NEW TENTS

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Anthropology has had a remarkable impact on modern culture as long as it stresses the role of cultural diversities as unfitting with the universalization brought about by technology. Space and the city, of course, were not exceptions. Team X's revision of the orthodox approach of Modern Movement was grounded on this cultural shift, epitomized by Levi Strauss's discoveries, a main reference for those architects. Of course the cultural context was much wider, including sociology, art and existentialism. I merely need to mention Paul Ricoeur's seminal theories on the risks of universalization. Since then, other cultures were no longer overshadowed by the technology-oriented idea of progress. Non-Western cities and spaces became a non-marginal reference. The Smithsons' idea of mat-building, just to quote an example, was brought about by this new attitude.

At that time anthropologists had to travel to "foreign countries". And so did architects: van Eyck for example. Nowadays, in the tragic age of migration, we no longer need to travel to confront other societies: they reach endlessly our Western world. Yet the broad approach of those architects needs to be further broadened and partly modified. Indeed we are urged to envisage a future architecture for a society which is not simply multiracial. For migration is colossal and migrants are, not merely uprooted and homeless, but also "spaceless". A complex condition, far from the mere "cultural exchange" of the Sixties. Architecture has to rethink the principle of settlement, and partly reconsider nomadic and ephemeral conditions.

Le Corbusier's, rather whimsically, gave to a tent camp - le temple primitif - the primacy as original architecture. His hierarchy unexpectedly turns out to be prophetic, much as Quatremère's tent. An unusual return to the origins permeates our future vision of a world with the "primitive" architecture of shelters and refugees camps.

I will try to focus on the architectural outcomes of cities were the ephemeral parts will become increasingly extensive.

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