The Sixth Lecture.

'Tricorso'.

JOA

Kensal, while eschewing the trite styling of genre so dear to 'Modernists', acquired a 'lexical poetic' by accommodating a number of 'mythic' personifications.

The purpose of such figurations is to enact dramatic narratives.

The 'Angel of Truckers', 1984, complete with apotropaic eyes and crash-helmet. Columnar bodies always have a potentially epiphanic being through their upstanding congruence with humans. This is enfleshed by dividing them into the anthropic 'event-horizons' of a head or face, a body divided by a belt, and a foot.

Anthony Vidler lectured on Quatremere de Quincy and Viollet le Duc. At the AA Bar, I remarked that that "Modernism was like Classicism without Myth". I drew "Athanasius Kircher assailed by Newton". The Enlightenment washed a Sargasso of rubbish over Architecture. The artilleryman Newton was signed to hurl this debris into the mythic landscape of the West.

The head of the 'angel' doubles as a heavy coping-stone to place a brick wall into compressive stability.
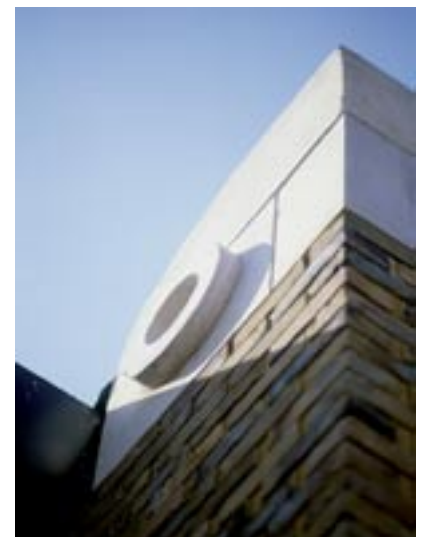
Yet in the aniconic architecture of the 20C, such 'figures' can only serve to remind us that Architecture makes a building into more than a heap of matter, enslaved to gravity - however much such 'materials' may apparently 'protest' by wriggling this way or that.

Being built-in already renders such 'bodies' akin to the figures of Michaelangelo who struggle to escape from their stony carapace. Images, buried in the body of mundane building, can be more mysterious than free-standing sculptures.

They bridge between the suspension of disbelief, that 'cordon sanitaire, imposed by the World of Art, and the taboo exercised by the 'Mundane World of the Real;, upon the 'coming-into-being' of any 'enfleshed ideas' (cf Ghostbusters One).

They are the banned 'poetic' dimension of the Architectural Order that was reduced, long ago in the 18C, to a mere Antigravity Prop. Poyle was a modest step towards the recovery of the Architectural Column as an actor in a long lost ritual of lifespace being and becoming.

The concrete corner column was given an iconically anthropomorphising head,(with electric eye) horizon-belt and foot.

Corner 'acroteria' doubling as ancient horn-images, gutter overflows and brick wall compressors.

Palladio advised Architects to place a heavy roof onto their walls, so as to bring masonry into tight compression. This gives a wall, or a column, lateral stability. When the bronze was stripped from the roofs of the Temple of the Sun at Baalbek, the huge baulks used for its timber roof-structure rotted away and the columns, relieved of their weight, became unstable and fell at the next earthquake.

Kensal was a more confident stride.

Old brickwork laid in lime mortar has small pieces of grit in its wide joints.There is none of the dead grey of Portland cement. The depth of the mortar joint is gentle - outlining the separate bricks while preserving the wholeness of the wall as a great sheet.

At Poyle the excess mortar 'fat' was cut off, flush to the bricks, with a single upward strike of the trowel. The joints were not 'struck' that is pushed in to solidify their surface as such a protection of the joint betrays an ignorance of how stock bricks suck rainwater OUT of joints.

In Kensal Road the mortar was 'pointed' by being scraped back 5 mm with an American hand-held wheeled trowel. Some suppose this endangers bricks to frost attack - again betraying an ignorance of how stock bricks resist freezing. The effect is purely aesthetic.

Ventilation extracts. Nothing was allowed to penetrate the masonry skin unless it was fortified by a massive and solid cast ballidon limestone grommet.

The outlet of the rainwater pipe from the monostyle column was cast in black concrete and then clear-lacquered to shine a deep sable.

This process of 'enfleshment' can be found even in the smallest details - such as the grooving between the bricks.

At Poyle no groove was made – so as to promote the illusion of a papery 'reverse trompe de l'oeil'. At Kensal the heavily modelled plasticity was reinforced by grooving the brick joints. Of the two, the Kensal treatment was considered more acceptable by the Surveyor to the building owners. He thought the Poyle technique untidy and cheap-looking.

I liked the effect created by the bricklayers at Poyle. The ceramic blocks (as High-Tech architects call bricks - the 'B'-word being too unclean to pass their silvered lips) seemed to float in clotted cream. The Poyle craftsmen certainly liked it because it was quick and easy to do. In neither case was a special mortar-mix used for pointing after the bricks were laid. If the constructional mortar has the right colour using it as the finish is also cheaper.

The solution to the inherent thin-ness of a modern brick wall is to trim it with chunky pieces of 'stone' wherever it is required to have a coping, an overflow, a rainwater hopper or a base in which to house railings. This way of enfleshing the qualities of 'constructedness' and especially that of 'establishedness', essential to any building, is much to be preferred than to break bricks in half and lay the apperance of a solid, cavity-less, English or Flemish bond wall. JOA would never engage in such a silly fraud.

Enfleshing an idea is not the same as faking a method of construction that is, in any case, superfluous to the 20C. Only Traditionalist 'Fogeys' (with no sense of History), do this.

The iconography of a London house-railing needs no great erudition to decipher. They are rows of black iron spears bedded into stone walls with molten lead. JOA used the same notion, for a gate and fence to the canal, only with blade-type points to stay within the law.

When unavoidably interior to the walls, JOA gutters are always fitted with prominent overflow outlets. This was a rainwater hopper, and overflow, in ballidon limestone concrete, to the transformer building.

The biggest technical problem was lighting. Most tenants hung a false ceiling over offices, throwing away the high space as well as the daylight provided by the warehouse roof. Looking at the bare fluorescent tubes used in the ages before glass computer screens created reflection-problems, I saw that the only part of a ceiling necessary to strip-lighting was a small, hotly-illuminated strip down each tube's side. JOA's solution was to cut out this 'piece of hot-ceiling' and cantilever it out from the wall.

The office of the Director of Finance had an open ceiling over which was stretched a translucent gauze. Above it some ducting brought fresh air through the ball-outlets. We situated them, Dan Dare-wise, in a 'sky'.
Drawing this 'empty-headed fronton, for the painters to 'mural', I found that 'natural' clouds blocked whatever poetic could be obtained from Mdf and painted cement blocks . The clouds needed to be abstracted with curves that merely alternated between little and big - just as one composes classical mouldings..!

JOA were asked to 'Fit-Out' one of the ten units. It was for a firm that manufactured authorised VHS copies of feature films. There was a windowless studio in which the wide-format celluloid was scanned and fed out to a room stacked to the ceiling with racks of domestic VHS recorders. The store of recorded tapes was up on the first floor, again windowless for security. In fact the firm was burgled more than once - through the fibre-cement roof until they installed a wire mesh ceiling. The front office was windowed and top lit. Our task was to make part of the warehouse into offices. This was conventionally arranged as some 'private' cabins for the officers of the firm and a communal area for the rank and file.

Being architects, interested in 'Urbanity' we made a plaza fronted by 'buildings'. I wanted the floor to be carpet-tiles laid to an hypostylar grid. I wanted the desks in the plaza to be painted with faux marble, and overshadowed by some potted trees. Overall a canopy in blue and white bands was to slide along wires like a bunching Roman blind. Maybe this came along later. Maybe not.

People are peculiar. They prefer to watch dud films on fuzzy little electron tubes rather than change their own lifeworld into something that places their quotidian lives on a proper, urbane, stage of real time and space.

But the real defect is iconic illiteracy. How can one inscribe surfaces when the whole culture is incapable of 'reading' such marks as anything more revealing than 'Fine Art'?

The 'plaza' fronted by the 'buildings' of the officers. JOA recirculated the warm air that rose to the high ceiling by mounting large office-desk fans horizontally, projecting from the high, 'Robot-Ordered' wall to the tape-store, on the left of this view. These fans oscillated, as desk-fans do, and sprayed the plaza with gently enlivening air..

After Poyle and Kensal road I was as happy with our external, urbanistic inventions, as I was unhappy with our forays into the 'world of interiors'. JOA had not, to be sure, been asked to resolve any great 'interior-design' problem. But then designing warehouses had never been thought much of a challenge either. The very term 'interior design' irritated me, as it does all Architects trained in the late 20C. Why was this world denied to my Profession? Why was the limit of architectural invention the manipulation of sunlight? What went on at night in people's minds when they came indoors and actually used interiors? What was so great about a black skylight? Why was the Architect's culture only welcome on the outside of buildings? What was wrong with making a beautiful entrance hall? The cost of decoration, compared to the cost of building, was petty. Why did not a beautiful interior increase the value of a rent?

Buildings are much bigger, cruder and cheaper than road vehicles. They increase in value (or their land does) and we expect them to last ten times as long with much lower maintenance costs. It is also harder to kill, or be killed, with a building. So it must surely be some sort of act of conceptual impotence to make buildings 'as if' they were vehicles?

If we need buildings to move and fly, and who does not, why not do this with an Architecture that can bring such ideas to a reified epiphany? Why only treat people like 'objects':- vegetables or bags of meat to be kept at optimum temperature and humidity?

Why not use our minds to power the transformation of the lifespace that is needed to 'make it work'?

And then I remembered the words of my 5th Year tutor, Peter Smithson, the star 1950s performer of British Architecture. He said to me, regretfully, in 1961, while designing his entry to the Sydney Opera House competition, that "Modernism is incapable of the 'great interior'". Yet what was my own enterprise, as it turned-out 20 years later, but the attempt to re-invent urbanity as an architecure of 'interior' places and spaces? What was Smithson admitting? Was he not the hero who had routed, almost single-handed, the Festival Welfare Establishment of Post War British Architecture? This was defeat at the hands of the universal sub-urbanity that always looked out of the picture-window at a synthesised 'Nature' and never into the beige pallor of its bloodless internal vacuity.
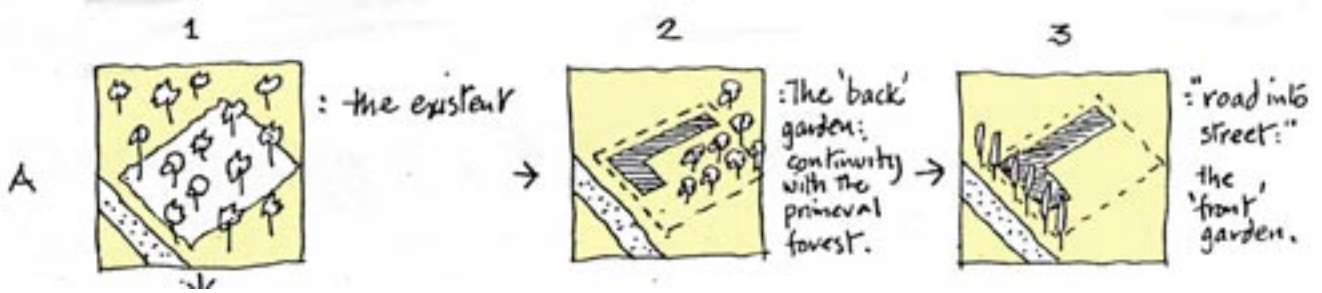
What would Plato see if he looked into the 'cave of appearances' today? Cream paint everywhere and not a **shadow** to be seen? Smithson's own design was for a ceiling like the inverted shell of a tortoise, carried out in **red Chinese lacquer**. It was like flayed flesh. Why could he not make 'skin', and clothe it? Utzon, who won Sydney, was brutally thrown off his project when he came to build its interior.

Interiors were clearly bad news. If I was to really conquer the conceptual atrophy brought-on by the universal suburbanism I needed to be able to design 'interiors', at every scale from a city-boulevard to a bathroom. But how could I progress when all such activity was taboo to 'serious' Architects?

How, then, was one to 'engineer' this? The flux of thought in its active and true reality is unknowable. What can be known, however, are its 'works'. When thoughts are mediated by some medium, fixed, as it were by the obdurate rules of syntax and lexicon, they can be studied. I determined to try to 'know myself', ('gnothis afthon' as is the advice of the Greeks when faced by confusion) – through the medium of my two first buildings. For when all is said and done, what the Architect chooses to build will reveal what he most values. Drawings are easy and ideas come two a penny to the practised hand and eye. But building is hard and wearisome to the mind because filled with events that come between an idea and its reification. One needs a monstrous stamina!

My guide, at this point, was a strong feeling that I did not want to 'know' these buildings either as they stood, for they were merely material, nor in a written text, for that was not sufficiently architectural. I wanted to 'know' them via the sort of drawings, very small drawings, made by such as Corbusier, Alberti in his marginal annotations, and the woodcuts to the Hypnerotomachia Poliphilia - that powerfully architectural rumination of the very early Renaissance. I felt that such drawings, small enough to fillet-out all circumstantial detail of the sort beloved to 'naturalists', could throw a bridge from brute material building to the entire immateriality of words.

My problem was that, hard as I tried (for two years) I could not invent these little 'sketches'!

Finally, in desperation, I determined to simply write down everything I both knew and thought of these two buildings.

I then translated one of these, about Poyle, into a grid of as-small- as-possible icon-strip sequences that illustrated some of the narrative developments in my essay.

The text of Poyle translated into a grid with, in the first column: five originary themes-. All of these were concerned with modes of enclosure and occupation - the primary Vitruvian function. the second column narrates modes of physical action which enflesh the themes concretely. The third column of the grid shows the concrete actions of the second column being translated into iconic emblems.
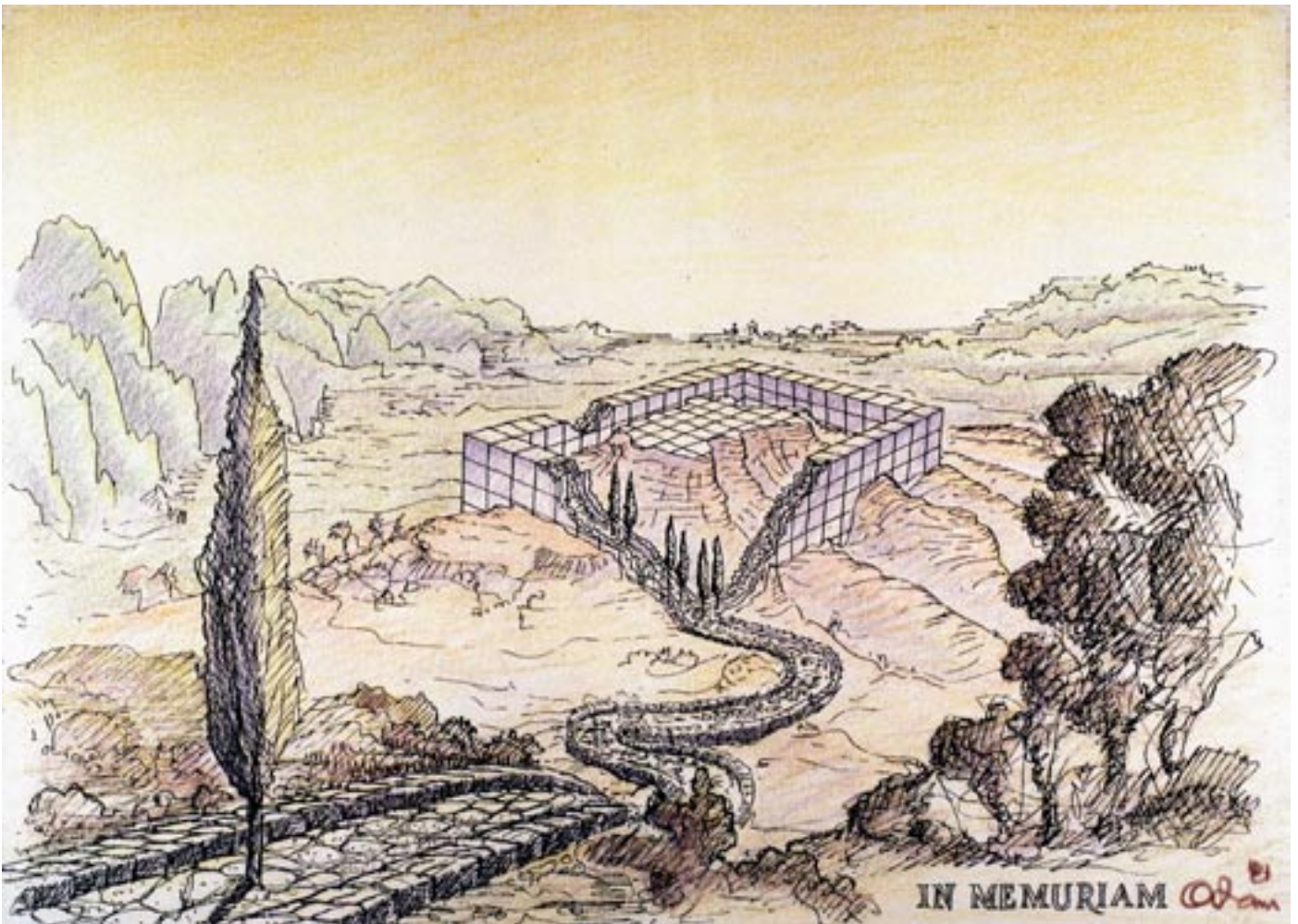

The first row, in YELLOW, was not particularly Interesting. It showed the extent of the property that McKay Securities wanted to develop. I showed it in the (mythical) state of "in the beginning, the Forest of Infinitude before Time had begun to flow". In Column two the footprint of the Warehouse building left part of the 'Forest' in its 'naturally primordial' state. This had, somehow to be imposed upon the needs of space-hungry ranks of parked automobiles. Column three, conversely, provided an enfilade of fastigiate new trees to compensate for my inability to parallel the street with the offices to the Warehouse.

Row two, in BLUE, became more fruitful. Extending the plot-boundary upwards into a wall, and then 'breaking into it' for the entrance produced the 'thick wall planter'. Row three was the most interesting. The 'Industrial Estate was the Welfare State Armpit type of lifespace built exclusively for the denigrated and down-graded manually skilled worker who so terrified the 'End of Empire' consensus. I 'mourned' the dismal fate of this superb 'Class' of manual 'makers and shakers' by planting a 'grove of cypresses' in the 'ruined' facade-wall. In fact they were fastigiate cherries - but they were at least 'enfiladed' & 'on parade'.

Row three, in PURPLE, showed that as I added more 'building' so the object bcame more 'interesting'. Why should not this be the case? In a civilised culture one is born into a building and spends more time in a building than in any other lifespace. The cult of Rusticity and the Garden is, as much as anything an index of the dull savagery of our 'architectural' culture and beyond that of our even more savage cities!

"In Memuriam". The 'Mountain is the accumulated debris of History. At its core is a seed, or germ. sometimes drawn as an old man with a crone's breasts. The Mountain is guarded by Infinity, whose form, as in the mathematical symbol, is a snake.The advent of the cataclysmic Time of Inception is effected by the landing of the Raft, whose quadrating force cubes the Heap into the walls of a 'Room' - the Camera Lucida. The Sundered Mountain releases the Arrow of Time whose mural memory is marked by kerb-stones. These became the diminutive constraints, or the walls of the world on wheels that flowed down the tracks of the serpent. But the road found it hard to lose its memory of itself as a wall. It kept sprouting memorial cypress trees 'in Memuriam'.
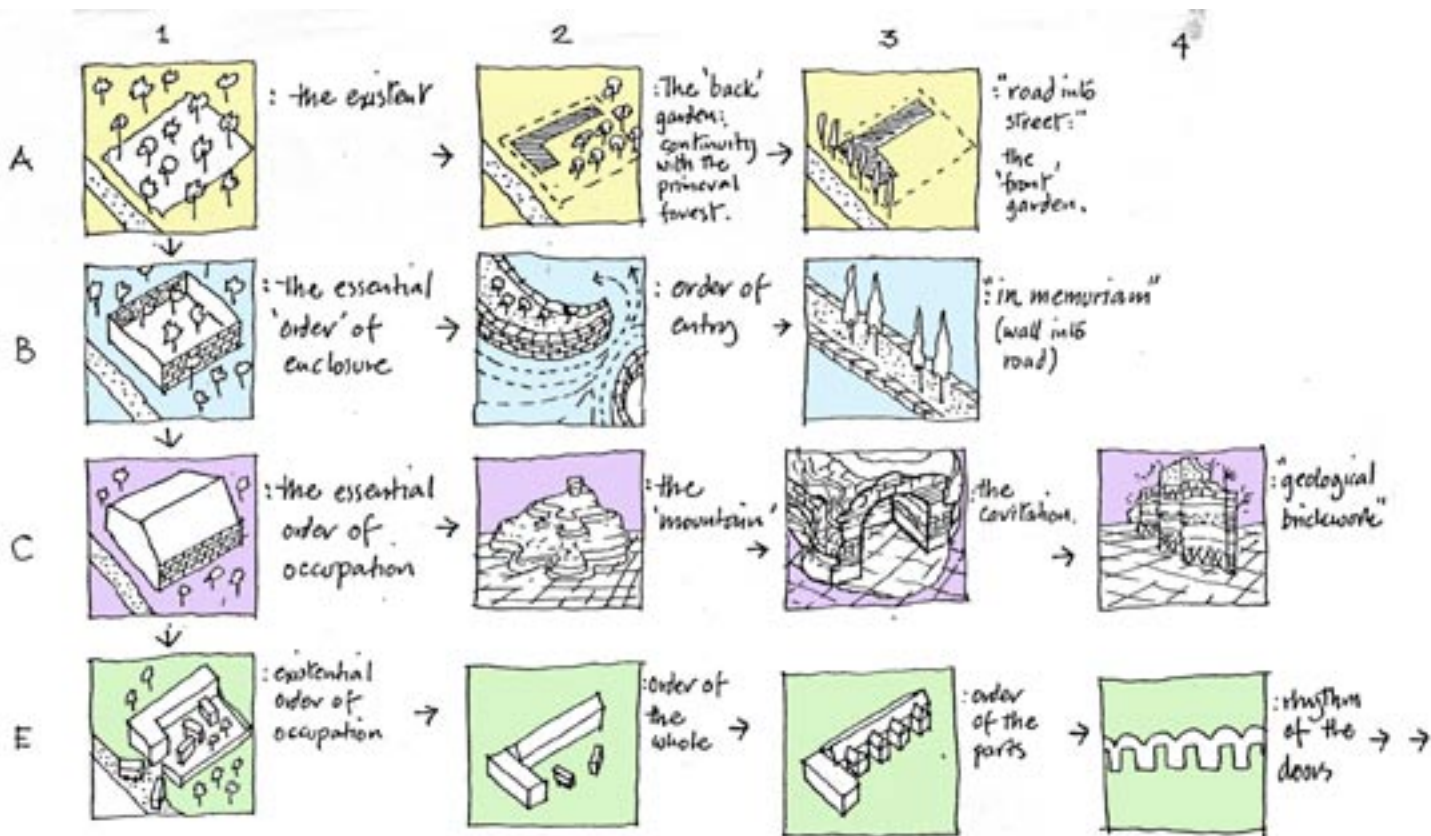

The origin of the idea of 'geological brickwork' was the form of the Mountain that was the 'natural' analogue of' 'that which was always there'. The recollection of the layered sediments of the 'time before' the Time of Inception of the building, is easily done by bricks that still recalls the mud from which they were baked. In Houston JOA mixed coursing tiles into the brick to increase the enfleshment of the idea of the earthy genius loci - in fact the Texan clay-soil 'gumbo'.

I began to understand that what I was doing in these 'comic-strips' of as-small-as-possible drawings was to strip out the visual metaphors of my descriptive text and stretch them, exactly as the meta-phoros 'works' to join the concrete body of my building to the ways that I might have generated it in my imagination, and beyond that, to the ways that the concrete body, once built, stimulated my mind to 'understand' its merely brutish physiology.

These were what I sought. Their power lay in the fact that they were, 'visual (but textual), metaphors rendered visual and then textualised in a continually 'ekphrastic' cycle..
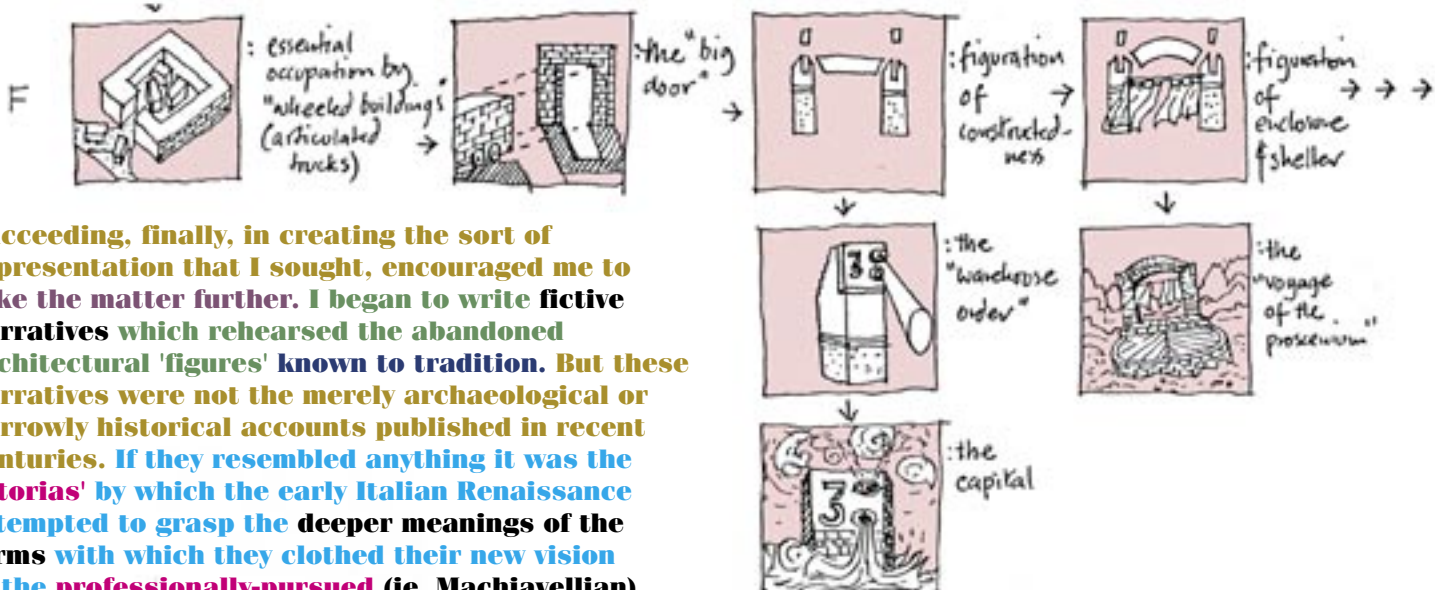
What was unexpected, at least for me, merely a practising Architect with an enthusiasm for words and graphics, was that once visualised, I could, by elaborating the most extremely 'distanced' icon, such as the 'In Memuriam', above, go on to extend the narrative dimension. This began to feed back and promise a textualised decoration!

The diagrams in grid format with labels:

Row A (1): ": the exterior" → (2): ":The 'back' garden: continuity with the primeval forest." → (3): ""road into street:" the 'front' garden."

Row B (1): ": the essential 'order' of enclosure" → (2): ": order of entry" → (3): ": "in memoriam" (wall into road)"

Row C (1): ": the essential order of occupation" → (2): ": the 'mountain'" → (3): ": the cavitation" → (4): ": geological brickwork"

Row E (1): ": existential order of occupation" → (2): ": order of the whole" → (3): ": order of the parts" → (4): ": rhythm of the doors" → →

THIS WAS AS FAR AS I TOOK THIS EXERCISE BEFORE DRAWING-UP SOME OF ITS FINAL ICONS INTO MUCH BIGGER AND MORE ELABORATED PICTURES.

I published, in AA (Architectural Association) Files No. 2, a six-page illustrated essay explaining the method used to invent this 'comic-strip iconic narrative. Called "Warehouse, Wordhouse, Picturehouse" it showed my exfoliation of the final mythic narrative-pictures from the original warehouse-building. I imagined that it might serve as a method to develop at least the imagination of the undergraduate Architect - or even the mature Practitioner. I had not bargained on it being entirely ignored by the Professors. They welcome the chaos and see it from the viewpoint of the "politique du pire", practised by the intellectual who has been disenfranchised by the Mass Consumer ethos. They increase the 'evil', hoping the masses will eventually rebel - Our 'Educators'!.

Now that the whole theoretical and formal universe of Modern Architecture lies in self-imposed, Deconstructed, ruin, I am told that this old essay is sometimes read!

Row F (1): ": essential occupation by "wheeled buildings" (articulated trucks)" → (2): ": the "big door"" → (3): ": figuration of constructed-ness" → (4): ": figuration of enclosure & shelter" → → →

Below F column 3: ": the "warehouse order""
Below that: ": the capital"
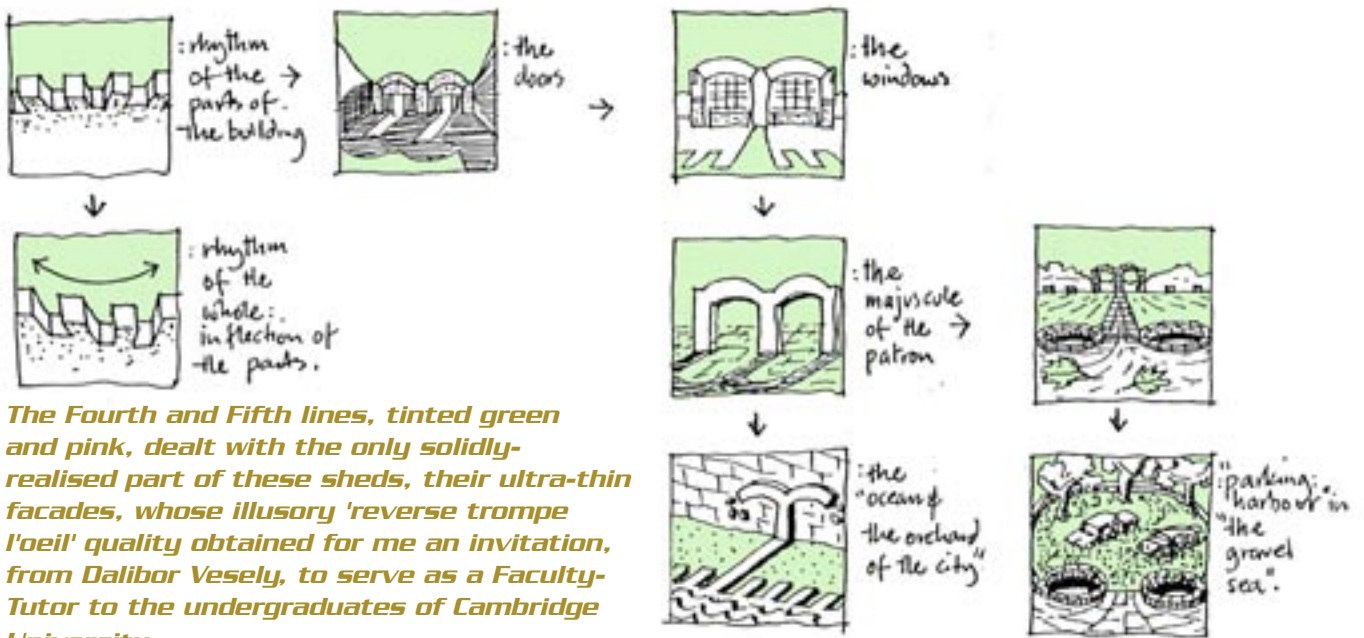Below F column 4: ": the voyage of the proscenium"

Succeeding, finally, in creating the sort of representation that I sought, encouraged me to take the matter further. I began to write fictive narratives which rehearsed the abandoned Architectural 'figures' known to tradition. But these narratives were not the merely archaeological or narrowly historical accounts published in recent centuries. If they resembled anything it was the 'istorias' by which the early Italian Renaissance attempted to grasp the deeper meanings of the forms with which they clothed their new vision of the professionally-pursued (ie. Machiavellian) politics necessary to realise a Rational State.
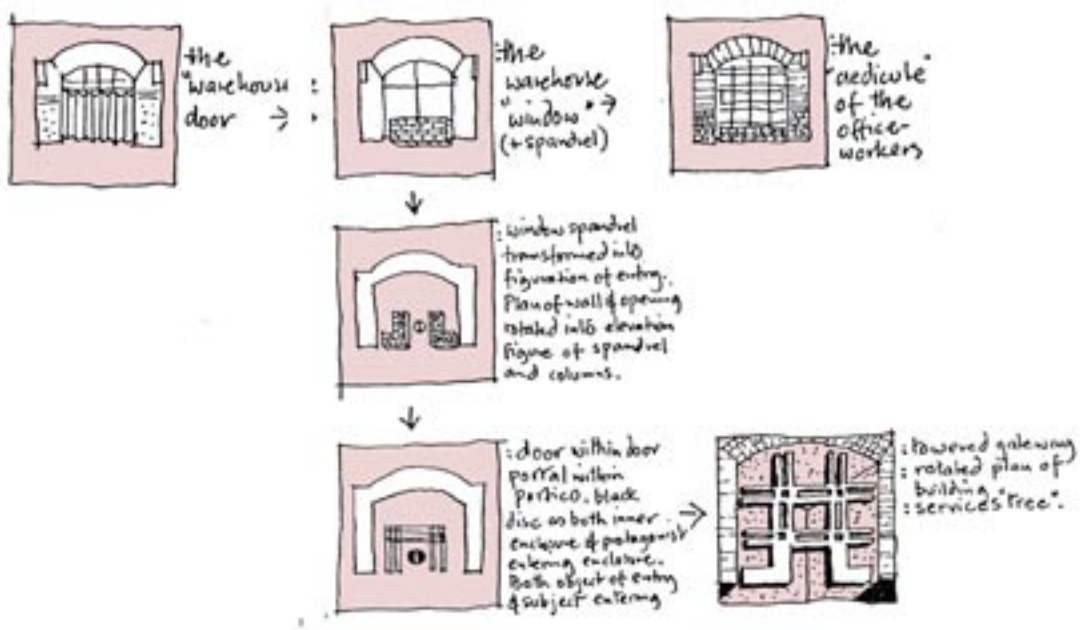
I was invited, around this time in the early 1980s, to a meeting at the Royal Institute of British Architects. The Department of Education was there along with several professors from Faculties of Architecture. The 'Man from the Ministry' wanted to know what the Professors wanted the Department to fund. My turn came and I remembered two things. One was how much my eldest daughter, Iliona, had enjoyed being taught Ancient Greek, at Westminster School, by Theo Zinn. She told me that his habit was to reach behind him for the class-books he needed. The other was how I had rescued failures from my own School, the Architectural Association. They were sent to me privately, at £5/hr. after failing their final design. This final design was left to the Student's own imagination. Desperate for originality, the young Architect frequently lost his way. My strategy was to find, in my already large library of 2,000 books, all collected before the recent start of my own office, some design that bore a resemblance to their failed inventions.So when shown a predecessor, such as the Hans and Bodo Rasch who prefigured Buckminster Fuller's levitational futures, or the biotechnical tubism of Hugo Haring, their confidence returned and I could guide them towards that 'gloss' of material credibility which Examiners seek. My only failure was an amiable alcoholic. His need was for a chemical rather than an iconological cure.

And so it was that I proposed that every Architectural Professor be given a 'second-hand book allowance'. He should be encouraged to visit the second hand shops, as I had done, and make a collection, one quarter of which would remain his own, and the rest that of the Faculty, to be distributed to the incoming teachers.

My proposal, for I was the only Practitioner, was met by a pained silence by the Professors. What they wanted was Computers. Books, especially ones describing the 9,000 yeears of our medium, were of NO INTEREST TO THEM AT ALL
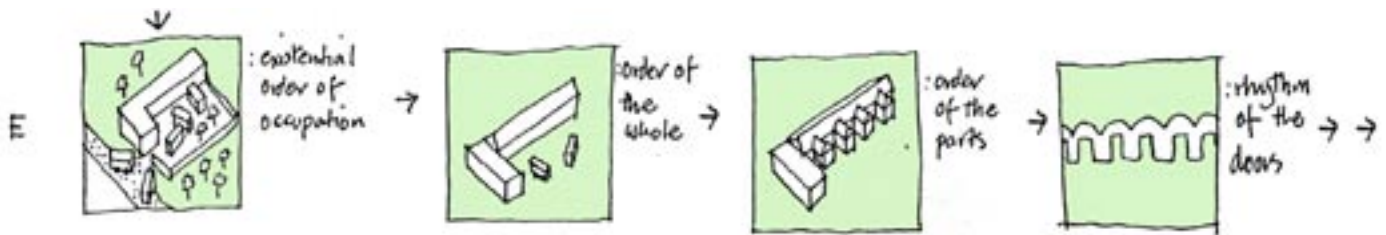

The Fourth and Fifth lines, tinted green and pink, dealt with the only solidly-realised part of these sheds, their ultra-thin facades, whose illusory 'reverse trompe l'oeil' quality obtained for me an invitation, from Dalibor Vesely, to serve as a Faculty-Tutor to the undergraduates of Cambridge University.
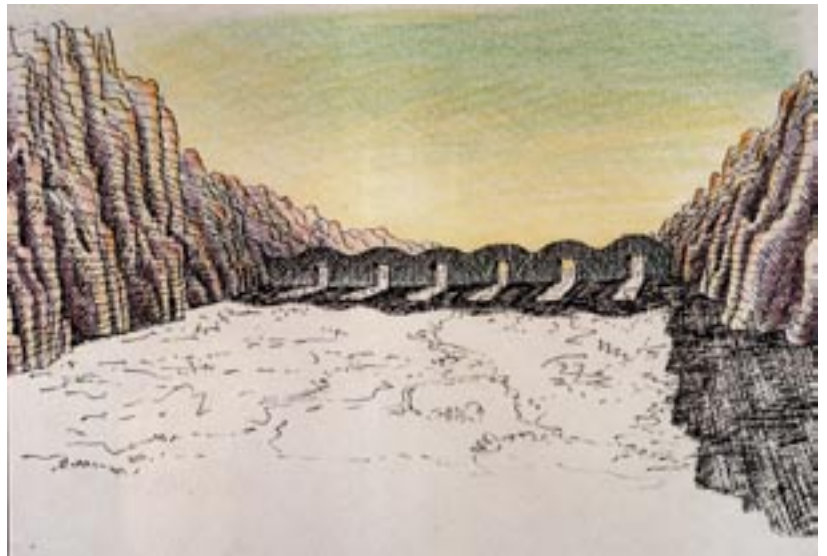
The fourth line, tinted GREEN, explored the need to break the long shed into ten little units which could either be let separately or in whatever grouping tenant desired. In fact all were let separately. But to make this possibility more attractive to the town planning authority I alternated the big doors for the trucks and brought out the small area of administrative space in the form of semi-detached kiosks.

My conceit of recalling the 'Horrea' of Rome served to unify the big doors with the two storey kiosks under a common figure of a 'giant order'. Its seemingly vaulted Entablature produced a large number of visual metaphors, from a snake akin to the Loch Ness Monster, to a grove of trees and even a range of water-spouts. All of these, when further explored, opened-up imaginative discourses which led me further and further into a strange understanding of Architecture which seemed full of the promise to unlock its secrets, secrets that still baffled all who attempted its theorisation. Not that this was an idle pursuit. For It became more and more plain to me that, in the highly bureaucratised age into which we were heading, Architecture, as it had been for 9,000 years, would eventually fail to receive public consideration if a rational theorisation of its valuable qualities failed to be invented.

Were these six sluice gates or six doors in a wall, which shut-off the forbidden upper valley? In fact they were both. During the dry season the inhabitants of the upper valley held festivals in the river bed. Those from the Delta found themselves having to pay diverse imposts at the doors. It was known that the mountains had once been an audience to these festivities. But that was before they had turned to stone.

These ancient forms, streets like valleys, walls full of doors, walls like statues, cannot fail to energise thought for they lie deep within our earliest experiences, over which a rich deposit of layers of meaning has accumulated, both during the life of the individual and that of his, or her, culture. To abandon them, merely because they are powerful is to exhibit an extraordinary intellectual cowardice.
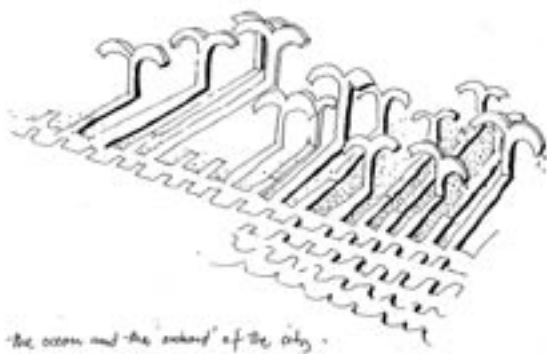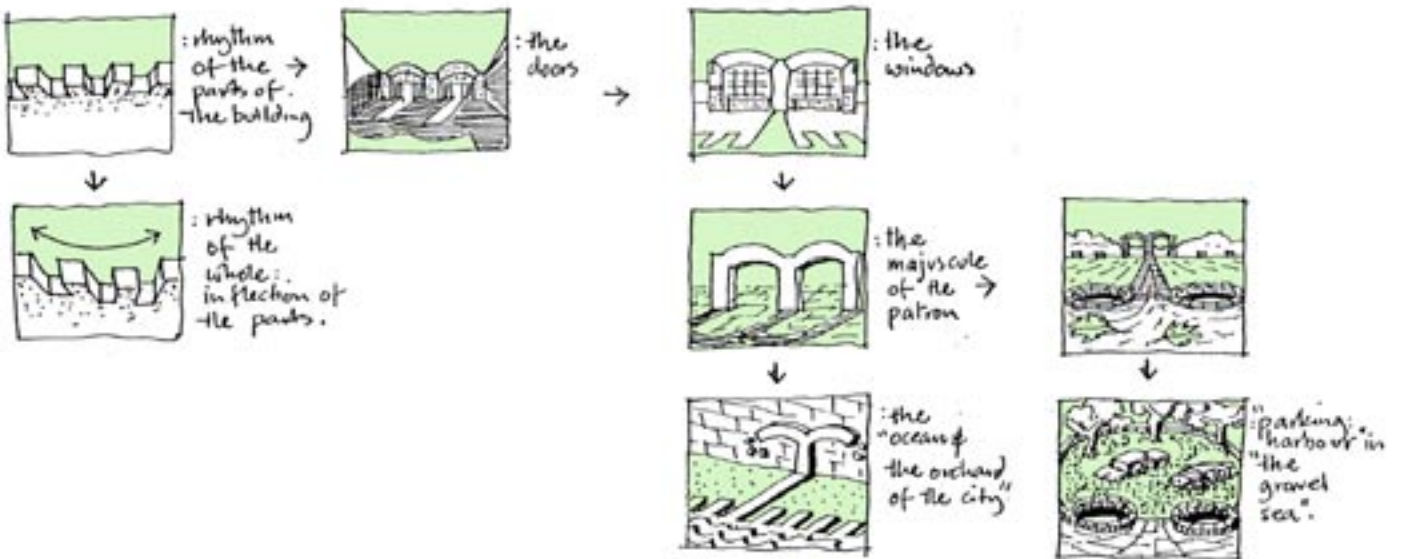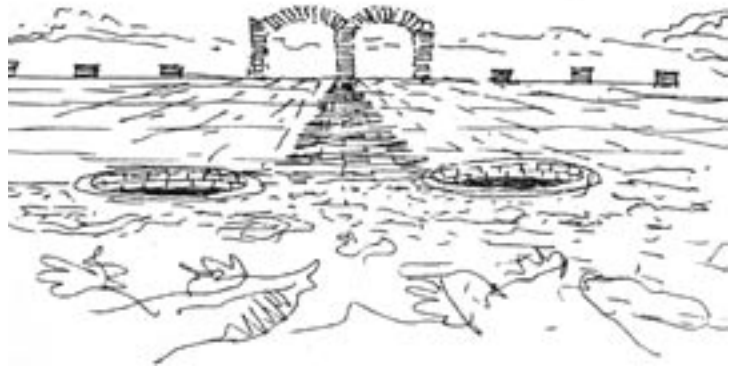

I was encouraged by this way of translating ideas out of what I had built back into text before arriving at the small drawings that I had sought.

Their publication caused some interest although nobody came back to me with anything much. They were thought 'fantastic'. What else could they appear to a generation of Architects already 40 years beyond the War that had finally destroyed any access to the history and traditions of the Medium?
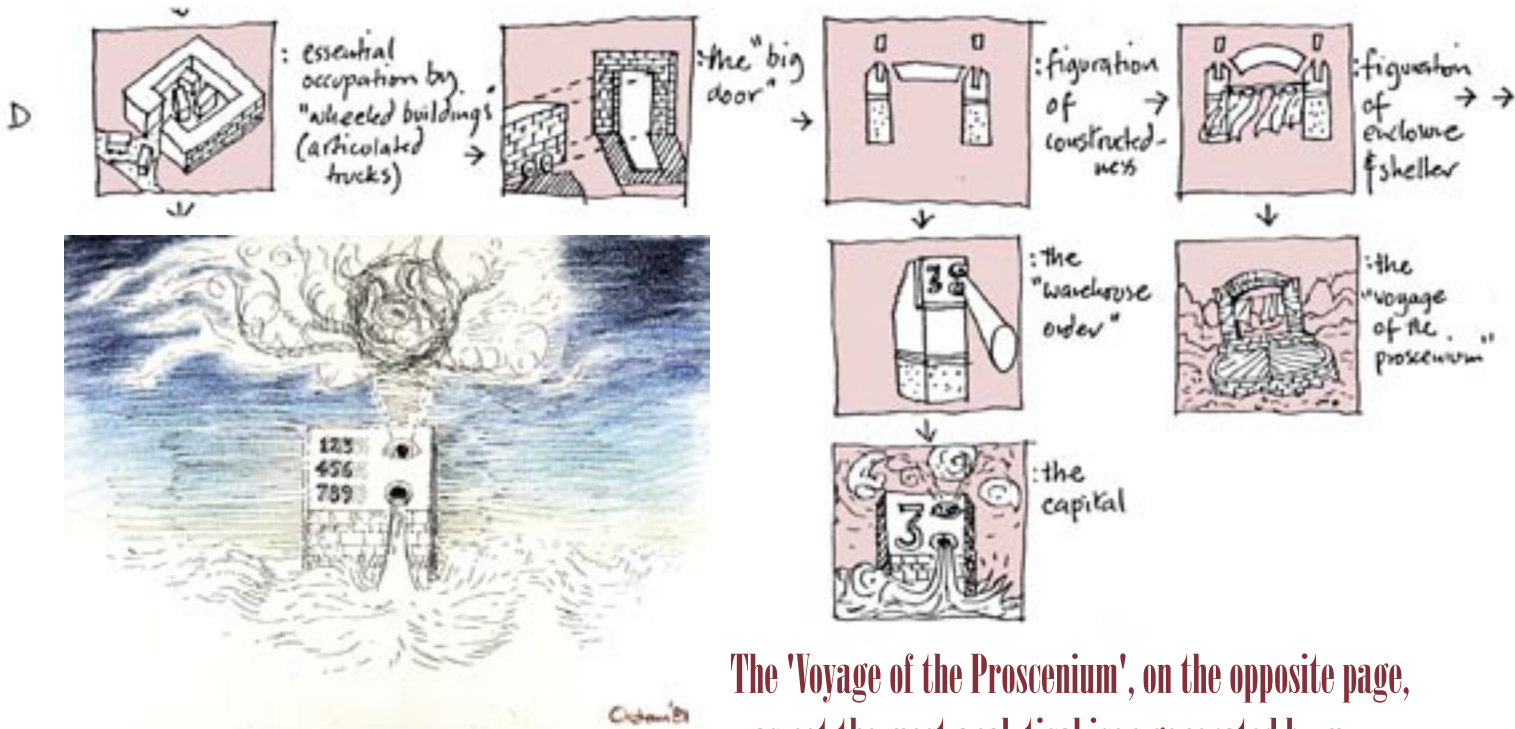
But for me they were the key that unlocked the doors not merely to writing theory, but more importantly, to techniques of positively scripting both space, and, more importantly, of surface.

The gigantic forecourt needed to manoeuvre trucks required to be divided so as to clarify the ownership of both truck and automobile parking. Rather than deliberately destroying the symbolic opportunities provided by these compositional disciplines, as would be the strategy of the iconic illiterates who profess Deconstruction, I explore them as far as the modest budget of a forecourt allows! Both torpedo-tracks and a waterspout, the two watery pits at their end find a further 'mythoi' below - the guise of the providential and amiable automobile-eater - a giant-eyed spider, pulling its web of doomed autos while hidden in a grove of trees.

This drawing, titled "The Ocean and the Orchard of the city", was the origin of the drawing in the Second Lecture that introduces the device of the Hypostyle, architectural version of the Forest of Infinity. The orchard of Edinnu is the land planted as an Orchard, therefore regular and cultivated, yet placed outside the boundaries of culture and cultivation, in the 'deshret', the desert. It exists yet needs no labour, only being brought into Time, and therefore History and Death, by consciousness, or 'knowing'. The Ocean is, for us air-breathing humans, another, much more alien enfleshment of the idea of Infinity. It bears forests when it falls, as rain, on the land.

The automobile has urbanised everywhere, yet it has destroyed Urbanity. All is not lost, however, if certain practices are followed. Urbanity should never admit defeat. I showed, even in the desert of Poyle, that Urbanity could triumph by using Time. A lifespace which is not fully Urbane can evoke one that is yet to become so. It is the opposite of the Romantic Ruin beloved of the 18C. One may call it a Foreshadowed Future. A Lifespace may foreshadow Urbanity by rehearsing its qualities in ways that bring to mind the idea that a real urbanity is destined, some time, to be realised on what is, today, a merely desolate desert, such as a gigantic car-park.

D : essential occupation by "wheeled buildings" (articulated trucks) → : the "big door" → : figuration of constructed-ness → : figuration of enclosure & shelter →

: the "warehouse order" → : the "voyage of the proscenium.." →

: the capital

Hand-held electronic calculators were the tech-toy to have in 1976, when Poyle was designed. I saw this capital as one, along with an ocean refilling from the rain that drips from its overflow and the sun, which had once given its energy to the fossil fuels that powered its light. These are levels of reality that exist beyond the pieces of metal, brick and concrete which are all that the materially-constrained understanding of 'functionalism' can admit. How can one enflesh 'being' if such proper and true levels of reality are excluded from one's lifespace?

This, marking-out the Unit - bays at Poyle, was the first of the many 'capitals' invented by JOA. Its body, that is to say the column below it, was securely buried in the brick walls below. The odd numbers had the light and gutter overflow composed as an exclamation mark. It was made by casting white onto grey concrete and then removing polystyrene shapes to give the stencil-font digit.

The 'Voyage of the Proscenium', on the opposite page, was not the most analytical icon generated by my interrogation of the Architectural works themselves - rather than the imperatives which might have generated them - but it was the most haunting.

The 'pro-skene' is the stage on which stand the bodies of the actors of the human tragi-comedy. They find themselves both elevated above their surroundings and subservient to the 'skene' itself. Yet the skene is merely a veil over what already seems to be there. What do the red and white curtains hide and what do they reveal?

They open onto a valley, seen from below. This is to say that they view a river, on which the stage itself seems to travel, floating like a boat down the centre of the valley. The source of the river is its birth, the extent of the river is its life, and its entry into the ocean is its dispersal and dissipation, its 'death' in the infinitely large watery body of the ocean. This is 'Somatic' Time - the 'Time of Living'. We live our lives upon this stage, looking only backwards through the framing proscenium, up at the picture of our past life, which begins and ends at the source. We sail, like the Amazonian Indians of Levi-Strauss, backwards into the future of the Ocean, which lies behind the viewer of this icon.

The colours of the stage are blue and green, those of the earth and the sea, the solid and the liquid, which go on for ever. Those of the curtains are red and white, the colours of life and death, blood and pallor, fire and air. These were also the colours of the Hippodrome, of the Bues and the Whites that became Christianity and the Reds and the Greens that became Islam.

The diagram labels read:

- the 'warehouse door' →
- the warehouse 'window' (+ spandrel) →
- the 'aedicule' of the office-workers

- window spandrel transformed into figuration of entry. Plan of wall & opening rotated into elevation figure of spandrel and columns.

- door within door portal within portico, black disc on both inner enclave & protagonist entering enclave. Both object of entry & subject entering.

- towered gateway; rotated plan of building; 'services tree'.

The fifth line, tinted pink, explored the **Door** and its apotropaic guardings, a **pair of framing columns,** coming, eventually to the **Order,** and its head, the **Capital.**

When I showed this 'grid' of icons to a conference in Edinburgh an aggrieved young Architect shouted from the back of the hall: "Why do you tell us all this about these REALLY BORING BUILDINGS?"

He liked High-Tech and wanted buildings like a supercharged 1930s Cord coupé – well who wouldn't. But my escape tunnel out of Stalag Welfare was working in an Industrial Estate armpit with sheds costing £110/sq.M. If I could make these a premonition of the 'Rome' to come then at least Architecture, as such, could be said to be gestating. Architecture was not yet dead – even if not yet fully birthed.

The 'Voyage of the Proscenium' was one of my favourite 'icons'. Like the pupil of an eye, it placed its protagonist upon the River of Life as it navigated the 'Deserta Cartesia' of the dismal suburban wastelands. Its curtains parted to reveal nothing but the 'same old story'. But the 'boat', the 'Navis', at least was promising - ARCHITECTURE!!!

I found it necessary, when changing from designing a building, to designing its iconic inscriptions, to put my feet up and have a nap in my swivelling chair. Maybe I had to re-orient my mental activity from the spatial-visual, to the verbal side of the brain. For I always found that if I did not write-out, tentatively at first, then more coherently, some sort of narrative, often interspersed with sketches, my iconic ambitions would be stillborn. Instead of going straight from thing to idea and vice versa, as we had all been taught to do, I was finding it more illuminating to pass through the lens of words. For it was this 'textualising' that translated the simultaneity of a field of objects into the temporality of narrative. By 'Writing Being' I was able to enter, via the phenomenological scripts, 'Time' into 'Space'. Finally I began to learn, as I describe in Lecture Thirty-Four, 'The Handy-Square', how to design a building by firstly representing its meaning so that it could be executed as an iconically mediated narrative.

And so it was that I realised, especially after the preceding pages, that what I was proposing was to interpose the Logos, the Word, between the Ikon and the Pragma, the Thing, to interpose texts or 'theoria' between a look, or an image and the physical and spatial medium of BUILDING. This was one of the 'taboos' which Maxwell proposed that "I had broken". Modernism specifically required the 'look' to be the direct, unmediated result of a Mechanical Physiology it termed 'Functionalism'. Corbusier admired a 'look' that was "meaningless". Behind this lay the suspicion that a meaningless lifespace was the price humanity had to pay for radical technical and social progress. As the 20C wore on it became a conviction until, in the 21C, every young Architect's ambition is to create a building that is radically 'uncognisable' and un-nameable while being technically efficient and clever in every way imaginable - that is to say calculable. For digital computation is his, or her, entire and sole medium. As for myself, I remain persuaded that the whole ludicrous history is symptomatic of nothing more illuminating than a profound iconic illiteracy, uninventiveness and intellectual incompetence behind which, in its turn, may lurk the paranoid fear that symbols might project ideas into the quotidian lifespace and connect-up in some way with a 'public ethic' - fears one might have hoped that a century of destructive deracination might have banished for ever.
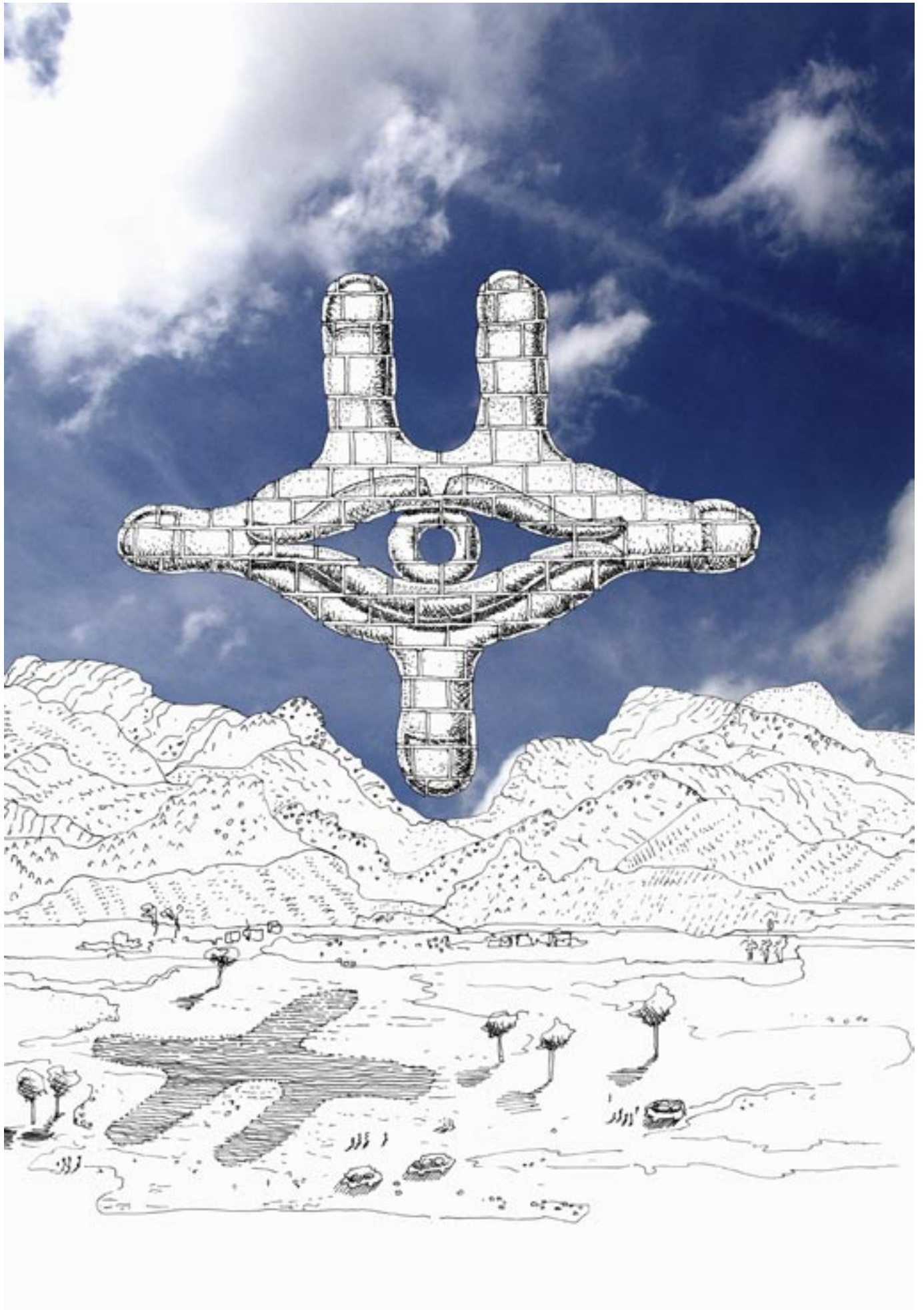
'THE 'TRICORSO'

I CALL THIS EMBLEM, OPPOSITE, OF A HAND CARRYING A MOUTH CONTAINING AN EYE, "THE TRICORSO".

IT CAME TO TO ME WHILE READING OF WHAT VEDIC METAPHYSICS CALLS "THE SUBTLE BODY".

MY UNDERSTANDING OF IT WAS THAT LANGUAGE, IN MEDIATING BETWEEN THE ICON AND THE THING UNITES THEM INTO A REALITY WHICH IS NOT ONLY IMAGEABLE AND MAKE-ABLE, AS IS THE WHOLE OF OUR CONTEMPORARY, TECHNOPHILIAC, LIFESPACE, BUT 'CONCEIVABLE' IN WAYS THAT TODAY'S EXPERIENCE IS NOT.

SUFFICE IT ONLY TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT THE EMBLEM IS 'BUILT' AS WELL AS LEVITATED. THIS IS TO FIGURE THAT THIS SYNTHESIS, AS ANY IN HUMAN CULTURE, IS BOTH AN 'ARTIFICE' AND ONE THAT HAS BECOME 'DETACHED' AND AUTONOMOUS. ARCHITECTURE IS NEITHER A MAINLY 'LOCAL' NOR A MAINLY 'NATURAL' MEDIUM. ITS ROLE IS RATHER TO COMBINE, PASSIONATELY AND EVEN CATACLYSMICALLY, THE ADVENTITIOUS IDEA WITH THE GIVEN 'FACTS' TO CREATE THE 'THIRD' ENTITY: THE 'CHILD' THAT IS BOTH THE RUIN AND CONSUMMATION OF ITS PROGENITORS.

FINALLY, IS IT INTENTIONAL, OR MERELY A HAPPY ACCIDENT THAT THE SHADOW OF THE 'TRICORSO' RECALLS THE SHAPE OF A HUMAN?

AFTERWORD for the SIXTH LECTURE: 'TRICORSO'.

After being an Architect for over twenty years, Poyle and Kensal Road were the first two buildings that I personally built. In large firms one remains in a 'team' and 'in charge' of nothing. But I saw that the Editors of the Architectural Review (and I saw three of these rapidly-changing dynasties), could not 'see' in my sheds what I knew was 'there'.

Being 'published' is the usual way that the young Architect comes to the notice of his peer-group and, through their approval, to Clients who care about 'Architecture'. My problem was wanting, as Madonna sings, 'something more' than the routine of pictures and descriptions that accompanied 'Publication'. I wanted texts that were more interesting than the usual Modernist platitudes. Even more than this did I want 'pictures' that were more than mere photographs, however big and glossy. But the Editors were, in their theoretical mode, essentially 'functionalists'. Like most Architects, they had little other way of classifying buildings than Realtors who knew them by what uses they could be rented - factories, warehouses, retail, housing and so on. I had to accept, after two years of 'waiting', that I had to do this 'explaining' job as well (If one wants something done properly etc, etc.). And so I embarked upon the peculiar conceptual voyage, rotating through three media, that I have described.

I shared the 'Four figures' with Semper, Corbusier and perhaps with others. They are obvious enough. But they do not 'say' enough. I needed to know and to 'establish', what 'Architecture' was - as such. That was something that needed doing in the 1950s, after the 'End of Urbanity' (Lecture One). But I needed to go further than a mere phenomenology of the 'having been built'. Buildings were prisons. Why else make them of glass? I needed to discover how to use this oppressive quality, this 'darkness', this self-imposed 'blindness', to help me 'see further'. I needed that technique, essential to 'Urbanity', and known to the Architects of the 'past', who could use the darkness of an 'Interior' to see what was not visible to the naked eye or the photographic film. I needed to overcome the admission of Peter Smithson, my 5th-Year Tutor, when he said, in 1959, "John, Modernism is incapable of the Great Interior".

Not that I complain. For it was this routine of translating a building into a text and then its visual metaphors into pictures and then those back into 'mythoi' and those into 'surface-scriptings, that I have named a 'Tricorso', which finally (over the next thirty years) gave me ways of rendering any human lifespace, at any scale, even up to that of a city, of any size, cognisable via meanings, icons and narratives which opened them to the 'understanding' of non-professionals. Twisting the body of a building to 'express its poetic' is as foolish as 'striking a permanent pose'. It begins to look like a malformation, a crippling. The right way to achieve wit is to speak it. This is the job of the textualised decoration which is 'Surface scripting', or 'Iconic engineering'.