

June 30 th '55

Dear Kevin,

Many thanks for the new edition of our report. It is beautifully written, lucid and convincing. I found only a few points that need further clarification.

I only wish, that during the last month I had had a more relaxed and consequently, more alert mind. I could have saved you from this late pestering and extra labour.

I divided my comments into three categories. First; some minor changes in formulation. I shall do this by indicating the places to be reconsidered, by page number and line. Second; concerns the distribution of the work task, where I would appreciate knowing your reaction. The third, is general observations on some of the basic aspects of our problem. These are only for future consideration, and please do not bother making any changes concerning this later category.

- I. Page 1, line 17 & 18. Should be more concrete. Something like: "Could best answer the needs of human beings in the present technical, social and cultural context and is most open to satisfy the possible future transformation of these needs."

Page 2, line 4&5. 'Eloquent continuity' seems to me to be too vague, if it was meant to refer to the physical factors of the outside world and not to our perceptual picturing of it. I would suggest; "Clearly legible relatedness of the spatial and functional factors, so that their connections can be easily and fully grasped. A physical patterning, that could be perceived in a perceptual, emotional and conceptual continuity."

Page 5, line 5. "Coherence or connectedness" instead of 'and'.

Page 18, line 16. 'In the visual arts they have been concerned with the problem of maintaining continuity in a changing flow.' There is too much claimed, as in my knowledge Eggeling and Richter, were the only ones who touched upon these problems {margin: (scroll idea)} in 1919-23, and what I am trying to develop from their scattered early ideas, is still not yet fully formed. Naturally, motion picture and television faces the problem of sequence organization, but, primarily from a story-telling point of view, that is, they are concerned with the continuity of dramatic events in the flow of changing spatial and temporal situations.

Page 27, line 12. Instead of 'Passive enjoyment' "Visual enjoyment" or "Opportunities for contemplation so needed in our highly strung life, which has distorted our sensibilities."

Line 18, Instead of Tiergarten, "The public Gardens of Munich" or ". .Frankfurt" and "Prater at Vienna"

Page 27, line 12. Instead of 'Technical setting' "The mechanical setting of concrete, steel and glass, traffic jams and the visual chaos of signs and displays"

Page 29, first paragraph. 'Meaning' is used here in a more specific way than it was introduced at the beginning. I assume we mean here, a conscious instrumentation of orientation toward specific ends; places, services or commodities. To avoid confusion in the later work, we have to define the boundaries of meanings in the different frame of reference. I assume that it could stand as it is now, but, later we must make it a point for ourselves to find unmistakable terms for 'meaning' in {a} the level of plastic organization, {b} space orientation, {c} unintentional expressive meaning, {('physiognomy')} and {d} finally, conscious manipulation of meanings, instrumentation of orientation, by words, images, signs, etc. {communication}

II

I would suggest some basic change in the distribution of our work, which seem to be necessary for me, both subjectively and objectively. What about our extending of the study of a small urban environment and its perception, from the proposed two areas, into four or five and making this study the core of our next year task? It seems to me that by choosing only a intown shopping district and an outlying residential area, would not give us the chance to build up a comprehensive frame of reference for the morphological description of our urban world, that we would gain by extending these studies; {to 5 prototypes.} a. {circled} by some area like a city core, such as the Copley Sq. {margin: via Louisberg C. Sign} as continuing study, that combines public buildings, public squares and certain aspects of the Common . b. {circled} by some area like an amusement area, theatre district, such as, in its most crystallized form, Picadilly, Broadway, or in a minor key, Washington st, Boston, London. c. {circled} by a Recreation area, Public Gardens, Boston Common, Central Park, Lincoln Park.

By extending this study to include some of the studies we approached in another way, we would gain the necessary convergence, that I felt was lacking in our program. This extended study would give us the chance to make a visual description of almost all basic factors and basic relationships of the urban environment as we know it today. This extended study would also give the chance to find a broader grasp of the needs and the value scales of these needs people aquired, living in an urban setting. This more comprehensive scanning of the City Scape, through its completeness, could give us a chance to make cross references both in physical features as well as in subjective reactions.

By transferring the study of natural elements in

city to the study of the small urban environment, would eliminate the feeling I had that this study was running parallel, but not converging with our major task. {beside, making the nature study visually comprehensive – I would have to travel here + abroad to be able to make valid comparisons. This would be budget and otherwise quite difficult.}

From the subjective angle, I would feel more happy, if I would not suddenly have to drop the Copley Square studies which was a four months concentrated labour and where I had worked out a satisfactory visual technique and prepared a variety of ideas for further exploration. I also feel that my contribution could be most valuable, if I stick to the areas where I am more at home and this visual exploration of the environment by graphic means, appeals to me very much.

What I would suggest then, that the study of the small environment and its perception, should be our common project, that we distribute; you having the responsibility for the shopping district and residential area, and I, the public square and recreation area. The entertainment area, we may divide, or I may take over as part of the communication of meaning study.

I do hope, this reorganizing of the material, will not go against your grain, in any case, please let me know how you feel about it.

III.

I would like to make some comment on the formulation of the 'orientation' study. I hope we shall have some chance to talk about this detail, but it may be helpful to you if I make some general comments now. I still feel, as I have expressed it before, that in your present formulation, orientation, is synonymous with perceptual organization. If so, I would think that it would be wiser to just use the term, 'perceptual organization' and keep the term 'orientation' to define the meaning that is generally accepted to cover. Orientation seems to me, is the perceptual process through which we can find a point of location or a line of direction, in certain coordinates. Whether it is mere spacelocus or dynamic participation, orientation implies a part-whole relationship or a space-time position in a space-time frame. In this precise but limited sense of orientation, the aesthetic qualities, as harmony, balance, rhythm, proportion; are not factors of orientation, they do not aid directly in finding one's way. I would suggest that we agree on certain systems of coordinates when we refer to orientation. For instance; a. {circled} Conceptual frames, map notion, grid system, based upon compass directions or any other defined, consistent system of conceptual coordinates. b. {circled} Landmarks, that is, orientation in reference to some man-made or natural, relatively stable, dominant visual {underlined} feature of our surroundings. c. Orientation within the fabric of functional areas, with expressive features and relatively legible boundaries. I would think that by separating such operational meanings from the wild forest of aesthetic categories, with their fuzzy boundaries and

{margin: vague terminology} three or four terms sometimes standing for the same basic meaning, we would gain clarity and economy in our thinking.

I have a similar reaction to the connection between orientation and communication, as they refer to the term meaning. If we could find a clear demarcation between information gained from forms, patterns, not intended as a message, and information gained from messages consciously aimed at being information; that is, purposeful instrumentation of orientation and accidental expressive features, we could organize our material more effectively. To put it in a simile; what we need to clarify, is the difference between the expressive feature of a hand and the conscious expression with a gesture of a hand.

Again, I do hope that these late comments will not add to your labours.

We all very much hope that all of you will be able to make an excursion here.

Warmest greetings,

{signature}

P.S. Could you let me know the name of our new secretary, {+ the second name of Francine our secretary in the architectural school} as I may send some typing to her.

Could you put into the budget another photographer besides Nishan {and besides student helpers}. You may remember, we discovered that he can give only one third of his time, which is very little.