

論文の内容要旨

The Role of Figuration in the Theory and Design of Robert Venturi (ロバート・ヴェンチュエリの理論とデザインにおける具象形態の役割)

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Study topic

The main goal of this research is to identify what is specific in the way the American architect Robert Venturi uses figuration, here understood as an artistic process of representation which is opposed to that of abstraction, in both his theories and designs, as well as to find out why and how this concept is brought into play in his projects. It obviously presupposes that figuration actually is a determinant aspect of his architecture, and therefore this study first seeks to confirm that such a relationship exists and is meaningful. What constitutes the *raison d'être* of the study is a sheer interest in the subject of figuration itself, considered by the author as a reservoir of architectural potentialities yet to be exploited. So researching the work of Robert Venturi in this manner can be seen as a pretext for studying the notion of figuration in architecture; and inversely, the study of figuration might be perceived as a way to narrow down and specify that of Venturi's work, too vast to be studied without such a purpose.

Because buildings need to respond to functional and technical criteria in order to exist, the discipline of architecture is widely considered as a sort of abstract art. But just as most buildings are not necessarily architectures, the practice of this discipline involves more often than not the input of external concrete images into the definition of a building design. The study thus seeks to identify these images and to relate them to their respective ideological contexts in architectural history. The interest in figuration is also coming from an observation of the alternation that has taken place between abstraction and figuration through time in artistic and architectural trends. As figuration today tends to impose itself as a domineering tendency in contemporary art, architecture is more likely than not to follow this direction in the near future.

The selection of an American architect as the subject of a monographic study in the context of Japanese academia can raise questions regarding its purpose, but this is precisely because this architect has developed theoretical research on the subject of Japanese architectural and visual cultures, and on their relationship to foreign influences that this study is relevant. And while there is no a priori requirement for a research topic to be necessarily related to the specific location where it is undertaken, this study nonetheless grasps the occasion to connect, present, and analyze the remarks, findings, and projects that Venturi has made in and about Japan whenever they are relevant to the study of the relationship between his work and the notion of figuration as a form-giver.

Study material and methodology

This study mainly relies on an original interview of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown conducted by myself at their house in Philadelphia on September 7, 2009. As figuration was the specific subject of conversation during our meeting, the text of the interview is constantly referred to in order to back up the findings of the study, to confirm the hypotheses that each part makes regarding the use of figuration, without replacing the study itself. Therefore it superimposes itself onto the study without changing its overall structure. To start with, the interview was useful in determining whether or not Venturi's work was consciously related to figuration, which was more of an assumption at the beginning of this study. It is then used to identify the theoretical basis of his dogmatic approach, as well as the figurative images used in his projects.

The research structure is divided into two main parts: one that deals with the theory of Robert Venturi, and the other with his design methods. So the methodology at a global scale in this study is that of a comparative analysis of theory to practice, with one part that focuses on the semantic field of figuration and the other on the formal field of this notion. Each part follows thus its own method: the first part consists of a literary analysis of Venturi's main publications and of the original interview in order to identify three things: 1) the type of terminology used regarding the issue of figuration, which led to an etymological study; 2) the origins of Venturi's theory within other figuration-related theories; and 3) the explicit uses of figuration which Venturi made in the form of analytical drawings.

Then the second part consists of case studies of Venturi's projects, where a decomposition of their various components has been performed, using on one hand the principles of Gestalt concerning the opposition figure/ground in order to extract the figurative basis of these designs and on the other the opposition between corporeal form and spatial form of Paul Frankl in order to distinguish the optical appearance of the building from its functional component.

The criteria used to select the projects included mainly the explicitness of their figurative component, as well as size and time, in order to have the widest array from which to identify any evolution. Whether project descriptions by Venturi himself was available or not has also been determinant when choosing these projects. Then the research consisted in trying to identify patterns among projects and to elaborate representative diagrams that aimed to express the main characteristics of the use of figuration in Venturi's architecture.

Main Chapters

In order to grasp the general meaning of the term "figuration" itself, what it includes and what it excludes, the second chapter starts with a study of the specific terminology related to this notion, and a disambiguation between the different terms involved. It then considers the work of various thinkers, art historians, philosophers, and architects, who have in one way or another theorized about this topic. The research then tries to decipher the various forms of expression of figuration in

architecture. It identifies an intention to both express and conceal figurative images in architectural form through arithmetics and proportions from Vitruvius to Le Corbusier. The study also observes the shift from this reference to human form (anthropometry) to that of Nature and that of the machine in Neoclassical and Modern architecture, while considering the socio-cultural backgrounds at stake in these ideological transformations.

A third chapter then looks at how figuration is used in the theory of Robert Venturi, as this very idea can be either accepted or rejected depending on the circumstance. This chapter also attempts to relocate his theoretical approach through a synthesis of his main publications, as well as to identify the external theoretical basis upon which his theory has been derived. A general theoretical diagram of such relationships highlights the facts that the originality of Venturi's theoretical stance lies in a mix of influences, rather than in blunt ideology.

It is understood that Venturi has been particularly skillful at literarily justifying his own designs rather than letting them speak for themselves, and therefore, in the fourth chapter focusing on the analysis of his design methods, it is intended to consider his theories as not necessarily valid when looking at his projects, so as to be able to generate independent observations and conclusions. The entirety of his built and unbuilt production has been considered and a series of case studies, selected for their capacity to best represent the different uses of figuration in his architecture, has been conducted so as to identify common design patterns.

The fifth chapter attempts to draw conclusions from the former analysis and to present them in an intelligible way. The way the legacy of Venturi has been interpreted by other architects, his influence and "counterinfluence", has also been researched.

Main conclusions

1. Origins of Venturi's Theory in Neoclassicism

The study concludes that Venturi uses figuration as both a negative and positive tool. It is used as a negative tool in his theory to criticize a certain type of architecture (with the duck, the glove, etc.), by associating popular imagery to otherwise abstract-looking buildings, thus instrumentalizing figuration itself, and as a positive tool in his own projects (as a means of decoration and communication). It is shown that it is precisely by proposing a distortion of an abstract type of architecture into a figurative one that Venturi and Scott Brown aimed to criticize the symbolic distortion that modern architects have accomplished. From a theoretical point of view, the advocacy of the "decorated shed" model over that of the "duck" is interpreted as a legacy of eighteenth century *Architecture parlante* in its attempt to communicate the functional nature of an edifice through visual devices, and as a reaction against Laugier's theory of inclusion of ornamentation and structure within the same building system, which has been most influential in modernism.

2. Instrumentalization of Figuration

The third chapter exposes the fact that figuration has been instrumentalized in the theory of Robert Venturi, in the sense that it has been used as a tool to serve a different purpose than the advocacy of figuration itself, in order to formulate a criticism of functionalism in architecture. What is at stake in the criticism of the duck is indeed not the fact that the building uses figuration as a means of expression (since many of Venturi's designs use figuration), but the fact that it attempts to depict something else than a building through its form. Further, the analysis of Venturi's main writings shows that Venturi systematically had recourse to figuration when analyzing the main characteristics of a given building type, which can be seen as a unique character of this architect. This particular method has been interpreted as a desire to fight the excess of abstraction that he aims to criticize in modernism, not with more abstract writings, but with properly figurative means.

3. Figuration and Aesthetics of Flatness

In the analysis of Venturi's projects, flatness is analyzed as a deliberate yet meaningful aesthetic choice. As opposed to traditional painting, where a two-dimensional support is used to express volumetry, in Venturi's architecture, the figuration of volumetric objects (or subjects) is reversely used to express the two-dimensionality of the support. In other words, the perception of the flatness of the billboard is magnified by the intentionally chosen figurative images, and this perception of flatness would be much weaker if these billboards displayed abstract shapes. This reverse representational process is interpreted as a desire to visually clarify the idea of the ejection of the figurative component of the building toward its exterior, so as to locate architecture in time rather than space.

4. Similarities and Differences Between the Four Types of Figuration Found in Venturi's Architecture

Through the analysis of Venturi's projects, the fourth chapter finds that there are only four types of use of figuration in Venturi's entire oeuvre: *decorated sheds*, *architectural correlations*, *urban homotheties* and *urban metaphors*. In *decorated sheds*: figuration is used to emphasize the flatness of the building facade (as mentioned above), in *architectural correlations*: it is used to establish a relation with architecture itself through analogies with archetypes, in *urban homotheties*: figuration is used to represent the very city within which the project takes place, and in the *urban metaphors*: an analogy with the space of the city is used as a circulation diagram that governs the overall structure of the building. The study also shows that several of these four types can exceptionally coexist within the same project (for example, the hotel in Nikko is both an *architectural correlation* and an *urban metaphor*).

5. Relocating Venturi within Architectural Theory and Design

5.1. Systems of Signs as Theoretical Strategy

It is arguable that the models of the decorated shed and that of the duck are probably not so different in terms of systems of signs. If one considers their relationship to the signifier/signified opposition, one can notice that the drawing of the decorated shed focuses on the signifier part of the

building, while the drawing of the duck is all about the signified. This comparison fails to compare apples to apples, in the sense that the signified “duck” and the signifier “decorated shed” belong to different semantic fields. Therefore one can observe that this set of drawings has performed a semantic distortion, in order to emphasize the difference between these two types rather than their similarity, which eventually can be seen as an intentional strategy in the theory of Venturi and Scott Brown to defend an architecture that breaks with the aesthetic conventions of modernism.

5.2. Venturi’s Theory as a Form of Functionalism

The third chapter shows that the functionalist ideals that sustained modernism in architecture have been not only criticized but also emulated by Venturi and Scott Brown. When they pointed that when the functional elements of modern architecture work symbolically, they usually do not work functionally, these architects endeavored to surpass functionalism in terms of functionality. So that one can interpret the decorated shed model, and therefore most of their architecture, as another kind of functionalism, which, in its appearance, is also similar to functionalism, since it also exudes a machine-like functionality.

5.3. A Theoretical Shift from Anti-dogmatic to Dogmatic

As the third chapter also shows, there has been a sharp shift from an anti-dogmatic approach in Venturi’s first book to a resolutely dogmatic one in his second book. What was initially dismissed was the reductive aspect of the formulas of modernism in architecture, but what was eventually defended by him in the decorated shed model is paradoxically an extremely reductive formula, which has none of the complexity and contradiction formerly advocated. The “Less is more” slogan of Mies Van der Rohe, which was openly countered by Venturi’s early theory, ultimately suited the decorated shed model.

5.4. The Problematic Location of the Ornament

Finally, one can notice that if Venturi’s theory has been built around a desire to restore the value of the ornament in architecture after its eradication in modernism, his conception of what is an ornament is questionable. Ornaments in classical architecture are used to make a connection between architectural elements and to identify these elements as such. As opposed to this, what the decorated shed has proposed is in fact a dislocation of the figurative component of ornamentation and its functionalization as a communication device, two processes that are more relevant to modernist zoning techniques than to meticulously crafted architecture.