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07 Con-texts
This third edition of Critic|all Conference is the continuation of the objective set by the Architectural Design Department of Madrid School of Architecture to strongly support research giving also the necessary diffusion impulse to it. The Conference has gradually become a place of knowledge production and, especially, a place for international meeting from which to convene relevant voices around the proposed topic at each edition.

We would like to thank all participants for their work and trust, as well as the members of the Scientific Committee whose effort and commitment to their tasks has made it possible for all the pieces to fit together.

Critic|all is a call for all. An appointment that, beyond the scope of each edition, we hope will be able to enhance a more general debate on the role of Criticism in the present context of architecture.

Silvia Colmenares & Luis Rojo
Directors of Critic|all
While Theory is produced, the History of Theory has to be constructed. Such an ambitious scope has been achieved by many different means but, among those, Anthology stands out as an effective instrument to present and connect apparently autonomous discourses in a way that actually describes a time-lapse situation. It performs a diagnosis.

The act of collecting —flowers, poems or architectural theory pieces— is not innocent. Being the written equivalent of the museum, Anthologies curate knowledge, providing meaning for a collection of fragments. Not only Anthology is a genre that, as Sylvia Lavin once pointed, creates a genealogy for the present, but also this kind of selected inventory of the past always claims a certain agenda for the future.

Paradoxically, the advent of what has been called ‘the end of theory’ in the late 90’s ran parallel to the publication of the two most significant anthologies that can be identified until now. The edited volume by Joan Ockman on already published material and covers the period from 1943 to 1968. The one compiled by Michael Hays starts precisely at that point and, despite the openness implied in its title, concludes around 1993. Both anthologies largely differ in scope and purpose: while Ockman interest lays in the unveiling of modernism continuities under the more general concept of ‘culture’, Hays collection is a clear call to the critical function of ‘theory’ as a mode of resistance to, and mediation with, the sociopolitical context in which it is produced.

Certainly there are some other architectural text compilations that could be cited here, but only to lead the scale towards the American commanded construction of the History of Theory, and in any case, none of them go hardly beyond the turn of the millennium. This would be the case of Kate Nesbit’s volume advocating for a ‘new’ theoretical framework that unfolds in a holistic manner from Vitruvius to the first years of the 21st Century. The only exception to these western-anglo-saxon oriented compilations is The SAGE Handbook of Architectural Theory, which addresses many contemporary debates from a wide variety of geographical and cultural points of view, resulting in a complex structure that nevertheless cannot be called an anthology, strictly speaking.

Amid this panorama, we put forward the following question: Isn’t Anthology an obsolete instrument for current times or does it contain some kind of purpose? In front of the globalized flow of information, whether generated or consumed in endless forms of exchange and heterogeneous media, which parameters should we apply to handle relevance, content or completeness?

The construction of the next index of Theory will have to deal with the very idea of its usefulness, either as a classifying device, an editing instrument or the enhancement of an agenda. The impossibility of covering the whole spectrum of strands urges to confess partially before taking the first step, loosing therefore the aspirations of encyclopaedic completeness that anthologies usually claim. It would be an impossible collection: never finished and, for this very reason, carrying out a critical stance towards the genre as an academic chimera.

Therefore, if we were to compile such an alternative Un-thology, which criteria should be implemented to make the choices of relevant texts? Should we dive into the endless ocean of officially indexed papers that grows exponentially in a monthly base? Are editorial statements still capable of identifying the new directions in architectural thought? How to deal with amateur writers in relation to institutionalized research conduits? What would be the rate of practing architects authors vs other scholarship profiles?

The 3rd edition of the Criticcall Conference welcomes contributions that critically address these and other questions related to the proposed topic. We expect to receive two types of materials:

**Research Articles**

Well constructed essays that engage with the problematization of the concept of Anthology, whether confronting two opposite discourses, analyzing the structure of previous compilations or discussing the procedures of architectural ideas dissemination. We expect interpretive work that draws new relations between things.

**Con-texts**

Short introductory essays that provide a context for a text dated between 1993 and the present and that is credited to be a significant spot in the recent history of architectural theory. In addition to the necessary review of what has already been said about the text, the paper should develop original arguments and clearly state the reasons why it should be included in a hypothetical Un-thology. We do not expect mere laudatory comments, but new insights on already published material.

**Notes**

## Conference Program

**THURSDAY 26-04-2018**

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Anthology as Collection: Althusser vs. Benjamin

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Abstract

The objective of this article is to explore, within the scope of architectural research, the possibilities of the Benjaminian concept of Collection as an alternative theoretical device to that of Anthology. We will begin by analysing Sylvia Lavin's essay "Theory into History; Or The Will to Anthology" to expose the main deficiencies of the use of anthology in the current panorama of architectural theory. Next, Walter Benjamin's essay "Eduard Fuchs: Collector and historian" will be analyzed to try to understand what the advantages of using the concept of collection may be compared to the concept of anthology. While Anthology tends to stabilize the present, the Collection tends to destabilize it, to bring it to a critical situation. The anthology builds up an intellectual lineage for the present in which to support an architectural practice. The collection traces the map of its fractures, draws the cartography of its lost opportunities.

If in the Anthology it is the whole that determines the fragment, in the Collection it is the fragment that determines the whole. In the Anthology still survives, camouflaged under a multiple appearance, the shadow of the great story. That nostalgia that drags the editor to recompose the fragments and endow them with a new unit, now imperceptible, as if he were a discreet Dr. Frankenstein. In the Collection, however, the fragment maintains its irreducible autonomy, as if it were in a dissection table, available for an autopsy rather than for a resurrection. If the Anthology presupposes a concept of theory based on construction and conceives theory as a theoretical mold or formwork in which the relation between theory and practice is causal, evident and explicit, the Collection presupposes a concept of theory based on destruction, in the opening of a clearing in the forest of the overdose of speeches, manifestos and theories, in which the relation between theory and practice is not so evident.

Key words: Anthology; Collection; Historian; Obsolescence; Psychoanalysis.

1. Introduction.

Is Anthology an obsolete instrument for current times or does it contain some kind of purpose? To address this question we are going to analyze one of the most known and representative anthologies of this kind, Architecture Theory since 1968 (K. Michael Hays), from the critical perspective that Sylvia Lavin developed in her essay "Theory into History; Or the Will to Anthology." This analysis will be based on some Walter Benjamin's works such as "Eduard Fuchs: Collector and historian", "On the Concept of History" or "On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress".

First, we will examine a fragment of the introduction to Hays's anthology which will serve as a kind of biopsy of the anthology as a whole. In this fragment Hays explains what his anthology is not ("history as 'it really happened'"), in opposition to what it claims to be ("an attempt to produce, as Louis Althusser recommended, the concept of that history."). We will briefly explain what Althusser's concept of history is and how he developed it by confronting both historicism and historical materialism.

Second, we will justify why we have chosen Walter Benjamin to support our analysis by relating some of his ideas to Hays's anthology and Lavin's critique. On the one hand, we will check the validity of using Benjamin's conceptions to deal with the history of the architecture theory of that period. We will compare the influence that Althusser and Benjamin have had on the authors of the essays compiled in Hays's anthology and how their respective concepts of history could be related. On the other hand, we will establish a close relationship between Lavin's critique of anthologies and Benjamin's analysis of history. In this way, we can take advantage of some of Benjamin's conceptions and propose alternatives to the problems that anthologies present.

Third, we will analyze Sylvia Lavin's essay to expose what could be the symptoms of its possible obsolescence ("completion, stability, order, closure"). What could be the reasons why this happens ("instrumentalization of the past"), and what could be its main contribution if they are considered as a diagnosis ("theory into history")? To analyze these symptoms, we will compare Lavin's critique of anthologies with Benjamin's critique of historicism. We will contrast Althusser's concept of historical time (suprahistoric) with that of Benjamin (intertwined). To examine why anthologies could perform that instrumentalization of the past which Lavin detected, we will compare Lavin's critique of anthologies with Benjamin's critique of historical materialism. We will question the concept of theory in which Hays's anthology is based confronting Jameson's concept of revolution with that of Benjamin. To analyze that therapeutic function that, according to Lavin, the anthologies perform, we will examine the activity of the Benjaminian collector, whose intention is not to build a "lineage for the present" but, rather, to take it to a critical situation.

Finally, and taking into account the revolutionary power that Benjamin, (via the surrealists) attributed to obsolete objects, we will consider the possibilities that are opened when considering the anthology as an obsolete instrument.

2.1. What is an anthology of this kind?

We are going to examine a fragment of Architecture Theory since 1968 which will serve us to understand what an anthology of this kind is. In one of the paragraphs of the introduction to Hays’s anthology we can read the following statement: “There are other criteria, mentioned in no particular order that guided the selections for this ‘anthology’. Though I believe that the most important texts of architecture theory are included here, I have not tried to reproduce the most used texts, or anthology history ‘as it really happened.’ Rather I have rationally reconstructed the history of architecture theory in an attempt to produce (as Louis Althusser recommended) the concept of that history —which is a history ‘as it really happened.’” Rather I have rationally reconstructed the history of architecture theory in an attempt to produce (as Louis Althusser recommended) the concept of that history —which is a quite different matter.13 In one of the essays included in this anthology, Architecture and the critique of ideology (1982), Fredric Jameson makes a very similar statement: “Far from a lacuna, I am much more attracted by Louis Althusser’s solution, which consists in proposing, in the midst of the crisis of historical representation and of narrative history, that the historian should conceive her task not as that of producing a representation of history, but rather as that of producing the concept of history, a very different matter indeed.”4 As Hays uses Jameson’s words to describe what his anthology intends to be, we could infer that Haya’s anthology is an attempt to produce the concept of the history of architecture theory since 1968, and that Louis Althusser is the key figure to understand what “to produce a concept of history” means.

2.2. To produce a representation of history; or history “as it really happened” (Historicism).

We will analyze briefly that idea of the history “as it really happened” to portray what supposedly an anthology of this type is not. Initially, we could say that this expression is apparently pointing to Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), one of the main figures of nineteen-century historicism (historismus), who considered that the task of the historian was precisely “to show what actually happened” (wie es eigentlich gewesen). This statement sounds obvious and simple, but it pretended to be a challenge to the philosophies of history of the first half of the nineteenth century, particularly Hegel’s philosophy of history.4 As is well known, Hegel developed a dialectical system to understand history in which each historical event resolved the contradictions inherent in the previous state. This conception of history makes schools of thought influenced by Hegel tend to see history as a progressive phenomenon. On the contrary, Ranke did not believe that history could be circumscribed by a concept: “My understanding of ‘leading ideas’ is simply that they are the dominant tendencies in each century. These tendencies, however, can only be described; they can not, in the last resort, be summed up in a concept.”17 He stated that history has no final goal which can be abstractly defined, and it is not a progressive process in which the later period is superior to the previous one.

2.3. To produce a concept of history (Althusser).

To develop his new concept of history, Althusser criticized not only classical historicism, but above all (from its structuralist approach), the historicist and humanist interpretation that was given to Marxism after the revolution of 1917. Althusser began to study in depth the work of Hegel between 1946 and 1950. As can be seen in his thesis of 1947 On the content in the thought of GWF Hegel, Althusser considers that Marx’s philosophy respects the Hegelian heritage in its main ideas on history, logic or subjectivity. Althusser’s assessment of Hegel was profound, and the influence of Marxism with Althusser were associated to an excessive simplification of his dialectic by his interpreters. However, since the early 1950s, Althusser’s opinion changes and begins to consider Marx’s thinking as a philosophy totally different from Hegel’s.6 The rejection of Hegel’s dialectic served, further more, so that Althusser could undertake the task of constructing a “structuralist Marxism,” centered on the metaphor of infrastructure-superstructure and on an abstract theory of ideology. If Hegel considers historical knowledge as an absolute knowledge, relatively easy to obtain as a whole, Althusser knelled it as an ultimate goal, in a practice: it is not about recognizing facts, reading reality, grouping events and classify them according to a single purpose, but to build them, to produce them theoretically. What Althusser considered about historical time is that it is not a matter of recognizing it, as if it were something given, as historicism considered, because “like any concept, it is never ‘given’ immediately, it is never readable in visible reality; this concept, like any concept, must be produced, constructed.”16 If the materialist historian wants to account for the past, he must introduce into it a theoretical production that is not in the historical course, that is, the “knowledge of history is not historical, just as the knowledge of sugar is not sugar.”17 This is one of the essential tasks of all theoretical work of production of the concept of history, to give a rigorous definition of the historical fact as such.

3. Why we choose Walter Benjamin?


The impact of Walter Benjamin’s writings on architectural theory, especially of his philosophy of history, is broad since the 1970’s.12 If we compare, from a statistical point of view, the impact that Althusser and Benjamin have had on the authors compiled in Architecture Theory since 1968, we can see that Benjamin’s influence on the architecture theory of that period is at least as important as Althusser’s. If not greater.13 Benjamin influence has also been very important in both Jameson and Hays. Both authors have referred to him in several books and his influence is evident in many aspects of their works.14 Then, we could even say that, if we roughly describe Hays’s anthology as a montage of fragments of the past (each of the essays) assembled and commented on, Hays’s anthology could resemble the Benjamin’s collection.15

So, could Hays’s anthology be considered a Benjaminian collection? Why not? Although both Althusser and Benjamin had similar intentions when they developed their critical analyses of history, they achieved completely different results. We will compare the conceptions of the history of Althusser and Benjamin to try to find out why Hays (and Jameson) prefers Althusser’s concept of history to support his anthology. Although Althusser did not know Benjamin’s work while developing his concept of history, he shares some of his main intentions. Despite their many differences both took as their point of departure the questioning of the concept of history commonly accepted in orthodox Marxism. Both insisted on the need to produce a new concept of history that would break with the dominant and fetishist idea of history as “continuous and homogeneous linearity.” They developed their respective conceptions of history and historical time by confronting both historicism and historical materialism. To achieve this goal both reintroduced Marx’s works, focusing attention on Hegel’s influence on Marx.

3.2. Walter Benjamin => “Theory into History; Or The Will to Anthology” (Sylvia Lavin)

After exposing his critique of how anthologies show the history of postwar architecture theory and the remarks which lay behind the “will to the anthology,” Lavin continues to explain why anthologies could be a useful tool if interpreted as a diagnosis. According to Lavin “a reconsideration of the status of history may indeed turn out to be the most lasting theoretical provocation of these anthologies.” (...) “The anthological museum should therefore be viewed in relation to its performative substantive: at any time an historical revolution, a revolutionary act can be rethought as a turn for the new in focus for a new period of theorization in which the basic parameters of the discipline are interrogated, history will no longer need to provide therapeutic closure but will instead open new potentials for intellection.”10 The architectural theorist may be the nominal protagonist of these anthologies, but the emergent figure of consequence is the historian.”18

To all these statements is what her title “Theory into History” seems to refer to. After reading such a thorough text in depth the work of Sylvia Lavin’s book of Walter Benjamin’s (1892-1940) —in which we find a rich and vast historical material—, it is clear that Lavin’s essay is an attempt to reconsider the concept of history and which appears in all almost contemporary discourses about the past. Particularly, when (as happens in Lavin’s essay) it comes to analyzing the problem of how history can be interpreted, conceptualized or represented, and how the criteria used to conceive and represent the past modify reception conditions.

4. Analyzing “Theory into History; Or the Will to Anthology” (Sylvia Lavin)

4.1. Sylvia Lavin (completion, stability, order, closure) => Walter Benjamin (Historicism)

Sylvia Lavin begins her essay by saying that anthologies, taking them as a whole, and beyond their differences in scope and approach, could be considered a “symptomatic phenomenon that exceeds the intentions of any one editor and warrants consideration.” Then she makes a controversial observation: “While a group these volumes describe architectural upheaval, they perform a contradictory function as well. Anthologies, compendia, and other such collections establish completion an lend stability to an otherwise promiscuous body of material. The techniques of cataloguing and classification used by these volumes provide both order and closure.”19

In the criticism of historicism that Benjamin develops in his essay “Edward Fuchs: Collector and Historian” instead of stability he talks of unease: “That state of unease: that state of unease which, by any consideration of history worthy of being called dialectical. (...) Unease over the provocation to the researcher, who must abandon the calm, contemplative attitude toward his object in order to become conscious of the critical constellation in which precisely this fragment of the past finds itself with
precisely this present.20 That “calm, contemplative attitude towards his object,” which according to Benjamin the researcher must abandon, is clearly related with Nietzsche’s quote that Benjamin chose to head the XII thesis of his last work “On the concept of History”: “We need history, but not the way a spoiled loafer in the garden of knowledge needs it.”21 This quote belongs to Nietzsche’s work “On the Unity of Science” (1874), a essay in which he denounces the dangers that an overdose of history, so characteristic in nineteenth-century Europe, represent for action. A warning that could be synthesized with the quote from Goethe which opens Nietzsche’s work: “Moreover I hate everything which merely instructs me without increasing or directly quickening my activity.”22

Benjamin follows, in his own way, the path traced by Nietzsche in his fight against that kind of historicism that overwhelmed action under the weight of a cultural overdose “The character of the historian, that is, according to Benjamin, to be rejected is very clear: It is the accumulating conception of history, in nineteenth-century Germany, as a coherent linear process, which is stated philosophically by Hegel and then developed into the academic historiographic industries of Ranke, Droysen, Mommsen, and Treitschke, among others. Benjamin calls the narrative principle of this kind of history a ‘history of “once upon a time”’ he says, a history that is estranged from the present, and that could be synthesized with the quote from Goethe which opens Nietzsche’s work: “Moreover I hate everything which merely instructs me without increasing or directly quickening my activity.”22

Because “there is a degree of doing history and an estimation of it which brings with it a withering and degenerating of life: a phenomenon which is now as necessary as it is possible to bring to consciousness through some remarkable symptoms of our age.”22 In this last quote, Nietzsche’s critical perspective on the banalities that the author of “Thevenin’s” critique of anthropology, a “psychological, historiographic and anthropological allusion” and about “symptoms” to report that fever of history that overwhelmed life and action, she speaks about a “symptomatic phenomenon,” to characterize that “will to analogy” which “establish completion and lend stability.” So, can we establish some kind of correspondence between the way in which historical historicism at the end of nineteenth century and the way in which analogies conceptualize the history of postwar architecture at the end of the twentieth century?

To try to find a reason that could explain this surprising similarity between the effects provoked by historicism and those provoked by analogies, we will point out one of the main differences between Althusser and Benjamin. The influence that the former had in both sphere, spiritual and political sphere, and about “symptoms” to report that fever of history that overwhelmed life and action, she speaks about a “symptomatic phenomenon,” to characterize that “will to analogy” which “establish completion and lend stability.” So, can we establish some kind of correspondence between the way in which historical historicism at the end of nineteenth century and the way in which analogies conceptualize the history of postwar architecture at the end of the twentieth century?}

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The first part of the quote, (what his concept of history is not), is clearly related with Hays’s intention. It is in the second part where we can appreciate the main difference. Instead to “produce a concept of history”, as Althusser recommended, what Benjamin proposes is “to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up a moment of danger”. The danger to which Benjamin refers is that which runs the tradition “of becoming a tool of the ruling classes”. And that is why in every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformity that is about to overpower it.”

3. Sylvia Lavin (therapeutic function) << Walter Benjamin (Psychoanalysis, collector)

In her essay Lavin states: “Anthropologies are, thus, the literary merger of museums and psychotherapeutic counselors at trauma sites. (...) historicize and thus complete a modernist project that was conceived to be always ongoing.” After relating anthologies with historicism we can understand better the complex relationship between anthologies and museums.47 Benjamin appreciated the dialectical turning that the collection of the fragments which configure an anthology of this kind is driven for more reasons than a question of beauty or antiquarian will to accumulate fragments of the past. If not, why does Lavin associate the collector with a therapeutic function? To answer this question we are going to compare two statements in which Lavin and Eduard Fuchs seem to agree. Lavin recalls a quote by Roger Chartier to question this concept of theory capable of provoke a revolutionary architecture, “In affirming that it was the Enlightenment that produced the Revolution, the classical interpretation perhaps inverses logical order: should we not consider instead that it was the Revolution that invented the Enlightenment by attempting to root its legitimacy in a corpus of texts and founding authors reconciled and united, beyond their extreme differences? (...) the revolutionaries constructed a continuity that was primarily a process of justification and a search for paternity.”

As Benjamin pointed out “This is also evident in Fuchs’s work when he declares: “In all its essentials, art (we can say architecture) is the idealized disguise of a given social situation. For it is an eternal law that every dominant political or social situation is forced to idealize itself in order to justify its existence ethnically.”42 So we can ask, what if, as Roger Chartier suggests about the French Revolutionaries, that sequence of assumptions is a myth, and it is the trauma caused by changes in social and material conditions that creates not only revolutions in design practice, but also the urgent need for build, in retrospect, a past, a tradition with which to legitimize themselves? Then this concept of theory in which anthologies are based could be just a justification similar to the one that, as Freud showed us, the conscious mind develops to justify the impulses of the unconscious, in order to reduce the uncertainty of the unconscious or unconscious instrumentalization of the past carried out by anthologies is what Lavin criticizes, the way in which they show the theory of postwar architecture in such a way that generates this “lineage for the present.”

Commenting Hays’s intention to show the physiognomy of the architecture theory since 1968, that “prevailing contours”, Lavin says “we see in Hays the subsumption of a once deniable theoretical provocation to be critical within a newly formulated will to historicize the theory of architecture.” We can find certain traces of that historicizing function in the words of Hays when he confesses “I have rationally reconstructed the history of architecture.”44 If reason guides the choices of the architect, it is the desire to produce an appropriate concept in his history, it is passion. On the contrary, what guides the activity of the Benjaminian historian. “The collector’s passion is a divining rod that turns him into a discover of new sources.”45 That “divining rod” which the collector owns reveal that the enthusiasm is guided by unconscious impulses. As Benjamin said “Similar enthusiasm,” later led Fuchs to conceptions akin to psychoanalysis. He was the first to make them fruitful for aesthetics.46 This “divining rod” let the collector to overcome that imperceptible necessity imposed by reason to look for therapeutic closure which distorts whatever production of a concept of history.

It is in this unconscious passion which guides the collector’s where Benjamin situated “the point where the unconscious can be made into marginal areas -such as caricature and pornographic imagery- and then stand out in splendid holiday array, and only rarely in its mostly shabby working clothes.”48 Can we apply this to the way in which anthologies show us the past?

5. Conclusion

We have related the symptoms that, according to Lavin, anthologies provoke (completion, stability, order, closure) with those that, according to Benjamin, caused nineteenth-century historicism (contemplative attitude). We have proposed the hypothesis that one of the reasons why anthologies could be obsolete instruments is because they are based on a concept of history (Althusser) which shares with historicism, (although of course in a different manner), the belief in the possibility of establishing a suprahistorical perspective from which to contemplate and analyze the past and thus, be able to produce a concept of history. To overcome this still idealistic conception, what Benjamin proposes is not “to produce a concept of history”, but “to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up a moment of danger”, that is, not a concept but an image. The dialectical image is what produces that anachronistic time, not timeless or suprahistorical but interrupted, intertwined historical time that could allow us to get in touch with the past not through reason but through experience. That suprahistorical perspective could be one of the reasons of anthologies’ obsolescence.

Another reason why anthologies could be obsolete instruments is because they are based on a concept of theory, “the Enlightenment model whereby philosophy produces revolutions (or theory produces design),” which is vulnerable to unconscious need to justify the present. As we have seen, the concept of theory that is behind Hays’s anthology is based on a concept of revolution that implicitly presupposes a linear concept of historical time (Jameson). On the contrary, Benjamin’s concept of revolution, is not a rupture with the past but a change in the way we contemplate it. What Benjamin considered is that “the experience of the present is directly implicated in the reconstruction of past experience (not the experience of the past, because there can never be the past).”49 Jameson considers Benjamin’s attempt to get in touch with past experiences as nostalgic. But psychoanalysis is not nostalgic at all. So, the task of the (revolutionary) historian should be not to build “an intellectual lineage for the present” but to articulate the past in such a way that the present is put into a critical situation. If we transfer this to the field of the theory of architecture, we would say that the theoretician or historian’s task would not be to retrospectively legitimize certain architectural practices, but to question their validity and thus open the architectural practice to new possibilities.

However, this “obsolescence” does not mean that these anthologies are not useful in the analysis of the theory of that historical period. First, because if we consider, not the object itself, but the use that can be made of it, Lavin’s criticism could be excessive. For example, we should keep in mind that, in general, anthologies are not read from the beginning to the end as if it were a novel or a treatise on architecture theory, but read in a fragmentary way. Therefore, it could be said that there are at least two relationship factors. On the one hand, a planned order, that the one that make up the anthology among them. This order responds to the necessary epistemological framework to make these texts comprehensible within a specific historical context and to the particular intentions of the editor. On the other hand, an unexpected order, which is established between a fragment of the anthology and the one that the reader is reading. This order creates a connection among the fragments, but also the one that the reader is reading. This order creates a connection among the fragments, but also the one that the reader is reading. This order allows us to get in touch with past experiences as the very one that Lavin comments. Therefore, anthologies are not obsolete as Lavin comments, but they are necessary instruments to produce a concept of history, which is not the one that Althusser proposed, but the one that Benjamin proposed, “to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up a moment of danger.”

Second, because if we take into account, the revolutionary power that Benjamin (thanks to Surrealism) attributed to obsolete objects, it could be possible that the most important contribution of anthologies, more than its documentary or historiographic value, was precisely its obsolescence (what Lavin could call its diagnostic function). In this way, the productive task of the historian, if considered as allegoriist, would not be to destroy the anthology but to try to reveal the possible reasons for its obsolescence, or what is the same, not destroy the anthology but its aura. Because it is precisely in the awareness of its obsolescence that the anthology achieves its true power. Then, obsolescence loses its veil and becomes what it really is, a collection of fragments. The anthology as collection would then be invaluable in two ways. On the one hand by showing, with all the rigor and objectivity of the scientist, an excellent collection of fragments that offer a complete and general overview of the history of thought. On the other hand by revealing, throughout its own obsolescence, the mythological foundation in which anthology, (and maybe architecture theory since 1968) seems to be founded.

...
In another essay called “Periodizing the 60s” (1984), Jameson points to the same idea, giving more information and referring to the Marxist nature of the 60s in which it already had a name or an identity. But in 1984, the 60s were still not yet a name. The 60s are the period of the 60s in the traditional, narrative sense will be offered here. But historical representation is just as surely in crisis as its counterpart, proving that “Althusser retains the orthodox radical rhetoric by simply severing all connections with the unscientific, and was best understood as a quasi-religious ideology. In 1980, sociologist Axel von den Berg described Nietzsche’sGenealogy, History. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.

It is well known that a revolution once existed, which was so constructed that it could counter any move of a chaise-player with the help of eternal objects of victory in the march. A puppet was the chair of the puppet, and behind the puppet there was the revolution. This, in turn, was followed by the chair of the puppet with strings. One can envision a corresponding object to this apparatus in philosophy. The puppet called “historical materialism is always supposed to have followed.” It can do this with no further ado against any opposition since it employs the services of theology, which as everyone knows is small and ugly and must be kept out of sight.” VI Thesis Walter Benjamin, On the Concept of, in Selected Writings, vol. 4, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott, et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

Sylva Lavín, “Theory into History, Or, the Will to Anthology.” 494.

28. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Eleven Theses on Feuerbach,” in The German Ideology (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1998). It is well known that Hegel’s most famous disciple, Karl Marx, adapted the didactic of his master and abandoned that idealist conception of history as "unfolding of the Spirit," in favor of his own materialist conception of it. For Marx, reality resides in the physical world, and not in idealistic forms as Hegel believed. According to Marx, Hegel’s philosophy was backward. In the materialist conception of history are the economic factors and the social relations associated with them, the 145

22. Ibid.


16. Sylvia Lavin, “Theory into History; Or, the Will to Anthology,” 496.


22. Ibid.


Hediger noted that for Marxs supporters history is the "determination of incompleteness" which is not comprised within the idea of historical progress, but only interpreted the world in several ways: what it is about now is to transform it. Therefore, the Marxist conception of history is the introduction of the concept of historical progress, where the world to demand his change of the world. And therefore this sentence proves to be a non-founded sentence. It provokes the question of the utilization of the world, which as everyone knows is small and ugly and must be kept out of sight.” VI Thesis Walter Benjamin, On the Concept of, in Selected Writings, vol. 4, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott, et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

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nineteen-century. Hays, panoramic view of the past characteristic of historicism, that place is the museum, the most significant architectonic types of the, and its receivers. The same threat hangs over both: that of becoming a tool of the ruling classes. In every era the attempt must unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history at a moment of danger. The danger affects both the content of the tradition memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. Historical materialism wishes to retain the image of the past which Nietzsche speaks about a “garden of knowledge” when referring to Historicism. If we recall Hays´s words, “I believe that the symbol of perfection that delight us with its beauty and produce that “contemplative attitude”, we can better understand why the flower as a symbol of perfection that delight us with its beauty and produce that “contemplative attitude”, we can better understand why Nietzsche speaks about a “garden of knowledge” when referring to Historicism. If we recall Hays´s words, “I believe that the important texts of architecture theory are included here,” 15, can we consider anthology close to that “garden of knowledge”? If we look for an architectural reference for that “garden of knowledge” a place that synthesizes that will to have a panoramic view of the past characteristic of historicism, that place is the museum, the most significant architectonic types of the nineteenth-century. Hays, Architecture Theory Since 1968, introduction, x-xv.

References

38. “To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it “the way it really was” (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. Historical materialism wishes to retain the image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history at a moment of danger. The danger affects both the content of the tradition and its receivers. The same threat hangs over both: that of becoming a tool of the ruling classes. In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it.” VI Thesis Walter Benjamin, On the Concept of History, in Selected Writings, vol. 4, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott et al., (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).
39. Sylvia Lavin, “Theory into History, Or, the Will to Anthology,” 494.
40. The “contemplative attitude” that anthologies provoke could be intimate related to the habitual interpretation of its etymological meaning. If consider that the etymological origin of the word ‘anthology’ comes from ἄνθος (ánthos, “flower, blossom”) + λογος (logos, “account”), we can infer that an anthology is a collection of illustrious items that could be flowers, poems, theoretical texts or whatever thing that achieves a certain degree of perfection. So if we understand the flower as a symbol of perfection that delight us with its beauty and produce that “contemplative attitude”, we can better understand why references

Ibid., 141.

Image Captions

Fig. 1. Left. Showcase with butterflies. Right. K.Michael Hays. “Architecture since 1968”


Biography

Marcos Pantaleón. I am an architect enrolled in the Doctorate Program in Advanced Architectural Projects of the School of Architecture of Madrid. The thesis that I am developing within this program is entitled “The historical dimension of experience: the fragment as constructor of the form”, and is co-directed by professors Concepción Layapayse Luque and Juan Miguel Hernández León. The objective of this research is to explore how alternative means of relating to the past through experience can affect the architecture project. To address this goal, Walter Benjamin’s concept of experience and his historical method are being analyzed, focusing attention on his concepts of ruin, after-life, allegory or poverty of experience. The case study chosen to develop this historical practice is the one with which this research began in the autumn of 2013, the landscape of ruins formed by the remains of the Atlantic Wall in some specific areas of northern France.