Preface

Building technology in the last decades of the 20th century has made almost everything possible. Provided that it can be designed and there is money to pay for it, we can now build anything.

Unfortunately, this does not mean that all architects are optimists or that the built environment will now be improved. On the contrary, architecture is suffering from as much confusion and doubt, for very much the same reasons, as all the other fields of creative activity.

The old, clear battle-lines of the 1920s and 1930s have disappeared. In those days, the crusaders of a rational architecture: Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and other heroes of the Modern movement in architecture, were lined up against the complacent defenders of traditional, imitative styles.

Even now although architects are much better informed by advanced computer technology at their disposal, yet their design solutions to the architectural problems are far from rational and scientific. They are more in the nature of expressionism, less functionalism, with excessive romanticism and monumentalism— and with least concern for humanism in the built environment.

An earnest search must be made for architectural designs with flexibility as one of the essential parameters, besides economy and efficiency, because nobody, however ingenious, can foresee future changes, which so quickly come about in the modern world. And since you must have structures which adapt themselves to the changing socio-economic needs of the human community, the thought of structures, which could provide Universal Space, in terms of column-free space, should be welcome. With Universal Space, one could design the interiors in any manner whatsoever by virtue of the flexibility it provides for fulfilling the multifarious requirements of human usage and mechanical utility.

The present dynamic development on theoretical research on reinforced concrete will not yield practical results unless we obtain a better knowledge of the actual behaviour of this material and learn to relate more strictly the elements of structural intuition, computer calculation, and construction procedure. Only a perfect synthesis of these factors can realise the unlimited technological and architectural potentialities of reinforced-concrete structures.

These are the fundamental architectural-design-performance constraints which impel me to search for solutions that may well be typical and enduring.

To build is to think, and to discover ideas worthy of consideration. This research work will fulfil its purpose only if concepts and solutions— evolved by sustained efforts— are taken as stimulus for critical appraisal and further development.

I hope that the few certainties and the many doubts— the fruits of acquired experience— that I am trying to convey to prospective users may elicit ample, concrete, and clarifying discussions, and thus help in evolving logical structural forms and quality construction out of its present state, which is essentially one of its unignorable crisis.

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