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z<CT>Introduction: The Mobile Landscape of Post-war Architectural Thought

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Around 1908, the German sociologist Georg Simmel reflected on the significance of mobility infrastructures, such as paths and bridges. These divisions of space, he wrote, were more than physical facts. They resulted from a subjective understanding of space, namely the human will to link distinct elements. Boundaries, paths and bridges were creations of a human being, the 'connecting creature who must always separate and who cannot connect without separating'. Simmel called this double act of separation and connection, resulting in a dynamic intertwining of physical place and mental spaces, the 'miracle of the road' (Simmel [1909] in Leach 1997: 64–7).

By stating that spatial boundaries were formed and reproduced by social action, Simmel advanced a non-static configuration of space. He suggested, moreover, that spatiality and ways of thinking changed simultaneously – a claim that left an important legacy: Simmel had a profound influence on the so-called 'mobilities paradigm'. From the mid-1990s on, contributions from anthropology, cultural studies, geography, migration studies, science and technology studies, tourism and transport studies and sociology started to look at society as a complex flow of people, objects and information. Authors often referred to Simmel when highlighting the meaning, politics and social implications of mobility (Sheller and Urry 2006).

Yet, besides illuminating the interdependence between physical places and social realms, Simmel's concept of mobility can also be helpful in studying the circulation of knowledge in the world. In his 1903 'Metropolis' essay, he suggested that a new mental geography emerged in the modern city when old social and material boundaries became

obliterated by the unseen tempo of modernity (Simmel [1903] in Spillman 2001). Or, as the historian John Randolph noted in his reflective article 'The Space of Intellect and the Intellect of Space', Simmel's 'miracle of the road' urges us to dissect ideas through the mobility of their constantly shifting rearrangement; when reflecting on path-building as a human achievement, Simmel demonstrated that the (mis)use of ideas and concepts turns us into travellers in 'a landscape of starts and stops, anchors and thoroughfares, limitations and freedoms' (Randolph in McMahon and Moyn 2014: 214).

This book argues that the post-war field of architectural thought was a mobile landscape, formed through a dialogical process between the physical and mental realms of practices, intentions and ways of knowing. The essays collected here all concentrate on specific connections and separations between the domains of practice and knowledge production in architecture. Their authors show how ideas and concepts about architecture transferred between coexisting and even contradictory paradigms, mutating as a consequence of the journey described, the route taken and the vehicles employed. Yet such mobility cannot simply be described as movement, as the transmission of something from one point to another, be it material/geographical or spiritual/epistemological. As we will see, architectural theory in the period studied could be embodied movement or performative movement; on other occasions it was only potential movement. Sometimes it was free movement, at other moments severely restricted. The works in this volume will therefore not only describe where theory resided, but also how and by which means it constructed its own space and in which interactions it was enmeshed.

By looking at specific case studies, the essays brought together in this book point to the complex and unstable nature of architectural thinking. Many accounts of architectural theory seem to have lost that sense of movement, and neglected the non-linear processes that produced little-explored connections between disciplinary perspectives and contexts. The

anthologies that have emerged since the 1990s, essential as they have been, focused mainly on theory in its published, edited form, ostensibly addressing non-specific audiences (e.g. Nesbitt 1996; Hays 2000; Mallgrave 2005; Crysler, Cairns and Heynen 2012; Sykes 2012). However, architectural knowledge is produced, disseminated and tested along the road and across various media. Architectural thought, we posit, is not only a high-speed game of racing cars on the highway focusing only on the destination, but also, as Simmel would have put it, of physical and mental movements and detours along bridges, boundaries and pathways.

But how can we realize Simmel's 'miracle of the road' when studying architectural theory? If theory is indeed mobile, and if its agendas, tools, paradigms and functions became increasingly diverse in the recent past, heading towards an open-ended diversity, how then does one historicize 'the discipline's intellections' (Jarzombek 1999: 201)? The authors gathered here addressed this challenge by offering answers to three essential sets of questions: one first set of questions might be framed as, what was theory's journey? Where did it travel to and from, and which routes did it take? Secondly, how did it travel? In other words, what were the vehicles theory used? And lastly, since there is no transfer without mutation, no transposition without transformation – how did theory transform while travelling?

<A>Knowledge on the move

Raising questions about the travelling nature of theory in the post-war world entails an important challenge: to make fluid again what has been congealed by the spatial, temporal and medial boundaries installed by theoreticians and historians, often through the above-mentioned anthologies. During the last decade, attempts to cross these boundaries have been made; large parts of the humanities have, in effect, come under the spell of dissecting

transfers between disciplines, cultures and historical periods. The acceptance that our knowledge depends on 'travelling concepts' or 'nomadic theories', and therefore demands a combination of multiple approaches, turned out to be a complex yet very rewarding endeavour (Weigel 2018).

In architectural theory and history, this increasing attention to how ideas and theories transformed when migrating from one culture to another has intersected with the field of postcolonial studies: since readings of Edward Said's 1982 essay on travelling theory sparked considerable debate, numerous publications ensued. Other scholars like James Clifford, Vivek Dharsschwar and Paul Rabinow helped to advance the study of the itineraries of theories and practices. Their work turned out to be inspirational, even crucial, for those studying transnational processes of exchange in (post)colonial architecture. Invention and migrancy, import and acculturation: postcolonial theory gave the analysis of these processes a much-needed vocabulary (Frank 2009; Moyn and Sartori 2013: 5–17).

Although architectural studies from the 1990s on increasingly explored different ways of thinking about the broad production, dissemination and – often 'global' – circulation of ideas, the work collected in this volume contends that paying attention to specific discursive turns and decisive moments of (re)import and transfer remains essential. As Anna Kinder recently argued, these formative moments run the risk of being overshadowed by a superficial understanding of transfers (Kinder 2017); they were, occasionally or by nature, too delicate, subtle or difficult to record at the time or identify in hindsight. In the first section of this book, Kinder's concern is taken seriously, as four authors meticulously examine instances of theory's journey between geographic, disciplinary and reflection contexts or practice spheres. They do this by scrutinizing interactions and (mis)receptions, or 'Translations and Appropriations' as we have called them, shedding light on the tensions

rising between the reality on-the-field, theory-suggesting design instances, and a 'dreamed',
aimed-at reality of theoretical ideal constructs.

<A>Translations and appropriations

In the first chapter, 'Deconstruction and Architecture: Translation as a Matter of Speculative
Theory', Céline Bodart examins the encounter between the French philosopher Jacques
Derrida and a cohort of American architects in the mid-1980s. The impact Jacques Derrida
had on architectural theory is well known. Yet while in the Anglo-American sphere the role
played by Derrida in the *Gilded Age of Theory* has probably been overstressed, in France this
narrative still elicits a kind of discomfort, and even silence, in the architectural debate. Where
does this disparity stem from?

Bodart demonstrates that when two different narratives about one and the same
encounter with architecture coexist, the speculative gap between both needs to be addressed.
In this case, it is important to look into the translation of Derrida's ideas. Situated between
extraction and appropriation, she argues, the mechanism of translation can be considered as
the agent for unprecedented mobility. Through the discussion of the challenges encountered
in translating Mark Wigley's 1993 book,, *Derrida's Haunt*, into French, the exercise of
translation is employed to a double end. Bodart begins by rereading the convoluted
movements of deconstruction in architectural discourses, before exploring how the fortune of
theoretical pursuits is conditioned by appropriation.

In our second chapter, 'Gehry's Lou Ruvo Center in Las Vegas as a Housing
Critique' by Yael Allweil, a reading of Frank O. Ghery's building-based tectonic theory in
Las Vegas – positioned as a response to postmodernist thought and architectural theory's
reliance on text as medium – is the starting-point for a critique of the architect's own legacy.
In her text, Allweil travels from the building(s) to the theory (both Ghery's and PoMo's) and

back to the building(s). She reads Gehry's Las Vegas building as a tectonic reconstruction of the spectacular 1972 collapse of the Pruitt-Igoe housing schemes in the city of St Louis, Missouri, thereby revealing Gehry's self-critique of the desertion of housing as a core premise of modern architecture and of the current class system within his own discipline. In this sense, the chapter entails a journey between a tectonic reading of the building as a 'duck' and a 'decorated shed' constructing a frozen 'Pruit-Igoe collapse', and a critique of a discipline that turned its back on housing as one of its foundation stones.

Bodart and Allweil both demonstrate that architectural theory is a field teeming with what Dana Cuff called the designers' 'espoused' theories: their chapters – to follow on with this concept – also suggest that theories employed by architects in their discourse are often inconsistent with their practices (Cuff 1992). Theories are used to pursue architects' own agendas and are therefore purposely selected as useful threads to weave narratives, enabling them to cope with a rapidly changing word. This is what Stylianos Giamarelos clearly demonstrates in 'Boomerang Effect: The Repercussions of Critical Regionalism in 1980s Greece', the third chapter in this book. He approaches theory as a situated historical artefact that acquires agency through the conditions of its production and dissemination in specific contexts. Giamarelos describes how, before becoming a novel 'international' discourse that could apply to diverse 'local' contexts in the hands of Kenneth Frampton (1983), critical regionalism was originally moulded by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre (1981) around the work of the Greek architects Suzana and Dimitris Antonakakis. The subsequent deflected 'return' of critical regionalism as an 'international' discourse to its 'originary' locus thus exemplifies an unexamined 'boomerang effect' of the 'travelling' post-war theories. The historical ramifications of Frampton's discourse on Suzana and Dimitris Antonakakis's own practice and the broader architectural field of 1980s Greece practically short-circuited the original theoretical intentions. Critical regionalism, Giamarelos contends, served as an alibi

for the inward-looking interests of conservative traditionalists and Greek modernists of the period.

Whereas critical regionalism started to cloud the reception of Suzana and Dimitris Antonakakis's work from the moment it turned into a broad-scope approach to architecture, the 'international' celebration of their 'peripheral' work reflexively endowed them with the aura of the 'internationally famous' architects in Greece. Effectively reinforcing a regional inferiority complex, this celebration estranged them from their peers and accelerated the dissolution of their twenty-year-old collaborative practice, Atelier 66, in 1986. This was an unintended yet lasting effect. Something not dissimilar happened with the exhibition *Tendenzen – Neuere Architektur im Tessin*, which opened at ETH Zurich in 1975. The sophisticated reading of Ticinese architecture by the curator Martin Steinman created a universalizing narrative, transcending the original exhibit and the buildings it depicted to formulate an autonomous theoretical framework for further forms of practice. In the chapter entitled 'The Autonomy of Theory: *Tendenzen – Neuere Architektur im Tessin*, ETH Zurich, 1975', Irina Davidovici dissects how this exhibition brought Ticinese architecture to the keen attention of Swiss architects in other cantons, specifically in the German-speaking north. Unlike a conventional survey, the exhibit pursued the articulation of conceptual positions, subsuming the regional characteristics of Ticinese architecture under the headings of an ultimately transferable methodological approach. This reframing of a production in the dialectical terms of architectural realism formed a crucial contribution to the profound shift that affected the self-understanding and the historiography of Swiss architecture in the 1980s and 1990s.

<A>Imprints and undercurrents

The chapters by Irina Davidovici and Stylianos Giamarelos both suggest that the awareness of a specific production can reside in a process of interpretation and rearticulation of the built work, either through the medium of the exhibition or through a handful of texts. This type of reconfiguration, rooted in a densely woven net of relationships and places, is often traceable at 'the surface' of cultural processes. One can easily disclose what was at stake in the 1975 catalogue of the *Tendenzen* exhibition or in the programmatic, often cited, articles on critical regionalism as an approach countering the perceived placelessness and lack of identity of Modern Movement architecture, while also rejecting the whimsical individualism and ornamentation of postmodern architecture. It seems more difficult, in turn, to discover the imprint that philosophical or ideological currents left on texts or exhibitions while operating underneath the direct readable surface. It certainly triggers numerous questions: which sediments of old thought frames are detectable in new ideas? Which concepts were quickly digested or slowly metabolized, thereby eventually becoming the ferment of theoretical frameworks?

Such questions, among other, emerge in the chapters forming the second section of this book. In 'Royston Landau and the Research Programmes of Architecture', Jasper Cepl examines the theory of the intellectual and educator Royston Landau (1927–2001), head of the Graduate School at the Architectural Association (AA) in London from 1974 until 1993. In his writings, Landau contributed both to update the agendas of contemporary practice and critically reflect on the structures of the architectural culture in which he was immersed. Through an early exchange with the MIT-based architectural historian Stanford Anderson, a former student of the philosopher of science Paul Feyerabend, Landau became aware of recent developments in the theory and sociology of scientific knowledge. He became one of the most fervent promoters of the theories of thinkers such as Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn and Imre Lakatos, all working on the ways through which scientists put forward their theories.

Cepl focuses on how Landau adopted Lakatos's 'methodology of scientific research programmes' and, in what the former called 'positional analysis', turned this concept into a method that allowed him to clarify how architects set up their agendas. This appropriation of developments in the philosophy of science in the 1960s – namely, the Lakatosian idea that research is mostly conducted on the basis of 'first principles' (the 'hard core') which are shared by those involved in the research programme – structured architects' decision-making processes at the AA. This case, configuring an outspoken implementation, shows how theory travels between fields of knowledge and how ideas and methods morph when sojourning in new intellectual and educational contexts.

Whereas Cepl offers a strong evidence-based illustration of how philosophical connections became established and unfolded, Karla Britton and Kyle Dugdale reveal in 'Theoretical A/gnosticisms' – the sixth chapter of this volume – that well-known intellectual claims governing architectural knowledge, like the one Landau made, are not the only possible claims. Besides the history of architecture, often held to be the primarily material of architectural knowledge, and its theory, deemed amenable to more esoteric speculations, it also makes sense to consider the theology of architecture. In Britton and Dugdale's chapter, this argument is bracketed by an analysis of two talks. The first, an address given at the Museum of Modern Art in 1964 by the theologian Paul Tillich, suggests how the sacred may be found in building types (beyond ecclesiastical architectures) as an extension of theological language itself. The second, a lecture delivered in London in 1979 by Colin Rowe on the occasion of the publication of *Collage City*, adopts the language of theology to articulate a critique of modern architecture. The chapter discusses how both Tillich and Rowe claimed, albeit using different registers, that modernity's architectural knowledge cannot be contained within familiar boundaries but must be pursued through categories that transcend predictable boundaries between architecture's material and immaterial concerns.

<A>**Vehicles**

In the third section of this book, the circulation and manipulation of knowledge as such leaves centre stage, and this is given to the networks of informal communication between architects and the platforms or tools which were crucial for the reconceptualization of the role of architecture in the post-war period. More precisely, four authors focus on the relays and instruments that theory and theorists employed, knowingly or not, in the transmission of their (shifting) knowledge. They do this by looking beyond the common text-based understanding of theory and by exploring other possible vehicles for the production and transmission of knowledge. The notion of 'vehicle' is therefore interpreted here in two possible senses. On the one hand, vehicles are discussed as the 'intended means' employed in the original iteration, production or dissemination of a theoretical construct, with contributions re-examining more common instances of such 'means': a seminar (in Buenos Aires) and the plan of a house (in Texas). On the other hand, vehicles may be understood as the 'non-intended' means, employed a posteriori in order to reinforce, extend or reconfigure ideas. This line, we will see, requires new 'mining' processes and new methodologies both from those who pursue the exercise first-hand, and from those who study it in hindsight. Postcards and oral testimonies will offer concrete entries to illuminate this understanding of the concept of 'vehicle'.

Against the background of the post-war period, at a moment that disciplinary discourse and popular culture became more and more entangled, the chapters presented in this section contribute to expand the traditional loci of architecture theory's discursive practices. Still, even when 'vehicles' help to disclose how and by which means architects and theorists disseminated and conveyed knowledge, tracking ideas on the move remains notoriously difficult. As the cultural theorist Sibylle Baumbach remarked, even just by

observing the movement of knowledge one risks destroying that movement. The trajectories scholars enthusiastically reconstruct, she argues, are often nothing more than linear templates, keeping important detours or anomalies from view. Moreover, multiple media or various types of knowledge are so deeply intertwined that the beginning and end of a theoretical discourse often simply cannot be determined (Baumbach, Michaelis and Nünning 2012).

This idea clearly resonates in the chapter 'Cedric Price's Chats: Orality and the Production of Architectural Theory', by Jim Njoo. The author argues that even though printed text has been the privileged medium of architectural theory, speech and writing continue to be deeply interdependent, even in a society increasingly dominated by non-literacy. He reveals how the public lectures of the British architect Cedric Price, although spoken, were often mediated through writing, whereas his personal letters, though written, were spoken-like in many respects. Price also referred to his writings and lectures as 'chats': casual, open-ended conversations that encouraged the participation of his audience. Price thus actively enacted architectural theory, not only in what he wrote or said but also through the proximity and interaction he developed with his interlocutors.

If 'talk' remains fundamental to human experience and communication, Njoo asks, how might one take into better account architectural theory's orality as a dialogical phenomenon? And how might its consideration reframe architectural theory's critical autonomy? Cedric Price is definitely not the only one whose complex interactions of orality link with a wider field of performance-related practices at the crossroads of art, entertainment, education and science. In 'Alternative Facts: Towards a Theorization of Oral History in Architecture', the eight chapter of this volume, Janina Gosseye, Naomi Stead and Deborah van der Plaat advance the theorization of oral history as a method in architectural research by examining both its direct nature and the complexities of its use. The biggest

hurdle in using oral history to study architecture from the past, they contend, resides in the fact that architecture remains a strongly authorized practice. The 'authority' to speak about buildings is still attached to author figures: consequently, speaking with architects about their own work risks perpetuating the valorization of architects' intentions above all other narratives and modes of knowledge. Furthermore, architects (generally, white men) are often at pains to shape and protect their legacy, to dictate how their work and persona will be written into history. The catalogue of 'great masters' in the architectural canon, the ideology of genius, the foregrounding of the lone author – these metanarratives could turn out to be *reinforced* by an unreflective use of oral history methods. Drawing upon the theory of oral history in architecture and other disciplines, Gosseye, Stead and van der Plaat reflect on the complexities attending the use of this particular method, and its particular conventions and conceptual frames, within the discipline of architecture.

If the use of oral history by architectural historians can be problematic, the interpretation of one of the most basic sources for architectural history – the plan – can equally generate problems. The reason? The plan may form a symptom of, and even mask for, underlying conceptual assumptions. In 'Abandoning the Plan', Michael Jasper argues that certain problems characterizing architectural thought are specifically conveyed by the plan as a conceptual device and a locus of knowledge. Through a comparative formal analysis of Peter Eisenman's House II (1969) and John Hejduk's Texas House 5 (1962), Jasper comes to the conclusion that a plan can offer evidence not of theory in the making – as a formative force – but of theory in deformation and dissipation. Jasper discusses a little-cited text from 1969 in which Peter Eisenman laments that the importance of the plan as conceptual device has been dwindling. In the same years, John Hejduk discerns the apparent loss of certain modernist spatial sensibilities. Which shifts did Eisenman and Hejduk sense at the time, in architecture's trajectory? Are they right, and did knowledge swerve from the plan

to reside elsewhere? By attempting to answer these questions, Jasper reveals a unique episode in twentieth-century architectural thought and tests an analytic approach that addresses the methodological challenges confronting architects and historians in their engagement with the changing shapes of architectural discourse.

In the tenth chapter of this volume, 'Deltiology as History: Informal Communication as Praxis', this same type of versality stands central. Here, Nicholas Boyarsky focuses on how the use of ephemera, and in particular the vintage postcard, became, for a brief moment in the early 1970s, a predominant tool in enabling and representing critical discourse on architecture and urbanism. Boyarsky traces how the surreal and the everyday life are adapted and mingled by four protagonists – Alvin Boyarsky, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, Bernard Tschumi and Rem Koolhaas – and how these strands mutate and cross-contaminate to surface in key publications of the period (*Chicago a la Carte*, 1970; *Learning from Las Vegas*, 1972; *Advertisements for Architecture*, 1976–7; and *Delirious New York*, 1978). He highlights how these publications established a platform for discussions of architecture beyond the narrow parameters of academic modernism to engage with the political, the banal, eroticism and transgression, and the mythic. Alvin Boyarsky adopted deltiology, the collecting of postcards, as a structuring device for radical education at the AA's International Institute of Design Summer Sessions (1970–2); employed as a means of informal communication between the avant-garde, it became an emblem of the confrontation between European and American protagonists at the 1976 Venice Biennale before lapsing into obscurity.

The plans and postcards discussed by Jasper and Boyarsky are prime indicators of how architects are able to devise their own codes of meaning, projecting their visions independent from mainstream discourses or media. The postcard is ephemeral by nature, following an unpredictable trajectory of being stamped, addressed, sent, received, read and

discarded, forgotten or remembered. The plan is hermetical, possibly congealing intersecting discourses. Being volatile or being arcane and even obscuring vibrant types of thought, in both cases architectural knowledge exposes its ability to operate beyond known categories or to be composed out of multiple hidden layers. This flexibility makes it difficult to pinpoint the inception of ideas and obviously complicates the understanding of any formative context. Contexts, as it turns out, are never stable, univocal entities. They seem to possess a constantly shifting nature and are, as the intellectual historian Ed Baring rightly indicated, clearly elusive: 'Like texts, contexts travel because even at their purported point of origin, they are already slipping away' (Baring 2016: 586).

Nonetheless, it is possible to get hold, to some extent, of the formative contexts of architectural knowledge. In 'Theorizing from the South: The Seminar of Latin American Architecture (SAL)', Catherine Ettinger discusses how a context-related slight had significant impact in empowering peripheral cultures of architecture. In 1985, at the first Biennial of Architecture organized in Buenos Aires, European and North American architects presented their work in the morning sessions downtown at the Teatro San Martin; Latin American architects were relegated to afternoon and evening sessions at the University of Buenos Aires. This slight led to an impromptu meeting of architects from the region who signed a manifesto constituting the informal founding of the Seminar of Latin American Architecture (SAL / Seminario de Arquitectura Latinoamericana).

The SAL proposed the development of a Latin American architecture theory and, through informal round-table discussions, the group encouraged the collective construction of central notions, such as 'arquitectura apropiada' (meaning, in Spanish, both appropriated and appropriate architecture). Dialogue among the participants was an important vehicle for reflection and for the consolidation of a shared framework that questioned metropolitan constructs such as the idea of 'critical regionalism'. The SAL gave visibility to individual

voices and cohesion to ideas present in the region both before and after the meetings. They were instrumental in the consolidation of a network of Latin American architecture magazines and the establishment of a documentation centre (CEDODAL), both of which played a relevant role in creating awareness of shared problems and perspectives of the discipline in the region. In this final chapter, the seminar allowed designers and theorists to claim the identity of practice and thought in a part of the world that, in a postcolonial time, still felt the weight of 'Western' cultural hegemony and its trappings: theory, fluid and alive, shall not be co-opted or straightjacketed by European and North American academy, the proponents of SAL seemed to say.

Whereas most recent writing on architectural theory has been concerned with the 'what' – what has been said and written, and by whom – this book is concerned with the 'how': how theory has been developed and transmitted. It attempts to decentre the architectural object and the traditional figure of the architect as synthesizer and creative visionary and focuses on reciprocal relations and situated networks. Translation; interdisciplinary exchanges (philosophy, theology); transfers from practice to theory, and back again; the international circulation of ideas, with the resulting transformations and resistances – these are some of the main stops in the journey we propose here.

Architecture Thinking Across Boundaries: Knowledge Transfers since the 1960s offers a rich understanding of the landscape of architectural thought as it formed over the last six decades. The authors of this book go well beyond the narratives, agents, contexts and production modes that have primarily been considered the highlights of this landscape: they do so by thoroughly and critically enquiring the interstices – geographical, temporal and epistemological – that lie between and behind such focal points, showing how unstable, vital and eminently mobile the processes of thinking about architecture have been. The prerogative

of architectural theory is, after all, much more widely shared than the discipline itself is often willing to admit.

Architecture Thinking Across Boundaries: Knowledge Transfers since the 1960s includes the extended versions of a selection of papers presented at the international conference 'Theory's History, 196X-199X: Challenges in the Historiography of Architectural Knowledge,' convened in Brussels on 6-8 February 2017. The conference was organized by this volume's editors together with Yves Schoonjans, Hilde Heynen, Sebastiaan Loosen and Maarten Delbeke. The editors thank their fellow conference organisers, the speakers and authors, the reviewers and the publisher, whose combined efforts made this volume possible.

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