

## **WEEK 12-OPINION**

### **ARCH-572, ARCHITECTURE THEORY AND CRITICISM**

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Opinions on work matter. It matters to understand the thoughts of different people in order to be able to learn from its successes and failures for a better tomorrow. But hypocritical and bilateral statements with no regards constructive criticism is what the architectural reviews are facing today(70). The restlessness and uncertainty of that of Americans has invaded the realm of criticism where both sides are looking for comfort where no one wants to challenge the other(70).

As the author describes it, the exhibition reviews these days can be categorised into three broader categories. "the Yes Report, the No Review, and the Maybe, So-So"(70). The problems within each is that they often seem to be have a fixated opinion and stand on it without questioning. 'The Yes Report' for example, would readily accept what is given without daring to initiate any polemic criticism. 'The No Review' on the other hand, is full of skepticism and adverse opinion(71). Rejected by professional writers, this has become a preferred writing style for architects, which in-turn brings contempt and disapproval towards the author. Finally, 'The Maybe So-So', is indecisive, ambiguous and annoying. "The problem with the Maybe, So-So is that it neutralises positive and negative criticism in a self-canceling, zero-sum game."(71). It is the easiest way to be able to look smart and make no enemies, where the only desire is 'self-preservation'(71). The author suggests a fourth kind of reviewing architecture, "that asks three simple questions: what is being done, what is not being done, and what should be done?"(72). It is important for a reviewer to provide descriptive criticism and not summary. It is also important to interpret the implications that allowed its existence at the first place. Furthermore, an evaluation of the project that offers a decision of its successes and failures is necessary. And finally, it is also necessary to speculate the future directions of architecture.

A personal opinion is formed through various external factors, which includes and is not limited to personal tastes and skills. The author perfectly describes the contrasting opinions of two star-architects, both passing "through the orbit of Frank Lloyd Wright"(62). Bruce Alonzo Goff and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, had their own personal opinions towards the future of inhabitation. They both had an idea of a contemporary method of living that were against the conventional suburban style. Yet, their thoughts differed. "For Ludwig, inhabitation is the art of personal restraint; for Bruce it's the design of personal expression"(63). It is important to understand that contemporary architecture was not merely a form-based concern. Both these architects "demonstrate that contemporary architecture is never defined by the biographies of generation or style, but by the possibilities of time, and of perceptive responses to acute socio-cultural situations"(64).

The author describes the difference between an Architect's opinion to that of an Historian(8). Historians like to read history of architecture in its gross time, where the focus is not architecture but the facts. However, an Architect considers history as accidents that should be wiped away of its existence. The historians focus in trivial facts and numbers, whereas architectural research requires attention to dialogue, not metrics.