased me a great deal. If, as J.B.Alberti proposed: "Architecture is the paradigmatic Art of Civilisation", then this 'iconolect' was not entirely bad. It is nicely-composed, as a formal discourse. It fascinated me, as all iconocrypts do, by being both an immediate presence, almost an 'object' while being also replete with rather easily-accessed meanings that, even so, when elaborated, multiply the more recondite, not to say arcane, attachments that all symbols present.

It seemed a sufficient 'flag' under which go forward into the War of Arts of Peace by which one may achieve, one day, an Ontic Constitution.

A 'pictorialised' version with the flaming Pyra, and its Golden Germ, the rivers of the Camera Lucida, the heads of the Intertwined serpents, the Heap of History, the 'W' for war and the Cubic 'Light in the Rock'.

Yet the 'scripting' of these Lectures could have ended at this point were it not for an accident that caused me to 'discover' one of the first cities to be radically planned and entirely rebuilt, in Europe, during the 20C. Finding myself in it, finding myself admiring it (even though it is far from beautiful in any received sense), and discovering its history, led me to realise that here was a totalising city-plan, made in the early 1920's, which contained all of the strategies that interested me. Moreover its bones had actually come off the paper to be built, along with much of its superstructure. It is true that after WWII its area-planning and architectural culture had changed. But the spirit of its original plan had not been destroyed. It was as if the contemporary city was wreathed in the mists of ignorance, rather than the smoke and dust of demolition.

The most striking thing about it was to realise that here, right at the beginning of the 20C, when all of the supposedly radical preconditions for the much trumpeted revolution in lifestyle were in position, an old city had been totally re-planned, from the ground up, as well as largely built. It had accommodated all these 'radical technicities' within a cultivated undertanding of lifespace design that had neither the need nor the ambition to achieve a 'radical break' with the received design culture. It proved what will come to be understood - that the so-called Modernity of the 20C was not so much an advance as a holding operation, conducted behind an ever-thickening fog of dissimulation - mainly to obscure an extraordinary collapse into a seemingly heightened degree of incompetence in city-design.

AFTERWORD for the THIRTY-FIRST LECTURE: 'A FLOWERING'.

I had 'proved' all of the ambitions that my old tutor, Bob Maxwell, had called "an impossible dream". Duncan Hall had giant, decorated, columns supporting a ceiling that was cut away to reveal its conceptual 'cargo'. The interior, the most important part of any building to its buyers and users, introduced them to 'chromatic deprivation'. Not only did they feel this novel sensation, but by it, that their lifespace could 'mean something'. While, at first, naturally unsure as to the ethical status of these novelties, both Professors, Undergraduates, and the Public of the city of Houston eventually took Duncan Hall to their hearts, and even, as I learned through the 'Test of Gluteus Maximus', to their minds.

The only group to exhibit a firm and unyielding disapproval, measured by banning their Freshmen from entering this 'dangerous' interior, were the Professors of Architecture. Not to say that they were not found, by the Security Guard, creeping about the interior very late at night. Like all Censors, they must suffer corruption to protect the innocent. Wishing to learn more of this curious antipathy, I attended one the Faculty's Thursday evening 'outsider' lectures. This was given by Dave Hickey, a self-styled Renegade Art Critic who'd HQ'd himself, as part of his 'up yours' Populism, in Las Vegas. I heard him laud Vegas and Hong Kong. I do not remember his reasons but, looking back on it his main and certain reason would have been to 'epater les sophomores'. A special strangeness was, for me, attached to the occasion because he looked uncannily like Peter Smithson, Britain's best known Renegade Young Architect of the '1950's and '1960's. Peter was my nominal Fifth-year tutor. I do not recall if Peter had a full-length black leather Gestapo-style trench coat. Vegas-Gestapo was Hickey's, rather than Smithson's style. Peter was less 'eager'. But that is the English for you.

Hickey's advice to the 'innocents' who had to be protected from my interior, was to "forget about", and I quote, "long-term planning, or any 'planning' at all". "Go with the flow" was his message. The equally black-clad Architectural Professors fawned upon this oracular genius, fresh from the architectural trash-can of Vegas. I asked him if he knew Peter Smithson and got a defensively provincial basilisk stare. Another curiosity for me was that I had only just got off the plane from Hong Kong, Los Angeles and Las Vegas where I had been 'on the inside' with the Developers and Designers of the £M500 Battersea Fun-Palace project. Hickey was lecturing on Ralph Adam Cram's Rice Campus, a brilliant piece of long-term planning mediated by a Building and Grounds Committee that, very deliberately, contained no Architectural Academics. Vegas itself was planned down to the last detail - even removing clocks and adding extra oxygen to the air-con to keep the punters 'punting'. Such mendacious 'teaching' disgusted me. Adolescents like to revolt. It is not for their Professors to feed them predigested vomit. I walked back to the Marriott Medical Hotel that night, across the dry 'St. Augustine' grass, feeling physically sick.