

Caractère
—a principal idea of architecture abandoned by modernism—

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Details with molding would probably be one of the most important factors which the architecture of modernism abandoned in the domain of architectural forms. The other architectural forms which were thrown out by the modernist architecture might just as well easily be pointed out; for example, columns of five orders, cornices, vertical long windows, walls articulated in the classic manner, and load-bearing walls themselves. Molding is found however in the details of all these elements. Yet, the aim of this article is to treat the subject not as concrete forms, but as ideas. What are the factors abandoned by modernism, belonging in the domain of ideas and equivalent to molding in the domain of forms? An important one would be the idea that a work of architecture should clearly proclaim what it is, namely, its destination or its building type in a narrow sense. It might be also called "architecture identity". The idea has been called by various terms such as *decor*, *bienséance*, *convenance* and *caractère*.¹⁾ The architecture of modernism has, in fact, given the same expression to every type of building, and all the buildings appeared under box-like forms enveloped in white and smooth surfaces. Theaters, town halls, hospitals and houses, all presented an appearance of a white box. One could not therefore, understand the destination of a building at one glance alone. The phenomenon that every type of building has the same appearance seems to be seen only in the modernist age, that is, about in the second and third quarters of this century.

In our days, often called post-modern, one has indeed a great regard for symbolic expressions of architectural forms by frequent employment of classical elements. The idea *decor* or *caractère* seems superficially to exist in the post-modern age. To give a familiar example, my children draw their house as always in the traditional shape of detached house with saddle roofs, although they have lived ever since their birth in an apartment house. Is the disappearance of the idea *decor* or *caractère* really a tendency peculiar to the modernist age? Why did modernism abandon the idea? Is *caractère* reviving or will it revive? To answer these questions is the final aim of this article. But before facing these difficult problems, we must trace briefly the history of the idea in order to show that it was used in any period and that it could be called eternally valid. This article will begin with a historical inquiry.

1. Decor

The idea equivalent for that represented by *caractère* can be found in Vitruvius' text. To be more exact, *decor* which was already used two or three times in this

article, is in reality Vitruvius' proper term. No stronger testimony than this would prove that the idea was used from ancient times. *Decor* is one of his six fundamental concepts on which architecture depends, with the other ideas, namely *ordinatio*, *dispositio*, *eurythmia*, *symmetria* and *distributio*. Vitruvius defines *decor* as follows.

Propriety (*decor*) is that perfection of style which comes when a work is authoritatively constructed on approved principles. It arises from prescription (Greek *θεματισμῶ*), from usage, or from nature.²⁾

He describes in succession that prescription requires the temple to be constructed with style appropriate for the god to which it is dedicated; that usage requires the accordance of decoration between interior and exterior of a building, and the conformity of decoration in an adopted style; and that nature requires the site to be selected for the sacred buildings and the interior arrangement to be done with regard to sunshine. Vitruvius intends, in sum, to claim by the word *decor* that a building ought to have a style or a form appropriate to the person (or god) for which it will be constructed and to the nature of site where it will be constructed. We might therefore be permitted to say that Vitruvius' *decor* has the almost same meaning as the idea mentioned above and represented by the term *caractère*. But then, it would be worthwhile to consider briefly why the word *decor* has changed to mean only decoration or ornament in the present sense whereby losing its original sense, comeliness or propriety.³⁾ The reason would probably be that ornament which had been a material means to express *decor* became gradually *decor* itself. In fact, ornament had been the most powerful, not to say unique, instrument to express the *decor* in the proper sense, that is, propriety.⁴⁾ Hence, it seems to be quite natural that modern architecture having refused any ornamental part abandoned the idea of *decor*. But this problem will be argued later in detail.

Did the idea of *decor* continue also to be used in the Middle Ages? Regrettably, few architectural documents of the Middle Ages are left today. Several lodge books and expertises of some cathedrals are indeed available, but with these documents we can seldom tell the medieval thoughts of architecture. We can neither find the idea corresponding to *decor* in the descriptions of Villard de Honnecourt's *Sketch-book*, which might be regarded as representative architectural documents in medieval times.⁵⁾ Nevertheless, it is true that Vitruvius continued to be read throughout the Middle Ages. As Paul Frankl says, Vitruvius was copied again and again during the evolution of Romanesque and Gothic architecture and for example, Vincent de Beauvais quotes Vitruvius' theory of proportions verbatim.⁶⁾ It might therefore be considered that medieval architects also appreciated the idea of *decor*, for it was one of six fundamental ideas of Vitruvius as stated above. In fact, Gothic symbolism will be easily connected to this idea. Suger, for instance, compared the columns of the choir with the apostles and prophets.⁷⁾ Such an attempt will be naturally related to the view that columns ought to take the form appropriate to the character of the apostle or prophet to which it is compared. According to Frankl again, although Vitruvius' theory that a temple should be constructed with style appropriate to its

sacred god is inapplicable because of the existence of only one God in medieval times, the change in the conception about Jesus, Mary and the saints is reflected in the changing phases of architectural style.⁸⁾ Such facts as mentioned above would lead us to consider that the idea of *decor* also continued to subsist in the minds of medieval architects.

Now our historical examination advances into recent times. Many books of architecture were published in Italy after the Renaissance. Can Vitruvius' idea of *decor* be found in the descriptions of these books? Let us examine here the texts of Alberti and Palladio, that is, *De re aedificatoria* and *I quattro libri dell' architettura*, respectively. Alberti does not positively refer to the idea of *decor*, nor seems to use the word *decor* itself, but the descriptions of a similar idea to that of *decor* are seen in places.⁹⁾ Particularly in the chapter III of Book VII, we can read the same sentences as Vitruvius' descriptions that a temple ought to be built with style appropriate for the god to which it is dedicated, as cited below.

It may not be amiss to take notice here of what the Ancients tell us, that the temples dedicated to Venus, Diana, the Muses, the Nymphs and the more tender Goddesses, ought in their structure to imitate that Virgin's delicacy and smiling gaiety of youth, which is proper to them.¹⁰⁾

Though it may be a limited recognition to some degree, it can be certain that Alberti inherited the idea of *decor* from Vitruvius. Unlike Alberti, Palladio enthusiastically mentions this idea. In fact, the second Book, chapter I and the fourth Book, chapter II are devoted to this idea. He frequently uses the word *decoro*, which is, of course, included in the titles of these two chapters. The principal paragraphs are shown in the following.

House only ought to be called convenient, which is suitable to the quality of him that is to dwell in it, and whose parts correspond to the whole and to each other Decorum is also to be observed in regard to the work, . . .¹¹⁾

Thus we read, that the ancients in building their temples endeavoured to observe the decorum, in which consists the most beautiful part of architecture.¹²⁾

Though we have examined only two examples, we might be able to say that the Italian architects of renaissance also retained Vitruvius' idea of *decor*, especially when they discussed the problems concerning the ancient temples.¹³⁾ But it is in the 17th and 18th centuries of France that the idea will widely accepted and become the key word of architectural theory.

2. *Bienséance, Convenance and Caractère*

The three words *bienséance*, *convenance* and *caractère*, when used in reference

to architecture, mean approximately the same idea as that of Vitruvius' *decor*. They were used chronologically in this order: *Bienséance* mainly in the second half of the 17th century, *convenance* in the 18th century, and *caractère* from the 18th century on.¹⁴⁾ Of course, these words were also used within the same period, and especially the former two, were sometimes confused with one another. Yet, we can perceive that the words used to represent ideas similar to *decor* have been changed from *bienséance* and *convenance* to *caractère*. In passing, the *Encyclopédie* contains the articles *bienséance* and *convenance*, but it does not give the descriptions of *caractère* as a term of architecture, though it contains, of course, the article of *caractère* itself.¹⁵⁾ And it regards *convenance* as very important, while the article *bienséance* merely instructs one to see *convenance*.¹⁶⁾

The word *bienséance* was formerly used at court. It meant a behavior or a manner befitting to the nobility. An early example of *bienséance* within the domain of architecture is Claude Perrault's translation of Vitruvius. He adopted this word as the French equivalent for Vitruvius' *decor*,¹⁷⁾ while Jean Martin had simply substituted *décoration* for *decor* about a century earlier.¹⁸⁾ About a century later, Laugier will devote the third article of chapter 3 of his *Essai* to *bienséance*. He writes: "The *bienséance* requires that a building has neither more nor less magnificence than that which will be appropriate to its destination, and that the decoration of buildings should not be arbitrary, but be always related to the status of the clients."¹⁹⁾ Ledoux, the last royal architect, also regards the word as important, when he writes, "The *bienséance* will offer to us the analogy of the proportions and of the ornaments; it indicates in the first aspect the motif of the buildings and their destination."²⁰⁾

As a common word, *convenance* is rather older than *bienséance*. An early appearance of the word in the vocabulary of architecture is J. Martin's translation of Alberti.²¹⁾ Since *convenance* was the equivalent of the Latin word *concinitas* in that text, it was originally used as a sense of harmony or accord. But in the 18th century, particularly in the terminology of architecture, it took the place of *bienséance*, which belonged to the vocabulary of court. J.F. Blondel wrote in *L'architecture française*: "*Convenance* ought to be regarded as the most essential aspect of building What we mean here by *convenance* is called by Vitruvius *bienséance*."²²⁾ Though *convenance* had been often confused with *bienséance*, as previously stated, it obtained by the end of the 18th century a somewhat fixed meaning, namely that of the accord between program and form. Nevertheless, it is not true that *convenance* and *bienséance* were kept completely separated one from another. For example, Quatremère de Quincy writes even in 1832, "The idea which this word (*convenance*) express returns, under various relations, to that of the word *bienséance*."²³⁾ And at this time it started to be confused with the word *caractère*.

Caractère is one of the most typical conceptions in the French academic theories of architecture. It seems that in the latter half of the 18th century, this word was used in the present sense of "the content of a work of architecture".²⁴⁾ The word was argued with various meanings and in various ways by many French writers of architecture.²⁵⁾

Here we quote some paragraphs containing the word with a sense close to the actual one, although the conception of the word is fairly varied. Germain Boffrand wrote in explaining *caractère*, "These different buildings ought to announce their destination to the spectator by their disposition, their structure and the manner with which they are decorated."²⁶⁾ He also placed great importance on the word, as is shown in the next sentence. "It is not sufficient that an edifice is beautiful, it must be agreeable, and (it is necessary) that the spectator feel the *caractère* which it must imprint."²⁷⁾ Also, J.F. Blondel wrote: "All the different kinds of architectural productions ought to bear the imprint of the particular purpose of each edifice; all ought to have a character that determines their general form and that clearly proclaims a building to be what it is."²⁸⁾ Nothing would be able to express the meaning of *caractère* so clearly as this paragraph.

Caractère, which had carried the aforementioned sense, was used in the 19th century and even in the 20th century through the Beaux-arts tradition of architectural education. Now we intend to show, through the texts of Julien Guadet, Auguste Perret and Georges Gromort, that *caractère* continued to be a key word of architectural theory in the Ecole des Beaux-arts of this century. Guadet defines *caractère* as "the identity between the architectural impression and the moral impression of the program".²⁹⁾ In other words, he insists that a building ought to appear in a form corresponding to its building type. The idea *caractère* seems very important to him, since his bulky work of four volumes is filled, so to speak, with descriptions of the character of each building type. Perret, who was a pupil of Guadet in the Ecole des Beaux-arts, also writes in his book of aphorisms, "Once the transient conditions and the permanent conditions are fulfilled, the building, thus submitted to man and nature will have both character and style; it will have harmony. Character, style and harmony are milestones on the path that leads, by way of truth, to beauty".³⁰⁾ It would not be necessary to stress the importance of the idea *caractère* to Perret who wrote little, if one simply considers the fact that he referred to it. Gromort, who was a professor of architectural theory in the Ecole des Beaux-arts like Guadet, writes with concrete examples: "It (*caractère*) is what makes us appreciate at first sight a monument for what it is. It is something that is often translated by the presence of some element or other (the belfry which announces the church, the openings of a rather special form which assure the lighting of a school . . .), but that is always obtained by virtue of an ensemble of factors of which the arrangement is peculiarly subtle; it is a very high quality that confers a sort of personality on an edifice, that distinguishes it from the other constructions, and that, in a word, characterizes it."³¹⁾ This paragraph is quoted from a book comprised of his lectures given at the Ecole des Beaux-arts from 1937 to 1940. We can say therefore that the idea of *caractère* survived in the sphere of architectural theory, even in the end of the 1930s when modernism had already taken root.³²⁾ In addition, we can find the idea in the books published after World War II, which are, of course, not historical monographs but rather contemporary general considerations of architecture.³³⁾

3. *Caractère* and modernism

These writings mentioned above seem to suggest that the idea of *caractère* still lives in the age of modernism. But in fact, the opposite is the case. *Caractère* was a very important idea in the education of the Ecole des Beaux-arts and in the thinkings of architects influenced by this education. The influence of the Ecole des Beaux-arts itself, however, was not so great even in France in the age of modernism. These architectural thoughts of the Ecole des Beaux-arts remained hidden from the main stream of architecture of that time. Still, the idea of *caractère* had been used in architectural thought throughout these times. All the above, although a little lengthy, simply illustrates that fact. Now we must consider the reason modernism abandoned the idea of *caractère*.

Modernism surely refused *caractère*. But why? The simplest answer would be that modernism detested this idea by reason of its intimate association with academic tradition. Modernism was extremely exclusive. It attacked all architectural theories of the past. To modernism, academic theory, which was taught in the Ecole des Beaux-arts, was the most irreconcilable one, the first to be confuted. It had to attack the idea of *caractère*, whether *caractère* was opposed to it or not. In fact, the meaning of *caractère* itself was not clearly opposite from the modernist theory. Let us again take the various meanings of *caractère* into consideration. In architecture, *caractère* was used in a sense of the accord of something, namely the accord between the exterior appearance of a building and its destination, or that between the appearance of a house and the social status of its inhabitant, or that between the form of a building and the nature of its site, etc It can thus mean the accord of decoration between the exterior and the interior, as Vitruvius had said. J.F. Blondel also wrote: "The exterior decoration ought to have an intimate connection with interior It is the accomplishment of this union which displays the excellence of an architect, above all when he has the art of making the exterior express the distribution of interior."³⁴ This opinion rather resembles one of the slogans of modernism, that is, the interpenetration of exterior space and interior space,³⁵ although there is a difference in that one refers to the decoration of a building, namely the building's solid part, while the other refers to the space of a building, namely the building's void part. *Caractère* might, moreover, be able to mean the accord of the form of a building and its function. It is needless to say, this is a typical conception of modernism. *Caractère* could grasp 'function' in a wide range, while modernism restricted it within a narrow range. In short, the idea of *caractère* never denied the so-called functionalism of modernism, but could contain it, if the idea is considered in the broadest sense. But the mere fact that the idea of *caractère* had been cultivated in the academic tradition was sufficient reason for modernism to refuse the idea.

Another reason why modernism abandoned *caractère* is that the idea possessed a connotation of ornamentation as we have already pointed out. The character of a building is expressed principally by ornaments, although it is also strongly

expressed by its scale. On the other hand, it is commonly known that modernism rejected ornamentation rigorously. It is therefore natural that modernism did not accept the idea of *caractère*. Furthermore, modernism denied ornamentation not merely because of its doctrine, there is also the development of modernist architecture. At first, modernism appeared in small scale buildings like houses. Small houses are able to produce a satisfactory effect of form without ornaments, because a white plane is never continuous more than twenty or thirty meters. In fact, the architecture of modernism in the 1940s and 1950s, which was also found in the buildings of large scale, did not completely abandon ornaments and even contained somewhat ornamental elements like *brise-soleil* or the joint-like lines applied to walls. If the architecture of modernism began with large scale buildings, modernism might not have so rigorously refused ornamentation. The clients of such small houses, mostly artists, refused any ornamental element suggesting tradition because they were quite fond of novelty. On the other hand, the apartment houses of modernism were for workers who could not afford to add ornaments. In actuality, modernism refused ornamentation, but it is not always true that the doctrine of modernism is naturally opposed to the existence of ornaments.

Let us again consider the other reason why modernism abandoned *caractère*, since this problem seems to require further examination. The International style which was introduced and promoted by modernism, is, as implied by the name, a style that should be used even in the tropics or in the tundra, namely all over the world. Modernism, in brief, abandoned the vernacular and traditional forms of architecture. It also abandoned the various forms of architecture which diversified in accordance with the destination or the purpose. As we briefly mentioned at the beginning of this article, modernism asserted that every building form was to focus on changing into a white box. A box-like building deprived of any ornamental element, of which the surfaces are white and smooth, was expected to be the ultimate style that the human species could finally obtain. On the contrary, the idea of *caractère* persists in a variety of architectural forms. According to the idea, a building ought to be clearly different from the others which have different purposes. If a building of a bank and a building of a college are the same, one cannot guess what the building might be.³⁶⁾ What is it, then, that indicates a building of a bank as a bank? It would be the traditional architectural style of banks which has become familiar to people. As I have previously said, even now my children draw their house in the traditional shape. I think that most of the children who live in apartment houses also draw, at least in Japan, their houses in the traditional shapes. This matter probably means that apartment houses with flat roofs have not yet become the tradition, although the problem is rather complex and contains many matters to be considered.³⁷⁾ The logical conclusion of this view however is that architecture should not change fundamentally, and that change is admitted only within the limits of traditional style. Such a conservative view was beyond the acceptance of modernism, which cried for a revolution.

4. *Caractère*—beyond modernism

In the previous section, we mentioned a conservative aspect of the idea *caractère*. The idea, in fact, was contradictory to revolutionary change. It demanded that a church wears church-like dresses, or that a school also wears school-like ones, and that a farmer's house ought to be different from a president's house. Figuratively speaking, this view means that a laborer should be dressed in working clothes, or a pupil in school uniform. It might be related to the favour of dress uniform, and more, to the favour of the social class system, which supports the existence of dress uniform.³⁸⁾ We need not expand the argument so far, to say that somewhat of conservatism is distinct in the idea of *caractère*. But why should architecture not be conservative? To answer this question, it would be best to quote from Ruskin, although the quotation makes us go back to the 19th century. He said in the chapter of "the lamp of obedience" of "*The seven lamps of architecture*".

The architecture of a nation is great only when it is as universal and as established as its language; and when provincial differences of style are nothing more than so many dialects this one requirement clear in all places and at all times, that the work shall be that of a school, that no individual caprice shall dispense with, or materially vary, accepted types and customary decorations; and that from the cottage to the palace, and from the chapel to the basilica, and from the garden fence to the fortress wall, every member and feature of the architecture of the nation shall be as commonly current, as frankly accepted, as its language or its coin We want no new style of architecture.³⁹⁾

In fact, such a view as shown in this somewhat lengthy citation, can also be said to be a manifestation of the idea *caractère* in a sense. It is not so eccentric, reactionary, or bigoted as is generally considered, and although Ruskin's expression in writing itself may be fairly violent, it was shared by the people of all periods except that of modernism.

Now we are in the so-called post-modern age. Born as a reaction against modernism, post-modernism resuscitated decoration, historical references, vernacular forms, and the traditional aspects of architecture; all which were abandoned by modernism. It also revived the metaphorical or symbolic expressions of architecture, in other words, the expressions represented by something like a sign.⁴⁰⁾ A building of post-modernism might, therefore, tell us its destination, its owner, and the nature of its site. In a sense, it accepts the idea of *caractère*. The building is, however, excessive and exaggerated. For example, it does not straightforwardly tell the destination of a building, but it tells sinuously the additional attributes of the destination.⁴¹⁾ Thus, a house of post-modernism does not tell that it is a house, but that it is a house likely to be comfortably lived in. Whether it is really comfortable or not is not the question. On the contrary, *caractère* demands that a building has

an accurate expression of its destination or its proprietor's nature without excess or deficiency. Therefore, one cannot say with certainty that the idea of *caractère* revives in the post-modern age.

In addition, *caractère* was an idea which could have become a criterion for the evaluation of architecture. Saying that a building has *caractère* means that the building is good and right. The age of post-modernism lost the words used for the appreciation of architecture. We can never say that a building is good or right. At best, all we can say is that we like it.⁴²⁾ In the age of modernism, the standard for judging of architecture was too exclusive and rigorous. But at that time, we certainly had distinct words to appreciate the works of architecture; and we could discuss their quality on a common basis, even if the question still remained, of whether the basis itself was proper or not. The fact that modernism had its own standard for architectural judgement (namely the ideology) might also be another reason why modernism abandoned the idea of *caractère*, which had been the standard most universally accepted. Criteria will probably become necessary in the future. The idea of *caractère* is extensive as was mentioned above. Indeed, it suggests 'appropriateness' or 'accord' only. With what it ought to be appropriate, or with what it ought to be in accordance, are however not fixed, and has changed historically in various ways. One might be able to find here a moment of resurrection of *caractère*. But whether it should revive or not is another subject, and rather a subject of critical essay. It would be sufficient for this article to show only that the idea has been used from antiquity to our days at least in some quarters, and that the idea does not lose its significance in spite of the disregard by modernism.⁴³⁾

Notes

- 1) Since *caractère* (character) would have been most frequently used and is the most popular in these various terms, we will use hereafter *caractère* principally as a representative word that indicates this idea. The word *caractère* has been certainly used in every category of arts, from literature to music, and it has been given different meanings varying with each category. Moreover, even in the architectural sphere itself, the meaning has slightly changed with the times. But the terminology of *caractère* is beside the purpose of this article. Here we use the word *caractère* only as representative of the words meaning the idea that a work of architecture ought to clearly proclaim what it is, as we mentioned in the text.
- 2) Vitruvius, *De architectura libri decem, Lib I, ii* (The edition of V. Rose & H. Muller-Strubing, p. 12). The English translation is taken from *Vitruvius the ten books on architecture, translated by M.H. Morgan* (Dover Publications, Inc., 1960). By the way, the translations of *decor* into modern languages are various. For example, Jean Martin translates it with the word *décoration*, Claude Perrault with *bienséance*, and August Rode with *Schicklichkeit*.
- 3) A dictionary defines as the proper sense of *decor*, 'comeliness', 'elegance', 'grace', 'beauty', 'charm' and 'ornament' (*A Latin dictionary for Schools* by Ch. T. Lewis, Oxford, 1964).
- 4) By the way, there is some difference of connotations between the two words *decoration* and *ornament*, though they are used today almost without distinction. The former means rather the decoration that an object itself becoming *decoratif*, while the latter means rather the decoration that something decorative added to an object. Such connotative sense of the word *decoration* seems to be derived from the fact that its origin is *decor* which did not mean originally *decoration* in the present sense.
- 5) *The sketchbook of Villard de Honnecourt, edited by Th. Bowie* (Indiana University, 1959).

- 6) Paul Frankl, *The Gothic, literary sources and interpretations through eight centuries* (Princeton University Press, 1960) pp. 88–89.
- 7) Erwin Panofsky, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey church of St. Denis and its art treasures* (Princeton University Press, 1946) p. 105.
- 8) P. Frankel, op. cit., p. 101.
- 9) Book II, chap. II; Book V, chap. II; Book VII, chap. III; and Book IX, chap. I are cases in point (*Alberti's ten books on architecture, translated by J. Leoni*, edited by J. Rykwert, Alec Tiranti Ltd., 1955). Besides, we can point out that his another work "*On painting*" also contains the descriptions of the idea similar to *decor* (L.B. Alberti, *On painting*, translated by J.R. Spencer, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967, p. 74)
- 10) Ibid., p. 137. The original Latin text corresponding to the English text "It may not be amiss to take notice here of what the ancients tell us" is "Faciad ad rem, quod aiunt". The original Latin text has not therefore such an expression as double negative of the English text. Nevertheless, it is certain that Alberti's text contains critical views against Vitruvius in some places.
- 11) Andrea Palladio, *The four books of architecture, with a new introduction by A.K. Placzeck* (Dover Publications, Inc., 1965) p. 37 (estimated number of the page which lacks it).
- 12) Ibid., p. 81.
- 13) Another example would be added. That is Serlio's text. We can read in the opening sentences of its fourth book the descriptions that a temple ought to be built with the style appropriate to the god dedicated, which are almost same as Vitruvius' and Alberti's sentences cited in the text of this article (S. Serlio, *The five books of architecture, an unabridged reprint of the English edition of 1611*, Dover publications, Inc., 1982).
- 14) A judgement, though it may be a little careless, from W. Szambien, *Symétrie, Goût, Caractère, théorie et terminologie de l'architecture à l'âge classique 1550–1800* (Picard, 1986), paragraphs 4, 8 and 9. Our descriptions on the theme are indebted much to this book, which discusses fully the three words, and which grew out of his article, "*Bienséance, convenance et caractère*" in *Les cahiers de la recherche architecturale* (no. 18, 1985, pp. 38–43). See also H. Shirai's two laborious articles written in Japanese and published in *Transactions of the Architectural Institute of Japan* (no. 330, 1983, pp. 163–170 & no. 333, 1983, pp. 137–143).
- 15) In Supplement Tome 2, we can read the lengthy article of *caractère*, which is almost the traduction from Sulzer's work *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*. But it does not treat *caractère* as the idea of architecture, and it describes *caractère* only in the domain of paintings and fine arts.
- 16) *L'encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (Readex Microprint corporation, 1969). Vol. IV, p. 161 (*convenance*), Vol. II, p. 245 (*bienséance*).
- 17) *Les dix livres d'architecture de Vitruve, corrigés et traduits en 1684 par Claude Perrault* (reprinted by Pierre Mardaga éditeur, 1979), p. 9 & p. 12.
- 18) Françoise Fichet, *La théorie architecturale à l'âge classique* (Pierre Mardaga éditeur, 1979), pp. 65–66.
- 19) Laugier, *Essai sur l'architecture* (republished in 1966 by Gregg Press Limited), p. 155.
- 20) C.N. Ledoux, *L'architecture considérée sous le rapport de l'art, des moeurs et de la législation* (republished in 1981 by Verlag Dr. Alfons Uhl), p. 10. Incidentally, it may be remarked here that the architecture satisfying the demands of *bienséance* can be called *architecture parlante* (narrative architecture). Yet, the idea of *architecture parlante* itself is not so clear, although some writers including Emil Kaufmann use this epithet sometimes. Kaufmann certainly points out the first example where the epithet was used (E. Kaufmann, *Architecture in the age of Reason, Baroque and Post-Baroque in England, Italy, and France*, Harvard University Press, 1955, p. 251, note 78). But nobody gives the other examples so far as I have seen until now.
- 21) W. Szambien, op. cit., pp. 167–168. Martin's translation is following. "*Beauté est une certaine convenance raisonnable gardée en toutes les parties pour l'effet à quoi on les veult appliquer . . .*" This paragraph belongs to the chapter II of the book VI of Alberti.
- 22) D.D. Egbert, *The Beaux-arts tradition in French architecture* (Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 131.
- 23) Quatremère de Quincy, *Dictionnaire historique de l'architecture* (1832) article 'convenance', cited from *Quatremère de Quincy, Dizionario storico di architettura, a cura di V. Farinati e G. Teyssot* (Marsilio Editori, 1985), p. 172.
- 24) Egbert, op. cit., p. 135, note 1. He defines the word in this lengthy note, and continues to explain as below. "If the building is to be a church, the architect may express in it his interpretation not only of values of religion in general but also those held at that time by the congregation for whom the church is built. In a house the universal significance of family life may be expressed

- in relation to the character and needs of the family or families that are to live there. A factory that is architecture and not just a building may suggest something of the architect's interpretation of the dignity of labor in relation to the nature of the particular industry."
- 25) Among those writers, Quatremère de Quincy probably treated it the most minutely by dividing the various levels of its meaning into four categories (W. Szambien, op. cit., pp. 187–190). But Quatremère's thought is so complicated that we feel it uselessly minute.
 - 26) Fichet, op. cit., p. 306.
 - 27) Ibid., p. 314. A parenthesized passage is inserted by the quoter.
 - 28) J.F. Blondel, *Cours d'architecture ou traité de la décoration, distribution et construction des bâtiments* (Desaint, librairie, 1771), Tome II, p. 229. The English translation is by Egbert, op. cit., p. 132.
 - 29) J. Guadet, *Eléments et théorie de l'architecture*, 5th ed. (Librairie de la construction moderne, un-dated; first edition published 1901–1904), Tome 1, p. 132.
 - 30) A. Perret, *Contribution à une théorie de l'architecture* (André Wahl, 1952). The English translation is adopted from "Architectes" no. 52, nov. 1974.
 - 31) G. Gromort, *Essai sur la théorie de l'architecture* (Vincent, Fréal & Cie., 1946) pp. 97–98.
 - 32) It is generally said that the 1930s is the age when modernism suffered a reaction or a counter movement of classicism. But it is not conceivable that the lecture of Gromort was influenced by such a situation of modernism.
 - 33) See, for example, A. Lurçat, *Formes, compositions et lois d'harmonie; éléments d'une science de l'esthétique architecturale* (Vincent, Fréal et Cie., 1955), Vol. 3.
 - 34) This is the requotation from Egbert, op. cit., p. 133. But to tell the truth, I cannot find the original sentences corresponding to this quotation in the page indicated by Egbert. Nevertheless, Blondel said similar contents in "Avant-propos" and "Dissertation" of his *Cours d'architecture*, Tome IV (La Veuve Desaint, Librairie, 1773). I, therefore, requote here from Egbert, in spite of something of an inaccuracy.
 - 35) This aspect is also called 'transparency'. See Colin Rowe, "Transparency: literal and phenomenon" in *The mathematics of the ideal villa and other essays* (The MIT Press, 1977), pp. 159–183.
 - 36) Though the contents of the idea *caractère* are themselves varied and extensive, we discuss here by restricting the meaning of the idea to that of the relation between building forms and building types.
 - 37) For example, we might be able to consider that what children draw is not a house (as a sense of material object), but a home (as a sense of spiritual one, namely *topos* of family). It may be a sign of their home. But why the sign of home should be a form of a house with saddle roof? And will the sign change in the future? I am not ready now to answer these questions.
 - 38) The name of International Style itself was not given by the advocates of the style. But as is generally known, they also insisted that the architecture should be international. We can therefore find easily a somewhat socialistic character of their thought, although most of the modern architects were not socialists strictly speaking. Also in such a point of view, it would be quite natural that the idea of *caractère* and the International Style contradict each other.
 - 39) J. Ruskin, *The seven lamps of architecture* (Cassell and Company Ltd., 1909), pp. 281–282.
 - 40) See Charles Jencks, *The language of Post-modern architecture* (Academy Editions, 1977), part 2, "The modes of architectural communication".
 - 41) By the way, James Fergusson's famous assertion, "Architecture imitates nothing, illustrates nothing, tells no tale", intends to say that the architecture has poor means of expression in comparison with the other arts. Neither is the architecture of post-modernism eloquent. It is merely garrulous.
 - 42) It is extremely significant that Robert Venturi's *Complexity and contradiction in architecture* (The Museum of modern art, 1966), which is regarded as the first manifestation of post-modernism, begins its descriptions with the sentence, "I like"
 - 43) I am particularly grateful to Prof. Ken-ichi Sasaki for his thoughtful and sharp comments on earlier drafts of this paper. I am also grateful to Mr. Evanson Chang for his sincere correction of the English writings of this manuscript; to Ms. Mizue Takahashi for help with typewriting several times the drafts of this paper.

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