

DESERTA ANGLICANA.

WHY ENGLAND HAS THE LEAST COGNISABLE AND THE MOST SELF-CONSCIOUSLY 'OCCULTED' LIFE-SPACE IN THE WORLD.

THE 'PALPABLE' IMAGE.

It may be persuasive to rehearse the many reasons, both natural and historical, for this metaphysical impoverishment of the British lifespace. Firstly, we are a Nordic culture. So we begin with the same distance from the original loci of Architecture, that is shared by all of our Transalpine neighbours. The children of Nordic cultures do not experience the "palpability" of images common to cultures who regard images as "natural", "given" and "a-priori" to a world where bright sunlight detaches them from the warm bodies of their material "doppelgangers". These cultures arise closer to the Tropic of Cancer than our own. They find it easier than we do to use images to perform their meta-physical exercises. The Nordic spirit is afraid of images to the point, rather commonly, of paranoia. We like to keep them locked in our books, inky theatres, cinemas, and latterly, T.V. sets, where they can roam at will. Harry Potter shows what happens to images under our dark skies and miserable daylight. They become quasi-physical agents - spooky to the point of wizardry.

NO COINCIDENCE.

Then there was the struggle to preserve the distance between these islands and the larger, wealthier and more powerful states of the mainland. It is surely no coincidence that it was during the reign of Henry VIII that an effective naval force was achieved, and, at the same time, a version of the Christian religion legally 'Nationalised'.

"THE TRIUMPH OF TEXT".

The specific instrument of this nationalisation was the translation of the "Good Book" from the universal languages in which it had been originally written: Greek and then Latin, into the language spoken by the islanders: English. By restricting 'authenticity' to the printed text alone, radical English Protestantism gave itself the authority to destroy all of the accompanying extra-textual dimensions of religious ritual. Murals, sculptures, music, gestures, rites and the whole 'embodied' and epiphanic dimension of Catholicism could be erased. Yet it was in these that the pre-Christian dimensions of religion mainly survived. These, then, as they had been in the earlier 15C Italian Renaissance, had to be 'moved-over' into the sphere of secular literature, courtly culture, and in particular, the masques and plays of the theatre. Shakespeare is the exemplary island author here.

ACTION "AT A DISTANCE".

The mastery of the sea, also, was different to that of the hand-to hand combat of troops of humans. The English navy not only had to master the chronometry of navigation, but the spherical geometry of its routes under the motions of the sun and stars. Even the techniques of marine combat used by the island navy were, like Newton's later understanding of Gravity, performed "at a distance". British ships fought those of the Spanish 'Armada' with rapid-firing cannons on wheeled trunnions rather than by grappling ships together for hand to hand assault. None of this could be advantaged by anything remotely other than the machinery, mathematics and physics at which these islands began by pressure of circumstances, to cultivate, reward and excel.

IMPERIAL CONDITIONING.

Then there was the huge effect of the centuries of the extraordinary enlargement of the island's Empire. No one can possibly argue that such an event could not fail to completely warp and alter the island's culture. One of its effects, as a child raised in the Indian RAJ until twelve from a father born into it in 1900 and a mother born in Argentina, I experienced at first hand. This was the rigorous avoidance of anything metaphysical. My family lived for three years close to the famous Hindu temples of Khajuraho. I recall several expeditions to the waterfalls and rock-cut swimming pools reserved to the Officer Class - as well as other treks into 'Nature'. Not once was I shown the temples surrounded by copulating deities, presumably a current "must see" for all visitors to the area. British Imperial Agencies did not concern themselves with such horrors. These were left to the attention of the 'subject peoples' of the Empire.

STELLA KRAMRISCH.

The history of the RAJ in my own medium of Architecture was that for centuries we built a rather adequate marriage of Mogul, Hindu and the Gothic that actually descended from them. It was given the name, by later historians, of "Indo-Saracenic". This represented its ingenious marriage of Gothic, the State Style of Britain after the accession of Queen Victoria, with Hindu and Islamic ornament. The RAJ also made accurate measured drawings of major Indian monuments. But the first theoretical text on the riotous lexicality of the Hindu Temple that Rabindranath Tagore, the illustrious Bengali Poet, accepted as intellectually persuasive were written by Stella Kramrisch. Kramrisch was a German Jewish refugee from Hitler, married to a British Officer, who ended her days running the Indian Department in New York's Metropolitan Museum.

FIRST THE FALL AND THEN THE DROP.

With a history like this, who can be surprised that when the Empire finally fell, after WWII, and an electoral landslide installed a British Labour Administration, every last vestige of the metaphysical culture cultivated out of a sense of respect for Britain's extraordinary global stature was precipitately, and even very precipitately, dropped by the very Imperial Mandarins, who, "returning home", now policed the New Planned Economy of the exhausted and indebted imperial rump.

AN ONTIC GEOGRAPHY LESSON.

It was this peculiarly 'native' Architectural geography that was introduced to us neophytes of 1955 by "Headmaster" John S. Walkden. It was the very first hour of the very first day of the very first semester at the Central London Polytechnic when he told us three things, and three things only. For he gave no lectures and one only ever saw him again if fallen into academic disfavour. "Architecture", Walkden informed, "is no longer a literary subject". I suspect that he actually meant "literate". For that was the truth of it. His second oracularity was: "Architects lost their charisma when they abandoned the 'Orders'". We novices had little idea what was meant by this. Fresh from military service, some of us wondered how one could get away with "abandoning one's Orders". Others worried if a "charisma" was yet another piece of required equipment. We were already burdened with boards, tee-squares, set-squares, ruling pens and the heavy tome of Banister Fletcher's History of Architecture. A "charisma" sounded French, rare and expensive - even second-hand.

THE 'NEW WORLD'.

"My son", Walkden concluded, "is likely to be chosen by the Olympic Swimming Team". This, at least, we understood. It was only some thirty years later that I understood that our "Headmaster" (today he would be called the "Dean"), was probably a disaffected pre-WWII Classicist. He was sharing with his new Students the news that it was no good being as enamoured of the Doric, Ionic and Corinthian Orders as he had once been. It would also only get us into trouble if we became too interested in the history and theory of our Medium. Here, in the Polytechnic, we were to be trained to build the New Jerusalem of the Welfare Existenzminimum.

As for Walkden Junior. He, one may assume, had the beautifully-muscled body of an Athlete and qualified for the Grecian "ephebe" that a Classicist should admire. Walkden Senior then retreated into the mysteries of Administration and waited, one assumes, for his Pension.

A FIRST REBELLION.

There have been rebellions against this oppressive Materialism. The first was mounted by the Conservationists. Aghast, not so much at the demolition of "old" buildings but at the intentionally sub-literate "new" ones that replaced them, the Conservationists invented "conservation". The preservation of so many old buildings, as a result of this 'movement' is without question the greatest contribution of the last half-century to the metaphysical quality of the British life-space.

SECOND REBELLION.

The second rebellion, which we will examine in due course, began as something more serious than Conservation.

THE END OF WAR.

It came from the recognition that War, in the sense understood by Clausewitz, could no longer be regarded as "diplomacy by other means". The philosophy of Genghis Kahn, reputedly (because of his gigantic conquests, the richest man that ever lived), was reputed to be: "kill the men, take the gold and enjoy the women". He seems, by reputedly fathering over 1,000 children, to have lived-up to have principles. But none of this could happen if everything was ruined and radioactive as well. Hiroshima signalled that all-out war, at the levels practiced during the early 20C, was no longer the final political recourse and the cement binding cultures to the rule of a 'warrior class' that it had been from the beginning of History.

THR "WHITE HEAT".

This second rebellion came also from the recognition, after Belsen, that the mere combination of Technology, Science and the power of Reasoning, were not a sufficient guarantee of 'Progress'. The "White Architecture" of the 1930s "Heroic Period were the advertisement of a culture stripped of all representations except Technology and Rationality. The Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson caught the idea explicitly when he proposed, at the Labour Party Conference in 1963 Scarborough, that a "New Britain would have to be forged in the White Heat of the Scientific Revolution". The ontic vacuities of Natural Science were the painless way to unity for the Party that Wilson inherited from the death of Gaitskell. His imagistic "white-out" led the Socialists away from their bitter quarrels over Nationalisation, Nuclear Disarmament (and, who knows, even City-Planning!). Their ten years of wandering in the wilderness of Opposition could be over of they got into the "Hot-Wash".

Even so, there had to be something more than a self imposed blindness - a taboo on (Socialist), foresight - if the horrors of the 20C were not to be repeated.

THE "WAR OF THE ARTS OF PEACE".

It is for this reason that I have adopted the name for my Lectures of 'The War of the Arts of Peace'. I discovered, in 2015, very much to my surprise, that the domain name "Arts of Peace" had never, in all of the 40 years of the Internet, been reserved. So I bought it. Then, because even this small fact seemed to me a proof that 'war' was a state of being natural to humanity, to add 'war' to these currently ignored and unwanted "arts". Of these, for the purposes of my new Consultancy, the principal 'art' is Architecture. The Times newspaper, in the 1960s sacked their Architecture Correspondent. Its Editor declared that the Medium could no longer qualify as one of the Arts. It is even today, characteristic of the English Conservative to treat a building that seems "all right" as merely "Property". A building that is "all wrong" (such as those cleaving to the style of "Deconstruction"), is classified as "Modern Art". Architecture, the Medium that L. B. Alberti called, in 15C Italy, "the paradigmatic medium of civilisation", remains alive no longer in the Conservative imagination. Only the newspapers of the political Left publish criticisms of what they call Architecture. And these will only gain the 'Left's' approval if the 'Architecture' can be said to be "Modern".

"CARRIED-ON BY OTHER MEANS".

The historical moment when it appeared to be either useful or legitimate to strip all meaning out of the human lifespace except the narrowly material was already past by the 1940s. All of the old Ancien Regime that had survived WW I were well and truly erased by the end of WWII. At a more personal level these events, by signing the end of the interminable history of War also signed the end of the "Warrior Class" into which all boys of my own Imperial pedigree were duly trained and inducted. It was clear, by the 1940s, that War, to rephrase Clausewitz, would be "carried-on by other means".

SEEN THRU' A WINDSCREEN, DARKLY.

What was not so clear, to a ruined and impoverished Europe, was that the new field of combat would be the Food Halls of the drive-in supermarkets of Victor Gruen. The weapons were the supersized appetites described by Thorstein Veblen. They were wielded by not so much the Dwellers-in as the Duellers-of the Consumer Economy. The only thing that remained inconspicuous in this Combat of Conspicuous Consumption were the sheds, big and little that huddled under the sky-signs whose peremptory slogans massaged the streams of

automobiles, each one perfumed with hot plastic and the fumes from cheap engines. This was not even a 'purified' Architecture. This was the opposite extreme, an Architecture reduced to flimsy windowless boxes whose only reification was nothing but some neon text floating high above them addressing a landscape like the dark side of the Moon - one of permanent iconic night. Those who mastered its essentially American techniques, and could tolerate its destruction of the material and cultural ecology of its Practitioners, would emerge as the entirely Pyrrhic victors. For in the Cold War it was the Victor's life-space which lay in ruins. In this case that of the smashed and wrecked Art Deco cities that had launched the world-beating culture of the early-20C USA!

CONNOISSEURING-THROUGH.

Within this context the burnt-out traces of some sort of Architecture seemed the best that could be hoped for. The West's Architecture "as found" had, it was felt, been polluted by Imperialism and its Totalitarian aftermath. Now, in the new consumerist Government by Fiscal Engineering, there was little more to building than billboard signage above automobiles. The Venturis in the USA responded with "Complexity and Contradiction", a ludicrous text with no Architectural substance whose marvellous opacity was of great aid to the American Architect. For it enabled him to navigate to the only harbours available: private dwellings and the occasional University Campus. To make even these voyages his ship must be filled to overflowing with an extraordinary cargo of connoisseurship. Yet this must in no way dampen the furnaces that consumed America's beautiful Art Deco cities, turning them into the "Burbs" whose fiscal fuel powered the military-industrial complex that guaranteed American global hegemony.

ENGLISH NEO-CLASSICISM BEDS WITH AMERICAN PO-MO.

One the more remarkable landfalls for these wandering outcasts of the Consuming Economy was the Sainsbury Wing in Trafalgar Square. Denise Scott-Brown (aka. Mrs. Robert Venturi), confided to me at the opening of her building while we sheltered from the crush around the eternally voluptuous body of Joan Collins, "What is it with you English Architects? You do not seem to want to win." I thought to myself: "at the price of building the most formally corrupt building in London, a design that stank of decadence, death and self-inflicted wounds to the sacred body of Hellenism can one wonder?" This was no longer a "Doric Column in the back of a dying democracy" but some Necrophiliacs bathing in the sweat of a torture victim. It seems of-a-piece with the masochism of this disgusting building that it should house a Crivelli, a Botticelli, a Piero della Francesca and an Uccello amongst others of the most beautiful Italian paintings in Britain. Po-

Mo was a silly name for an American betrayal of Modernism's project to finally crack the Architectural Code. Po-Mo is not "fun". If it is anything at all it is a desperate attempt to finally "modernise" Architecture itself by FINALLY making sense of it - so that it can finally be USED NOW.

HAND-MADE REVOLUTIONARIES.

The English Architect presented an exactly opposing persona. 'Authenticity' for him has, ever since WWII entailed an opposition to Capitalism and a preference for a small-time, pseudo-Mediaeval, William Morris taste for a hand-crafted "natural" innocence. The English prefer their 'Artist' to be a bit of a fool. Connoisseurship is, on this account, not required. Greek and Roman Classicism, which had been the commonplace Architecture of the West for centuries had been summarily tabooed by the Labour Landslide Administration of 1945. Greek and Latin were removed from the educational curriculum. The whole of the high, courtly culture of the West was dropped, along with the British Imperial Preferences that had kept the British Merchant ships full and British factories humming. So keen was the Left to destroy the Right that they felt had led them into WWII, that they destroyed the employment of their own supporters and the only high culture these islands had ever known.

"BRITAIN CAN MAKE IT".

A strange fantasy possessed the impoverished ruins of the greatest Empire that history had ever known. Curious little spectacles were mounted by the Left, such as the 1951 "Festival of Britain". It was conveniently forgotten that it was the Russians who had crushed the Germans and the USA who had destroyed the Japanese. Not that Britain had been idle. But before out "Allies" joined us we were being well and truly beaten. Chauvinistic slogans abounded. "Britain Can Make It" (an echo of the Wartime Blitz exhortation of "Britain can Take it"), promoted a 1946 exhibition at the V & A which advised the importance of "Industrial Design". The newspapers translated it as "Britons can't have it" - a prescient forecast as it turned-out that Britain's manufactories did not 'have it' at all. For it was not long before the far more destroyed industries of Italy, Germany and France, and above all - Japan - soon proved more capable of pleasing the New Consumers.

"BRITAIN AS A 'HIGH-TECH' SCRAPYARD.

And so it was that consequent to the mid-20C collapse of the British Empire, the greatest period in these remote Atlantic Islands' history, that any of the "foreign influences" so essential to the U.S. Architect's persona, became anathema to the Island Kingdom's Architectural

Practitioners. This was especially the case for the top English High Tech Architects. The ones whom I neighbored in the British Pavilion of the 1991 Venice Biennale remained, at least to me, entirely devoid of Architectural Culture. What I mean is that they had no 'conversation' concerning that divine city's Architectural splendours. It was enough for them that a building was made something like the JU 88 tri-motor with its corrugated skin, or of moulded fibreglass plastic or really anything at all tubular and wired up like an old WWI biplane. To look mechanical and industrial was all that was required. Indeed the only prize considered worth winning was the competition offered by the Financial Times for "Industrial Architecture".

LANDSLIDE LABOUR MARRIES AMERICAN SUBURBIA.

A contributing factor here was that the Labour Landslide Administration had decreed in the little-known but widely-employed Planning Manual: "The Redevelopment of Central Areas (Summer) 1947", that all dwelling and working was to be 'decanted' out of the cities into "housing estates" and "industrial estates". The only historical exemplar quoted in this lavish (for the time) prescription for urban suicide was the way Los Angeles demolished whole city blocks to provide off-street automobile parking. These civic 'wounds' were coloured blood-red. The Labour love affair with the USA was already flowering. English cities, one year after "VJ Day", were being turned into drive-in suburban "Centres".

PREFABRICATED PLACES IN WHICH TO PUT YOUR PURCHASES.

My experience in the LCC/GLC (that is at the highest cultural level in English Public Architecture), of the design of Welfare State Housing Estates was that it was governed by nothing except the imperative to provide the Tenant with the most space per pound in which he can accumulate his purchases. No regard was paid to anything else. There was no culture of City-Planning, no thought of of Public Transport, no culture of Architecture as such and no idea of what sort of Culture would be advantaged by it. The only quality required to pass a design upwards to its final acceptance by the New Towns Department was to claim it was "prefabricated" (even when it was not because no-one could build a three-bed house for £2,500 in 1962 if it was not by hand with no mechanical plant at all!).

NO SIGNALS RECEIVED.

The GLC was, in the three Departments of New Towns, Housing and City Planning (in which I worked for over four years), a brain dead institution. Not once did we receive a signal from its higher centres - that is to say Jack Whittle. It was a self-absorbed, self-governing monolith of 1,200 blue-jeaned Fairisle-sweatered Architects who lived

inside a cocoon of received tastes that were shared with no-one outside their giant stone palace opposite the Palace of Westminster. Margaret Thatcher destroyed nothing. GLC Lifespace-Culture had been dead for years. She merely cleared it away so that it became a giant Marriott Hotel sitting on a shark aquarium provisioned by Big Macs. This latter occupied our Refectory - whose kitchen served rather decent meals. The GLC was a great institution betrayed by the rotten Architectural culture of my uselessly Fellow-Travelling Profession.

"ARMPIT ARCHITECTURE".

It was only in an Industrial Estate that the young British Architect could escape the dead hand of the Welfare State's insistence on their special brand of home-grown Freddie Gibberd "Festival of Britain" Architectural sub-literacy. It was there, in the industrial armpits of the British Landscape, that all the British High-Tech Architects cut their first teeth on the forms and materials that would lead, ultimately to Lloyds of London - a building dedicated to "Change" that has proved so inflexible that it can not be sold by the Stock Exchange. Never mind, it is a stunner - as so it should be at £250,000 for each de-iced air-conditioned external all-glass elevator-cab.

WINNING THE OLD WAR AND LOSING THE NEW PEACE.

None of this was of any concern to those charged with the wealth and security of the West. Nor did these subjects concern them after the two major disasters to strike them. The first of these was the loss of the Second Iraqi War. This began in March 2003 and officially ended in December 2011. While not as clear-cut as previous 'wars', it is generally agreed that it was not in any sense a 'victory'. The continuing effect of the wars in the Middle East has been the slow loss of American hegemony. It is not possible to say with any clarity what has replaced the 'Consumerist' Model, or even if anything else really has. But it is possible to observe that this Model has failed to be adopted, even after a shattering war and the expenditure of (literally), trillions of U.S. dollars.

THE AMERICAN POOR FAIL TO "PLAY UP AND PLAY THE GAME".

The second disaster was the economic crash of 2007. While booms and busts are nothing new this one appeared to end the simple belief that the American Consumerist Model was the only one to follow. President Clinton's Administration insisted that the Banks offer mortgages to persons normally excluded from the benign spiral of lifespace enhancement and subsidised debt. When this artificially inflated balloon exploded the USA lost sufficient confidence in its own Model to elect a President who is an overblown caricature of its most

exaggerated routines. If he should fail to re-animate them then they will be discredited entirely - and with nothing much to replace them!

There is, in short, a shortage of plausible 'Models'.

"POST-MODERNISM".

The seeming impossibility of escape from the ethos that had governed the first half of the 20C, indeed the enthusiastic adoption and headlong pursuit of the self-same scorched-earth technophilia by the self-appointed 'parties of progress' led not only to Conservation but to the invention of the idea of "Post Modernism". This was in its beginning, an invention, mainly, of French Marxist Philosophers who objected not only to the Anglo-American hegemony that had usurped the role of the "Lingua Franca" but to the Russian Empire's employment of the philosopher Marx to oppress Eastern Europe

THE PRICE OF VICTORY.

In the hands of the USA, however, Post-Modernism became a celebration of the ruin of any and every ambition to a life, either individual or collective, that could be lived according to a narrative that gave it some larger meaning. The whole idea of 'meaning' shrank to a mere bricolage of random contingencies. Jack Kerouac's "On the Road" was its Prophetic Text and Francis Fukuyama its official advocate with his post-ideological "End of History". Existence within the world created by the ending of Hot War and the transition to Cold War (but war all the same!), had meant a human lifespaces subjected to a state of massive, and continuous, economic "churn". The "old" (a relative term in the USA), cities were depopulated, endlessly re-built and set within a vast "burb" of cement freeways, tin-box drive-ins and "ranch houses". It was by this furious disturbance of their citizens that the USA could generate enough fiscal throughput for the State to pay for "Star Wars" (as the new computerised conflict was hubristically denominated). Post-Modernism recognised that it was the Victor, in this new sort of an 'unfought' war of technological dominance, whose life-space lay in (metaphysical), ruins.

Even, and perhaps especially the North Americans, mourned the transformation of their brand-new Art Deco (the French, more correctly call it the "Moderne"), cities into the late-20C "Burbs". Sky-signs, pressed tin shacks and endless parking lots comprise a City of Iconic Night that turned the bright sun of early 20C American Modernity into the dark side of the moon of Cold War Victory.

THE SHIP OF FOOLS.

So, at least in my own Medium, it was in the USA that the supposed rebellion of Post Modernism against Modernism occurred with the greatest enthusiasm. But it was a ship of fools that set sail away from Modernity only to be wrecked, as must all voyagers be whose only ambition is the oblivion of "Fun". The 2011 PoMo exhibition mounted in the V & A Museum after the badly-designed 2003 "Art Deco" and the better-presented, but equally inconclusive 2006 "Modernism", was infinitely squalid in its ambition to present its thesis: that PoMo was nothing but "Fun".

THE ISLAND CONDITION.

British Conservation saved huge territories from being replaced by the squalid illiteracies of Post WWII 'Modernism'. No part of Britain was 'safe' from its 'Utopianising' enthusiasm. The elites of both the Right and the Left promoted its deliberately mindless lifespan.

BRITISH ANTI-MODERNISM.

The origins of British Post-Modernism were entirely different to those of the USA, In the USA all real resistance to the 'burbs" was futile. The ruin of the iconic American City was a military imperative. Nothing could stand in its way. Britain had, on the contrary, in the 1962 West Point speech of Secretary of State Acheson: "lost an Empire and not yet found a role". Britain could never again, without an Empire, be the world super-power that she had been before WWII. Britain also had inherited from this Empire the largest tract of Classically-designed city - in West London - on the planet. Britain may not have been capable of theorising what it had, or understanding Architecture at the level of its original inventors. But the islands were, for one reason or another, thickly covered in buildings and cities of a high level of Architectural culture.

A COMMON ANCESTRY

British Post-Modernism therefore grew out of the same rebellion against life-space illiteracy that motivated Conservationists. It grew out the rebellion, also, that led to the "Green" movement. I worked, for several semesters, back in 1971-3, in the Alternative Technology Department of my Alma Mater, the Architectural Association of Bedford Square, Bloomsbury, London.

INTELLECTUAL INADEQUACY.

British Post-Modernism was, as aesthetic movements tend to be in England, innocent, straightforward, politically unambitious and even philosophically naive. We focus on the technicalities and assume that any reasonable person would follow where they led! One could say,

without stretching a point, that HRH. The Prince of Wales could stand as one of British Post-Modern's exemplary advocates.

A MASS-MOVEMENT.

It became, in this entirely un-Transatlantic "guileless" guise, a genuine mass-movement, attracting real public approval and popularity. It also attracted, as is also commonplace in Britain, absolutely no theoretical support of any intellectual substance whatever. An example of this truly pathetic level of discourse were the infantile Editorials published for too many years (1980-2005), by Peter Davey, the side-whiskered Paladin who governed the Architectural Review, Britain's only Architectural Journal with a global reach.

P.O.W.I.

I was invited by Adam Hardy, Britain's leading authority on the Hindu Temple, when he was Dean of the Academic side of the Prince of Wales Institute, to act as one of the External Examiners who vet the students' work at the end of the year. The Institute, under his leadership, practiced what one might call a "Method Acting" pedagogy. One wore appropriate clothing, ate appropriate food, listened to appropriate music and read appropriate texts when designing anything from an Intervention into the 1756 Giambattista Nolli plan of Rome, to a Mohammedan Khani or Mosque and a Hindu Temple. The yard was full of large ceramic fragments of the latter project. The Institute gave an excellent education (which included water-colouring, that most arcane and marvellously useful of graphical skills), in the pedagogical desert of 1990's London. The External Examiner is expected to pen a brief critique. This I did, adding some suggestions as to how the course could be improved by the study of minor 20C Architects, mostly from the USA. I heard nothing of it until after the "fall" and the impending closure. It was then that the Head Examiner, from the University of Wales that approved P.O.W.I.'s performance, commended my five-year-old ideas and remarked that they should have been adopted! Tant pis!

THE FALL OF P.O.W.I.

But Hardy was ousted by David Watkin, "Peterhouse Blue" personified and Professor Emeritus of Cambridge History of Architecture. Watkins disapproved of the multi-cultural curriculum. The Director became a pink-faced Protégé of Anglo-American Neo-Classicism. This last "niche tendency" became all that was permitted onto the P.O.W.I. curriculum. Yet the School had ambitions for its teaching to be "recognised" by the RIBA. After some years warming-up, it finally attempted this "volta". It was easily tripped and failed by a deeply

hostile Institute that had never forgotten the Prince's popular quip that "Post-War Planning had done more damage to London than Goering's Luftwaffe". The dismissal of his Institute was made all the easier because, and this may surprise, the Students' weakest subject was Architectural History.

SYMPATHETIC MAGIC.

The Design Theory of P.O.W.I., can be summarised by the Frontispiece to a Conference held in the University of Notre-Dame, a Catholic institution in the city of Chicago. The frontispiece showed a "before and after". "Before" was a line drawing of Chicago, complete with skyscrapers and gasometers. The "After" showed the same view retro-fitted with Columns and Entablatures. The proposition was simple: Classicise everything in the view and things would be all-right. It was a sort of extra-historical sympathetic magic derived from a cult of "eternal verities" which, even so, would not work their divine powers unless "cut in stone". The Aniconic Materialism of the R.I.B.A. made short shrift of it. The puerile, 'innocent', Sloane-fed Anglo-American Neo-Classicism of P.O.W.I. did what anyone with wits knew it would do. It poisoned itself with its sublime idiocies.

Adam Hardy could have kept the P.O.W.I. going with his Method Acting pedagogy and his global catholicity. One cannot, even from the myopic vantage of the R.I.B.A., 'fail' honest practical skills and EVERY culture on the planet. But when protected only by the pink-faced protagonists of a bloodless, colourless Neo-Georgian fakery, the Academy of the P.O.W.I., so proud and thriving when it began, just withered and died when exposed to the icy purview of the Bloody-Minded Pragmatism which fuels the arteries of our Architectural Establishment. P.O.W.I. died of that endemic illness: British Intellectual Innocence.

INSPIRED PLAGIARISM.

The attitude of another 'stylist' was not dissimilar. Augustus Welby Pugin, whose 1994 V & A Exhibition JOA designed, believed that 13C France was pretty much all-right. Augustus Welby was hired by Charles Barry, the winner of the 1835 competition to rebuild Parliament, to cover his Classical plan-forms in Gothicised detail. Pugin sailed his boat to the France from which his family originated, bought fragments of Gothic stonework that the anti-clerical fury the Revolution had discarded if not destroyed and sailed them up the Thames for the Masons building the new Parliament to copy. Big Ben, the iconic emblem of Britain, is a child of some random fragments of Republican Terror. Pugin was a plagiarist. But he was one of genius. One has learnt to expect at least this, even if little more, from our Island's Architects.

A FAMILY TREE.

But then who is the forbear of whom? Gothic was invented by the French to stiffen Christian resistance to the Islamic conquerors of Spain. But whence did Gothic originate if it was not from the contacts of the French Crusaders with the Saracens? And whence did they obtain it but the Buddhist monuments of India. The two were joined under the British Raj to create Indo-Saracenic.

Edwin Lutyens the marvellous Architect of New Delhi, the greatest planned city the British ever built, hated everything Indian - Indo-Saracenic included. But it was the Raj's most amiable, comfortable and richly-ornamented style of building. It was not elevated by any sort of legible metaphysic. But that would certainly be too much to expect of the Indian Raj, or I would argue, of any other sort of English Architecture.

One taboo that JOA did not manage to breach was that which the V&A Museum laid upon an historical approach to Gothic Architecture. (Develop this theme...).

WITHERED AND RE-PLANTED BY GARDENERS FROM THE EU.

The intellectual infantility of the island's Architectural rebellions against the 'Existenzminimum' version of Modernism (a Continental Modernism that itself originated as a Rebellion - how many Negatives make a Positive?), rendered it vulnerable to attack in the Schools and Journals of the Profession. These Institutions must have a theoretical foundation if they are to instruct, communicate and lead the adolescent ignoramuses who are their 'Clients'. Failing any such supply on the part of the naive but popular British versions of the Post-Modern 'movement' (in all of its many forms), meant that the Movement was soon abandoned by the Schools and Journals. A new generation of Savants moved, unsurprisingly, over to Britain from the EU to fill this 'media' void in British life-space discourse. London was subjected to the banalities of Koolhaas and his project for a metaphysics of domestic conveniences.

END OF THE "DESERTA ANGLICANA". JOHN OUTRAM. FEB 2018