

in the beginning the cave and the earth itself were the dimensions of the cave. The floor had its own thickness of earth and the dimension of the walls of the cave stopped at the beginning of the sea.

In reality there was no defined dimension when your comprehension of the world carried infinity within it. The only ultimate was the killed animal outside the cavemouth, the only thing that kept you firmly in the universe. And that animal corpse was resurrected on the walls of the cave. An abode was sought in the nature of animal.

I have no idea how many years went by before "the autonomous" dimension was born in front of the cavemouth . . . the stone, hacked in one rectangular volume. Height. Length. Width. How incomprehensible the work of creation in a limited malleable quantity must have been.

The greatest poetic manifestation in limited form. The first security, the first written sign in the landscape resting secretly in the hewn stone.

The story of you and I again standing on the plain. Time was given a dimension.

As I write this note down from a lecture on constructions at Easter in 1987, in "Bygg 3", I suddenly remember a visit to Aldo van Eyck. I was living in his house and in the evening we were looking at photographs of a journey he had made in Peru. He kept circling round the theme of the stones in the ancient Peruvian walls. Why those rounded shapes, that precise masonry with its projecting joints, this love of stone in this vast desolate landscape . . .

The child's constructive meeting with the earth is when it makes its first mudcake with its hands. The easily handled earth is mixed with water and takes its form in a series of units. When these dry the firm shapes and the child's fingerprints are left on the grey surface. The child does not know that at that moment they have laid the beginnings of the element which has created great mural architecture . . . the brick. To wall his house with brick is to have spoken to Moses daily.

The great old brickworks were magnificent buildings consisting of a series of furnaces built like large cruciform vaulted constructions in brick. Above these were light wooden constructions with shelves on which the bricks were dried and stored. These were vast extended buildings, their horizontality contrasting with their slim high chimneys.

On my first stay with Jørn Utzon, the Danish architect, we stopped to visit these brickworks along Strandveien near Helsingør. It was the amazing light falling through the open wooden constructions that was so fascinating, as well as the heavy "mysterious" furnaces being fed with fine sawdust to keep an even temperature in the kilns full of bricks.

How do you express your creative temperament in brick? What is your vocabulary?

Naturally the choice of material quality and colour of the actual brick . . . a calm evenly fired one or one with an uneven, nervous surface?

But it is the joint, the "space between" which is your weapon.

Is the mortar to lie flush with the sides of the brick? No relief? Or with deep joints which catch the world of shadows of the light? Or do you tell the joint to spill out in a convex form where the surface of the brick is framed? Whether you build your wall with dry joints (narrow joints) or open them up so joint and brick almost play the same part? I have described all this world. Its theme within a few centimetres, and the mortar's quality lying in the composition of the grains of sand. Sigurd Lewerentz, the Swedish architect, built his church in a birch grove in one of the suburbs of Stockholm. The white spotted birch trunks gave impulse to the architecture of the walls. The bricks of the high walls were given large coarse joints in which the mortar took possession of the precise form of the brick. And in this bold unbroken play between brick and mortar, the wall found its dialogue with the trunks of the trees. And passers-by stop and say: "What an amazingly lovely birch wood. I never noticed it until the church was built."

Is the brick the architect's letter of the alphabet? . . .

Imagine one of the great novels in the history of architecture . . . Rome. It is handwritten with a neat little brick (10 x 5 x 22) cm.

I see few bricks in Rome, for they are visible only in the naked ruins. The route into the story has the same beauty as the route to completion. When the last course is laid, Rome will mask its constructive reality behind the glossy facades . . . the make-up is put on. And total theatre is put on stage.

Afterword

A man who had lived all his life in the desert and had never seen a tree, discovered by chance a large store stacked with pieces of wood about sixty centimetres long. He lay down on the sand and suddenly saw a bird in the sky. The tree was created in his imagination. He then went back to the store, put the pieces together and the bird found its place in its multifold of branches.

In a place in a town there was a store of ten thousand piles of bricks. The man passing requested in his heart a space for his soul. The dream of the great construction had been born. And the poem on the space for the soul was to be found under the brick arch of the cathedral. (JT)