

negotiation piece

Celine Condorelli

With Cedric Price, Dan Graham, Paul Hirst,
Jeff Kipnis and Gerald Frug.

gerald frug- Nowadays government has gone out of fashion, it's been replaced by words like governance, "GOVERNANCE". Along with public private partnerships, stakeholders, and urban development corporations.

paul hirst- But the public space of the classical city is being threatened by the privatization of communal areas, by shopping malls, enclosed systems of walkways and corporate complexes. And ultimately this threatens the mixing of the different social groups in the city, and it threatens the public sphere, the place of democracy, by the elimination of its spatial context.

gerald frug- We need a decision making process that transforms the richness of the urban population of London, from being positioned as neighborhood based and defensive, to become part of the city's dynamic development.

paul hirst- This is in part driven by middle class fear of the danger of the streets, it amounts to social segregation, because you have special security guards and so on at the walkways and entrances of these complexes, and certain people don't get in. We need open spaces where the plural groups of the modern city can meet. So in a sense the street is a locus of publicity, and I mean that in the old fashioned sense, that is as public life.

jeff kipnis- the prevailing ethic in architectural design remains the problem of how to install, as best as possible, as image or, an imagination of democratic space. And interestingly enough we only have two models. It may be reductive, but what you'll find, is that there are really only two models of how to organize a democratic space. One model is the grid. Absolute homogeneity, equalization, and the notion that a homogenous space guarantees a democracy by being broadly enfranchising.

dan graham- alluding to histories of pavilions, from Renaissance, to Baroque, to the allegorical pavilions of the English garden to 19th century gazebo to world fair pavilions to international world fairs like the Venice Biennale or Mies Van de Rohe's Barcelona pavilion. One article I wrote could easily be "allegorical landscape garden". So there is always a kind of quasi narrative, and there is an interest in modern materials,

gerald frug- We need to revive the notion of the public.

dan graham- an allusion to the modern city, a labyrinthine quality, which is the labyrinthine quality of cities, there is an amusement sense, and there is a representation of the nation state.

paul hirst- that's all fine

cedric price- architecture is a continuous process, which, unless it is important, should be put to bed.

jeff kipnis- It's able to support a kind of political institution, but it doesn't take control over it, it doesn't determine it. It doesn't decide that the front will be better, that the back will be worse, it just causes the material differentiation and it's all the other institutions that support that physical condition, that actually establish the political space. The political space in that instant, depended not only on material form, but on the context, and on the event. Architecture at best is in control of some aspects of material form, a minor relationship to event through programme, and a very indeterminate relationship to context through some relationship to site.

paul hirst- I absolutely take the diagnosis.

dan graham- In other words, utopia, pavilions as a utopian critique of the city, and the idea of the folly, as an area of pleasure in the city, or just outside the city in a park. Or the sense of the German word for pavilion, lust pavilion meaning pleasure pavilion. Rem Koolhaas in his idea of Coney island gives us another view of the kind Coney island Disneyotic idea of pavilions as something for parents and children, on Sundays, or holidays.

jeff kipnis- the way in which architecture participates in producing an architectural space which participates in the political space but is unable to determine it...

gerald frug- Once upon a time there was something called government, and people thought that government, the democratically appointed people and their appointees, should have the ultimate responsibility for urban design making.

paul hirst- But the ideal of the street as a public space, as part of a locus of social mixing, rests on this waning idea of a political community

dan graham- old style

jeff kipnis- Intensive coherence and extreme levels of coordination and extreme level of cohesiveness.

dan graham- all of these are part of the modern pavilion, leading to the banal modern examples, which are bus shelters and telephone booths.

gerald frug- The most significant crisis in current urban design – it lies not in our inability to design innovative buildings, but in our inability to design a good mechanism for decision-making about to what to build.

paul hirst- what I want to question is whether we can have the same sort of prescriptions.

gerald frug- Changing the current structure requires institutional innovation.

paul hirst- Now, underlying these positions is the idea that government is based on a political community with a common citizenship. That is, it is self-governing, and all members have a reasonable equality of access. Now this I would call the ideal of civic republic, it really stretches from ancient Greece and Rome, to renaissance Italy and so on to the present day, and it rests on the related ideas

of the public sphere where all groups meet and the public space that actualizes it, not merely formally but in the everyday commerce of social groups. Now what I want to argue, is that in political terms -and I am by trade a political theorist so this is what you will get- the idea of a single self-governing community, whose citizens govern their affairs, who interact in public space is now deeply problematic.

jeff kipnis- We can't really make a claim that the grid successfully installs a democratic space, or does it? What we constantly need is other institutions to prop up the architectural effect; and the notion of propping up is a place where to support a certain mythology about architecture in contradiction to the notion of the architectural effect. So... lets see if I can give some example.... this could install a democracy or it could install other forms of organization, depending on the kinds of institutions, military, economic, social patterns which support the architecture.

cedric price- In dealing in an application for building consent for the demolition of a listed building the quality of the proposed replacement building is not material. Now that is now law, that is now policy. Now, I find that very interesting, not all that disturbing, but interesting. Because the role of the par of those who apply for, inspect, determine and approve listing becomes an entirely new game. And it's close to...

dan graham- rustic hut

cedric price- ... taxidermy, embalming, or stopping clocks.

gerald frug- We have lost our ability to figure out whom to give decision-making authority to.

dan graham- pavilions and nature were also wrapped up in this idea of the rustic hut

gerald frug- Neither the government, public sector, nor business, the private sector can be trusted to make decision making about the transformation of urban life. The instinct therefore, is to merge the public and the private. The first source of this policy is the collapse of the public private distinction.

cedric price- Just remember those links, tricks rules manners are my suggested feeds. Now remember the one, how we got to provisions: how do you get from tricks to provisions? You don't have to tell me now, if u don't remember it means you're not interested.

dan graham- So pavilions always have something to do with dominant power.

cedric price- The providers may be the climate produced by the rules. The tricks you've seen the links with provisions. But the providers may be the climate produced by the rules and the current manners. So tricks really are an action situation, that's what I'm trying to say.

gerald frug- This slide of hand, about the public private distinction, has produced a second problem. It's helped guide the kind of development that's taking place here, generating a momentum to build a global business environment, a comfortable place for the middle class to live work and shop.

cedric price- Now rules, rules are likely to be out of date, repair kits for bad provisions, not bad providers, and a safety net for enfeeble providers. But they can also be short hand for advantageous time distortion.

gerald frug- It also doesn't mean that we should slow things down.

cedric price- Which is what the word shorthand is.

jeff kipnis- And all of a sudden you start to realize that...

dan graham- I guess my pavilions relate to corporate power.

cedric price- Because it means that you can write quicker than anyone has ever written, and that's why it's called shorthand. I think?

gerald frug- An empowered public decision making process properly designed, could make things faster, by making public decision making more legitimate.

jeff kipnis- The logic of the grid, which requires erasure and replacement of diversity and difference, the standardization which is broadly enfranchising, also is such that it is unable to accommodate the necessary celebration of diversity and difference, so that instances that need to be differentiated within the logic can't be. So you begin to see the breakdown of the politics of the grid. Actually this was the issue that Rem (Koolhaas) was trying to argue, that perhaps the grid is more enfranchising than we thought, but at least we should understand why the grid was a model for democratic space and at the same time what its problems are.

paul hirst- But modern society is in a sense not faced by dictatorship or the tyranny of the majority.

jeff kipnis- The second model we have is collage.

paul hirst- They are faced by, on the contrary, overloaded and ineffective national and municipal big governments which are insufficiently accountable because they rely on democratic political mechanisms that were created in the 18th and 19th centuries for limited government. We' ve been relying, in a sense, on the democratic means of accountability that were fine for a night watchman state but not for an omni competent public service state. So we don't fear the tyranny of the majority now, what we fear is the contest of fragmented minorities.

gerald frug- The word partnership has a vague feel good quality. But partnership is a businessman's word. It suggests a world without politics.

paul hirst- But we also fear the domination of civil society by large hierarchical organizations called business corporations. What has happened, in the increasing obsolescence of national and municipal government of the demos and so on, is the growth within civil society of institutions which are hierarchical. We no longer fear the dictatorship of the state, increasingly we are facing organizations that are dictatorial in civil society. Some corporations for example claim such a tyrannical power over the lives of their members that they are an outrage. We can think of numerous examples of this kind if we want.

gerald frug- In the business world, we don't have political conflict, we have cooperation, we are all on the same team, working together on our common objectives, because we need each other.

cedric price- So in fact rules are nothing more than an ordering situation. Tricks are an action situation, rules are an ordering situation. Manners, manners... they are a product of this interaction between providers and provisions, in aiming to miss, not in just the interaction, but in doing something, in aiming to miss. And because I know the suspense must be enormous, I would, just to... as an aside

jeff kipnis- So the other model of installing a democratic space through architecture is the collage.

cedric price- That the most boisterous systems are the rough ones. The most boisterous systems, the ones which will exist and pay off, any system, are the rough ones. If you aim something with a rough one, you aim to miss. Now, manners as I said. The next one is that they are, I think, and I am not sure about this, but I think that they are tools for humanizing change, not for delaying it, and not for distorting it. The rules can distort, manners I think are humanizing of change. So manners really, are a resolving situation.

paul hirst- now citizens flee public space, through, in parts, through fear of the pathologies of a pluralism beyond control. Violent street crime, and the threat of an under class who have little in common with respectable citizens.

dan graham- they focused from the beginning on the spectator's perceptual process, and notions of subject and object, of phenomenology, behaviorism, in other words outward outward in other words psychological social behavior, and I think these things are still built in the architectural projects.

gerald frug- In the uk, urban decision-making seems to be resting above all on a single word, that word is partnership.

paul hirst- because actually forms of government are pulling apart. There is no us. There is no demos that can be governed.

cedric price- the strength of disorder... not chaos, that's a different thing.

gerald frug- Do we have an architectural vision of the city?

cedric price- So the process in relation to encouraging, and I am suggesting that we do encourage various institutions which do not capitalize or have various headquarters, but that we encourage those institutions which safeguard this advantage of disorder of the individual. And that we encourage them in such a way so that they are not set up through people being short of time, they are not set up in a panic state, but they are set up before any particular situation occurs. Because the panic state is the one that sets up the adverse institutions, whether it's government, or education, or whatever. So to avoid panic, the aiming to miss situation should be made quite public, it shouldn't be a secret tool, it should be broadcast, we should let people know just what dreadful risks we are taking on their behalf even before they have actually employed us.... hum

gerald frug- The national government is a partner with the London authority and it in turn is a partner with the bureau of the surrounding municipality. All of these partners are also partners with other businesses and stakeholders, and the stakeholders are all partners with each other. Community groups, trade unions, voluntary organizations, organizations representing the disabled, young people, gays and lesbians, they are partners too!

jeff kipnis- Incongruous, and incoherent. Now as you've heard me describe, I believe that incoherence is one of the major consequences, one of the major forms of adequacy of collage, so I've taken that list and accepted all the first four blank vast points except that I've changed the last point from incoherence to

intensive cohesion. How can we imagine a space that is heterogeneous without being hierarchical, which has the features of being blank vast, pointing and incongruous, but was based on a notion of intensive coherence.

cedric price- Now the, hum... avoidance of targets and the value of vague similarities. Well it was the very vague similarities, and the strength of charting differences in order to come to the same solution. Now this one is a pun, aiming to miss is a pun, in so much as there are a series of details for a particular structure where in fact in literal terms and in very small sort of little jolly details for structuring things one avoids a problem by aiming to miss. Now it isn't the same as tolerance.

paul hirst- Firstly, we must see politics in terms of the desegregation between territory and function.

cedric price- Because if you have built in tolerance you are in fact assuming a plus and minus factor in your elements. If you aim to miss you don't bother with tolerance.

paul hirst- politics will become complexly federal.

cedric price- Now the aim to miss zone is pink obviously.

paul hirst- Not merely between different levels of territorial authority, but also between multilocational forms of functional government, some of which are international, some community based but interlocal. So we're talking about forms of government which deal with specific functions, they may very well cross boundaries and they may be sited at different points in the city but never add up to the communal governance of the city. Now what that says is that there can be no coherent public sphere, no single public sphere and there can be in a sense no public space, no space of meeting and location together. Now the second point to make is that part of that complex structure of authority will be the devolution of power to voluntary self-governing associations. Classic democratic theory treats voluntary associations as what it calls secondary associations. They are part of an independent civil society, distinct from the state, that serves as the foundation for the plural political groups that compete to control the state and therefore ensure democracy. Secondary associations are kind of the bedrock of democracy.

gerald frug- What's new, is that government no longer feels able to be the decision maker, and now needs to come to a consensus with others, with corporations, interests groups, communities, stakeholders. Who are these people? Who is a stakeholder? Which communities and corporations count? Who is included in the concept of "community"?

jeff kipnis- this is the very model of collage, understood as identification of diversity and difference, and an explicit representation... so it's every material, every form, as you'll see little patches of differential organization, a high level of individualistic expression... lots of odd forms...

gerald frug- Only individuals, only human beings, not institutions and groups can be citizens. Only individuals can vote. Institutions can share decision making power, that is they can become stakeholders, participate in governance, and be appointed to the boards of urban developments corporations. This kind of public private merger is taking place on a large scale.

jeff kipnis- the problem of embodiment bears on a history which has two aspects, one is that it understands architecture as an applied application.

cedric price- Without laboring that anymore what I am suggesting is that, for very different reasons, the aim of the architect should not be to hit the so-called aspirations of the local authorities, but to miss all those aspirations and thereby provide a very uniform...

jeff kipnis- applied philosophy, applied engineering, applied sociology, applied art, applied technology... and that history is always the history along which one also finds that architecture is defective. There is a long history of configuring architecture as a defective discipline precisely because of the inabilities of embodiment that accrue to understanding the discipline as an application. And it's a very long history, actually you can find it all way from Plato to Hegel, you can find it in Bataille, you can find it in Rosalind Krauss, you can find it in many of engineering texts of the 60s, you can find it in Paul Virilio.... there's a constant notion of some kind of defect that architecture has, and it generally has this defect because it's unable to fulfill its goal as an application.

paul hirst- Now the division between state and society is in crisis. On the one hand the state is inadequate to perform its functions and inadequately supervised; on the other, civil society is increasingly on the one hand fragmented, and yet to the degree it's not fragmented it's dominated by forms of hierarchically controlled power that ultimately answerable to nobody but their masters, not answerable to the shareholders, their workers, but answerable only to their masters, and their masters are the top officials who themselves are only answerable ultimately to their stock market quotations. Well if this is the case, if civil society is increasingly uncivil, because it is filled with contesting groups who really don't recognize the public sphere as much as they did and by hierarchical government, what do we do about it? Well the answer I think is that if the state is increasingly less a locus, if government is multifunctional, multilocational, there is no single one place where we can say this is the public sphere, then what we

must do is try and reinvigorate civil society as a political agency.

jeff kipnis- and Nietzsche actually is the one philosopher who doesn't think of architecture as an applied act but as a form of imagination, a form of political imagination. So the role of the architect in Nietzsche is someone who is engaged in physicalising imagination.

cedric price- Aiming to miss

dan graham- There is a history of pavilions that went from the Renaissance landscape garden in which they were literary and philosophical models on the one hand, on the other hand they were forms of Disneyland, of entertainment, amusement pavilions.

gerald frug- We need to revive the notion of the public.

cedric price- I wonder whether in fact there is any system whereby there can be a sort of....

gerald frug- Social development should have an impact on the organization of a city's urban planning process, and thereby on the nature of its physical development.

cedric price- A sort of continuous exchange without it being too heavily programmed, that doesn't have the event connotation that sitting around like this does.

jeff kipnis- What are the implications of thinking architecture as a form of political imagination? As some way of imagining the transformations of context, the organization of emergent social arrangements and the construction of new institutional forms? Whether or not this imagination is actually effectuated is not as important as the politics of its imaginative affect I think.

cedric price- And the tools that now and again one tries to employ in order to encourage, not only architects to learn how to miss but to encourage society in general to realize that to travel is hopefully better than to arrive.

