

Thesis topic: The Utilisation of the Flood-basin at Tivadar

It might be called a paradox that our ancestors with the regulation of the river Tisza – which otherwise fits into the economic and social processes of the 19th century – have not created a smooth, disciplined and calculable, but a tameless natural phenomenon. The straightening of the curves of the Tisza, ceasing its edges made valuable crop fields, but also restricted the puffer areas of the river that provided natural protect for the people who lived in symbiosis with the cycles of the changing water.

A gapped dam system was made during the regulation, which, on one hand, restrained the river that swells with even more destructing force. On the other hand, and this seems to be the greater problem, the dam separated the river from the daily life of the people living by its bank. This alienation from the environment caused and still causes hesitation, slow exhaustion and impoverishment on this picturesque land.

The configuration of a bigger reservoir and dam system, that provides total protection against swellings, cannot be an obligate and sustainable solution because of its harmful side-effect, not only because of its unbelievable and disproportionate costs, but also because of its un-sustainability and unreality.

The realisation and the meditation on this problem is highly an architect's project and, may I add, architect's responsibility. The research for alternative and sustainable answers is highly right and topical from the side of the graduating student. And the answer is striking: the dissolution of the general uncertainty caused by the destructive swellings and the suggestion for the revival of the area can be an excellent alternative to the long-drawn big projects, as it has a fast and local effect and it is realistic and effective even in a small compass.

This idea is not recent: the swimming settlements are reminiscent of the old water mills and other swimming houses that completely disappeared to the last century.

This projects the idea of getting to know the river and the ways of living with it, instead of strictly secluding of the everchanging and incalculable water. As Gregory Bateson put it in the '70's:

‘From the perspective of mere survival and continuity, the harder stones, like granite should be considered as the most successful among the macroscopic entities.

[...] But the stone stays in 'game' with different modes than living things.

The stone, let's put it this way, resists changing; stays in place, unaltered.

A living thing avoids changing by correcting the alteration or by changing itself to adapt to the new conditions or by organically integrating the alteration into itself.’

The vitality and flexibility of the swimming islands is not only shown in relation to the changing water. The thesis proposes a structured system that can be built or rebuilt, extended, moved according to the changes, thanks to its modularised structure. In Umberto Eco's words:

‘The work of art is an open structure.’

The elements of the planned system are sourced locally, and can be prepared and transported locally. These elements have different quality, punctuality and durability according to their role within the structure. The elements which limited in number can provide infinite building opportunity according to the user's needs, taking into account even the eventual lack of technical knowledge or mechanisation.

The greatest recognition and virtue of the thesis is that the answer for the original question is not only a specific topic, but also a variable system: a catalogue that needs to be devised in its details and uniformed connections.

To illustrate the opportunities of this catalogue, one part of the thesis is the plan of a swimming driftwood processor settlement; moreover Noemi's other ideas, such as the fruit- or fish processing factories are realistic (possibly accomplishable) ideas that support the original goal. It is typical of our world view that driftwood means a constant problem to us, however, this organic waste, which creates bars and obstacles on the river, is an unfailing and renewing source of energy. This, with a little input and with the help of the local labour force, can solve or improve the great problem of this area: the lack of firing in the winter.

This self-evident recognition illustrates nicely Noemi's problem solving strategy: she targets to find those methods which improves others' quality of life with minimal tools and based on the local opportunities. Her thesis plan can be viewed as the part of finding the way through this un-trodden path, where the details are sometimes naive, other times inventiously punctual ideas, which inspire us to rethink the most common systems and components.

The ingenious use of the fabric formed concrete technology is part of this, however, I cannot hide my doubts about its water proof abilities- hence its buoyancy-, it is most important to emphasise the recognition that certain techniques with new perception bear so much potential.

Noemi's thesis therefore is a recipe, for me.

A recipe, which needs an intensive product and manufacturing technological overview in order to be turned into a real catalogue, but this obviously is over the limitations of a thesis paper.

A recipe, which on one hand, shows a creative and complex architectural approach in open systems, on the other hand, a recipe that with solving actual problems brings us back to a withered era and the beautiful atmosphere of swimming houses.

Bon Apetit!

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