



The Theory of Architecture: Concepts Themes & Practices

Paul-Alan Johnson

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The Theory of Architecture Concepts, Themes & Practices Paul-Alan Johnson Although it has long been thought that theory directs architectural practice, no one has explained precisely how the connection between theory and practice is supposed to work. This guide asserts that architectural theory does not direct practice, but is itself a form of reflective practice. Paul-Alan Johnson cuts through the jargon and mystery of architectural theory to clarify how it relates to actual applications in the field. He also reveals the connections between new and old ideas to enhance the reader's powers of critical evaluation. Nearly 100 major concepts, themes, and practices of architecture--as well as the rhetoric of architects and designers--are presented in an easily accessible format. Throughout, Johnson attempts to reduce each architectural notion into its essential concept. By doing so, he makes theory accessible for everyday professional discussion. Topics are arranged under ten headings: identification, definition, power, attitudes, ethics, order, authority, governance, relationship, and expression. Areas covered under these headings include:

- * Utopic thought in theories of architecture
- * Advocacy and citizen participation in architecture
- * The basis of architectural quality and excellence
- * The roles of the architect as artist, poet, scientist, and technologist
- * Ethical obligations of architecture
- * Rationales for models and methods of design
- * How authority is determined in architecture
- * How architects structure their concepts
- * Conventions of communication within the architectural profession

Each section begins by showing the etymology of key terms of the topic discussed, along with a summary history of the topic's use in architecture. Discussions probe the conceptual and philosophical difficulties of different theories, as well as their potential and limitations in past and present usage. Among the provocative issues discussed in terms of their relationship to architecture are chaos theory, feminism, service to the community, and the use of metaphor. Johnson points out with stunning clarity the intentions as well as the contradictions and inconsistencies of all notions and concepts. All architects and designers, as well as students and teachers in these disciplines, will gain many insights about architectural thought in this groundbreaking text.

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