

Post world war ii chandigarh cultural studies essay



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War could be known as one of the direct factors that influence architecture immediately. The social changes after the war bring significant change in architecture style. Demographic expansion, industrialization, economic, progression of science and technology as well as the new urban areas is the main issues that the war influences architecture in overall. (Cresti, 1970, p. 17) Le Corbusier's architecture style was changed after World War II as well. It is not difficult to find out that there is a big shift in his late design style in many of his works during this time, for example, Chandigarh, La Tourette and Notre Dame du Haut. Being mentioned in Coleman book (2005, p. 92), Le Corbusier during his post-World War II period, had his work influenced by 'social content and social structure'. This is totally different from formalist and normal visual approach. He uses the human body as the order and his theory was based on the human body structure as well. Also between the age 50-65, his designs emphasized more on nature elements of housing unit that are: sun, space and greenness. (Hervé, 1970, p. 100) In the interview with Tadao Ando, which was written down by Auping M. (2002, p. 17, p. 75), he discussed his understanding about Le Corbusier work - La Tourette - a famous building in post-World War II period. This building was always considered as a heavy design with the dominant of concrete. The material with its design leads to a lot of discussion. Tadao said after the 'white period' - which most building and villas of Le Corbusier were painted in white - Le Corbusier started using brick and concrete texture for his designs in order to reveal a new approach in architecture which is more abstract. Tadao compared La Tourette with 'a sculpture of light'. After the War, Le Corbusier started using contrasting materials as his trend in building design. This shift to natural texture of materials becomes a new approach for surface

style. (Frampton, 2007, p. 225). Chandigarh is one of his successful in design as well as urban planning. During this time, he actually shifted his style from purism to a new brutalism, which is the use of brutal material such as raw concrete. 1 Since he played material as a single and noble task of the architect, which can made them useful. (Hervé, 1970, p. 114) Chandigarh is also considered as a sculpture mixed with the concrete texture. This is an impressive artwork that differs from the local conditions and building styles in India. Among all his works during this period, Chandigarh could be one of the most representative works with a big shift comparing to the early age's works. The design of Chandigarh at that time was expected to be the capital of Punjab - the symbol of new India. This could lead for the expectation of impression and revolution in architecture design. It was mentioned that Chandigarh was originally ' motopian' suburbia by Albert Mayer before it was handed to Le Corbusier. (Frampton, 2007, p. 230) Since 1948, Le Corbusier has been obsessed by the idea of the " Open Hand". He wanted to place it in Chandigarh design, at the end of the ' Capital'. He thought that when modern world reached the limitless intellectual and material riches, the design would show an " Open Hand" to receive and to give. (Hervé, 1970, p. 39) The " Open Hand" for Le Corbusier is a sign of peace and reconciliation. For this, he is really want to carried it in his subconscious for many years, and " come into existence in order to provide a testimony of harmony". (Hervé, 1970, p. 62) Le Corbusier himself said that the second constituent elements of Chandigarh and its sub-divisions do not normally follow traditional rules, numbers but become a simple yet childish and impressive arithmetic. (Le Corbusier, 1958, p. 171 - 173) Le Corbusier actually put lot of his knowledge and feeling in Chandigarh building. Although in his early age,

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he created the Five Points rules as well as many other rationales, it seems like he put much more sudden inspiration for his work during this later period. He said that Chandigarh would be a 'geometrical event', a 'sculpture of intellect', not simply a city for high levels people with the walls and neighbors surrounding around. (Le Corbusier, 1958, p. 215)As mentioned before, Le Corbusier uses the human body as the order and his theory and design are also based on human body as well. From Chandigarh, he works with human body and the importance of human body. He hold a wooden human body, modulator, with Chandigarh site plan when he working on the urban planning. (Le Corbusier, 1958, p. 31-32)Le Corbusier mentioned in his own book about his designs during this period as: "I have spent my life drawing palaces that were to be the houses of men; building houses that are palaces. Our last invention has been to equip the Palace of the Ministries in the Capitol of Chandigarh and the Convent of La Tourette at Lyons with glazed panels called 'musical', the most rational solution of modern glasswork, governed by a rule which for a long time past has governed music." (Le Corbusier, 1958, p. 321)During the design in Chandigarh, it seems that the city planning and the society have a huge conflict. Le Corbusier was allowed to plan the city based on his rules and principles; these principles also give the thoughts about advanced industrial civilizations. "The great highways of Chandigarh are empty of traffic; the city itself has become a group of almost isolated villages, which occupy odd corners in the ground plan. Only the government center - a magnificent ensemble of Palace of Justice, Assembly Hall, and Secretariat - functions as planned." (Fishman, Robert, 1977, p. 254) Although Chandigarh is one of the biggest successes in his career, it is probably that the design fulfills its task

to become a ' masterpiece', rather than serve the society it was built in. There was none of any ideas during art history that include building that was built of coarse raw concrete. Strength, structure and wind-bracing could be the important issues for Chandigarh design to be mentioned about. The beauty this design brings could be called a new beauty. There is a contact with the joys in Hindu principles: " the fraternity of the relations between cosmos and living beings: stars, nature, sacred animals, birds, monkeys and cows, and in the village the children, the adults, and the active old people, the lagoon and the mango trees; everything is present and smiles, poor but proportioned." (Hervé, Lucien, 1970, p. 37)

Conclusion

During his successful career, Le Corbusier's works can be divided into two main period which we could see a recognizable shift between the two. The first period is " white period". This could be considered as his ' early age'. Works during this time mostly applied the principles of Five Points of New Architecture - possibly his most influential architectural rules. The second period is his ' later age'. Many works were mixed the ' early age' works with the texture and sculptural mind. The shift between that two was such a major departure that makes us difficult to identify all of them from the same person - Le Corbusier. However, the modulator and proportion that could be the identification for his works. For example, we can see the application of proportion on elevations of Villa Savoye(Image 4) and urban planning and Chandigarh(Image 5) as well. Villa Savoye is a well-order, clear and free combination of space. The flexibility in many elements but still follow his primary form makes this building carried out most his ' Five Points of New

Architecture' rules. There are a lot of rationales in his early age's work. However, after post-World War II, we could see that Le Corbusier seems to put more feeling into his work, not purely following the rules but become more impressive design with his own feeling. No matter the big shift, there is still the common point between his early works and post-World War II works. The Five Points rules were applied in the works in both periods that make these rules become so distinctive. For example, we can still see the pilotis, free façade, roof garden and free plan in his post-World War II works, La Tourette. However, the only difference in his work is his feeling to be added in, such as, " Open Hand" in Chandigarh and " Duck", " Hat" in Notre Dame du Haut that make his works more sculptural rather than functional as his early age's works.