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DWELLING OFF-PLANET IN A CAN OF ENVIRONMENT: WHEN IS IT ARCHITECTURE?

Abstract

Almost everything that is talked about as space architecture is actually technology and its supporting sciences, which includes design. This paper describes research of how we give measure to express the immeasurable infinity that any one of us feels in our hearts, while architecture is not to be found as a measure, form or amplitude of anything. It brings to the discussion of space architecture the essential questioning of technology in architectural practice for off-Earth environments.

The draw of space travel and settlement is architectural in the way that we feel infinite potential by going out into that nothingness that infinitesimalizes an individual life just as our individual lives are infinitesimal to our souls. This paper answers to the question of how an off-Earth "can of Earth environment" becomes the measure of human aspiration, which is architecture. We face the terror of the void as a necessary danger of entering that space of infinity. From Earth, the universe twinkles. In space, as in the heart, the infinite is an unmitigated intensity. Technology is danger [Heidegger] both in maintaining the power to hold an artificial environment and as concealment of essential human ends. This is poetic: The danger of not finding spirituality in life and the yearning for it is express in the quest for space and space exploration; it is there whether we pay attention to it or not. Architecture can be shown to be our awareness of that in a superordinate program to materiality.

We can link architecture's superordinate program to technology in the context of astronautics as a defined relationship between technology and spirituality. The science of this is the 'alternate cognitive knowledge' that spiritual practice of rajayoga bears. It is a science that is 'objective' within any person [Vivekananda, Ram Chandra, Larson]. Spirituality allows the development its terms as aspiration, intention and the purpose of dwelling. Consciousness and its higher forms of freedom can be addressed through the simple means of freedom-of-choice as turning all materiality to means. Thus the inherent relationship between striving to get to space and architectural practice questioning technology as ends.

This paper concludes with a practical approach to take-in-hand the infinite, the immeasurable and the super-measurable that the universe holds out to us *as* off-Earth environment in direct service to the well being of the dweller, opening more proper avenues for architectural practice in space.