A Cabalist in Cabell Hall 1/27/96

One acknowledgment and three brief remarks and then my offering.

I must acknowledge first William McDonough for his apparent fearless appetite for generational "renewal and risk" inherent in this celebration here today. I express my gratitude to him and to our faculty and students and offer back a Cabalist feast for all of us to imagine here, today. As many of you know, one of my recurrent images is that of the Duc deBerry at his (15c) feast table, not a chair in sight, but still overburdened with every manner of dish, guest, and beast. An overburdened table is more intriguing to me than the impression of a singular chair.

It should be clear to all that I choose to fabricate the idea of a well-grounded School here rather than serve the singular ambitions of a precisely classified department there. I have been re-reading a 1953 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica for over four decades now from A-Z, Z-A; then K-Z, J-A, etc. I do not intend to change my reading habits. But I also bring with me, and must acknowledge now, three other more portable books; Alice Walker's In Search of our Mothers' Gardens (1984), William Saroyan's The Human Comedy (1943), and Walter Lippmann's A Preface to Morals (1929). The first is a recent gift from our daughter; the second a gift given to my father on the day of my birth, and the third borrowed from my father's library 27 years ago on the day of his death.

1. Adele Santos has advised you to fasten your seat belts; perhaps those traveling with anyone called Peter might expect to suffer a rocky journey. My contrary spirit suggests that you now fling off these seat belts for a start this afternoon, take the risk, and allow yourselves to be moved if not jolted en route.

2. Adele and I share Rice University in common over a two decade period though we never coincided there as colleagues. At Rice a remarkable professor has endured long before and after us. Eleanor Evans is an artist and educator of the imagination. She taught the first year studio for over four decades. And for each generation she was also a demanding external examiner four years later as students presented their final comprehensive efforts in the famed William Ward Watkin competition. She was determined that the students' capacity to imagine this world as new would not suffer from the very successes of their rigorous education. She was a singular witness, a "testigo", who testified against training posturing as education. Throughout her teaching career she began with the material fabrications of the natural world; amidst the clutter she would introduce a spider's web, a moth's cocoon, a leaf, and then a rainbow. Her visual world was immensely dense but also as essential as the finest line inherent in each pragmatic model. Therefore, her final all-school lecture in 1992 came as a shock and a thrill. This lecture was a contemporary offering of vacancy, without a single slide, without a singularly exemplary artifact. Yet it was the most visually moving I have ever imagined. She, unlike I, knew how to be brief, essential. She told brief stories of two contemporary situations located in two distinct but familiar territories. Ms. Evans told of two childhood odysseys, one a summer's journey to her grandparents Iowan farm and a detailed account of their summer kitchen from sunrise to starscape. The other odyssey was a winter sojourn to the other grandparents in Chicago and another precise account of one window, which led to a fire escape

transformed magically from black to white as a snowstorm did its requisite alchemy. Stories without slides, which filled the imagination, were shared by a great teacher who whispered Ariadne's name along with the masterful Phidias.

3. The final prefacing remark is on Carl Sagen's Dragons in Eden. Five months ago I fell from a ladder and broke my wrist remarking the very territory upon which I had killed a great black snake yet another five months before. I wrote to my colleagues at the time that I had hoped that this temporary condition would not forebode an ineffective and limp leadership for my chairmanship. Today after recent weeks of therapeutic snow shoveling and after witnessing a fantastically productive fall semester on behalf of students and faculty alike, I hope to demonstrate that these digits are more than renewed for the springtime confrontations ahead for all of us. Now my offering.

Imagine: Five Digits 1/27/96

One, a good place to begin;
Two, Seven, Twenty-seven, three x three, nine square x three, one cubic meter; Three goes into Nine, Six, Ninety-six, three again and again, sixty-nine, ninety-six then and now.

Once every twenty-seven years there regularly occurs the opportunity for the Architect to acknowledge the Cabalist; we are a substantial crowd congregated to bear witness to this event here today in Cabell Hall.

I first began to teach twenty-seven years ago in 1969. My formal architectural education began thirty-four years ago; 1961-you can turn that upside down. Sometime between twenty-seven and thirty-four can be projected a generational cycle. Today is one of those moments, a hyphen, a leap year of sorts, both to reflect upon and to renew these enduring permutations, as every generation must. Somewhere between the Pyramid and the Sphinx, sometime between Eden and Jerusalem my education began.

Imagine Now, The New World, Virginia

Architecture, the Cabalah, Old Cabell Hall are the instruments of Reception, of Doctrines received by tradition, of the finite evidencing of hidden wisdom, some call Grace. Architecture, is the Cabalah, is an attempt to use finite constructs to explain the infinite structure of the cosmos. We could not be in a better setting today; no self-centered Rotunda here, no singularly clear precise form. We are held in tension, hostage, this afternoon between the depths of a flat wall and the spherical path of the wintry sun.

"Long, long ago and far, far away" is how I began my youthful teaching through spatial narratives in collaboration with Sigismundo Malalesta and Scherezade. Robert Dripps, the III, reminds me that at the ripe-old age of 52, since I began to teach at 25, perhaps I now have mediated more of my past than there remains for my future. Consequently, I value the instrumentality of "here and now" not only for myself as professional and professor but also as my modest contribution as citizen of this School.

Now, Imagine this Room

It is only appropriate that we spend the afternoon of this tempestuous and brilliant wintry day in this contemporary room with the real light "here" and then "there", with the School of Athens behind me but clearly confronting you. This is a contemporary room, a contemporary moment. Raphael's painting (1510) is remarkable for its celebration of Earthly Knowledge (Jefferson's Useful Knowledge) with the inventive, coincidence of present day characters projected into historical if not legendary time and space. This room, archetypal as a theatrical model with this clearly referential text, is an aggressive curriculum position onto itself, and challenges us as architects and citizens to participate as a contemporary congregation reaffirming even in Virgin territory the reciprocal totality of the present and the past. The School of Athens, 4th Century B.C. by way of 16th Century A.D. Rome, reappears here renewed about a century after its reprojection to accompany us this afternoon. Woody Allen's characters in The Purple Rose of Cairo, stepped on and off the silver screen as Raphael has stepped into his subject matter and space together with both contemporary patrons and pals alike.

My message this afternoon for myself and for this School is one of a similar ethical engagement with the contemporary imagination both "long, long ago and far, far away" and "here and now."

Now, Imagine a Stranger in this School of Architecture

I am not from here.
I came here from more than a decade in the fermenting condition of East Texas. Rumor has it that I was made and packaged, formulated some say, up East in Central New Jersey. The truth is that I came from the Eastern Edge of the West River, now called the Hudson. I grew up in the reliable light of a Manhattan apartment with ten huge windows. Nine faced north, but one magical window in the Dining Room faced south. As a child, especially in winter on Sunday mornings I would be magnetized by the shot of light that filled the air and marked a gridded parallelogram on the wall-to-wall carpeting. I would strike the ground, three floors up, and even in my immaculate context dust would magically arise to embody the light in the air. Light not only mattered, with some action it became instrumentally tangible.

Around that Dining Room table at night by candlelight I heard stories of other distant homes. My mother's family were great storytellers; the theatre and its spirit of collaboration were routine for those more at home in "fin de siecle" Vienna, Torino and Trieste. The other Home was that of my father – an orphanage in Pittsburgh. He never spoke of that place to his two sons, but acted singularly in his way. On January 27, 1961, thirty-five years ago today a great blizzard hit New York as my father was honored in the Grand Ballroom of the Plaza Hotel for his lifetime support of orphanages and orphans in America, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. A great uncle appeared out of the blue with a family bible from 1222 listing the seven century family tree of the Zoldessy clan; Magyar horse trainers, traders, thieves who accompanied the Mongol hordes of Genghis Khan settling in the Piedmont of Transylvania, Unguar, the Woodlands of Western Hungary. At the turn of the century, from nearby Prague came my grandfather, this uncle's brother, fabricator of huge furnaces and minute gears soon to serve the fiery steel industries of Pittsburgh. I acknowledge these journeymen and women all as Raphael

had Aeneas bear Anciasis on his shoulders as he led his son in hand out of Troy and onto Rome, (Vatican, Borgo Project.) They constitute in part for me as an American architect the doctrines I have received by tradition brought to you in this reception room as an offering from a new Cabalist in Old Cabell Hall.

I am now-here in Virginia, renewing myself as student and educator in this remarkable place, here-now. Though I may be amused, I refuse to believe now-here means with a slip of a hyphen no-where. It is our task as a School, as students and faculty, to locate ourselves selfishly between that ancient Assembly in Athens and this School of contemporary Cabalists.

To name names, and to speculate on the coincidence of numbers is certainly not fashionable as Italo Calvino warns in Numbers in the Night, in our relativist, tentative culture. But architects do not just form appearances; they specify, enumerate and inhabit matter; dig deep foundations, if they are optimistic, and acknowledge a profound decorum to be adhered to in the light of the sun and the reflectively of the moon.

I will share some time with you and Raphael as to where I find myself and why I have selected to build upon such strong foundations here.

Finally, Imagine a Contemporary task for all of us to share.

We have found two buildings sites here; one which we call the Land in North Garden, the other this School in Virginia. Both appear substantially solid, four visible gneiss rock ridges (departments) bearing witness as to the distinct stability of the site. I should have known better than to build casually a bridge between these distinct ridges. I was to learn the treachery of colluvial soil, a soft word implying four meters of fine powdery debris incapable of bearing the weight of four distinct separate piers. Between the ridge rocks and the pervasive powder this conceptually hyphenated terrace became rather rooted to a dwelling space substantially inhabiting the now vacated earth, a basement, a cave-like common hearth, an alchemist's crucible where this speculation was commenced the last day of 1995 with these five digits and a pencil and a yellow pad. The building site is coincidentally the Land and the School, both replete with diverse substances called common resources, both resonate with a specific local history of memory and amnesia. This specifically prerequisite theatre (the Lawn) for the rebuilding of the World already offers a sufficient curriculum for this particularly situated School. The pre-condition for all these constructions is clearly an ethical intention that environmental negotiation is the public theatre of citizenship.

We, all four departments, are subcontractors for a project that supposes a contribution beyond ourselves somewhere in the future. Raphael had that same joyful faith in the future when he brought Athens to Rome and Romans in consort with Athenians. Perhaps that is why I naively issued my first studio assignment here in 1992 as the projection of an Eleventh Pavilion for the Lawn in the still firm conviction that there must be indeed a vulnerable future for even the most perfect past. Columbus celebrated that same notion exactly half a millennium earlier.

Time Out. I've invited Alice Walker to join us now. I have asked you to imagine five digits, the New World, Virginia and a Stranger; I have attempted to set a stage in this Reception Room

upon which we must all act. I have presented characters and contexts of my familiar prerequisites.

Creation often
needs two hearts
one to root
and one to flower
One to sustain
in time of drouth
and hold fast
against winds of pain
the fragile bloom
that in the glory
of its hour
affirms a heart
unsung, unseen.

("Motherroot", Marilou Awiakta
in Abiding Appalachia)

And I remember people coming to my mother's yard to be given cuttings from her flowers; I hear again the praise showered on her because whatever rocky soil she landed on, she turned into a garden. A garden so brilliant with colors, so original in its design, so magnificent with life and creativity, that to this day people drive by our house in Georgia – perfect strangers and imperfect strangers-and ask to stand or walk among my mother's art.

I notice that it is only when my mother is working in her flowers that she is radiant, almost to the point of being invisible – except as Creator; hand and eye. She is involved in work her soul must have. Ordering the universe in the image of her personal conception of Beauty.

Her face, as she prepares the Art that is her gift, is a legacy of respect she leaves to me, for all that illuminates and cherishes life. She has handed down respect for the possibilities – and the will to grasp them.

For her, so hindered and intruded upon in so many ways, being an artist has still been a daily part of her life. This ability to hold on, even in very simple ways, is work black women have done for a very long time.

This poem is not enough, but it is something, for the woman who literally covered the holes in our walls with sunflowers:

There were women then
My mama's generation
Husky of voice – Stout of
Step
With fists as well as
Hands
How they battered down
Doors
And ironed
Starched white
Shirts
How they led
Armies
Headragged Generals
Across mined
Fields
Booby-trapped
Kitchens
To discover books
Desks
A place for us
How they knew what we
Must know
Without knowing a page
Of it
Themselves.

Guided by my heritage of a love of beauty and a respect for strength – in search of my mother's garden, I found my own.

And perhaps in Africa over two hundred years ago, there was just such a mother; perhaps she painted vivid and daring decorations in oranges and yellows and greens on the walls of her hut; perhaps she sang – in a voice like Roberta Flack's – sweetly over the compounds of her village; perhaps she wove the most stunning mats or told the most ingenious stories of all the village storytellers. Perhaps she was herself a poet – though only her daughter's name is signed to the poems that we know.

(Alice Walker, In Search of our
Mothers' Gardens)

Now briefly I will return to a safer middle ground, an accounting of seven remarkable Deans as educational directors in this drama.

In 1961 Robert McLaughlin, then Dean at Princeton, knew the names of every new student on the first day. On that first day, coincidentally my eighteenth birthday, that great Scotsman of a Dean introduced himself first with his enthusiasm for both the promise of post-war prefabrication and the coincidental value of the B'hai faith. He was an architect/pioneer in both faithful movements and impressed me with his progressive optimism. But he had also done his homework, and tested me that first day on what he thought were my useful assets to that school. Given my seven years of Latin and Hebrew, why had I not considered the Theological Seminary up the road. I protested that I had not had Presbyterian tendencies for some time now, and anyway my real love was for both the classics and architecture, I insisted. Impatient, he still went on to test my convictions. "Since there had been an ancient connection between theatre and architecture, perhaps I should offer my extensive stage set experience then to the campus Triangle Club." I had been taught to be accommodating to ancient sages, and, thus upon this second suggestion, I jump started my design curriculum that winter accepting the challenge and touring with this Dean and his buddies Jimmy Stewart and Jose Ferrer on the 50th Anniversary Triangle tour for which I designed and constructed the sets. I was ruined from the start by what Stirling later referred to as my amusing theatrical excessiveness in the Alley Theatre project (1982), followed by Frampton's bemused but clearly critical evaluation of my work as scenographic in the Parasol House (1984). A strange legacy was confirmed upon me by that remarkably pragmatic Scotsman.

Four years later, I elected to remain at Princeton for graduate work under my second Dean Robert Geddes. Recently from the University of Pennsylvania, the territory of Venturi and Kahn, Geddes spoke not of these substantially heroic figures, but brought with him the agenda of the City and "other" citizens heretofore not necessarily the agenda of the Princes and Popes of Princeton.

The Princeton I came to in 1961 had a curriculum of country clubs, suburban train stations, and Episcopal chapels for the students of all male prep schools in New England. When I left Princeton in 1967, thanks to Geddes, there was a curriculum located in the inner city shelters for drug addicts and unwed mothers, urban housing for the elderly, habilitative asylums for the mentally handicapped, and my thesis: a school of occupational retaining for conventional academic drop outs curiously located across the tracks from affluent Oyster Bay confronting the then polluted Long Island Sound. In six years I have come full circle from a situation of urban privilege to a situation of urban vulnerability. Bemusedly, I note that I won the first Lady Bird Johnson American the Beautiful Fund project award in 1967 for that thesis effort on renewal and the dignity of risk. More important at the time I thought I was out of School forever. In the heady political condition of the mid-1960's I assumed that "Princetonians in the Nation's Service" indeed had a responsibility to serve. I went off from 1967-69 to the Peace Corps in Peru. To be a foreigner, an "extranjero", a stranger in another culture was a fantastic lesson for this provincial New Yorker.

One brief anecdote. I was permitted to live in the historic center of a city founded in 1540. Arequipa, Peru is 8000 feet in altitude in a Shangri-La setting surrounded by three active Andean volcanoes; El Misti, Chachani, and Picchu Picchu. The historic center house type was often a sequence of cave like rooms built around a central patio. One large door punctured the inner patio wall; one high window let in light and noise from the street; an additional small

oculus permitted the high noon equatorial sun to penetrate the barrel-vaulted volume. A product of my fancy education, I rejected all this. The rooms were dark, I thought thus dismal and lifeless. Little did this genetic woodsman realize the preciousness of cool darkness in a desert oasis. Years later, when I read Tanazaki's In Praise of Shadows did I become convinced of the architects' role as agent of darkness if not the night. I was condemned by all too familiar academic criteria to live rather for two years in an ex-urban internationally designed (no doubt by Scandinavians) and U.S. Aid sponsored housing experiment inviting the constant glare and grit of daily sandstorms into the unintentional interior. Previously, I had a course at Princeton in politics by the Protestant Theologian Reinhold Neibuhr "Children of Light, and Children of Darkness". I should have known better. Inside is different from outside in spite of what I was taught by would be Californians. My immediate work there was the contemporary agenda of self-help housing which now sustains my faith in a program of work to dwell, to work again which is all too easily overlooked in the disposable transferability of this our recently assumed American sense of place.

In 1969 I came back to Princeton to teach that which I had been taught supposedly so well. I taught about space I need not touch, about light without the pre-requisite dust, about transparency and abstraction. I worked in cahoots with mylar and quadruple 0 pen points. We continued to celebrate white models in every possible nuance learning early on not to name matter; only to celebrate air-conditioned space. Ten years later this same Cistercian School laid humbled before the Benedictine menaces, refocused now on Rooms, never again space, pan-tone models became the reliquaries of a geological grab bag. It was time to leave that formative setting.

Two remarkable lessons linger from my Princeton student days. Michael Graves spoke softly in those days and told a careful story to second year students in 1963. "One day, long, long ago and far away in Indianapolis, Indiana, a five year old was holding his father's hand one Saturday afternoon as they walked past the elder gentleman's place of work. It was a high-rise office building in the heart of downtown. The father pointed up and said, Son, this is where I work. The boy, one hand securely clenched, took his own other hand and raised it and asked "*where*?" His father could not answer because he could not distinguish his window from any of the others." Michael said architects were obliged now to help five-year old boys to understand where their fathers work. The other Graves lesson was a short clear if not impatient demand years later in his office. "Peter, it will help you to make that window if you would only imagine from where you want the sun to be coming when you sit down to read the 'New York Times' on Sunday morning." Imagine a window in Indianapolis; imagine a window for tomorrow morning; and Imagine with Raphael how to make a window in this flat wall in this Room.

Another later Princeton lesson distinguished between *education and training*. As a graduate student, I had the privilege of being in a studio of six with four great critics: Frampton, Calquhoun, Maxwell and Colin Rowe all coincidentally visitors over a two year period. I was taught long before to be polite and always assumed profoundly that there must be great logic behind my critics' observations and instructions. Colin Rowe gave us a small urban design problem, a quadrant of Philadelphia as a warm up exercise for a museum of natural science for Logan Circle. He flew in every Tuesday and Thursday from Ithaca to fit us in with his

simultaneously rigorous Cornell schedule. On the first day of crits I presented my already resolved scheme and he sent me off to look at the plan of Strassbourg. Gleefully I went to the library, found the plan, traced the intentions, and modified Penn's patterns. On the following Thursday I showed off the amalgamation. Rowe looked and said only "for next week try Edinburgh." I said "Yes, sir" and gleefully went through the next exercise. The following Tuesday and for two weeks thereafter, Mr. Rowe, sir, would sit down, observe and yet only recommend yet another city, Torino, Montpelier, Avignon. The tracings were getting rather layered, now seven sheets, adjustments all recorded in an aggregate fashion on a well-worn vellum surface with 6H leads. Finally getting nowhere by going everywhere, I confronted this revered Professor as he never evaluated what I had been doing but always suggesting yet another source. I said, "Mr. Rowe, sir, I've been following your instructions for weeks now doing what you told me to do but you never comment on what I have done." He then gave me the greatest pedagogic lesson of all. He said, "Peter, you have been a very good student for a month now, but you will never be a great architect until you turn to me and make an offering of your own. You have incorporated Strasbourg, Edinburgh, Torino, Montpelier and Avignon into an incredible tapestry of quotations-Now start with a fresh sheet and your own voice and take me to a place I have not been before, but which is coded in the hidden wisdom of these gracious plans." Perhaps, Mr. Rowe, Sir, was a Cabalist. Imagine Five Digits Engaged; a window from which to review the City.

I have mentioned two remarkable deans. There are several more waiting in the hall or up on this wall..*After Princeton there has always been Virginia.* In the spring of 1980 I was a visiting critic in the graduate program here and had extraordinary students. Douglas and Victoria Rixey have remained collaborators and remarkable friends for the profession and the school. My third Dean, Joe Bosserman, about to step down, made a gracious offer at that time, as we were both from the same Old School. I could come to reinforce that which was substantially here. It would have been a familiar transition for me, where Bosserman sought continuity for a program he had so strongly nurtured. That spring, a new incoming dean from the "other" Old School in his silence stimulated space for speculation about my own continuing growth and specifically about this supposedly New School in which I was to labor.

During that long, hot and silent summer, John Meunier, soon to be my fourth significant Dean, not from any Old School at all, rather a Liverpool type as was Stirling, called me up regarding two former Princeton students he was considering hiring at the University of Cincinnati. I raved about them both, as I tend to do, and recommended that if at all possible he should hire them both rather than choose between such distinct resources. He said to my surprise "how about hiring one seasoned teacher instead of two recent students." I said, "Sorry it's too late, and anyway we are packed up and headed for Virginia." Slyly, as are those from the sweatshops of Liverpool, he suggested my coming out for thesis reviews. After much hesitation, but because I have a hard time saying "no," I went out for thesis reviews on June 1980. To my surprise I arrived at the Boone County Airport in Kentucky, and was greeted by what turned out to be a faculty search committee of five who, as Robert McLaughlin, had done their homework. On the ride into Cincinnati, they impressed me that they had taken the time to study carefully my Princeton work, not only my curious narratives that left a sheepish grin on student faces, but in addition they had sensed that within that which was built (each elemental door, window, attic, or basement) there was a latent curriculum position useful to them, in that

great "work-study" school, based on a faith in trying to learn how to build. On that short ride from the airport to Roeblings bridge over the Rhine, past the Cincinnati Zoo, where Aida is performed each summer by the packaderms, and on to the blue collar acropolis of the university, Clifton, I began to reappreciate the words of Heath Licklider, my first advisor and last colleague at Princeton. From Richmond, Virginia and in god-like diction, he had advised me that familiarity always breeds dullness at home, but expertise is only appreciated from afar. The sustained aggressive appetite for critical evaluation by the faculty of one another's work at Cincinnati was a revelation to me. Frankly, the cool disengagement of all too familiar Princeton, and the then perceived remoteness of a self-reflective Virginia School coincided with the sweaty embrace of that pragmatic city institution. Most importantly for me then and now, these first generation college students valued the privilege of what they called " a higher education" above all else and brought me to a decision I had hoped my father would have understood. After Princeton, on our way to Virginia, we found another route through the prerequisite desert (Abiding Appalachia), joined Cincinnatus and friends, and frequented the Zoo and Opera in syncopation that first year in exile. That John Heyduk and Michael Graves had been undergraduates there made me believe that within that pragmatic city of tool makers, like Pittsburgh and Liverpool, there was to be found fertile ground for new strains of the imagination to be nurtured in the clear light of common sense.

I gave an introductory school-wide talk in September 1980, and afterwards Dean John Meunier invited me for a reception – a Cabalist feast, in his home. There were only a small group of faculty there, prepared in their attendance for a remarkably critical blood bath, Liverpool style. In English fashion, they had prepared themselves and grilled me critically on my presentation facts and curious interpretations. There were no Old School assumptions in that pragmatic and knowledgeable setting. Creative agendas were permitted only when one got one's facts right first. It was difficult, but I was beginning to learn anew in that unassuming setting. Then Peter Eisenman, the new Virginia Dean's not so silent partner, came to Cincinnati a month later to lecture. As his former student, in my vulnerable newness, he reminded everyone how lucky they were to have the second best Michael Graves in their midst. I got the familiar clue then that it was already time to move on. Though we lived in a small town to the west of Cincinnati called Wyoming probably to convince ourselves we were finally far, far away, I found that this new land, this building site was still too familiar. I called Michael Graves several months later, as a good student would, to ask his advice as to whether I should take a Rice University offer. He was clear; "Certainly not, at Princeton we all expect that you will stay at Cincinnati for many years to help build their program." I thanked him, consistently polite, and then packed my boots and spurs for Texas. I crossed the Mississippi finally at 39 but not yet grey.

There I met my fifth remarkable Dean: O. Jack Mitchell. I never knew what the O. stood for except that he was somewhat round and inclusive and alive; we got along fine. That Dean was an honest communicator who loved Houston; he loved the profession that flourished there. There was no alienation from the way things were, no suspicion, no disengagement. He asked us to imagine a city; he was a smart Southerner who knew the dark power of great allees of live oak trees. He also knew how to light up that city at night. It was a great place to teach; like at Princeton under Geddes in the 1960's the agenda was wide open, like Houston as long as it was at the scale of a yet to be imagined city. (Renewal and risk were commonplace there). And he was a gardener, too. No critical blood bath there, he nurtured and cultivated faculty, students

and the profession alike. In the boom of 1981 he brought James Stirling to America to double the size of the school and raised the funds in one week from the Profession at hand. The Stirling plan is properly conservative, quiet even at the scale of the Cram campus; a remarkably risky act of faith for Houston. It was essentially brilliant as an interior in which to work in magnificently manipulated light. There I encountered two individuals, two "other to-be Deans," so critical to my heuristic confidence in the political responsibilities and phenomenal joys of our field. Adele Santos, now the dean of the New School (in San Diego,) literally put me up to this heady blast at that time, and Peter and Adele led that optimistic debate on all fronts. Peter Rowe, now Dean of Harvard's GSD, was an ambitiously relevant director/chair, a planner with a vision for the Gulf Coast as a natural region, which affected the entire curriculum of that climatic School. These two instrumental actors from the other side of this world, South Africa and New Zealand, connect me to my equally inverted south of the equator Peruvian condition. I will be forever grateful to them for turning the world upside down for my teaching and my work.

Robert Mangurian the real Dean at Sci-Arc has kept me on a long-leash for some time as part of his celebration of the thesis process, which permeates that entire curriculum from the start to the finish. On the first day, the students make their own paper; at night they build a fire, and in the charcoal they find their first remarkable drawing instruments. *Dirty digits*..He shares a confidence in both the enduring lessons of the sun and the moon was well the necessity of revealing this world anew each day with the help of both each new student and each old colleague alike. He is my Armenian pal with a mother from Plymouth Rock. Noah set sail long, long ago voyaging east of Eden and landed at Mt. Ararat, Armenia. Exactly six thousand years later (4004 B.C.-1996 A.D.), this son of Armenia has found his way to California going as far west as one can go before one encounters the east. Daniel Liebskind, born in a concentration camp, has joined Mangurian in the City of the Angels and is another Dean of sorts when not in Berlin. He believes only America, *tierra icognita*, can save the world from the death of the imagination predicted in 1492 when Reason and Science burdened the Renaissance with the authority of singular codes, when Copernicus settled all Heavenly debates, and when both the Inquisition and Protestantism gave grace to the idea of "no" rather than "yes". Catholic, as an inclusive adjective that once said yes to all manner of man and matter; was turned full circle and became a politically correct and exclusive noun for the Enlightenment. Only in the New World especially in Virginia could the Cabalist imagination embrace Captain John Smith and Pocahontas; only here could Prospero and Crusoe encounter their terrifying Calibans and contemporary Fridays. Armenia/America on my map exists along a thin Blue Ridge up the road apiece.

Time Out, Again. I wish to invite another pal William Saroyan to join us here to introduce Ulysses Macauley who has been waiting very patiently in the wings.

> *The little boy named Ulysses Macauley one day stood over the new gopher hole in the backyard of his house on Santa Clara Avenue in Ithaca, California. The gopher of this hole pushed up fresh moist dirt and peeked out at the boy, who was certainly a stranger but perhaps not an enemy. Before this miracle had been fully enjoyed by the boy, one of the birds of Ithaca flew into the old walnut tree in the backyard and after settling itself on a branch broke into rapture, moving the boy's fascination from the earth to the tree.*

Next, best of all, a freight train puffed and roared far away. The boy listened, and felt the earth beneath him tremble with the moving of the train. Then he broke into running, moving (it seemed to him) swifter than any life in the world.
When he reached the crossing he was just in time to see the passing of the whole train, from locomotive to caboose. He waved to the engineer, but the engineer did not wave back to him. He waved to five others who were with the train, but not one of them waved back. They might have done so, but they didn't. At last a Negro appeared leaning over the side of a gondola. Above the clatter of the train, Ulysses heard the man singing:

> *"Weep no more, my lady, O weep no more today*
> *We will sing one song for the old Kentucky home*
> *For the old Kentucky home far away"*

Ulysses waved to the Negro too, and then a wondrous and unexpected thing happened. This man, black and different from all the others, waved back to Ulysses, shouting: "Going home, boy-going back where I belong!"

The small boy and the Negro waved to one another until the train was almost out of sight.

Then Ulysses looked around. There it was, all around him, funny and lonely – the world of his life. The strange, weed-infested, junky, wonderful, senseless yet beautiful world. Walking down the track came an old man with a rolled bundle on his back. Ulysses waved to this man too, but the man was too old and too tired to be pleased with a small boy's friendliness. The old man glanced at Ulysses as if both he and the boy were already dead.

The little boy turned slowly and started for home. As he moved, he still listened to the passing of the train, the singing of the Negro, and the joyous words: "Gong home, boy—going back where I belong!" He stopped to think of all this, loitering beside a china-ball tree and kicking at the yellow, smelly, fallen fruit of it. After a moment he smiled the smile of the Macauley people – the gentle, wise, secret smile, which said Yes to all things.

When he turned the corner and saw the Macauley house, Ulysses began to skip, kicking up a heel. He tripped and fell because of this merriment, but got to his feet and went on.

His mother was in the yard, throwing feed to the chickens. She watched the boy trip and fall and get up and skip again. He came quickly and quietly and stood beside her, then went to the hen nest to look for eggs. He found one. He looked at it a moment, picked it up, brought it to his mother and very carefully handed it to her, by which he meant what no man can guess and no child can remember to tell.

(*William Saroyan, "Ulysses*",

The Human Comedy (1943)

I have covered this afternoon with pride certain Terrains of Resistance, frictions, blisters, perhaps so important to my appreciation of this School. And now I am here. We are here. We need to imagine the instrumentality of our digits, to count on those represented in this Reception Hall. Our common history out there began on fallow ground, not in nature, not in the wilderness, with a glass already half full and consumed. Resources of clay and stone were revealed yet within, beneath the exhausted topsoil and made useful for this not so Virgin context. The doctrines here have been handed down from one generation to another to reinterpret, to expand upon these numbers, which haunt us now in the night. One rotunda, Ten pavilions, permutations of student rooms, ending again in One. I came here to build in 1992 specifically drawn to the vision powerfully articulated by Harry Porter, my second Virginia Dean, my sixth of significance in this genesis cycle. He was dean of a School more important in its agenda in this university than any one department. I joined an enduring public school with a contemporary public agenda. This school is neither new nor old but shares the optimism of those with the endurance for the long race ahead. The numbers are great here, too diverse for these limited digits alone. Like Shiva, I will need to grow a few more limbs for all the work that must be done here or depend upon the collaboration of all. I am more interested in the greatness of this School than in the goodness of this department. I came here clearly to teach and not to administrate. My final remarkable Dean, the third in Virginia and the seventh of significance, is another great Scotsman like the first, William McDonough, whose optimistic faith in the public health and welfare of this planet gets back to the sensuous and profoundly elemental essence of a contemporary architecture. In the New World imagined by Noah, Liebskind and McDonough a confederation of smartened races, blistered then calloused, but still vitally sensitive will clamor to attend this School of Athens now more than virtual in Virginia together with Raphael, Alice Walker and especially Ulysses Macauley. Here they might warm up over a bowl of minestrone or Anastazi stew but under my watch they will have trouble finding bouillon or consummé here. This is a crowded room. Bill McDonough has turned up the heat on all of us. Let's see what kind of nutritious stew pot, or witches' brew, we will serve to this our generation in this setting as Cabalists to sustain all of us this new year.

Here and now I am about to conclude. As an aspiring Cabalist, I must offer one more permutation on our profession.

"Now" backwards is "won", recombined is "own." "Now" in Virginia we have "won" already that which we "own," our received tradition. Just out there. Right here in this Reception room. "Here" on the other hand is unique; it makes no sense backwards or inverted, so we should never again make our "here" Virginia ever a second best "other."

All of the above has been offered as a fabrication, a curriculum vitae, a parallel analogy to the essential nature of an inhabited and accountable architecture. It is up to you individually and as citizens to imagine your full obligations as Architects in this contemporary context.

Walter Lippmann insists on having the last word – Raphael is pleased.

The modern man is an emigrant who lives in a revolutionary society and inherits a protestant tradition. He must be guided by his conscience. But when he searches his conscience, he finds no fixed point outside of it by which he can take his bearings. He does not really believe that there is such a point, because he himself has moved about too fast to fix any point long enough in his mind. For the sense of authority is not established by argument. It is acquired by deep familiarity and indurated association. The ancient authorities were blended with the ancient landmarks, with fields and vineyards and patriarchal trees, with ancient houses and chests full of heirlooms, with churchyards near at hand and their ancestral graves, with old men who remembered wise sayings they had heard from wise old men. In that kind of setting it is natural to believe that the great truths are known and the big questions settled, and to feel that the dead themselves are still alive and are watching over the ancient faith.

The American people, more than any other people, is composed of individuals who have lost association with their old landmarks. They have crossed an ocean, they have spread themselves across a new continent. The American who still lives in his grandfather's house feels almost as if he were living in a museum. There are few Americans who have not moved at least once since their childhood, and even if they have staid where they were born, the old landmarks themselves have been carted away to make room for progress. That, perhaps, is one reason why we have so much more Americanism than love of America. It takes time to learn to love the new gas station, which stands where the wild honeysuckle grew. Moreover, the great majority of Americans have risen in the world. They have moved out of their class, lifting the old folds along with them perhaps, so that together they may sit by the steam pipes, and listen to the crooning of the radio. But more and more of them have moved not only out of their class, but out of their culture; and then they leave the old folks behind, and the continuity of life is broken. For faith grows well only as it is passed on from parents to their children amidst surroundings that bear witness, because nothing changes radically, to a deep permanence in the order of the world. It is true, no doubt, that in this great physical and psychic migration some of the old household gods are carefully packed up and put with the rest of the luggage, and then unpacked and set up on new altars in new places. But what can be taken along is at best no more than the tree, which is above the ground. The roots remain in the soil where first they grew.

The deep and abiding traditions of religion belong to the countryside. For it is then that man earns his daily bread by submitting to superhuman forces whose behavior he can only partially control. There is not much he can do when he has ploughed the ground and planted his seed except to wait hopefully for sun and rain from the sky. He is obviously part of a scheme that is greater than himself, subject to elements that transcend his powers and surpass his understanding. The city is an acid that dissolves this piety. How different it is from an ancient vineyard where men cultivate what their fathers have planted. In a modern city it is not easy to maintain that "reverent attachment to the sources of his being and the steadying of his life by that attachment." It is not natural to form reverent attachments to an apartment on a two-year lease, and an imitation mahogany desk on the thirty-second floor of an office building. In such an

environment piety becomes absurd, a butt for the facetious, and the pious man looks like a picturesque yokel or a stuffy fool.

Yet without piety, without a patriotism of family and place, without an almost plant-like implication in unchangeable surroundings, there can be no disposition to believe in an external order of things. The omnipotence of God means something to men who submit daily to the cycles of the weather and the mysterious power of nature. But the city man puts his faith in furnaces to keep out the cold, is proudly aware of what bad sewage his ancestors endured, and how ignorantly they believed that God, who made Adam at 9 a.m. on October 23 in the year 4004 B.C., was concerned with the behavior of Adam's children.

(Walter Lippmann "Barren Ground",
A Preface to Morals, 1927)

Raphael, Alice's Mother, Ulysses, and Adam thank you for accompanying them on a journey from Eden to Jerusalem this afternoon.