

FROM SOCIAL STUDIES CHAPTER III *TO NEVERLAND**...

Doubt, tension, disillusion in the first steps and the transition from observer to actor...

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Abstract

Education of architecture calls for a different start than others. For the student to ‘forget’ everything he has learned until now and make a new beginning, the educator must break some habits. The way to do this is in fact simple. The student needs to get in touch with himself, that is, he needs to concentrate on what he’s doing rather than the outcome. He needs to learn to be happy with what he has created, even if he’s chosen a model, this should not continue, he must learn to appreciate his own imagination. He must stop following what others are doing and collecting data and instead start being the actor, not the observer.

So, what is the role of the educator in the forming of this awareness and sensibility?

What can be done beyond communicating a systematic and correct model outside of the well known psychological approaches?

What can be said about how studio environments should be designed?

Firstly, studios should be **Neverland** -like places where a fine balance is achieved and all hierarchies disappear in a second. These should be places where you lose yourself, only surrounded by your dreams.

In Neverland everything is about believing. When you stop believing Neverland disappears. But all the purity, innocence and naturalness that a child-like spirit contains is present here. It is an environment purified of any unnecessary information.

The conclusion here is definitely not leaving the student to his own devices, but to make it easier to understand; the steps to make the new student who ‘does not remember’ find a path can be summarized as follows:

Discovering, understanding and perceiving communication pathways

Discovering yourself and your potential, learning to listen

Feeling the art of life and creativity

So we can summarize awareness as the increase in courage and vitality, and the decrease in fear and doubt. When it is outlined this way, the model of teaching that is used will be irrelevant because there will be the Neverland that is emancipated and fuelled by the student’s imagination. Here, the true nature of mankind, his feelings and his will to live are already present. In this environment the student will create, his doubts subsided, he will feel himself in the midst of his life and will love his profession.

The student should come not to a lecture room but to Neverland where he will find everything he needs. Conversation, feeling nature, drawing freely for hours and getting his strength from silence will be the way of this new method.

The student who was told off for painting the daisy purple and its leaves pink, will find the courage to do this again only through this method; which in turn will give way to design and creativity. The aim of the this study is to find a path to “ Neverland”, by creating a new model

approach, called art of life and creativity in-between a new world of architecture education and reality...

* Social Studies Chapter III represents here the strict education system in college which is not based on a free and creative thinking...

** Neverland is the fictional island and dream world, featured in the play Peter Pan by Scottish writer J. M. Barrie. It is often seen as a metaphor for eternal childhood, immortality, and escapism.

Introducing Architecture...

Centuries ago, Gaoan said, : “There are no smart or stupid students – it is only a matter of the teacher educating them to be virtuous, discovering their potential capabilities and encouraging them to push these capabilities forward...”(Cleary,1989).

Yesterday afternoon I met a student who was there to register with his mother. A family from Izmir. Father was an architect. Clearly proud and anticipating following in his father’s footsteps the first thing he asked was ***‘what do we need for our first class?’***

This is a typical question for a student who has left the safe arms of high school, who is now aware of the fact that school is more than ‘Social Studies, Chapter 3, Page 20’ but does not want to carry this awareness any further. We talked for a while. The student naturally had some knowledge as to what architecture was and what kind of an academic life awaited him but as he had not faced these issues yet he did not know whether what he knew was the truth or some other less favorable fate was waiting for him. On the other hand there was something very clear in his eyes. ***‘I am willing to go through sleepless nights, but don’t expect me to work too hard, let me live a little...’***

I have always thought that the most enjoyable period in the study of architecture is the first semester, both when I was a student and an assistant. My opinion did not change during the years that followed when I started teaching.

The moment the student steps into the classroom is incomparable, you can not capture the same moment ever again. The energy created by the naivety, purity, pride and excitement disappears in the following years. Especially for a student who has taken on a project, there is only a few years of torture instead of education. (although there are exceptions.) But this is the nature of the beast. You cannot feel the excitement or the beating of a student’s heart any other time or place. Students wait a whole summer to enjoy that first lecture. The moment when the student looks at you pen and paper at hand, with a head full of expectations some of which may be a little exaggerated, you have to take the right step because it is in this moment that the student’s notion of being an architect will be shaped and even years later this notion will not be erased.

Over the years I have read quite a few articles on what architecture is and what an architect is supposed to do. I have come across comprehensive research in these studies on how education systems should be revised or which methods should be adopted in order to bring in certain capabilities. Remembering what Gaoan said centuries ago, I realised the need to adopt a different point of view.

Vitruvius was the first to understand the various forces that affect architectural education from without. His broad list of subjects with which an architect should be familiar locates the education of an architect within a wider framework of knowledge (**Weiner,2005**).

Following Vitruvius' footsteps, it is necessary to build a new framework, which includes “**not**” the answers but all possible questions in the first year architectural education.

First steps – Confusions – Questions

Architecture is different from other educational fields. Students of law or medicine or any other field go through their education learning to adapt themselves to their profession. You often hear comments such as ‘He’s dedicated his life to medicine’ or ‘Law became his whole life’. It is different for students of architecture. They learn to adapt their profession to their life and to develop a lifestyle and awareness in accordance with this adaptation. While life flows, everyday activities, habits, expectations and goals continue in this vein.

An architect or a student of architecture does not dedicate himself to his profession because there is **no line** he can draw between the two, designing is a natural process for him in the flow of his life, has always been and always will be.

Studying architecture forms a lifestyle; an architect must learn to look at his environment with a level of concern and to be creative in letting his concern bring about possible solutions. In order to achieve this, he must think about what he expects from life and feel the strength in him to make his first decisions.

If a student who enters the faculty of architecture is doing so due to external factors rather than his own volition, he will have a different stand. The notion here is ‘I can’t draw, I’ve never done anything like this before.’ He will be susceptible to environmental inputs as he had no knowledge of architecture before. These are usually scary.

To give an example, when you ask the new students what they expect from their studies the answers you get will be interesting:

- We won’t get much sleep will we?
- When will we get to build something?.
- I can’t draw, what am I going to do?
- Why do we have so many classes, aren’t we just going to draw?
- My friend said architecture students have art classes, we did not have that in high school, what’s going to happen?
- Why do they ask us to buy so many drawing tools, we don’t know anything yet.
- I thought we were just going to draw buildings, why do you make us draw other things?

Questions and comments are endless. The student is naturally confused and apprehensive. He is in fact seeking help. It is only a matter of time before the student wishes to throw himself into the safe and familiar arms of high school rather than face the cold, hard facts.

Architecture begins, when the students take the pen to their hands and draw. It is a magic moment, and not important, how good or bad they draw, or what they draw. The most important thing is, that they find the courage to draw. Drawing is not just a skill; it can be learned, by thinking, imagining, risking, inventing, and expressing all of them in unique visual form. There is no absolute standard of good drawing.

Giving the children confidence that they can draw and leading them to “let their eyes do the drawing” results in sensitive, perceptive drawings. Teacher should encourage students to take risks for drawing and not be inhibited by fear of “messing up”... (**Unsworth, 2001**)

Besides, it helps students to perceive the world around them, which awakes several new questions in mind. If we really expect to develop an enquiring mind in a student, one that is eager to ask questions concerning problems of today, a mind that is flexible, then we have to create a place, where all questions are asked and discussed freely.

Kurokawa once stated, that dividing problems into separate components in order to make it easier to address each portion separately has been given one of the characteristic features of 20th century intellectual life(**Kurokawa, 1991**) This will help us to define and combine problematic points and also to create such a place which includes all necessary information provided by the students and teachers in a conscious way, but not necessarily rules. More important is that every one should be aware of that changes to an informal and unusual way may lead to a freedom and creativity, but it can also lead to an underestimating and insufficient expression of thoughts and visions, if the aim is not clear enough to all the students.

As Michelangelo said :"*the greatest danger for most of us is not that we aim too high and we miss it, but we aim too low and we reach it...*"(**Unsworth ,2001**)

Why should we create a neverland ?

The goal of education is to form minds which can be critical, which can verify, and not accept everything they are offered. So, we need pupils who are active, who learn early to find out for themselves, partly by their own spontaneous activity and partly through materials we set up for them; who learn early to tell what is verifiable and what is simply the first idea to come to them. (**Feigenberg, 1991**). So, what can be done about this, how can the student's preconceived opinions, fears and doubts be drawn to a relevant point and a strong academic foundation be formed to build on?

Are terms such as **awareness, feeling anxiety toward real events and being conscious of one's own vital reality relevant to our concern, if so what the role of the educator in the forming of this awareness and sensibility?**

* What can be done beyond communicating a systematic and correct model outside of the well known psychological approaches?

* What does the student expect?

The amount of questions can be increased, and it should be; but it is not necessary to find answers to all questions. In today's world a problem-solving approach cannot be sufficient in every condition. First year architectural education is one of them.

Solving a problem, and getting an answer stops searching in most cases; if you think you have an answer for it, you just stop creating. Answers kill creativity. What we have to seek for is to find maybe "*possible answers*", but absolutely not "*definite answers*". A possible answer may be in a place, where all above mentioned questions can be asked and discussed easily. In this study it will be called **Neverland**... Firstly, studios should be **Neverland** -like places where a **fine balance** is achieved and all **hierarchies disappear** in a second. These should be places where you lose yourself, only surrounded by your **dreams**. In Neverland everything is about **believing**. When you stop believing Neverland disappears. But all the **purity, innocence and naturalness that a child-like spirit** contains is present here. It is an environment **purified of any unnecessary information**. Today's education systems in every field is usually result-oriented. The process although accepted as important and valuable tends to get lost along the way. The future anxiety here holds the student back from enjoying the moment he's in. This is where Neverland comes in handy.

In his book "**Creating Your Own Path to Freedom**", Osho has written about education in a large chapter and concluded his examples by saying 'Real education teaches the methods of the heart, shows how can be more joyous, gives the sensibility to respect life, embrace existence and appreciate aesthetic beauty, brings us closer to nature...' (**Osho, 2006**)

This is worth thinking about because creating is an activity of thinking outside of the box. It needs not the acuteness of reason but the softer voice of the heart. So **the moment being lived in** is important.

In high school the student usually memorizes everything, even when he does not, the things he learns are limited to what he's told to 'learn', never does he know what the information he learns is used for in real life. As the result is important, he's only concerned with passing his classes, not what he experiences while he's learning. That's why a new student of architecture has to learn to understand why we choose to do certain things and why not.

As soon as he feels the need to understand, he finds something to communicate with. This is much easier in Neverland. The student creates without realising it. Many times you can see a student come up with such a correct composition that he himself doesn't know how he did it. Here, the student has gotten **in touch with himself**, in other words, has started to **'remember'**.

How life goes on in Neverland...

Olivio Ferrari once remarked, " *we never talk about the magic of teaching*". It is clear that a teacher must have a philosophy, must know and believe something. A teacher must teach what they know and what they believe. It is not enough to have an idea: one must be able to teach that idea. The act of teaching depends primarily on a kind of sympathetic magic. Teaching is a power passed on from one person to another. It requires a reciprocal operation of empathy between student and teacher, and for the architecture itself. (**Weiner, 2005**)

This reciprocal operation is called "*open communication*" in Neverland.

We have to deal with the world. So does every student. Every student has his or her own way to communicate with others. In Neverland it is much easier, as there are no boundaries, and it helps students to emphasize their feelings and imagination and show them accordingly. In that sense the basis of Neverland is set on the four functions of **Carl Gustav Jung**.

These 4 functions are: **sensing, thinking, feeling, and intuiting...** (**Jung, 2006**)

We first sense everything, and want to find out what it is. Then we think about it. The thinking process includes evaluating information or ideas rationally, logically and also perceiving, exploring, dreaming, judging and adopting to situations.

The third step is about like or dislike. It is about feeling how to accept the current situation or to reject it. And the last step is a kind of perception that works outside of the usual conscious processes, which is called intuition.

According to Jung, (**Jung, 2007**) we all have these functions, but in different proportions. The important thing is to balance them. In Neverland students get an opportunity to make a self evaluation how they use their four functions, which has to be increased, and vice versa...

Boeree indicates that Jungian functions have to be evaluated in such a way, that each of us has a **superior** function, which we prefer and which is best developed in us, a **secondary** function, which we are aware of and use in support of our superior function, a **tertiary** function, which is only slightly less developed but not terribly conscious, and an **inferior** function, which is poorly developed and so unconscious that we might deny its existence in ourselves. Most of us develop only one or two of the functions, but our goal should be to develop all four. (**Boeree, 2006**)

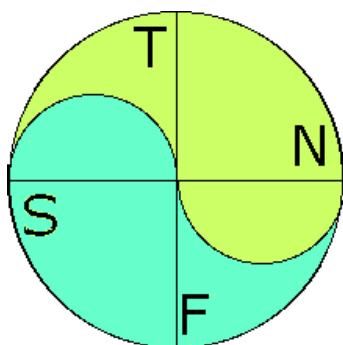


Figure1. the four functions of Jung (Boeree)

Each process has its own particular areas in which it performs better than the other processes. Feeling excels at *well-being and belonging*, thinking is excellent at *logic*, sensing excels at discriminating one's *immediate surroundings*, intuition excels at *generating possibilities* (**Stamps, 1994**)

As can be expected this process is not an easy one. But what the student needs first and foremost is this state of **awareness**.

Krishnamurti describes an intelligent revolt which is not reaction, and which comes with self-knowledge through the awareness of one's own thought and feeling. It is only when we face experience as it comes and do not avoid disturbance that we keep intelligence highly awakened; and intelligence highly awakened is intuition, which is the only true guide in life.

(**Krishnamurti, 1953**)

By handing the student a pen and paper in his first design class you either create a potential that develops on an acutely reasonable and intellectual level or let the student live in the moment by opening the doors of Neverland. The choice of the educator does not necessarily indicate the path the student will take because he will have the right to make decisions concerning his own life but it will point him toward a path.

The conclusion here is definitely not leaving the student to his own devices, but to make it easier to understand; the steps to make the new student who 'does not remember' find a path can be summarized as follows:

- **Discovering yourself and your potential**
- **Feeling the art of life and creativity**
- **Avoiding fear**

It is important for the student to know himself and discover his potential.

High school has ended, the student has found himself at the gates of university after a difficult period of exams. The first days are difficult for the student, almost strange, and he finds it hard to make any sense of it all. While the university=freedom concept he used to dream of is present, he is still missing the safety of high school.

At this point the student will start to discover himself, firstly getting in touch with himself.

The reactions given in childhood change over time. Children express their happiness and sadness naturally without any plans in the background but as they get older they feel the weight of environmental inputs, habits and values and start filtering their thoughts and feelings. This filtering process causes the student to ignore his creativity in the first few classes. **The student needs to dream...Nietzsche says 'the day that dreamers are gone will be a disaster for humanity'.**

The imagination of a student of architecture works differently or should be made to work differently. He needs to think and feel what no one else has thought or felt before or perceive these in his life. **Life is beautiful when meaning is created.** Osho says meaning comes from creativity. Meaning should be sought without any preconceived notions or expectations, only then it can be created and this is only possible through taking part in life deeply and completely. Anything is possible for attending life. **Somebody who wants to learn how to dance needs to dance instead of just watching dancers. A person who wants to learn something needs to participate in it.** (Osho, 1999)

We can apply what Osho said to students of architecture. The student enters the university learning how to collect data. Collecting data blocks creativity. The student, as a result of learning about what others have done, puts himself in the role of the observer. **Whereas he needs to be an active participant.** Only then can he step out of what's already known and be creative. **The moment he lets go of his mind and reason will be a beginning here.**

The student who only tries to convey what he knows follows a well known path, there is no creativity there, only a path that's followed, **what the student of architecture must be taught is not to follow down a path but to have the courage to participate in life.**

Going over what we've said so far, what is obvious is the need for the student to get in touch with himself. Although the language of design is not one he can understand, **he can use color and lines the way he's used to and will be allowed to do so for a while yet. Basic design studios will become his first Neverland and his first interaction will be with white sheets. He is asked to transform what's in his mind on to paper freely.** The possibility of laws being misused is condoned. The student is at the point of the 'bird' he was taught. In his drawing pad he sees his free world for the first time. His scared hand starts to fill the page and his drawings become preliminary sketches. **Long talks with the student are essential at this point, not only lectures.** It is a part of concentrating on what's at hand and not just on the result: talking and discussing every line drawn in a studio, forgetting about the outside world. **Going back to nature will be important here.** What's happening around us and what are we missing? Sometimes it will be necessary to **carry the studio outside** to enjoy watching or drawing a bird in the sky or perched on a branch. Here, the student will learn to listen, speak and to do these freely, but more importantly he will notice the silence.

Every child perceives nature in a different way. This perception is connected with the values developed before, but the energy of life in everyone is the same. The way to bring this out in a student is through silence. The student needs silence, **the vibration of silence**, as much as he needs to talk, discuss and converse. The educator has to realize the need of the student to express himself freely by drawing anything he chooses in order to dismantle the insecurity caused by his belief that his best friend in high school was better than him.

Unless it was imposed, the student will find himself in this silence. The educator's job in Neverland is to provide it. It is the only way to help the student discover his own potential.

A self confident student can trust existence and the universe. Lastly the educator should help the student remember. **The student who has not taken the responsibility of his life should want to do so. This responsibility begins when the student starts questioning everything.** The student must be encouraged to ask questions.

Life in Neverland...

**This pictures are taken in
Neverland (Introduction to Architecture)
Studios / Halic University-2008**

Lectured by Assist. Prof. Dr. Lerzan Aras,
Res. Assist. Eser Ya ıcı,
Res. Assist. Esin Sarıman, Res. Assist. Burçe Tokur



Conclusion

Education of architecture calls for a different start than others. For the student to ‘forget’ everything he has learned until now and make a new beginning, the educator must break some habits. The way to do this is in fact simple, creating an original and free studio environment.

As Dutton states, the design studio is the central feature of architectural education programs. It is the heart and head of architectural education. (**Dutton, 1991**)

Architecture is among disciplines of possibilities. Though long overdue, the disciplines of design have begun to emerge independently as neither subset of the sciences or the humanities (**Malecha, 2006**). And because each school is situated in a unique institutional context and influenced by its own regional demographics, programmatic change must follow from a careful self- assessment of the school’s particular circumstances.

Perceptions of the school program, social dynamics and the ideal studio and curriculum (**Groat, 1996**) are interrelated for creating this atmosphere. But in every case there is one thing in common, and this is the reality that the student needs to get in touch with himself, that is, he needs to concentrate on what he’s doing rather than the outcome.

He needs to learn to be happy with what he has created, even if he’s chosen a model, this should not continue, he must learn to appreciate his own imagination.

He must stop following what others are doing and collecting data and instead start being the actor, not the observer.

Awareness as the increase in courage and vitality, and the decrease in fear and doubt is the are the basic aims of Neverland. When it is outlined this way, the model of teaching that is used will be irrelevant because there will be the Neverland that is emancipated and fuelled by the student’s imagination. Here, the true nature of mankind, his feelings and his will to live are already present. In this environment the student will create, his doubts subsided, he will feel himself in the midst of his life and will love his profession.

He will begin to sense, to think and to feel.. As Santayana writes, “ A sunset is not criticized, it is felt and enjoyed”... This gives us the freedom to appreciate and admire the beauty of something and take fuller responsibility for it. (**Santayana, 1988**)

The student should come not to a lecture room but to Neverland where he will find everything he needs. *Conversation, feeling nature, drawing freely for hours and getting his strength from silence* will be the way of this new method. The student who was told off for painting the daisy purple and its leaves pink, will find the courage to do this again only through this method; which in turn will give way to design and creativity.

As Krishnamurti indicated years ago, “*Education should not encourage the individual to conform to society or to be negatively harmonious with it, but help him to discover the true values which come with unbiased investigation and self-awareness...*”

(**Krishnamurti, 2004**)

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