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THE CAVE, THE TENT, AND THE HOUSE: REFLECTIONS ON SCHINDLER'S KINGS ROAD HOUSE

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ABSTRACT

The Kings Road House, designed by Rudolph Schindler for himself in Los Angeles, demonstrates the architect's concept of dwelling, which is unique in the history of modern architecture in certain aspects. Although Schindler's house reflects spatial, formal and aesthetical developments in Modern architecture both in Europe and the United States, Schindler's design is unique in the way it unites various influences in his own crucible of philosophical ideas and attitudes towards contemporary life in 1921, when the footsteps of Modernism was just beginning to be heard. One of the most important results of Schindler's interpretation of Modernism is his use of the aspects tectonic culture as the genome of a spatial paradigm to invoke and reestablish the primordial bond between human-beings and the environment. The primitivism of the house is not simply a metaphor. The house was designed to facilitate this bond like a big furniture and to establish a common ground, which allows the dwellers and guests both to experience their private worlds as individuals, and to share the collective spirit of the camp life.

Keywords: Rudolph Schindler, Kings Road House, Dwelling, Architecture, Modernism, Tectonic Culture.

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MAĞARA, ÇADIR VE EV: SCHINDLER'İN KINGS ROAD EVİ ÜZERİNE TESPİTLER

ÖZET

Rudolph Schindler'in Los Angeles'ta kendi için inşa ettiği Kings Road Evi, bazı özellikleri açısından mimarın Modern mimarlık tarihinde eşsiz denebilecek barınma kavrayışını sergiler. Bu ev Avrupa ve Amerika'daki Modern mimarlıkta gerçekleşen mekânsal, biçimsel ve estetik gelişmeleri yansıtsa da, Modernizmin ayak seslerinin yeni yeni duyulmaya başlandığı 1921 yılında, mimarın çeşitli etkileri felsefî fikirler ve çağdaş hayata değin tavırlarla şekillenmiş olan kendi kabında birleştirmesi bakımından kendine has özellikleri hâizdir. Schindler'in Modernizm yorumunun en önemli sonuçlarından biri, mekânsal bir paradigmanın çekirdeği olarak nitelenebilecek tektonik kültürün özelliklerini insanın çevreyle ezelî bağını hatırlatmak ve yeniden tesis etmek için kullanmasıdır. Bu açıdan evin yansıttığı ilkellik sadece bir metafordan ibaret değildir. Ev, aynı zamanda bu bağı kurmayı adeta büyük bir mobilya gibi kolaylaştıracak ve içinde barınanları ve misafirlerini hem kendi kişisel dünyalarını, hem de bir kamp hayatının kolektif ruhunu yaşama fırsatı veren ortak bir zemin sağlayacak şekilde tasarlanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rudolph Schindler, Kings Road House, Barınma, Mimarlık, Modernizm, Tektonik Kültür.

INTRODUCTION

"The civilised man has progressed from a
fear of the elements to their domination.
His home is no longer a timid retreat;
his power has enabled him to return to nature.
The words 'comfortable' and 'homey'
have changed their meaning."
Rudolph M. Schindler*, Modern Architecture: A Program*

Rudolph M. Schindler held the belief that architecture, as a monumental art confined to the building shell, has become obsolete. He believed that the architectural space was the subject of new monumentality, serving as a more fitting symbol for the modern man who had conquered the laws of nature through mathematics and could express his mind through spatial configurations. Consequently, attempts to

attain stylistic coherence through structural or plastic form were futile. Architectural space was the new paradigm.[2] Schindler's conception of architectural space had nothing to do with the exaltation of space, although it belonged to the tradition of spatial innovation extending from Horta and Loos to Le Corbusier and Mies. For him, architectural space was primarily a matter of bodily and spiritual well-being, which is the essence of dwelling on earth for modern man.

In the autumn of 1921, shortly after he quit working for Frank Lloyd Wright, Rudolph Schindler decided to build a house-studio on 835 Kings Road, West Hollywood, California, in which he would start his own architectural practice (Smith, p. 115). Instead of the conventional single-family house, Schindler based his design on communal living, where three apartments would accommodate five individuals: two couples and one guest. Engineer Clyde Chase oversaw the completion of the construction in 1922. Clyde and his wife Marian were the other couple to share the Schindler house with Rudolph and his wife Pauline, a musician and radical modernist. The studio-apartments were served by a communal kitchen, which was also the connection point of the three separate units. Schindler described his scheme a decade later in an article published in T-Square in 1932, entitled "A cooperative Dwelling":

> A cooperative dwelling for two young couples...
>
> The Ordinary residential arrangement providing rooms for specialized purposes has been abandoned.
>
> Instead, each person receives a large private studio; each couple, a common entrance hall and bath. Open porches on the roof are used for sleeping. An enclosed patio for each couple, with an out-of-door fire place, serves the purposes of an ordinary living room. The form of the house divides the garden into several such private rooms. A separate guest apartment, with its own garden, is also provided for. One kitchen is planned for both couples"[3]

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[2] Rudolph Schindler, "Modern Architecture: A program", trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave, in RM Schindler: Composition and Construction, ed. Lionel March and Judith Sheine, London: Academy Editions, 1995, pp.10-13.

[3] Robert Sweeney and Judith Sheine, Schindler. Kings Road, and Southern California Modernism. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012, p .15.

Originally, Schindler designed the two apartments as two private studios, each divided by partitions, allowing individuals to fulfill their dual roles as solitary and social individuals (Figure 1). Interior partitions could be removed for social gatherings both inside and outside. The two exterior fireplaces at the garden-patios were intended for such occasions when the house would resemble a temporary camp structure, with people gathering outside around the fire. Schindler named the private spaces as studios, reflecting his conception of the ideal dwellers as artists. To accentuate the camping atmosphere, Schindler designed sleeping porches on the rooftop of the single-storey house, which he called 'baskets' (Smith, 1993, p. 115). Seven fireplaces – two in family patio-gardens and five in private studios – were the only heating source (Smith, 1993, p. 116) (Figure 2). The structure consisted of a basic concrete floor and walls, fenestrated timber walls, and a timber roof. The concrete walls were erected directly on the concrete slab, which also serves as the final floor. These walls were moulded on the floor slab and then tilted up by the help of a block and tackle (the 'tilt-slab' technique) with a 3-inch gap from one another to be filled with glass.[4]

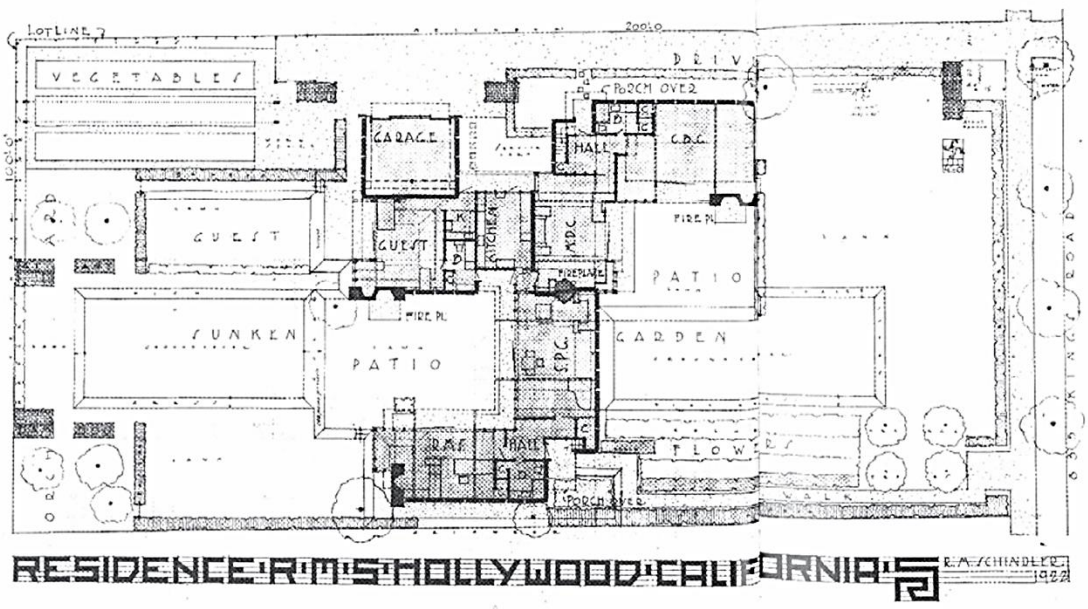

Figure 1. Plan of the Kings Road House (Zeigler, 2003).

[4] Kathryn Smith. "The Schindler House," in RM Schindler: Composition and Construction, ed. Lionel March and Judith Sheine, London: Academy Editions, 1995, p. 116.

In the letter he sent to the parents of his wife, Schindler mentioned the general aspects of his scheme, which show the influence of camping life he experienced during his work in mountains with his partner and future housemate, Clyde Chase: "The rooms are large studio rooms – with concrete walls on the three sides, the front open (glass) to the outdoors – a real California scheme. On the roof, two 'sleeping baskets' are provided – for open air sleeping – with a temporary cover for rainy nights." In the same letter, Schindler mentioned the 'utility room', which comprises the kitchen, laundry equipment, storage bins and the icebox that would serve for the five individuals sharing the house, which he located in the center of his design. He also talked about making cooking a "campfire affair" that should no longer be a burden for one person but become a joyful activity for all the inhabitants. He added that the courts (patios) could be used for social events – especially if "covered by a vellum and serve as a real room" (Figure 3). Guests from various backgrounds often filled the house, gathering for music or conversation in a festive atmosphere.[5]

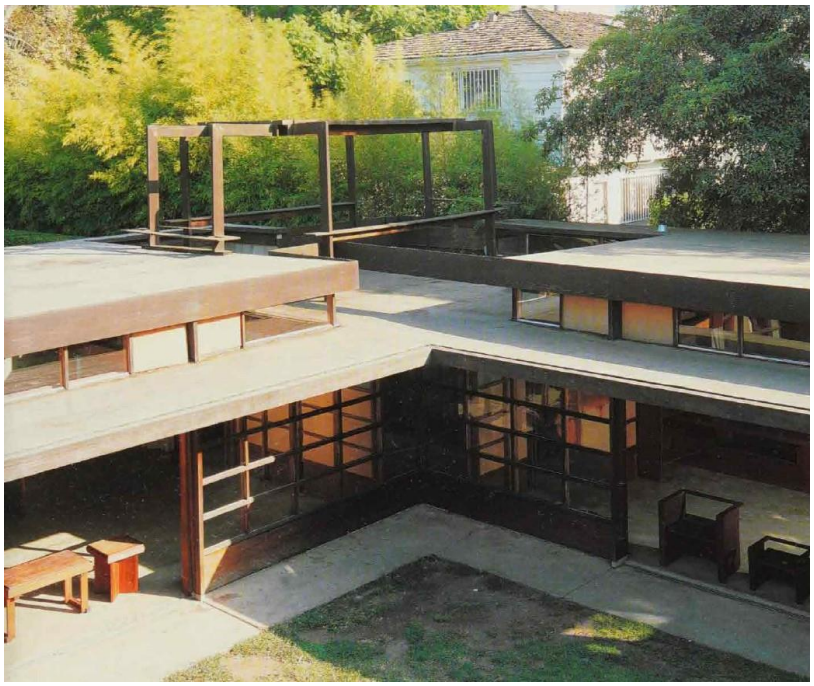

Figure 2. P. G. Schindler's (left) and R. M. Schindler's (right) studios and their 'sleeping basket' above (Smith, 2001).

After having a second child in 1924, the Chases left the house. A year later, Richard Neutra and his wife Dione moved into the Chase studio, where they lived until the summer of 1930 with their two small children. In the same year, Pauline

[5] Smith, "The Schindler House," pp.118-119.

returned to the house three years after she left it with her son, but she lived a separate life from her husband. Schindler lived in this house until his death in 1953 and Pauline until hers in 1977.[6]

The 'Schindler', or 'Kings Road' house, which is preserved today by the Friends of the Schindler House (FOSH) organization that owns it, reflects one of the implicit drives in Modernism more than any other building of its time, which is primitivism. The penchant for the primitive is much more visible in Modern art than in architecture, and the 1920s is especially important for the aesthetic influence of Modern art on Modern architecture.[7] Not only because of the permeability between the interiors and exteriors, but also because of its play with the most archaic aspects of dwelling, such as the cave and the tent, the Kings Road house is unique and significant. Every detail in this house, where vertical and horizontal lines intersect, reveals the primordial tectonic culture that arose from the junction. These intersections are some of the earliest manifestations of the unity of art, architecture, and furniture, particularly when it comes to the construction of space like a piece of furniture.

[6] Kathryn Smith. Schindler House, New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001, pp. 26-29; and Lisa Zeigler "California Moderne", Icon, Spring, 2003, pp. 40-45.

[7] For the "primitive" roots of Le Corbusier's architecture, see Adolf M. Vogt, Le Corbusier, the Noble Savage - Toward an Archaeology of Modernism, Cambridge (Mass.): MIT Press, 2000.

Figure 3. View of the patio from Pauline Gibling Schindler's studio (Smith, 2001).

The Bounds of the 'Space Architecture'

When Schindler built his house in the early 1920s, the house type was still enjoying its exalted position among the avant-garde circles, a status it had gained during the Arts and Crafts movement. Since then, the house was being seen more or less as the primeval and almost spiritual place for the unity of artistic creations, which has been lost since the end of the Middle Ages.[8] In the beginning of the Twentieth Century, the German word for architecture, *Baukunst* was in line with the idea of unity (*gesamptkunstwerk*) in the built environment shaped by artistically created architecture and furniture, when the unity was being characterized by the new design spirit of *Sachlichkeit*.[9] Influential names such as H. Muthesius and O. Wagner preferred the word *Baukunst* over the Greco-Latin 'Architecture',[10] which carried Nordic-nationalistic overtones and reinforced the prevailing notion of distinction between (German) culture and (Western) civilization during that period. But the British Arts and Crafts movement is equally important for the contemplation of an architecture outside the Classical or any other historicist style, criticised by Muthesius under the rubric of 'style-architecture'.

The impact of Arts and Crafts domestic settings on continental Europe's architectural milieu appears crucial in comprehending the significance of interiors in the style problem, previously dominated by exterior form.[11] Although Schindler belonged to a later generation that benefited from the earlier pioneers such as Wright

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[8] Wright, Frank Lloyd, "The Art and Craft of the Machine", The New Industrialism - Volume I, National League of Industrial Art, 1902.

[9] Hermann Muthesius. Style-Architecture and Building Art: Transformations of Architecture in the Nineteenth Century and Its Present Condition. The Gety Center for the History of Art and Humanities, 1994.

[10] Hermann Muthesius is one of the earliest supporters of this argument in German speaking countries. See his Style-architecture and Building-art, trans. Stanford Anderson, Santa Monica: The The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994.

[11] Harry Francis Mallgrave pointed out how influential the problem of contemporary interiors was on the German speaking critics around the last decades of the twentieth century, such as Georg Hirth, Cornelius Gurlitt, Robert Dohme, Richard Streiter, Alfred Lichtwark, and Hermann Muthesius. The English interiors were of particular concern. "From Realism to Sachlichkeit: The Polemics of Architectural Modernity in the 1890s," in Otto Wagner: Reflections on the Raiment of Modernity, ed. Harry Francis Mallgrave, Santa Monica: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, pp.281-322.

and Loos, his ideas and work are by no doubt one of the earliest attempts to find a modern architectural expression from within. The teachings and practices of Wagner and Loos in Vienna, and especially his practice with Wright were very influential on the development of Schindler's architectural conceptions. These prominent figures of the emerging Modern architecture were all very interested in the modern expression of the spatial organization. On the other hand, the application of the idea of architecture as spatial art (*raumgestaltung*) was still very fresh both theoretically and practically, although many decades had passed since its preliminary conception by scholars like Heinrich Wölfflin[12] and August Schmarsow at the end of the nineteenth century.[13]

One of the most prominent figures of Modern architecture, Le Corbusier was also very sensitive to the notion of Modern interiors. As early as 1914, Le Corbusier had prepared the outlines of a new spatial paradigm by his Dom-Ino scheme, which allowed for the free planning of spaces within the same structure. The 'free plan' later became the expression of free-flowing space in the 1920s in houses like Villa Cook, Villa Stein-De Monzie, and Villa Savoye. Meanwhile, people were developing new concepts of spatiality everywhere. While Le Corbusier applied the technique of his 'Purist' compositions to surfaces and masses, in the Bauhaus studios an innovative program was being carried out by means of which furniture and utensils became the natural extension of the Modern building. The prestigious furniture designer Pierre Chareau contributed to the convergence between tools and architectural space at a Parisian town house named La Maison de Verre, where the idea of a tool dominated both the interior organization and the exterior form. Also, the Dutch De Stijl movement, a collaboration among painters, sculptors, architects, and designers, rigorously sought the representation of a modern architectural space.[14]

Bart Van der Leck, P. J. C. Klaarhamer, and Gerrit Rietveld are among the De Stijl designers who developed plastic and spatial concepts by means of interior design

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[12] Peter Collins. *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture. 1750-1950*. Montreal: McGill_Queen's University Press, 1965, p. 286.

[13] August Schmarsow, "The Essence of Architectural Creation," trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomu, in Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, ed. Harry Francis Mallgrave, Santa Monica: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, pp.281-298.

[14] Nancy J. Troy, The De Stijl Environment, Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press, 1983, p.8.

and pushed the boundaries of the applied art towards the idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* – the synthesis of arts stemming from the 'will to style' that would culminate in Gerrit Rietveld's Schröder House in 1926. Troy discussed the Arts and Crafts background of designers such as Klaarhamer and the impact of F. L. Wright's architecture on Dutch architects like H. P. Berlage, Rob van't Hoff, J. J. P. Oud, and Jan Wils[15]. Although Oud and C. Van Eesteren played an important role in carrying Neoplasticism into three-dimensional space, T. Van Doesburg was the main player who made possible the transition from painting to furniture and then to architecture.

In the beginning, Van Doesburg conceived painting and architecture as two different realms, and he had no control over the spatial organization of architectural elements. Oud and H. Kamerlingh Onnes limited the De Vonk House experiment (1918) to decorative surfaces, with the exception of the staircase's plasticity. Doig showed that there is a strong connection between Doesburg's stained-glass windows designed for this house and his developing conception of architecture as a merge between what is aesthetic and what is functional, as well as between what is painterly and flat and what is spatial and three-dimensional. Therefore, Doig claimed that "in De Vonk House Van Doesburg attempted to translate theory into form" by inferring ideas from contemporary philosophy and art, such as Cubism and Rationalism, and developed a "painterly conception of architecture". Van Doesburg was also influenced by El Lissitzky's idea of the materiality of colour and this influence may have led him to the idea of dematerialisation of the mass with coloured planes that would hover in the air as if distributed by a centrifugal force.[16] When Van Doesburg visited Bauhaus and started his counter course against Johannes Itten's teaching, he met the young student C. Van Eesteren. His ideas immediately influenced Van Eesteren, who incorporated them into his architectural imagery. Their collaboration resulted in one of the most innovative conceptions of the Twentieth Century architecture in two drawings, the "Maison Particulière" and the "Maison d'Artiste" (1922).

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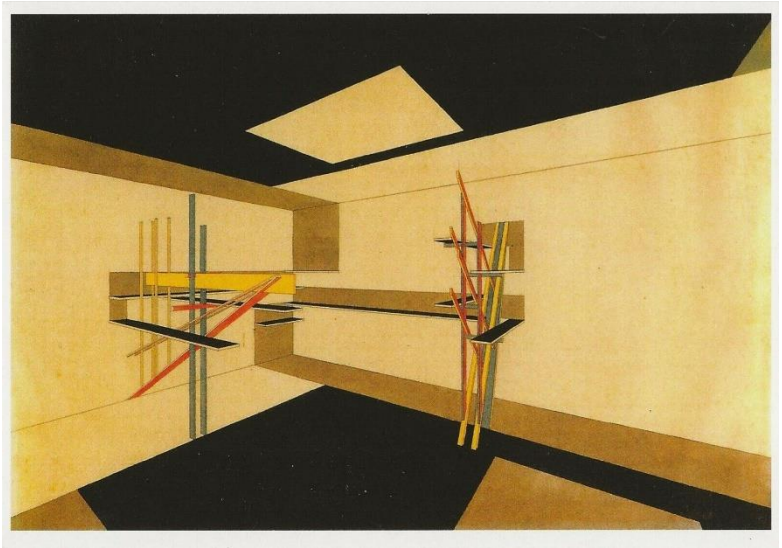
[15] Troy…

[16] Allan Doig states that "Lissitzky submitted that, as the barometer of material, colour was the visual embodiment of the other specific qualities of material form," Theo Van Doesburg: Painting into Architecture, Theory into Practice, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p.135.

An important development concerning De Stijl interior design is the ‘problem of the corner’, which became evident in V. Huszar’s designs. Unlike in the interlocking-coloured planes Huszar applied after 1920, in the interior design projects like the Bruynzeel House, “the corners where the surfaces met assumed much greater importance” as “they reinforced the continuous nature of the viewer’s experience of the interior”[17] (Figure 4). Interior designer Piet Zwart’s 1921 stand design for a celluloid manufacturing firm, which was organised around a corner, also challenges Doesburg and Van Eesteren’s exploded-boxes.[18] (Figure 5).

Figure 4. Vilmos Huszár; Piet Klaarhamer: Bruynzeel House Boys Bedroom, Voorburg, 1918-19 (Troy, 1983).



[17] Nancy J. Troy, The De Stijl Environment, Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press, 1983, pp.43.
[18] Nancy J. Troy, The De Stijl Environment, Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press, 1983, p.50.

Figure 5. Piet Zwart: Stand for a celluloid manufacturer. Annual Industrial Fair, Utrecht, 1921 (Troy, 1983).

In Zwart's designs, the physical properties of functional objects, namely the built-in shelves, gave the definition of the interior space. Zwart designed these shelves to form the corner of the room, blending seamlessly with the surrounding walls, thereby seemingly asserting a tectonic quality. Because the shelves, chair, and table appear to suggest an integrative spatial configuration, this particular design blurs the boundaries between architecture and furniture. The intermixture of tectonic and spatial qualities of furniture and architecture matured later in the 1920s in the experiments of Van Doesburg, Van Eesteren, and Rietveld. Yet, in the precursory experiments of Huszar and Zwart, the corner holds immense significance in tectonic expression as the location of the archaic joint, which will resurface in the Kings Road House.

Join/Joint/Joist

Although Schindler preferred architectural space to form, his understanding of space creation, which may be interpreted as the Californian version of the *raumplan*, was materialised in a certain tectonic form. In the past, Schindler argued, the structural system produced the style, and the concept of space existed only within the structural achievements - building techniques and materials always took precedence over style. He, on the other hand, believed that since the structural problems today are solved with mathematical calculations, the architect must deal with his main problem, which is space, and think about structural solutions through space creation.[19]

Schindler also held the belief that an architect should be an artist, focusing on finding an artistic expression for both the spatial and material dimensions of architecture. Unlike many other Modernists, he did not support mass production with basic standards, which would not appeal to the aesthetic needs of individuals with artistic minds. Therefore, an artist's hand was necessary in shaping the built

[19] Rudolph Schindler, "Modern Architecture: A program", trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave, in RM Schindler: Composition and Construction, ed. Lionel March and Judith Sheine, London: Academy Editions, 1995, pp.10-13.

environment.[20] At the same time, Schindler wanted architecture to become a background for human activities, a setting to facilitate the interaction between the fellow men. For him, the essence of architectural settings embodied a wilderness camp, akin to a 'primitive hut', equipped with modern amenities to foster enjoyment of nature, life, and friendship. Accordingly, he saw a mutual dependence between the interiors and the immediate surroundings of a dwelling. Therefore, architectural space required a strong connection between the interiors and exteriors.[21]

Schindler's modern architecture program, which he dated to 1913, incorporated the most significant European experiments on the relationship between space creation and building mass. His close acquaintance with Wright's architecture moulded the ideas of those experiments into a new framework. Wright's 'organic' architecture necessitated first 'anchoring' the building to its site.[22] Richard Neutra, an Austrian colleague and friend of Schindler who lived for a few years in the Kings Road House when he came to the United States to work for Wright, coined the term 'site-anchoring'. This Wrightian concept does not only mean to emphasize the horizontality of the structure in close connection with the ground. It also means to create a unique place out of the site, and that is realised most effectively by means of making the building surround a portion of the land as much as possible. The 'pin-wheel' layout, a prominent feature of the Kings Road House, effectively achieves this.

Taking into account all the previously mentioned influences on his thinking, it can be asserted that Schindler envisioned 'space architecture' as a container for the human body, which inhabits and navigates the space, akin to an enlarged furniture that reduces the necessity for additional furniture. The relationship between the details of furniture and construction in Schindler's house, which emphasize the joints, follows the same logic as De Stijl experiments. As part of his social ideas, Schindler favoured a casual lifestyle, which also pertains to the body's interaction

[20] Schindler, Rudolph M. "Notes on Architecture (1914-1919)" in August Sarnitz, R.M. Schindler, New York: Rizzoli, 1988a, 43.

[21] In his 1926 article entitled "Shelter and Playground," Schindler explains the need of a private room for an individual as "to gain a back ground for his life." In August Sarnitz, R.M. Schindler, New York: Rizzoli, 1988, p.47.

[22] Wright, F. L. (1998). An American Architecture [1955] (Ed. E. Kaufmann). New York: Barnes & Noble Books.

with the environment, including the floor, furniture, and weather. The body's simple, almost primitive interaction with the environment - whether built or unbuilt – mediates the interaction with immaterial qualities like communication and sharing on an equalitarian basis.

In his 1926 essay 'About Furniture' published in 'The Care of the Body' column of Dr. Phillip Lovell in Los Angeles Times, Schindler refused anything selected for its charm for interior decoration and argued that every item must serve for a spatial use and unity in the room, which is to be "conceived as an organic entity, and a background for human activity."[23] The word 'organic' used here recalls exactly the meaning in Wright's writing, like the influential Wasmuth portfolio that attracted the attention of Schindler in Vienna. However, Wright's concept of organic unity did not advocate for a formally biological approach. Rather, he wanted to refer by this word to the functional, spatial, decorative, as well as spiritual wholeness of architectural production. His severe criticism of the Arts and Crafts trend may seem contradictory if it is not understood in the context in which he refused the artistic craftsmanship ideal but not the ideal of brotherhood (guild) that produced the stylistic unity of artifacts.[24] Wright's exaltation of the 'Gothic spirit' depicts an art that is fundamentally organic, excluding any artificially pasted or inserted elements.[25] He demonstrated his convictions in everything joined or 'knitted' together in his prairie houses, where ornamentation functioned as a 'combiner' of all surfaces, including the decorative patterns of carpets. The emphasis of horizontality in Wright houses seems to have stemmed from the emphasis upon spatial organization which functions both as a 'background' of human activities and 'site-anchoring' (place-making). Schindler, too, exhibited the same tendency in his architecture and writing. What sets him apart in this regard is how he treated the building as a piece of furniture, extending the functional space both vertically and horizontally towards the exterior. By so doing, Schindler enriched the concept of 'organic unity', although it may be argued that the horizontal

[23] Schindler, Rudolph, M. "About Furniture (18 April 1926)" in August Sarnitz, R.M. Schindler, New York: Rizzoli, 1988b, p. 46.

[24] Wright, Frank Lloyd, "The Art and Craft of the Machine", The New Industrialism - Volume I: National League of Industrial Art, 1902.

[25] Frank Lloyd Wright, Studies and Excuted Buildings, New York: Rizzoli, 1998.

extension is signalled in the overhanging eaves of Wright's houses that covered the porches.

Polyzoides stated that "the charm of its small size, the rapidity and relative cheapness of its construction, and the ease with which it can be moved around make a piece of furniture an ideal model of architectural intentions." From this point of departure, he asserted that Schindler must have understood that the Viennese Secession architects as well as Wagner and Loos "used furniture as a primary object lesson in advancing their ideas." Therefore, Polyzoides thought that the interior design played an important role in Schindler's conception of 'space architecture.'[26] He argued that in his 1926 article on furniture, Schindler refers to 1) "socially transformational role" of furniture, and 2) a harmonious aesthetic that "binds structure and surface, space and furniture, light and climate," as the aspects of "making of a space architecture."[27] The former refers to the well-known ideal that was passed from the Arts and Crafts to the Art Nouveau and Modernism, while the latter generally defined the De Stijl movement. However, the relationship between De Stijl aesthetic and Schindler's architecture cannot be taken beyond spatial creation, for the fact that while Schindler believed in the need to overcome the harms of industrialisation, Van Doesburg was enthusiastic about the 'machine' and its dependence on a culture of pure reason. Moules highlighted Schindler's belief that the house-furniture serves as the foundation for future social reform:

> The interior and furniture prescribed a radical transformation of social life, a neo-savage society. This was to be a response to the necessities of utility and economy (foremost values of an industrialized society): symbolism, and the 'auratic', not to say wilful; the 'idol' for those new secular rituals of daily life is the fire in the hearth.[28]

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[26] Stefanos Polyzoides, "Space Architecture Inside Out", in RM Schindler: Composition and Construction, ed. Lionel March and Judith Sheine, London: Academy Editions, 1995, p.197.
[27] Stefanos Polyzoides, "Space Architecture Inside Out", in RM Schindler: Composition and Construction, ed. Lionel March and Judith Sheine, London: Academy Editions, 1995, p.198.
[28] Elizabeth Moules. "The Mystic and the Tangible: Schindler's furniture in the twenties", in RM Schindler: composition and construction, ed. Lionel March and Judith Sheine, London: Academy Editions, 1995, p.191, pp.188-195. On the other hand, Allan Doig mentions Van Doesburg's appeal to machine aesthetic, which was canonized by Le Corbusier. Theo Van Doesburg: painting into architecture, theory into practice, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp.152 ff.

Since Laugier (1753)[29] and Rousseau (1754)[30], the primitive dwelling of the savage has been a recurring theme in avant-garde attitudes in architecture. Viollet-le-Duc (1875)[31] thoroughly investigated this concept, and the leading figures of the Modern movement such as Le Corbusier and Mies[32] adopted it as a leitmotif. Gottfried Semper had based his famous 'Four Elements of Architecture' on the Caribbean primitive hut,[33] and the hearth (Semper's 'moral element') was a central theme also in many of Wright's houses created with utmost tectonic sensitivity.[34] The 'knot' as the origin of tectonic culture in Semper's theory[35] made the joint a crucial thing to emphasize for many Modern architects with Semperian motivations, and Schindler is one of them. However, while Schindler's house displays a tectonic quality through its timber texture, its concrete elements evoke the atectonic counterpart of primitive dwellings, the cave. Therefore, the tectonic tool, representing carpentry/furniture, and the cave, representing a natural dwelling, serve as two simultaneous metaphors in Schindler's house (Figure 6).

[29] Marc-Antoine Laugier. Essai sur l'architecture. Chez Duchesne, 1753.
[30] Jean-Jacques Rousseau. "Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes", in J. J. Rousseau, Discours. Ménard, 1831.
[31] E. E. Viollet-le-Duc. Histoire de l'habitation humaine depuis les temps préhistoriques jusqu'à nos jours. J. Hetzel, 1875.
[32] See, for example, Fritz Neumeyer, The Artless World: Mies van der Rohe on the Building Art, Cambridge (Mass.): MIT Press, 199, p. 118; and also Le Corbusier, Une Maison Un Palais, Les Editions C. Gres & C, 1989 (1928).
[33] Kenneth Frampton. Studies in Tectonic Culture. The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture. MIT Press, 1995.
[34] Peter Blake. Master Builders. Le Corbusier/Mies Van Der Rohe/Frank Lloyd Wright. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1996, p. 303.
[35] William W. Braham. "What's Hecuba to Him? On Kiesler and the Knot". Assemblage 36: 6-23, 1998, p. 9.

Figure 6. Kings Road House, west façade (Sweeney and Sheine, 2012).

For Semper, binding or joining two things together is the basic premise for creating order in nature, and the main idea is hidden in the joint.[36] In Schindler's house, the right angle manifests as the logic of the architectural joint, extending from the joists supporting the shade of the sleeping basket on the roof to the rafters supporting the ceiling and the overhang, and from the glazing frame to the frames of the bookshelves and chairs (Figure 7). Where a vertical piece of wood meets with a lateral one, it merges into it; it joins in, and a new existence occurs. Here begins from within the right-angle an unnatural growth that proceeds in geometrical order towards a destination, like an ivy twining around the massive walls of a cave. All the joists, frames, and furniture join the growth by means of joints. Conceptually, the right-angle serves as the seed of growth, as the building's plan consists of the merging of three L-shaped units. The timber framework reveals this logic in innumerable places. The growth from within the joint, no matter where it started, is destined to open up a space for the human body, and this opening starts with the right-angle. Therefore, the 'problem of the corner' is solved here in the right-angled joint, which is the seed of the modern space to be created by the fusion of art, furniture, and architecture (Figure 8).

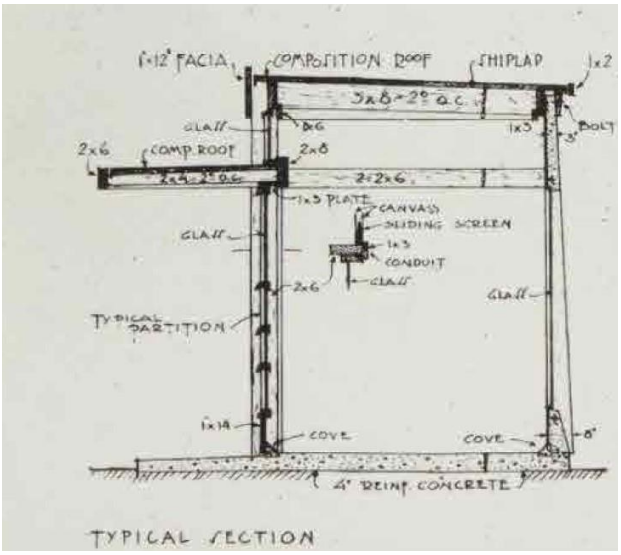

Figure 7. Typical section of the Kings Road House (Smith, 2001).

Figure 8. Clyde Chase studio, north wall (Sweeney and Sheine, 2012).

[36] Gottfried Semper, "Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts or A Practical Aesthetics", trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann, in Gottfried Semper: The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings, ed. Harry Francis Mallgrave, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp.181-264.

The final purpose of space that emerges from the right-angled joints is not only to relax the human body; it also aims to waken its 'sensory equipment'. The lowering of the ceiling level, the height of the furniture and the extension of the floor to the patio serve to the same effect. Schindler's awareness of the intimate relation between horizontality and human body results in bringing things closer to the floor and the floor to the natural ground. He called it "the battle to civilize the floor."[37] According to Polyzoides, Schindler conceived horizontality also "as a compositional device" that was "favoured because it symbolizes equality, democratic equilibrium, and a possible escape from conventional behaviour."[38] Although concrete and wood exhibit different tectonic aspects in the horizontal construction of space, such as different joint qualities, the concrete slab and walls unite with the wooden frames and ceiling, following the logic of the right-angle. The difference, however, seems to suggest another level of representation - a psychological level based on sensory experience and symbolic associations.

Symbolism of the Cave

In connection with Schindler's argument about civilizing the floor, Moule pointed out the fireplaces in Schindler's house where "the fire is laid directly on the floor". She claimed that "the floor has now been so tamed as to allow for the temporalities of both flame and fabrics"[39]. The durability of the solid concrete floor, the soothing warmth of the fire on this ground, the gentle touch of the mat, and the warm texture of the wooden ceiling framework, all undoubtedly reflect the fundamental associations with sensory experiences.

Gebhard claimed that "as an environment for living, the Kings Road House is a peculiar mixture of nineteenth and twentieth century precepts." According to him, living in the open field was a romantic desire of the Arts and Crafts idealists, which was adopted by the followers of the movement in the United States where

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[37] Schindler's ideas about horizontality and civilization is clear in his article "Furniture and the Modern House: A theory of Interior Design," (1936), in August Sarnitz, R.M. Schindler, New York: Rizzoli, 1988, p.54.

[38] Polyzoides also states that furniture is articulated around the corners. Stefanos Polyzoides, "Space Architecture Inside Out", in RM Schindler: Composition and Construction, ed. Lionel March and Judith Sheine, London: Academy Editions, 1995, p. 201.

[39] Elizabeth Moule, "The Mystic and the Tangible: Schindler's furniture in the twenties", in RM Schindler: composition and construction, ed. Lionel March and Judith Sheine, London: Academy Editions, 1995, p.192.

the recent memory of the wilderness of the Western frontier made it easier. However, this house's critical position is easily identifiable due to its distance from the emerging International Style, which is often associated with machine analogies. For Gebhard, the main problem with Schindler's house was the lack of mechanical heating and this situation was far from providing comfort required for a modern interior life even in the Southern California climate where there may be cold winter days.[40] Gebhard also realised the conflicting structure of the building in this connection:

> The structure of the house, like its environment, was a bundle of opposites. The concrete floor and the concrete tilt-slab walls (derived indirectly from Irving Gill's work through Lloyd Wright) were experimental and advanced – particularly for the West Coast. The repetitive slab walls suggested modern technology, and their rhythmic appearance throughout the house expresses the repetitive process of machine production. In contrast to these concrete surfaces are the wooden ceilings, with their narrow clerestory lighting, the thin internal walls of wood and sliding doors, all of which strongly suggest impermanence. The house was, as Schindler had said, a marriage between the solid permanent cave and the open lightweight tent.[41]

In his 1913 manifesto, Schindler asserted that the cave was the first dwelling of man before he learned to pile things up. However, in his 1936 essay entitled 'Furniture and the Modern House: A Theory of Interior Design', he elaborated his understanding of modern dwelling. Under the subtitle "The Four Elements: earth, water, fire, air", Schindler argued that for the primitive man, shelter was anonymous with the feeling of safety since it protected man from the hazards of nature. Therefore, the feeling of relief resulting from entering the cave is still a part of human psychology, which is evident in the motto "my house is my castle." However, Schindler argued, since we have mastered the hazardous aspects of the four elements of nature today, we no longer need to close ourselves to the interiors or surrender to mechanical devices that put barriers between us and nature. On the contrary, Schindler supported the idea of living in close contact with the four elements as much as possible:

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[40] David Gebhard, Schindler, Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1980, pp.50-51.
[41] Gebhard, Schindler, p.51.

> To insist that ventilating windows, fireplaces and pools are rendered obsolete by our ducts and pipes is merely to repeat another half-truth of the modernistic sloganist. The open window, the furtive sunray, the natural breeze, lightning and thunder, the crackling flame, the bed under the stars are thrilling experiences not to be surrendered from our daily life.[42]

Therefore, the dual character of the structure reveals the two different levels of representation resulting from the architect's desire to express spatial and social paradigms of an emerging architecture at the same time. While all the elements serve together to build up the 'space architecture', the massive tilt-slabs and the fireplaces have special roles in the setting (Figure 9). The cave and the fireplace serve as symbolic references, evoking moral issues associated with 'primitive' notions such as individual freedom, social gathering, and equality.

Figure 9. R. Schindler studio (Smith, 2001).

Schindler's 'cave-tent' is neither primitive nor assimilated by the machine. Despite the house's openness to the gardens on all sides, tall plants such as hedges and bamboo walls tightly enclose these gardens for privacy, making them intimate spaces that are equally part of the house and nature (Figure 10). The solid concrete walls, punctuated only by narrow vertical glazing, consistently confront the openings to the gardens to satisfy the primordial urge to keep the back safe and confront

[42] Rudolph M. Schindler, "Furniture and the Modern House: A Theory of Interior Design," in August Sarnitz, R.M. Schindler, New York: Rizzoli, 1988, p.56.

the danger from the front. Contrary to the natural walls of the cave, the mechanical repetition of these walls resembles the tectonic rhythm of the timber framework of the walls they face. The gathering around the fire as equal individuals, sharing and enjoying the warmth, conversation, food, etc., represents man's emancipation from his fear of nature. The primordial cave, the family dwelling, the collective pueblo - all of these are placed in Kings Road House as interlocking settings. The close connection between these settings is made possible by the equalitarian platforms which stage the rituals of private and collective living.

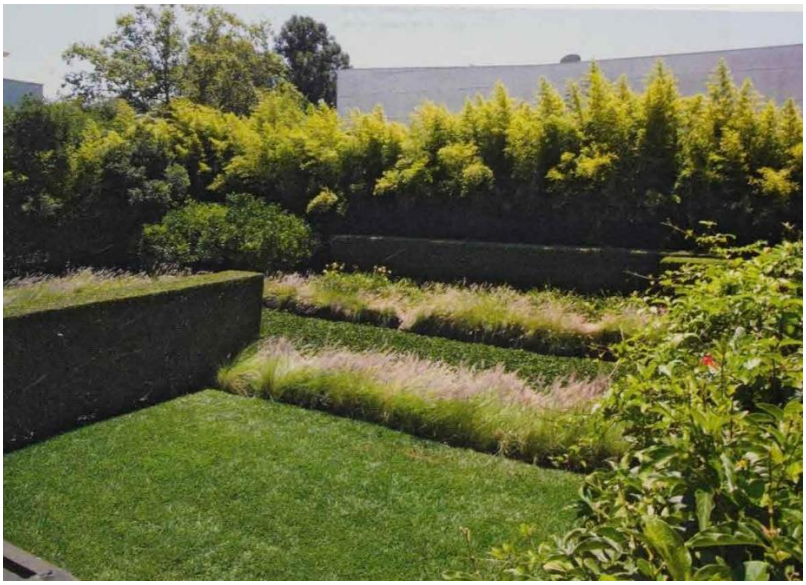

Figure 10. Chase garden-patio in the Kings Road House (Seeney and Sheine, 2012).

As David Leatherbarrow argues in his investigation of the phenomenological meanings of horizontality in *Uncommon Ground*, symbolic and ritualistic associations are part of the 'space architecture' that transforms man's natural environment into a setting - a setting that fuses the horizons of the dwellers. Inspired by Gadamer's concept of the 'fusion of horizons', this study interprets the horizon in both literal and phenomenal terms, interpreting it as "planes of reference or, more fundamentally, of existence" and not just as "the boundaries that circumscribe visual fields, nor the lines of intersection between the sky and the earth or ocean".[43] Leatherbarrow also defines the horizon as "the means by which we anchor ourselves in the world".[44] But because the horizon is always shifting according to our

[43] David Leatherbarrow. Uncommon Ground. Architecture, Technology, and Topography. MIT Press, 2000, pp. 27-8.

[44] Leatherbarrow, Uncommon Ground, p. 173.

standing – from physical, cultural, or historical points of view – it is always 'stratified'. Therefore, a dwelling in interlocking settings like the Kings Road House offers many stratified horizons, which may emerge according to one's posture and gaze into the space as well as according to one's finding himself/herself in his/her own 'world'. Leatherbarrow's ontological reading of the notion in architecture disavows the distinction between objective and metaphorical meanings.

CONCLUSION

The importance of the Kings Road House lies in its articulated settings, both inside and outside, which are designed to foster interaction among individuals and between humans and nature. In this house, which is one of the earliest and most radical examples of the spatial revolution of Modernism, Schindler's wanted to find a new definition of architectural space that depends on the physical and perceptual motion of the body in-between the horizontal planes coordinated by the vertical planes. Forming the space with the junction of the horizontal and the vertical is also related to Semper's assumption that the primordial tectonic invention of man is the knot, the precursor of the architectural joint. Therefore, the right-angle manifests the idea of a generic tectonic conception for the spatial configuration. The L-shape serves as a metaphor for the joints in the timber wall-roof, concrete floor-wall, and the house plan. Like the furniture, the building hides nothing as to how it was realised, so that from a single chair to the overall structure it shows the traces of the same artefact which is like one complicated piece of furniture.

Body is the link between the house and the furniture. Chairs, tables, decks, walls, fireplaces, and floor slabs receive their objective meaning from the human body and the subjective meaning from the cultural context of the dwellers. It was clearly the man as social being that was missing in the geometric patterns of De Stijl experiments, although they had a profound insight into the potential of the right-angled joints. In these experiments, the collaboration of artists, furniture designers, and architects provided the tectonic form with human scale. Wright's tectonic organicism provided the common ground for such avant-garde experiments in art and the 'space architecture' paradigm.[45] The Kings Road House testifies to the

[45] Peter Blake, p. 331; Eugenia Victoria Ellis. "Space of Continuity: Frank Lloyd Wright's Destruction of the Box and Modern Conceptions of Space". 102nd ACSA Annual Meeting

expansion of this common ground to incorporate the idea of semi-communal life for modern individuals.

The conception of the building as a spatial artefact or tool may be significant also in its difference from Le Corbusier's concept of 'machine à habiter'. Schindler, like Le Corbusier, envisioned the house as an abode for the artist-dweller, but he sought the poetics of dwelling not in the vistas of the idle promenades, but in the literal fusion of horizons of fellow men, idealistically expected to share the same 'world' despite their exaggeratedly individualistic existences. That may be why Le Corbusier's buildings dominate the site as if they have emerged out of nowhere, while the Schindler House on the Kings Road wants to be the organic result of the interaction of man and the environment within a specific place created by stratified horizons.

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