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The Architecture of Twists and Turns: Space, Time and Narrative in the work of John Soane and Carlo Scarpa

Introduction

Architecture has both interactive and analogical relationships with language. A designed building originates in a linguistic document, the design brief providing a list of functional categories and quantities. In the case of building programmes, such as libraries, museums and art galleries, the word-like function of the classifications of contents in space are preceded by classifications recorded in texts and reflecting the history of thought. The analogical relationship between architecture and language goes back to the 19th century and the idea that works of architecture should be read like books, narratives or texts (Forty, 2004). Quatremère de Quincy for example, likened historical monuments to libraries - public inscriptions or records of the people.

This idea came under strong criticism in the 20th century after modernism asserted that buildings were to be read as autonomous works. Writing on the occasion of the Museum of Modern Art's fifth anniversary in 1934 Alfred Barr, Jr., MoMA's founding director, set up a dichotomy between an intellectual understanding of art mediated by words and a direct experience of art that comes from the unmediated encounter between the viewer and the object. 'Words about art may help to explain techniques, remove prejudices, clarify relationships, suggest sequences, and attack habitual resentments through the back door of intelligence. But the front door of understanding is through experience of the work of art itself' (Barr, 1934). Similarly to art, architecture has been affected by a longstanding assumption that 'experiences mediated through the senses are fundamentally incompatible with those mediated through language' (Forty 2004, 12). Yet, as Adrian Forty explains, even if architecture is not a language this does not lessen the value of language for understanding architecture. Bill Hillier for example, has made a productive analogy between the syntax of space and the syntactic and semantic structure of language. The characteristic spatial relationships that define the cultural inhabitation of space are similar to linguistic rules we use in speaking and writing, or the unconscious mechanisms we 'think with' (Hillier 1996).

If ordinary language offers a paradigm for understanding the unconscious apparatus of meaning-making in architecture, what about the literary function of language? This question concerns works of architecture as intentional aesthetic systems rather than as unconscious structures shared within a society like language. It also allows literary narrative to function as a critical tool and a design

tool as opposed to explanatory paradigm. *If the principles of spatial structure function similarly to those of ordinary language, what can we say about narrative devices or rules used in literary texts? Or what about buildings as social objects, understood in a historical context and the ordering mechanisms of language to organize cultural messages and relations of power?*

In this essay I address these questions first, by focusing on how devices ordering our perception of space and time in literature can illuminate spatial practices as aesthetic systems; second, by exploring our perception of space-time in buildings housing collections, such as museums, galleries and exhibitions. Buildings devoted to displays share the assumption that the spatial arrangement of objects, supported by object-based interpretation, offer a narrative to be understood through the physical experience of reading, looking, and walking. This experience is staged by the linguistic strategies of classification, taxonomy and lists, and the architectural strategies of viewing sequences, mediating the encounter between the architect, the curator, the objects and the viewer. Museums, galleries and private collections therefore, are ideal candidates for addressing the analogic and interactive encounter of architecture with linguistic strategies and narrative form.

The choice of these narrative strategies is critical when the container is itself a historical monument or is embedded in a historical context, as the meanings that are attached to the building and the displays can be motivated and invested with potential significance. Although separated by a century and a half, John Soane and Carlo Scarpa had a strong relationship with history and context as artistic practices and inspirational resources. Soane's house-museum and Scarpa's projects such as the Castelvecchio, the Olivetti Showroom and the Canova's extension, seem to present a common paradigm: all housing collections, albeit Soane's house-museum accommodates his own private collection; all fusing the architects' own interventions within the existing fabric; all collaging contemporary architecture over the substrate of previous historical episodes; all eschewing the idea of a single unified form as the central governing composition by which the building could be read; all forcing the visitor into sinuous routes and around art works to see the building and the objects. For Nicholas Olsbeg, Scarpa opened the possibility for an architecture in union with poetry, sculpture, painting and craft around the themes of memory, allegory and metaphor (Olsberg, 1999). Soane also conceived his house-museum as a union of architecture with the arts, engaging in spatial optical mechanisms and an eccentric taste in narrative expression (Soane 1830, 1832, 1835-36). Deriving from these common tendencies for itineraries and multiple associations, works of the two architects present suitable examples to examine the perception of space, time and meaning, drawing parallels between motifs in architecture and narrative.

Context

Advancing from A to B, narrative occupies 'space' and involves time (Cobley, 2001). Fiction writers traditionally have valorised these features of narrative,

adopting spatial and temporal models as metaphors for space and time in their work. From Odysseus' journey in the *Odyssey* to Dante's travels in the Comedia, and from Jorge Luis Borges' *Garden of Forking Paths* to Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* and Umberto Eco's labyrinthine library in *The Name of the Rose*, the experience of reading has been paralleled to the experience of travelling and wandering in actual space and time. In his essay *Cybernetics and Ghosts* Calvino discusses stories which derive from combinatorial games, the formal exploration of the possibilities for permutation and transformations, such as George Perec's narrative strategy in *La Vie, Mode d'Emploi,* proceeding through the rooms of an imaginary house in the knight's moves of chess, describing always the same elements in the different tales in the different rooms (Calvino, 1986).

Similarly, architects have harnessed a range of literary strategies anchoring meaning-making in the context of crafting stories. A characteristic example is Giuseppe Terragni's and Pietro Lingheri's Danteum, an unbuilt monument dedicated to Dante and structured around the division of the *Divine Comedy* into three realms (Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso). Another example is Rem Koolhaas' *Delirious New York*, conceiving of Manhattan as an unwritten manifesto of capitalist vernacular, an investors' architecture without a blue print (Koolhaas, 1994). Pretending he is the city's biographer, Koolhaas furnished Manhattan's built evidence with a theoretical frame, serving as an intellectual terrain for his own architecture. His second book, S,M,L,XL with Bruce Mau, appropriated the linguistic conventions of list and taxonomy in order to fabricate proximity between heterogenous objects and ideas (Lueder, 2019). Another architect who is fascinated by literary pursuits is Bernard Tchumi, who in *Manhattan Transcripts,* transcribed events, normally removed from conventional architectural representation, as theoretical propositions through drawing from real New York locales to express the idea that architecture resides in the superimposition of place, movement and event (Tschumi, 1994). Peter Eisenman also experimented with literary composition as seen in his project *Moving Arrows Eros and Other Errors,* translating the story of Romeo and Juliet into an architectural project in Verona. More recently CJ Lim's *Virtually Venice,* an exhibition for the British Pavilion at the 2004 Venice Architectural Biennale, was derived from the legendary story of Marco Polo's first meeting with the Mongolian Emperor, Kublai Khan (Lim, 2006). His latest books *London in One and Half Dimensions* and *Once Upon a China* use themes of English and Chinese identity as critical tools to re-imagine the urban condition beyond the exuberance of non-contextual Western capitalist models (Lim and Liu, 2011; Lim and McCloy, 2021).

Recent scholarship has explored the intersection between architecture and literature through creative site-writing (Rendell, 2010), translations and analogical relations between the two media (Psarra, 2009; 2018; Kanekar, 2015). Yet, in spite of rich studies in this area, the relationships that allow literary principles of composition to 'speak' to architectural design languages have not attracted the attention they deserve. There is very little critical analysis of the exchange between architecture and narrative in relation to how literary principles can inform

design explorations. This is primarily because, with a few exceptions, most of existing scholarly work focuses either on signification – what the interaction of architecture and fiction means - or practice-led investigations.

In his article 'How Buildings Mean', Nelson Goodman argues that we must consider the question of how a particular work conveys meaning before we are able to address what they may mean (Goodman, 1985). This essay is a first attempt to elucidate the categories of meaning and the mechanisms by which these meanings are transmitted in both media. It takes inspiration from the work of Umberto Eco (1981) and Marie-Laure Ryan (1991) about the theory of possible worlds as addressed in *The Role of the Reader* and *Possible Worlds Artificial Intelligence and Narrative* Theory respectively. The essay does not claim authority over literary theory, but rather calls for a more focused architectural study of space-time in the two symbolic media.

The model reader and circumnavigational time

Before exploring this topic in the work of the two architects, it is essential to discuss some theoretical concepts. In his book *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods,* Eco (1994) discusses fiction as a mode of travel in textual space and time. Referring to literature as wood or garden of forking paths, a metaphor devised by Borges, he explains that in a narrative text, the reader is forced to make choices that refer to the type of reader the author has in mind, a sort of ideal type [or model reader] whom the text not only sees as a collaborator but also tries to create. The model reader is instructed by the model author, a voice that speaks to the reader as a narrative strategy, a set of instructions he or she needs to follow by reading the text more than once, forcing a reading time and inducing them to take 'inferential walks'.

Not only architecture and the arts of space allow time to be entirely experienced and enjoyed, but also engage viewers to take actual and inferential walks. Curators of museums, art galleries and private collections increasingly recognise the need for divergent ways to engage visitors with the building and the display. However, curatorial interpretation has traditionally addressed an ideal, hypothetical or imagined visitor and threaded ideal visiting routes through spaces and collections. Architects also work with an ideal user in mind, close to Eco's model reader. This type of user is different from the empirical user, which implies a link between the function of the building and social behaviour. The ideal user comes closer to the visitor Soane had in mind, who would visit his house-museum with ticket in hand saying that the museum is open only on sunny days. Soane placed demands on visitors to read between the lines, directing their attention to the tinted skylights bringing warm Mediterranean light into the building, and the influence of the Classical world in his museum and collection.

A recent competition organised by the curators of Soane's Museum asked participants to name their favourite object in the building. A winning entry drew attention to relationships intentionally created by the architect: the nymph by

Richard Westmacott in the Picture Room Recess overlooking and tempting 'padre Giovanni' in the Monk's Parlour, the Gothic lair in the basement (Fig. 01). The fictitious monk was the satirical alter ego of Soane.
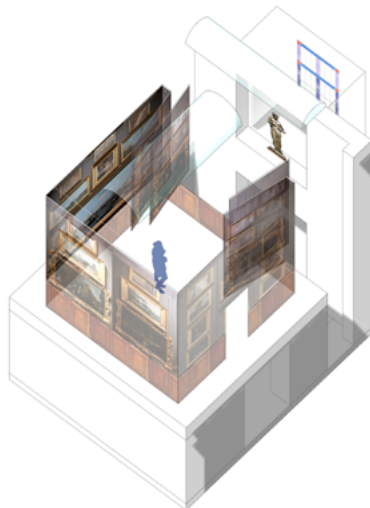

Fig. 01. John Soane's Museum – Richard Westmacott's statue of Nymph in the Picture Room Recess overlooking and 'tempting' 'padre Giovanni' in the Monk's Parlour.

Source: Image drawn by Carlota Nunez-Barranco Vallejo using photography by Eva Tisnikar.

Visitors to the Museum come across the nymph first in the Picture Room, when the hinged panels open revealing the statue in the Recess presiding over a void that connects with the Monk's Parlour. The interface of the statue with the hermit takes its true meaning only at a later moment when they look up from the monk's cell with the Picture Room panels open (Figs. 02A-B).
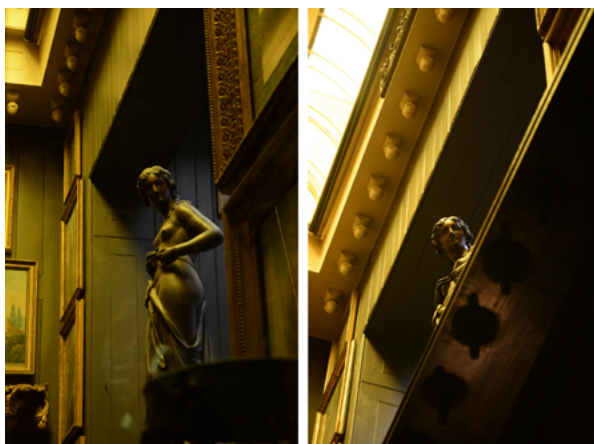

Fig. 02. A (Left) John Soane's Museum – Richard Westmacott's statue of Nymph in the Picture Room Recess seen from the Corridor. B (Right) John Soane's Museum – Richard Westmacott's statue of Nymph in the Picture Room Recess seen from the basement.

Source: Eva Tisnikar.

The incongruous encounter between the Classical sensuality of the nymph and the Gothic melancholy of the monk is dramatized through the synchronous viewing of the two spaces, the forward glimpse of the basement from the Picture Room and the sequence in which they are visited. Soane invites the visitor to recognise the craft of interpretation, revealing his identity as the model curator and collector to the model viewer as a set of display mechanisms and viewing strategies. This interplay between the architect collector and the visitor can only come into being through the process of moving and viewing.

Foreshadowing an encounter or event, space-time manipulation is frequently found in literature, film and drama. It communicates that life is not framed by rationality and predictability. Characteristically, the opening paragraph of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcias Marques reads: 'Many years later as he faced the firing squad, colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice...' (1998, 5). Known as *prolepsis* and *analepsis*, the motifs of flash-forward and flash-backward often structure a large part of a narrative. A clear example of this strategy is the *Odyssey* which begins in *media res* when Odysseus having escaped from Calypso's island and her amorous advances, is shipwrecked among the Phaeacians and tells his tale (Dimock et al, 2014). The story moves backward in time as the hero narrates his many adventures, and only in book 13 does the text return where we were in book, 8 as he sets sail for Ithaca.

In the opening lines of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus is described as the man of 'twists and turns', defining the identity of the hero whose intelligence enables him to defy death and escape the wrath of Poseidon. 'Twists and turns' refers both to Odysseus' multiple adventures during his homeward journey, and his mental capacity to twist and turn facts in order to escape danger, gain advantage over his enemies and test the loyalty of his family. We encounter the device of twists and turns in other instances in the epic, such as in Odysseus's ability to be the great teller of tales, telling his story many times in the lofty palaces he visits in his travels and in his own palace in Ithaca, where he disguises his identity to Athena, his son Telemachus and wife Penelope. The motif of twists and turns is further accentuated by the trip of Telemachus in the first rhapsody in search of his father, including the stories told by other characters, or sang by bards in banquets and gatherings. 'Twists and turns' therefore, reflects not only the shape of the plot comprising flash backs and flash forwards, but also the motifs of repetition, remembrance and prediction in the Odyssey.

Using Leibniz' concept of possible worlds, Marie-Laure Ryan (1994) explains that the aesthetic appeal of a plot is a function of the richness and variety of embedded narratives, story-like constructs contained in the private world of characters or implied by their actions, or the propositions through which the reader fills informational gaps in the story. In many cases these embedded narratives derive from tensions between the events occurring in the fiction and unactualized possibilities. Ryan explains that narrative suspense derives from

'the confrontation of characters of limited foresight and a reader who anticipates – correctly or not – the situations into which they should run' (ibid. 174). The reverse strategy also captures the readers' interest, delaying their understanding of a sequence of actions or leading them in the wrong direction. The themes of twists and turns and embedded narratives in the Odyssey therefore, cast the epic as a field of narrative possibilities where readers expect developments or form retrospective interpretations.

In his book *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, Italo Calvino argued for the value of quickness, but also acknowledged the importance of narrative time which is decaying, cyclic or motionless. 'In any case a story is an operation carried out on the length of time involved, an enchantment that acts on the passing of time, either contracting on dilating it' (Calvino, 2009, 35). Eco also emphasized the idea of manipulating time to explore the pleasures of lingering and explained time in a work of fiction as one of the strategies used by the model author to engage the model reader. He explained that delaying tactics, such as those found in the Odyssey, allow the reader to take 'inferential walks', a term he put forward in his book *The Role of the Reader*, the readerly process of making predictions.

For Eco, time in fiction appears in three forms: 'story time', 'discourse time' and 'reading time'. (Eco 1994). Story time is part of the content of the story. If the text says 'a thousand years pass' the story time is a thousand years. But at the level of linguistic expression, which is at the level of fictional discourse, the time in this sentence is very short. A story or event lasting two seconds (story time) might take a longer text to describe, for example a reading time of forty-two seconds, as is the case of the death of Le Chiffre in Casino Royale by Ian Fleming. The opposite can be the case, as in Proust's taking of thirty pages to describe someone tossing and turning on his bed.

Eco proposes that authors can vary these three types of time or make them congruent. With a few exceptions, the congruence between the three types distinguishes banal or ordinary works from works of literature that aim at constructing an aesthetic experience. He goes on to explain that the arts of space, such as painting and architecture require 'circumnavigational time', a time to be experienced, which depending on the level of detail may require more time, such as the cathedral at Chartres, or multiple viewings as in Jackson Pollock's paintings where we find ourselves focusing on different parts of the painting in order to pick up specific patterns out of the dense labyrinth of lines. But for Eco in general, the qualities and complexities of story time, discourse time and reading time are not to be found in architecture or the visual arts. It is mainly literature that invests on these three notions of time causing readers to take inferential walks.

Nothing can be further from the truth, and thus, I move to describing the techniques by which Soane and Scarpa construct complex perceptions of space and time, inviting the viewer to travel along real and virtual pathways in imagination.

Soane's House-Museum

The first technique to discuss in Soane's museum is the contrast between the matrix of rooms with clearly defined geometrical centres – a characteristic of the classical treatment of rooms with centrally positioned windows, decorations, cornices and ceilings – and the diagonal visual lines that travel through doorways, windows, light courts and skylights (Fig. 03A-B). Linked in sequence, the geometrically defined rooms imply the Classical axial principles of composition, in which there is a frontal approach to each room and axial synchronicity. The diagonal lines of the other hand, are akin to the picturesque logic of composition, exposing multiple distant views without a direct approach route to far off seen spaces (Psarra, 2009). The composition of rooms as spatial enclosures and the decomposition of them by these diagonal views create two contrasting notions of space-time: '*circumnavigational space-time*', using Eco's term, according to which we move from room to room in order to see the building and the exhibits, and '*synchronic space-time*', due to the simultaneous visibility of rooms and objects.
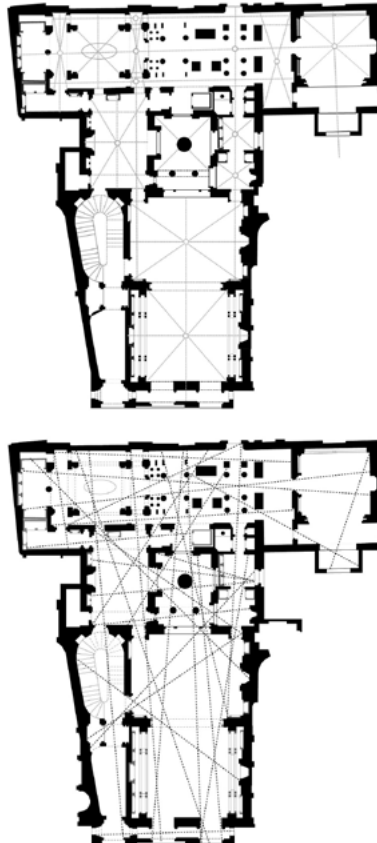

Fig. 03. A (Top) John Soane's Museum – ground floor plan with centres of rooms. B (Bottom) John Soane's Museum – ground floor plan with diagonal visual lines.

Source: drawings by Sophia Psarra.

Synchronic space-time is when we are offered views into spaces that will be accessed later as part of the visiting route or views to spaces that we have already seen and. In this case the impression is of leaping forward or backward in space-time. This technique of staging space and time features in many instances in Soane's house-museum, as in the case of the sarcophagus in the Crypt revealed through the void in the Dome area, and the previously discussed Monk's Parlour seen through the folding panels in the Picture Gallery.

The second technique Soane uses is the circuit, a long sequence the visitor need to walk through in order to see the majority of spaces, eventually returning to the front of the layout and completing the visit (Fig. 04). Circling the central light court, the circuit takes the visitor from the Georgian rooms at the front to the Picture Gallery, the Crypt and the deepest parts of the house. As visitors return to the Dome area on the ground floor - exhibiting a large collection of ancient fragments and Soane's own bust - they reach the Breakfast Room, taking its architectural theme from the recurring usage of the vaulted ceiling in Soane's projects. Stringing rooms in linear sequence, from the front to the rear of the building and back, the circuit stands in clear contrast with the diagonal vistas revealing distant parts of the interior (Psarra, ibid.). Circumnavigational time - the time it takes to walk through the circuit – is in this way, juxtaposed with synchronic time, instantaneously linking rooms and objects across distance.
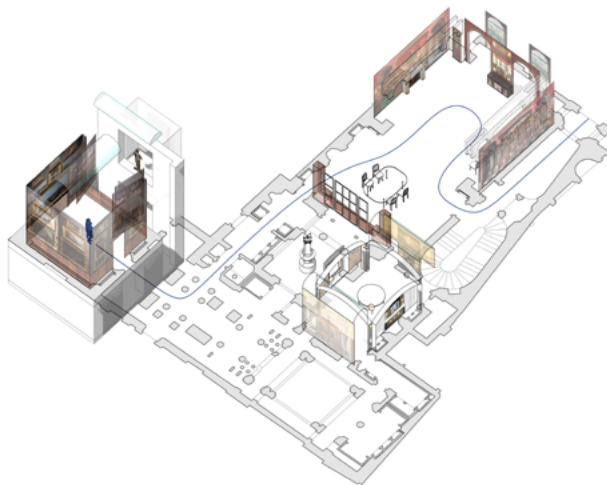

Fig. 04. John Soane's Museum – axonometric of the ground floor plan showing the Library, Picture Gallery and Breakfast Room.

Source: Image drawn by Carlota Nunez-Barranco Vallejo using photography by Eva Tisnikar.

Mirrors in the museum are key protagonists in the construction of these two notions of time. Soane placed mirrors at the periphery of the rooms, over the Library shelves, on doorways, window mullions and the frames of furniture. The mirrors dissolve the walls, open the boundaries of space and create distorted perspectives. Through the mirrors located between the two front openings in the

Library and the mirror over the mantel in the Breakfast Room, one can see the central Court reflected in two directions (Figs 05-07).
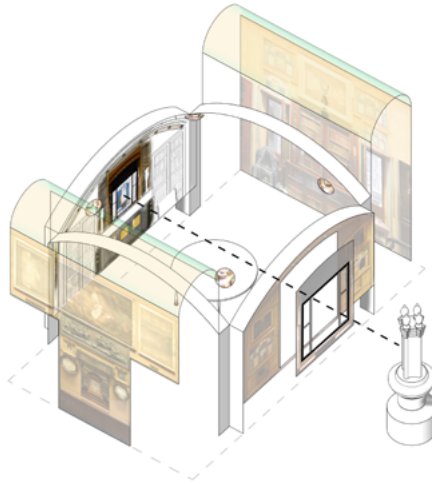

Fig. 05. John Soane's Museum – Breakfast Room with reflection of the central court on mirror over the mantel.

Source: Image drawn by Carlota Nunez-Barranco Vallejo using photography by Eva Tisnikar.

These reflections intensify our awareness of the Court as the centre of the layout, a centre we see in real space and in reflected space but cannot occupy with our bodies (Psarra, ibid.). This dislocation of empirical, forward moving space-time - the space-time we experience with our bodies - from synchronic space-time – the space-time in the mirror - engages our cognitive relationship with space-time. Following from Eco and Ryan, this cognitive relationship can be described in three ways: first, as unfolding along a line, where we cannot skip moments leaping forward or backward; second, as a calendar or a building plan where all events are seen in one moment; and finally, as a malleable entity based on our recollections from memory and predictions about the future.

Fig. 06. John Soane's Museum – Library with reflection of the central court on the mirror between the two openings.

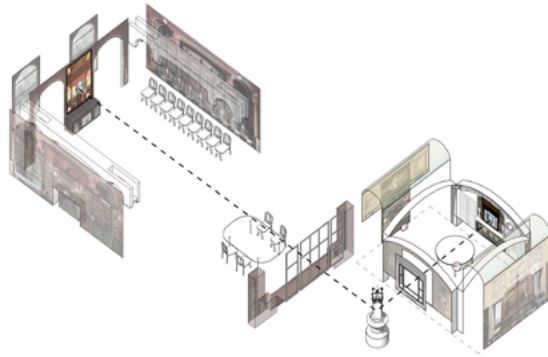*Source: Image drawn by Carlota Nunez-Barranco Vallejo using photography by Eva Tisnikar.*

Fig. 07. John Soane's Museum – Library and Breakfast Room with reflections of the central court on mirrors.

Source: Image drawn by Carlota Nunez-Barranco Vallejo using photography by Eva Tisnikar.

The reading of architectural prolepsis, analepsis and sequential movement through the interior suggests an analogical relationship of architecture with literary language. The interactive relationship of architecture and language defines a building and its meaning in a real-world context (Markus& Cameron, 2002). Exhibiting a large collection of historical objects and building fragments, Soane's Museum has history as its thematic cultural context. Soane's view of history, however, is fanciful, 'smitten with love of novelty in animated by direct defiance of all established rules of the architectural schools' (Soane, 1830, 1832, 1835-36). Domes, colonnades, crypts, vaults, sky-lights, recesses, niches and ante-rooms treat history as a pantheon of forms and a repository of combinations. Like the interplay of space and time, history for the Neoclassical architect is an interchange of past and present that is both sequential and synchronic. From the Georgian front rooms to the back areas and the basement with their Classical, Roman and Egyptian displays, the Museum thematizes history as an imaginative, unbounded and directly accessible supra-historical world freed from the constraints of historical, stylistic and museological knowledge.

Carlo Scarpa's Castelvecchio, Olivetti Showroom, and Canova's Extension

Scarpa's relationship with history is also based on the notion that the past is malleable. Scarpa lived all his life in Venice, a place where, over the centuries, historical forms, types, materials and methods of construction have coalesced into a single urban artifact like a fossil 'petrified in layers of rock' (Howard 2002). In the Olivetti Showroom, Scarpa's inspiration for the linear vertical slicing of space, the narrow walkways in the mezzanine, the sculptural staircase, the water in the central zone and the glass mosaics comes from that great catalogue of forms that is Venice, with its narrow passages, fondamentas, sottoporticos, bridges stretching over the water, water flooding the edges of spaces, the range of colourful materials and the rich surface decorations, (Fig. 08).
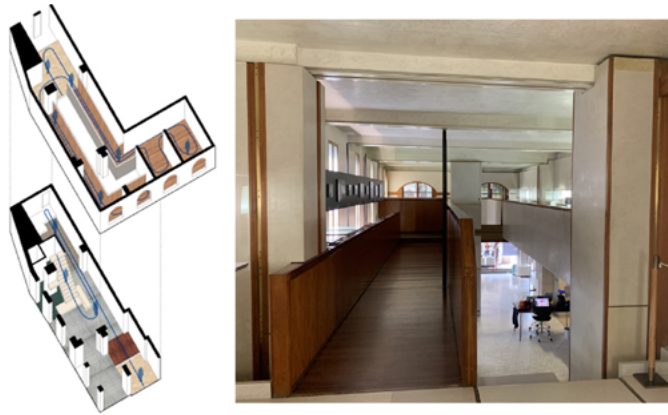
Fig. 08. A (Right) Carlo Scarpa's Olivetti Showroom, Venice – axonometric of ground floor and mezzanine level. B (Left) Carlo Scarpa's Olivetti Showroom, Venice – view of mezzanine.

Source: Figure 8A drawn by Gustavo Maldonado. Figure 8B photography by Sophia Psarra.

By extending circumnavigational time through twists and turns of circulation, Scarpa contrasts the synchronic views from the front and back ends of the showroom with the sinuous progress of the viewer through the interior. There are many similar views in Venice extending over the linear stretches of the canals, to link places that are reached only indirectly, by the meandering and intersecting canals and alleys. Staging movement through a long sequence is a device frequently used by Scarpa (Curtis, 1996) even when spaces are not linearly shaped, as in the extension to Canova's Museum in Possagno and the Castelvecchio in Verona, where the varied positioning of statues of different size and height requires the visitors to walk around them crossing their own paths multiple times (Fig. 09). The Castelvecchio moves the visitor through a single space three times, reminiscent of Venice's shifting floor planes, countless steps, stairs and loggias, while the pond at the front of the building recalls the way in which Venice doubles images in the reflections of its canals.
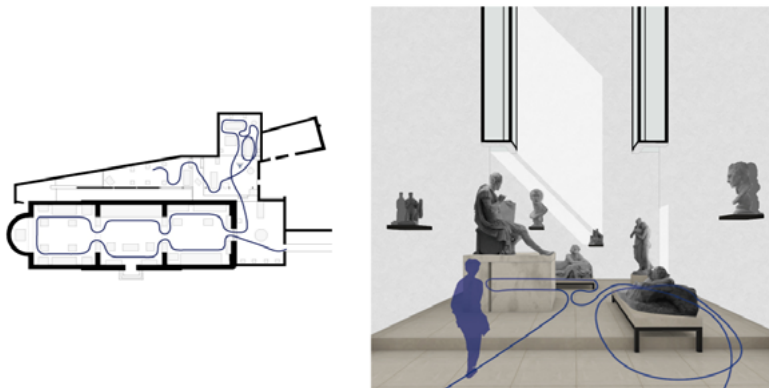

Fig. 09. Carlo Scarpa's extension to Canova Museum, Possagno – plan (left) and gallery (right).

Source: Figures drawn by Gustavo Maldonado.

Another linguistic motif used by Scarpa in the extension to Canova's Museum is *mise-en-byme*, which means placing a copy of an image or object inside itself, like the snow globe in Orson Wells' *Citizen Cane*. Metonymically referring to the prismatic windows at the corners of the tall space in the Canoviana extension, the glass cabinets containing figurines function as mini galleries inside the larger gallery, linking the scale of the building as a whole to that of the windows and the displays. Mise-en-byme has a strong presence in Soane's Museum too. The vault sail in the Breakfast Room, the cork models of Pompeii and Gandy's paintings of the Museum are demonstrations of Soane's desire to embed his own architecture into the historical ancestry. The Breakfast room has been often discussed as a miniature version of Soane's oeuvre, linking thematically his own career with architectural history, the larger narrative in the house, while the placement of his own bust in the Dome testifies to his desire to install himself in the panorama of architecture.

Wholeness versus fragment and the preference for drawings

Architectural criticism has rarely explored the complex dynamics of space and time in architectural works, but rather looked at photographs, drawings and plans, fixing in one's mind both a visual impression of architectural works as featured in an image and their abstractions in plans. A clear example is Colin Rowe's analysis of Villa Malcontenta by Palladio and Le Corbusier's Villa Stein, in which the momentary visual perception of the two buildings in photographs is compared with the synchronic perception of drawings (Rowe, 1976). A preference for drawings seems to be behind Bruno Zevi's question: 'Was Scarpa an architect'. This question was triggered by the fact that, in Zevi's words, 'Scarpa left behind no memorable plans' (Murphy). In fact Scarpa left no plans at all but a series of layered drawings, palimpsests that worked as mechanisms for his thoughts rather than a set of instructions to builders of a finished object. Richard Murphy explains that Scarpa drew to build. For him there was no sequence of thought or organisation which ordered the progress of a project from general design concept to detailed construction (ibid.). Whilst representing a unity of craft and design, this approach has been criticised as attacking the edges of a problem at the expense of an overall unifying concept.

For Zevi, Scarpa *'would not start from a general set-up to later focus on structural joints and mouldings, he would reverse the process, attacking with ferocious inventiveness and extraordinary tension of energy each and every detail, in order to make them significant, in the certainty that from their dialogue and interlacement would spontaneously spring the message of the whole.'*[1] The preference for drawings is a preference the historiography and criticism of architecture have demonstrated alongside the concepts of wholeness of form and composition as a relationship between parts and whole, whether this relationship

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[1] Bruno Zevi quoted in Murphy, R., Ibid.

represents a classical axial system or a picturesque composition. Scarpa stayed outside the influences of Western architectural academy, escaping the prejudice or impulse for wholeness, composition and the whole-part relationship.

In Goodman's terms, buildings mean in four ways: by denotation, as when meanings are denoted directly by texts onto their walls; exemplification, drawing attention to certain properties in the work; metaphorical or metonymic expression, referring to properties not possessed by a work, but expressed by the work; and finally, mediated reference, a chain of reasoning that leads to a succession of meanings linked by association by the work (Goodman, ibid.). Critics interpret Scarpa's work as being about a metonymic articulation of found fragments, spoils of the constructed world, metonymic being a term that described the capacity of a fragment to express the whole, as in Goodman's third category. Scarpa's tectonic poetry was brought into being by the growth of a tradition within the trade of modernity. This tradition was based in the Venetian constructive ability to reconcile discrete building elements of disparate origin without being eclectic. Venetians built most of their city using building spoils that came from their trading routes. A clear example of a built structure made of found elements is the façade of San Sebastiano in Venice facing a narrow triangular campo. As Carlo Frascari explains the upper columns are shorter than those in the ground floor and raised on pedestals so that the two floors can have matching heights. This is because the columns on the upper level were found objects that came from another structure (Frascari, 2004).

In Soane's and Scarpa's work, wholeness is not of greater significance than the ways in which space-time relationships structure the perception of the work, or the ways in which the fragment evokes the whole in the mind of the viewer. For these architects, the work takes shape and form in the process of moving and viewing rather than through a two-dimensional drawing, plan or elevation. The work comes alive through the ordering and rich relationships of space-time; the work becomes the process of interaction between the physical reality, the time-based encounter of the viewer with the building and the processes that bind the different types of space-time in the mind of viewer.

Architecture and Language: Analogy and Interaction

If collecting is 'inherently a cult of fragments, a sticking together of material bias that stand as metonyms and metaphors for the world' (Elsner, 1994), museums, exhibitions and private collections are not simply actual spaces organising spatial sequences and temporal experiences, but also world-making devices, staging and memorialising the past out of fragments as complete worlds within the walls of a cultural institution. The relationship of these institutions with knowledge, history, the past, present and future is mediated not only by twists and turns, orchestrated journeys through spaces and contents, but also through world-making, the exercise of collecting, classifying, organising, illustrating, annotating, visualising, writing and publishing.

Markus and Cameron explain that language is a neglected subject in discussions of architecture, conventionally approached as a visual rather than verbal statement (2002). Any social practice, like architecture, has both verbal and aesthetic dimensions. While the syntax of space structures social relationships, these relationships, their meaningfulness, and the subtending relations of power are also a function of the ordering systems of language. These operate in the interactive production of the architectural brief as well as of the drawings and conventions that enable exchanges between architects, clients, contractors and builders. As to the aesthetic function of the linguistic analogy, any epic or myth from the Odyssey to Ariadne's thread demonstrates the age-old relationship between space and language as symbolic media that interlace in imbuing our experience of buildings with narrative sense.[2]

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