

## **Selected Student Work**

SPC Architecture Program: Design 1 - Fall 2008

Instructor: Jon Wenberg, AIA

### **Spatial Communication: *First Year Trajectories***

#### **Section 3 Analytical Process Addendum**

The notes for section three briefly describe an intention toward a process of narrative interpretation, [“*For the purpose of this section, narrative works may be understood to propose and prepossess distinct contextual identities. The narrative structure (1) introduces interactive identities that approximate the complexity of the “...field of discourses and economies” (Rakatansky, 1992) which make up and characterize every moment of spatial / architectural experience. Our analysis will begin with a spatial agenda; we will set out to re-pose our subject narrative in terms of scalar/spatial relationships, using the character of the narrative expression to guide the specific way in which we construct our new expressions in the terms of habitable space.*”] though they do not go into any detail as to the specific methodology applied during the course of the exercise. The following is an attempt to reconstruct what occurred as the result of a moderated group analysis and re-assembly of the subject narrative in spatial/scalar terms.

Subject Narrative:

#### **LXXII**

I live not in myself, but I become  
Portion of that around me; and to me  
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum  
Of human cities torture: I can see  
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be  
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,  
Class'd among creatures, when the soul can flee,  
And with the sky -- the peak -- the heaving plain  
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle -- and not in vain.  
Lord Byron. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto the Third*

#### **1. Narrative Identity**

We began by formally asking “*How is the narrative to be used?*”. In this particular case the need for this question was obviated by the fact that this piece was chosen specifically to work with a section on context development. It may be noted however that such consideration should reinforce the idea that a given narrative structure possesses a specific identity which may or may not be appropriate for transposition into a chosen spatial typology.

The next step of course was then to ask what type of context this would become; “what is the character of this context?”. Through multiple readings, limited background research and some prodding on thought in the direction of phenomenological transparency, we concluded that the context to be derived from this narrative would exist temporally within a brief moment of experience and spatially exhibit the simultaneous experience of both personal and great scale. (*As noted in the main section description, the medium structure of iambic pentameter and its ababbcbcc rhyming scheme have been intentionally neglected for this analysis*)

It should be noted that choosing to work with a narrative of this extreme nature is intended to provide beginning students with immediate accessibility and a broad margin of error within which to test newly developed spatial communication skills. Advanced studios might benefit from larger, more subtle and more complex narrative constructions.

## 2. Parts Inventory

Having made a decision that this would be a context construction and come to at least a preliminary conclusion about the character of this context in terms of scale interaction, our next step was to loosely inventory the parts of this construction into categories specifically related to spatial scale relationships. It may be noted here that there are at least as wide a variety of directions to take with regard to category selection as there are people who would undertake such an activity. The decision to focus this analysis on scale relationships originates with the general focus of this particular design studio. The point must be made however that this is the critical moment in such an investigation where the complexity of the "...field of discourses and economies", as suggested by Mark Rakatansky, is recognized in a narrative work and selectively edited to reveal with great clarity structures of a manageable group of distinct system interactions which may be restated in architectural/spatial terms.

Our analysis begins with a loose interpretive inventory (one version of several):

I live not in myself, but I become	<b>(I)</b>	singular self, momentary, immediate scale
	[(I) live not in <b>(myself)</b> ]	alternate version of (I) indirectly suggesting (I) as distinct from <i>others</i> , In opposition to <i>others</i> - therefore (I) of scale inverse to singular
Portion of that around me; and to me	<b>(I become)</b> <b>(Portn. of that arnd. me)</b>	bridge, <u>threshold moment</u> singular scale structures revealed, repeated, reflected within larger scale activity.
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum	<b>(High mountains)</b>	<u>great scale, singular identity</u> , Not directly accessible at singular scale, Also (I) restated, reflected at great scale
	[(High mntns.)are a <b>feeling</b> ]	experience of (I) from alternate perspective, part of (I)
Of human cities torture: I can see	<b>(the hum)</b> <b>(human cities)</b>	persistent, vaguely distinct presence <u>great scale, plural identity</u> , inverse of (myself), negotiable singular scale
	[(human cities) <b>torture</b> ]	revealed nature of plural identity, singular scale within uncomfortable <u>dense matrix</u> of other [(I) inversion]
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be	<b>(nature)</b>	datum identification/recognition, major link or intersection. context within which (I), (Mountains) & (Human Cities) reside
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,	[(nature) <b>fleshy chain</b> ]	unfolded larger experience of intersecting identity between (mountains) & (human cities), <u>constructed interruption along datum</u> of (nature). Reference of <u>larger order</u>
Class'd among creatures, when the soul can flee,	<b>(Class'd among creatures)</b> <b>(soul can flee)</b>	revealed moment of (fleshy chain) self identifying / defining association with larger order – momentary, <u>simultaneous experience</u> of singular and great scale
And with the sky -- the peak -- the heaving plain	<b>(mingle)</b>	singular scale revealed in broad unfolding of larger order, repeated, reflected, not momentary but in continuum
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle -- and not in vain.	<b>(not in vain)</b>	reflection of self within larger order reinforces identity of self as interconnected component of (nature),\.

### 3. Transposition

The inventory of parts, though re-stated in spatial/scalar terms, does not constitute by itself a recipe for architectural expression. What is done here is to reveal a spatial agenda which must be adopted as a translation into a specific spatial condition or system. Physical, material components must ultimately be assigned proximity to one another in order for a true architectural, spatial experience to be constructed. It is at this moment where a group of individual designers now take various directions in expression of these conditions based on a common programmatic restatement of the derived inventory. We use this opportunity to discuss the importance of "program" in architecture, and proceed by making a sequence of specific programmatic decisions.

Following is a loose restatement of the programmatic requirements derived from our narrative inventory; various valid interpretations might be made, though this is the direction we decided to embark upon. Ultimately this exercise is intended to promote the development of individual context analysis strategies.

### 4. Program

Models are to be constructed demonstrating the intersection of two distinct systems.

System-1 should demonstrate the transformation or breaking down of a large scale structure of clear singular identity into a structure also of equally large scale, but consisting of a dense small scale sub-component matrix.

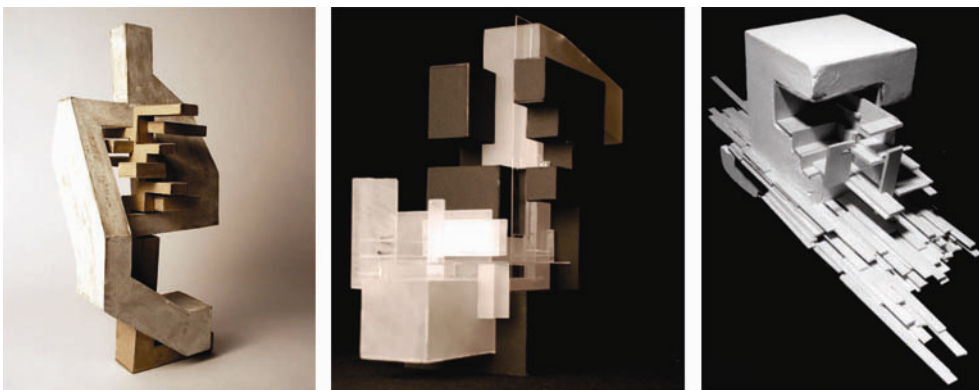
System-2 should demonstrate the revelation or tracing of one linear boundary component found within a second large scale structure. At some location along this linear boundary there must be an interruption or threshold moment and the revelation of sub-systems operating within that larger system.

System-1 must intersect system-2 at the threshold moment.

The primary requirement for this construction is that it builds on previous exercises in scale interaction in such a way as to clearly indicate the scale of human habitation.

### 5. Construction

Ultimately, a project which demonstrates systems development at widely varying scales and scale interactions that clearly suggest spaces relative to the human body, the project is considered successful. Below are examples of some of the better results:



### Bibliography

Whiteman, J., Kipnis, J., & Burdett, R.: Editors (1992).

Mark Rakatansky, P. 199 – 221: *Spatial Narratives*. The MIT Press