

THE "METAMETAPHOR" THEOREM

(And Arabia)

by

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Introduction:

This monograph's five sections builds from a generic definition of a theorem to establishing *metaphor* as a theorem about *metaphors*. The monograph further defines the *metaphor* turning to the works of Paul Weiss, W.J. Gordon, Jamel Akbar and George Dodds. This monograph both deals with the product, process and originator of the *metaphor*. References are made to Saudi Arabia as examples and application of these ideas.

Theorems and Propositions:

"The whole is greater than the sum of its' parts"; "the art of architecture"; "less is more"; "form follows function"; and "architecture makes *metaphors*" are just a few of architecture's *theorems* which as mathematics are propositions (or formula) covering something to be proved from other propositions or formulas. In particular it is a proposition that can be deducted from the premises of a system. When we propose that architecture is an art because it, too, makes *metaphors* we assume two things. First that we recognize the first proposition that art is a *metaphor* and second that we understand *metaphor's* function as a system. Furthermore, the above theorems are attempts to look beyond the day to day guidelines of architectural theory and methodology to a wider more *transcendental* and interactive view of architecture. That is to say it is an attempt to place architecture in a context beyond its' own known domain into a another so as to illuminate it in a way heretofore and apparently, strange and unfamiliar. Theorems provide us with the benefits, already known and accepted in one system to shed light and give life to a second. It is an *inductive*

process bringing forward facts and particulars from the other domains to architecture and vice versa. The two are reciprocal, interact and translate each other about certain commonalities. Not that architecture cannot be practiced without such relationships. But it is by such relationships that we put to work on one, the laws, parameters and workings of another. This can usually be tested in routines applied in the circumstances of creating, learning, observing, or using a work of architecture. We ask of the work of its' form follows functions and has less produced more; etc?

We also admit by suggesting for a theorem that the context of architecture left (and altogether limited) to itself is wanting and in need of something to satisfy a weakness of some deficiency. We also propose theorems as a result of experiences in other contexts involving other systems to an extent that we have good reason to suspect the validity of the relationships and worth of testing (proving) it from others. It may also be an answer to an untested or unproven theory. Why is architecture an art? To answer this and be able to finally rest with the definition we must *know* art and be able to match architecture with all of art's parameters.

We are also saying that the three branches of the *metametaphor* theorem: architecture, art and *metaphors can* be viewed both "*objectively*" and "*connectively*;" and then usefully and (beneficially) applied to our experience of all three. Particularly architecture, so as make the *theorem* worthy of our attention. Theorem's value ultimately is in the domain of learning. Most creativity occurs in pursuit of learning. We are constantly testing goals, ideals, models, conditioning laws, systems, etc. against learning methodologies and theories of

knowing. One such theory was developed by ^(1.0)William J. Gordon in his book, the "Synectics, *The metaphoric way of knowing*". In this book he shows the value of using *metaphors* to grasp new ideas, create work and to learn better, faster, and more imaginatively by using *metaphors* thereby improving the quality of the process, products and relationships with people because of applying his *theorems*.

Transfer's Meanings:

^(2.0)*Metaphor* is a Greek word meaning "transfer"; which this monograph applies to acts of creation. Out of certain truths about *metaphors*, Arabs, and Saudi Arabia we can try to understand principles which underline the knowledge and existence of art, architecture and then Saudi Arab architecture. In the sense that this study is based on a philosophy which deals with the principle of architectural origin and structure while investigating the sciences of its' being; it is metaphysic. It is intimately connected with a theory of knowledge; it is abstract and abstruse in its' thoughts about existence, casuality, and truth. This study, for the most part, is not about the obvious and pragmatism although it is directed toward being an applicable and viable constant for the understanding of architecture in general and may be applied to Saudi Arabia architecture in particular.

A philosophy which has at its' premise that one is related to another (not as an analogy) implies that one should be more concerned with the second by the assistance of the first; in that way, too the, process of

(1.0) Gordon, W.J., "*The metaphoric way of knowing*".
 (2.0) Weiss, P., "*The metaphorical process*"

from "*The Question Concerning Technology*" saying that "technology is a way of *revealing*". We cannot imagine a work of art which is not revealed since that we imagine and the ultimate work is inextricably bound together. That is why we need not only look at *metaphors*, but at the *making of metaphors* knowing that the *process* will *influence the product*. *Metaphors* occur when they are made *metaphorically*. Art is made when it is made artistically. Art and *metaphors* both are a (3.0) "*mimesis*". Where one imitates the way in which things are created and imitated.

One of the reasons that very creative artist do not always work according to one or another fixed system; and in fact are perpetually relearning their own process is so that technique will not (3.1) hinder mimetic inquiry". (This is according to Jacques Ellul; in "*The Technological Society*"). The artist knows that the *more* there is of the system the *less* there is in it for him. The creative process is one of an intimate relationship between the creator and created. Between *metaphor* and making of *metaphors*. This is also why the best described but not systematized. Accordingly, the more predominant the system of making *metaphors* the less the creator understands about the created. This may in part explain Jamel Akbar's suggestion that even the architect's interventions between the user and the "work" may thereby destroy chances for a work of art. The magnitude of the intervention may produce what for the world and the architect may be a work of art. It may be the architect's work of art. But, it also may be irrelevant, noxious, or even innocuous to its' tenants, users and occupants.

(3.0) Dodds, G., "*On the place of architectural speculation*".

(3.1) Ellul, J., "*The technological society*"

There is a lack of distinction between subject *and* object. There is an *immediate* relationship with the material world and a *direct* experience of its' totality.

(3.0 pg 78) In this way *metaphors* are relevant because they are made by both their users and perceivers. And the maker is the dominant beneficiary. For example, (4.0) Jamel Akbar's reference to the Arab who, himself, creates his house without intervention. *Metaphors* are also left as *metaphors*; and, *equipoise* between contrasting, opposing, or interacting elements is sought between meanings. They are and "media-balanced" to suit the creator and not a third party user, a transient public or state logos. In this way, too, the state and its' logos may, too, make *metaphors* and temper expression to suite a manifestation of its' corporate ideal. After all a state, religion, corporation or any non-human person does *not* have a body. Their bodies are composed of their citizens, congregations, believes, makers, employees, stockholders that are the material manifestations beneficiaries, managers and operators. It therefore, is positioned to look within its' own make-up and extrapolate manifestations of its' charter (program, logos, constitution, ideas, writings, etc.). Science and this "*age*" of electronics, computerization and communications have become an age in which technology, once a minor subordinated subject, (3.0) "has grown to engulf science; and, by extension; all of society." "Meanings have likewise been obliterated and identities of individuals, states, religions, corporations, etc., became footnotes to means and methods. *Metaphors* once dominant to be revealed have become superficial attachments, symbols and fascades. Now the *metaphor*

(3.0) Dodds, G., "*On the place of architectural speculation*".
 (4.0) Akbar, J., "*Crisis in the built environment*".

includes: means and methods, technology and any broad spectrum of issues. We look beyond *what* is being communicated by intention to the *process* which has become part of the *metaphor*. No one would want *not* to use all of technologies benefits. However, to understand and deal with all of technology and a complex set of varied settlement patterns the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as other major societies, has had to resort to technological and "process-specialist" who can make development in "present-time" and combine "diverse circumstance" possible. The making of *metaphors* in this context is "*high*"-*tech* "not *artisan-like*". It requires access to information from worldwide sources and not only local indigenous sources.

This is based on *metaphoric-like* expectations nurtured by knowledge of an external context. An external context which Saudis want to "bring in" and include.

(3.0) Dodds recognizes the two views of technology from both Ellul and Heidegger and discusses Ellul's method of measuring the intervention of technology in terms of its' relative degrees of "*opacity*". *Metaphors*, including their extent of *being* can be any amount of any element and then be understood by these *degrees* and variations. The *metaphor* itself exudes the truth of its' composition and components. For example, architecture is involved today in such a truth. Composer's efforts to mold a body for an emerging state can be likened to scientist mixing chemicals to form a compound who are subject to the discipline and properties of the chemical's environment: the *process* of science, the *properties* of the chemicals themselves, their own being and experiences

(3.0) Dodds, G., "*On the place of architectural speculation*".

with all the properties.

(3.0) Indeed, as Dodds says we don't simply employ technique, but rather we are employed by *technique*. Any architect who draws a building with his own hand is quite a bit different than the one using a "keyboard and software package". One process, to use Ellul's *metaphor*, is more "*opaque*" than the other and therefore estranging us from the *forms* we make. They become the expressions of the media with all its' hardware, software and process. We must therefore not only consider meanings, symbols, design, engineering, etc., but a *concept* which permits the reality of technology along with People's needs for identity. All the public can not participate together in even the most accessible of *metaphoric* creative processes. This usually results in a *gap* between creator(s) and users. However, in these terms the product is ultimately their common catalyst. A *metaphor* which explains one in relation to another and expresses what is common to both. In this process the architect can display his design to the client and systematically observe, listen and then include the clients comments into revisions of the initial design. The architect and owner must be well prepared to organize and manage this process. The architect who is well prepared to listen and revise will serve the end user and will indeed make a *relevant metaphor*.

It is said that "one man's pleasure may be another man's poison." For many societies, (and much of our discussion inevitably generalizes to that extent), technology is an end in itself. Technology is itself a desired *engulfing* phenomenon *because* it does not express the

(3.0) Dodds, G., "*On the place of architectural speculation*".

complexity, diversity, peculiarity, identity and ideals of a societies tradition. The *engulfing* technology becomes the ameliorating identity as a tool for interfacing divergent traditions, nuances of religion, and diverse regional customs. Many societies, are both subject to a "*boom*" economy with exponential growth and a huge migration from rural and nomadic settings (as in Saudi Arabia) into cities and villages.

(3.0) The more *opaque* a technique, the less revelatory it becomes, distancing the maker from that which is concealed. ¹Concealed from mankind and further hindering mimetic inquiry." For example, Saudi architects are the products of professional education (usually created outside of Saudi Arabia) and in this way can be a kind of alien in their own society. There is no *long* tradition of such a profession in Saudi Arabia. What the Saudi architect learns to profess is involved in cultures, societies and traditions that do not share a common history, religion, culture nor set of economic epochs. Indeed, what mimetic activity that does take place transposes from the Saudi architect's *learned past* to his present cultural setting in Saudi Arabia. He is faced with becoming an architect, which in former times was a profession only practiced by non Saudis to now being himself *that architect* to make *metaphors* relevant to the divergent demands of contemporary Saudi Arabia.

Indeed, the Saudi is very much involved in an *opaque* process which is

(3.0) Dodds, G., "*On the place of architectural speculation*".

1. *conceal*: hide; to prevent disclosure and recognition. To place out of site. Kept from view and perception. To prevent another from knowing. In itself is a design factor. Its experience by composers cause their work to reveal concealed area, approaches entries, access, courtyards, etc.

less revealing and further distances what is already concealed from his very own people. It contributes, according to ^(3.1)Ellul, to the fracturing and dissolution of our understanding of the world we make (and the one in which we live).

Programmers, planners, designers, draftsmen and specification writers may never visit the site or know the environment of the project. Large architectural offices have split responsibilities divided amongst many different specialists. Often, in Saudi Arabia projects will be divided amongst many different offices each assigned to one phase and then passed to a completely different architect for the next phase. This process indeed allows many firms to participate in the business but is the most inefficient way to design a *coherent metaphor*. If it is true that the *metaphor* is the architect and the architect the *metaphor* then with such splits and divisions it is difficult to discern commitment. Who takes on this single responsibility and carries it through? Who will be accountable for the *metaphor*?

Saudi's urban landscape is filled with works of architecture which have either *directly* or *indirectly* not been design products derived from its' place but from other contexts. Directly, when buildings are designed in Saudi Arabia by persons trained and experienced outside of Saudi Arabia; and *indirectly* by the (many) projects designed outside of Saudi Arabia by non-Saudis. Every work of art (*metaphors*) has "its' unique existence at the place where it happens to be." Such works *directly* or *indirectly* from these other contexts have nonetheless become uniquely Saudi and related to their immediate situation. They are the *metaphors*

(3.1) Ellul, J., "*The technological society*"

of Saudi Arabia but they also are a part of other contexts as well.

What is rather at stake is more the *sense* of disassociation (and distance) by both users and creators of the effects on the built environment than what is *actually* the case.

(3.0) "What was once a process of *revealing* prior to technique has been devalued to the level of the ¹*vicarious*." Although much of what is taught and understood from the "west's" architectural past is derived not from shallow singularities but from a long and complex history involving major styles and periods; and, major revolutions of industry, science, culture, and philosophy, religion and settlement patterns. It is no wonder that simplistic *mimetics* of "western" typeology can be noxious and strike dissonant cords to those that desire to look beyond the *expeditious metaphor* to what the *metaphor* represents by way of its' intrusion and historical interruption. *What is the right, relevance and compatibility of "that" metaphor to "this" context, "these" people and "this" culture? Since those other metaphors, however, valuable and meaningful, are not designed from "this" place and they are alien to what is the commonality that warrants inclusion in the Saudi Arab Metaphor?*

In this regard Saudi Arabia is a *type* of our world where the *arts* have been reduced to superficial decoration and commodity. Art is not

(3.0) Dodds, G., *"On the place of architectural speculation"*.

1. vicis: change: it is the substitutionary experience through imaginative or sympathetic participation in the experience of another. The *metaphor* is not originated from the result of direct experience with the context resulting in a like *metaphor* which when perceived recounts those vicarious indirect thought and ideas.

cultivated nor are there contexts in which arts may be made *fertile*. Institutionalization is not a solution nor in this monograph. Our world is part of what Saudi Arabia is experiencing: the low value of an overt art in architecture or of art permeating any work. Instead craft, imitation and technique have all become *placebos* for art. The extent of what can be *fed* is limited by one of five senses and little more reaches from the senses to the mind to become perceptions. Societies opt for immediate gratification instead of inventing the food with which to feed themselves (and others). Sociologists call these the "other-directed", the sheep, and the followers. This anti-art/anti-architecture is challenged by monographs that establish prerequisite paradigms, theorems and concepts. They are not meant to be formulas but helpful and constructive confrontations and challenges. Themselves creations and *metaphors* of a future creative act. Their purpose is to both encourage and prompt the existence of other *metaphors*. "*Just imagine a world without art*". None of us want to be in this world. We know we're being *fed* junk, imitation and nonsense when we don't receive any new information. It is a basic instinct. That is why art can be appreciated and used by so many because it tells us something about our relationships to every thing else. This is also why art is the making of *metaphors*. Art is a *metaphor* for everything we finally perceive and begin to relate to our own context, life-style and psycho-social environment. When we make the *metaphor* we do so in concordance with its' creator and begin to understand our "reality". Art and *metaphor* thus free us from our circumstance into a personal realm. In traditional Bedouin settings it is the *metaphoric* instincts of the *Bedo* which invite the artisan's talents. And it is the *potentials* of the *artisan* which make up the *metaphor*. The instinct and need for *metaphoric* expression is intrinsic and fundamental. Consciousness

itself leads man to make links from one context to another and reify those links into works which include commonalities and differences. Even as settlers imagine the use of one place to be used in relationship to another or precedence of climate, terrane etc.

Knowing that art and *metaphor* are linked to the work of artisans and place it is as the *Bedouin* who goes from one place to another. He does employ the *metaphor*, borrowing from the relationship of his previous *set-up* and its' relationship to its' place, to the new place. Since it is the *set-up* which he carries with him it is familiar. It is then the place which is the variable. That unique and special place in the desert to which he must adapt his familiar tent(s). The place is at once unique and yet because he *thinks metaphorically* he is able to see in the unique place analogies to past sites. And, after analyzing its' commonalities and differences is able to meld his set-up with the new site. A theatrical company analyzing a strange theater experiences much the same as the Bedouin in the desert. He must assimilate a variable strange place with a familiar well rehearsed performance.

(3.0 pg 76) Imitation, imagination, conceptualizations are common to both "speculative architectural projects and the art of the theater because they both come to exist out of "making" and "place". Where "making" both for theater and architecture is an "assemblage or (re)construction of pre-existing fragments into a new whole." Both Plato and Aristotle defined "mimesis" where Plato distinguished between good and bad mimesis whereas Aristotle between kind and heroic vs. comic. The former being *above* while the latter *below* men's station. So judgmental

was Plato that both the architect and the poet were banned from the "Republic." Plato was concerned with truthfulness seeing the artisan as producing *reality* while the artist mere *illusion* of things rather than the things themselves. Plato did, however, define a "good mimesis" as one which "reenacts" the first creation (ultimately revealing truth and beauty). This remaking is a restoration of knowledge that does not resemble the original so much as it leads to the essential *condition* of the *referent* (the object or event) to which a term (or symbol) *refer*.

Parts of the *metaphor*, "Richard, Lion, or the essence common to both are equivalent to "brave". There is in the *metaphor* a lack of resemblance because each take on the qualities of the other (inherent in the *metaphor*). *Metaphors* can be mimesis (the good kind of mimesis).

Metaphor is a transfer which embodies a *change* of one component from another; and is the result of "understanding that is achieved" of not only the *new state* (the product or the *metaphor*), but also the relationship of the transformed state to the *referent*. Here the referent can be regarded as the *user* of a work of architecture. The referent is then the "*object*" or either of the components making up the work. (3.0) It is in the performing the "mimeses" that meaning is established; not only through *simulacrum*, but through a lack of resemblance as well. Man imitating not the products but the divine creative act through which soul ¹("GOD") called things into existence.

(3.0) Dodds, G., "On the place of architectural speculation".

1. Author's insert

(3.0 pg. 78) The way in which philosophers reference divine creative acts itself is *metaphoric* and mimetic not "framing a new order, instead, like the philosophers mind, they pointed backward to a lost knowledge that, by mimesis (*metaphors*) they served to restore." (2.0) Paul Weiss says that the architect's work operates in *time*: of the architect's past, the past of the context and the knowledge of the field. (3.2) Alberto Perez-Gomez adds that architectural speculation (conceptualizations of things in the past, as extent, about a possible but not necessarily real future are kind of a "*heuristic*" act, specifically as a restoration or remaking of a condition that is no longer present.

We may consider carrying prototypes from one context to another in the same way as we consider applying a work of art created in one "place" (with its' own *metaphorical* context) and applying it to another. (3.0) George Dodds refers to it as the "syntactic relationship of the work of art to its' setting."

Consider the great European classical and renaissance works of art and architecture and the relationship that the master builder had to the site and the construction process. How much of this is lost in the contemporary role of the architect, and, how does this impact works of architecture in Saudi Arabia? Indeed, much of Saudi's new cities are designed outside of Saudi. This may explain why they *seem* unrelated to the Saudi surrounding. They are! But instead much more suited; and in fact a kind of "imitation" of the context in which they *are* designed. In contrast one is reminded again of the buildings in Abha

(2.0) Weiss, P., "*The metaphorical process*"

(3.0) Dodds, G., "*On the place of architectural speculation*".

(3.2) Perez-Gomez, A., "*Architecture as Embodied knowledge*"

(Saudi Arabia), designed and built on-site by *non-architects* (not as the A.I.A. defines *architects* as the owner's agent or his surrogate) but *the* client himself.

(3.0) Bad mimesis is imitation; Good mimesis is creation: Arabist may be asking for copies from others. (See Plato and our earlier discussion above). Saudi is Arabic and at one with a creative process which can reproduce identical things and make *metaphors*. Composers can combine, construct, bring together, and transform things from one to another state by considering them in yet another context along with their alien (unlike) components. On the contrary, local architecture looks its' best when it doesn't, *in this sense*, look any thing like men have heretofore constructed in other contexts, but instead is itself a *new* mimeses for its' owns time and place. This is what many strive to achieve.

The didactics of the "*metametaphoric*" theorem as a mimetic concept is a *tool* to evaluate the application of *metaphors*. It also explains the *process* of mimesis. It begins where Plato and Aristotle leave off. It explains the relevance of *metaphors* over non-*metaphoric* analogies or symbols. It puts *metaphors* in a context of alternates to understanding architecture.

Architecture: The making of metaphors as a conceptual model:

This monograph *suggests* and *introduces* a conceptual model that links architecture to art and thereby restores it to its' place within a family of creative acts having different media, modes and concepts but with

(3.0) Dodds, G., "*On the place of architectural speculation*".

identical Conditions, Operations, Ideals and Goals (C.O.I.G.).

The value of this conceptual *model* while explicating Saudi Arabian architecture is to define the *scope* of the Saudi environmental program beyond the mundane to the *ideal*. It is in the realm of the *ideal* that we consider architecture amongst a variety of art's expressions.

This monograph provides a possible conceptual framework around which art, and architecture may develop. The *metaphoric* theorem may enable a student's and/or practitioner's transition away from mechanics and toward the art of architecture but with a sense of *mission*. Motivation is necessary. *Metaphors* and *metaphoric* process include motivations, mission and context. All in one. That is why the *metaphoric* theorem is a conceptual framework for change and transition from the non-art; as well as from *art to architecture, crafting* dwellings to making *metaphors*.

This monograph should not be read by any architect as a *judgement* but for the *encouragement* of creative artist and artisans. This work may hopefully encourage to further commissioning, collecting and exhibiting. The life, works and care of a society's artist is the responsibility of its' own society. Architects may wish to call these works *metaphors*, geometries, etc., but without *its'* existence architects may be walking away from their very own creative muscles and "authenticity."

1. *authenticity*: see various works by Martin Heidegger (see author's note number 2 in bibliography)

"Metametaphor":

By raising the *metaphor* above its' linguistic context and beyond the scale of its' normal consideration of both *reading* and creating we may designate a new but related discipline which has been designed to deal critically with the original. "*Meta*" is Latin for change and indeed so much contained in this theorem changes the common framework we normally associate with *metaphors*. The *metaphor*, its' structure, mechanics, goals presence and its' many incarnations (manifestations) have been developed beyond its' strictest literary sense. We can even refer to an *architect* as a *metaphor* and understand such an application in this new and advanced use of the *metaphor*. We can understand that the architect him or herself is an agent for change and that he or she transforms, composes and experiences what he or she makes. The two are inseparable. The maker of his or her work. The reader experiences what the assembler *exudes* from his or her cumulation of experiences.

The *transformation* of the literary *metaphor* to a *generic* all-art encompassing theorem reaches into existence and finds transcending qualities. Qualities equally magnificent in any of the arts. In an age emphasizing technology an offsetting counter vector provides a whole complete view of our world. *Metaphor's* inherently transfer and change. A "*metametaphor*" will change *metaphors* usage and application. It already talks about architecture in terms of art using terms found in one to define the other. It is *interactive* and more *comprehensive*. Literary, linguistic, architectural, dance, painting, music, drama, etc. *Metaphor's* commonality is in the idea and not the media by which it is expressed. They are as they first originate, a *cognate* by those who

experience their peculiar characteristics. The originator experiences, bears, personalizes, digests, thinks, diagnosis and *reifies*. He is the *metaphor* and what we perceive is his *signature*. *Metametaphor* is a theorem for assemblers, composers, creators, originators, makers, artists, architects, writers, dancers, directors, producers, etc. who accept the reality of their responsibility. That they are agents of change and what they express they produce. What is read is the appreciation of the skill, perception and involvement they have in their subject. *Metametaphor* is appreciation of the skill, perception and involvement in their subject. *Metametaphor* is related to metalanguage insofar as it ultimately will have to deal with the relation between one or another *form* of expression.

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Author's note:

1. All word definitions from *"Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary"*
1991 published by William A. Hewellyn.
2. Reader is advised to refer: Jarva Lal Mehta's 1976, *"Martin Heidegger, the way and the vision"* published by the University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu.