Theoretical Interpretations on Ideology in Architecture and Planning

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ABSTRACT

Ideology is a system involving ideas that explains the validity to actions and ethos of a social, cultural, religious, political, or business entity. It is a system of ideas that aspires both to explain the world and to change it. Future is a blend of what we now know as present and past. No human society fully knows what has actually happened through the historical process based on evidence alone. It requires perception, logics and analysis as to predict what might have taken place and what might happen. These elements in their mutual relationship give rise to ideology which has a crucial role to play in a historical account to amalgamate all these dimensions. This article makes theoretical elaboration on the concept of ideology, studies the relationship of ideology with idea, theory, philosophy, morality, ethics and politics. It then considers the stand of ideology in the modern world and attempts to seek how planning today is shaped by ideology. It is done with reference from theoretical writings and arguments by Robert Venturi.

Keywords: Ideology, Logic, Theory, Philosophy, Morality, Ethics, Ideologist, Ideologue

Introduction

Construction is one of the demanding Industries. Performance of the industry need to be enhanced. Performance of construction is not satisfactory in terms of time in Nepal (Mishra and Bhandari, 2018). Labour productivity of the sector is more in comparison to industrial standard. The contractors don’t provide health facilities at the construction site for causal workers. They are compelled to work without proper sanitary facilities, safe drinking water, no proper catering service and others. Employees think that health related facilities are lacking in the site (Mishra and Sharestha, 2017). The study conducted by Maskey and Mishra (2018) showed that time spent by skilled and unskilled labors in productive work were 56.92% and 55.74% respectively. It means rest of their time still unused. So it needs to manage all level of workface effectively for high performance of the industry. Mishra and Rai (2017) also compared the different types of building and found performance should improve. Value Management practices is highly recommended practice for project and production operation management in developed country as an effective competitive tool also. Lack of trained professionals on VM as the main reason for not implementation (Mishra, 2019). In this regard, Ideology is the body of doctrine, myth or belief that guides an individual, social movement, institution, class, or large group” (Anon.)

“I would say for the young: Don’t be straight jacketed by ideology. Don’t be driven by a structure of ideas.” - Bill Ayers

An idea can either be a thought or an assembly of thoughts produced in the mind. An idea usually, is produced with determination, but can also be produced involuntarily. Ideas also form through discussions or during brainstorming sessions. Ideology, however, is the philosophy, belief pattern, values or doctrines belonging to an individual or group.
“The term ‘ideology’ was born in the highly controversial, philosophical and political debates and fights of the French Revolution and acquired several other meanings from the early days of the First French Empire to the present.” (Nirmala, 2012)

The word ‘ideology’ came into being when Destutt de Tracy used it to discuss to one aspect of his ‘science of ideas’ in 1796. He classified his ‘science of ideas’ into three aspects: Ideology, General Grammar and Logic directed respectively towards Subject, the means and the reason of this science. He took to referring to ‘ideology’ to be the most general and broad term because of the fact that the ‘science of ideas’ contained the study of their interpretation and manifestation.

He referred to ‘ideas’ as science capable of providing a logical framework to those fascinated towards the study of ideas and those towards criticizing it. The term, however, has been challenged and has become a concept susceptible to change. The term ‘ideology’ also refers to mutually dependent ideas, notions, doctrines, conducts, congregations and even legends that serve as a predictable stand point. The predictable ideas are vulnerable towards being taken for granted and are used in interpretation, in understanding and in guiding values towards a particular direction against those of other ideologies.

In social studies and the humanities, the concept of ideology is defined in different, sometimes equivalent and variant, but sometimes also contradictory ways: 1) ideology is the sum of all positive and pragmatic beliefs, values, modes of behaviour and acting shared by a group of theorists or agents, that is, members of culture or a specific distinguished formation within the framework of culture; 2) ideology is the sum of all the misconceptions, false beliefs, and effects of illusions shared by the members of a social stratum, class, nation, political party, a specific culture or world of art, which projects a possible, actual, and current world of existence; 3) ideology is the sum of all the symbolic and imaginary, arbitrary and artificial effects produced by the media system in places of expected reality, ideology posits us as objects among objects of consumption, seduction, and ecstasy, that is, ideology becomes, by means of its media realisation, a techno-multiplied new reality (hyperreality); 4) in its essence, ideology is a phantasmatic construction serving to prop up our reality, in other words, it is an illusion that structures effective social relations and hides traumatic social divisions or confrontations that cannot be symbolized, therefore its function is to provide us with a bearable social reality (Vladimir Mako, 2014).

A study of ideology bring with itself terms such as ‘ideologist’ and ‘ideologue.’ An ideologue is one who adheres to an ideology and has, in the very adherence, an element of inflexibility and dogmatism contained. An ideologist, however, is one who interprets and develops ideology and is pragmatic.

Theory on the other hand, is a generalization of concepts and are proven to be true. It is an outcome of analysis. A theory needs to be analyzed before being proposed and there is transparency in a theory. A theory serves as a tool of analysis in understanding, explaining and making of predictions of a given concept. It generally deals with the logical aspects of something and tells us what it is, though oftentimes does not include the practical aspect. It explains a phenomenon. Unlike theories, Ideologies are beliefs or thoughts of people in a community and may or may not be experiment concepts. Consciousness of people are result of ideologies. People’s behaviors, too, are sometimes guided by the kind of ideologies they hold. Ideologies may consciously or unconsciously be existential in a person’s mind and may be the governing set of ideas in a particular community that the person lives. They are, generally, results of socialization but can also be generated in a person’s mind and has a possibility of being antagonistic to the very society’s perspective of it. Ideology belonging to a particular society are upheld by the dominant party dwelling in and are capable of influencing the common people. Since, it is not a result of analysis or that of evidence or logic, it is difficult to prove that ideologies are false. Theories, however, enjoy a logical, evidence-based and analytical platform and can be proven false with evidence. Ideologies are responsible for shaping a community while theories are responsible for explaining the existing phenomena. Both ideologies and theories prevail almost in all societies and provide meaning to human life explaining the true landscape of the contextual incidents.

A five-part classification of planning theories is discussed under the heuristic rubric of SITAR, covering the Synoptic, Incremental, Transactive, Advocacy, and Radical schools of planning thought. Comparison is made of their relative strengths and weaknesses, revealing ways they are often complementary, but often strongly at odds. Contradictions among them are not seen to be deficiencies in the theories themselves, but reflections of homologous tensions and contradictions in society at large. Parallel application of more than one theory is usually necessary for arriving at valid, three-dimensional perspectives on social issues and appropriate action implications. An ideology, however, can be broadly classified as political, social, cultural, and scientific and so on; while enjoying an spectrum to be classified on several other basis. Ideology also contrasts with philosophy in certain manner. While philosophy attempts to understand life and the principles governing it and does so adhering to pragmatic approach, ideology merely attempts to continuing its existence and at some point advocating it. The advocacy
may, sometimes, have in it, a hope of getting things improved or enhancing the current state of affairs. Philosophy makes peace with the existing world trying to understand it as it exists while ideology may also be directed towards a vision for the future and towards changing the current state of affairs. Philosophy is objective, aware and flexible while ideology is dogmatic, stubborn and rigid. Once fixed, ideology refuses to change regardless of the changes in the environment. Philosophy is open to challenge and positively perceives it while ideology turns a blind eye to challenge. It may, sometimes, even be repellent to challenges. It’s in a philosopher’s interest to arrive on a build for the basis of life and other things but it will also be in his interest to discuss and ponder the philosophies.

A philosopher’s willingness to listen to criticism makes him open-minded. An ideologue, on the other hand, will disprove anything challenging his ideology. It can be thus, propagated that philosophy encourages one to think, to think beyond the established patterns of thoughts while ideology also discourages any thinking that goes against the basic principles governing it. Philosophy requires regulated thought. So is not the case with ideology. An ideology has lots of emotions in play. Philosophy, however, is neither harmful, nor helpful for there is no advocacy or greed or any material greed behind it. An ideology, on the contrary, is capable of bringing both good and harm to the society. It is because of its limited or no concern on serving universal interests like philosophy. Ideology demands someone to advocate it and to convert other beliefs and thoughts to that particular ideology. Every ideology, however, has philosophy giving birth to it.

Similar differences and contrasts can be found between ideology and ethics. Moral values guiding a person’s behavior is known as ethics. While ethics is the study of ethical principles, ideology is more of an inherent value and less of a study. Morality on the other hand are intrinsic values inherent in person. Ideology rests upon morality. The ideology of a person is a result of the sort of moral realms he believes in.

There also lies a distinction between politics and ideology. “In the most general sense, politics may be defined as the sum of all pragmatic social practices and institutions whereby a social relationship or order is realized. Some theorists distinguish between politics and the political. The political is then defined as the multiplicity of all the antagonisms that constitute human society. Politics denotes social confrontation and attempting to resolve those social antagonisms, i.e. attempting to resolve the political, which constitutes society. In political and cultural terms, an ideology is a relatively coherent and determined set of ideas, symbolic conceptions, values, beliefs and forms of thought, behaviors, expressions, presentations, and actions, shared by the members of a particular social group, political party, state institution, ethnic or gender group, or class of society. Therefore, ideology has the character of identificatory representation and perception. The ideology of an individual is the way s/he perceives her/himself as a singular subject in the context of her/his society, a subject in a community, the community as a subject, and therefore life itself, nature, and the world as phenomena for the subject” (Vladimir Mako, 2014).

Karl Mannheim in historical reconstruction of the meaning-shifts of ideology says that ‘ideology’ in modern terms is used as was born when the politician Napoleon Bonaparte, used it to abuse ‘the ideologues’, upon their opposing him.

“Following Marx, Louis Althusser redefined ‘ideology’ as a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence. A specific ideology has its material existence because it is a socially active representation. From this materialistic ground, Althusser derived the following conclusions: a) every practice is enabled by ideology and unfolds via ideology and b) ideology exists only from the subject and for the subject. In that sense, ideology is a system of representations that carries out the interpellation of individuals as subjects vis-à-vis their real social conditions: ideology is a ‘Representation’ of the Imaginary Relationship of Individuals to their Real Conditions of Existence.3 Lacanian theoretical psychoanalysis, a step further from Althusser, has pointed out that the role of ideology is not to offer the subject an escape point from her/his reality, but to offer her/him social reality itself as an escape from a real traumatic kernel in the midst of human life. For, according to Lacan, a phantasm is not something that opposes reality, but the last support for that which is called reality. For instance, according to SlavojŽižek: ‘Ideology is not a dreamlike illusion that we build to escape insupportable reality; in its basic dimension it is a fantasy-constructionwhich see.Ørves as a support for our ‘reality’ itself: an ‘illusion’ which structures our effective, real social relations and thereby masks some insupportable, real, impossible kernel.’ (Vladimir Mako, 2014).

**Ideology in Architecture and Planning**

Cities earlier used to be a result of popular ideologies of that of individual planners and architects which in the time run used to gain popularity to give rise to a mass ideology. Howard, in ‘Garden Cities of Tomorrow’ wanted to design an alternative to the overcrowded and polluted industrial cities of the turn of the century, and his solution centered on creating smaller ‘garden cities’, with 32,000 peopleach, in the country linked by canals and transit and set in a permanent greenbelt. His scheme included vast open space, with the aim of giving urban slum-dwellers the best of both city and country living. He captioned the above diagram, ‘A Group of smokeless, Slumless Cities.’

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Le Corbusier, in his visualization of ‘The Radiant Cities’ was trying to find a fix for the same problems of urban pollution and overcrowding, but unlike Howard, he envisioned building up, not out. His plan, also known as ‘Towers in the Park,’ proposed exactly that: numerous high-rise buildings each surrounded by green space. Each building was set on what planners today would derisively refer to as ‘superblocks,’ and space was clearly delineated between different uses which includes housing, the business center, factories and warehouses. Le Corbusier’s ideas later reappeared in the design of massive public housing projects in the U.S. in the era of ‘urban renewal.’

America’s Land Ordinance of 1785 divided most of the country’s troubled interior west of the Ohio River into a well-ordered grid of townships 6 square-miles in size, each covering 36 square-mile land parcels for the kind of agrarian, land-owning society. Its effects still dwindle in all those perfect perpendicular roads and square farms. Frank Lloyd Wright, in his idea to design the Broadacre City, hired the geometry of rural grid even further in his vision for a utopia where each family live on an acre of its own. That level of density would have essentially spread suburbia over the entire country.

The Street Grid Concept refers to the simple, rational street grid that has been a default choice of planners for centuries, one widely discarded in the U.S. in the 1950s as people relocated into suburbs and cul-de-sacs. The 1852 map of San Francisco, decades later, did same the thing, suitably ignoring the city’s coastline and topography shaped irregularly.

Planners progressively idealizes subjects involving transportation, the environment and the economy, not at communities or cities’ scale, but within regions where multiple metros can link together. The ‘Megaregion’ concept, as such, isn’t new, though. The 1961 map from Jean Gottman’s book Megalopolis illustrates one continuous Northeastern Megaregion from Washington, D.C., to Boston.

Planners have been idealizing transectas agragraphical tool to classify landscapes into multiple uses. Created by architect Andres Duany, this particular one, clarifies the rural-to-urban degree between nature and thick urban zones and has developed as a popular framework among New Urbanists.

As cities start to fill with skyscrapers towards the beginning of 20th century, planners spun their curiosity from the footprint of neighborhoods and its layout at street level to the bulk of buildings rising toward the sky. New zoning laws called ‘The Setback Principle’ of 1916, in New York City required buildings to get narrower the taller they got, enabling daylight to the streets below.

Giambattista Nollis map, though doesn’t look particularly exceptional today, idealized the new practice of depicting entire cities from above without a single focal point, every block being seen instead as if the mapmaker were directly above it. The resulting image highlights the city’s shape and street network and the patterns of its development.

Artists and architects adhering to situationism in mid-20th century believed in the ideology that city should be captured as it was experienced by people and not as it was designed with a top-down approach by architects and planners. That was a time they were revolting against modernistic urban renewal plans. Their approach contributed to a renewed perspective in planning i.e. emphasis now was laid on bottom-up citizen experience and effort.

The Hockey Stick approach was another ideology in urban planning and has little to do with it. Michael Mann, a climate scientist demonstrates the temperature spike in the Northern Hemisphere since Industrial Revolution began. SPUR links between smart growth and climate change. ‘That has become really the organizing narrative of planning in the 21st Century,’ Grant says, ‘The idea that there’s a connection between the shape of cities and the patterns of settlement and their climate impact is so powerful. So many other ideas can be sort of subsumed within that narrative.’

Ideology seeks to claim a condition that is self-evident. Ideology so well defines reality that we, at times, have trouble imagining that the view we have regarding reality could be anything else. This results in strengthening of our view towards things such as buildings which makes the meaning we assign to them appear true and undeniable. We purchase a typical suburban house, there is very little confusion as to where the living room is located despite the fact that there are no signs hanging on the walls or telling us where to place the sofa. Our visiting a Ranch house, however, would make us that the occupants were confused and were bordering on an unnatural act upon seeing them furnish the living room. Ideology, a veil that lying in front of us, aspiris to be transparent in order that the association between a particular meaning and an object gets obvious and the roleplayed by ideology in maintaining the arbitrary assignment of meaning is not visible. This desire for transparency, however, can only be but a partial explanation. When we claim a building to have an auracapable of making it architecture, what wear “seeing” is the mirror image of our ideology in the veil. The veil is also a mirror.

“What we perceive when we look at a building and declare it to be great architecture is most likely not the actual form of the structure and its spatial organization that is in our sight, but the veil that is our shared beliefs about what is great architecture. The veil is a mirrored surface that reflects back the image our ideology has constructed. We do not see the space-time continuum, but a reflection of
I. Ideology also enjoys certain interesting perspectives coming out from planners and architects. The idiom ‘Devil is in the details’, a seemingly interesting phrase to the ears, refers to the fact that mistakes are usually committed in the small and minute details of a project. It is usually spoken as a caution reminding someone to pay attention to small details to avoid failure. An older, and slightly more common, phrase ‘God is in the details’ means that attention paid to small things has big rewards, or that details are important. The devil version of the expression is a variation on the God phrase, though it is uncertain as where they exactly originated. This stands as an illustration to how it is ideology the stirrings of which enable us understand better. To understand both in same perspective would mean an antagonistic conflict between the two despite not a single element of anti-thesis prevailing between them.

It is amazing how two professionals belonging to the same arena of work have so much of ideological differences contained in their thoughts. Phrases ‘Less is more’ and ‘less is a bore’ can act as an instance for such an antagonism. To denote Modernist movement in a single phrase, many would go with Mies van der Rohe’s crisp utterance, ‘less is more.’ The slogan came to express the very architectural language it created, reproducing an entire generation of architects and planners who intended to strip back buildings and cities to their austere essentials.

“Less is a bore, on the other hand, is a term coined by Robert Venturi, one of the major architectural figures of the twentieth century. It is associated with postmodern architecture and the return of ornate designs and expressive forms. Less is a bore is a commentary on the minimalism and highly functional forms that have dominated architecture since the 1940s. It could be considered a continuation of the highly stylized and decorative designs of classical and early 20th century architectural movements such as Art Deco” (Spacey, 2016).

Along with many of his modernist peers, Mies, encouraged the abolition of the unnecessary, arguing ornamentation to be a distraction from the splendid of structural rationality, or even worse, a disreputable mark of extravagance. With any ideological action, naturally, there is a reaction. This is where Robert Venturi, an American architect peeped in. Venturi identified Mies’ remark as a key source of impactand promulgated ‘Less is a bore’. Known to be Venturi’s memorable quote, it was surpassed by Mies’ oxymoronic original and became a song for the entire architectural and planning movement. Postmodernism, as an era of warmer architecture and planning, cities full of appeal that displayed a grander understanding towards context, setting, urban landscapes deep-rooted with more humility and humor than the existing earnest modernistic setting of the twentieth century.

For Venturi, this meant breaking the chains off, designing buildings that did not obey the established rubrics of the Modernist manifesto. His first assignment, a house for his mother Vanna Venturi, encompassed this line of thought, intentionally contradicting the language promulgated by Mies and more: A pitched roof was proposed instead of a flat one, solid walls were selected instead of glass; a purely ornamental arch was prepared as the focus of the frontage, addressing Mannerist rather than Modernist sentiments. Venturi debated his position with books as with buildings, briefing the Postmodernist controversy in complexity and Conflict in Architecture, published shortly after the completion of Vanna Venturi House. ‘Architects can no longer afford to be intimidated by the puritanically moral language of orthodox Modern architecture,’ asserted Venturi, ‘I like elements which are hybrid rather than pure, compromising rather than clear, distorted rather than straightforward. I am for messy vitality over obvious unity. I include the non sequitur and proclaim duality.’

And yet, the Post-modernist movement, is idealized widely by many particularly within the realm of practicing architects, as a failure of the highest order. Many of its buildings are looked upon as ugly. Gargantuan Portland Building Michael Graves is often seen emerging near the top of lists reporting the world’s most detested buildings. Critics of Post-modernist designs refer to them as peddlers of pastiche creating buildings adorned by ill proportions and horribly impetuous details.

Venturi would laugh undoubtedly such accusations labeling them to display the same lack of wit and open-mindedness that Modernist architecture demands. ‘Does architecture need to adhere to so narrow a set of rules pertaining to composition, color, structure and texture?’ would be a question Venturi would wonder. He embraced the intuitive power of design, considering that buildings, while, flying on the grounds of rationalism would never fail to bring a smile to people’s countenance. This is what he knew to be the design of gentle anarchy, of free spirited optimism and of unbridled joy.

Editor of Archi Objects Luca Onniboni idealizes that no single rule should drive any design decision of a planner. “Both sentences are slogans,” declares Onniboni. He further adds that planning should, on no account, be furnished of slogans, nor should theses slogans be understood as divine words.

Despite this truth, the everlasting debate between Modernist and Postmodernist ideologies continues, will no doubt, continue for many decades to come. It is a fact likely to delight only Venturi, also known to be the perennial devil’s advocate of architecture.
Robert Venturi, of the major architectural figures in the twentieth century, is an American architect who helped shape the way architects, students, and planners experience architecture and think about the built American environment. His planning and buildings along with theoretical writings and teaching have added to the extension of dissertation about architecture and planning. He speaks of his favorite place to be Las Vegas. It is not because he enjoys gambling or drinking or going to nightclubs. What he likes, he says, about Las Vegas is its architecture. What makes that rare is that, as Venturi admits, architects are not really supposed to like Las Vegas. Venturi, not only rejects fellow architects’ concerns that the POP architecture of Las Vegas is roughhand tasteless, he impertinently advocates that a cautious study of the commercial belt of the American highway, as the one in Las Vegas may be significant to architects and urbanists today as were the readings of Medieval Europe and ancient Rome and Greece to previous generations.

To highlight his seriousness, he and his wife, Denise Scott Brown, a city planner, took 13 architectural students from Yale University to Las Vegas to make a study on ‘the Strip’ in 1968. The students could seek, in the Venturi’s arguments, a method of ‘learning from the landscape’, a landscape they see as anovel urban form, fundamentally different from what we have known, one which we have been equipped to deal with and one which, from unawareness, wedelineate today as urban sprawl.

The Venturis views, indeed, on design could almost be called counterrevolutionary. Instead of sweeping utopian plans, they prefer ‘piece meal planning.’ Instead of the sophisticated formations of renowned modern architects, they prefer the usual economic structures laid by the sides of the roads representing the architectural vernacular. He, who is perfectly eager to accept the state of affairs as it is, as Robert Venturi did in his book, Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, can be said to be revolutionary.

The urban sprawl represented by Main Street and Las Vegas is likely to stay. Perhaps architects and planners should learn to love the Venturi’s ideology, or at least learn to make with it. ‘There no good way to pollute land or air or water,’ says Denise Venturi, ‘but what is called visual pollution which usually means someone else’s home or business is not the same.’ ‘We can learn to do the strip and the urban sprawl well,’ says Venturi in his book, ‘the seemingly chaotic juxtapositions of honky-tonk elements express an intriguing kind of vitality and validity.’

Venturi’s effort to reproduce the very ‘vitality and validity’ in his own buildings can clearly be seen. These efforts are influenced heavily by Pop Art. The Fire Station No. 4 in Columbus, designed by him, indicates a message clearly gained from the strip. The false façades of frontier town of the West and the front wall of the very fire station is higher than needed, highlighting its focus on street life and its civic aspects rather than on private aspects in the cityscape. The entrefaçade, indeed, is a huge Pop symbol. The typical small-town firehouse with big doors and an massive sign reads ‘Fire Station No. 4.’

Published in 1966 Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture set off the blizzard that vicinities Venturi today. It was a scholarly knob if examples reaching through the history of architecture to the Italian Mannerism and Baroque. The book stated the doctrines of the Venturi’s ideology that the prodigious architecture of the past was not simple, but often abstruse and multifaceted, and that the persistence of modern establishment of architecture on solo style of sheer simplicity as often voiced in Mies Van Der Rohe’s well-known maxim, ‘less is more’ was not an approach suitable to the irony and convolution of modern times, the result being retort by Venturi, ‘Less is a bore.’

Complexity and Contradiction, in effect, was a attack against the mainland stream of modernist architecture, as embodied by the lustrous International Style of steel and glass. Many critics take it to be the firstand still the most meaningfully written declaration made against that style. ‘Architects can no longer afford to be intimidated by the puritanically moral language of orthodox modern architecture,’ said Venturi and added that he liked elements which were hybrid rather than pure, compromising rather than clear, distorted rather than straightforward, ambiguous rather than articulated, boring as well as interestingly conventional rather than designed, accommodating rather than excluding, inconsistent and equivocal rather than direct and clear. He said he was for messy vitality over obvious unity and that he was for richness of meaning rather than clarity of meaning.

Robert Venturi along with Denise Venturi is well trained in the prodigious architecture of the past century. They make no effort to conceal their admiration for it. They, however, are profoundly committed that the monumental approach characterizing the most modern architecture from the Frank Lloyd Wright’s days are unsuitable for the present age. The Venturi’s ideology has gone stale because of the modern movement and the heirs to the pioneering modern architects and planners have spun the revolution that theearily modernist architects and planners led to a new Establishment.

There is nothing, at first glimpse, very ground-breaking about Venturi’s buildings. The building board is an confession de centric. Most of Venturi creations, like the Columbus fire station, however, seem simple, ordinary and non-contradictory at first. This is an effect the Venturis do not seem to mind. ‘We like to say, around the office, that our buildings are dumb,’ he says.

A second glimpse, and some prolonged staring, however reveals that Venturi’s designs are, on no account,
ordinary. In fact, when many of the, such as the Guild House, a housing project for the elderly people in downtown in Philadelphia and Venturi’s best-known work are carefully studied, meticulous attempts can be seen to have been made to merge historical references and conformist elements into erudite, sophisticated design despite theoratory about their being ordinary. His designs represent ideologistada number of architects like Charles Moore and Robert A. M. Stern have referred to as the new ideology of inclusion, that is, architecture that wants to work modestly into the existing landscape, uniting the effects of average everyday buildings and of historical styles of the past, as opposed to the more common modern line of exclusion.

The Venturis’ firmness on submitting to the environment in which the building is set suggests that their designs are very different from one another that no one can really be called typical. Their buildings mature more from the landscape aroundand from the functional necessities of the package than from an a priori design ideology such as International Style or Frank Lloyd Wright’s Organic concept. ‘When you design a building to fit a theory, you get piece of propaganda rather than a work of art,’ Venturi says.

Rome it was that gave started shaping the new philosophy which was to be culminated in his book. While tourists saw the great testaments of the city, Venturi saw Rome’s pedestrian gage, its squares, and the multifaceted intertwining of great architecture with the common everyday landscape of the city.

‘We don’t think people want ‘total design’ as it is given to them by most modern architects,’ puts in Mrs. Venturi trying to get a know-how of people’s ideology, ‘They want shelter with symbolism applied to it.’

‘Shelter with symbolism applied’, to the Venturis is a ‘decorated shed.’ The Venturis prefer calling buildings ‘ducks. The nametakes its origin from a duck-shaped poultry store on Long Island.

‘For today’s buildings, the decorated shed is more appropriate,’ Venturi says. ‘Most of the major monuments of modern architecture today are really ducks, they try much too hard to fit their functions into an abstract conception of form, and end up being just big symbols for heroic modern architecture, like the new Boston City Hall. It’s all a big symbol, though it won’t admit it. How ridiculous trying to make a piazzapublico, like an Italian city-state! If they really wanted to make it so monumental, they should have built a plain loft building and put a sign up top saying, ‘I Am a Monument.’ That would have been appropriate to today’s American city’ (Goldberger, 1971).

Venturi, in hopes of dedicating more time to his practice, gave up the Davenport chair in 1971. The present roster of the firm comprises of four partners, the Venturis, John Rauch and Clark. Rauch has worked with Venturi since 1961. The firm also consist of 8 staff architects, almost all of whom are positive young designers preferring an active role in the Venturi & Rauch operation to be fumbling a larger but less creative firm.

The officestretches through parts of 2 row houses in an old vicinity near Philadelphia’s Rittenhouse Square, acquiring both first floors and reaching up to take 1 second floor and part of a fourth. The entrance delivers the visitor an early outline to the firm’s approach. Instead of a stylish plaque, the door bears only the inscription ‘Venturi and Rauch’ lettered on the sort of small metal sign that more often reads “Gentlemen.” Inside, the vestibule offers a less consistent image: there is an elegant, old-fashioned wardrobe cabinet, an oak library cabinet used for slides, bicycle which a staff architect habitually parks inside and an old bench on which sits a sign with a moving electric message. The sign’s motto resembles the slogans from the Whitney show: ‘Symbol in space before form in space. Las Vegas is to the Strip what Rome is to the Piazza’ (Goldberger, 1971).

John Rauch’s, in his eagerness to see the firm get more work, adhered to the easiness about the easy-going maneuver and felt its reputation as an off-the-wall atelier to not be helpful. He, however, once comforted Venturi saying ‘You’re only a failure. I’m an assistant failure.’ He is not found to have any misgivings about the ideology of the firms articulated by Venturi.

Despite Rauch’s doing only a minor amount of designing himself, Venturi had him as major confidant for new ideas which is why he has mentioned of him to be a winnower of ideas whose analytical mind helps set the direction a design should take and reset it when it is lost.’ Rauch’s more distinctive moves were to muddle his role in the office. Inclined towards the technical aspects.

Despite there being enough commissions to keep their staff eventful paid on time, the Venturis talked about how Rauch desires for more work. They were not reluctant in suggesting that they had been victimized in more establishmentarian architectural rings because of the debatable nature of their designs. They liked to bestow their harshest words to the finest commissions which they referred to as the official negotiators of goodness which passed architectural plans for major cities and which the Venturis sensed had caused their firm to lose several major commissions.

The Venturis did appear to stimulate a wrath among the recognized members of the architectural profession, which, as per Ada Louise Huxtable, is fragmented right down the middle-90 per cent against. The figure is likely too appropriate to indicate the architectural community’s response to the Mathematics Building planned for Yale University.
designed by Venturi which was also picked by jury as the winner in one of the country’s most revealed architectural competitions. It was then that it became the focus of one of the country’s most exposed architectural combats. Upon plans for the building being published, an architect advised in a letter to the form that it looked like ‘an old! Oft building.’ Also, a colleague idealized it to be a piece of Junk.

The extreme reactions provoked by Venturis’ ideology for the architectural vernacular in many other architects and planners, remain, no matter how troublesome are the thorns on their sides. Peter Blake, condemning Robert Venturi of for reinforcing Nixon’s status quo, says that architects and planners should set examples of excellence and that Bob was eager to accept the most desolate and mindless examples of America and that this is not what we know as the function of a planner or an architect. He said, ‘He’s terribly amusing oh, I think he’s marvelously funny, but I sometimes wonder if he’s not just a marvelous practical joker.’ Peter Blake was a holder of such an ideology when it came to Venturi.

Such charged, no doubt, infuriated the Venturi Couple. ‘There seems to be a very fine line between liberalism and class snobbery,’ Mrs. Venturi says in a tone louder than ever. She says of avant-garde planners such as Herbert Ganost have been proposing that there is an abundant worth of the existing landscape and that the Venturis were the first ones to line them.

‘Upper-middle-class architects build to suit themselves,” said Mr. venturi, more quietly, ‘You don’t have to like something to learn from it. We go to Pop culture sources to be stimulated, the way early modern architects went to the factory.’

Despite such terrible criticism as Blake’s, Mr. and Mrs. Venturi continued referring to their buildings as ugly and ordinary. It was a tendency that particularly infuriated Vincent Scully who believed that their rhetoric prevented many people from seeing the underlying sophistication of their designs. “The Venturis impishly carry on about being boring and ugly. Said Scully, ‘I understand why they do it, but it isn’t true. Bob Venturi is very much a traditional architect and planners should set examples of excellence serving our needs. Traditional architecture developed over thousands of years, its best practices tested by trial and error and handed down by practitioners generation after generation. It failed to maintain its market share because modernism had better advertising, not because it was a better product.

Reflections

There are two standpoints in which the term, ‘ideology’ is used. In one sense, it’s a clutch of ideas, viewpoints and belief system that sustains an individual or a social order. While it may be used to refer to a clutch of ideas, viewpoints and belief system promoting continuation of the current state of affairs, it may also be used to refer to those opposing the system. It is likely, though not frequent, for a given social system to enjoy various ideologies, sometimes contradictory and antagonistic to one another. Ideologies may also vary as per varying classes. Social-economic and political systems have, in history, been a function of certain dominant ideologies. Ideology, in another sense, has been interpreted as false consciousness in contrast to the real or scientific knowledge of the world.

Ideology differs from idea, theory, philosophy, ethics, morality and politics in the subtlety of their approach though not much in area of their application. Ideologies change over time and are the cities though at every point of time, there is a possibility that an individual or a group of people suddenly find themselves going with an ideology supposed to be belonging to that of ancient past. Ideologies are subjected to change if held by an ideologist and not by an ideologue. A very ideology can betrue for a point of time and false at another. For instance, ‘Less is more’ was wrong before it became a slogan. The kind of architecture and planning embodied by the phrase was a mistake the first time someone thought it up. It was told that a machine age required a machine architecture. No plausible reason was given. All we got was an architectural metaphor for efficiency, not efficiency itself. The kind of architecture modernism replaced worked better at pleasing our eye and serving our needs. Traditional architecture developed over thousands of years, its best practices tested by trial and error and handed down by practitioners generation after generation. It failed to maintain its market share because modernism had better advertising, not because it was a better product.

References


