

L I F E D E A T H
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L I T E R A T E I L L I T E R A T E
S O L I D V O I D
L A N D S C A P E I N T E R I O R
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D Y N A M I C S T A T I C
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E M P L O Y E D U N E M P L O Y E D
N A T U R A L M A N - M A D E
P A S T F U T U R E
C A P I T A L I S M S O C I A L I S M
T E M P O R A R Y P E R M A N E N T
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A C C E S S I B L E I N A C C E S S I B L E
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U R B A N R U R A L

I am for richness of meaning rather than clarity of meaning, for the implicit function as well as the explicit function. I prefer 'both-and' to 'either-or', black and white and sometimes grey, to black or white. A valid architecture evokes many levels of meaning and combinations of focus: its space and elements becomes readable and workable in several ways at once. (Venturi 1977: 16)

Dualisms constitute the complexities and intrigues which give live colour.

Kurokawa (1991: 46) explains Suzuki Daisetz's philosophy of the identity of opposites as the fundamental principle by which the contradictory opposites are revealed as existing in relation to each other. Therefore, one can reason that the ability to distinguish between opposing concepts, such as public/private, inside/outside, black/white, apartheid/integration and Eurocentric/Afrocentric spatial thought, exists because of the differentiation in concepts. It is, therefore, the opposing force that brings a concept to life.

'Human beings exist as a part of the universe; at the same time, the universe is enfolded in the consciousness of human beings' (Kurokawa 1991: 46). For this reason, duals depend on each other for their existence because without darkness, no light would exist and without interior spaces, the concept of exterior space would exist.

Kurokawa (1991: 38) criticizes Modernism and Modern architecture for their preference for dualism and segregation. He explains that the 'essentially invisible chaos of life' (the complementary) has been lost through segregation and that ambiguity has been lost through clarity. In his book *Complexity and Contradiction*, Venturi (1977:16) reaffirms this approach. . He sets modernism's exclusive principle of 'either-or' against post-modernism's 'both-and' approach, and he reacts as follows:

'Contradictory levels of meaning and use in architecture involve the paradoxical contrast implied by the conjunctive "yet"' (Venturi 1977: 23).

'The non-dialectical mean between which extremes are suspended constitutes something like an interface, which is the condition of the possibility and impossibility of seemingly seamless systems and structures. When radically conceived, this interface extends beyond every margin of difference to 'contaminate' opposites that once seemed fixed.' (Taylor 1997: 269)

Venturi construes that the basis of the both- and phenomenon is contradiction, and that its basis is hierarchy, which yields several levels of meanings among elements of varying value.

It can include elements that are both good and awkward, big and little, closed and open, continues and articulated, round and square, structural and spatial. An architecture which includes varying degree of meaning breeds ambiguity and tension. (Venturi 1977: 23)

This ambiguity of meaning is created through the simultaneous affirmation and rejection on a conceptual level (Kurokawa 1991: 38). When contrasting spheres merge, tension is created between the dualities. This tension allows the 'in-between' to exist. Consequently the acknowledgement of the one opposite will inevitably lead to the neglect of the other. Therefore, one can argue that providing for the in-between might suggest the acknowledgement and integration of both.

According to Berrizbeitia and Pollak (2003: 82), the dualistic interface, also called a threshold, can be explored as a psychological or an ecological phenomenon. A psychological threshold is the point at which a stimulus is of sufficient stimulation to begin to produce an effect. Ecological thresholds are the most important parts of a system; for instance, the place where the field meets the forest is more important than the forest or field.

Berrizbeitia and Pollak (2003: 82) explain that thresholds are the points where transformations begin, where exchanges between unlikely things occur, and where identities are declared.

Because thresholds are the result of dynamic relations between architecture and landscape, public and private, and work and recreation, they resist closure in terms of meaning and space.

Thresholds have the potential of inclusive realms where the introduction and maintenance of difference are possible. Unlike an idea of inclusion as a melting pot where identities are blurred to create a compromised whole, a threshold as an operation entails the preservation of differences, while creating something new from the coexistence.

Alswang & Van Rensburg (1995: 709) defines *reciprocity* as 'the practice of giving and taking benefits to and from each other.' According to Berrizbeitia and Pollak (2003: 14), the insertion of a building disrupts the landscape. This disruption offers an opportunity for the architecture to be an agent of the physical and conceptual reconstruction of the environment it has disrupted. Thereby, a reciprocal relationship is established with the landscape. He explains that one strategy of reconstruction is the physical and visual internalization of the topography of the surrounding landscape such as Carme Pinos and Eric Miralles accomplished in their design of a school at Morella, Spain.

Berrizbeitia & Pollak (2003: 14) states that ambiguity supports reciprocity; therefore, by assigning an equivalent status to two things through a strategy that renders their identity uncertain, the possibility for an own interpretation is established. This is evident in the manner interior and exterior spaces are dealt with in the school building. Outside visitors are made to feel protected from the elements, as if they were inside, while interior spaces are ripped open to expose the user to the setting.

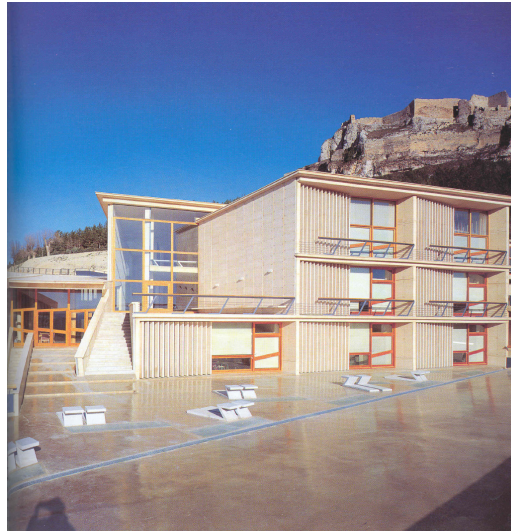
Reciprocity depends on architecture that is made up of or broken down into multiple elements. 'This combination of fragmentation and multiplicity serves to open the architectural work in such a way as to be able to engage with the landscape, not as opposite but as elements of connection and use, similar in kind to elements of architecture' (Berrizbeitia & Pollak 2003: 14).



interior - exterior connections at the Metro Mall



7
NORMATIVE POSITION
03 IN BETWEEN
city to city
country to country
coast to coast
ka:| to ka:|



03.01. View of the school

SCHOOL AT MORELLA, SPAIN

1986–1993, Carme Pinos and Eric Miralles

Ryan (1996: 44) describes this building as 'an enormous foyer, a public meeting place which is in turn expansive and enclosed.' The architects were extremely sensitive to the insertion of the building into the landscape. Their approach was to unveil ambiguities between inside and outside by

The inversion of figure–ground relationship

The use of movement as a device to initiate spatial and visual relationships between the architecture and the landscape

Shifts in the relationship of subject to view (Berrizbeitia & Pollak 2003: 36)

The distribution of the program is analogous of the 'in-between' condition of the site. Ryan (1996: 44) notes that the repetitive constituents of the program (the school and the boarding school) both unfold down the site, allowing each its portion of natural light, and are aligned apart so that the upper entrance has a vertiginous slot open to the lower perimeter playground. He explains that this division enables each segment to develop its own language of form through its specific functional analysis.

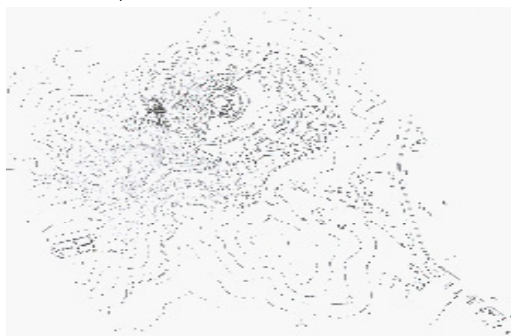
To fade the division between inside and outside, the left-over (in-between) spaces around buildings are not treated as the by-product of the figure. They are the generators of the building form. The terraces, ramps and private dormitory gardens are emphasized to become the figure. 'These grounds, usually the passive repositories of the buildings, are conceived as figured voids that actively function to fragment the volumes of the building, to create fissures, gaps, views and passages between and through, in order to provoke its relationship with the landscape (Berrizbeitia & Pollak 2003: 37).

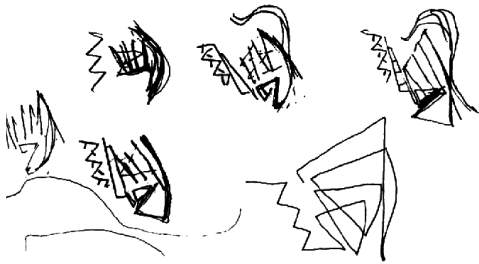
The project is conceived as a series of trajectories that describe and delimit, without limiting. A territory in which inside and outside is visibly interwoven (Berrizbeitia & Pollak 2003: 15).

The figural and spatial prominence given to horizontal and vertical circulation, both inside and outside, breaks down the building's autonomy. Thereby substituting, for a purely architectural presence, one of which the experience is made of passing encounters between architecture and landscape.

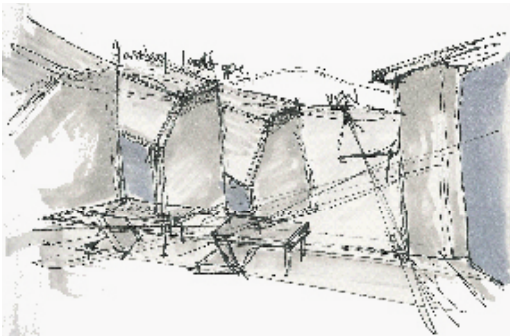
Ambiguity is augmented by the inversion of

03.02. Site plan

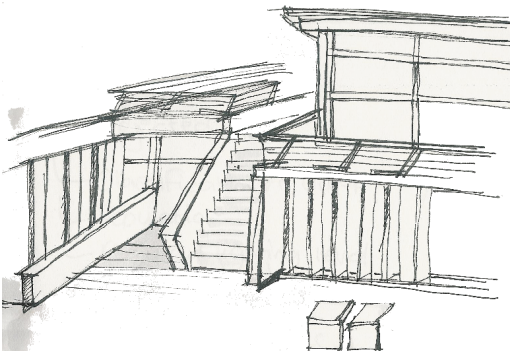




03.03. Conceptual development of the plan



03.03. The placement of structures create fissures towards views



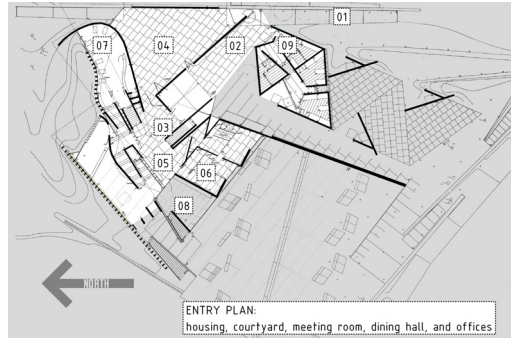
03.04. The emphasis is placed on the ground rather than the figure

commonly held expectations about exterior and interior space. Outside visitors are made to feel protected from the landscape, as if being inside. This impression is created by always positioning the visitor in relation to the building wall or roof overhang. Benches are not positioned in the conventional way but are placed at the outer edges or parapet or rail of a terrace. This impression of being at the edge of a view is, paradoxically, always reserved for the inside of a building, where the visitor is meant to feel as if he or she were outside, suspended in the landscape.

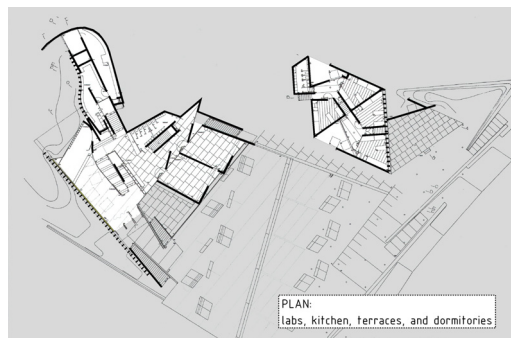
Inside, the visual experience is akin to that outside: no opaque walls interrupt vision; it is allowed to escape in all directions. Likewise, light comes in from all sides, as if outdoors, and is supplemented by additional artificial lighting, when needed, to emphasize a sense of being outside. Ryan (1996: 45) explains that this impression is achieved with the use of floor-to-ceiling glass with external grilles of thin, vertical ribs of in-situ concrete, creating a tectonic rhythm that is also, in the great Spanish tradition, a play on light and shade. These vertical ribs change the appearance of the building when the structure is experienced through movement.

The views from the architectural promenade are filtered, layered, fragmented and multiple: in the interior, they are always given in small amounts through the vertical fenestration; on the exterior, the emphasis is on views through the gaps between buildings. The traditional view over a silent, composed and passive landscape is transformed to allow a reciprocal exchange in which the landscape may not always be benign, nor the viewer always dominant.

- 01_ACCESS RAMP
- 02_ENTRANCE COURT YARD
- 03_HALL
- 04_MULTI USE HALL
- 05_RECEPTION
- 06_OFFICES
- 07_VOID OF CAFETERIA
- 08_TERRACE
- 09_TEACHERS DWELLING

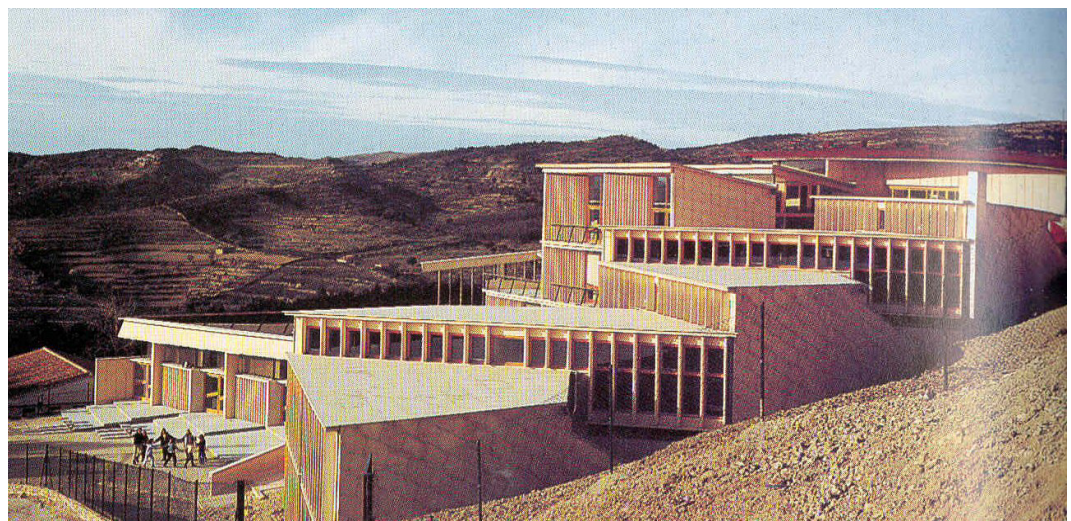


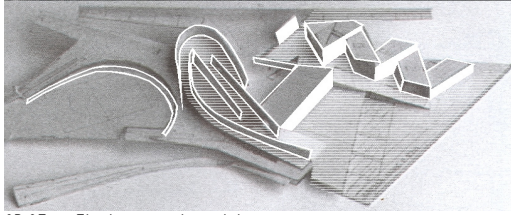
03.05. Entry Plan



03.06. Plan of labs and dormitories

03.08. View of the dormitories following the ground line





03.07. First concept model



03.10. Entrance hall



03.11. Interior view towards sports fields, the extensive use of glass enforces the notion of exposure to the surrounding while being indoors



03.12. The open yet private nature of classrooms

The site is a transitional zone at the juxtaposition of the contradictory contextual urban realms; therefore the *INbetween* condition of the site leads to the search for the *INbetween* in architecture

From the placement of

poor opposite rich,

inviting opposite closed,

dense urban fabric opposite sprawling suburban fabric, and

exclusive opposite inclusive,

arise the question: When dealing with an island placed amidst these contradictions, how does one include and acknowledge all? Providing for the one inevitably leads to the exclusion of the other, yet again reinforcing the legacy apartheid left South African society in our urban environments.

Thus the question remains: can the *INbetween* be captured in the creation of a platform for integration? Is it possible to find relevance in the prevailing context and paradigm of contemporary South Africa? Now, ten years after apartheid, the merging of nationalities, languages, cultures, ideas, people and the built environment is set on the uncertain basis of difference. Hence the search for relevance continues. In retrospect, integration does not emerge in the elaborate architectural symbols of democracy such as Constitution Hill and the Apartheid Museum; however, from everyday needs and happenings, a rich integration of ideas and resources leads to co-dependent interactions.

Maybe addressing diversity and richness in the rainbow nation has led to the loss of being South African. In the mindset of a nation trying to cope with so many opposing forces, often by borrowing from foreign cultures, the problem of the lack of a relevant local identity remains.

Therefore, the search is for the vibrant middle ground between rich and poor, inclusion and exclusion, and Eurocentric and Afro centric views in terms of space, division, security, defensibility and ownership.

The merging of ideas should not represent or imitate either the one or the other but should, rather, create a paradigm shift with reference to the merging concepts in unique way. The program is a development centre for urban youth and children. Similar to South Africa, youth are also in a state of *INbetweenness*; they are neither children nor adults. They are at a stage when their feelings toward responsibility are relatively unclear, this *INbetween* condition is viewed as an appropriate point of intervention.

The search for the *INbetween* in architectural terms, aims at the acknowledgement and inclusion of both ends of the dualism. Therefore the architecture will be an investigation of the fading of boundaries. The physical boundaries between private and public, outside and inside, formal and informal, should weaken towards more suggested psychological boundaries

