

ects which characterized several European countries throughout the 19th century.

We may well ask whether the works mentioned above are in fact restrained, whether they are particularly functional, or merely expressions of particular regional conditions? Certainly Hansen and Bindesbøll were also cosmopolitans and the history of architecture tends to be dominated by a limited number of formal principles, which seem to get stuck for several generations, but which may in fact simply be the random product of influential architectural personae like the two gentlemen mentioned here.

Generally speaking a lot of the projects mentioned -new and old alike- do in fact share certain traits: They are modern yet anchored in tradition. Bindesbøll's psychiatric hospital was an exponent of an entirely new view of mental illness and P. V. Jensen Klint's Crystalline Cluster was innovative even in its references to older building cultures. This also applied to the long residential complex designed by Carl Petersen and Ivar Bentsen, which appears simultaneously retrospectively classicist in its detailing and radically modern in its repetitions. Another trait shared by many of these projects is that they are apparently capable of absorbing the great narrative i.e. of allowing architecture to appear as an extension of nature's own building activity. In this sense the use of repetition and abstraction vis-à-vis a recognizable set of motifs appears to be simply an artistic trick which nevertheless reminds us that in 19th and 20th century architecture the simple can be radical and the avant garde does not necessarily reject tradition.

Notes:

1. World Value Survey by Ronald Inglehart and Wayne E. Baker, 2000.
2. Knud Millech and Kay Fisker, *Danske arkitekturstrømninger 1850-1950*, Copenhagen 1951, p. 36f.
3. Lisbet Balslev Jørgensen, *Danmarks Arkitektur. Enfamiliehuset*, Copenhagen 1979, p. 42.
4. Carl Petersen, "Modsatninger", in: *Archi-tekten* 1920.
5. Jannie Rosenberg Bendsen, *Enkelhed, mådehold og funktionalitet - en analyse af fremtrædende danske arkitekters udlægninger af dansk arkitektur*, Copenhagen 2009.

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Finland: the south and symbols of enculturation

Gareth Griffiths

To pose the question of the 'south' in relation to Finland raises the often asked question of centre versus periphery or south versus north. There have been those who have attempted to 'essentialize' a division between south and north. One could blame this on von Herder and Goethe at the end of the 18th century; unaware of the French origins of Gothic architecture, they declared it the true German architecture, in opposition to Laugier's French classicism. But even in more recent times Norwegian architecture theorist Christian Norberg Schulz argued that identity has to be understood 'di-critically': the essence of the North is that it is not the South -"the North is a world, scarcely understood, of moods as determined by the light, while the South is the birth of Idea and Form, each entity becoming discrete".

One could also talk of debt and gratitude. This is well illustrated by Alvar Aalto e il Classicismo Nordico (1998) by Paolo Angeletti and Gaia Remiddi. Travelling from Italy to the 'north' in search of the debt, the question arises: "Why is it that it is our northern colleagues and not we who feel united by those communal traits of the classical and Mediterranean traditions?" But their answer comes as gratitude: "If this helps us recuperate an architectonic and urban sensibility so often reflected within our own country, and if this causes us to feel gratitude to Aalto for his efforts in reviving our own heritage, then it should also induce us to search for other equally important meanings of his particular 'classicism'". Here they are suggesting that the classical and the organic are one and the same -what could be termed Vitruvian primitivism.

Classicism as a universal, standard symbol of enculturation is well illustrated by an engraving depicting Finland in Suecia Antiqua et Hodierna, a series of engravings completed in 1661-1703 under the direction of distinguished Swedish soldier-engineer Eric Dahlbergh. The series was instigated by the Swedish crown at a time when Sweden was at the height of its imperialist powers, and depicts the nation's prominent cities and buildings. Only nine of the 353 engravings depict Sweden's largest

'province', Finland. But apart from one medieval castle, no architecture and only one city (Vyborg) were deemed worthy of inclusion. Instead, the emphasis is on coats of arms and views of rural life. Most remarkable is the engraving for "South Finland". It depicts a clearing in a forest for the construction of a typical modest log farmhouse, but in the foreground is a skilled craftsman carving a Corinthian column. The whole series of engravings was viewed through Dahlbergh's architectural ideal of the Roman Baroque, with overlays of motifs of classical mythology and grand distortions, but here the presence of a classical column is used to signify Sweden's colonisation of Finland, bringing enculturation as signified by classical architecture.

In fact, it was not so much architecture as the founding of engineer-designed grid plan towns in Finland -in order to centralise commerce and mark military defence against the threat from neighbouring Russia- that would become the important instrument in the policies of the centralised royal power in a vast and very sparsely inhabited area. Military engineers also had ambitions to build 'ideal cities' based on state-of-the-art French and Dutch fortification treaties. The only one to be carried out in Finland was the radial plan for the new fortress town of Hamina, bordering Russia, by fortification engineer Axel von Löwen in 1723. When the town was ceded to Russia in 1743, similar grand plans were drawn up for new fortress towns in Lovisa and Helsinki but few of the Baroque ideals were realised.

Lacking a professional class of architects, up until the latter part of the 19th century 'building design' in Finland beyond the vernacular tradition was a matter of master builders, foreign pattern books, military engineering or employing foreign architects. The first leading architects in Finland were foreigners, the first being the Italian-born Carlo Bassi, followed by the German Carl-Ludwig Engel. The 'journeyman architect' Engel had arrived a few years after Russia had annexed Finland in 1809, making it a grand duchy within the Russian empire. In 1816 Engel was made state architect with the task of designing the new capital, Helsinki. The result was a St. Petersburg in miniature, designed in the prevailing neoclassical style of the day -in Greek and Roman variations where appropriate.

Dahlbergh's engraving brings to mind a far more famous one, made half a century later by M.A. Laugier, "Allegorical figure of Architecture

exhibiting the primitive hut" (Essai sur l' Architecture, 1753), which attempted to depict the Vitruvian primitivist origins of architecture. But despite any surface similarities -depictions of the 'natural' state of man- these two engravings are intellectually worlds apart. The argument in Dahlbergh's engraving was later turned on its head. The 'universality' of classicism would become a symbol of Russia's colonization of Finland, such that by the 19th century, National Romantic movements would react against it, exploring not a Vitruvian primitivist origin (as arguably Antonio Gaudí did in Catalonia) but alternative 'native' symbolic associations. The cultural-mythical basis for Finnish nationalism -as part of the political movement for Finnish independence from Russia- was found in the 1890s in Karelia, the area of eastern Finland that straddled the Finland-Russian border. Inspired by folkloristic organisations in central Europe, numerous architects (but also painters, ethnologists, etc.) travelled to Karelia in search of the peasant roots of Finnish culture and to record in detail the old buildings and villages. However, this impulse, would then be inspiration for a bourgeois monumental art nouveau style -e.g. the work of architects such as Eliel Saarinen and Lars Sonck- yet equally inspired by Swiss-style vernacular, the robust 'neo-vernacular' of the American architect H.H. Richardson (said to be inspired by a combination of French and Spanish Romanesque precedents), the English Arts and Crafts movement, and Art Nouveau precedents of central Europe and Scotland. But again, in turn, soon after Finland's independence in 1917 there was yet another counter-reaction. The young Alvar Aalto was scathing of national romanticism, calling it "that absurd period of the flowering of the birch-bark culture, when all that was clumsy and coarse was considered so very Finnish". The counter tendency, so-called Nordic Classicism of the 1920s, would again appeal to the universality of classicism, albeit tempered by a concern not for the monumental but the vernacular. But the next paradigm shift, Le Corbusier's modernist theories, an appeal to a higher universal applicability, would later equally be seen as products of the conditions of the 'south'.

There was no effective schooling in architecture in Finland until the 1870s. Architecture began to be taught as part of the so-called Polytechnic School in Helsinki in 1879, but most of its first teachers were German and so it greatly resembled the German system. From 1885 travel scholarships had been made avail-

able, and most of these were taken to Germany and central Europe. Some Finnish architects were trained in Sweden and there are a few examples of Finns undertaking studies further away. One example is Gustaf Nyström, who studied in Vienna, in 1878-79, and followed the urban planning theories of Reinhard Baumeister. He returned with topical ideas in city planning, such as zoning and developments in sanitation and traffic. He later had the chance to implement these ideas in an 1898 competition for the Helsinki district of Töölö, which he (together with an engineer Herman Norrmén) had initially won. Their main competitors were younger architects, Bertil Jung and Lars Sonck, who had picked up just the previous year the more aesthetic-based urban theories of another Viennese, Camillo Sitte. In the final solution for Töölö, however, Nyström would be asked to cooperate with Sonck, and a compromise plan was finally implemented.

In regard to the question of the influence of the 'south', Alvar Aalto is an exception among Finnish architects. His entire body of works, spanning a career from 1923 to 1976, can be mapped out in relation to the vast changes in Finnish society, media and architecture: from a classical education to the embrace of purist modernism to his own modernist style. Aalto's early career is also marked by his first journey southwards, on his honeymoon with wife Aino Marsio to Italy in 1924, followed by growing contacts with powerful architects in Sweden and then central and southern Europe and the USA. And as his reputation and practice grew, the number of trips grew, visiting several places virtually every year. But one should not over-emphasise the issue of travel: Aalto never travelled to Japan, yet there is certainly evidence that he took influences from it (e.g. Villa Mairea, 1939), albeit from books. However, the classical thematizing can be put into perspective by comparing Aalto's design for the new campus for the Helsinki University of Technology (1949-74) and the new campus for the University of Oulu (1967-71) by Kari Virta. With its numerous classical themes, and 'red brick' university symbolism, Aalto's work was already referred to as 'academic traditionalistic', while the objective of the latter, in a low-key structuralist layout typical for the time, was described as "a democratic atmosphere of an academic 'production institution'". Hence by that time the whole idea of 'enculturation' had been superseded in avant-gardist circles by 'non-aesthetic' technological rationality. Study trips

abroad would more often be to look at recent developments in technology or mass housing in Sweden, Denmark or central Europe.

It was not until the 1930s that university study trips directed by a professor became the norm, though travelling was in those days hardly a routine matter. Most excursions were to other Nordic countries. During the late 1940s and 1950s there were also trips to Italy, France and Greece, albeit overland via war-torn Germany. Architecture professors at Helsinki University of Technology, Carolus Lindberg and Nils Erik Wickberg took groups of students on excursions to central and southern Europe, often lasting more than a month. Of course many architects made individual trips, but the student trips have often been remarked upon by the architects themselves as being defining moments in their careers. Wickberg (1909-2002) in particular held a key position. He was not only professor of architecture history in Helsinki (1956-72) but for three periods (1946-49, 52-56, 58-59) editor of the Finnish architecture journal *Arkkitehti*, as well as working as a restoration architect on significant national monuments. Hence he held his influential position at the height of Functionalist architecture in Finland. Wickberg's position is well encapsulated in an article from 1946 titled "Quo vadis architectura?" Responding to the reactionary classicism of Nazi Germany and the reactionary 'softening' of modernism with historical layers in Sweden, Wickberg defends experimentalism: "The fact that many aspects perceived by the general public as typically 'Functionalist' appear sterile and unfriendly is not so much a result of abandoning the old, as of failing to use sufficient imagination in exploiting the possibilities offered by new materials and building methods".

But this was not to say that Wickberg defended the wholesale replacement of the old city by a modernist one or of founding a suburban 'forest city' as in the case of Tapiola, which had been set by its founders as in opposition to the traditional city. As Wickberg saw it, architecture had to be anchored in more general cultural phenomena but without appealing to populism. Each era should have its own layer. Wickberg also promoted a re-evaluation of all previous layers, including the neoclassical architecture of Helsinki which national romanticists had associated with Russian colonialism. Vilhelm Helander -one of Wickberg's prominent students, who would later become professor of architecture history,

specialising in restoration- has explained how during the years when Finnish old towns were being demolished in the name of progress, efficiency and property development, Wickberg inspired students to understand the townscape and quality of everyday life in towns and public squares which had grown slowly; towns such as Siena, Bamberg and Ellwangen.

Helander himself first came to public attention in 1970 with a polemical book, written jointly with another student of Wickberg, Mikael Sundman, titled *Kenen Helsinki* [Whose Helsinki?]. In the book they challenged the destruction of the historical centre of Helsinki. One of their prime examples was the scheme by a prominent professor and architect, Aarno Ruusuvuori (and who had succeeded Wickberg as editor of *Arkkitehti*). After an architectural competition in 1960, Ruusuvuori had begun in 1970 to remodel an entire city block in central Helsinki for the purposes of the expansion of the Helsinki City Hall (1960-88). Wickberg had actually been a member of the competition jury and had initially favoured Ruusuvuori's proposal over that of a more restoration-oriented proposal. However, in its development the scheme called for the demolition or retention of only the facades of many of the neoclassical buildings comprising the block and a virtually completely new interior in his typical 'Brutalist' style. Subsequently, the scheme was halted and Ruusuvuori's ambitions scaled down -and as such in time it would be praised as adding one more layer to the city.

A few years later, in 1972, Helander and Sundman, together with Pekka Pakkala, won the design competition for a new urban plan for the Helsinki district of Katajanokka, a headland immediately adjacent to the city centre. Half of the area had been developed in the early 1900s as a bourgeois art nouveau residential district, while the other half was in use as a military and industrial area and dockyard. In removing much of the industrial area, their scheme called for the insertion of disparate existing buildings within the traditional street grid and the formation of a public square with an arcade on the ground floor, as well as favouring the use of mostly red brick, which had been typical for the industrial area. However, it departed from the traditional grid by making the large inner courtyards into park-like spaces for local residents. Thus, rather than merely returning to classical urban principles, this was a synthesis of classicism and functional-

ism, inspired just as much by Sweden as Italy.

Helander established his own architect's office in partnership with architect Juha Leiviskä in 1978. Leiviskä had also been a student of Wickberg, and had been on a number of his excursions to southern Europe, and has spoken of the defining influence of Wickberg. Wickberg lectured on the great lines of Western architecture, from classicism, through Gothic to the Renaissance. One of his particular interests was the Baroque. Leiviskä had been struck by Wickberg's explanations regarding the use of light in German Baroque churches (e.g. the Zimmermann brothers' Wies church and Balthasar Neumann's *Vierzehnheiligen* and *Neresheim* churches), calling architecture "an instrument of light". Leiviskä did indeed make his reputation with church design: Saint Thomas's church and parish centre, Oulu (1971-75), Myymäki church and parish centre (1980-84), Kirkkonummi parish centre (1980-84), and Männistö church and parish centre (1986-92). Other key works are the Vallila branch library and daycare centre, Helsinki (1984-91) the German Embassy in Helsinki (1986-93) and the Culture Centre in Bethlehem, Palestine (1998-2003).

But in addition to the Baroque, Leiviskä's other major interest has been *De Stijl*. Leiviskä himself has attempted to draw parallels between the notion of intermediate space in *De Stijl* forms (also evident in early Mies van der Rohe) and late German Baroque space, which Siegfried Giedion had characterised as "the interpenetration of volumes" and where the different spaces are "blended into one another". There are various almost contradictory factors to be taken into account here. One of the key aims of *De Stijl* artists was to achieve the boundlessness of the universal; their paintings continued in theory beyond the limits of the canvas, while their architecture aimed to abolish the wall as the boundary between interior and exterior. In Leiviskä's work too, space is most often defined not by rectangular enclosure but parallel lines. This could even be achieved in urban design, as shown for example by his Merikasarminkatu housing scheme (1979-84), part of the Helander-Sundman-Pakkala urban plan for Katajanokka.

These principles led to the creation of layering or overlapping of surfaces as well as echelons. Similar themes were also well known in the work of Aalto, but the precedent for them is usually said to be romanticism, classical ruins or even Cubist collage. This is not to deny the influence

of Aalto on Leiviskä, but it has been something he has also tried to distance himself from, avoiding the organic sense of enclosure of Aalto's mature works. Leiviskä claims to be reconciling these issues -and for public buildings this is done to a great extent through the use of light, and by reducing colour in the interior to 'washed out' colours and shades of white, but without the contrasting presence of primary colours so central to *De Stijl*. Indeed, with the obvious lack of built examples of *De Stijl* works, it can be argued that Leiviskä has succeeded in materialising the universal abstract qualities of *De Stijl* through the added dimension of light. However, daylight and artificial light are treated very differently. Leiviskä gives the precedent of Hagia Sofia (which he had visited with Wickberg in 1961): "A shimmering veil of light, dusky daylight in the vaulting and just overhead a whole field of wrought iron chandeliers, with tiny oil lamps... It produces a carpet of warm light at a lower level as a counter-balance to the daylight up above". The idea of the 'field of lamps' led to Leiviskä designing his own lamps which are used in all his buildings, invariably in groups. These principles have remained central to all Leiviskä's designs, in a career spanning from 1961 to the present day, and comprising just over 30 completed buildings and over 60 unrealised schemes, most of them architectural competition entries.

Finnish architects have often argued that postmodernism had no real significance in Finland, preferring the historical idea of 'the tradition of modernism'. But what puts this issue better into perspective was the change in historic viewpoints during the 1980s, when postmodernism was at its height in the work of Robert Venturi and Michael Graves, but also with the more urban interpretations such as Aldo Rossi. This was the time when Nordic Classicism, until then ignored by historians, was re-evaluated -as shown in numerous articles and exhibitions. The work specifically of Asplund, especially his Stockholm City Library and Villa Snellman, as well as the early work of Aalto, then became regarded as 'proto-postmodern'. The key authority in Finland in re-evaluating this period was architect Simo Paavilainen (who had once worked for Juha Leiviskä). But he then took these ideas into the buildings he designed together with his wife Käpy, with the introduction of irony, symbolism, decoration and esoteric references to specific historical buildings. This is best exemplified in 3 churches: Olari church in Espoo (1981), Paimio Parish Centre (1984), and St. Michael's

church in Helsinki (1988). In describing Olari church, he even broadened the context of the building into the populist Robert Venturi rhetoric of "Is not Main Street almost alright?": "Olari church and parish centre are an example of what an architect's Italian trip can lead to. Everything started from the similarity of the building site to the Imperial Forums in Rome. Merituulentie Road cuts through the site like Via dei Fori Imperiali between two hills. The football pitch and car-parking areas are forums. The white steel shelter and petrol pumps of the Teboil filling station play the part of the broken marble columns. The Saab-Scania car showroom is the Basilica of Maxentius, the shopping centre is Trajan's Market and the huge colonnaded Niittykumpu 'apartment block on pillars' is the overbearing Vittorio Emanuele monument. The purpose of the church and parish centre in the landscape is to function as the brick wall of the imperial palaces of the Palatine with its substructures". Similarly, the design of St. Michael's church and parish centre involved designing the building as a fragmented cityscape, emphasised through different form displacements and materials -a method usually associated with Aalto. The church itself, once Finnish granite proved too expensive, was to be built in red and white brick stripes, and the Paavilainens travelled to Sienna to literally measure the stripes on Sienna Cathedral "to know what were the correct proportions for the stripes".

In conclusion it should be stated that 'south' has been far more than a synonym for classicism or enculturation. Modernism itself was a product from the 'south': indeed, there was always an argument that Le Corbusier's theories applied not so much universally as to a Mediterranean climate and culture. With increased globalization, identity has increasingly been seen as a question of the exploitation of difference, but which in a geographically peripheral country still gets interpreted through 'essentialist' ideas connected to national identity.

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Sigurd Lewerentz. The wise, right and magnificent game of the inhabitant on stage

Arturo Frediani Safarti

Between 1933 and 1937 Sigurd Lewerentz conceived and then built the single family house that helped him to mutate into a "new" architect. Villa Edstrand isn't a pristine work, nor a clear statement of purpose, but an arduously compounded task where a sincere self-critical attitude and a deep research on the goals that might be achieved in an architectural process can be foreseen.

During the process Lewerentz became slowly aware that architecture could no longer be understood as one of the Fine Arts but rather as a "Practical Art", convenient for the inhabitant, and whose end is other than itself (Aristotle). The tale of the deed would cease to be a simple alibi on the form. Composition would become a strategic deal with the events. Form would meet an "ethic" purpose rather than a "plastic" one. The small building in the Swedish southern shore can be understood as the addition of several episodes, linked experiences or environmental sequences that, while intertwined, precipitate in the form of a synthetic script. Lewerentz focuses on the Leistungsform of the project, in its formal ability to enable action to happen and to recall the narrative nature of the events.

The process ceases to be a coherent formal issue and now brings to the surface the sort of violence that is detectable in many ancient buildings as the centuries and the renovations have gone by. Lewerentz adopts his old mate Hugo Häring's motto: "Is purposeless to determine form, to force it by any norms or to dictate it".

The structure of the plot beats the stylistic structure. Composition is no longer driven by language conventions and puts forward the intervention of the scenery, encourages the environmental staging of the experience and finally promotes its spatial synthesis.

The project faces the conflict set between the inner nature of compositional issues and the chances of enjoying a given space. The compositional concerns and the room for opportunities do not always go along well and very seldom are concomitant. There's no possible strict aesthetic control if we want to

take into account both at once.

The Edstrand Villa is a conglomerate as refined as its inhabitants but as archaic as their drives. Positivist certainty and Art redemption go both against the premonition of a permanent architectural-cored, exploratory and anti-dogmatic attitude.

The house is the premonition of an affinity with reality that yet was about to evolve and bloom in the form of the new-empiric post-war architecture.

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