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## SEVEN THOUGHTS ON A SIN (TYPOLOGY)<sup>i</sup>

### 01 New Heterotopias

In Lieven De Boeck's 'Seven Sins of Urbanism', the Typology of the modernist 'form follows function' and functions separation must be dismissed in order to produce a 'more attractive world' made of the non-denominate of heterotopias. But what are the new heterotopias of contemporary urbanism? Can they be named and renamed with the flowing fixity of arrangement and contents, and the selective permeability of boundaries of the Foucaultian heterotopias?

### 02 Typology

While it advocates the 'suppression' of the notion of typology, statement #5 0903 implicitly refers back to the much wider and yet architecturally

more precise notion of Type that was developed by the architecture theorists of the Enlightenment. The fluid and re-combinable - and yet precise - arrangement of the new 'non-denominate' can be traced back to the roots of the Type, with all its potentials for re-elaboration and only partial adhesion - if not total indifference - to the issue of function.

### 03 Type

In 1825 Quatremère de Quincy offers a thoroughly modern (non modernist) definition of Type, which continues to have critical repercussions in architecture today. His is a form-less Type without pre-defined function, in which 'all is more or less vague'. The Type is a nucleus for a complexity of spatial arrangements that are adaptable to, but not (or not only) generated by function.

### 04 Time

Not a static form but a multiplicity of variations, Type operates in time 'like a sort of nucleus about which are collected, and to which are coordinated *in time*, the developments and *variations of forms* to which the

object is susceptible.' (Quatremère)<sup>ii</sup> Extraordinarily modern in its non-definition of space, this description refuses to congeal Type in one form, offering to architecture the tool of a dynamic four-dimensional proto-form that is at the same time original-generative and derivate-cumulative. We would call it, today, a diagram.

## **05 Diagram**

Generative flexibility, vagueness, non-representativity characterize the new 'system of modifiable concepts'. The suppression of the functionalist typology calls for a flexible tool that is not only a-functional but also informative rather than formal. Never given, the new type cannot be represented as a form, but only as an interpretative accumulation of forms in constant modification, 'moulded according to the occasion' to perform as critical agents.

## **06 Non-dénommé'**

The idea of vagueness in Quatremère's Type questions the stability of form and opens the classical language of architecture to the oscillations of the

multiple. In De Boeck's manifesto the attractiveness of the 'non-dénommé' derives from its challenging of function: the modernist language of architecture is subjected to even wider oscillations to question the given of function and incorporate the unexpected or the yet-unnamed.

## 07 Logic Rationalism

Form remains an agent of the a-functional for a 'more attractive world'. The quest for form progresses along a 'logic rationalism' à-la-Boullée, that 'recognizes the insufficiency and mediocrity offered by the results achieved only in a rational way' and raises the 'demand to break the rational construction from within, posing a continuous contradiction' between the system of principles and the personal expression. (A. Rossi)<sup>iii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> This text accompanied the display of Lieven De Boeck's work 'Seven Sins of Urbanism' in the exhibition *Negation in Art and Architecture*, held in Amsterdam in May 2005 at 66 East, Centre for Urban Culture, and is

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published in the exhibition catalogue *Negation in Art and Architecture*, Amsterdam: 66 East, Centre for Urban Culture 2005.

ii Antoine Quatremère de Quincy, 'Type', in *Encyclopédie Méthodique*. 'Architecture', vol. 3, pt. II, Paris, 1825. Translated in English in *Opposition* 8, now in K. Michael Hays (ed.), *The Oppositions Reader*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998, pp. 617-620.

iii A. Rossi, 'Introduzione a Boullée', in E.L. Boullée, *Architettura. Saggio sull'arte*, Padova: Marsilio 1967, p. 8.