

shift in perception

Studio Meteora #3, Powers

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chapter I

concepts

atmosphere of surroundings

atmosphere of sound

atmosphere of light

atmosphere of magic

atmosphere between composure and seduction

palace of atmospheres

Reading a place, becoming involved with it, working out the purpose, meaning and goal of a brief, drafting, planning' and designing a piece of architecture is therefore a convoluted process that does not follow a straightforward, linear path. Poetic landscapes are philosophical ventures that always begin with a location, linking it to a person, a literary event or a motif.[1]

What effect can the ear have on the eyes, what effect can sound have on sight, listening on looking?[2] *What is it we all humans have in common? It's the gift to have the ability to use our senses. The new face hosting the palace of atmospheres has this special power to trigger us, trigger our senses, move us and let us be involved.* The delight of the senses is receiving the quality of some object that is fitting for and corresponds to a sense, as is felt in delicacies of food, in softness of aromas, in the sweetness of sounds, in the charms of paintings, and in the cheerful objects of our sentiments.[3] A 'historia' you can justifiably praise and admire will be one that reveals itself to be so charming and attractive as to hold the eye of the learned and unlearned spectator for a long while with a certain sense of pleasure and emotion. [4]

atmosphere of surroundings

I've walked a lot in the mountains in Iceland. And as you come to a new valley, as you come to a new landscape, you have a certain view. If you stand still, the landscape doesn't necessarily tell you how big it is. It doesn't really tell you what you're looking at. The moment you start to move the mountain starts to move.[5] We perceive atmosphere through our emotional sensibility. We are capable of immediate appreciation, of a spontaneous emotional response, of rejecting things in a flash.[6] *We are not talking about a linear thought.* By assimilating all sorts of scales into architecture, building may be transformed from coverings enclosing limited spaces, ie shelter, to environments extending indefinitely. [7] There seems no reason for limiting the objects of Sublimity or Beauty to the sole class of visible objects. [8] *It all has to do with proximity and distance.*

atmosphere of sound

The ear knows the distance all too well.
[9] To the sound of their footsteps was added the sound of rain.[10] Interiors are like large instruments, collecting sound, amplifying it, transmitting it elsewhere.
[11] There is no space without noise nor any noise without space. [12] *The whole experience of sound is linked to the shape peculiar to each room, to the surfaces of the materials they contain and the way those materials have been applied.*

atmosphere of light

He couldn't be sure the shadow at his heels was mine, as I couldn't be sure the shadow whose heels I followed belonged to him; but as I had no doubts about him, he had none about me.[13] 'The eye is more powerful than anything, more swift than anything, more worthy than anything'[14] Is it? The eye had been revered in the Aristotelian tradition as the chief of the sensory organs.[15] *We're looking at the actual appearance of things around us. Where light falls, there are shadows. How does the light fall? How do surfaces appear? Dull? Sparkling? Is there an effect of depth? The space we perceive is a pure mass of shadow. It gives us the feeling there's something beyond us, some thing beyond all understanding.*

atmosphere of magic

Our senses continually receive.[16] We could say the secret to create space *is to collect different things in the world, different materials and combine them. If we focus on bringing a certain amount of a material together with another one we can see how they react together. We can always add and remove and if we modify the amount for just a little bit we identify a difference. Materials react with one another and have their radiance, so that the material composition gives rise to something unique. For sure there is always a reaction.* The greatest problems arise with elements appearing only in one frame, like the sparkle of a jewel, or with elements moving very quickly, such as raindrops. [17] *If we go one step further, It's about the perception of the known and the unknown.* You can combine different materials in a building, and there's a certain point where you'll find they're too far away from each other to react, and there's a point too where they're too close together, and that kills them. [18]

atmosphere between composure and seduction

In this chapter the couple's friends, relatives, and neighbors took a stroll in the heart of historic Paris before their celebratory meal.[19] *How do we move in space, in a sequence of spaces? This atmosphere is about how the movement is involved. Architecture is a spatial but also a temporal art. Either we can direct people or we can induce a sense of freedom of movement to create a milieu for strolling.* The gentler art of seduction is of getting people to let go, to saunter, and that lies within the powers of an architect. The ability to designing a stage setting, directing a play. [20]

You enter a space, you might stay there for a while or just passing through, at one point something might be drawing you around the corner or you might be curious whats in the next space because of the way the light falls or because of other sensory impressions.

The evolved human mind constructs or calculates the world of stable objects from the ever changing stream of sensory inputs.[21] And it's a kind of voyage of discovery. Direction, seduction, letting go, granting freedom. Guidance, preparation, stimulation, the pleasant surprise, relaxation. [22]

'How could we see the compact capacity of the senses,' he asks, 'if we separated them?' [23]

- [1] Peter Zumthor_Atmospheres
- [2] Serres_The Five Senses
- [3] Williams, Daniele Barbaros Vitruvius of 1567
- [4] Alberti_On Painting
- [5] Olafur Eliasson
- [6] Peter Zumthor_Atmospheres
- [7] Another Scale of Architecture, Ishigami
- [8] Harrison Wood Gaiger_Art in Theory 1648 1815
- [9] Serres_Genesis
- [10] Borges_Collected Fictions
- [11] Peter Zumthor_Atmospheres
- [12] Serres_Genesis
- [13] Eco_The Name of the Rose
- [14] Alberti
- [15] Alberti_On Painting
- [16] [Serres_The Birth of Physics
- [17] Gaudreault, A Companion to Early Cinema
- [18] Peter Zumthor_Atmospheres
- [19] Hamon_Expositions
- [20] Peter Zumthor_Atmospheres
- [21] Schumacher, The Autopoiesis of Architecture Vol 2
- [22] Peter Zumthor_Atmospheres
- [23] Serres_The Five Senses

chapter II

chambers

ship

foyer

hall

tower

termal bath

rituals

The young woman smiled broadly, and looked pleased.[1] The inside of the ship was finished, as finished as a ship ever was; that could be told in a single eye blinking glance. [1] The walls were of a gleaming silvery finish that retained no fingerprints. There were no angles; walls, floors, and ceiling faded gently into each other and in the cold, metallic glittering of the hidden lights, one was surrounded by six chilly reflections of one's bewildered self.[1] He plunged into the silent streets.[2] *Her streets, the Seine river.* Spring evening, warm air. - Red sunset. "I am becoming fond of Paris", she said.[3] *There was this magical reflection of a series of parisian facades and in front of them the trees of the spacious avenues of the riverbank along the seine.* Her river winding under the bridges.[4] Nevertheless, the ship followed one given direction.[4] *It kept on going until the rose windows she was familiar with appeared.* Seen from the river, this is one of the most impressive facades along the waterfront. [5] *She knew the ship was heading home.*

Is that the main entrance, shrunk out of all proportion, squeezed in against the top border of the concrete wall?[6] The ship, it sails past the obstacle of noise, neither transmitting nor receiving, and cancels out the Sirens. [7] *Curiously she turns around to watch the sunset slowly disappear behind the closing entrance gate which controls access to the interior.* Then the body becomes sensitive to the cold.[8] In the darkness she tries to touch the heavy stones surrounding her. "Touch is the last remaining means of guiding yourself", [9] *she thought. Meanwhile the ship was docked and she was escorted by the helmsman.*

To ascend the portico, it was necessary to use the ramp as the entrance road to the palace.[10] As doing so, the well-known heavy and irregular sound of footsteps came closer. It was drowned out by the loud classical music which was resounding throughout the generous atrium. "Music is never tragic, music is joy"[11] Softly, she was singing to the music, a sleepily joyful tune he did not recognise.[12] At the present moment, there was a formed sentence in his head [12], the old, fragile man insisted on taking off her coat. Once again she refused his offer with a smile which won't keep him from asking again.

„Good night, all.”[12]

“Good night, madam.”[12]

He followed her with his eyes until she disappeared.[13] Instead of contemplating the ceiling, she began receiving the sky where [14] the turtledoves were churning the air with their wings above the poplars whose tops were swaying in the wind [14]. *Her chest has been widening all the way to the clouds that were passing. All Paris was spread out under her feet, her undulating horizon, her river winding under the bridges, her stream of people flowing to and fro in the streets; with the cloud of smoke rising from her many chimneys; with her chain of crested roofs pressing in ever tightening coils round about Notre Dame.*[15] The evening hour when a thousand holes appear on the surface of the earth.[16] Where is the source of light? [17] *She’s hunting single point light sources producing scallops and patterns.*[18] *Consciously she rises,* in order to “remain” a little while [19]. She listens to the noise of a lorry that is not yet visible, or the sounds of a conversation only one of whose participants is visible. [20] “The secret is perhaps more difficult to bring to light than the unconscious”[21], *she whispered.*

The more we immerse ourselves in this space, the more we see and the less we hear. And the more we withdraw from it, the less we see and the better we listen.[22] *At the time the urban fabric became more blurred and the patterns started to vanish into the air,* she was closing the door behind her very carefully.[23]

Night continued to fall.[24]

She awoke with the sun in her eyes, which, at first, produced on her the effect of being a continuation of her dream.[24] She looked at the sky: it seemed as though she feared that she should wake up from her dream.[24] Bernini originally drew her stretching her right arm upward, but later he partially erased this gesture.[25] The room within was suffused with a dim, grayish light—daylight diffusing through thick drapery.[26] Together with the folds of drapery, which billow around her as though lifted by a strong wind, this gives an incomparable impression of life and movement, in the play of light and shadow and the unexpected forms.[27] *“Is there a correspondence of the folds in front of the drapery with those behind?” - she asked herself.* It all seemed to her to have disappeared as though behind the curtain of a theatre.[28]

The sound came in a matter of minutes, and was like the gentle stroking of a mellow gong.[29] *It swelled till she could feel the vibration physically, and then slowly faded.* Now it was the church bell which spoke.[30]

She gazed upon and adored the things that she wore, her knot of ribbon, her gloves, her sleeves, her shoes, her cuffs, as sacred objects of which she was the master.[30] *The young woman came forward, bowed and took her seat.* The aroma of roasted coffee early in the morning makes her muscles and skin quiver with delight. [31] The excellent bread was unchanged, the coffee was as strong as ever [32] *and every single dish was part of the perfect arrangement.* Thus you can see the marvellous order of things, found everywhere you look.[33]

When Breakfast was done, it seemed to him more than likely she had some duties of her own to attend to.[34] „Are you going out on a new mission soon [34], *Mrs. Murdoch?*” There was no response. He looked at her silently, allowing no hint of personal reaction in his face.[35]

She turned to leave the room.[35]

"For the poorest rice farmer and the meanest servant, just as for the rich aristocrat, the daily soak in superlatively heated water is part of the routine of every late afternoon." [36]

The afternoon bath plays an important role in life, especially of the young woman. She washes thoroughly before she's entering the bath so as not to dirty the water. The extremely hot water and steamy atmosphere make her feel almost liquid inside, an inner heat that lasts long after the bath is ended.[36] She became addicted to the experience of the sense of wandering and drifting gently underwater. It is this sensation that makes the space distinct and unique. [37]

She leapt out of the water, put on her tunic and girdle, and disappeared.[38]

- [1] Asimov_Complete Robot Anthology
- [2] Hugo_Les Miserables
- [3] Levy_Baroque and the Political Language of Formalism 1845 1945
- [4] Hugo_Les Miserables
- [5] Saunders_The Art and Architecture of London
- [6] Morris_Castle A History of the Buildings That Shaped Med
- [7] Serres_The Five Senses
- [8] Serres_The Birth of Physics
- [9] Serres_The Five Senses
- [10] Fu_Traditional Chinese Architecture Twelve Essays,
- [11] Deleuze Guattari_A Thousand Plateaus
- [12] Asimov, Complete Robot Anthology
- [13] Hugo, Les Miserables
- [14] Serres_Biogea
- [15] Hugo_Les Miserables,
- [16] Deleuze Guattari_A Thousand Plateaus
- [17] Serres_Hermes Literature Science Philosophy
- [18] Serres_The Parasite
- [19] Derrida_Signature
- [20] Deleuze_Cinema 2 The Time Image
- [21] Deleuze_Desert Islands and Other Texts
- [22] Serres_The Five Senses
- [23] Kafka_The Trial
- [24] Hugo, Les Miserables
- [25] Lavin_Drawings by Gianlorenzo Bernini
- [26] Asimov, Complete Robot Anthology
- [27] Magnuson, Rome in the Age of Bernini 2
- [28] Hugo, Les Miserables
- [29] Asimov, Complete Robot Anthology
- [30] Hugo_Les Miserables
- [31] Serres_The Five Senses
- [32] Rybczynski, City Life
- [33] Williams, Daniele Barbaros Vitruvius of 1567
- [34] Asimov, Complete Robot Anthology,
- [35] Rand_The Fountainhead
- [36] Heschong_Thermal Deligt in Architecture,
- [37] Ito_Tarzans In the Media Forest
- [38] Calasso_The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony

chapter III

banquet
characters of importance

architect

ingeneer

artist

fashion designer

butler

...and many more

banquet

Every first Sunday of the month for the last few years, 79 rue Saint-Louis en l'île, Paris, has been a city within a city; for here Elisabeth Murdoch has held an endless supper party in the heart of the palace, the door open to the people invited, the table ready for all who wish to eat, the conversation a babble of different languages, accents, generations and sensibilities – by reputation this is a place where once everything, and anything, was permitted.[1]

The dinner takes place in the heart of the palace to keep the main hall as the central focus for gathering and entertaining. The gigantic hall, the atrium is a four storey high void. This is, no doubt, a space charged with Christian ritual, yet the affect of the upward gaze has more in common with James Turrel's skyspaces than it does with ecclesiastical architecture.[2] The centered opening of the light ceiling of the cupola room appeared above, as an eye in the shallow dome. The wall at the same time blank and expressive [3] is shaped as a circle and plastered on the inside. The floor is made of the most beautiful of the native woods, in the selection of which much taste is displayed, as also in the arrangement, so that the various colours of the wood may harmonize or contrast well with each other.[4] Everything was designed for the main hall, the furniture, the products on the shelves, the clock, the radio, the storage system and the only colour comes from the orange cigarette packet [5], permanently in Elisabeth's hands.

The final preparations for the evening were in full swing. It was a lavish banquet with five large tables well laid out [6], the table linen subtly embellished with floral patterns, shiny and starched and ready for a richly laid dining table [7]. There were flowers everywhere [8], fresh flower arrangements from the cutting gardens [9]. Candles were arranged on all the tables waiting for the dark to get lighted. The tables were set, the hall was alive with decoration and the odor of the food was enticing. [10] There certainly was a considerable variety to the food and more than enough of everything. [10] Alfred, the old man was drinking wine.[11] He wasn't. The last thing to do was to make sure he had chosen a noble drop for Elisabeth's guests. He took his time swirling the ruby liquid around the bulbous sides of the glass, observing its legs; considered it, sniffed it and, his eyes closed, tasted it.[12] For a great many years he has been her closest right hand man. When Elisabeth saw what he had created, she recognised his work with gratitude.

At 79 rue Saint-Louis en l'île, a community comes together, shares food, drinks and conversation and departs in the course of an evening. [13] *New faces made their way into the main hall* where people were already bumping into each other, introducing themselves, finding connections and listening to each other's stories.[13] "Any night," *Elisabeth says*, "when lovely flowers smell sweet and a light breeze blows cool, is a gift from Heaven for our delight. Nothing better can we do than light the candles, lift the wine glass, and write poems.[14] *Alfred struck a match and lighted the candles.* [15] And, within, the hall was bright as any hall could be with light of candles in a house at night.[16]

Throughout it all, *Elisabeth herself* sat on her stool and surveyed the scene she had created. [17] In the audience she's spotting the person she has a lot to thank for. Especially the bath he had created for one of her major rituals. There is an exchange, a give-and-take, between his buildings and their surroundings. An attentiveness. An enrichment. Words like atmosphere and mood inevitably come to mind when faced with his work.[18]

She takes a sip of her wine and feels a brief moment of appreciation. 'I remember him saying'[19]: Architecture, It is not a free art in that sense. I think architecture attains its highest quality as an applied art. And it is at its most beautiful when things have come into their own, when they are coherent. That is when everything refers to everything else and it is impossible to remove a single thing without destroying the whole. Place, use and form. The form reflects the place, the place is just so, and the use reflects this and that.[20]

In the meantime, someone had approached her.[21] She visualizes *the woman* in front of her in a hotel in Moscow turning to her with some new clothes on and saying [22]: "People don't want to see clothes, they want to see something that fuels the imagination. For me, what I do is an artistic expression which is channeled through me. Fashion is just the medium." [23] She does not write with paper and ink (except in her leisure time), but with material, with forms and with colours; however, this does not stop her being commonly attributed with the authority and the panache of a writer of the classical age: elegant, philosophical, sensitive, rebellious. [24]

She keeps fashion on the edge of barbarism all the more to overwhelm it with all the values of the classical order: reason, nature, permanence, the desire to charm and not to surprise; people are pleased to see her in pages of newspapers.[24]

We should however remember that the chapter begins with wine and is fuelled with it throughout.[25] Wine encourages talk, and is numbing.[25]

She caught a silent glimpse of another very talented creature as a part of the audience. He works with light and space and is concerned with their basic interconnectedness within the manifold of visual perception.[26] His desire is to set up a situation to which he takes us and let us see. It becomes our experience at the end. In all of his work, he fashions ethereal visual spaces using pure light.[26] He creates works that deal at first hand with light's untouchable essence - The apparent contradiction of "at first hand" and "untouchable" I used here intentionally: he encourages viewers to see in ways that are haptic, as if they could feel light with their eyes, like pressure on the skin of visual perception.[26]

He once told me: "In working with light, what is really important to me is to create and experience of wordless thought, to make the quality and sensation of light itself something really quite tactile. It has a quality seemingly intangible, yet it is physically felt. Often people reach out and try to touch it"[27]

That moment, Elisabeth realized that it was a masterpiece in the most overwhelming sense of the word.[28]

- [1] Hollis_Cities Are Good For You
- [2] Leatherbarrow Eisenschmidt_Twentieth Century Architecture
- [3] Steiner_After Babel Aspects of Language and Translation
- [4] Nelson_Architecture and Empire in Jamaica
- [5] Sudjic_Edifice Complex The Architecture of Power
- [6] Campbell_The Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior 14001
- [7] Sekules_Cultures of the Countryside Art Museum Heritage
- [8] Hugo_Les Miserables
- [9] Deitz, Of Gardens Selected Essays Penn Studies in Lands
- [10] Asimov, Complete Robot Anthology
- [11] Kerouac_On The Road
- [12] Serres_The Five Senses
- [13] Hollis_Cities Are Good For You
- [14] Gothein, A History of Garden Art
- [15] Hugo_Les Miserables
- [16] Adams, Mont Saint Michel and Chartres
- [17] Hollis_Cities Are Good For You
- [18] Peter Zumthor_Atmospheres
- [19] Carter_Anthony Blunt His Lives
- [20] Peter Zumthor_Atmospheres
- [21] Hugo_Les Miserables
- [22] Carter_Anthony Blunt His Lives
- [23] Alexander McQueen
- [24] Barthes_The language of fashion
- [25] Serres_The Five Senses
- [26] Craig Adcock - James Turrell_ the Art of Light and Space
- [27] James Turrell
- [28] Borges_Collected Fictions