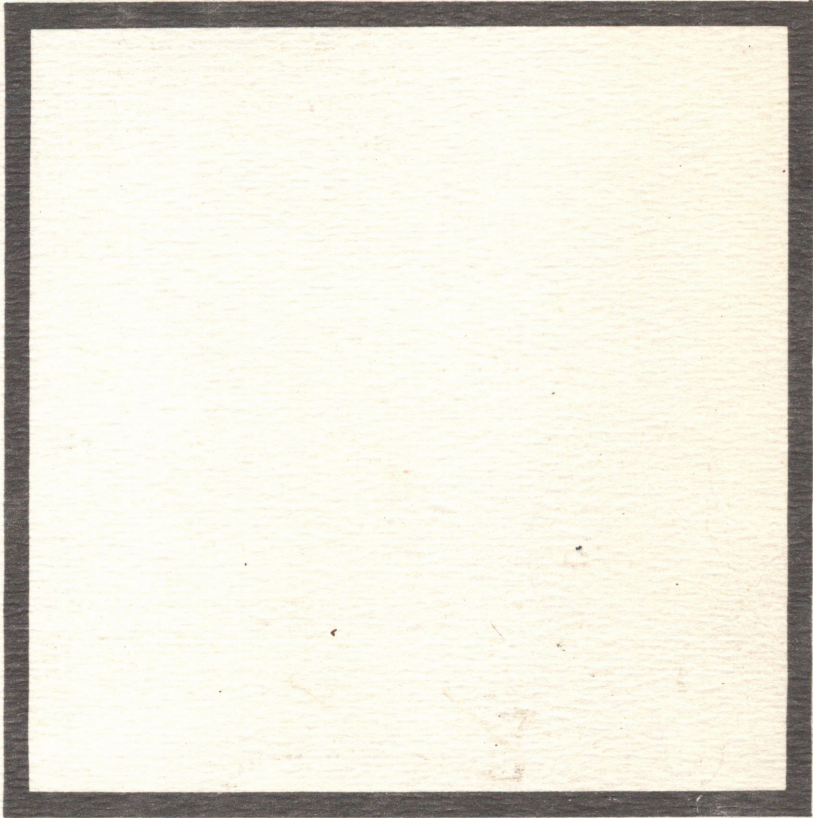


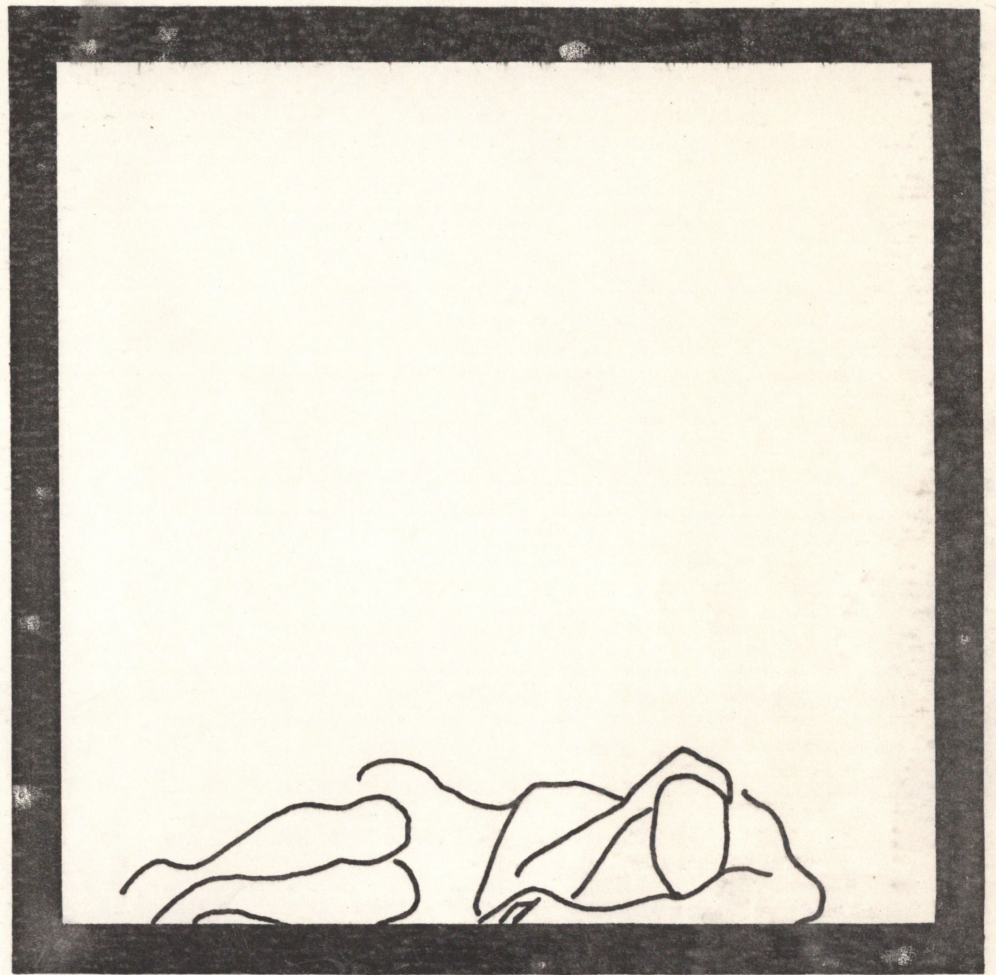
PLACE IN ARCHITECTURE



CHRISTOPHER M. SCHILTZ

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I a stranger and afraid
in a world I never made
Housman

PLACE IN ARCHITECTURE

An undergraduate thesis in architecture presented to the
School of Architecture, Montana State University, by
Christopher M. Schiltz on the 12th day of December, 1977,
in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Architecture.

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Christopher M. Schiltz was born to Mr. and Mrs. John M. Schiltz on September 24, 1953 in Billings, Montana, the youngest child of four. He was raised in Billings, and educated in the parochial school system. From 1961-1968, he attended Kate Fratt Memorial grade school. From 1968-1972, he attended and graduated from Billings Central Catholic High School. In 1972 he entered Montana State University and majored in architecture. This thesis presentation of December 12, 1977, concludes his formal education and fulfills the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Architecture. Mr. Schiltz has moved back to Billings and is established there in an architectural firm.

Approved by:

Advisor _____

Coordinator _____

Director _____

Dean _____

The goal of this thesis project is the advancement of knowledge through an investigation of place in architecture. I would hope that this advancement would come about through a careful study of my own thought process by others. It is my own thought process I wish to impart in this project. Perhaps the advancement of knowledge is nothing more than opening other peoples eyes, expanding their minds, by forcing them to stop and think carefully about abstract concepts. There are no great revelations or breakthroughs, but simply a documentation of my concept of place in architecture and the process through which I arrived at such a concept. Whether it be abstract and subtle, or concrete and obvious, my only hope is that one person might develop or strengthen his own attitude about place in architecture and become more sensitive to the total human condition. Therein lies the advancement of knowledge.

Christopher M. Schiltz

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ON PLACE...

"Architecture, perhaps to a more tangible extent than any other art, reflects and expresses in microcosm but with precision, the obtaining concepts of the universe. Such expression is neither idle nor arbitrary, for it is only through cosmology that a sense of location in time and space can be communicated. This sense of location, however changeful or however permanent, is essential to the health and life of human communities."

"Architecture implies a constant rediscovery of constant human qualities translated into space. Man is always and everywhere essentially the same."

"We can meet ourselves everywhere in all places and ages - doing the same things in a different way, feeling the same differently, reacting differently to the same."

VAN EYCK

"Finding built form for changing - man becomes a religious value. Man's need of identification - in - space through built environment corresponding to 'ownness' has more to do with the kind of space he uses than the amount of space he owns. The relationship of space - quality to life - quality is under - developed."

TEAM 10

"The basis of urban order, we are beginning to see, is the preservation and creation of a sense of place. Its current destruction or omission is not only an aesthetic loss. It has, I believe, a great deal to do with the uncertain state of our mental health and our standard of life."

VON ECKARDT

"... a place, ... is a created thing, an ethnic domain made visible, tangible, sensible. As such it is, of course, an illusion. Like any other plastic symbol it is primarily an illusion of self-contained, self-sufficient, perceptual space."

LANGER

"The places are goals or foci where we experience the meaningful events of our existence, but they are also points of departing from which we orient ourselves and take possession of the environment."

NORBERG-SCHULZ

"The valuable critic is not someone who merely likes what is familiar to him, and still less is he someone who pretends to like what he is told to admire. He is someone who is prepared to expose himself fully to the new experience and ask himself what it is doing to him and how it is doing it. Such an observer... will take the trouble to decipher the whole communication it is trying to make, and will arrive at his own conclusions whether that communication is worth his attention or not."

"He will ask himself whether the cumulative emotional effect of the aesthetic communication, its 'level of tension'; is gauged to its purpose; ... and he will ask himself, too, what contribution it makes to the sense of place."



THESIS

To experience place is to be conscious of oneself in space and time through an emotional response to the perception of context.

Place can be created through the utilization of elements which evoke such response.



INTENT

The subject of this thesis is place in architecture. I have chosen place as a topic because I believe it to be the very essence of good architecture and design. This thesis is a personal account. It consists of the analysis of place in my own mind, that is, a documentation of my thought process. In choosing place as a topic, I am challenging myself to discover how I might benefit as a designer by bettering my understanding of abstract concepts. I hope to find out what place is to me in a logical and tangible way; to narrow it down and apply its significance to a project. If place can be created in architecture, then that is my intent. In this thesis, I hope to find objective means to a subjective end.



RESEARCH

The concept of place is tremendously subjective. Two people may agree upon the experience of place, yet disagree upon the reasoning for such an experience. The experience of place is so vastly different from one individual to the next that a survey of people's responses to what place is would be endless. Insight may be gained but no steadfast conclusions could be drawn. There is no common denominator that applies to all. One must make conjectures and refutations of his own in order to narrow down and logically express his own concept of the place experience. It becomes a frustrating mental struggle to try to define tangibly that which seems to be intangible.

To experience place is to be aware of myself in space and time through the realization and understanding of specific perceived boundaries.

Place is a specific space.

Place is the position of a figure, or a figure in position with reference to its position to others.

Place is a portion of space occupied by a body; hence, proper or assigned position, time or character.

Place is a state of mind or of affairs.

Place is the sensual awareness of space.

Place is the perception of a boundary.

Place is the perception of oneself relative to physical and/or mental boundaries.

Place is created in the mind.

Place is memory.

CONJECTURES

Place gives man identity in that he becomes self-aware in experiencing place. The intent to create place is merely sensitivity to man's basic need of identity. To fulfill such a need, place creation must be the ultimate goal of design activity.

As in any creation, there is a process. Such a process is an objective means of understanding place by understanding the experience. However, if one understands the experience of place, does it follow that he can create such an experience? The successful creation of place is dependent upon a process which involves two modes of understanding: 1) the designer's personal understanding, awareness, and sensitivity to the experience of place and 2) an understanding of the design context and those he is designing for.

The boundary in which the experience of place occurs is one of space and time. It is the continuum in which every event of our lives takes place. Upon entering a specific space-time boundary, the process of the place experience begins with one's confrontation of objective situations. Such situations may be physical, social or cultural. They may be independent of one another, but more often are interdependent in that each affects or complements the other. The physical, social and cultural situations are a system of inter-related dimensions which we live. They are the foundation of context.

Upon being confronted with the objective situations, one immediately orients himself to the situation. The orientation may be cognitive, cathetic, or evaluative. The cognitive orientation consists of classification and description of the objective situation(s); that is, the situation is ordered, organized and studied. The cathetic orientation consists of a spontaneous reaction to the situation according to the gratification it offers. The evaluative orientation consists of a reaction to the situation on a comparative basis. As one orients himself to the objective situation, context is perceived. If the perceived context has the strength and stimulus to evoke a response of self-consciousness, awareness and identity, then such a context is place.

MODE 1: PLACE

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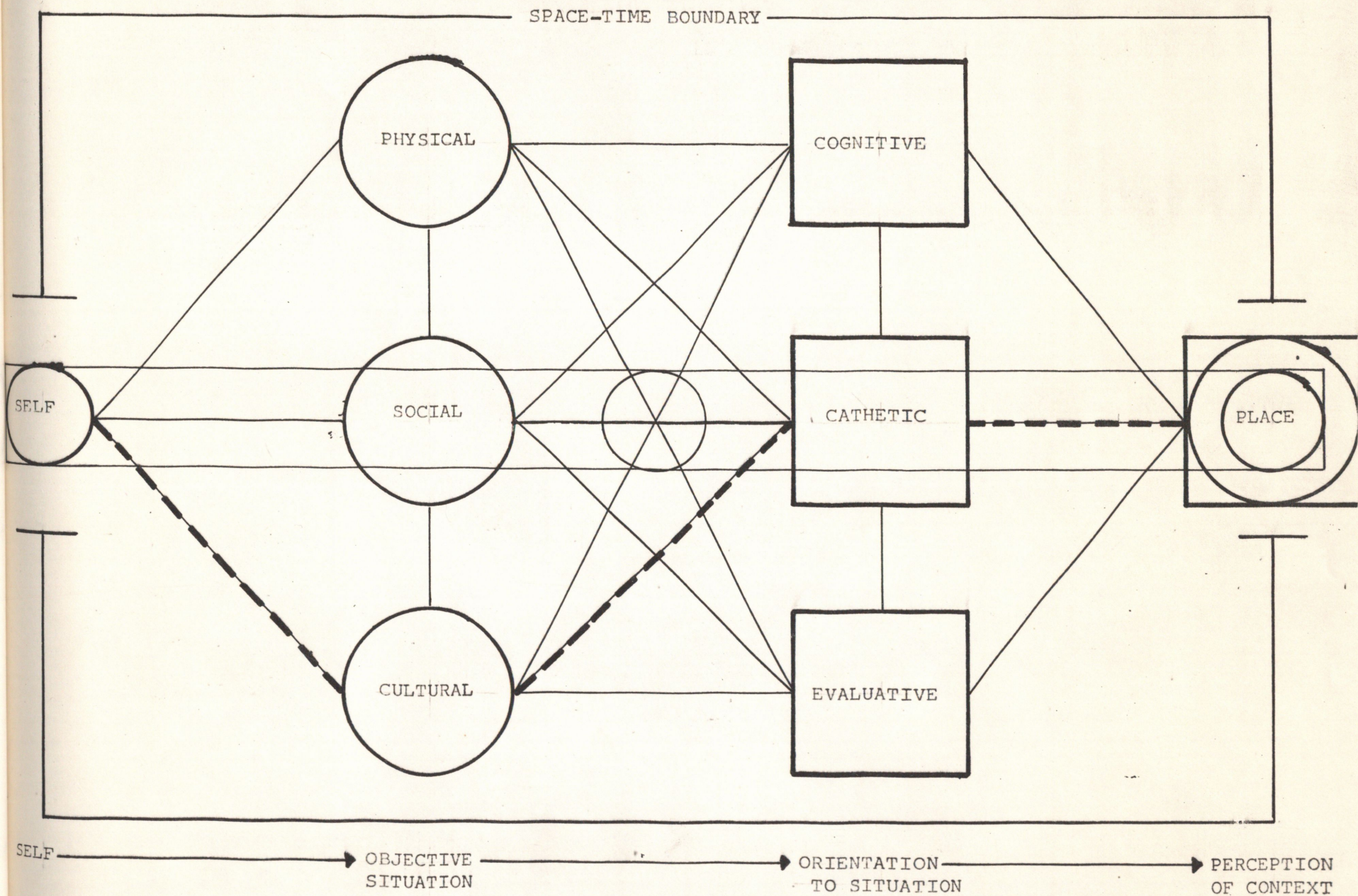
The second mode of understanding involved in the process of place creation concerns the designer's understanding of the design context and those whose needs he is trying to fulfill.

I have chosen to create place in the realm of Roman Catholicism through the design of a cathedral. The design context of such a structure in regards to the previously stated process of experiencing place involves the cultural objective situation and the cathetic orientation. to such a situation. What, then, are the elements which create the cultural-cathetic design context in built form? The elements which create such a context involve the perception of phenomena (in terms of event). The elements are inter-dependent and may exist as: 1) elements in groups, 2) elements in circuit or 3) elements in sequence. *sence of event*

The generation of self into this context, that is, place, is dependent upon the strength of the elements which create it.

I understand the doctrine of Roman Catholicism to involve elements in sequence and to literally be a process in itself. I understand it to be the procession of life, which culminates in total sacrifice. This sacrifice is symbolic of forgiveness, thus generating spiritual life and its procession once again.

MODE 2: DESIGN CONTEXT



EXPERIENCING PLACE

Two modes of understanding have been examined and expressed: 1) a personal understanding of place; in general and for a specific design context, and 2) a personal understanding and interpretation of the doctrine of Roman Catholic worship. The merging of these two modes generates concept.



CONCEPT

The design concept of this thesis project comes together easily. Each mode of understanding involves a process which is linear in nature. The cultural - cathetic context implies the perception of phenomena in a linear, sequential way. The interpretation of Roman Catholic doctrine (the procession of life) implies the same. Not only do the modes merge, they, in fact, compliment and reinforce one another. This is not simply a happy coincidence. The fact that both modes provide a means to a strong clear and concise concept is a result of setting the creation of place as a design goal. The struggle to find an objective means to a subjective end through a logical process of thought becomes rewarding as a design concept is formed.

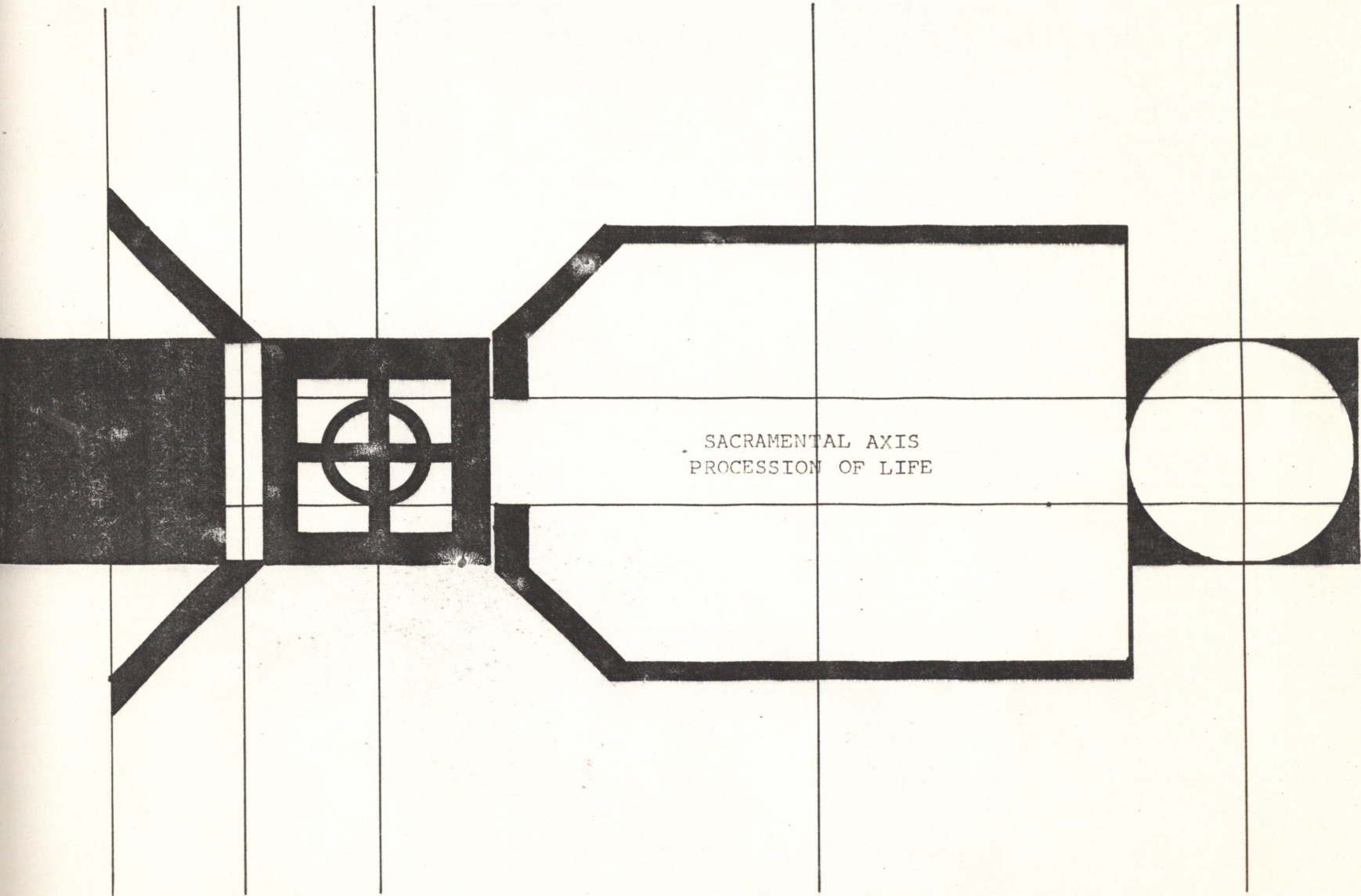
ENTRY
PLAZZA

ENTRANCE

BAPTRISTRY

NAVE

ALTAR



SEARCH
IN
DARKNESS

BEGINNING
OF LIGHT

RE-BIRTH, FORGIVENESS
EMERGENCE INTO LIGHT

HUMILITY, WORSHIP
LIGHT

TOTAL SACRIFICE
BRILLIANCE OF LIGHT

By no means is the design concept in itself place creation. It is, however, a starting point in which the elements of place, those elements which evoke an emotional response to the perception of context, may be utilized in built form. If elements dealing with phenomena such as light, color, texture, volume, form, shape ect. (these are sensual elements) are utilized in a sensitive, responsible manner according to the designer's personal interpretation of the context in which he is working and the needs he is fulfilling, then place creation is well on its way.

In architectural place creation, built-form is the very evidence through which we judge our responses. One must be able to identify in three-dimensional space. Such evidence cannot be provided here. Proof or disproof of this thesis must be made through tangible means. Even if this were possible, it does not follow that place would be created for anyone but myself as the designer, and perhaps I too would have to admit that place has not been created. However, by arriving at a strong concept, the opportunity to create place is much greater. The strength of the concept is relative to the degree of proximity to which a designer comes in his goal of place creation.



CONCLUSION

Upon concluding this thesis project I would like to express what I have learned through this exercise. My original interest in place in architecture has greatly increased as this project has progressed. This thesis was a mental effort. If it is true that one gets out only what he puts in, then I have gained much. I have learned how to communicate my own abstract thoughts and concepts in a logical manner, though at times it became a struggle to do so. Frustration and fanaticism were often the state of my mental well-being. However, I sincerely believe that I have accomplished a thesis. The very nature of a thesis implies that proof or disproof can be positive steps in the advancement of knowledge. I do not feel that I have proven that place in architecture can be created, nor do I feel I have disproven that such creation can be accomplished.

Place creation involves much more than a designer's intent to do so. However, such intentions should not be disregarded, for they may be a valid vehicle to furthering a designer's sensitivity and awareness towards himself, those he is designing for, and the state of architecture in general.

My attitudes about place have changed to a degree. I find that I have come full circle in this project to some extent. I am not suggesting an anti-thesis, merely another light in which place can be viewed. Perhaps the

basic concepts of existence are the foundation blocks for this thesis. What of place in the light of existential philosophy?

According to Sartre, "if existence preceeds essence, man is responsible for what he is. Thus, existentialism's first move is to make every man aware of what he is and to make the full responsibility of his existence rest on him."

Then place creation may be nothing more than providing man with an opportunity to create place within himself. Is place, then, existential space?

I wish to conclude this thesis on such a question, in that it is my hope that the reader's thought process might continue on; to expand upon, and reach further on the subject of place in architecture.

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