

In-between, Twin phenomena and The Court of Audit

Introduction

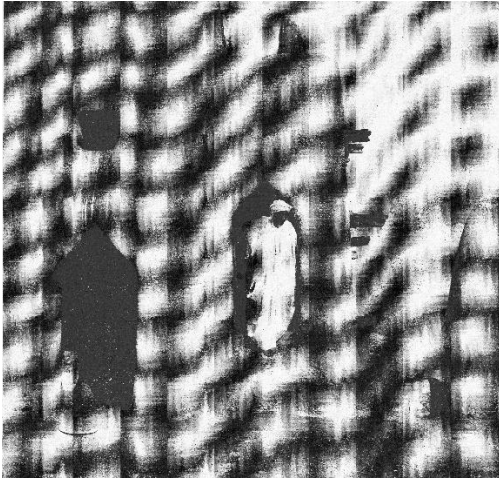
The concern of my paper is to focus on two essential - and constant - elements of Aldo van Eyck's thinking and his approach to architectural design: The concept of the 'In-between' and that of the 'Twin phenomena'. Furthermore, I will do so on the basis of the last design he realised together with Hanie van Eyck. Because on the basis of this project in comparison with another, also later project: the extension of the ESTEC complex in Noordwijk – just as realised together with Hannie and Abel Blom - a potential opposition between both concepts and their application on architectural design can be exemplified. And what also can be exemplified is a particular quality of the Court of Audit, concerning this matter. However, before coming to the architecture itself, I first wish to explain the concepts of 'In-between' and that of 'Twin phenomena' - and what distinguish them from one another.



The concept of the 'In-between'

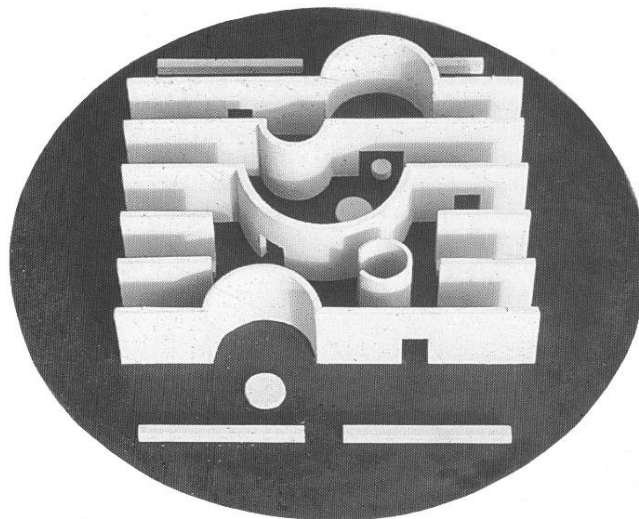
Within van Eyck's architectural theory, the concept of the 'In-between' essentially complements his notion of an 'Interiorization of space,' thus his position to reject the modernist approach to space and to refer to space in terms of place, as a place of human experience and living. And this, of course, in the context of Team 10. In relation to this approach to space, the concept of the 'In-between' now charges the concept of place with a socio-spatial meaning: place becomes an 'In-between' place, a place of encounter, of experienced encounter: between humans but also in terms of the encounter of a human being with the outside world, so to speak.

For Van Eyck, from this specific socio-spatial concept of space as place followed the primary function of architecture to just enable such experience, and to do so by creating corresponding spaces and spatial relations, including a corresponding relation between inside and outside - between private and public. In this vein, for Van Eyck architecture becomes humane architecture, it starts to coincide with man.



This functional relation between architecture and the 'Interiorization' of space includes, that architecture turns into what Van Eyck called with reference to Martin Buber - from whom he derived the concept of the 'In-between' - 'Gestalt gewordenes Zwischen.' That means that the reality of the 'In-between', of interaction and dialogue, becomes objectified in a corresponding architecture. Here, it is the created spatial interrelation, the spatial encounter or dialogue, that a particular architecture creates between the various inside and outside spaces and between them and the surroundings, by which that 'Zwischen' becomes 'Gestalt' - becomes objectified in physical shape - for instance in the shape of a particular doorstep - but also in the shape of a whole building.

But what kind of 'Gestalt' it eventually became in his architecture also depends on another concept, or rather notion, and that he also applied on architectural design: the notion of 'Twin phenomena'.



Twin phenomena

As the concept of the 'In-between' is about the concrete human experience in space, and the resultant meaning for architectural design, the notion of 'Twin phenomena' rather deals with reality as a whole. In this sense, with the term 'Twin phenomena' van Eyck attempted to describe the general relational character of indeed everything that exists, for instance: the existence of the phenomenon of day in relation to that of night, of past in relation to future, or small in relation to large and so on.

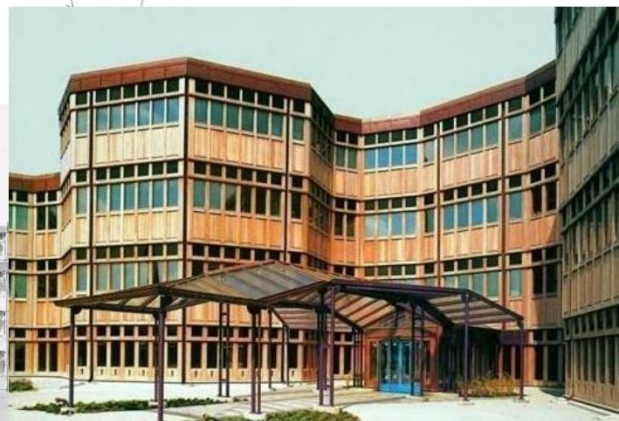
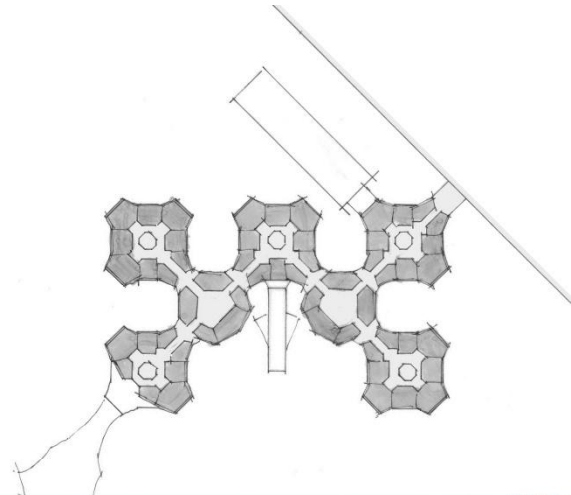
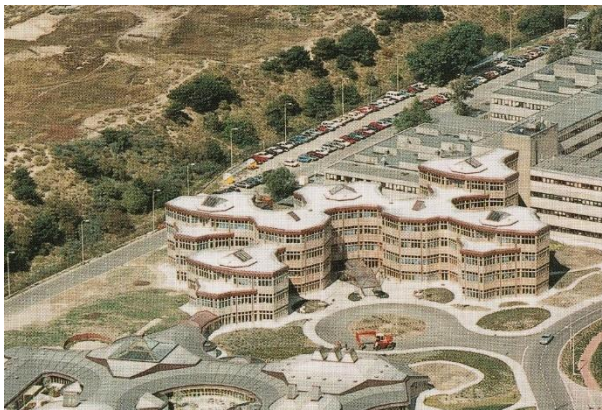
'In-between' and 'Twin phenomena' have in common the same notion of interaction and interdependency between two things, or phenomena: in a concrete experience-oriented and socio-spatial sense, on the one hand, and in an overall, generalizing sense, on the other. It is at the level of the 'Twin phenomena' of 'enclosed - open' and that of 'inside - outside' that both concepts, that is their application on architectural design, come together.

As soon as it regards architectural design, however, the notion of 'Twin phenomena' also resulted in rather formal categories of design, that is, of a configurational design approach. In particular, it resulted in Van Eyck's two design-principles of 'unity-diversity' and 'part-whole' - and by which architectural design was conceived to coincide with the general principle of relativity.

Main argument

What I want to show now on the basis of the design of the Court of Audit, and in comparison with a particular part of the ESTEC project, is that as soon as the 'twin-phenomenological' design-principle 'part-whole' and 'diversity-unity' are applied on the shaping and relating of spaces, they operate at the same artistic level as the before described 'Gestalt gewordenes Zwischen', however, not with a socio-spatial but a formal-artistic orientation. And it is this twofold orientation at the same level of design, by which the concept of the 'In-between' and that of 'Twin-phenomena' conflict with one another. They conflict with each other, since the artistic manifestation of the 'In-between' gets superimposed by a rather formal way of relating spaces with each other. In other words: to bring architecture into line with man gets superimposed by bringing architecture into line with the principle of relativity. This superimposition I would like to show at the example of the ESTEC extension.

With the example of the Court of Audit I instead want to show, that an integration of the design principle 'part-whole' and 'diversity-unity' into the created shape of a socio-spatial 'In-between' is realized - and by which the fundamental interaction, or dialogue, between the building and its surrounding - is even artistically intensified. This is the case, since here the design-principle 'part-whole' and 'diversity-unity' are applied only in a form-artistic way.



The Office part of the ESTEC extension

I have chosen this part of the building complex, due to the similarity with the extension of the Court of Audit and since here the design principle 'part-whole' just strongly determines the way how spaces are shaped and related to one another. In this sense, as far as this part of project represents a 'Gestalt gewordenes Zwischen' it does so rather in a formal-artistic sense. How does it do so?

The way how spaces are shaped and related to each other and to the surrounding space - is characterized by its subdivision into five identical parts. Two slightly different parts - , lying in-between - interconnect these five parts to a continuous horizontal-orthogonal structure. Taking three parts out, we have the very basic structure of the Court of Audit extension. Owing to the rather organic shape of the whole building structure, the separated parts get both clearly defined and bound together at the same time. This is realised by a façade, within which convex and concave sections continuously alternate - and whereby the convex sections define the singular parts, and the concave sections their conjunction to a whole. In a different way, we see this double function of that meandering shape: to create spatial independence and coherence, inside the building. Here the continuous system of corridors is characterised by leading from one central space to the following, all defining the centre of each of the different sub-part. By walking through the building (no matter on which floor) one clearly recognises the differentiation in several identical parts.

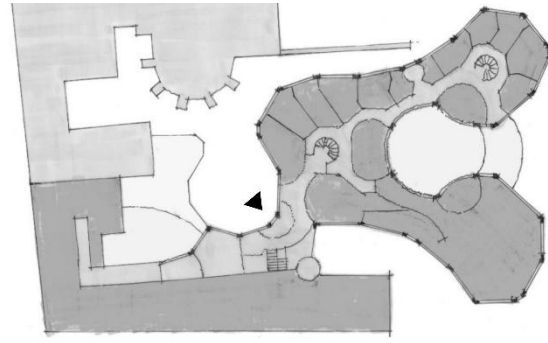
In this sense, the spatial structure is both at the outside and the inside characterized by a rather formal configuration of identical building sections to a coherent whole. From the outside perspective, their unity within one coherent building is additionally realised by specific feature of the façade architecture: Next to its subdivision into convex and concave sections, the façade is characterised by the inclusion of an apparently indefinite repetition of small vertical windows. This repetitive structure allows to artistically unite the various parts based on an order that interpenetrates each of these parts -comparable with the roof of the Burgerweeshuis with its endless repetition of roof domes. A third structuring element of the façade, which in turn mediates between this smallest and most individualising element of the facade and the alternating façade sections, are the vertical knuckle-lines. In this way, the 'Twin phenomena' 'part-whole' indeed determines the architecture of the building at the level of its overall spatial configuration and of the designed inside out-relation. As a result, also the realized and perceptible interaction, or dialogue between the various inside spaces among each other and with the outside is clearly determined by this design principle. The building therefore somehow disintegrates into a self-referential dialogue between its parts. It is at the entrance side, that a dialogue between the building as a whole and the outside is created and perceptible. This is, due to the fact that there an outside space is defined: the main outside space between this higher and the lower part of the extension.

Court of Audit

The design for the Court of Audit coincides with the described office part of the ESTEC project in being an extension. It is an extension that also contrasts with the existing and surrounding building structure through its organic shape. As in the case of the ESTEC design, this shape is characterized by a constant change between a convex and concave outline separating -and relating inside and outside from, or with each other.

At the same time, however, this leads not at all to a superimposition of the shaped dialogue between the building and its surrounding. Moreover, the meandering facade shapes itself this dialogue. That it can do so has three reasons: The first reason is the compact shape of this building extension, and as a result of this: the non-existing differentiation into identical sub-parts. The second reason, and from which the specific quality of the Court of Audit also results, is the spatial context, within which the building is situated. It is a defined urban space with a residential building structure along two sides; and with an office building, the choir of a church, and the existing part of the Court of Audit on the other two sides. The third reason- and which is directly related to both the spatial context and the more compact shape - is that the just as present change between convex and concave sections now moves between and around two defined outside spaces. Two spaces that in themselves act as 'In-between' spaces between the building's inside and the surrounding urban space. Spaces with a distinct socio-spatial identity: On the one hand: the small entrance square between the back of the church and the new main entrance of the Court of Audit. On the other hand: the central courtyard with a terrace on the second floor, forming the spatial centre of the new building.

On the basis of this spatial configuration the convex and concave building structure indeed creates and represents an interlacing between the building's covered inside and its surroundings. It does so by developing in horizontal and vertical direction: First, around the central terrace, second, around the entrance space, and third, along the opposed lying urban space.



kinds of outside, by which the reality of the 'In-between', of a socio-spatial interaction and dialogue becomes manifest through and in the physical shape of the building. It also becomes manifest, since the wave-like motion of the building's facade continues at the inside into the internal corridor system, which - at least from the second floor onward - provides an outside-orientation towards the different outside realms.

Eventually it becomes manifest by the design of the façade: here, the wave-like motion gets supported by its screen-like character. Amongst other this screen-like character is created by the grey-blue colouring of the balustrades—a colouring that adapts the balustrades to the windows and their reflection of the grey-blue sky. This screen-like separation divides, on the one hand, inside and outside in a clear and distinct way; on the other hand, it creates a clear view into the building's inside and vice versa. Owing to this kind of fusion of enclosing and opening, the façade does not open, but rather is open, and supports the interlacing between the building's inside and the defined outside space. And it is this screen-like character of the façade that also allows for the integration of the elements that embody the 'part-whole' and 'diversity-unity' principle. First, in the shape of the vertical knuckle lines that are situated between the polygon surfaces and which are detailed as open rain pipes. Positioned directly in front of the real columns of reinforced concrete, they are the only vertical elements within the design of the facade. In shaping the described interlacing, the horizontally acting screen-like surface of the façade creates and represents the uniting element of the design, while the vertically acting tectonic structure of knuckle lines, represents the individualizing element that separates the whole in different individual parts. In comparison with the ESTEC extension, the vertical knuckle lines get rendered, here, as relatively independent elements.

As a result, the design principle of 'part-whole' is integrated into the kind of how spaces are shaped and related to each other, without superimposing it. The same goes for the colouring of the façade and the thereby implied design principle of 'diversity - unity'. It does so, since also at the level of colouring this design principle does not deal with the configuration of the defined spaces but is limited to the design of the façade. Moreover, it intensifies this interaction, or dialogue, between the building and its surrounding, since it stresses the individual character of the building within the unifying spatial context of the defined urban space.