

ENGLISH SUMMARY

CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARD ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY IN THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ARCHITECTS LOUIS I. KAHN AND ROBERT VENTURI

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ABSTRACT

Louis I. Kahn (1901-1974) and Robert Venturi (1925-2018) are considered to be among the most prolific architects of the mid-twentieth century in the United States of America. Apart from their extraordinary build and projected architecture both architects were widely known for their discursive contribution to the architectural culture of their time. This dissertation built on scholarship that searched to contextualize the formation of architectural history telling practices. It therefore analyzed contexts of the emergence of architectural history discourse, focusing on architects' historical education, their consumption of architectural history, and the environment where their first discursive ideas on architectural history were presented.

The dissertation used the discourse analysis method and analyzed discursive practices, events, and chosen texts. The study of the texts aimed for identification of main concepts and patterns of architectural history usage in the texts that architects produced. It intended to compare the historical narratives of selected representants of two mid-century generations of renowned architects. The research on genealogy of architecture historical narratives was to provide the material on its main components and issues. The dissertation argued to challenge ideas of mega-narratives as all-encompassing forces in architect's life. Study suggested that the discourse and its particular modes could evolve in a parallel discursive schema to the design and projected practices, and that architectural history writing might be rendered as an institution in architectural profession.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This dissertation explored writings on architectural history of selected architects in the United States, in the mid-twentieth century. To showcase changing attitudes toward architectural history, the study followed a comparison of two reflective architects of that period, Louis I. Kahn and Robert Venturi. The isolation of the narrative on the history of architecture from other abstract issues in a professional's philosophy intended to capture the micro-scale of the designer's reflection. The main thesis offered in this dissertation was that attitude toward architectural history of an architect was formed by the interplay of several factors, namely, the motives established within the organizations participating in the consumption and production of discourse, the institution of architectural writing, and architect's autonomous decisions in these environments. The dissertation acknowledged that the existing research often overemphasized the dichotomy of modernism and postmodernism in the study on architects. Therefore, this research did not start with pre-existing assumption that their attitudes toward architectural history might be simplified to modern or postmodern. Historicism studied as an institution could represent a variety of professional, societal, and disciplinary issues. This study suggested that, in the institution of architectural writing, certain concepts can be carried on and modified by representatives of various generations.

Chapter One. Framework for Research on the Twentieth-Century Historicism

This chapter presented the main research objectives and methods for the study on the twentieth-century historicism. It briefly presented the contexts of the mid-twentieth century architectural history status in the United States of America. The dissertation's purpose, aim and theses were stated. Main arguments were specified and the layout of the manuscript was presented. The chapter ended with commentary on methods and data collection. The background stating the sources and limits of the study closed the chapter.

Chapter Two. Main Themes in Kahn's and Venturi's Historicisms

In the second chapter, the outline of Tafuri's stance on architectural history's crisis was presented, and various concepts from his oeuvre were explored for their methodological usefulness in this dissertation. The following Tafurian concepts were listed and discussed: the project of history, operative criticism, crisis in the project of history, space of conflict, myth against history, criticism, and history as a production. Main themes in Kahn's and Venturi's historicisms were presented. The chapter was illustrated with examples of the realized,

unrealized, and theoretical projects of their formative years. The study was meant to showcase both architects' historiographies in the timeframe of the forties, fifties, and sixties, in the mid-twentieth century.

Chapter Three. Institution of Historicism

In the third chapter, architectural writing was rendered as an institution, discussed and checked for its compliance with the historiographical production and consumption of Kahn and Venturi. The aim of the text analysis in the chapter was to present how architectural history in architects' writings showed signs of institutionalization. The reification of architectural historiography was meant to present how various forms of institution maintain their status in the profession, and evolve in the architectural body of writings.

As previously mentioned, the identification of historical narrative's components was among the most important purposes of this research. The chapter focused on the close analysis of the selected texts of architects. The analysis aimed for determining the relationships and patterns of the use of architectural history in texts written by architects. To categorize and group the instances of architectural history usage in texts, custom genre classification was introduced. The similarities and differences between Louis I. Kahn's and Robert Venturi's casual uses of architectural history in their discourse were presented.

The analysis showed that both architects often used examples of architectural history objects in their texts to validate their ideas on contemporary architecture. Architectural history also appeared to back up general ideas on society or culture in classical cultural history vein. Lastly, when architects recalled their own past, they contributed to the construction of their own history. The subjective sampling of material during architects' history telling was not disinterested. Architects actively contributed to constructing their own and disciplinary history.

Chapter Four. Consumption and Production of Historicism

Context analysis of the last chapter was meant to show what framed the formation of Kahn's and Venturi's attitudes toward architectural history. The chapter presented fixed, preexisting similarities and differences in the context of the formation of architectural history attitudes for Kahn and Venturi. The analysis showcased the contexts of education, consumption, and production of architectural history narratives for chosen architects. The chapter began with an inquiry into the type of architectural history education in the first quarter of the twentieth century in the United States. Was Kahn's and Venturi's historical education

different, by being a generation apart? The inquiry into other sources, that might have influenced their early historical philosophies was done. The focus was on the casual consumption of architectural history by architects. Questions posed in this part were, What casual readings did they do on architectural history, What role did other institutional aid play in their research into architectural history?

The chapter also discussed the details of the production of architectural history. It started with an inquiry into their first professional academic positions and their first significant publications. It intended to look at the discursive practices and events that shaped their discourse. The questions were, What publishing world they entered, Where they mostly published, and What was the historical attitude in the institutions they joined? This chapter focused on the analysis of how the architectural profession maintained its status as a social institution through social practices and social roles defining it around the forties, fifties and sixties in the United States. Most distinctive features of Kahn's and Venturi's earliest writings were commented on and briefly analyzed contextually. The aim was to reconstruct the landscape of discursive events which architects participated in. How similar were the situations in which Kahn and Venturi formulated their ideas? Did certain social structures support the emergence of discursive practices? How were the field, style, and mode of discourse echoing the discursive events they participated in?

Results

The aim of this dissertation, stated at its beginning, was to study the contexts of the formation of architectural discourse and to analyze architects' attitudes toward architectural history. Main issues that occurred when studied architects wrote on architectural history were operativity, disintegration with formerly established interpretations of particular architectural periods, opening of architectural storylines for their rewriting in the quest for the search for new meanings. To express ideas on architectural history Kahn used highly poetic, metaphysical, existentialist, theological, architecture ontological, and internally-coded language, while Venturi's was more critical, analytical, disciplinary inclusive, with emphasis on comparisons of formal features entwined in language games. The main thesis offered in this dissertation was that attitude toward architectural history of an architect was formed by the interplay of several factors, namely, the motives established within the organizations participating in the consumption and production of discourse, the institution of architectural

writing, and architect's autonomous decisions in these environments, and after the careful examination the thesis was tested.

Historicism studied as an institution represented a variety of professional, societal, and disciplinary issues, such as the influence of meta-language and history-telling practices on occupational identity production. Following certain discursive strategies might help sustain power or gain status within speech communities, or help disciplinary recognition. This study suggested that, in the institution of architectural writing, certain concepts were carried on and modified by representatives of various generations. Especially apparent was relying heavily on methods of classical cultural history with overwhelming generalizations and anecdotal knowledge. Kahn and Venturi implemented architectural history in their manifestos, they used architectural history to justify and illustrate their statements. Biased choice of examples of the past objects and authors and casual knowledge entered as premises in reasoning to construct architecture theory-like output. The historical attitudes of Kahn and Venturi were theorized as an institution, as their historical narrative changed, with changing genres of writing, with an external, indirect influence, in the form of architectural history discursive patterns.