UIA 2005 Istanbul
Wendesday, July 6, 2005

11:45-13:00
F E/T
Session 3.20
791

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO ARCHITECTURE
THE INTERRELATION BETWEEN THE CREATION PROCESS AND THE SPIRIT OF

THE PLACE: A Case Study, Israel

Nili Portugali, Architect A.A.Dip (London)

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present the interpretation given in architecture to the ***holistic-organic*** worldview a worldview which stands in recent years at the forefront of the scientific world as a whole and my particular interpretation of it both in ***theory and in practice***, in projects I designed and built in Israel.

The real challenge of contemporary architecture as I see it is to find a way in which new buildings we design will preserve the ***spirit of the place***, attaining ***human*** qualities and ***soul.***

The basic argument presented here is that in order to change the feeling of the environment and create places and buildings that we really feel part of and want to live in, the issue here is not a change of style, but a transformation of the ***worldview*** underlying current thought and approaches.

Buildings affect our life and the fate of the physical environment we live in for many years, and thus their real test is the ***test of time***.
Although this timeless quality exists in buildings rooted in ***different*** cultures and traditions, the experience they generate is ***common*** to all people, no matter where or from what culture they come from. Thus Christopher Alexander's basic assumption was that behind this ***timeless*** quality, lies a ***universal*** and eternal element ***common*** to us all as ***human being***, the **"**innate patterns**"** of the spoken language in Chomsky's terminology.

The first part of the presentation will present the various elements of this theoretical approach and describe the planning process itself, a process that is ***fundamentally*** different from conventional ones.
The main elements to be discussed:
1. *A Phenomenological Approach to Architecture*
2. *The Relations between the Parts and the Whole*
3. *The Planning Process itself*
 * Choosing A Pattern Language for The Project
* Planning Process on the Site Itself

The second part will demonstrate how this approach as well as the planning process, were implemented in a selected projects designed and built by me in Israel, in relation to the ***physical and cultural reality of the place*** they were built on. This reality includes both the wide context of Israel as a ***unique interface between the orient and the west***, and the specific context of the ***site itself***.

I hope that by presenting an approach which tries both to identify the needs **common to us all** as **human beings**, codes that **cross cultures** and link them together in harmony, and by applying a planning process which structurally responds to the **identity of each cultural and social group** we build for*, and* to the **uniqueness of each site**, I will contribute something towards replacing current conceptions and approaches whereby aggressive political motives and egotistical ambitions create the kind of architecture that forms a real **threat** to the **physical and human** environment we live in.