In their introduction to this book, the editors resorted to an analogy with the game of chess to suggest that the history of architectural theory could go beyond the simple description of the “moves” of the theorist by examining “how the rules of the game shifted throughout history.”¹

To address this question, I propose to examine some aspects of the work produced in the 1960s and 1970s by Montreal architect and artist Melvin Charney (1935-2012).² Charney’s oeuvre, one may argue, is truly representative of the period ranging from the 1960 to the mid-1990, since it reflects a shift—which characterized the passage from “High Modernism” to “Postmodernism” — from an architecture conceived of as an instrument efficiently performing functions (machine) to an architecture conceptualized as a system of signs (language). As described below, Charney scrutinized theoretical dualities inherited from the modern movement and transformed them with the introduction of references external to the field of architecture. In the process, a trajectory emerged that changed the terms of reference and shaped the thematic contents of this dualistic framework.

On a metacritical level, my methodological outlook builds on a crucial distinction Stanford Anderson (1934-2016) made in 1987 between the internal and the external history of architecture.³ “Internal history,” he explained, “considers what is unique to [the field of architecture],” while “external history demonstrates how the field […] is enabled or constrained by social conditions.” The core of Anderson’s argument is to accept neither complete determination nor autonomy. There is, rather, an intersection between a relatively independent field such as architecture and the enabling and limiting conditions of society. There is some internal order to the field of architecture, but its intersection with a particular society is a matter of historical inquiry, not logical demonstration.
Anderson gave, unfortunately, no clue about what he meant by “internal order of the field.” Also open to speculation is how “the enabling and limiting conditions of society” actually affect the internal order of the field. Charney never referred to Anderson’s model, but his work suggests hypotheses about these issues. Yet, in the context of this book, the conjunction of both Charney’s critique and Anderson’s theory may help to assess the assertion of the editors that “the history of architectural theory in the post-war period has been impacted by the coming and going of a series of theoretical frameworks: critical theory, postmodernism, critical regionalism, deconstructivism, pragmatism, and so on.”

Image versus process

After architectural studies at McGill University, Melvin Charney completed his education at Yale University in 1959. There, he was deeply influenced by the ideas of Louis I. Kahn, notably, by his distinction between design and architecture. According to Kahn, design proposed formal solutions to a problem formulated \textit{a priori} in a program, whereas architecture started with the “realization” of a problem. Design tended to impose order with exterior forms. In contrast, architecture felt the “existence will” of a need, that is, the form lying undeveloped within that need. In other words, architecture grew out of a need as a plant from a seed. Architecture was the product of an intellectual process rather than a mere preconceived vision. This is why Kahn valued archaic form, which was form still loaded with possibilities. Design was imagery, while architecture was a perpetual process of inquiry into the nature of things.

Following Kahn’s advice, Charney travelled in the eastern Mediterranean countries between 1961 and 1963. In looking at how ancient cultures answered architectural problems, the contemporary architect could learn how to get to the core of emerging new societal demands.

In Istanbul – most notably in its historical mosques – Charney found an architecture embodying “construction”; the principle of which was the “build-up” of elements. Separation of small, familiar parts, such as columns, thin walls, and domes, was the “rule of the game” in sixteenth-century Turkish architecture. In this way, buildings retained “a sense of process”; thus, they had meaning for a contemporary architecture similarly made of small, prefabricated industrial elements.

In contrast, the troglodyte architecture of Cappadocia was based on the principle of “excavation”; whereby material was removed from natural rock formations to create inhabitable space. Yet, the landscape of Cappadocia was also characterized by the presence of the discordant image of “constructed architecture” imported by the Christians during the 11th century. While the “plan
of a rock-cut dwelling began with the cutting of its spaces,” religious architecture “began with an image,” the image of a known style, of previous examples. Specifically, rock-cut churches were not “construction,” since their sculpted decoration was merely an “image of construction.” Charney’s archive from his travels includes a photograph he took meant to show that the columns and arches of these churches held nothing up (Fig. 1). What separated the indigenous dwellings and the religious environment of Cappadocia was not a difference of principle – both were realized by way of excavation – but precisely the difference between “process” and “image.”

Upon his return to Montreal in 1964, Charney found instances of “process” and “image” in the new architecture that emerged out of the frenetic modernization of his native city. The traditional city of streets and squares was transformed into an environment of dense, vertical clusters of buildings. A detailed analysis of Place Victoria indicated the semi-successful insertion of tall skyscrapers in the urban fabric. Place Victoria and its siblings, such as Place Ville-Marie, presented a special environmental problem, he wrote: their “interior circulation spaces are part of the private building yet because of their size really serve the public as streets and are in a sense an extension of the public city.”
This dichotomy, he argued, was not clearly resolved in the planning of these building complexes. Yet, Place Victoria was superior to the other recent Montreal high-rise office towers because it emphasized “a sense of process set up both in the grouping and in the phasing of the elements of this building.” By comparison, Place Ville-Marie and the C-I-L House exhibited “an overt formalism and a two-dimensional composition of parts;” their architecture followed a “packaging ideology” which had “all the semblance of cool integration” of technology. “However, in Place Victoria,” Charney concluded, “integration has in itself become part of the form; the technology of this tower is realized in architecture, and, as architecture, technology here becomes a human factor.”

In his first influential essay, “Grain Elevator Revisited,” Charney showed that the dichotomy between image and process was ingrained in the discourse of the modern movement. He was intrigued that Le Corbusier used photographs of American grain elevators to illustrate his famous definition of architecture: “L’architecture est le jeu savant, correct et magnifique des volumes assemblés sous la lumière.” He was struck by the fact that Le Corbusier published an image of Montreal’s Grain Elevator no. 2 and wrongly situated it in the United States. Moreover, Le Corbusier touched up the photograph: to illustrate his argument, he erased the Bonsecours Market from the background to isolate the volume of the elevator in a void; finally, he marked out the edges of the building to accentuate symmetry.

Charney noticed the discrepancies of the Purist myth. The imposing structures of the port of Montreal were visibly not monuments isolated in the American prairies; neither were they made to stir emotions, as Le Corbusier argued. After he studied their conception, Charney realized that each elevator was a link in a distribution chain, built at the scale of the continent, for the global provision of grain.

He concluded that Le Corbusier and his contemporaries of the 1920s did not understand that the elevators were not buildings but large-scale machines made to keep grain in motion. Because they looked at them merely as images, the “moderns” of the 1920s saw the elevators as formal analogues for a future architecture. In Charney’s opinion, contemporary architects made the same aesthetic mistake when they looked at the installations of the Kennedy Space Centre and at Apollo vehicles as a prefiguration of a new lifestyle. For him, “rather than the static and lumpy neo-monuments of yesteryear,” the elevators were the image of a process, a “process we must study if we believe that architecture is an involvement with human processes rather than with designed things.”

Taking the Pavillon du Québec at Expo 67 as an example, Charney argued that Quebec’s architecture was characterized by an overwrought formalism (Fig. 2). His own anti-formalism adhered to the radical discourses of the 1960s, and in particular, to the ideas of the inventor of the Fun Palace, Cedric Price. These discourses in favor of an “architecture autre” undermined the very values on which
modern monumental architecture rested: composition, pre-visualization, permanence, fixity, and ultimately, the very notion of “object,” for which was substituted the notion of “process.”

An instance of architecture autre, Charney’s project for the Canadian Pavilion at Expo 70 at Osaka, showed that an alternative to the “object of design as work of art” was the “environmental kit-of-parts,” which enabled to anticipate a nomadic and participative architecture, constantly transformed by the users. In other words, here was an “architecture of process” realized by a selection, an appropriation, and a “détournement” of industrial products (Fig. 3).\(^{17}\)

Charney’s opposition of “process” and “formalism” echoed the contemporaneous distinction between “instrument” and “monument” George Baird made in 1967 when he compared Cedric Price’s Pottery Thinkbelt project and Eero Saarinen’s CBS Building in New York City.\(^{10}\) Baird considered that this dichotomy was an aporia that could be resolved with the introduction of semiology. Following a different path to surpass the dichotomy, Charney resorted instead to Michael Polanyi’s concept of “tacit knowledge” to supplement structuralist theories of the sign.
The contradiction of contemporary architecture

The starting point of his argument was the contradiction of contemporary architecture “between its elitist and repressive condition and its obvious origins in social content.” To illustrate this contradiction, Charney compared photographs of two individual houses built north of Montreal. On the one hand, the picture of an architect’s house found on the cover of a book on contemporary architecture in Quebec embodied the ideology and failure of “architecture as an institutional system” (Fig. 4). On the other hand, the photo of an anonymous house, which illustrated an article denouncing the ugliness of Quebec’s landscape, represented the other repressive side of an elitist cultural institution incapable of seeing in this image “an authentic architecture born of real things and rooted in people’s real lives” (Fig. 5).

A scrupulous description of the architect’s house indicated that its ambiguous formalism detached the building from its environment. In its formal isolation, this house, largely derivative from American precedents of the 1950s, recalled “the language of an aesthetic myth.”
Fig. 4. Architect Charles Elliott Trudeau's house in the Laurentians, Quebec, ca. 1966. Reproduced with permission from *Vie des arts*, no. 42 (1966): 32.

Fig. 5. House of an unknown person, n.d., photograph: Jean Saulnier. Reproduced by permission of the Ministère de la culture du Québec from *Culture vivante*, no. 15 (1969): 12.
Found on the side of the road, the other was, on the contrary, totally integrated into its environment. The anonymous house was “specific to its occupants and to its place.” Its real significance lay in the fact that it reflected “the condition of those who had to struggle – with a minimum of resources available – to find a way to house themselves.” According to Charney, the house belonged to a living popular tradition of medieval origin, which was still alive in the modern age. He derived this line of thought from John A. Kouwenhoven’s *Made in America: The Arts in Modern Civilization* (1949), in which the author argued that the vernacular tradition was transformed by industrialization, notably by the invention of balloon framing and prefabrication. According to Kouwenhoven, the vernacular tradition was the real driving force of “an architecture indigenous to modern civilization.” But Charney added another layer to this proposition when he maintained: “A tradition refers to an attitude towards building, an attitude rooted in an innate response to the need for organization of physical space and conditioned by the resources available.” In presenting popular architecture as an “innate response” of people to their environment, Charney drew an explicit analogy with Michael Polanyi’s “tacit knowledge,” a form of knowledge acquired in practice, which cannot be expressed otherwise. On that basis, Charney argued: “the source of contemporary architecture in Quebec is in a way of building that has shaped the relationship between people and the built form they inhabit.”

With this provocative comparison, Charney added layers to the previous dichotomy between “image” and “process.” Obviously, the architect’s house represented the image of a foreign modern architecture, a stylistic phenomenon, a packaging ideology. In contrast, the anonymous house illustrated a process, which was the stamp of an authentic modernity rooted in real experience. What was new in this presentation was Charney’s contrasting of the authoritarian essence of architecture as an institutional system and of the liberatory potential of popular architecture, an idea, we will see below, invigorated by his reading of Foucault.

**From “objets-types” to “images-types”**

Also in 1970, Charney conceived the *Memo Series*, a project he submitted to a Canadian competition for a museum to air flight and an air force memorial. The *Series* searched for a commemorative architecture that would not take the form of a building. Charney speculated on the materialization of a Canadian memorial network, which would grant “existence to an architectural concept in the heads of people.” The project was based on the idea that meaning emerges in the interaction between people and their environment. The originality and major shift of this pivotal project in Charney’s itinerary resided in his replacing of the selection of
industrial built fragments (the “objets-types”) by a series of found images evocative of air flight (the “images-types”). Consequently, the artifactual bits were selected for their evocative power rather than for their potential as building material for the creation of a built environment.  

Charney produced dozens of memos describing a variety of commemorative scenarios, like visits of crash sites, travelling museum planes, meetings of veterans in abandoned sheds, virtual reconstitution of historical flights and of war experiences, and so on. At once memorials and memoranda, the Memo Series aimed at putting in place a national network anticipating today’s social networks. Commemoration was no longer conceived as a localized monumental design object but rather as a personal experience shared with a vast community: the concept of architecture “in the heads of people” was fundamentally a social fact repressed by the architectural institution, which not only imposed objects but also restricted the way people interacted with the built environment.  

Charney’s accompanying criticism of power was openly buttressed by the work of Michel Foucault, who exposed the repressive mechanisms of power. The idea that history transforms documents into monuments, found in The Archeology of Knowledge, consolidated Charney’s innovative handling of images published in the press, the massive diffusion of which participated in the formation of a collective unconscious. Inspired by the practices of Pop Art, he “monumentalized” those images by retrieving them from daily inattentive consumption: he collected them, classified them, and developed a discourse on them in his Dictionnaire d’architecture, a work suggesting a possibly inherent, yet unrevealed, structure to the dialectics of liberation and oppression of which architecture is both an instrument and a mirror. 

Other monuments

In parallel, Charney explored by way of construction the commemorative potential of the architectural images he found meaningful. His first installation, created in 1975, reconstituted the image of a worker’s house targeted for demolition by an urban renewal project for downtown Trois-Rivières (Fig. 6). The image of the building, a hybrid between a house and a tomb, revealed the innate architectural knowledge and the daily heroism of an unknown worker. In accordance with the Freudian definition of a totem, this installation, entitled Le trésor de Trois-Rivières, was a substitute for the demolished house (Fig. 7). That reification seemed necessary in order to commemorate a work the value of which the cultural institution was incapable of recognizing. The dialectics of elite and popular architecture implied a dialectical understanding of architectural monumentality, which was the site of a political struggle about memory.
In contrast, Charney’s urban installation *Les maisons de la rue Sherbrooke*, built as part of the cultural program of the 1976 Montreal Olympics, was not a work referring to an antecedent.\(^3\) In this work, building aimed at making visible the collective space of the street as defined by the façades of individual buildings, a space de-structured by demolition and punctuated by the ruins of a disappearing city. For Charney, those surviving fragments were not commemorative of a bygone past but rather comprised the concentrated brief for the future city (Fig. 8). The installation introduced fragments of houses that never existed. As visual duplication of the real houses on the other side of the street, the new fragments inverted the process of erosion of the *quartiers populaires*, “the city of urban knowledge.” The work introduced a new ruin and thus materialized the idea that ruins could project the future of Montreal. The ephemeral façade was a reified metonymy of Montreal urban architecture. The fragment reduced the whole to its essential characteristic: that of a construction subsumed by the street, that of a backdrop defining the collective street space.

Yet, the profound significance of *Les maisons de la rue Sherbrooke* surfaced, not without bitter irony, with their very destruction by order of Mayor Jean Drapeau.\(^3\)
The destruction re-enacted, like in a ritual, the demolition of the quartiers populaires, the repositories of an innate urban knowledge. The figurative content of this work and the images of its destruction acted as a catalyst that brought to collective consciousness the fact that the city was the battleground of a real struggle between repressive power and cultural resistance.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Charney’s act of urban activism was its worldwide diffusion under the form of a mass media image. The photographs of the rue Sherbrooke installation thus acquired the status, and diffused the message, of the images collected over thirty years by the architect in his Dictionnaire d’architecture.

**The sign of the sign**

By the early 1980s, Charney’s analysis of Montreal had evolved as he acknowledged the displacement of the mechanical/biological analogy by a semiologic analogy, which also suggested a
structural displacement in the understanding of architecture as a societal practice, since semiology is based on the assumption that there exist shared referential links to which human artifacts convey meaning, and these links, [...], are socially bound: society makes every use a sign of itself.\[35\]

The 1960s urban renewal project for Montreal was still enacted during the 1970s, as resistance from the residents of the targeted central neighborhoods increased. Two intertwined cities coexisted in tension: the modern metropolis of private superblocks and the fragmented traditional “city of urban knowledge” of the central quartiers populaires. If the private commercial interiors of recent superblocks were still an ambiguous extension of exterior public space, they began to incorporate features of the traditional city such as a “square” in the case of Complexe Desjardins and historical fragments in the case of the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). In parallel, renovation, insertion, and gentrification became common practices that helped in preserving the neighborhoods. While the superblocks tended “to automate and normalize sign systems” in their total reproduction of themselves, small-scale interventions in the quartiers replicated “things-as-they-are.”\[36\] This unresolved tension was, for Charney, a transitional stage that would lead to “the introduction of textural urban figuration and typologies.”

Nonetheless, Charney remained convinced that popular architecture provided the essential model of architectural creation. As a type of natural sign, popular architecture represented the fundamental nature of architecture: true primitive huts “at once both primitive and metaphorical.”\[37\] For him, these huts confirmed:

the arrival of an architecture that finds its place in the new order of things and that is aware of the images of images, the symbols of symbols and the signs of signs. It is as if architecture starts by refusing to refuse, by wanting to affirm that continuity between art and life.\[38\]

In the “postmodern” 1980s, however, signs and symbols were reintroduced in “a practice so obviously tied in to institutionalized power” in the name of a return to history and a rediscovery of the sense of place.\[39\] For Charney, it was “as if the ‘innocence’ of history were now being advanced in place of the ‘innocence’ of pragmatic functionalism of the modernist decades.”\[40\] But history was far from being innocent and architecture was far from being a transparent means of representation. In his mind, architecture had to “make obvious what is said and for whom it is said.”\[41\]

The reintroduction of figural content in architecture fostered a new dialectic of sensibilities opposing, on the one hand, a critical “discourse of revelation” seeking to expose that “what is accepted as natural is in fact historically constituted and thus subject to change,” and on the other hand, “an insidious exploitation of
representational devices to belie the very significations promulgated in the name of history.” The first tendency gave rise to a renewed formalism animated by “the very desire to evoke the autonomous life of architectural forms.” Symptomatic of the “incipient ‘innocence’ which pervades practice,” the second tendency assumed that architectural meaning emerged from a sense of place. But for Charney,

There is no such thing as a “Place” other than the sum total of the representations of that place. There are, therefore, no “innocent” sites. There have never been neutral voids to be filled by buildings, other than the destructive imposition of a strategic emptiness. Nor can I relate to such notions as *genius loci* which seems to grapple with the phenomena of constructed presences in pre-contextual, if not in anti-urban terms.

The rediscovery of “architecture as a system of signs” introduced in the discipline a crisis of meaning, which duplicated the contemporaneous Derridean deconstruction of the sign. Nevertheless, Charney was convinced that architectural meaning is not dissociable from life. For him, meaning was constructed by the inherent logic of a narrative that blends images and words. In his artwork of the 1980s, he assumed that meaning emerges from a process of layering in which layers establish correspondences and associations revealing on one side the collective “signs of recognition” of the city, and on the other side the “ciphers of deception” of architecture as an institutional system.

**Charney and his contemporaries**

Like the theoretical contributions of other major architects/critics of his generation such as Colin Rowe, Peter Eisenman, or John Hejduk, Melvin Charney’s critique represents a sophisticated extension of Le Corbusier’s didactic lesson encapsulated in his famous slogan “eyes which do not see.” Over the course of thirty years he evolved an original dualistic reading of architecture that looked for “the image behind the *image.*” For him, architecture was never an aesthetic or formal problem; nor was it the product of an individual genius. Being grounded in real life, architecture resulted from an innate, if unconscious faculty, common to everyone, which gave meaning to collective built forms such as cities. The architectural institution replicated and aestheticized the forms of vernacular architecture, whether popular or industrial.

Like Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, Charney’s interest in pop environments led him to consider architecture as a system of signs. But rather than conceiving the built environment as a system of communication, Charney, in a
way analogous to but distinct from Aldo Rossi, saw in popular architecture a repository of experience, a reified memory of the heroic struggle for a place realized by people increasingly deprived of their legitimate means of cultural expression by a repressive technocracy. After 1968, at the moment when architectural culture repudiated utopia, the founding notion of the historical avant-garde, Charney affirmed architecture’s fundamental political role. Yet, he did not limit architecture to the status of a repressive apparatus, as he believed that it could also be a means of liberation when appropriated by people. In addition, rather than considering architectural figures as heraldic and decorative devices, he saw in architectural images traces of a language rooted in a collective unconscious. Throughout his meditations Charney metamorphosed constantly the “dialectics” of architecture. In the 1980s, his psychoanalytical model drew architecture out of the semiotic duality opposing the syntactic (Eisenman) and the semantic (Venturi) sides of the sign. By 1990, architecture could be understood as a dialectics between the reification of a mythical narrative and the *mise en abyme* of this reification by its replication as an architectural image.

**Concluding remarks**

Our brief survey of Melvin Charney’s relentless critique of late modern and postmodern formalism may provide provisional answers to the questions raised by Anderson’s essay. By external history, Anderson plainly referred to the technical and economic factors enabling or limiting the realization of buildings by the profession.\(^45\) I suggest here that the theoretical constructs of the discipline, which Anderson defined as the “growing knowledge that is unique” to the field of architecture, is also affected by external history. Charney’s case illustrates how architecture’s internal history is transformed by the introduction in the discipline of concepts drawn from external disciplines. Yet, the “internal order of the field” seems to be shaped not in terms of a dialectics to be overcome, but as a duality – or a “contradiction” as Charney put it – echoing previous dualistic models, such as Le Corbusier’s distinction between architecture and engineering, Giedion’s famous split between “feeling” and “thinking,” and Aldo van Eyck’s “twin-phenomena,” models which reverberate with the post-1968 opposition of phenomenology and structuralism highlighted by K. Michael Hays.\(^46\) In Charney’s work, this duality took the form of oppositions of terms (“design vs. architecture,” “image vs. process,” “institutional system vs. popular architecture,” “oppression vs. liberation,” “ciphers of deception vs. signs of recognition,” and so on), which were framed with notions found outside the field of architecture (Pop art, Polanyi’s tacit knowledge, Foucault’s archaeology, theories of the sign, Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, etc.).
Still, if Charney’s itinerary constitutes a paradigmatic instance of the general shift from a biological to a linguistic analogy during this period, it also shows that this thematic transformation of architectural theory did not abolish the dualistic framework inherited from the modern movement. In Charney’s case, thematic transformation seems consolidated, rather than generated, by the import of external notions. An obsession with the contradictions of an architectural institution perpetuating a mythical and inadequate relationship to the “world” has constantly driven his action; consequently, external references enriched and confirmed a critical argument bred by an issue internal to the architectural discipline.

Some exploratory considerations can be drawn from this state of affairs. Firstly, one can ponder what the status is of the different ideas and tendencies launched in architectural theory. Theoretical frameworks, such as critical theory, postmodernism, critical regionalism, deconstructivism, or pragmatism, are not equivalent and interchangeable. Neither are they surface phenomena, whims of fashion, or the result of external influences: the conditions of their appearance are intimately tied to the internal condition of architecture. Therefore, if the history of the theory of architecture is to be more than the reactivation of forgotten manifestos or the application of an ideological framework proclaiming what history should have been, this activity must uncover the latent logic of the field in mapping the relationships between these concepts and explaining their role in the development of architectural “knowledge.”

Secondly, the “knowledge” generated by the “importation procedure” seems inseparable from the architect’s critical intent. It is this intentionality that distinguishes theoretical works such as Charney’s from the “consumption of theory” tacitly endorsed by a conception of theory’s history as a “coming and going of a series of theoretical frameworks.” Insomuch as meaning springs from the effects sought by the critical project, such “knowledge” certainly has cultural and social relevance but claims no “scientific” value. So, in Charney’s case, the critical outlook generated by “the revelation of what the architectural institution represses” is an instance of “recalibration” aiming at disclosing the theoretical distortion perpetuated by dominant models.

Thirdly, the import of new themes in architectural theory since the 1960s has regularly modified the terms of the internal duality of the architectural field, yet the duality persists, showing that the internal order of the field adapts to, but is not determined by, external history. Simply said, the “rules of the architectural game” remain, without a doubt, remarkably stable in the longue durée of its history, while its thematic contents change.

This is a possible way of interpreting what Anderson conceived as the semi-autonomy of architecture. Other case studies will be necessary to validate this thesis. This, in itself, is a historiographical project.
Notes

1. Sebastiaan Loosen, Rajesh Heynickx, and Hilde Heynen, “The Shifting Contours of Post-War Architectural Theory,” in The Figure of Knowledge: Conditioning Architectural Theory, 1960s-1990s, ed. Loosen, Heynickx, and Heynen (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2020). Author’s note: I assume that the editors are referring only to the history of Western architecture from the 1960s to the 1990s.


5. Loosen, Heynickx, and Heynen, “The Shifting Contours of Post-War Architectural Theory.”


8. “Elements are units which can be put together in an architectural game to make anything you like. By observing the rules of the game, i.e., a door as a door, a building may be accomplished, adjusted to change, or distorted to suit a whim.” Melvin Charney, “A Journal of Istanbul: Notes on Islamic Architecture,” (1962) reprinted in Martin, On Architecture, 62-71.


10. Charney’s dichotomy between process and image rephrased Louis Kahn’s distinction between “architecture as realization” and “design as imagery.” See Kahn, “Concluding Remarks.”
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
17. With his project for Osaka published in several international magazines in 1969 and 1970, Charney was recognized as a significant, radical architect and was invited to the International Futures Research Conference in Kyoto (1970) to present his work along with Cedric Price, Archigram, and Yona Friedman.
22. The architect and owner of the house was Charles Elliot Trudeau, brother of then Prime Minister of Canada Pierre Elliot Trudeau.
25. Charney, “Towards a Definition.”
27. “On the Liberation of Architecture” was introduced with the following epigraph quoting Walter Benjamin’s “The Author as Producer”: “The tiniest fragment of everyday life says more than…”
29. Since the early 1960s, Charney shared the fascination of the Pop artists of his generation for the rhetorical function of mass media imagery, which he compared to the techniques of French “nouveau roman.” See Melvin Charney, “The World of Pop” (1964), reprinted in Martin, *On Architecture*, 81-87.
36. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Charney visibly referred to contemporary postmodern theory as it crystallized at the 1980 Venice Architecture Biennale and as framed by Paolo Portoghesi et al. in *The


41. Ibid.

42. Charney, “Sign of Recognition.”

43. Ibid.


45. In the same text, Anderson outlined an expanded understanding of architecture as a cultural field, which is not limited to the works produced by professional architects – the profession. He conceived this field as a discipline that encompasses the activities of protagonists working in the institutions constitutive of the field (schools, museums, publications, libraries, galleries, etc.), Anderson, “On Criticism.”


47. George Baird traced back this “structural” dualism to the origins of modern architecture in the quarrel of the ancients and the moderns, which opposed the tenets of tradition (François Blondel) and the principles of reason (Claude Perrault). See: Baird, “La dimension amoureuse.”


49. Loosen, Heynickx, and Heynen, “The Shifting Contours of Post-war Architectural Theory.”

