Research Paper

AMBIGUITY AND EXPOSURE: VISIONARY ARCHITECTURE USE OF DARKNESS

AMOS BAR-ELI

Senior Lecturer, Department of Interior Design, Faculty of Design, HIT – Holon Institute of Technology, Holon, Israel.

ORCID NUMBER: 0000-0002-5285-920X
amos2667@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The paper explores how drawings of visionary architecture utilize darkness as a representation and narrative tool, of both physical and metaphorical qualities. Although darkness might be considered contradictory to architectural aims, it is reveled in the paper as a carrier of concepts and possibilities that cannot be unveiled otherwise. Visionary architecture is architecture most commonly not-built, sometimes un-buildable, and such that proposes a critical architectural concept, a concept that is a counterweight or alternative to the existing. Visionary architecture permits architects to express themselves in experimental and inquisitive fashion which is different from building or theory writing. Released from the shackles of reality, it presents opportunities for exploration of human emotions and futuristic speculations. Darkness entails unwelcome misunderstandings, frustrating dead-ends, and lurking dangers. On the other hand, darkness offers a reconciliation cradle for unresolved issues, transgressing taboos, and inner conflicts that torment and arouse man's soul. The lack of the visible does not reduce understanding but rather opens up windows toward new ideas and feelings which the visible cannot unveil, and without which we are confined to a life of no discovery or excitement.

Visionary architecture uses darkness in order to explore levels of conceptual understandings that the geometrical and the concrete do not explain, and expose them as essential for the human experience in the world. Utilizing lack of light and suggesting ambiguous realities, visionary architecture exposes possibilities that can be part of architecture. Drawing on visionary architecture creations by Piranesi, Lequeu, and more recent architects such as Pichler, Woods, and others, the paper articulates the typology of darkness within the realm of visionary architecture. Elaborating on the issue with the aid of conceptual perceptions of Robin Middleton, Alberto Perez-Gomez, and others the paper contends that the use of darkness is imperative today no less than anytime in the past. That although contemporary technology has the ability to decipher mysteries of the universe and the body, still the ambiguity of creativity, emotion, eroticism, the unfinished, and death can be reconciled mainly by the use of darkness.

Keywords: Visionary Architecture, Darkness, Architectural Representation
Word count: 7701

1. INTRODUCTION

Visionary architecture is architecture most commonly not-built, sometimes un-buildable, and such that proposes a critical architectural concept, a concept that is a counterweight or alternative to the existing. Visionary architecture permits architects to express themselves in an experimental and inquisitive fashion which is different from building or theory writing. Released from the shackles of reality, it presents opportunities for exploration of human emotions and futuristic speculations. Darkness entails unwelcome misunderstandings, frustrating dead-ends, and lurking dangers. On the other hand, darkness offers a reconciliation cradle for unresolved issues, taboos, and inner conflicts that torment and arouse man's soul. The lack of the visible does not reduce understanding but rather opens up windows toward new ideas and feelings which the visible cannot unveil, and without which we are confined to a life of no discovery or excitement. Visionary architecture uses darkness in order to explore levels of conceptual understandings that the geometrical and the concrete do not explain, and expose them as essential for the human experience in the world. Utilizing lack of light and suggesting ambiguous realities, visionary architecture sheds light on possibilities, concepts, critical issues, and inner conflicts, that otherwise remain hidden.

The paper articulates the typology of darkness within the realm of visionary architecture. Elaborating on the issue with the aid of conceptual perceptions, and various examples from art and literature, and some architectural concepts related to shadows and darkness. An analysis of various examples, historical to more recent, unveils a range of concepts and manifestations of the presence of darkness in the realm of visionary architecture. The paper contends that the use of darkness is imperative today no less than any time in the past. That although contemporary technology has the ability to decipher mysteries of the universe and the body, still the ambiguity of creativity, emotion, eroticism, the unfinished, and death can be reconciled mainly by the use of darkness.

2. VISIONARY ARCHITECTURE

Visionary architecture is released from chains that obstruct the architectural building like the complexity of materialization, transferring from paper to object, the limitations of representation, and the distance between the architect and the physical construction (Evans, 1997). The Visionary usually does not have a patron or a concrete user; it is general and proposed as a model rather than a specific solution. American art historian George Collins strengthens this by stating: "a visionary scheme may bear only a corollary of abstract relation to physical actuality and be rather a statement of spiritual or intellectual commitment or fantasy on the part of the designer." (Collins, 1979:244).

Visionary architecture is not only an architectural whim that exists on the margin; it has an essential role in practice, research, and discourse. It is crucial to the way architects search for a new meaning of doing and thinking architecture, ways that will fit an unknown future and will stand contradictory to paved paths no longer relevant. Visionary architecture proposes a theoretical statement, speculative or imagined. It aspires to present an idea that is considered advanced for its time without, necessarily, an intent to build it (Collins, 1979). Visionary architecture permits architects to express themselves in an experimental and inquisitive fashion which is different than building or theory writing. Those who are engaged in visionary architecture do it for a multitude of reasons: injecting noise into the system, research and development, personal expression, experiments, political protest, social criticism, and educational purposes. Visionary architecture allows creators to make use of architectural tools in order to make historical research, critical discourse, and dialog that can raise questions other than what is possible with verbal or written tools (Tafuri, 1987, Spiller, 2006).

It can be said that many operations of humanity involve speculation and fantasy, but in architecture, the practical tool for building is also the ideal tool to free the imagination (Bingham, Carolin, Cook & Wilson, 2004). Visionary architecture cannot be detached from the cultural and technological context within which it is conceived, otherwise, it will be perceived as un-connected, totally fictional, and will propose no option to be understood or affect the viewer, as expressed by Bingham: "Crucially, fantasy architecture must engage the imagination of the viewer with imagery that is not over-proscriptive, leaving them the space in which to project their own narratives and imagined futures." (Bingham, Carolin, Cook & Wilson, 2004:19)

Visionary architecture is critical and in dispute with the existing. The criticism is about cultural and social characteristics related to historical events. Criticism can be against ways of common thinking and architectural standards, like for example the suggestions of Archigram that rally against routine behavior in architectural firms (Coleman, 2005). The polemics could be aimed at common methods of education, agreed forms of expression, and the proper way to create and practice architecture. Visionary architecture does not always put itself in the position of the prophet or the inventor but it confronts the existing, this confrontation is utilized for advancement and renewal (Spiller, 2007). In a way, this departure point is paradoxical, for it aspires for a better situation but at the same moment declares that once reached, this situation has to be confronted all over again. Nevertheless, this polemical impulse is a necessity as explained by Italian historian Battisti:

"The worst authority, however, is the one within us, and that is our continuity and our inertia. Therefore, we must try to change our own ideas, to perhaps lose every concept of dignity, therefore of stability and permanence, to oscillate when the situation demands, and to be contradictory, in public as well as in private." (Battisti, 1998:149)

3. DARKNESS

Darkness is lack of light, lack of sight. And since sight is the primary tool for comprehending the environment, it becomes lack of the ability to position the body in space, to distinguish differences between objects, or to determine distance and speed of movement. Without light it becomes impossible to make logical assumptions about the outcome of conditions and situations. Darkness hinders the ability to find our way both physically and metaphorically. As our culture is vision oriented, any hindering of the visible is understood as negative and unwelcome. It is through light that the form, mass, and shape of space is made explicit and appreciated. It is through light, and the quality of light, that the atmosphere and intangible qualities of space are revealed. This attitude has been widely acknowledged, as Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa points out:

"The dominance of vision over the other senses - and the consequent bias in cognition - has been observed by many philosophers. ...western culture has been dominated by an ocular-centric paradigm, a vision-generated, vision-centered interpretation of knowledge, truth, and reality." (Pallasmaa,2005:*16)*

Pallasmaa note is an introduction to his critic of the sovereignty of light, aimed to promote the sensorial and haptic appreciation of the world. This sensorial appreciation benefits from impaired vision, lack of visibility, darkness, so that other sensations can be felt and experienced without the dominance of sight. Light exposes and reveals, but also obscures and hinders, other, not less complex or versatile, sensations. Pallasmaa reminds us that:

"During overpowering emotional experiences, we tend to close off the distancing sense of vision; we close the eyes when dreaming, listening to music, or caressing our beloved ones. Deep shadows and darkness are essential, because they dim the sharpness of vision, make depth and distance ambiguous, and invite unconscious peripheral vision and tactile fantasy." (Pallasmaa,2005:*46)*

The visual is not merely the content of the seen, it is always about potential, of unfolding, of possible interpretation, of a hint toward something else that resides elsewhere. There is mental depth in what is seen. As such darkness is not a cover and distortion does not offer hiding. On the contrary, darkness, invites, penetrates, resonate with complex truth, with ambiguous possibilities, with the irreconcilable truth of reality. Darkness can reveal things light does not show. Darkness does not really hide, it rather obscures, makes things lose their undeniable and concrete manifestation while in turn, they gain an existence as potential, as open to interpretation. Darkness allows the other senses to become more acute and felt. Besides seeing we have other senses: smell, touch, sound, and taste, all take part in the way we experience and appreciate reality. The overwhelming significance we give to sight emerged since the introduction of perspectival space representation in the Renaissance. It has diminished our sensibility and appreciation of architectural space as a multi-sensory experience. It is through darkness, shadow, and diminishing visible conditions, that our other senses become more acute, producing a more well-rounded experience, richer in flavors. Darkness allows interpretation through experience rather than through signage. As darkness is less concrete, less precise and finalized, it is more subtle, ambiguous, mysterious and touches on a wider range of sensibilities: "How much more mysterious and inviting is the street of an old town with its alternating realms of darkness and light than are the brightly and evenly lit streets of today!" (Pallasmaa,2005:46).

In a telling and poetic book, by novel prize winner for literature Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk, titled: My name is Red, the miniaturists of the Ottoman period spend their lives obsessively dedicated to the art of copying colored illuminations. Following years of painting the smallest details in semi-darkness, they gradually lose their eyesight. But through this blindness they achieve a more acute sense of sight, they actually reach a higher sense of artistry only when becoming fully blind. As if only through complete lack of light they can really-see the inner truth of their subject-matter. In a horrific part of the tale, Pamuk tells how the growing frustration of some illustrators, unable to reach this sort of reverse enlightenment, makes them turn their steel ink-point toward their own pupils inflicting blindness upon themselves (Pamuk, 2011).

3.1 Darkness: Imagination and Dream

The imagination is awakened in the shadows because the mental activity is unfocused. The physical sight of objects and physical phenomena in the real world triggers our disciplined logic, we understand and expect connections and occurrences, cause and effect, any unpredicted form or sequence of events will either be neglected or cause discomfort, disorientation, or confusion that will require a logical resolution. The possibility of enhanced imagination is dependent then on darkened conditions, the ability to 'see' other things, understand, imagine, and except, is enhanced by the poverty of vision. An absent-minded gaze, one that is not overwhelmed by external images, can penetrate the surface of the physical image and focus on infinity. Under the 'sleep of reason...', as Spanish painter Goya titles one of his etchings, '… produces monsters'. In a well-known image Goya portrays himself dozes among his drawing tools, his reason disabled, out of the darkened background behind him emerges a swarm of monstrous creatures. Among them, we can recognize an owl that may symbolize folly, and bats which are the metaphor of ignorance. Many other unrecognized creatures rush to envelope him in his sleep. Elements of the unknown create interest, tension, hope, expectation, and stimulation. Darkness is an invitation for the mind to invent, interpret, and imagine the monstrosities of an unthinkable.

This familiar dream state is characterized by a lack of apparent logical connections between objects and events, time can be sequenced unpredictably, and space can alter in an unforeseeable manner. In most cases, the memory of dreams does not linger and can alter over time. Dreams meaning is fluid, fragile, and can touch upon multi

explanations, memories, and associations. Darkness understood in such terms, allows us to think clearly once sharpness of vision has been suppressed. Impoverished visibility allows the awakening of the imagination by making visual images unclear and ambiguous. The imagination is awakened in the shadows because the mental activity is unfocused. Einstein, the German physicist, used to tell how he made his greatest achievements by closing his eyes and producing dreamlike situations that allowed him to imagine unresolvable issues. It is almost paradoxical that imaginary trains traveling at the speed of light became the source for the theory of relativity, which proved to be a more qualified theory for describing reality (Miller, 2001).

3.2 Darkness: Atmosphere
Maybe no discussion of the bewildering and conflicting attributes of darkness is not complete without a mention of the ultimate master of the ambiguity of cognition, Czech writer Franz Kafka. Writing at the threshold of modernity, with its most complex suggestive issues of humanity. The opening lines of his unfinished novel "The Castle" mark the novel's unresolved journey into the human condition, so adequately proposed by lack of visibility:

"It was late evening when K. arrived. The village lay deep in snow. There was nothing to be seen of Castle Mount, for mist and darkness surrounded it, and not the faintest glimmer of light showed where the great castle lay. K. stood on the wooden bridge leading from the road to the village for a long time, looking up at what seemed to be a void." (Kafka, 2009:5)

In another quote, also from the same book, a rather simple, realistic, everyday situation portrays the confusion created by impaired visibility. All daily conditions described seem to gather toward creating a sense of uncertainty and vagueness, darkness is piled in layers with constant frustration, confusion, irrationality, dissatisfaction, with always a faint thread of optimism, and dark humor:

"It was a large, dimly lit room. Coming in from outside, he could see nothing at first. K. staggered and nearly fell over a washing-trough; a woman's hand caught him. He heard a number of children shouting in one corner. Steam billowed out of another, turning the twilight into darkness." (Kafka, 2009:13)

Japanese traditional culture celebrates the subtle potential inherent in the qualities of darkness (Saito, 1997). In a well-known short book by the Japanese writer Tanizaki, titled: On the praise of shadows, Tanizaki explores the role of shadows and darkness in traditional Japanese culture. He recognizes the many expressions of Japanese appreciation and subtle enjoyment of darkness in all facets of everyday life, art, and culture. Many of those are compared to Western routines and preference to light. Tanizaki tells about the dichotomy which is felt between the efficiency of the contemporary house and its technology, and the unique atmosphere of the traditional Japanese house marked especially by its layers of darkness and quiet. He begins the written description by seemingly conflicting architectural setting, the temple, and the toilet: "When I frequent a temple in Kyoto or Nara, and I am being directed to the traditional toilet, darkened, which is always also spotless clean, I again appreciate the fine attributes of the pure Japanese architecture." (Tanizaki, 2013:9)

3.3 Darkness: Complexity of the Soul
Dramatic conditions enhanced by darkness, shadows, and impaired visibility are prevalent in Medieval western art. It has used darkened spaces for prisons, underworld, and imaginary representations of hell, dedicated to enclosing sinners and the misfits of society. It used darkness mainly as the opposite of light symbolism of holiness, purity, and knowledge. In this respect darkness is a mechanism of fear, blame, and punishment. Later periods exposed other more varied tones of human emotions, sense of mystery, adventure, sadness, fear, and melancholy. These expressed in art styles such as Picturesque and Romanticism, adorning issues of dramatic emotional state such as the sublime and the uncanny. All used various tactics of impaired visibility such as fog, mist, haze, storms, voids, deep shadows, and of course darkness to enhance the range and depth of human emotions.

The traditional Western dichotomy of Good-Bad, Light-Dark, caused the appreciation of darkness to emerge slowly, yet artists grow more aware of the qualities of darkness and the ability through its use to portray finer sensibilities of human nature. Among such artists, Dutch painter Rembrandt is probably most known for the masterful use of darkness in his paintings. By obscuring in deep shadows large portions of the paintings he managed to bring to the fore deeper qualities of the human spirit, psychological complexities, and variety of emotions. In his painting: Philosopher in Meditation (1632), an old man is seating in a small house leaning on his desk, on which a book is open, engaged in contemplation by the dimmed light coming from a small window. The interior is dominated by a spiral staircase diminishing into darkness. The metaphor of life and the mystery of origin is obvious, purpose and fate are implicit in the spiral stairs. The darkness, toward which it ascends and descends, reminds us that we are living luminously between two eternities of darkness. The old man is at an age in which he can look back at his achievements and deeds, maybe written in the book, and at the same time can sense his unavoidable end. This unresolved contemplation, hard to think about, is represented via the masking of the answer, darkness is used to leave the issue unresolved, in constant contemplation. For Rembrandt the human was not something that you can simply copy like maybe some Renaissance painters believed, it was not obvious, it was something to be found...in the darkness (Levy, 2017).

Almost two centuries after Rembrandt it is Spanish master painter Francisco Goya who choose to portray images of a mad-house. In these paintings the architecture is bare and lit from a single light source, producing large

spaces that are darkened rather than spread with light. Most remarkably some of the figures are drawn deep in the shadows, their facial characteristic hardly visible, slightly hinted. This obscuring of the human figure rather than hiding exposes human fragility, tormented soul, and deep complexities of the mind which reflects and penetrates reality out of the darkness of the subconscious. Darkness is no longer only abstract but rather phenomenological, it portrays man as a more complex in nature, as emotional and irrational (Levy, 2017).

In those two examples facial expressions and suggested complex layers of the human are enhanced by lack of visibility, large areas of dark paint, and layers of growing deep shadows. Architectural space, like the faces, is hidden in dark, deep shadows. The unclear quality and detail of the space serve to metaphorically enhance the issue of philosophical contemplation, unresolved psychological complexities, and the fathomless depth of the human soul. This darkness rather than hide opens up the mind and offers a path to contemplate issues that cannot be explained or seen. Issues that any light shed upon them will most probably make them disappear. Rembrandt and Goya, masters of darkness, presented in their paintings the essence of modern age psychoanalysis. Fundamentally it is the method which assists to think things that are hard to think about, it interprets the unconsciousness, exposes the wished and fantasized, anxiety and conflicts that we prefer to keep obscured in such deep darkness even hidden from ourselves, as explains Israeli psychoanalyst Itamar Levy:

"…a feeling which is hard to represent, a sensory feeling which refuses any narrative description. The thought can stem from an idea or experience that are so private that they are hard to communicate, from wills or meanings different from each other, even conflicting, that the connection between them is fluid and elusive, or existential sensation and thought fragments frightened to evaporate, such that any attempt to stabilize them damages their airy essence." (Levy, 2017:16)

4. DARKNESS IN VISIONARY ARCHITECTURE
4.1 The Dark Forest
In 1499 the book: Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, was published in Venice, probably by a friar named Francesco Colona. It is an architectural treaty composed of an allegorical tale of romantic and erotic adventures of Poliphilo as he searches for his loved one Polia. The book, an early example of print, is accompanied by an assortment of woodcuts depicting the experiences and events. The story begins as the protagonist Poliphilo is lost in a dark forest, where he falls asleep, he dreams of a strange place where his experiences take place. He falls asleep again, and dreams again, within his dream. His journey includes moral choices, sensual and erotic experiences, and enjoyment of fragmented sometimes ambiguous architectural artifacts and spaces. It concludes as the lovers unite, also in the physical and metaphorical cover of darkness:

"Polia and Poliphilo are finally together, but not before having been blindfolded by Cupid. The possibility of meaningful architecture depends upon a realization that visible form and language refer to something other, recognized only when the dominant sense of sight (and Renaissance perspective) is mediated by the body's primary synthetic (tactile) understanding." (Pérez-Gómez, 1992: xix)

As an architecture treaty, it opens unique architectural propositions very different from more known ones like that of Vitruvius or Alberti's, that is since the book reminds us that the effect of architecture is always beyond the purely visual and is related to memory and expectation of erotic fulfillment: "The wholeness of love and architecture is sensuous yet beyond the senses, it is a wholeness underscored by alchemical themes and operations of fragmentation and union that structure the narrative." (Pérez-Gómez, 1992: xvi)

Mexican-Canadian architectural historian Alberto Pérez-Gómez re-interprets the book as a demonstration of how architectural meaning is not something solely intellectual, a formal question of proportional relationships or abstract aesthetic values, but rather originates in the erotic impulse itself. The erotic gaze dominant in the book is understood as the yearning for fulfillment through vision, something that cannot be fulfilled. When we look at a thing, we don't actually look for its anatomy but rather we are expecting a fantasy. Seeing by itself does not fulfill us, our gaze is aroused by the object seen but can never be fully satisfied. In order to demonstrate this condition, the narrative uses darkness in several instances and forms: the dark forest, sense of loss, sleeping, blindfolding, and dreaming.

4.2 Identity Through Disintegration
The use of dark contrasting tones, shadows, cloudy storm-like skies, concentrated light sources, were all used in architectural visions to create dramatic effects and draw attention to the qualities of the represented architecture. One such artist was English architect J.M Gandy, whose genius was his ability to take the visionary works of John Soan and give them drama, spirit, and beauty, or in his own words: "Architecture is enrapt in a cloud of darkness… To unveil its power in true splendor ought to be the aim of the artist ". (Gandy in Steil, 2014:99)

His dramatic dark representations of Soan's collective works sheds aura of mystery to the architecture and enhances concerns for Romantic emphasis on isolation, heroism, and loss, concerns that were shared and influenced by the works of his Italian contemporary G. B Piranesi (Steil, 2014). Piranesi, active in the 18th century, is considered by many as the spiritual father of the visionary architecture tradition. His dark engravings called Carceri (1749) depict a series of imaginary prisons existing among the ruins of ancient Rome. Time and functions described in the detailed engravings are ambiguous; this enhances their allegoric and mysterious meaning (Spiller, 2007). Darkness

ingrained within his captivating hatchings has influenced almost every visionary architect since his time: "Piranesi is one of the most persuasive paper-architects, and from him many have learned that they prefer shams to the truth, that the most prized forms of mental freedom require a certain insulation from reality." (Harbison, 1993:102)

Piranesi's drawings seem realistic at first glance, deeper inspection reveals them to contain a sense of fantasy, unrealistic perspective(s), and a sense of endless depth in seemingly closed spaces. Piranesi's representations contain many attributes of suppressing visibility, such as the use of dark shades, smoke, and fumes that rise in different locations. The fragmented arrangement, the free use of imagination and fantasy, the uncertain propositions of spaces, and the sense of infinite spatial possibilities, require the viewer to use his imagination to complete the situation. To do this by placing himself in the drawing, this placement does not offer peace or harmony, only continuous search (Small, 2007). So describes this Russian film director Eisenstein: "...the accumulation of perspectives into the distance is on the verge of madness and narcotic hallucinations, but every such completely awkward perspective in itself is connected rather naturally." (Eisenstein in Tafuri, 1987:75)

The world, as interpreted by Piranesi, is unclear, full of contradictions, there is no apparent ideal or truth. Man is relentlessly required to interpret his place in the world, subjected to endlessly search for meaning while creating new variations on existing themes. Piranesi has no intention to repair this world by rearranging it, but rather by accepting its disordered, and flowing state. He embraces the world's contradictions, mystery, and ill-logic as fate (Tafuri, 1987). Researcher Irene Small calls this process: identity through disintegration. Artifacts drawn are not merely copies of existing objects but presented as if being re-read and re-interpreted when drawn by him. They all carry a sense of disintegration, decay, and constant change. The broken ruins, in the drawings, are never broken innocently, they always convey something. This intention is evident in the way the works always point to a center that never appears, and the ruins always disappear, break or fade into darkness in the exact place where they are supposed to continue to explain their internal logic (Small, 2007).

4.3 He is Free

The extensive social changes of the French revolution brought in its wake what is considered by many to be the first wave that was purely understood as visionary architecture. The prominent figures were architects Claude Nicolas Ledoux and Étienne-Louis Boullée. The monumentality and captivating reversal of light and dark in Boullée's vision for a Cenotaph for Sir Isaac Newton are, most likely, one of the best-known visionary architectural works from the period. The rising power of criticism, alongside acknowledgment of the uniqueness of the individual, has given rise to some intriguing figures, among them the enigmatic architect Jean Jacques Lequeu. Lequeu was born in France in 1757, his many creations are mostly architectural fantasies, which he understood as architectural speculations, and as a meaningful method to explore architectural concepts. Marked from a young age as somewhat a prodigy, yet his whole life was employed in the obscurity of the department of measurement and cartography. His freedom from architectural work in an office allowed him to confront issues not common in architecture, such as sexuality, and bad taste. This freedom was essential, enabling him to remain critical, polemic, contradictory, and enigmatic, sometimes on the verge of sanity, to which he most likely have descended into toward the end of his life (Duboy, 1987).

Lequeu's preference for the dramatic is exemplified in dark-toned sections, wide range of darkened atmospheric skies, pure black backgrounds, and various obscene sexual behavior composed in dark spaces. Many of his creations explore underground settings, furnaces, primitive hideouts, adorned by deep shadows, flames, and smoke. His writings are scattered over his drawings and include remarks of dual meaning, pieces of flattery, malice attacks on architects, and abundant spelling mistakes, most of them intentional. His written explanations, sometimes fragmented, are a mixture of sophisticated critic and unrelated threads of thought, many times suggest conflicting explanations to the same issues. The explanations detail and categorize the drawings but at the same time obscure them as if they are an additional coat of darkness (Kaufman, 1949).

One exemplary work by Lequeu is a drawing showing a female nude, enigmatically titled: He is Free. The drawing depicts a classical architectural element, an arch supported on four somber-faced caryatids. From the darkness of the opening beneath it, a nude female figure emerges in an unclear state of consciousness, her hand is stretched toward a fleeting songbird. The freedom, suggested in the title, is from the chains of classical architecture's tyranny, and restrictive sexual behavior. Darkness and the sleepy pose are used as metaphors and a mechanism to free the mind from both sexual taboos and constrained architectural thinking. Throughout Lequeu's creative oeuvre darkness is used not only for dramatic contrasting effects but rather for its ability to enhance the enigma of human nature, hide conflicting intentions, and suggest freedom from biases and taboos imposed by order, society, and fear (Chapman, 2007).

4.4 Revolution

Periods of dramatic social change coupled with economic hardship seem like an agreeable ground for cultivating the visionary output. Such was the Russian revolution in the early decades of the 20th century, it gave rise to some extreme Avant-Garde energetic outpour. It was a conscious attempt to define new architecture fitting the new culture and society endorsed by revolutionary ideals. In the early days of the Russian revolution, the works of architect Yakov Chernikov were dark architectural fantasies. His graphic experiments searched a visual expression

that puts emphasis on a dramatic, romantic, and poetic quality. The emphasis is not on the political or social aspect but more on the personal, fantastic, imaginative, and artistic. Chernikov does not attempt to work from art to architecture, but rather in a reverse, from architecture to art; to bring architecture to the level of art. His concept of non-objectivity, claimed that the composition is governed by logical definitions and not by natural organic condition. The balance is dictated by the feel of the artist and the artistic logic, not from copying nature, history, or the existing (Bar-Eli, 2011).

The final decade of the Russian communist experiment has given rise, once more, to a visionary impulse among architects, this time it was a lack of employment and an urge for international discourse. The visionary paper architecture of Brodsky and Utkin, their creations emphasize atmosphere, idea, and artistic expression (Klotz, 1990). There is an emphasis on darkness which is a metaphor of the situation of man in the world, the relations between man and the city, man with architecture, and possible meaning of architecture. Brodsky and Utkin's dark, dramatic, and sort of pessimistic artistic expression is not only a way to bypass bureaucracy and unemployment in deteriorating USSR but also means of communicating ideas and search for possible significance. Darkness is not depicting the dark times but rather a manifestation of the reality of modern urban life: loneliness, confusion, fear, loss of purpose, and continuous detachment from history and nature. This artistic expression is not used only as criticism and resistance but an essential tool for the development of new ideas, an indispensable human way to reconcile gaps and conflicts and to overcome contradictions that compose reality (Nesbitt, 2003).

4.5 Submerged

The visionary is not solely directed as social criticism or portrayal of urban complexities. Many have employed strong visionary impulses toward the self and the consequences of reality upon the individual. An example of this can be found in the visionary works of Austrian architect Walter Pichler (1936-2012). He was renowned during the late '60s for his visionary architecture consisting of urban issues on the background of technological changes, their effects, and possibilities, especially on the human body and the place of man in the world. Early in the 1970's he moves to a rural farm in Austria were his works turned into more personal and artistic in nature (Dunster, 2005). The first thing evident in all the works by Pichler from that period is the atmosphere, it can be defined as expressive and poetic. This atmosphere is almost a material by its own right; it is a space through which we understand the world (James, 2008). It is not a description of a landscape, but a blurred image, as if seen through a constant, thick fog, through some material that everything is submerged in: "Atmosphere relates to the critical strategy of clouding, to render obscure, to resist rhetorical clarity." (James, 2008:60)

Pichler's works are represented in a very realistic and precise manner, yet they contain many features of haziness and vagueness, this creates ambiguity and indeterminacy; it aims at stepping away from clarity and rationality. An example can be seen in a colored drawing of an architectural section titled: House for the Ridge. The drawing is precise, highly detailed, clearly done by someone proficient in architecture, deep understanding of details, craft of building, and of materials. All is clear: concrete base supporting the structure, door hinges, base for the sculpture, the sculpture itself monumental in the center of the space like an ancient deity in its temple. The colors are dark, the building rooted into the brown earth, the interior space is black, the sky a mixture of blood red and rusty browns. Somber, sublime, mythical, static, an architecture for art, architecture which is art, art that portrays architecture. Pichler brings back into his representations the darkness that was expelled by the light. Light represents improvement and progress of humanity and it is opposed to values of the mystical past: "Light released society from the dark forces of myth and folklore. Dark space, in contrast, was aligned with the pathological, the unseen and the diseased agent that will harm the social body." (James, 2008:62)

According to Pichler, it is only through darkness that objectivity and rationality can be opposed, only through darkness and its ambiguity can subjectivity, relativity, and melancholy appear. This melancholy is self-aware and serves as a mask from the real world (James, 2008).

4.6 Dystopia

One of the most prevailing subjects that interest enthusiastically creators of visionary architecture is technology. How will it affect our lives, morality, environment, nature, and what will be an architecture that reflects this? The motive forces behind modern science and technology are man's ambitions for power and the domination of reality. Technology is a constant effort to transfer to the mechanic, that which cannot be explained; to make the unknown known and to change reality according to our will. Technology will assist humanity to control its limitations, nature's hazards, and bring an end to our endless and depressing struggle for liberation and freedom. The problem with this approach is that it functions perfectly under controlled and contained conditions but loses its meaning under conflicting and uncontrollable situations. Complex planning that includes predictions and precise assumptions, is facing a reality of indeterminacy, confusion, and chaos, a paradoxical situation created by technology (Vesely, 2004).

Our relations with technology can be seen on the positive side, that sees technology as a provider of redemption and freedom, or it can be seen on the negative side as the cause of distraction. Technology always contains these two conflicting options, and this incites our emotional response toward it. The option exists, at least theoretically, that a technology that is intended to serve and enhance will change direction and turn against its creator and bring destruction, both physical and moral. The uncertainty implied by unpredictable changes generated by technology

have been equivalenced to darkness:

"Today the dark forest is no longer a threatening and disorienting place. Technology is its equivalent, representing precisely that which we cannot control yet also a place of potential meaning once we recognize its mysterious origin (depth, not trickery) and our ability to deconstruct its language in an operation of acceptance, twisting, and eventual healing." (Pérez-Gómez, 1992: xxi)

A possible dystopic future, a consequence of technological advances gone-wrong, misused, out of control, or in other ways turning against humanity, is one of the most common expressions of visionary architecture. In dystopia many and varied manifestations of darkness together with physical expressions of decline are predominant. Breakdown and the degradation of the environment and its contained artifacts, clogged contaminated cities, malfunctioning technology, deteriorating machinery, and deserted architectural elements are all abundant in dystopia's imagery. Such futuristic dystopia is predominantly characterized by darkness. The natural light of the sun, the symbol of nature, the provider of warmth, endless energy, and light, the dominant factors of quality of life. In dystopia the sun is hidden behind dust and pollution, its faint haze barely sheds light on piles of remaining ruins reminiscent of humanity's vanity, moral collapse, and misuse of technology. Darkness is dual in its portrayed manifestation it is a physical discomfort and loss of power, and it is a metaphor for the moralistic loss of way and depression, a warning against the shortcomings inherent in our own nature.

4.7 Noise in the System

British architect and theoretician Neil Spiller teach in Bartlett since 1992, author of several books on experimental research work of visionary architecture, and a zealous promoter and creator of visionary architectural drawings. Spiller sees architectural drawing as a means of research and theoretical experimentation, not available or possible in either writing or building. The conceptual roots of Spiller's work are found in his anti-establishment attitude, his drive to search, experiment, and explore, and in his faith that truth resides not solely in science, the known, or the agreed. His spirit of anti-establishment is not idealistic or violent; it is basically such that affords acceptance for different and unacceptable ideas, that allows the possibility for the not proved, true, or fashionable. Spiller works are attempts to reconcile the virtual and physical, to bring together a historical sense of architecture with suggestive new possibilities. Spillers' drawings engage directly with conditions unfeasible by reason or objectified representation. Sometimes his drawings are done in self-irony, and sometimes they mock the architectural seriousness of being persuasive to the public through flashy imagery. He uses the technique of collage and superposition shown deliberately in a confusing unclear way, as he testifies: "My architectural language has been honed by years of experimentation, with technology, with mythology and with shifting aesthetic preoccupations; above all it was out of control." (Spiller, 2006:2)

Spiller's works have a dark Goth feel to them. It does not refer to formalistic copy but to the spirit of the drawings, their character. The Gothic characterized by its darkness-ness is aimed at the scary and mysterious, the fantastic and the imagined, with a romantic emotional tendency. This spirit allows for the symbolic, in a variety of fields, such as religious, technological, mythological, and personal. His early works are in black and white with very dark contrast. It has roots in the classic look of architectural drawings and suggests a contradiction between the real and the imagined. Other characteristics of his works are techniques of confusion like collage, superposition, cut & paste, twisting, stretching, and so on. The works aspire to be ambiguous and undefined; this hiding is of importance for Spiller, and his method to deal with rationality and the logic involved with architecture. The aim is to expose things that the clear and bright drawings cannot expose: "In a search…, the drawing is morphed, spliced, fragmented and collaged. The unforeseen becomes see-able." (Spiller, 1998:35)

5. DISCUSSION

Visionary architecture proposes a critical architectural concept, a concept that is a counterweight or alternative to the existing. It is released from the obstructing chains of the building process: the complexity of materialization, transferring from paper to object, limitations of representation, and the distance between the architect and the physical construction. Released from the shackles of reality, it presents opportunities for exploration of human emotions and futuristic speculations. Visionary architecture, being a representation of architecture, came to realize that, very much like art, it has the ability to disclose through its representation a superior truth of experience which reality itself could conceal. It can discuss and suggest issues that are hard to think or express, taboos and inner conflicts which words and built spaces are short of being able to portray. As such visionary architecture has the capacity to complete our everyday experience of existential lack and make us spiritually whole. Once we acknowledge the mystery and unresolvable opaque origin and unknown beyond, we can, through the conceptual representations suggested by visionary architecture, reconcile with this existential experience. The main tool available for visionary architecture to conduct this discourse is darkness.

Representation of darkness is concerned with dramatic effects that arouse feelings of mystery, the sublime, and the uncanny. Darkness and lack of vision are introduced extensively in order to allow the fulfillment of the gap that opens up between what can be seen and our experience of the world. Darkness opens up the ability to use the imagination, to contemplate unresolved hard issues, reconcile conflicts, entice the imagination, and to complete our experience of reality. Darkness is used by visionary architecture representation both as a method and as a

concept, not limited to its romantic and dramatic effects. It expands to question the relationship between man's soul and the architectural environment, to contemplate the future and our relationship with technology. Visionary architecture uses darkness in its representation as a tool for criticism of architecture, of moral issues, and of society. It is used to experiment and explore existential issues and experiences of which built architecture or theory is short of exploring.

As the examples in the paper contend, the use of darkness in visionary architecture goes hand in hand with the main issues explored by visionary architecture. As technology, society, the relationship of man with nature, and with his own nature, evolve and shift in meaning and possibilities, so does the architectural darkened visions that contemplate about them. The relevance of darkness within the realm of visionary architecture is all more important today as technological advances in digital representation enhance the ability to represent accurately architectural space. The role of imagery has been dramatically changed during the last few decades, suggesting a reevaluation of its role in the process of creativity and architectural discourse. What can darkness reveal in contemporary evolving reality and visionary architecture? Has the role of darkness exhausted itself? I contend that as long as representation has not been drained so does the role of darkness, as a mark of the potential of the imagined, the hidden, the absence which lies within the seen.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Battisti, E. (1998). Utopia in Uncertainty. Translated by R. Williamson. *Utopian Studies*, 9, no. 1, pp. 149-155.

Bar-Eli, A. (2011). *On the Non-Complete in Visionary Architecture.* Berlin: LAP Academic Publishing.

Bingham, N., Clare C., Cook, P. and Wilson, R. (2004). *Fantasy Architecture: 1500-2036*. London: Hayward Gallery/Royal Institute of British Architects.

Chapman, Michael. (2007). Architecture and Hermaphroditism: Gender Ambiguity and the Forbidden Antecedents of Architectural Form. *Queer Space: Center and Peripheries*, pp 1-7.

Coleman, N. (2005). *Utopias and Architecture*. USA: Routledge.

Collins, G. R. (1979). Visionary Drawings of Architecture and Planning: 20th Century through the 1960s. *Art Journal*, pp. 244–256.

Duboy, P. (1987). *Lequeu: An Architectural Enigma*. Great Britain: The MIT Press.

Dunster, D. (2005). Walter Pichler. *Architectural Design*, 75, no. 4, pp. 86–91.

Evans, R. and (first) Architectural Association. (1997). *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays*. London: Architectural Association.

Harbison, R. (1993). *The Built, the Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable: In Pursuit of Architectural Meaning*. London: The MIT Press.

James, P. (2008). Walter Pichler's House Next to the Smithy: Atmosphere and Ground. *Architectural Design*, 78, no. 3, pp. 60–63.

Kafka, F. (2009). *The Castle*. United-States: Oxford University Press. https://libcom.org/files/Franz%20Kafka-The%20Castle%20(Oxford%20World%27s%20Classics)%20(2009).pdf (accessed 24.3.20)

Kaufmann, E. (1949). Jean-Jacques Lequeu. *The Art Bulletin,* 31, no. 2, pp. 130–135.

Klotz, H. ed. (1990). *Paper Architecture: New Projects from the Soviet Union*. USA: Rizzoli.

Levy, I. (2017). *The Passion of the Gaze*. Tel-Aviv: Resling. [in Hebrew].

Miller, A. (2001). *Einstein, Picasso: Space, Time and the Beauty That Causes Havoc*. New York: Basic Books.

Nesbitt, L. (2003). *Brodsky and Utkin: The Complete Works*. New ed. New York; Abingdon: Princeton Architectural; Marston.

Pallasmaa, J. (2005). *The Eyes of the Skin*. Great Britan: Wiley-Academy.

Pamuk, O. (2011). *My Name Is Red*. London: Faber & Faber.

Pérez-Gómez, A. (1992). *Polyphilo, or, The Dark Forest Revisited: An Erotic Epiphany of Architecture*. London: MIT Press.

Saito, Y. (1997). The Japanese Aesthetics of Imperfection and Insufficiency. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 55, no. 4, pp. 377–385.

Small, I. (2007). Piranesi's Shape of Time. Image & Narrative *[e-journal],* 18. http://www.imageandnarrative.be/thinking_pictures/small.htm [accessed 24.3.20]

Spiller, N. (1998). *Digital Dreams: Architecture and the New Alchemic Technologies*. London: Ellipsis.

Spiller, N. (2006). Deformography: The Surreal Poetics of Cybridised Architecture. *Papers of Surrealism*, no. 4, pp.1-20.

Spiller, N. (2007). *Visionary Architecture: Blueprints of the Modern Imagination*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Steil, D. L. (2014). *The Architectural Capriccio: Memory, Fantasy and Invention*. Manchester, UK: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

Tafuri, M. (1987). *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*. Cambridge Mass., MIT Press.

Tanizaki, J. (2013, (1933)). *In Praise of Shadows*. Israel: Asia. [in Hebrew].

Vesely, D. (2004). *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation: The Question Of*. London, England: MIT Press.