

The SAGE Handbook of Architectural Theory



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Introduction – 1: Architectural Theory in an Expanded Field

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REVISITING PARC DE LA VILLETTE

On a midsummer's afternoon in Paris' Parc de la Villette locals and tourists mingle amongst the famous red follies that dot the park. Children paddle in a shallow pool that surrounds one of the follies. Family groups and friends gather at tented cafés and bars that have sprouted up alongside one another. Strolling couples take in the sun, cyclists weave along the banks of the canal, while the distant din of an impromptu football

match thickens the atmosphere. It is an evidently multicultural scene. Many women are dressed in strongly coloured and patterned fabrics of distant places, others wear hijabs. Some men wear kaftans, while many teens and children wear football strips bearing the names of global stars of the game such as Zidane, Ronaldo and Drogba. Security men

Figure 0.1 (Below) Temporary café next to a Folly at Parc de la Villette, Paris. (Stephen Cairns)





Figure 0.2 (Above) Security guards on elevated walkway at Parc de la Villette, Paris. (Stephen Cairns)

walk their beats in pairs on the elevated decks that cut across the park. They wear black combat trousers and orange T-shirts branded with ‘Prevention Sécurité’ on the back. Walkie-talkies and bundles of keys hang from their belts. One of the routine jobs on their beat is to rattle the door handles of each of the 35 follies. They are checking that the follies are locked. Most are empty. Some have begun to appear a little dilapidated and worn. Once solidly red, some follies are now a patchwork of stained and faded panels and brighter replacements. At some, one can even stare through rusted panels to the structure within. But they are now also ‘worn in’. Once stark markers set out on a grid across the park, the follies are nowadays embedded, albeit ambiguously, in a mature landscape of trees, shrubs and human activity.

These follies began their lives as trademark elements of the original Parc de la Villette landscape, as designed by architect Bernard Tschumi. Tschumi won the commission to design Parc de la Villette in an international competition launched in 1982 by the then French Minister of Culture, Jack Lang. The forward-looking competition brief had little in the way of functional requirements, emphasizing instead the values of urbanism, pleasure and experimentation, calling for

nothing less than an urban park for the twenty-first century. The seemingly open brief was underpinned by ambitious cultural and urban planning policy aspirations. To be sited on 55 hectares of semi-derelict land in the northeast corner of Paris, and framed by a new Science Museum and Music Centre, the Parc de la Villette was to reanimate what had been a relatively marginalized area of the city, open up the city to the suburbs beyond, and sustain Paris’ place as a global centre of cultural innovation.

Tschumi’s winning design proposal was significant not simply because of its intrinsic architectural qualities. It gained notoriety for the way it was self-consciously animated by ‘theory’. Parc de la Villette was widely regarded as a built manifestation of Tschumi’s ongoing critique of the foundational principles of architectural modernism, specifically the assumptions about the determinate role of function, structure and economy-of-means on built form. Parc de la Villette was not simply theorized after the event of its design and making, it was conceived in and through a specific articulation of design thinking that linked architecture to debates in literary theory and philosophy. This mobilization of theory in the design – enhanced by Tschumi’s invitation to Jacques Derrida and Peter Eisenman to collaborate on an aspect of it¹ – triggered a scramble amongst critics, commentators and academics in the discipline to acquire the novel vocabularies required to appropriately engage. Suddenly, it seemed, architecture was pursuing theory in various postmodernist, post-structuralist and deconstructivist guises.

The Parc de la Villette project was by no means a unique nor even inaugural activation of theory in architecture, as we will see. Nor should it be seen as some emblematic monument of architectural theory. But it did demonstrate a self-conscious engagement with a particular kind of theory that, as Jonathan Culler usefully notes, is essentially a ‘nickname’ for eclectic styles of scholarship that challenge and reorient thinking across diverse

disciplinary lines. The coherence that is attributed to writings in this mode resides, Culler suggests, in ‘their analyses of language, mind, history, or culture [that] offer novel and persuasive accounts of signification, make strange the familiar and perhaps persuade readers to conceive of their own thinking and the institutions to which it relates in new ways’ (Culler 1994, 13). In the 1980s this set of developments gave rise to new textbooks and special issue journals, as well as prestigious exhibitions. Titles such as *What is Deconstruction?* (Norris and Benjamin 1988), *Deconstruction in Architecture* (Papadakis 1988) and *Deconstructivist Architecture* (Johnson and Wigley 1988), mark architecture’s engagement with this extra- and interdisciplinary body of work. Theory was in the air and the Parc de la Villette project seemed to encapsulate it. This particular kind of theory mobilized not only a critique of architectures already made, but also saw this critique as grounds for an enrichment of the architectural design process itself. This involved the (re)invention of a host of metaphorical and literal design operations – montage, collage, automatic drawing, excavation, layering, fragmenting, juxtaposing, tracing – that coalesced in an ‘auto-generative’ design process in which the conventional agencies of client, user and architect came to be scrambled.²

Just as Parc de la Villette has found a place in the fabric and everyday life of Paris, so too has it found a place in the discipline’s history of itself. Parc de la Villette is today part of the architectural canon. With its architectural fabric now worn in, there is also an unavoidable sense that Parc de la Villette’s theory has worn thin. Tschumi explicitly sought to unhinge the conventional expectation that form should, as Sullivan’s cliché has it, ‘follow’ function. He did so by activating the ambiguities of chance and play, and the follies (which were loosely functional, sculptural, pavilion-like structures) played a key part in articulating this commitment. As such, the image of security guards rattling

the locks of an empty pavilion, while an animated crowd is served beer and wine from a tent pitched in its shadow, is striking in its irony. Is it that the Parc, as critics at the time chimed, replaced functionalism with an intensified formalism? Is it that the Parc’s design, informed as it was by theory, was too clever for its own good? Or is it that the informal, performative and lived will always outflank a leaden-footed practice such as architecture, however radically it might be conceived?³ Despite this, the Parc has evidently been creatively and successfully programmed by the management teams of the Parc and the adjacent Science Museum and Music Centre. A myriad of local volunteer organizations have acquired spaces for daily and weekly events such as exhibitions, dance and theatrical performances, and gardening classes. These user groups have exploited the indeterminacy of the design. They have stitched themselves into the fabric of the Parc in multiple ways, sometimes as sustained and sanctioned user groups, and other times through fleeting and unpredictable appropriations.

With its vibrant activity co-existing with often-fallow follies, Parc de la Villette encapsulates the hope and ambiguity of architecture’s earlier engagement with post-structuralist theory. For example, it still captures something of the adventurous and open potential of critical attitudes to entrenched disciplinary truths such as functionalism, formulas of composition and essentialisms of place. As a marker of a disciplinary turning point, Parc de la Villette also reminds us of the ways in which connections with theoretical debates in other disciplines enabled architecture to see itself anew through emerging critiques of logocentrism, phallogocentrism and eurocentrism. The debates that followed provided openings for restructuring not only the Enlightenment intellectual legacy embedded in architecture, but also genuine practical alternatives for how architecture might comport itself in the world. These included new ways of

conceptualizing and producing architecture, new modes of pedagogy, new logics of office organization, new commitments to a more inclusive, universally accessible architectural profession.

For all these gains, architecture's engagement with post-structuralist theory also meant that more established conceptions of architectural theory were increasingly seen as unsatisfactory. The problematizing of such more conventional approaches saw many of them marginalized or merely rendered unfashionable. This certainly happened to established traditions of theory building in architecture that could be defined in terms of a Popperian 'scientific method' (Popper 2002 [1963], 333). Within architecture, a wide range of architectural theory followed this template, including building sciences, the 'first generation' of design methodologists (Alexander 1964; Broadbent and Ward 1969), instrumentally inflected approaches to design based on post-occupancy evaluation (Proshansky et al. 1970), amongst others. Theoretical approaches defined in terms of a Husserlian 'phenomenological method' (Husserl 1931) that garnered significant followings in architecture were suspiciously cast as essentialist (Norberg-Schulz 1965; Perez-Gomez 1985; see also Chapter 7 in this volume). Studies of vernacular built forms and environments, supported by Levi-Straussian structuralism (van Eyck 1961 and 1967; Bourdieu 1970; Blier 1995; Hertzberger 2005), were seen as tainted by their latent humanism. The discipline's ancient investment in theories of aesthetic formalism, wherein various systems of proportion and composition authorized the proper arrangement of architectural forms and spaces (Boudon 1971; Ching 1979; Le Corbusier 2000 [1955]; Papadakis and Aslet 1988), were also questioned. As was the renewed interest in European urban history, urban morphology and architectural type that had, since the 1960s, begun to coalesce under the heading of 'neo-rationalism' (Krier 1988; Muratori 1967; Rossi 1982 [1966]; Panerai

et al. 2004 [1977]). And finally, in the wake of post-structuralist theory, architecture's intermittent engagement with critical theoretical traditions, such as Marxism (Tafuri 1980 [1968]; Tzonis 1972), was in some quarters thought too cheerless and too normative.

ENDS OF THEORY?

Many of the tensions between scientific, phenomenological and post-structuralist definitions of theory have been rehearsed, elaborated and reconsidered in one way or another, within a wider debate on the 'ends of theory' (Callus and Herbrechter 2004; Rabate 2002; Cunningham 2002; Butler et al. 2000; Payne and Schad 2004; Jameson 2004 in a special issue of *Critical Inquiry* on the theme). The seeds of this debate were, of course, already present in the unstable constellation of approaches, tendencies and tactics that were gathered under the heading of post-structuralism. In this respect, post-structuralist 'theory' was itself a thorough-going attack on the idea of theory – a tension that is nicely captured in a pair of essays by American literary critics J. Hillis Miller on 'the triumph of theory' (1987), and Paul de Man on the 'resistance to theory' (1982). Some strands of this debate might be characterized as a blatant reassertion of the 'grand narratives' of progress, universal justice or equality, in the name of an effective politics of globalization (Eagleton 2003). Other strands have taken the form of discipline- or medium-specific resistances (especially in those fields that are focused on creative practice, such as film studies, fine art and performance studies) subsumed within the language of critique or the language metaphor *per se* (Culler 2000). Often motivated by materialist or pragmatist attitudes, still further strands in this debate sought to 'reconstruct' disciplinary paradigms that were regarded as suffering the destructive

effects of theory (see, for example, Bordwell and Carroll 1996).

Manfredo Tafuri's neo-Marxist critique of architecture and capitalism was an important site for the development of a discipline-specific 'resistance to theory'. In his *Architecture and Utopia* (1976 [1973]), Tafuri characterized semiology and structuralism as a 'delicate ideological veil' (Tafuri 1976, 150), and its application to architecture as disguising the deeper penetration of capital and economic logics into the processes of architectural production. Tropes that came to be so important in architectural theory – such as indeterminacy, open-endedness and ambiguity – were diagnosed in nascent form in the semiological project and critiqued by Tafuri as serving to dissolve the medium or materiality of architecture. While this served, in turn, to buttress architects' sense of their own agency and creative freedom, it did so at the cost of disguising architecture's growing sense of impotence in the world. That is, while 'architecture seeks its own meaning' through semiology, the discipline is, argues Tafuri, 'tormented by the sense of having lost its meaning altogether' (Tafuri 1976, 161). This line of argument was pointedly elaborated in his essay 'L'Architecture dans le Boudoir' (1974) where the theme of an illusory and destructive interiorization through theory was articulated through analysis of the work of specific avant-garde architects (the New York Five, Aldo Rossi, James Stirling). Tafuri's critique of the avant-garde's subsequent embrace of post-structuralist theory is articulated more fully in a set of essays and interviews in a special issue of *Casabella* (Gregotti 1995). Other authors have revisited this critical approach by attempting to reconcile its emphasis on architectural history with some of the themes that theory has activated, such as the everyday, gender and postcolonialism (see, for example, Borden and Rendell 2000; Heynen and Loeckx 1998).

The more recent end-of-theory atmosphere has found concrete expression in architecture

under the name of the 'post-critical' (Baird 2004; Chapter 2 of this volume). Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting published in 2002 an article on 'Projective architecture' that came to be understood as an appeal for a 'post-critical' architecture (although the authors themselves were careful not to use that characterization). In the aftermath of this publication, many more voices were raised that pleaded for a more modest understanding of architecture's capacities to critically reflect on the world, given that architecture is, out of necessity, mostly complicit with the flows of capital that increasingly structure that world.. This formulation was, in a way, a foregrounding of the disciplinary medium – bricks, mortar, glass, concrete and capital – and practice at the expense of the philosophical reflection that animated earlier theoretical paradigms. Other commentators (Allen 2004; Speaks 2001, 2002 (a), (b), (c); Martin 2005) rhetorically elaborated this view, suggesting that (as it coincided with an upturn in the economy and an increase in availability of work for architects) the pragmatic embrace of the market economy served as motivation, intellectual licence and ethical horizon for architectural practice.

The displacements, deconstructions and disruptions of long-held and relatively stable disciplinary norms served to proliferate what Jean-François Lyotard famously called 'little narratives'. Architectural theory, as we have seen, inventively took up the possibilities of this new, fragmented discursive terrain. But it also seemed, in retrospect, especially susceptible to the consumptive mode that it inspired, in which novel theoretical vocabularies were adopted, briefly entertained, or (worse) 'applied' to built form, then abandoned as outdated only to be replaced by new paradigms. We hope that this Handbook will make a contribution to the longer, slower and oscillating history of architectural theory. The Handbook does not propose a fresh set of 'posts-', turns or paradigms that break with all that precedes it. Nor does it promote a return to the universalist aspirations of

scientific theory in its various guises, or the essentialisms of experience. It builds upon the irrefutable theoretical energy that the Parc de la Villette embodied, but does so by putting the critical sensitivities, the pluralist sensibility, the self-reflexivity and speculative ambition that post-structuralism inculcated in the discipline into contact with a wider set of world conditions.

Understanding the architectural afterlife of Parc de la Villette today is not well served by the theoretical vocabulary by which it was conceived. The eventual effectiveness of the Parc as built, inhabited and appropriated reality was, in many respects, unforeseen. This is, of course, an inevitable fact of all architectures. The circumstantial eventfulness that gathers to them, the life (and death) that flows and ebbs through them, inevitably complicates and usually exceeds any inaugurating motivations or principles (see Ockman 2000; Till 2009). A theoretical framework that is sensitive to this play between the principle of a building (what it is as a design) and the circumstance of a building (what it comes to be) must be couched in more expansive terms. This is not merely to claim that architectural theory can somehow incorporate circumstance in the name of 'the political', 'the technical' or 'the social'. It is to suggest that architectural theory can sensitize the discipline to the myriad of relationships – proximities, interconnections, entanglements, distances, contiguities, framings and short-circuitings – that buildings establish between themselves and the forms of life that pulse through and within them. An architectural theory conceived along these relational lines draws us both outwards from the building to the wider network, ecology or milieu within which it sits, and inwards to the material fabric of the building itself. It also ensures that these outward and inward trajectories are not mutually exclusive, but have the capacity to be short-circuited, and related intimately. This expanded field suggests that architectural theory is porous and open to the circumstances of the world.⁴

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS

Worldly theory is bound up with modes of production and dissemination. As with the other humanities, the privileged medium for architectural theory has, until the very recent past, been printed text – monographs, edited collections, anthologies, journal articles and conference proceedings (as can be gathered from the bibliographies of each section in this Handbook). A number of important journals appeared in the 1980s and 1990s that came to be crucial vehicles for the development of architectural theory. Journals such as *Oppositions* and *Assemblage* in the USA, *AA Files* in the UK, *Archis* in the Netherlands, *Lotus International* in Italy all supported, in varying ways, the rapid development and dissemination of interdisciplinary themes and styles of debate. Unlike journals in the sciences, these periodicals were very much identified with their editors or with their editorial boards, being known for taking up specific positions and critically aligning themselves with certain paradigms (Crysler 2003). In the last decade or so, pressure has been rising to give more prominence to peer-reviewed journals, which are supposedly more open and neutral. Hence we have seen the emergence of journals like *Architectural Theory Review*, which is entirely devoted to the exchange of information and ideas on areas of architectural interest. Scholars in architectural theory have also experimented with web-based publications. The best known is the *Haecceity* platform (www.haecceityinc.com), which aims at supporting critical architectural theory by addressing the status of architecture 'at the end of metaphysics'. Some would argue that web publications are the future of our discipline, but thus far printed materials still have greater reach and influence than those limited to cyberspace – as the bibliographical sections in this Handbook show.

These references already indicate that architectural theory's dominant language is currently English. Although its past and

present references are steeped in Italian, French and German, architectural theorists who solely use one of these languages are unlikely to gain international prominence today. International exchange and communication mainly happens in English, and the best known academic centres of architectural theory are located within the Anglo-Saxon cultural sphere – London, the American East and West Coasts, one or two centres in Australia. Paris, Venice and Berlin, like Barcelona and Rotterdam, are on the map, but they do not have the same force of gravity. Other parts of the world – the whole of Asia, Africa and Latin America – do not really play along. Some centers operate within regional or national debates, while others lack the resources needed to produce publications for an anglophonic debate that is increasingly dominated by large multinational presses. This situation, of course, is consistent with the overall cultural hegemony of Western-based institutions. It is a hegemony that one can (and should) deplore and criticize, but at the same time one has to recognize that this hegemony is structurally part of the way our academic institutions function.

Confronting the ‘spaces of theory’ through the production of this Handbook proved to be a sobering experience. Given our interdisciplinary and cross-cultural ambitions, we were keen to offer the Handbook as a platform for voices of intellectuals who were based outside established academic centres in Europe, North America or Australasia. This aspiration proved more difficult to fulfil than we had anticipated. This volume does feature the work of authors who come from Latin America, South and East Asia, Southeast Asia and Africa, and they tackle a diverse range of issues that are as cosmopolitan and engaged with global debates in the discipline as any other contributor. But is one’s place of origin especially significant in the global academy today? Most contributors to this volume undertook doctoral studies and developed academic careers in the

West. Most are based at academic institutions in the West. Clearly, global cities such as Singapore, Johannesburg and Shanghai, for example, host significant sites of scholarship in the field, and their emergence suggests that the academic world is expanding geographically. But this begs the question: does an expansion of geographical horizons imply an equivalent diversification of intellectual horizons? That is, does the academy – in the name of academic freedom and disinterested inquiry – recognize, support or even catalyse new forms of knowledge and styles of thinking that might emerge outside established centres? Or does the academy today seek to expand and entrench a newly commodified global format for the production and consumption of knowledge?

In their book *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy*, Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades (2004) outline a political economy of knowledge production in the contemporary academy.⁵ They document the ways in which the academy increasingly operates according to a set of global norms dictated by neo-liberal ideologies. This process, which they dub ‘academic capitalism’, normalizes the values of competition according to narrowing criteria, and entrenches market-like behaviours across the teaching/learning, research and service functions of universities globally. Research and scholarship play an especially important part in this system, serving as markers of brand distinction for individual institutions, and driving knowledge production for a commodified knowledge economy. The emerging global academic market has seen a tightening of intellectual agendas as institutions ‘gatekeep’ legitimate forms of knowledge in the name of ‘quality’ and ‘academic standards’ (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004, 120).⁶ While Slaughter and Rhoades document examples of resistance to this development – citing cases in South Africa and Central America, for example (2004, 124) – they also note the isolated and unsustainable nature of these enterprises.

It is easier, perhaps, for those whose work is already framed cross-culturally, to contemplate effective forms of scholarship that exploit the integrative aspects of globalization for positive academic effects. We might think of the long-distance, dialogic and shuttling modes of scholarship that developed in the 1980s and 1990s in critical anthropology and postcolonial studies. We might point to the increasing mobility that enables research across the academy to be structured in multi-sited ways (see Chan and Fisher 2008). Nonetheless, Slaughter and Rhoades' analysis will resonate with the daily working experiences of many scholars in the West. And, more significantly, it offers a plausible structural explanation for the diminished resources – time, funding, infrastructure – that scholars in many centres outside the West work with. For our purposes, it also clearly sets out the parameters and stakes for a project that seeks to make alternate and novel scholarly voices heard in the global academy today.

Another institutional limitation concerns the place of architectural theory within the academic curriculum. When the EAEE (European Association of Architectural Education) organizes a workshop on architectural theory (which they have done on a regular basis over the last five years), participants tend to identify themselves in rather different ways. Some see themselves as scholars, others as architects who teach. This difference is consistent with the observation that architectural theory typically occupies one of two positions in the educational programme of future architects. It either aligns with architectural history in survey courses and specialist seminars devoted to 'history, theory and criticism' or it is closely linked with studio courses, providing to studio teachers a space where they can discursively reflect upon the tacit knowledge that circulates in the studio learning environment. In the first case, it is often taught by professors holding a PhD in art history, architectural history or (more rarely) architectural

theory; in the second it is the by-product of a design-oriented course that is the responsibility of a practising architect, who might or might not hold a PhD but has developed a theoretical stance more informally.

The two situations are common, not just in Europe but also in the USA (where the first version tends to be more dominant in research universities, whereas the second would predominate in more professionally oriented architectural schools) and elsewhere.⁷ Nevertheless, architectural theory as an academic discipline is dominated by the first type of scholar – art or architectural historians who do not practice as architects.⁸ It is not hard to conjecture the reason for this: these scholars are the ones whose career paths depend upon their publication output, whereas the professors who teach architectural theory as part of their involvement in their studio work receive promotions on the basis of their architectural projects. Hence, there is a clear difference in publication patterns, with the first type of scholars being much more prolific in writing books and articles, and the second type being better known in terms of their built works.

This situation makes up for a disjuncture between, on the one hand, the academic identity of architectural theory in a book like this, and, on the other, architectural theory as taught in many architectural schools. Depending on the willingness of the responsible professor to address the very wide range of issues that can possibly be covered in architectural theory, students will or will not be offered the opportunity to engage with them. Depending upon the openness of the responsible professor to reflect upon design questions, students will or will not be challenged to bridge theory and design. The resulting teaching practices thus make up a very wide variety of contents and methods, making architectural theory, although often seen as essential, not very stable nor anywhere near canonical.

While a growing number of anthologies, edited collections, authored books and

journals participate in defining and delimiting architectural theory, many teachers feel free to venture far away from these supposedly core narratives. Instead, they follow specific trajectories that build upon older approaches (about scale, rhythm, proportions; or about materials, crafts and joints; or about space, tectonics and details), or that highlight an idiosyncratic theoretical angle, engaging specific ‘masters’ and their ways of doing architecture (Le Corbusier, Mies and Louis Kahn come to mind as very popular reference points for this kind of teaching).

POSITIONING THE HANDBOOK

Three influential anthologies of architectural theory, each building on the Parc de la Villette ‘theory moment’, were published in close succession in the late 1990s. Kate Nesbitt’s *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965–1995* was published in 1996, and this was followed in 1997 by *Rethinking Architecture* edited by Neil Leach. *Architecture Theory since 1968*, edited by K. Michael Hays, appeared a year later, in 1998. At the time, the publication of these collections was greeted with a sense of excitement, but also, perhaps a sense of closure, one that comes with the attempt to place the unruly and often contentious debates of the prior three decades into some form of order (Lavin 1999). Since this Handbook inevitably engages with the culture of ideas that these collections represent and have actively shaped, framing their endeavours is integral to explaining our own. In stating things in this way, we want to underscore the fact that the organization of this collection – and our editorial relationship to prior approaches – seeks to explore the reach, coherence and porosity of architectural theory as a field of inquiry.

The Hays, Nesbitt and Leach volumes all take the time period around 1968 as their starting point. In *Theorizing a New Agenda*, Nesbitt argues that the three decades since 1965 were characterized by social upheaval, a loss of faith in the modernist project, and ‘a certain disillusionment with social reform’ within the profession (Nesbitt 1996, 22). The global recession that followed the oil shocks of the mid-1970s helped to spur a period of critical reflection and writing by architects (in part through lack of building opportunities) in Europe and North America. This was accompanied by the creation of new institutions and publications, which in turn advanced the prominence and influence of architectural theory in education and professional practice. Nesbitt notes the proliferation of competing positions that emerged in this period – something that both her extended introduction and the organization of the book reflect (1996, 28). She crossmatches five paradigms (ranging from ‘the aesthetic of the sublime’ to post-structuralism) with five major themes that the paradigms are employed to address (from place and history to the body). The result is a complex, pluralist map of the field, one that is primarily populated by the writings of architects and architectural academics based in the USA and, to a much lesser degree, in Europe. Nesbitt locates the ‘institutions of theory’ in New York, Venice and London (1996, 22). This institutional focus might be one of the reasons why, for all her awareness of the social conditions of architecture, she did not register discourses that were important elsewhere in the world, such as those concerned with participation and populism (Tzonis and Lefaivre 1976) or on ‘human settlements’ (d’Auria et al. 2010).

K. Michael Hays’s volume, *Architecture Theory since 1968* also argues that the time period (in this case ending with 1993) is defined by the emergence of new institutions of theory. But he goes a step further to argue that since 1968 ‘architecture theory’ has all but subsumed ‘architectural culture’ (Hays 1998, x). In this formulation, the social

upheavals and uncertainties of the 1960s led to the institutionalization of a permanent critique in architectural culture, one that is achieved through theory as a system of mediation or ‘transcoding’ between social changes in the world at large and their specific articulation within architectural culture. As a result, architectural culture becomes less a stable foundation for theoretical discourse than its object of desire: it must now be ‘constantly constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed through more self-conscious theoretical procedures’ (Hays 1998, x). The choice of material in the Hays collection, while overlapping at points with Nesbitt’s, is more attuned to a specific critical strategy, one which grants architecture a sense of partial autonomy from the forces in which it is embedded:

In its strongest form mediation is the production of relationships between formal analysis of a work of architecture and its social ground or context [...] but in such way as to show that architecture is having some autonomous force with which it could also be seen as negating, repressing, compensating for, and even producing as well as reproducing, that context. (Hays 1998, x)

Hays thus gives prominence to the autonomy of architecture as the source of its critical capacity. Both in the years leading up to and following the publication of his volume, the approach summarized above by Hays (and also explored in the journal *Assemblage*) has been the subject of considerable discussion. Some have argued (including, at earlier points, the editors of this Handbook) that the emphasis on the critical discourse of form displaced other considerations and practices; others have claimed that, regardless of the success or failure of the approach, it redirected attention to architecture as system of representation intertwined with the texts, institutions and agents that constitute it as such.⁹ Though our volume clearly departs from the discourse of critical form, we nevertheless are operating in the opening Hays’ volume helped to create for an architectural theory that questions its historical

assumptions – as part of an effort to redefine how the social and the architectural are defined and related to each other.

The third major collection to emerge in the 1990s, Neil Leach’s *Rethinking Architecture* (1997), shares with both Hays and Nesbitt an emphasis on the capacity for architectural theory to provoke critical reflection. He describes the end of the twentieth century as a ‘moment of recuperation’, and (following Jameson) one of ‘inverted millenarianism’ in which ‘premonitions of the future [...] have been replaced by analysis of the past, and by reflection, in particular, on the collapse of various concepts on which contemporary society had been grounded’ (Leach 1997, xiii). However, the point of departure in Leach’s book is not within architecture, but explicitly outside it: architectural discourse, he suggests, has been ‘largely a discourse of form’ organized around ‘questions of style’ (1997, xiv). He proposes rethinking architecture through ‘depth models’ from other disciplines that transcend the limitations of such an approach. His categories, though in some cases overlapping directly with Nesbitt’s (such as phenomenology, postmodernism, post-structuralism), are examined from the standpoint of critical theorists and philosophers who write about architecture but have no training in it (1997, xvi). The critical step here, different from, but as powerful as, the space clearing potential of ‘posts-’ and ‘turns’, involves creating a negative characterization of the discipline in order to move outside it. For Leach, this exteriority creates the possibility of rethinking the discipline’s internal priorities. This approach elaborates the rich potential of connections with other disciplines. The absence of an internal perspective also means that the specificities of architecture (such as its engagement with form, construction or material) are not considered central elements of discussion.

While this Handbook overlaps with these three volumes in terms of its time frame and thematic content, from an editorial

standpoint it has been organized and produced in a fundamentally different way. The Handbook is not a collection of existing texts. Rather, it presents original texts on topics that we, as editors, considered significant to the field of architectural theory today. The invited authors engage with a cross-section of existing literature, assessing significant debates and posing challenging questions that indicate future directions for study and investigation.

In developing the framework for the Handbook, we have built upon and reconsidered the assumptions that underpin the previous anthologies. From a temporal standpoint, our initial intention was to pick up where these collections left off, by dealing with the turbulent period from around 1989 to the present. However, once the project was underway – a process that involved extensive meetings amongst ourselves and the 16 section and project editors – it became clear that the complicated intellectual and institutional histories of the participants would make such neat divisions impossible. A sense of (sometimes critical) dialogue with the past, rather than a periodizing break with it, is a consistent feature throughout. This is reflected in the temporality of the contributions, almost all of which reach into (and in some cases extend beyond) the last three decades as the frame for their discussions. As with the Nesbitt, Hays and Leach volumes, the period from the mid-1960s to the present is regarded in this collection as one of intensifying change, with profound transformations coming in the decade immediately after those volumes were published.

However, we do not regard 1968 as singular moment of epochal change, but instead see it, together with more recent changes occurring around 2000, as a contradictory moment of intensification that opens onto a much more divided and polarized world – one in which the unanticipated consequences of prior waves of capitalist modernization increasingly dominate the future imaginings

of the global present: the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the realignments of alliances in Europe and elsewhere; the revitalization of religious and nationalist movements, with sometimes fundamentalist and aggressive overtones (including the events surrounding 9/11 and its aftermath); systemic changes in the global financial system (the ‘Big Bang’ in 1987) followed by the rise or fall (and rise) of various economic bubbles, each increasingly more exaggerated and precarious than its predecessor (culminating with the collapse of 2008); the related generalization of digital technology; the shift in economic growth patterns towards China and India; further rapid urbanization in the global South (with half of the world’s population now living in cities); increasingly polarized geopolitical conditions; growing popular consciousness of an environmental crisis that is planetary in scale.

The complexity of the current moment requires an impure, inclusive approach enlivened by the possibilities produced by the critical intersection and juxtaposition of competing positions. Some of the approaches and debates featured in the previous volumes have also been brought to the fore in this Handbook, along with others that remained more or less in the background: the overlaps and tensions between memory, history and tradition (Section 4); the role of the profession and the institutions of architecture (Section 5); the discourses on sustainability and how they relate to late-capitalism (Section 7); the important interaction between architecture and the transformation of the urban field (Section 8). Finally, the Handbook is notable for the way it explores the interaction between architectural theory and architectural projects – not just by including mostly ‘theoretical’ (paper) projects, but also by discussing how the Handbook’s themes are relevant to the professional production of architecture, to how architects deal with commissions, and to how diverse groups interact with their built environments.

WORLDING, PROVINCIALIZING, GATHERING

Our ambition is for the Handbook to act as a vehicle that broaches an expanded and more porous definition of architectural theory. This ambition, as we have also suggested, is necessarily anticipatory and retroactive. That is, it engages with the worldly possibilities of theory as much as it values existing discourse. In this respect, an expansive and porous definition of theory is also a matter of retrieving features that were already present, though dormant, within archaic definitions of the term. ‘Theory’ used to connote openness, participation, generosity and mobility as well as authority and clarity. The term is derived from the Greek *theoros* and *theoria*, which embody ideas of viewing and of sacred duty (Bill 1901, 197). The idea of ‘spectator’ seems to have been the original meaning, later to be supplemented by that of a ‘state delegate to a foreign festival’ (Bill 1901, 198). Religious and sacred duties were subsequently added to this delegate function, giving rise to a second meaning: ‘commissioner sent on sacred service’. So the plural *theoroi* came to designate delegates sent to sacred foreign festivals to view, to participate and to represent their home state. Herodotus and Thucydides, amongst others, used the term in a simpler way to refer to ‘journeys of travel and sightseeing’ (Bill 1901, 199). The function of *theoroi*, as Wlad Godzich puts it, was to ‘see-and-tell’ in a way that offered an ‘official and more ascertainable form of knowledge’. As such *theoria* provided ‘a bedrock of certainty: what it certified as having seen could become the object of public discourse’ (Godzich 1986, xiv).

This etymology gave rise to different understandings of theory. The conventional, scientific use of the term tends to emphasize the authorizing, ground-truthing and systemic aspects of its archaic meaning. This is the kind of theory that travels, and is valid because it travels, because it transcends

contingencies, and all that they stand for – materiality, tactility, contamination, circumstance. On the other hand, theory, as a nickname for those eclectic (post-structuralist, postmodern) interdisciplinary styles of scholarship, activates the mobile, estranging, relative and contingent aspects of the archaic meaning.

These two understandings of theory have, in the recent past, been seen as incompatible and mutually exclusive. On the one hand, theory aspires to be an authorizing practice giving rise to a globally applicable system of concepts. On the other hand, ‘theory’ functions as set of tactics and styles of reading and thinking that work to disrupt that system. This tension and oscillation between the authorizing and disruptive dimensions of theory underpins what Miller (1987) and de Man (1982) called the ‘triumph’ of and ‘resistance’ to theory, and the wider ends-of-theory debate. It also resonates with Tafuri’s resistance to avant-garde architectural theory as a kind of illusory rhetorical superstructure for the discipline, and with the subsequent post-critical debates in architecture. This Handbook positions itself as part of this oscillation, rather than entrenching one stance or other. In this respect we are motivated by the complex tensions between the general and the contingent, the global and the situated, that are precisely *held* within the classical sense of *theoria*. The ancient Greek *theoroi* who traveled, saw and reported, were under a duty to produce understandable reports that could ‘enlarge the community’s view’ (Rausch 1982, cited in Rabate 2002, 114). This theory-making was a cosmopolitan project that established carefully calibrated relationships between the distant and the near, the foreign and the familiar. Rodolphe Gasché’s (2007) recent meditation on the ongoing relevance of theory cites Hans-Georg Gadamer’s famous essay ‘In Praise of Theory’ as a way of articulating this. ‘Theoria’, Gadamer suggested, ‘is not so much the individual, momentary act as it is a comportment, a state and condition in

which one holds oneself' (Gadamer 1990, 96; cited in Gasché 2007, 200).¹⁰

How, then, should we qualify our actions in this expanded terrain of architectural theory? How do we summarize the motivations behind undertaking a new collection of this kind? What kind of architectural theory could grasp the complexity of that midsummer's afternoon in Park de la Villette? What does it mean to theorize architecture in an ends-of-theory or post-critical moment? What might be the scope and remit of this new era of architectural theory? By way of concluding our first introduction to this Handbook, we want to invoke three different, though related, concepts as a means of fleshing out the idea of an architectural theory in an expanded field: provincializing (Chakrabarty), worlding (Spivak), gathering (Latour). Each of these concepts usefully refers to conditions – such as building, making, inhabiting, mapping, describing territories – that make them amenable to architectural reflection. But they each in different ways articulate a mode of practice and style of thinking that is attentive to the complexities and contradictions around matters of difference in a globalizing world.

Chakrabarty's (2000) term 'provincializing Europe' is not merely a matter of articulating histories from non-European points of view (this is a long-standing project and many such histories have been written). Rather, the term refers to a simultaneous acknowledgment of the indispensability and inadequacy of the European intellectual heritage for thinking through conditions that pertain in everyday life outside of Europe. This doubled stance that simultaneously decentres and activates principles such as rationality, secularism or social justice, demands heightened attention to the situated and practising nature of theory. It calls for being constantly attuned to the particularities of difference and the generalities of concepts and categories and how they might be mutually accommodated.

Spivak (1990) adapts ('vulgarizes', as she puts it) Heidegger's term 'worlding' for similar purposes. She uses the term to draw attention to the epistemic violence implicated in imperialism, in particular 'the assumption that when the colonizers come to a world, they encounter it as un-inscribed earth upon which they write their inscriptions' (1990, 129). The idea of the 'Third World' is, for Spivak, a striking instance of this homogenizing process. Yet, this process also contains within it possibilities for a 'counter-worlding' or a new 'worlding of the world' in which alternate, situated possibilities for being in the world are articulated. As in Chakrabarty's logic of provincialization, this is a self-contradictory process that involves 'un-learning' the privileges of speaking from the centre as much as it does learning and propagating new forms of knowledge.

Latour's (2004) reappropriation of Heidegger's conception of 'gathering', brings us to the most architectural framing of these three related themes. Latour's consideration of contemporary technology, leads him to consider the way certain things have gathering or relational effects. The work of theory, for Latour, is not merely a matter of 'debunking', but one of assembly. The theorist 'is one who offers the participants arenas in which to gather'. The critic is 'the one for whom, if something is constructed, then it means it is fragile and thus in great need of care and caution'.

We do not propose that 'provincializing', 'worlding' and 'gathering' is a recipe for practising theory in contemporary times. Rather, we aim to draw out the richness of each of these verbs and examine their consequences for thinking about architecture today. We propose that architecture always already involves a form of provincializing, worlding and gathering. We propose that each of these concepts, as they have been respectively adapted, vulgarized and wrenched from their original (European) intellectual context, will help to displace the narrowed framing of post-structuralist architectural theory, and

help configure a newly sensitized framework for thinking about architecture in contemporary times. This is, we think, what the contributors to this volume have attempted to do: they have responded to and elaborated the editorial themes and issues in ways that anchored them in worldly concerns that question the hegemony of what is often seen as the centre of the discipline. They have considered architecture as a material practice that gathers not only techniques and materials, but also people and their social interactions.

FOUR GUIDING THEMES

In developing the content of this collection, we have identified a sequence of interpretive and methodological strategies to translate the critical potential of these three verbs into a more tangible editorial framework: a set of orienting devices that also collectively represent, in the broadest sense, the goals of the collection. This framework can be defined by a commitment to interdisciplinarity and cross-cultural analysis, rethinking architecture's characteristic divide between theory and practice, and the pursuit of open-ended and provisional investigations. We briefly outline each of these below.

INTERDISCIPLINARITY

Our approach to interdisciplinarity in this collection has been shaped by its complicated institutional history and the challenges it poses for architectural scholarship. The discourse on space, indebted to the pioneering work of Henri Lefebvre, holds particular significance in relation to the interdisciplinarity of architectural theory. Through the work of Lefebvre and others who followed him, space in the humanities and social sciences has assumed a new prominence in

social theory: no longer regarded as a container, frame or context for social processes, but a social process in itself that is intertwined with the development of capitalism. In its diverse meanings and analytic potential, space is at once material and imaginary, and spans scales from the body to the planetary. As such, it offers a bridge between the realm of architectural scholarship and the theorization of space and social processes in other fields.

At the same time, the discourses on space carry with them concerns about dissimulation (architectural theorists operating as social scientists) and displacement (where the specificity of architectural practices dissolves into a more generalized interest in social processes) (Robbins 1994; West 1993). Others have suggested that recent forms of interdisciplinarity in architectural research are in part a manifestation of the institutional authority it now holds within the universities: with the expansion of programmes in architectural history and theory, particularly at the PhD level, architectural academics have come to view other disciplines as sources, competitors and intellectual contexts for their research, shifting the focus from buildings and practice in the world at large to debates between disciplines within the academy (Jarzombek 1999, 197).

As we have suggested in the first part of this introduction, the turn towards the so-called post-critical, and the parallel, but quite different, revival of interest in pragmatism (with its emphasis on theory as something that guides, but does not precede, practice) are in part a reaction to interdisciplinarity and its potential to dissolve the historical specificity of disciplinary knowledge and practice (Saunders 2007). We do not advocate interdisciplinarity as a corrective to what some have characterized as a self-enclosed and self-referential discipline. We argue instead that architecture has always borrowed from other disciplines to illuminate its central questions, to augment its legitimacy, to find a language to redefine its

agenda. A more fully historicized understanding of architecture's 'interdisciplinary intellections' (Jarzombek 1999, 197) would enable us to better understand architecture's intellectual positioning today. Until the middle of the twentieth century, the fields of reference tended to be well-established disciplines such as archaeology, philosophy or history. Since then, architectural theory has been influenced by more fluid theoretical discourses such as structuralism, post-structuralism, semiotics, cybernetics, (neo) Marxist political theory, cultural studies, gender studies or postcolonial theory. This situation, which is partially responsible for the archipelago-like character of architectural theory, is nevertheless also a rich source of innovation and provocation. Emerging voices in architectural theory present new and original perspectives that are often based on intimate knowledge of neighbouring fields. We therefore regard interdisciplinarity as a way of representing and questioning the multifold processes and practices intrinsic to architecture and its specific history as a discipline and profession.

CROSS-CULTURAL FRAMEWORKS

This handbook has been shaped by the intellectual legacy of postcolonial struggles, most directly in the way we have conceptualized theory's space of knowledge. It has been conventional for theory collections to reinstate the grand evolutionary narrative of nineteenth century historicism as the unquestioned organizing framework for the sequential presentation of master texts, a convention that continues up to the present with several recent volumes on architectural theory. Perhaps the most notable example of the continuing tradition is the two-volume collection edited by Harry Francis Mallgrave and Christina Contandriopoulos, which begins with a chapter on Vitruvius and concludes with a section entitled 'Millennial Tensions'

(Mallgrave 2005, Mallgrave and Contandriopoulos 2008). A subsection on the 'End of Theory' creates a threshold to the future grouping, entitled 'Beyond the Millennium'. If the implied break with the past underscores the persistence of architectural theory's developmentalist tropes, the geography of knowledge mapped by the collection as a whole underscores the resilience of architectural theory's universalizing space of Euro-American origins and teleological development.

This collection is indebted to three decades of postcolonial studies that have, in diverse ways, reimagined the bounded spaces of Western knowledge as part of a world space surcharged with historical forces of colonization, imperialism and their aftermath. We therefore do not propose cross-cultural analysis based on a simple inside/outside relation, whereby the traditional Western canon is supplemented with more and more 'external' sources: this approach, in our view, can only serve to reinforce (and re-legitimate) the operations of the original system. Instead, we argue the first step is to uncover the cross-cultural within objects and ideas previously understood as (racially) pure exemplars of 'Western modernity' or 'colonial culture'.

Rethinking the space of European origins and hegemony in this way also transforms the assumptions of diffusionist models of modernity, in which ideas are presumed to travel from core to periphery, and from purity to debased status as they move between contexts. Following Edward Said, what emerges instead is a 'contrapuntal' narrative social space in which the architectural and urban 'cultures of imperialism' are in movement between core and periphery, as they are re-assembled, reworked and reinscribed in both the colonial city and imperial metropole (Cairns 2007). More recently, scholars of architectural and urban modernities have employed a cluster of terms (such as global, alternative, multiple, indigenous, vernacular, domestic or ordinary, amongst others) to

denote the conceptual and geographical decentring of monolithic conceptions of history. The terms signal a methodological shift, in which modernity is defined as an encounter rather than a simple transmission across borders: a site of conflict, and of agency and appropriation. The resulting transformation in the space of theory registers in the Handbook through multiple and sometimes contradictory positions, which do not line up in a neat evolutionary flow, but rather express different responses to common issues (such as the technology, aesthetics or sustainability) across cultures.

THE ECONOMY OF REFLECTION AND ACTION

The Handbook also sets out to positively engage with the widely acknowledged theory–practice divide. As editors, we believe this involves questioning the autonomy that is sometimes asserted by those engaged, on the one hand, in critical, theoretical and interpretive work, and those, on the other hand, involved in the creative and manual work of making a building. While acknowledging that a certain kind of relative and strategic autonomy is necessary for each realm, we have sought in both the organization and content of the collection to foreground the complex economy that the discipline of architecture has always sought to sustain between these realms. One of the underlying premises of the Handbook is that architectural theory can be characterized as a style of thinking that is constitutionally, if not always avowedly, open to the material and pragmatic dimensions of the built environment. And, because architectural modes of building are self-conscious, considered and inherently theoretical, this can be said to be a reciprocal principle.

Here we might think of Rem Koolhaas' essay 'Junkspace' (2003). It is a meditation on the material conditions, design, construction

and consumption practices that constitute the generic spaces of late-capitalism. Less essay than slab of stream-of-consciousness prose, 'Junkspace' is theory at the front lines of globalization. It is informed by the pragmatic, craftless construction techniques behind the airconditioned, escalator- and travelator-fed, insulated spaces of the global city: 'verbs unknown and unthinkable in architectural history – clamp, stick, fold, dump, glue, shoot, double, fuse – have become indispensable' (Koolhaas 2003, 410). Frederic Jameson, in his review of the wider *Project on the City* (Chuihua et al. 2003a, 2003b) to which 'Junkspace' formed a centrepiece, suggests that Koolhaas' writing, and this piece in particular, represents a 'new symbolic form' (Jameson 2003, 77). The essay's 'repetitive insistence' and sheer energy speaks directly to 'concrete' – actually, plastic, aluminium, vinyl, glass, plasterboard – realities of a globalizing world. Koolhaas' prose, Jameson argues, is one means of 'breaking out of the windless present of the postmodern back into real historical time, and a history made by human beings' (Jameson 2003, 76). In a more instrumental guise, yet working on a similar set of themes, we might also consider the work of architecture and planning firm, DEGWA, and in particular, co-founder Frank Duffy's research on office space, its history and future fortunes (Duffy 1992, 2008; Duffy et al. 1998). The firm has built its professional reputation on the capacity to bring sophisticated research techniques to bear both on the immediate – programmatic, urban, structural – demands of a given brief, and on longer-term strategic thinking on issues relevant to a particular sector, such as corporate work practices. The complex commissions that DEGWA undertake form a rich and reciprocal terrain for Duffy's theoretical writings.

Like all economies and systems of exchange, transactions can be conducted illicitly as much as in the open, materials can be as often smuggled as declared, and the process can be as often short-circuited as it

is smooth. In making a critical intervention in the economy of reflection and action, we have therefore sought to foreground the theoretical assumptions that underpin areas that are typically regarded as non-theoretical; at the same time, through ideas associated with gathering, we have sought to examine theory as a social practice, thus expanding the architectural meaning of the term 'practice' beyond its typically professional connotations, to one that refers to the routines, habits of thinking, social and intellectual relationships that shape theory.

PROVISIONAL AND OPEN-ENDED INVESTIGATIONS

As noted above, many of the edited collections published over the last two decades that deal with architectural theory have been concerned with mapping the formation and historical development of specific strands of architectural thought through the published writings of architects, critics and practitioners. *The Handbook* differs from these efforts, because it is structured around a series of issues and debates. This collection is not focused on the influence of single texts or individual authors: in working within the genre of the literature review, we present the interpretive work of scholars who construct cross sections through debates that we believe are central to the current intellectual landscape of architectural theory. The chapters in this collection stretch across a much larger set of positions, institutional geographies, and built conditions than is possible to achieve in an anthology of previously published material. While acknowledging the centrality of certain conventions of architectural theory as part of the core problematic of the collection, the contributions are concerned with mapping new tendencies and operating in domains that border on parallel investigations in other disciplines.

We believe that theory must be open to continuous revision and change if it is to represent and intervene in the relationship between the built environment and the changing conditions of the world at large. This collection does not construct a singular, evolutionary model of the field that culminates in an idealized present. While our contributors address the genealogy of the positions they discuss, collective emphasis is on the immediate past as a space of competing and sometimes contradictory positions. We have tried to represent the contingent and situated quality of theoretical discourse across multiple debates. Contributions question the given definitions and typical modes of architectural theory as a means of provoking open-ended investigations into possible outlines of future directions.

NOTES

1 See Brunette and Willis (1994, 27) for an account of the failure of the collaboration, and Derrida's critique of Eisenman's reading of post-structuralism and architecture.

2 See Andrew Benjamin (2007) for further discussion of architecture's autonomy and the role of deconstruction and critical architecture.

3 See Casey (1998, 312–317) for detailed discussion of the philosophical issues. See also Rendell (2006, 117) for discussion of the 'fit' of new functions in the Parc de la Villette follies.

4 The idea of theory as an expanded field draws from Rosalind Krauss' (1979) famous essay 'Sculpture in the expanded field', and from Anthony Vidler's (2004) subsequent revisiting of that essay in his discussion of architecture and landscape.

5 *Academic Capitalism* (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004) has a predominant US focus, and builds on an earlier book (Slaughter and Leslie 1997) that was framed with material from higher education institutions in Canada, Australia, the UK and the USA. See also their contributions to the collection, *Exchange University* (Chan and Fisher, 2008).

6 Bill Readings' (1996) book *The University in Ruins* was a powerful early warning of the narrowing of intellectual agendas in the name of unaccountable principles such as 'excellence'. It remains an important text in this debate.

7 In the absence of substantive studies on this topic of where and how architectural theory is taught, we base ourselves on our own observations and on our relative familiarity with a wide range of institutions, like, for example, those where the contributors to this Handbook are teaching. Hilde Heynen was involved in the coordination of the architectural theory workshops of the EAAE (Hasselt 2006, Trondheim 2007, Lisbon 2008, Fribourg 2009, Chania 2010).

8 This dominance of non-practising scholars is a rather recent phenomenon. In Joan Ockman's *Architecture Culture 1943–1968* one can count 46 authors who are mainly known as practising architects versus 27 others (art historians, philosophers or critics). In K. Michael Hays' (1998) *Architecture Theory since 1968* the ratio is reversed: 17 practising architects versus 36 non-practising scholars.

9 Hays' collection contains a number of contributions that are critical of the approach he outlines in his introduction. Mary McLeod's contribution to the volume, for example, connects the rise of deconstruction to the politics of the Reagan era. Her argument was originally published in the journal *Assemblage* (also edited by Hays), where it was part of a cluster of articles that challenged the discourses of critical architecture over that journal's history (McLeod 1989). The final issue of *Assemblage* in 2000 also reflected critical on arguments around the approach. See for example, Robert Somol's discussion, entitled 'In the wake of *Assemblage*' (Somol 2000). A range of other authors have focused on issues extending from the role of journals in supporting debates around critical architecture, to the translation of deconstruction in architectural theory (Crysler 2003; Groat 1992; Heynen 2007; Kahn 1994; Schwarzer 1999).

10 See Rodolphe Gasché's chapter 'Under the Heading of Theory' (2007) for an account of the theory debate in literary criticism and its current fortunes.

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