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The human understanding when it has once adopted an opinion (either as being the received opinion or as being agreeable to itself) draws all things else to support and agree with it.

Francis Bacon, 1620

There is always a well-known solution to every human problem—neat, plausible, and wrong.

H. L. Mencken, 1920

It should be the chief aim of a university professor to exhibit himself in his own true character—that is, as an ignorant man thinking, actively utilizing his small share of knowledge.

Alfred North Whitehead, 1929

If complications arise, that is because they are trying to deal with it not as journalists, sociologists, politicians, entertainers, humanitarians, priests, or artists, but seriously.

James Agee, 1941

The other is capable of arousing in me a doubt that would otherwise not occur to me. The clash of views generates events of far-reaching importance. I am induced to take up a particular standpoint, to view my own action as another views it or as the action of another person, and, conversely, to view another's action as my own. Now I have within me two standpoints, my own and that of the other; both are now part of my way of thinking. In this way the limitations of my individual thinking are transcended by including the thoughts of others. I am now open to more alternatives than my own unaided comprehension would make possible.

Solomon Asch, 1952

In 1925, I began my studies at the Institute of Technology in Berlin and became a student of the great architect Professor Heinrich Tessenow, who belonged to the "Ring" school of architecture, along with Gropius and Mies van der Rohe. In the summer of 1927, I received my architect's license and began teaching at the Institute. On my salary, I was able to marry the girl I had loved since my childhood and we honeymooned in the Mecklenburg lake district; my wife and I launched our boats in Spandau, 100 yards or so from the prison in which I would spend 20 years of my life. At the Institute, I became Professor Tessenow's assistant. In 1932, a reduction in university salaries led me to resign my assistant professorship and we moved to Mannheim, where I set up practice as an architect. My career ambitions stagnated rather rapidly, however. And then commissions began coming from a totally unexpected source—the party. While I was in Berlin, I was a courier for the party and, in that capacity, I met Karl Hanke...he was then a minor party functionary. When he learned I was an architect, he gave me the modest assignment of redecorating his district headquarters. A few other small commissions followed, but when I left Berlin for Mannheim, Hanke and I lost touch. Then, on January 30, 1933, Von Hindenburg appointed Hitler as chancellor in the hope that a strengthened and unified right-wing government might quiet labor and left-wing dissent and stabilize the economy. In March 1933, immediately after national elections had strengthened Hitler's hand, I received a call from Hanke, asking me to come to Berlin right away, where he introduced me to Dr. Goebbels.... Goebbels commissioned me to rebuild and redecorate his propaganda ministry, instructing me to begin at once. I left Goebbels and walked through Berlin, thrilled at the prospect of my first major commission.

Albert Speer, 1971

The whole matter can be summed up in the question: what is education for? ...Is education to be a "passport to privilege" or is it something which people take upon themselves almost like a monastic vow, a sacred obligation to serve the people? ...Leo Tolstoy referred to it when he wrote: "I sit on a man's back, choking him, and making him carry me, and yet assure myself and others that I am very sorry for him and wish to ease his lot by any means possible, except getting off his back." ...Can we establish an ideology, or whatever you like to call it, which insists that the educated have taken upon themselves an obligation.... If this ideology does not prevail, if it is taken for granted that education is a passport to privilege, then the content of education will not primarily be something to serve the people, but something to serve ourselves, the educated. The privileged minority will wish to be educated in a manner that sets them apart and will inevitably learn and teach the wrong things, that is to say, things that do set them apart, with a contempt for manual labor, a contempt for primary production, a contempt for rural life, etc.... The beginning of wisdom is the admission of one's own lack of knowledge.

E. F. Schumacher, 1973

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I ascribe a basic importance to the phenomenon of language. To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the form of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization.

Frantz Fanon, 1977

Much that traveled under the name of liberal education did not in fact liberate, because it was not in fact a removal of ignorance but an indoctrination with new forms of ignorance; or because the ignorance it removed was trivial, and the knowledge substituted was not of how to use critical intelligence but of how to use a collection of information, more or less inaccurate, for social climbing.

Wayne Booth, c. 1983

Professional education should be based on awareness that the earth is itself the primary physician, primary lawgiver, primary revelation of the divine, primary scientist, primary technologist, primary commercial venture, primary artist, primary educator, and primary agent in whichever other activity we find in human affairs.

Thomas Berry, 1988

Even though the last few decades have given us so many bitter warnings about the effects of a naïve linear approach, it still pervades much of our thought and terminology.

Mary Midgley, 1991

It is hard to communicate if the only side of an argument you can hear is your own.

Ann Hulbert, 1994

Students sealed off from reality on college campuses or in the world of computer screens and malls don't learn much about natural systems, don't learn how to care about the living world, or about each other. They and their professors specialize in specific narrow areas of knowledge and don't learn how to make connections with other areas of knowledge.

David Orr, quoted by Gene Logsdon, 1992, 1994

Education and religion, especially, should awaken in the young an awareness of the world in which they live, how it functions, how the human fits in the great story of the universe, and the historical sequence of developments that have shaped our physical and cultural landscape. Along with this awareness of the past and present, education and religion should communicate some guidance concerning the future.

Thomas Berry, 1999

The complicity of the arts and humanities in this conquest is readily apparent in the enthusiasm with which the disciplines, schools, and libraries have accepted their ever-growing dependence (at public expense) on electronic technologies that are, in fact, as all of history shows, not necessary to learning or teaching, and which have produced no perceptible improvement in either. This was accomplished virtually without a dissenting voice, without criticism, without regard even for the economic cost. It is the clearest demonstration so far that the cult of originality and innovation is in fact a crowd of conformists, tramping on one another's heels for fear of being the last to buy whatever is for sale. ...In the universities one discipline is rarely called upon to answer questions that might be asked of it by another discipline. The future is the utopia of academic thought, for virtually anything is hypothetically possible there.... Professional education proceeds according to ideas of professional competence and according to professional standards, and this explains the decline in education from ideals of service and good work, citizenship and membership, to mere "job training" or "career preparation." Suppose that the ultimate standard of our work were to be, not professionalism and profitability, but the health and durability of human and natural communities. If the arts and the sciences ever waken from their rapture of academic specialization, they will make themselves at home in places they have helped to spoil, and set about reconstructing histories and remembering names.

Wendell Berry, 2000

MARGARET. On my first day in architecture school, my professor gave us an assignment: We had twenty-four hours to come up with a design for a poet's retreat. The site was on a hill, and we were given a whole list of requirements, including square footage and an approximate budget. As if I was a real architect, I sat down at my table and carefully measured out each room, calculating material costs and trying to see how I could best utilize the site to maximize the views towards the valley. Later that night, deep into the project, I lifted my head for the first time and saw that nobody was obeying the rules. It was a spectacle, every project trying to outdo the other. One student

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had made a mobile that hung down from a man-made cliff, another had dug down two hundred feet, carving out a small island in the middle of a water well. When I asked whether they were worried about being penalized for not following the rules, they laughed at me. "Everyone knows rules are made to be broken," they said. And so, I started from scratch. I put trapdoors where there were supposed to be floors. I made a beautiful courtyard that could only be seen but never occupied, and finally I constructed a long plank that extended a hundred feet out, just in case the poet grew frustrated with life and wanted to kill himself. I got an A ... But later that night, as I was getting ready for bed in my tiny dormitory room, I began to get an uneasy feeling in my stomach. It was as if I knew that someone, somewhere, had been cheated ... (*Directly to Erhardt and Colin.*) You see, people don't care what philosophers we've studied or which computer graphics program we use. They don't care about Nietzsche, Freud or for that matter Le Corbusier. What they do care about is what sort of environment they live in. They might not always be able to recognize what it is about a space that makes them feel comfortable or irritated ... But I do know that people who will come to use my swimming pool will come back to use it again. And I do know it will make them feel a little better about life

COLIN. Well, I think we've said all we have to about this project.

ERHARDT. Me too.

WILLIAM. Good effort, Margaret ... Shall we move on? This is Raja ... She's taken somewhat of a different approach ... The entire building is suspended from four helicopters ...

ERHARDT. (*Making a joke.*) Now this is evolution ... (*Colin and William join in the laughter while we ... Fade to black.*)

End of Play

Oren Safdie, 2004

Dear Miss Manners:

In this election year, I am struck by a barrier to participation in the world's most famous democracy - that being Americans' reluctance to consider political discourse to be polite conversation.

In most parts of the world, it might be considered far more engaging dinner conversation to contrast the qualities of candidates for office than, say, to discuss the less savory sorts of reality television.

I find the rigor with which reasoned political discourse - or even discussion of complex news topics - is quashed as if it's a threat to future generations' participation in our communities. (sic) I certainly grew up with animated (but cordial) political discussion in many formal and informal venues.

Yet broach the subject of an election at most dinner tables or cocktail parties and it's as though you were discussing something shameful or utterly beyond proper behavior.

Could you please elaborate as to the proper place of free speech in mixed company?

....

You mean people of mixed political opinions, who are going to feel free to say what they think about the morals and intelligence of people who disagree with them about politics (or sex or religion, which are also banned from the dinner table)?

Miss Manners suggests you try bringing up a topic from each of these areas - for example, the death penalty, same-sex marriage, or abortion - and see how much polite, cordial and reasoned discourse you provoke.

She would be only too happy to welcome the return of substantive conversation at dinner parties; goodness knows she is weary of hearing people talk about the food. But conversation requires listening respectfully to others and engaging in polite give-and-take, rather than making speeches and imputing others' motives and judgment.

Unless you are sure you are among those who know how to express their opinions politely and listen to others' respectfully, Miss Manners suggests you be grateful for those discussions of reality television.

Judith Martin (Miss Manners), 2004

What's important is that you take a position and state how you feel. It is not important what other people might think, just what you think.

Stanley Kaplan, Scholastic Aptitude Test preparation book, c. 2005

(Linear thinking is) dangerous in part because it doesn't match reality. The world is not organized linearly. A forest is not organized linearly. A river is not organized linearly. An intrahuman (or interspecies) relationship is not organized linearly. Life is not organized linearly, or parabolically, or sinusoidally, or any of the other...models we can try to project onto it; these regressions may sometimes describe a portion of what we see, but they do not come close to defining reality. These regressions are not reality, and they are no substitute for reality. The...near-ubiquitous cultural delusion that one's concepts are more important than the real...has led to a culture capable of destroying everything.

Derrick Jensen, 2009

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...Serious...practice is about...choosing the right questions...to explore.... It is not really about answering them. Often a successful investigation will not answer a single one, and instead raise new questions.

Paul Chaat Smith, 2009

...Just because he was first does not necessarily make him right but it certainly makes Vitruvius influential, because the mistaken (and dangerous) conflation of visual order with social order continues to this day. Why, in Bob Evans's terms, have we moved from the notion that a building is "an opportunity to improve the human condition," to a time when it is conceived of as "an opportunity to express the human condition?" I suspect the answer is disturbingly simple; *it looks good*. The argument appears to be that there's lots of new media and technology out there, so let's represent them. Well, there's also lots of poverty out there, but I don't see much of that informing contemporary architectural discourse. Poverty doesn't look good; media and technology do. In architecture, having too many ideas is a sign of confusion, whereas one idea rigorously carried through is a mark of order and control. Where in other disciplines having ideas is the lifeblood, in architecture they are edited. ...The main way that architectural education avoids staring the stasis of its own process in the eye is by confusing radical making with radical thinking. ...The technique of the drawing becomes the ground for working out ideas divorced from their initial (social and temporal) context; technique...eventually becoming an end unto itself, rather than a means to an end... driven by an internalized obsession with the various modes and codes of architectural representation. The situation is exacerbated in the early twenty-first century by the extraordinary power made available by the computer. Technical determinism enters an unholy alliance with formal determinism.... In a classic display of technical determinism, new shapes are evolved because they *can* be there...and not because they *need* to be there. In this isolated world the self-interest of the professional leads to a certain blindness to the state of others. As the American artist Gordon Matta-Clark observes, "when a thing does not have any life at all, it seems to have a lot of manipulation for manipulation's sake." There is something desperate in the belief that generating formal complexity in the computer is necessarily going to lead to occupational and social complexity in the final building. The wizardry of the surfaces distracts from the breathtaking naivety of these arguments. The end-of-year exhibitions are often dazzling, quite literally; such is the shininess and freshness of the surface that one is seduced into believing that something genuinely new is happening. But scratch beneath the veneer and one finds a void, a political and ethical void in which the underlying processes and their social detachment are left unexamined. Where problem-solving...tends to either abstract or exclude the social and the political, sense-making inevitably engages with them and, in so doing, accords with a model of architectural agency in which social and political issues are brought to the fore and then negotiated through spatial discussions. This process...may not provide the immediate rush of visual stimulation that is associated with the creative design of an object—a rush which has proved addictive to architects over the ages—but it does have a much longer-term and profound effect. ...In their role as interpreters architects have to assume a stance of modesty. (This) means acknowledging that...architects are not acting for themselves but on behalf of others, and this means acting ethically. It is to ethics that we now turn.

Jeremy Till, 2009

There is a three-way link between the seemingly independent architectural avant garde, their educators who implant early in architectural education the taste for pursuing exotic, yet useless novelty, and the privileged few who benefit from constant superfluous change, the engine that concentrates wealth within market-driven, consumption-based economies. So where faculty get their ideas, how they incubate them and what work methods they promote among students, are all critical to shaping not just the early years of young professionals. But too many architectural educators...live in a very unique, self-constructed universe, not dependent on team building so critical to executing significant additions to our socially and ecologically complex environments. When teaching design, they too often promote a form of detached individualism that mimics their own life circumstances. The computer and its graphic capabilities have dramatically expanded this capacity to escape into empty formalisms. To what extent has this put pressure on architects to be more outrageous in form and structure than their competing peers? Are these creations really contributing positively to our urban landscapes and skylines? How long will the novelty last, how long will people pay the ever-increasing ticket prices to upkeep these expensive contraptions? How long will the host cities depend on the tourist value of gawking, while the more substantive aspects of their local economies go untended, as their under-classes grow in numbers? They are finding that after the one-time international tourists leave, the locals also only attend once because the price of entry is just too high. Where did this penchant for frivolous novelty begin? I lay it on the doorstep of the schools of architecture, as I lay on the doorstep of the business schools the penchant for their graduates to invent novel financial instruments that add little or no value, but create hugely inflated profits for a few, built on air. Both graduates may be leading us into cultural and economic dead-ends. I blame the faculty.

Michael Pyatok, 2010

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The price of ignoring our fallibility not only extends [beyond making mistakes]... but also to our overall outlook on the world. When Socrates taught his students, he didn't try to stuff them full of knowledge. Instead, he sought to fill them with aporia, with a sense of doubt, perplexity, and awe in the face of the complexity and contradictions of the world.

Kathryn Schulz, 2010