

3 . C o n t e x t a n a l y s i s

2.3 Understanding architecture today

It is my understanding that the study of architecture has approached a different way of thinking, which lends itself beyond hard factual data and knowledge. This field of study is approaching a more intuitive understanding of its context, physical and social. This is a conclusion after having read the work of Tschumi, Brunchoten, De Certeau and publications from the Architectural Association. This was also observed in the exhibitions at the 2006 Venice Biennale, especially the English Exhibition (see fig 2.2). There seems to a search for that which is not so obvious, as if the old methods have failed us, and we now realize how quickly everything changes and how connected we all are. It seems that sensitive observation, anticipation and realizing that there are countless factors that influence what has to be done, is what is needed to understand what goes on around us. It is thanks to post-modern thinking that architecture is influenced by other disciplines, such as pure science, art and philosophy, and it is also a sign of the times, that our world is getting smaller.



fig 2.1



fig 2.2

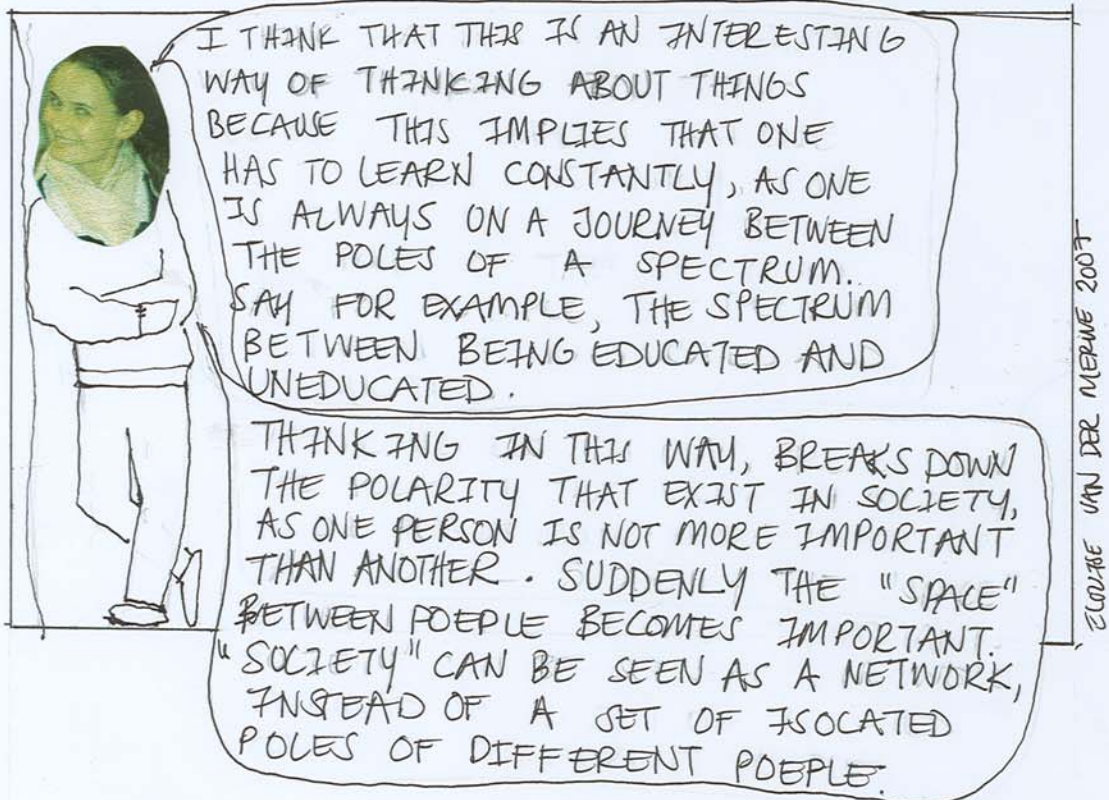
fig 2.1 Cover of discourse of events
 fig 2.2 Extracts from Echo/city,
 catalogue of the English Exhibition at
 the Venice Biennale 2006

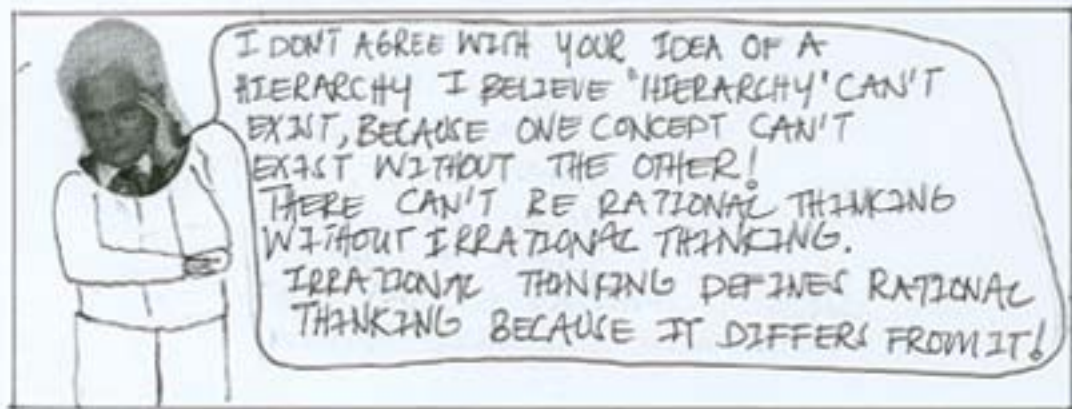
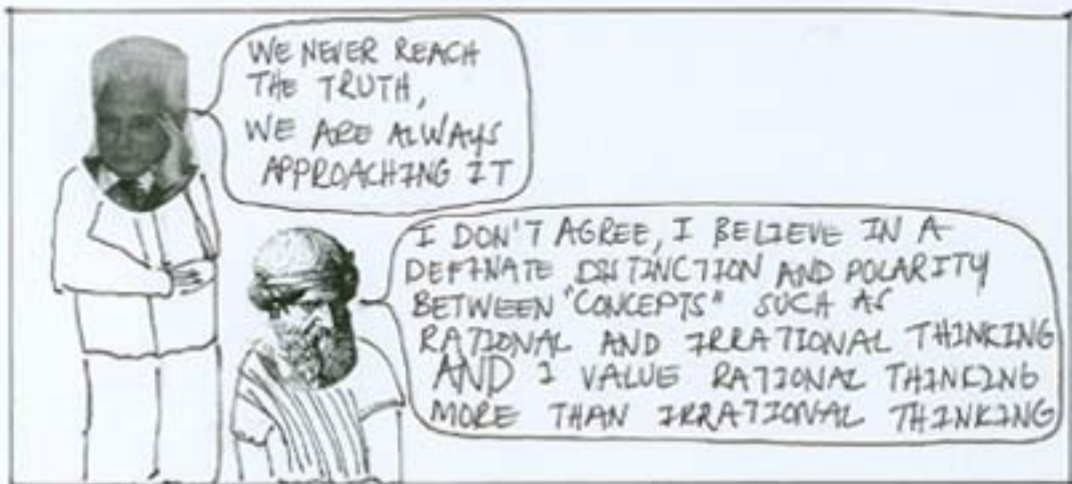
2.2 Interpretation of deconstruction The idea of a network is derived from Derrida's notion of the 'in between'. A network is an apt analogy, as in its' structure there is an emphasis on the links, bridges or bonds in between elements.

Goosen writes on the philosopher, Mark. C. Taylor's interpretation of the in between that Taylor, as a deconstructivist, positions himself in the "interstices between oppositions – the space where things are, for instance, not fully present nor entirely absent. Hence instead of assigning presence priority over absence, as happened in traditional thought structure, Taylor argues that neither one ought to have priority over the other. Presence cannot be conceived of without absence, and vice versa." (2001:29)

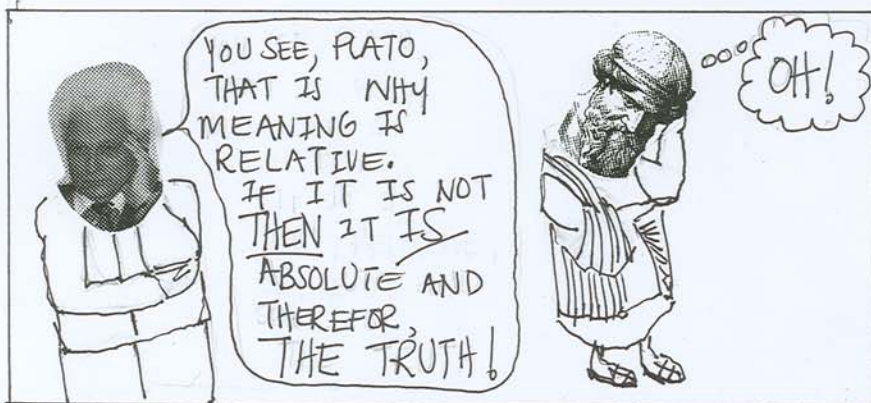
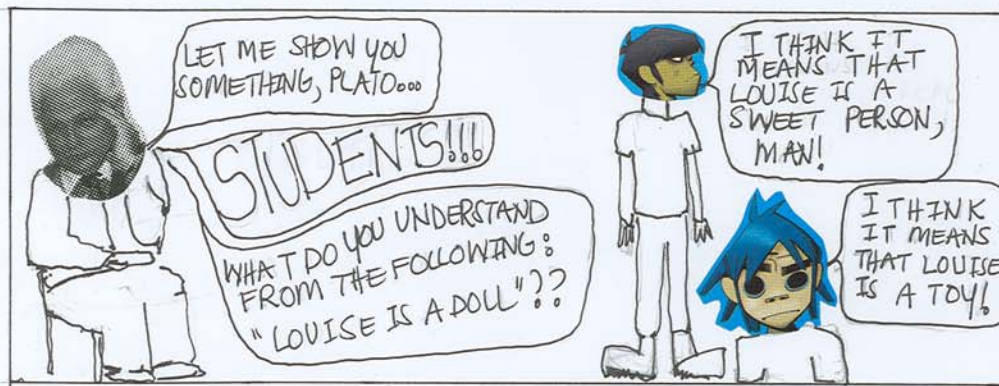
This becomes important in my project, physically and metaphorically. Metaphorically the building should be a bridge between people, a bridge between understanding and not understanding, being uneducated and moving towards being educated.

The intention is also to allow for many places where people can forge connections by meeting unexpectedly, and where spaces can open up and address surrounding spaces. This connection is intended to happen vertically as well as horizontally.





Understanding Derrida and deconstruction



2 . D e s i g n T h e o r y
 2 . 1 D e c o n s t r u c t i o n
 C a r t o o n

Currently, the Sammy Marx library is used as a study centre by many UNISA students, rather than its designed intent; a traditional library, where information is obtained through books. This project is a media centre, where information can be obtained through books as well as other media and facilities, such as computers. It also addresses the need for a quiet environment apt for studying.

The building would become an experimental interface, or meeting place between the university and the community and the schools that exists in the city, especially the eastern quadrant of the city. This media and study centre would serve the learners of the surrounding schools as a means of support to the outcomes based education program.

- 1.4 Client
- Non- place based actors:
- City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality
 - University of Pretoria

The City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality (CTMM) would provide the funding for this building, as it would be treated as a community media and study centre. The University of Pretoria would assist in the funding and as fundraising for the building. The University would want to establish an inner city facility, that diffuses traditional academic boundaries.

- Place based actors:
- Users of the Bloed Street taxi rank
 - Learners of the surrounding schools
 - City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality
 - University of Pretoria

The existing libraries in the area are; the City Library in Sammy Marx Square, the old State Library and the new National Library on the corner of Andries and Vermeulen Street. The National library will serve as a research facility and none of the material that it will house, will be allowed to be removed.

1.2 Problem statement

The aim of this project is to create a vantage point from which a journey can begin – a journey of learning in a place where the city is depolarized, or folded.

1.3 Initial vision for the study area

- A quiet space, a pause in the busyness of every day life;
- a vantage point where one could look at the city and ultimately at oneself;
- a place that meets its, immediate and remote context, head on!
- And it is the between where things are not certain, but moving in the direction of the greater good.

3.3 Walking through the city

According to De Certeau (1988), walking through a city (the act of using space) can be likened to the acoustic expression of language. There are two spatial practices: synecdoche and asyndeton. These relate to how words are used. Synecdoche consists of "using a word in the sense that it is part of another meaning of the same word". Thus "ship" can be replaced by "sails" in the sense that "here arrives fifty a fleet of fifty sails". Asyndeton is the suppression of linking words such as conjunctions and adverbs. Synecdoche expands the spatial elements of environments, and takes its place, maybe as a taxi could represent the people that use it. Asyndeton creates "less open gaps".

fig 3.6-3.9 early morning activity along van der Walt Str.

fig 3.6



fig 3.7

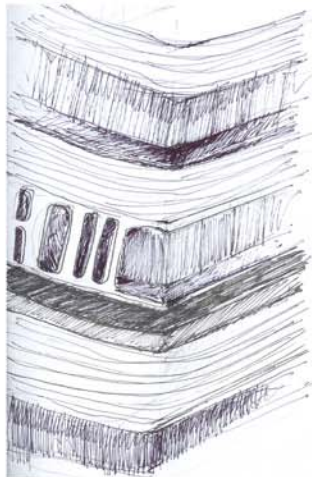
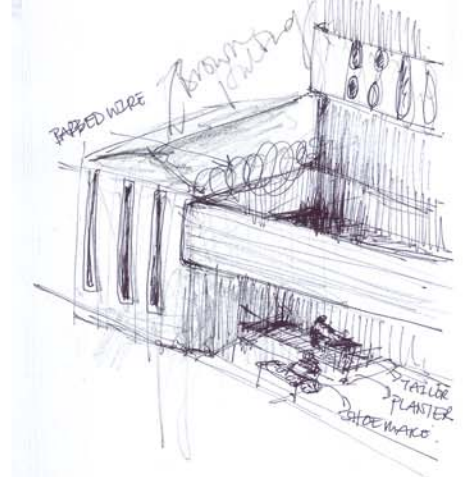


fig 3.8



fig 3.9



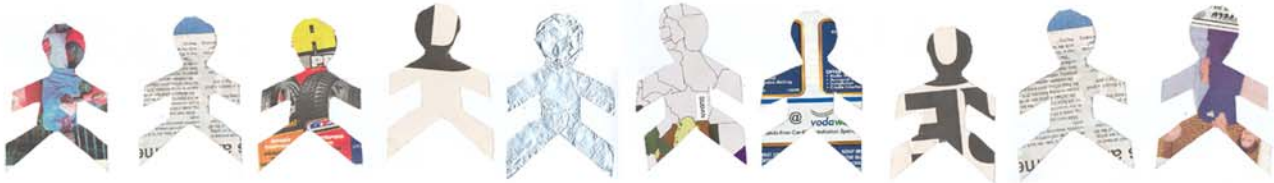
4.1 Typological precedents

4.1.1 Alberto Kalach,
Public library
of Mexico,
Mexico D.F, Mexico
(construction 2005-2006)

The idea of this building is to represent an ark of human knowledge. It is a long structure 47 m long running through three modules that are each 68m wide (see fig 4,4). Through the centre of the building runs an independent structure that is the full height of the building and holds over one and a half million books (see fig 4.4). On either side of this case, that forms the central backbone, there are reading spaces. These spaces are connected with the surrounding gardens. The central book case connects all the spaces on the various levels. Light is let in and controlled through a saw tooth roof. Light filters through the building because of the book case structure in the centre.

The volume of the spaces range from being high, to being low and intimate in the study areas. The legibility and understandability of this essentially simple building, is inspiring (see fig 4.1). This is due to the central book case that acts as an orientation point on all floor levels of the library.

4 . P r e c e d e n t s t u d i e s



POLARITY OF SOCIAL CONTEXT

ALL STAISTICS FROM ([HTTP://WWW.UNICEF.ORG/INFOBYCOUNTRY/SOUTHAFRICA-STATISTICS](http://www.unicef.org/infoycountry/southafrica-statistics))

3.5.1 Polarity of the context

The polarity of the context is directly expressed in the removal of the people from the CBD (see fig 3.53). Further more it is evident in the economic inequality, and inequality of access to opportunities, due to economic situation (see fig 3.60).

fig 3.60 Statistical data of context

30
Concept city ...
a place of transformations
and appropriations, the
object of various kinds
of interference but also...
enriched by new attributes,
it is simultaneously the
machinery and the hero
of modernity

Beneath the discourses
that ideologize the city,
the rules and combinations
of power that have no
readable identity
proliferate; without points
where one can take hold
of them, without rational
transparency, they are impossible
to administer.

The concept city is decaying.
Catastrophe?

... try another path ...
analyze the microbe-like,
singular and plural
practices, which an
urbanized system was to
administer or suppress, but
which have outlived its decay;
one can follow the swarming

activities of these procedures,
that far from being regulated
or eliminated by panoptic
administration, have reinforced
themselves into a proliferating
illegitimacy, developed and
insinuated themselves into
the networks of surveillance,
and combined in accord with
unreadable but stable tactics
to the point of constituting
everyday regulations and
surreptitious creativities...

... frantic mechanisms and
discourses of observational
organization.

CITY IN TERMS OF "UTOPIAN + URBANISTIC DISCOURSE"

- ① produces own space +
rational organization must
thus repress all physical,
mental and political pollutions
that would compromise it."
- ② substitution of a ...
synchronic system for ...
stubborn resistance offered
by tradition^s, ... made

: It gradually becomes
possible to attribute to it,
~~and to it~~ all the functions
and predicates that were
previously scattered and
assigned to many different
real subject groups, associations
and individuals.

"The City", like a proper name,
thus provides a way of
conceiving and constructing space

29

- possible by the flattening out
of data on a plane projection,
must replace the tactics of
users who take advantage
of "opportunities", and who,
through these trap events,
These lapses in visibility,
reproduce the opacities of
history everywhere;
- ③ ... the creation of a
universal and anonymous
subject which is the city itself

on the basis of a finite
number of stable, isolatable
and interconnected
properties.

Administration is
combined with a process
of elimination in this
place organized by
"speculative" and classificatory
operations.

On the one hand there
is a differentiation and
redistribution of the parts
and functions of the city ... ;
on the other there is
a rejection of everything
that is not capable of being
dealt with in this way and
so constitutes the "waste
products" of a functionalist
administration (abnormality, death,
deviance, illness)

28 Yet there is a definite chain of cause and effect, but it not to be understood by outsiders.

What can be understood is that everyday people travel from Mamelodi, Soshanguve and Atteridgeville to the taxi rank in Bloed Street (see fig 3.49-3.52, and fig 3.59), where their paths converge. After getting off the taxi, people walk along Van der Walt Street into town. After the day's work, people return to the rank again using Van der Walt Street.

A small part of the activities along Van der Walt Street, can be appreciated (very superficially) by looking at the business of the tailor in the old planter at what used to be the entrance to the building at 335 Bloed Street. It appears that he occupies the planter, as he does not seem to pay rent for the planter that is his shop. But he does store his machine in the cell phone shop that is next door. It is possible that he pays the owner of the shop some money for storage. Maybe the owner of the shop then looks after his interest, by ensuring that no one else occupies his spot. The purpose of this illustration is to try and explain the existing network of informal trade with formal trade, and people with one another.

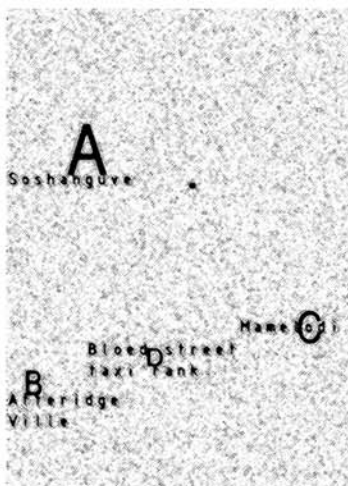


fig 5.59

27 By analyzing the social process in the making of space and place, the element of time will be integrated into our understanding. The conception of space arrived at in this way is dynamic: space at all its possible scales, from global space to the micro space of daily routines, are all constantly changing yet embedded in their social context, allowing multiple but interrelated identities. It is this dynamic conception of space that would allow design with change and for change while embedded in concrete social and physical contexts. (Mandipour, 1996)

De Certeau writes that one cannot predict the drawings of an autistic child and in the same way, one cannot predict the movement of pedestrians. The trace that this movement leaves behind, are the foot paths, even they only show what has been and not what is (1988:99).

Walking or driving in the study context, one's path is constantly intercepted by strangers haggling goods, or pedestrians suddenly crossing the road. An almost unpredictable cross fire of connections and collisions waiting to happen, a whole other network waiting to emerge. There is no understanding it; there are too many factors involved, and no logic to it. Understanding it would ensue that there is some rational pattern or formula.