
Eisenman begins the article with introducing the concepts of the “three fictions” that architecture has been under since the fifteenth century. Modernism is the contemporary thread used as discourse in conjunction with the three fictions. The first fiction is representation, essentially being face value within representation regarding pre Renaissance forward. Modernism attempts to break from these Renaissance notions in having the function of an object be made apparent without ornament. An example of this is a column honestly doing its job without a base or capital. This reduction becomes an “attempt to represent reality itself” (Eisenman 213). Eisenman argues that this functionalism is really just another stylistic conclusion as a simulation of efficiency. “From this perspective the Modern Movement can be seen to be continuous with the architecture that preceded it” (214).

The second fiction is reason and is a “simulation of the meaning of the truth through the message of science (215). During the Renaissance the source of origin was entrenched in natural, divine, cosmological or anthropomorphic geometry. The vitruvian man exemplifies this idea as it depended on a “belief of a universal plan in nature and the cosmos” (215). This is also apparent with Alberti’s composition. Formulaic strategy is used to arrive at the goal and is not open ended. These ideas play into modern ideals as rational architecture represents truth and becomes the aesthetic basis for modern architecture.

The third fiction is history where Eisenman explains the idea of past which is seen in the fifteenth century where “the attempt of the classical to recover the timeless turned, paradoxically, to a time bound idea of history as a source of timelessness” (217). The Modernist aim to reject history as ideals were pointed to harmonic relationships over embodiments of eternal or universal. Eisenman argues the problem with this as Modernists for some reason could not see themselves as part of the cycle and act as “midwife to historically significant form” (217).

Eisenman concludes his article with proposing that “the end of the beginning and the end of the end is to propose the end of beginnings and ends of value” (223). To move forward, architecture does not look at determinants of history, instead an artificial past and futureless present emerge.

Are tools and operations such as GH and swarming create an end or is there potential that they will fail in the sense that modernism did?

Skepticism remains, is it truly possible to abolish the past?