

We are living through a radicalized, unsettling moment in Western politics as what seemed the drift of history towards democracy, greater individual freedoms, increased fairness and greater international cooperation is at least temporarily reversed. As we finished production of this issue, ISPA was also concluding its 4th Biennial conference at a most overtly political venue—The United States Air Force Academy—which is simultaneously a Mecca for modern architecture lovers as well as an indisputable seat of the projection of American power. This fact was underscored as our philosophical discussions were occasionally interrupted by fighter jets buzzing the campus. Thus, it should make sense that even in the slow-moving world of applied philosophy, the times would lead us to produce this most overtly political issue. This development was not by design but rather by accretion—but one we eventually embraced as a legitimate extension of the exploration of the conjunction of architecture and philosophy. The issue begins at a broadly theoretical level but gradually becomes more pointedly critical culminating in a first-ever (for *Architecture Philosophy*) open letter to the architecture establishment.

To begin, Sean Akhane-Bryen and Chris L. Smith take up the concept of abjection in “The Space of the Lacerated Subject.” As theorized by Julia Kristeva, abjection is the necessary demarcation process, one that begins in infancy, of distancing oneself from what is not true and proper to the individual. But this process is susceptible to cooption. Architecture can be pressed into the

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service of abjective strategies to banish difference or conversely, to create totalizing environments that serve power. Architecture, they argue, is not only a “potential abject, but also the instrument or vector of abjection.” Bataille’s writings on architecture and abjection are employed to craft an alternative to bad abjective strategies.

In a related vein, Matt Waggoner discusses Adorno’s solution to the problem of living in a system of unfair power relations as the imperative “How Not to be at Home in One’s Home.” Adorno made no real distinction between the problems of dwelling and morality. Waggoner argues that, for Adorno, “The proper relation (to property in an age of inextricable entanglement with illegitimate power relations is)...to refuse the logic of possession and of exclusive habitation by assuming the status of a visitor in one’s own home.” Given the many truly awful immigrant and refugee crises across the world, this imperative applies at least as pointedly to the dilemmas of international immigration as it does to making room for strangers in more intimate settings.

Given Loos’ famous assertion that “only a very small part of architecture belongs to the realm of art: The tomb and the monument” we thought it both appropriate and, given events in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017, timely, to include Roger Paden’s thoughtful proposals for the treatment of Confederate monuments in American towns in “The Use and Abuse of Historical Monuments for Life.” Here, Paden resources Nietzsche, perhaps an initially unlikely choice, to help him propose a way out of the dichotomy presented between the antiquarians (who engage history as connoisseurs) and the revisionists (who advocate removal of such monuments altogether) with an approach that “serves life” by incorporating such monuments into larger works.

While the APDSR (Architects Planners and Designers for Social Responsibility) has urged the American Institute of Architects to take an ethical stance against the design of prisons for solitary confinement and capital punishment, the Institute has resisted getting drawn into what it sees as a divisive issue. For Dominique Moran Yvonne Jewkes and Colin Lorne, this situation is just another example of architects’ aversion to moral introspection. “Designing for Imprisonment,” discusses the current state of architects’ capacity for moral leadership by using the controversy over prison design as centerpiece. In the spirit of their essay, the open letter to the American Institute of Architects following Moran’s essay written by one of the editors and a group of his students makes a moral case that the Institute should come down decisively against the design of prisons for the torturous practice of long-term solitary confinement. The intention of this piece is not to create a litmus test for readers but to explore

legitimate implications of moral philosophy applied to architecture. We hope it opens new avenues for reader response.

Following this plea to the architecture profession, Brian Irwin's "Architecture as Participation in the World: Merleau-Ponty, Wölfflin, and the Bodily Experience of the Built Environment" brings the essays back to a more serene, hope-filled tenor as he invites the reader to consider the renewed possibilities for participating in, instead of visually consuming, architecture by combining insights by the great phenomenologist with those of the great architectural historian. The issue concludes with two book reviews: a review of David Wang's *The Philosophy of Chinese Architecture* by Thorsten Botz-Bornstein and a review of Steven Vogel's *Thinking Like a Mall*.

Taken together, these essays make a case for the benefits of the philosophical consideration of the political dimensions of architecture. They also form something of a bridge between the Bamberg essays in volumes 3.1 and 3.2, focussed on the human in architecture, and the next planned volume emanating from the Colorado Springs conference. They have certainly helped demarcate new areas from which to explore the conjunction of architecture and philosophy.

Tom Spector

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