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## **Gathering, Disposing and the Cultivation of Judgement in Sir Henry Wotton's *The Elements of Architecture*.**

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*Employing a hermeneutic approach to reading Sir Henry Wotton's seventeenth century text on architecture, this paper discloses the discourse on judgement that lies at its heart. Wotton's conception of judgement is Aristotelian, and refers to the Ancient's Ethics and discourse on practical reasoning. Addressed to the aristocratic amateur architects of Jacobean England, The Elements of Architecture seeks to provide a 'rule' for the cultivation of good judgment in architecture. This paper examines the nuances of the relationship between 'rule' and 'example' in Wotton's conception of judgement, arguing for its derivation from the relationship between logos and ethos in Aristotelian philosophy. The interplay between the two proves crucial to the making of an interpretive work.*

### **Introduction**

In his Preface to *The Elements of Architecture*(1624) Sir Henry Wotton describes himself as "but a gatherer and disposer of other mens stuffe." To the modern mind this seems to be a disclaimer of any merit for the work. Indeed, post-Enlightenment commentators upon Wotton's *Elements* have too often interpreted the phrase according to their own values, suggesting that the greatest interest an examination of the work might yield was a list of its (insufficiently acknowledged) sources.<sup>1</sup> However at the turn of the seventeenth century, the activity of 'gathering and disposing' lay at the heart of human 'making'. It informed not only the literary activity of the humanists but also the house building of Elizabethan and Jacobean aristocrats. Although well understood by Wotton's original readers, this particular conception of making was to come under fire within half a century of his death and is all but lost to us now.

What interest might this now-dead conception of 'making' hold for us? Does Wotton's 'gathering and disposing' harbour a question that remains as alive today as it was for his seventeenth century contemporaries? This paper argues that it does, for the issue that lies at the heart of *The Elements of Architecture* is not only the disposition of material but, equally, the cultivation of judgement. Wotton's self-effacement in the opening lines of his *Elements* alerts us to a distinction that is central to that work; a distinction between those who merely gather and dispose, and those who exercise judgement in the generation of an interpretive work. It is Wotton's understanding of this distinction that this paper seeks to articulate.

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## Gathering and Disposing

What is meant by ‘gathering and disposing’? This activity, which remained relatively unproblematic for Wotton and his peers, provoked little reflective discourse in his time. Far more eloquent aids to understanding the concept are provided by those who championed humanist making against the challenge of the ‘moderns’ at the turn of the eighteenth century. Threatened by the imminent demise of their world, these men were forced to articulate that which they wished to defend.

One such is Jonathon Swift. In his *Battle of the Books* Swift provides us with a marvellous image for understanding difference between the kind of making that was habitually employed in Wotton’s time and that advocated by the ‘moderns’, ancestors of our own understanding. Swift parodies the battle between ancients and moderns by likening it to a dispute between a spider and a bee. The ‘modern’ spider claims superiority over the bee because that which she makes, her silken web, is the product of her own body. The bee, she points out, can claim no such originality. Its honey is derived from nectar, gathered from the flowers that it visits.<sup>2</sup>

If Swift’s spider gives voice to a relatively new value placed upon ‘originality’, his bee belongs to an ancient tradition. The bee, buzzing from this flower to that and gathering from each what it needs, was a familiar metaphor for the activity of a student compiling material for rhetorical invention.<sup>3</sup>

From an early age youths educated within the classical and humanist tradition were taught to keep ‘commonplace’ books. Therein they would record not only pithy observations and quotable quotes from classical literary works, but also images from the scriptures, nature, mythology and history, that might serve to illustrate their speeches. Guidelines for assembling such books had first been given by Aristotle in his *Topica*, and this scheme had been adopted and elaborated by succeeding generations of writers on rhetoric.<sup>4</sup> A passage from Erasmus’s late fifteenth century work *On Copia* clearly illustrates this method of composition:

“[F]irst,” Erasmus advised, “collect as many topics as possible.” Typical topics might be: ‘constance’, ‘justice’, ‘the superiority of the ancients to the moderns’ or vice versa, and so on. Such topics were not devised by the author of the commonplace book. They were inherited as part of a tradition.

Erasmus continues: “[A]fter you have collected as many headings as will be sufficient and arranged them in the order you wish, . . . then whatever you come across anywhere in any author, especially if it is very noteworthy, you will immediately mark down in its proper place whether it be a fable, an apologue, an exemplum, a strange occurrence, a sententia, a witty or otherwise unusual expression, an adage, a metaphor or a parable.”<sup>5</sup>

Erasmus emphasizes that exemplar are not drawn only from literature: “[N]o learning is so far removed from rhetoric that you may not enrich your classifications from it.”<sup>6</sup> Even a study so apparently remote as mathematics, he points out, may supply a wealth of

images. The sphere suggests self-sufficiency, the cube, stability, and so on. He concludes his account of the method by invoking the now familiar image of the bee:

“And so the student, like the industrious bee, will fly about through all the authors’ gardens and light on every small flower of rhetoric, everywhere collecting some honey that he may carry off to his own hive. Since there is such great abundance of subjects in these, a complete gleaning is not possible, and he will be sure to select the most important and adapt them to the pattern of his work. There are some which can be adapted not only for different, but even for opposite uses, and therefore should be noted down in several places.”<sup>7</sup>

The popularity of Serlio’s *Five Books of Architecture* and of the various pattern books that followed him, can more easily be grasped once their connection with commonplace books is recognized. Like the commonplace books, Serlian texts on architecture consist of a multitude of examples gathered under various headings. The five Classical Orders provided one ready set of topics; building types, such as houses, churches, theatres and so on, another. Like the rhetorical bee, Serlio had visited the architectural ‘classics’, recording an architrave here, the plan of a banqueting hall there. The result is a collection; not a finished literary work but a sourcebook, a storehouse of examples. His books were seized upon by those amateur architects among the aristocracy whose education had familiarized them with this particular method of organizing examples as the raw material of invention. Throughout the sixteenth century architectural pattern books became an increasingly popular addition to aristocratic libraries, providing well thumbed companions to the more demanding tomes on Vitruvian theory.<sup>8</sup>

The fertile visual culture of Elizabethan and Jacobean England, with its relish of two-dimensional pattern, was stimulated by the intricate geometric designs for plan and ornament given by Serlio, Vredeman de Vries and Dietterlin. Further, the allegorical potential of architecture was emphasized in these popular works. Serlio had suggested both Christian and functional associations for the orders, Vredeman de Vries introduced an analogy between the orders and the five ages of man, and Dietterlin expanded upon all the aforementioned themes in a riot of allegorical invention. Wotton’s fellow aristocrats, educated in the Classics and practiced in the construction of rhetorical conceits, must readily have grasped this interpretive opening. It brought the relatively unfamiliar conventions of classical architecture into a familiar setting.<sup>9</sup>

Thus set in motion, amateur architects among the English aristocracy did not hesitate to extend the store of examples provided by the patternbooks from their own experience. Indicative of such activity is the declaration by one prospective builder, of his intention to visit the houses of fellow aristocrats in order to “borrow . . . knowledge . . . somewhat out of every place of mark where curiosities are used.”<sup>10</sup>

The idea of gathering architectural curiosities and other devices as material for new designs may strike the modern reader as a recipe for the production of an appallingly eclectic jumble. Indeed a number of the resulting works have been so judged.<sup>11</sup> However it must be remembered that the gathering of examples, for which the commonplace books

provided a method, is not, in itself, invention. Once again the metaphor of the bee can be employed, this time in company not with a spider, but with an ant. The ant, like the bee, is a gatherer. But unlike the bee, the ant merely stockpiles the material it gathers. The bee, by contrast, digests it, and from it, produces honey.<sup>12</sup>

The difference between ant and bee is in the manner by which they synthesize their material. The compiler of a commonplace (or architectural pattern) book certainly does impose an interpretive framework upon the world, however this is largely an artless, or unreflective process. The selection of topics and the ability to recognize examples pertinent to those topics are both acts guided by habit or intuition rather than by deliberation.<sup>13</sup> In a similar way the ant distinguishes edible from inedible, and gathers according to this unreflectively grasped criterion. The digestive proceeding of the bee, however, requires a second movement of synthesis. That is, it requires not only the intuitively given interpretive structure which directs the initial gathering, but a second order of bringing together, a deliberative act through which the various parts that have been gathered are transformed into a new unity.

### **The Elements of Architecture**

Wotton introduces the distinction between the activities of ant and bee to his text on architecture at the close of the preface, where he briefly discusses the different literary genres that had lain open to him in embarking on his work. There were two ways, he mused, in which his speculations upon the art of architecture might be delivered: "*The one Historical, by description of the principall workes, performed already in good part, by Giorgio Vassari in the lives of Architects: The other Logically, by casting the rules and cautions of this Art, into some comfortable Methode. . .*"<sup>14</sup>

The alternative here presented strikes a familiar chord. While the historian is ant-like in his gathering and stockpiling of facts, the logician, whose syllogisms draw a major and minor premise into fruitful relationship, performs the digestive function of a bee.

Of course this portrait pertains to an ancient, rather than modern, conception of history; but this ancient conception was certainly the one that informed Wotton and his peers.

The function of history, as understood until well into the seventeenth, or even the eighteenth, century, was to make collections; to provide a record of particularity.<sup>15</sup> Natural historians, for example, collected rocks, plants, insects, and so on. Civil history recorded actions of various kinds: courageous acts, acts of political cunning, noble acts. History, thus conceived, bore little resemblance to the narratives characteristic of post-Enlightenment history, with their emphasis upon cause and effect.<sup>16</sup> Rather it functioned as a kind of storehouse within which information concerning the infinite variety of particulars of concrete experience could be collected, sorted, and compared. Such collections provided the raw material not only for Aristotelian sciences, but for his politics and practical philosophy.

Within this context, history provides the material for logical constructions, whether they be demonstrative, dialectical, rhetorical or poetic. Its product is material, no less than is the stone and timber stockpiled in readiness for the commanding activity of the architect. And just as the available building materials provide a ‘given’ with which the architect must work, so, too, is the material delivered by history a ‘given’ for the activity of reason.

Aristotle defines the material cause of an action or change as “that from which . . . a thing comes into being.”<sup>17</sup> Understood in its broadest sense, then, the material cause can be taken to include all that which is given through ethos, the intuitively given world of habitual assumptions and understandings within which human reasoning takes place, and through which it is made possible. Aristotle himself is quite clear on this point. “All instruction given or received by way of argument,” he notes, “proceeds from pre-existent knowledge.”<sup>18</sup> Pre-existent knowledge is the material cause of new knowledge; it is that from which new knowledge comes into being.

If all that can be taught derives from that which is already known, then the logical chain of reasoning must ultimately rest upon knowledge which is not demonstrable or teachable, but which is simply grasped by the intuition.<sup>19</sup> This intuitively given starting point is explicitly identified, by Aristotle, with memory, with experience and with ethos; and these, precisely, are the concern of the historian.<sup>20</sup>

And this is an important point, for Wotton’s meditation upon the alternative merits of logic and history can now be recognized as the overture to a central theme within his work; that is, the relation between logos and ethos, between reason and habit, between deliberation and judgement. It is this relationship which informs Wotton’s distinction between the architect and his “second *Superintendent*,” and equally his prioritization of form over material.<sup>21</sup> Most importantly, however, it informs a distinction between the architect and the judge of architecture.<sup>22</sup> That this last distinction lies at the heart of Wotton’s meditation on the relative merits of logic and history is confirmed by his conclusion. Logic is to be preferred over history, he argues:

*“For though in practicall knowledges, every complete example bears the credite of a rule; yet peradventure rules should preceed, that we may by them, be made fit to judge of examples.”*<sup>23</sup>

Wotton’s reader is to be made “fit to judge.” The cultivation of judgement is the goal at which *The Elements of Architecture* aims.

Wotton’s conclusion, however, does more than announce his concern with judgement. It also points to the paradoxical interdependence of logic and history, of deliberative and intuitive reason. The ‘rule’ delivered by logic is drawn from the material judged pertinent by the historian. That rule then provides a standard by which the material can be judged. The nexus between deliberative and intuitive reasoning pulses through the movement from initial to final judgement.

### **A Rule That Makes us Fit to Judge.**

Wotton intends his logical approach to deliver ‘rules’ by which we may judge the architectural merit of particular works. This declared intention is likely to be received with some misgivings by his modern readers, for it suggests (to us) a wholly inappropriate determinism. However there is an important difference between the classical sense of the term ‘rule’, and the sense that it has for us today. Let us, therefore, remove the potential for misunderstanding before going further.

Wotton’s term ‘rule’ translates the Greek ‘arche’. This rendering of ‘arche’ (which is now more usually translated as ‘first principle’ or ‘origin’) is unfamiliar to us, and needs explanation. How can Wotton’s notion of a ‘rule’ be accommodated to our understanding of ‘arche’? In fact, as will be shown, ‘rule’ does well in conveying several of the interrelated meanings that inform this ancient term.

One meaning of ‘rule’, or perhaps more commonly now, ‘ruler’, is that of a straight-edged strip employed as a guide for the drawing of lines. The length of the ruler may be divided into discrete units, so providing a means of determinate measurement. Significantly, however, the measure given is in no way universal or absolute. It gains its authority through the rational agreement of the community within which it is employed. A ruler, according to this sense of the word, both guides and provides a standard.

The same double meaning is borne when the term is applied to a monarch. The Ruler, or King, provides guidance and sets a standard for his people. This dual function was clearly understood by Wotton’s king, James I of England, and was emphasized in the advice which that king gave his son in the *Basilicon Doron*:

“ . . . so yee may be a good King, discharging your Office . . . in the points of Iustice and Equitie: which in two sundrie waies ye must doe: the one in establisshing and executing, (which is the life of the Law) good Lawes among your people: the other, by your behauiour in your owne person, and with your servants, to teach your people by your example: for people are naturally inclined to counterfaite (like apes) their Princes maners, according to the notable saying of *Plato* . . . ”<sup>24</sup>

James conceives of the outward demeanour of a King as providing a guide for his people, one that will shape their behaviour through instinctive imitation of his. The King’s Law, on the other hand, provides a standard by which that behaviour can be judged. Both standard and guidance are given by the Ruler.

If we now return to the term ‘arche’ and its reference to a beginning, a point of origin, or first principle, its connection with Wotton’s ‘rule’ can more readily be traced; for a Prince is the principal person in his State. As a leader, he is followed by his subjects.

The possession of ‘first’ place within a political hierarchy may not easily translate, for us, into the temporal sense of ‘first’, however this step was certainly made within ancient political philosophy. There the Prince, or Ruler, was held responsible for the state of his State. He was the cause, the origin, of its well being or dissolution. For both Plato and

Aristotle, the cultivation of an harmonious political State was dependent upon the moral character of its statesmen. Only those who possess a just soul are capable of bringing about or maintaining a just State.<sup>25</sup>

In late sixteenth century England the renewed influence of this ancient political philosophy was given voice in Sir Philip Sidney's *Old Arcadia*. In this work the moral failure of the Prince, Basilius, almost leads to the destruction of his State.<sup>26</sup> Wotton, in his *Elements*, notes the decorum with which Sidney houses his misguided Prince in a "Star-like Lodge," which "incommodious Figure" reflected the arrogance and selfishness of his soul. As Wotton comments, Basilius "did rather want some extraordinary *Formes* to entertaine his *Fancie*, then *roome* for *Courtiers*."<sup>27</sup> Such self obsession, in a Ruler, certainly spelled disaster for his State.

The withdrawal of Basilius from his community through his accommodation in the "Star-like Lodge," draws attention to the ancient stipulation that a Ruler must represent his State, and such representation requires discursive engagement. Like the standard of measurement provided by a straight-edged rule, the standard set by a Ruler of State must command the rational assent of the community within which it is employed. Within a political State such assent requires ongoing negotiation. The Rule can never be set in concrete, and so the Ruler must not withdraw.

One final semantic gymnastic will return us to Wotton's desire for a rule by which his reader may be made 'fit to judge'. If the term 'rule' is identified with the Greek 'arche' and so with 'Rulers of State', it is perhaps equally significant that the term 'state' translates the Greek 'ethos'. The rule of a monarch guides those who are ruled. It is *the ruled* who are made "fit to judge." Judgement is cultivated within the State, within ethos.

This observation returns us to Wotton's apparently paradoxical intertwining of logic and history, of deliberative and intuitive reasoning. The framing of rules and the exercise of judgement are assigned to different realms, and yet neither can exist independently of the other. Sidney knows this: the death of Basilius follows as a consequence of his withdrawal from the State. The collapse of his State follows from the withdrawal of its Ruler.<sup>28</sup>

## **Judgement**

Even so, things are not as simple as they may seem.

'Ethos' names the realm of unquestioned assumptions and habitual associations which unconsciously shapes our world. The judgement of the ant intuitively recognizes and articulates these familiar patterns of association.

But this kind of judgement is clearly not the same as that which Wotton hopes to cultivate in his readers. Those who are 'fit to judge of examples' are possessed of a different order



of judgement to that exercised by the historian. What do these different kinds of judgement have in common, and where do they differ? If the judgement of the historian can be identified with ethos, what of the judgement of 'the judge'?

Let us begin by clarifying our understanding of the way in which ethos informs the judgement of the ant. If ethos names the realm of unquestioned assumptions and habitual associations which unconsciously shapes our world, the judgement of the ant intuitively recognizes and articulates those familiar patterns of association. The interpretive assumption of the ant is that everything encountered has a place within those familiar patterns. The new is intuitively assimilated to the already known.

But the judgement of the judge is different in kind to this assimilative function.

When one is called upon to pass judgement on the merit of a work, the ongoing flow of that which is habitually given is interrupted. The work stands there, and one must do it justice. It is this pause in the flow of the habitually given which marks the difference between the judgement of the ant and that of the judge.

Judgements of merit spring from ethos, no less than those of the ant. Wotton recognizes this, noting that judgement must flow from an "*extemporall habite*."<sup>29</sup> Speaking extempore, as any student of rhetoric would have been well aware, requires an intuitive grasp of the subject. Such understanding can only be cultivated through both constant practice and a familiarity with the topic. It is this kinship with the topic that makes possible the intuitive leap necessary for good judgement.

Nevertheless such judgement is not immediate. It calls for consideration, a weighing up of this and that. The demand that the judge does justice to the work, and that she justifies her judgement, gives pause to the habitual responses cultivated within ethos and makes space for rational reflection.

Such judgement, therefore, must be distinguished not only from that of the ant, but also from that instantaneous recognition of the beautiful "which suddenly where it is taketh every *Beholder*."<sup>30</sup> Such unmediated recognition of the beautiful, according to Wotton, is not only universal (in that it moves all who behold it), but also inexplicable. The beholder is ravished, "(and hee knowes not how) by a secret *Harmony* in the *Proportions*."<sup>31</sup>

If the ant-like activity of the historian was identified with the material cause of a change or an action, the power to ravish the soul of a beholder is identified, by Wotton, with the final cause: "[T]his indeede is that end," he confirms, "at which in some degree, we should ayme even in the privatetest workes."<sup>32</sup>

But the judgement of the judge is not the discernment of such ravishing beauty; for clearly that which moves all who behold it calls for no special powers of detection. As Aristotle confirms, a knowledge of both the material and the final cause is given through intuition. "[I]ntuitive reason," says Aristotle, "is concerned with the ultimates in both

directions; for both the first terms and the last are objects of intuitive reason and not of argument.”<sup>33</sup> Both the material which is received as a ‘given’ to work with, and the beauty of a realized *telos*, are intuitively grasped and available to all.

What then is the task of the judge? A clue is provided in Wotton’s first instruction to his novice judge:

“I could wish him that commeth to examine any noble *Work*, first of all to examine himselfe, whether perchance the *sight* of many brave things before (which remaine like impressed formes) have not made him apt to thinke nothing *good*, but that which is the *best*; for this *humour* were too sowre.”<sup>34</sup>

The judgements of merit with which Wotton is concerned are, therefore, of buildings which are ‘good’ but not necessarily ‘the best’. They are of those buildings in which “the sagacitie of the architect” may have been put to “divers ingenious shifts.” It is here, where the architect has “wrestle[d] with scarcitie of *Ground*,” or some other such adversity, that judgement is put to the test. The architect may have had “sometimes to damme one Roome (though of speciall use) for the benefit and beauty of all the rest; Another while, to make those fairest, which are most in Sight, and to leave the other (like a cunning Painter) in shadow, *cum multis alyis*, which it were infinite to pursue.”<sup>35</sup> It is here, where choices have been made, compromises negotiated, that good judgement may be displayed.

For an Aristotelian a perfect site, an agreeable client, a limitless budget and an endless supply of flawless materials may all contribute to the production of a perfect building, but these things do nothing to cultivate good judgement in architecture. In fact the desire for removal of all constraints is considered the ultimate vice; the vice of pleonexia. This untranslatable vice, in which greed, arrogance and injustice combine, represents a loss of self-knowledge, of any sense of oneself as a part within a whole, a limited being who transcends those limitations only through participation in something which extends beyond oneself.<sup>36</sup> And only those who possess self-knowledge will judge well.

Wotton’s recommendation that the judge should not approach his task with ‘too sowre’ a humour not only admits the possibility that ‘the good’ will be found even where the soul is not immediately ravished, but also prepares the way for surprise.

It was Sir Francis Bacon, Wotton’s acquaintance and occasional correspondent, who first articulated the positive role of negative experience. We learn something new only through having our expectations disappointed. The interpretive assumption of the ant, that everything can be assimilated to that which is already known, was named by Bacon as one of the *idola fori*. Bacon berated the ant’s propensity to register only experiences that confirmed existing assumptions, as disabling prejudice, blinding us to truth.<sup>37</sup>

In a Baconian spirit, then, Wotton recommends that the judge of architecture should remain open, even to examples that do not immediately strike her as being ‘the best’. And it is this opening which creates a space for rational reflection, for reason.

What, then, can we conclude about the difference in judgement between ant and judge?

In the first place, they differ in their interpretive assumption: while the ant assumes that everything encountered will conform to that which is already known, the judge assumes only that it is accessible to reason and can be measured by a rational standard.

Second, they differ in their expectations: while the ant expects to be confirmed in existing opinions, the judge remains open to surprise.

Third, they differ in what they produce: while the ant merely reproduces existing understandings, the judge produces a work, *an* interpretation.

The difference between habitual interpretation and that which arises from rational reflection, is like the difference between a cliché and a metaphor. While the first always invokes only the same old set of associations, the second can display the world anew. Although habitual interpretation is certainly a form of interpretation, it has lost the power to show us anything, to seize or tease our understanding. For this reason those who speak of 'interpretation' are usually referring to the product of rational rather than habitual activity, to that which transports, rather than that which simply affirms, to the metaphor rather than the cliché.

What the two kinds of judgement have in common is their reliance upon an intuitive recognition of that which is appropriate to ethos. Where they differ is marked by the difference between reproduction and direction, between stasis and movement. Now this is a distinction of some importance; and it is one that recurrently surfaces in Wotton's thought.

If an art is to be considered liberal rather than mechanical, he maintains, it must be truly interpretive, and not merely reproductive. It is this conviction which qualifies Wotton's praise of Kepler's device for charting landscapes.<sup>38</sup> Equally, it is this which informs his meditation on the reason why, among painters, "some exact *Symmetrists* have been blamed, for being too true."<sup>39</sup> Wotton's care in distinguishing the painter's art from mere reproduction echoes the claim, threaded throughout *The Elements*, that architecture and its allied arts are, indeed, liberal.

### **Interpretation, Logic and Justice.**

One way to approach the difference between habitual and rational interpretation is through the difference between induction and deduction. While the historian gathers material by induction, the logician employs that material in the activity of deduction.

Induction proceeds by identifying different instances of the same thing or type of thing. Its power is the power of recognition. Unity is recognized within multiplicity, and so the unlimited diversity of sensuous experience is limited and made intelligible.

Deduction, on the other hand, proceeds by means of the logical syllogism.<sup>40</sup> A syllogism is a three term relationship in which the middle term negotiates between a universal statement and a particular instance. While the historian compares one example to another, sorting like from unlike, the logician compares examples with statements and definitions. She brings sensuous material into a relationship with abstractions. Logic, then, has the structure of justice; that is, it arises through the mediating power of a mean between unlike extremes.

If the historian makes collections, the logician makes bodies; organic unities in which unlike parts (the extremes represented by universal and particular) are bound into a proportionate whole. The logician, then, is a maker, a poet.

It is not surprising, then, that faced with an alternative between a logical or an historical approach to his subject, Wotton decides upon the logical. In fact, as is now, perhaps, evident, his opening meditation upon the approach to be adopted is itself an anticipation of his answer. In making his choice, Wotton alerts us to his concern, precisely, with choice. The good judge is one who knows how to recognize the right choice.

### **Dialectic, Architecture and Difference**

The logical approach employed by Wotton in his delineation of “the rules and cautions” of architecture is not the formal logic of demonstrative argument. Rather, it is the art of dialectic. This art had been recommended by Aristotle, in his *Ethics*, as appropriate to the activity of law makers, whether they be concerned with regulating political relations or with formulating guidelines for the practice of an art.<sup>41</sup>

Dialectic plays a central role, in Platonic-Aristotelian philosophy, in the cultivation of an individual’s capacity for practical reasoning, or *phronesis*. Significantly, within this tradition, architecture and dialectic are often metaphorically linked. The practical reasoning engaged in by an architect who has “wrestle[d] with scarcitie of *Ground*,” or some other such adversity, can be seen as analogous to the reasoning of a dialectician who must draw into unity the disparate threads of a practical tradition.

Despite the ancient popularity of metaphorical play between the two fields, however, works of architecture are indisputably different in kind from those of dialectic. While the architect’s production is spatial and sensuous, dialectic is realized in language; in reasoned argument and written ‘rule’. It is this difference that makes understanding, and therefore judgement, possible. The judge, like the logician, is a poet; a maker of organic unities. She grasps the fitness between a particular work and the ‘rule’ of that discipline.

### **Conclusion**

Jonathon Swift’s spider claims superiority over the humanists’ bee because that which she makes, her silken web, is the product of her own body. The bee, by contrast, gathers

nectar from flowers and digests it to produce honey. It is the bee's incorporation of material from outside, of difference, that distinguishes its making from the 'originality' of the spider.<sup>42</sup> For Wotton the spider's celebration of originality is misguided, as good judgement, which is necessary to architect and judge alike, requires the play of difference.

Nearly four centuries has passed since Wotton first penned his *Elements of Architecture*. His quest to construct an 'arche' for architecture cannot command our attention, as it did that of his peers: the classical canon of architecture, within which Wotton worked, is no longer central to architectural striving. Despite this, however, his text remains worthy of engagement today; for his discourse on the cultivation of judgment has by no means exhausted its relevance.

## Notes

- 1 This suggestion is implicit, for example, in Joseph Rykwert's comment that "Wotton's language echoes that of Scamozzi (whom Wotton never mentions), even when he claims to be formulating his own observations." in *The First Moderns: Architects of the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1980, p. 128. Certainly Wotton was not always rigorous in citing his sources, as has been shown by Herbert Mitchell in "An Unrecorded Issue of Philibert Delorme's *Le premier tome de l'architecture*, Annotated by Sir Henry Wotton." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 23 (1994): 20-29. However the rigour expected today was not usual in Wotton's time, and indeed Wotton was far more conscientious in this respect than many of his contemporaries.
- 2 Jonathon Swift, *Tale of a Tub and An Account of a Battel between the Ancient and Modern Books in St. James's Library and a Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*. Facsimile reprint of 1704 edition, Foundations of the Novel, ed. Michael F. Shugrue. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1972, pp. 242-8.
- 3 The connection between the bee and poeise goes back at least to Plato, who repeats what is said of poets, "that they harvest the honey of their songs from streaming well springs in the gardens and meadows of the muses and bring it to us like bees, they themselves being in flight." (*Ion*, 534b)
- 4 Aristotle, *Topica*, 105b13-18. I have used the translation by W. A. Pickard-Cambridge, in *The Works of Aristotle*. Vol. 1, ed. W. D. Ross. London: Oxford University Press, 1928.
- 5 Desiderius Erasmus, *On Copia of Words and Ideas (De Utraque Verborum ac Rerum Copia)* p. 89. I have used the translation by Donald B. King and H. David Rix. Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 1963.
- 6 Desiderius Erasmus, *On Copia of Words and Ideas*, p. 90.
- 7 Desiderius Erasmus, *On Copia of Words and Ideas*, p. 90.
- 8 Mark Girouard discusses the composition of aristocratic architectural libraries in *Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1983, p. 15. See also Malcolm Airs, "The English Country House in the Sixteenth Century." *Oxford Art Journal*, 11 (April 1979): 15-18; and John Newman, "Italian Treatises in Use: The Significance of Inigo Jones's Annotations." In *Les Traités d'Architecture de la Renaissance, Actes du colloque tenu à Tours du 1er au 11 juillet 1981*, ed. Andre Chastel and Jean Guillaume, Paris: Picard, 1988, pp. 435-441.
- 9 Mark Girouard provides us with an excellent insight into the digestive process by which ideas drawn from Serlio and others were re-presented in Elizabethan and Jacobean house designs. He provides numerous plates throughout his discussion of the Smythsons, comparing details of their houses with plates from Serlio, Vredeman de Vries and Dietterlin, in *Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House*.
- 10 From a letter by Henry Percy, ninth Earl of Northumberland to Robert Cecil, in the **Historical Manuscripts Commission**, Marquess of Salisbury, XV (London, 1930), pp.382-3. The letter is undated but endorsed 1603. Quoted by Maurice Howard, in "Self Fashioning and the Classical Moment in Mid-Sixteenth-Century English Architecture." In *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c.1540-1660*, ed. Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn. 198-217. London: Reaktion Books, 1990, p. 198.
- 11 See, for example, John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530-1830*. Seventh revised and enlarged (third integrated) ed., Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983, p. 84; and Elizabeth T. Jordan, "Inigo Jones and the Architecture of Poetry." *Renaissance Quarterly* 44 (1991): 280-319, p. 281. The eclecticism of many humanist literary works is noted by Paul Oskar Kristeller, "The Moral Thought of Renaissance Humanism." In *Renaissance*

- Thought and the Arts: Collected Essays*. Expanded edition, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990, pp. 37-39.
- 12 The stockpiling activity of the ant was, in all probability, a well known extension of the 'bee' metaphor at the time. Certainly the ant was employed to make this point by Sir Francis Bacon, who frequently criticized those *Empirici* who 'are like the ant; they only collect and use.' Quoted from the *Novum Organon*, by Michel Malherbe, in "Bacon's Method of Science." In *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon*. ed. Markku Peltonen. 75-98. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 82.
  - 13 Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, 981a. I have used the translation by W. D. Ross, in *The Works of Aristotle*. Second ed. Vol. 8, ed. W. D. Ross. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1928.
  - 14 Sir Henry Wotton's *The Elements of Architecture*. A Facsimile Reprint of the First Edition (London, 1624) With Introduction and Notes by Frederick Hard, The Folger Shakespeare Library, Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1968. Preface.
  - 15 Reinhart Koselleck, "Historia Magistra Vitae: The Dissolution of the Topos into the Perspective of a Modernized Historical Process." In *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, 21-38. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1985.
  - 16 Civil history did use narrative from ancient times, but the purpose of these narratives was to record a complete action, to create a whole, and so to generate an example which could be referred to when appropriate. These narratives were not explanatory in nature, as modern historical narratives are.
  - 17 Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, 1013a25.
  - 18 Aristotle, *Analytica Posteriora*, 71a1. Note also his declaration that the premises of a syllogism are the material cause of the conclusion. *Physics*, 195a18-19. Both the premises of a syllogism and the material delivered by the historian are given by intuitive reason.
  - 19 Aristotle, *Analytica Posteriora*, 71b20-30, 72a3-8 & 72b18-30.
  - 20 Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, 980b1-30.
  - 21 Sir Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture*, pp. 11-12 (mislabelled 21).
  - 22 Sir Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture*, p. 115.
  - 23 Sir Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture*, Preface.
  - 24 King James VI and I, "Basilicon Doron," in *Political Writings*. ed. Johann P. Sommerville. Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994; p. 20.
  - 25 See Plato *The Republic*, Bk. 9; Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1144b20-1145a5; and Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Plato's Educational State." In *Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato*. Translated by P. Christopher Smith. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980, p. 82.
  - 26 Andrew D. Weiner, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Protestantism: A Study of Contexts*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978, pp. 54-60.
  - 27 Sir Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture*, p. 120.
  - 28 Andrew D. Weiner, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Protestantism*, pp. 58-9 & 80-1.
  - 29 Sir Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture*, p. 115.
  - 30 Sir Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture*, p. 119.
  - 31 Sir Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture*, p. 12 (misprinted 21).
  - 32 Sir Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture*, p. 12 (misprinted 21).
  - 33 Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1143a35. By 'first term' Aristotle means the first principle (arche) which he identifies with the final cause (*Metaphysica*, 1013a20-25). By 'last term', Aristotle means 'the last and variable fact', or the realm of particulars, the material world which supplies the material cause (*Ethica Nicomachea*, 1143b1-5).
  - 34 Sir Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture*, p. 115.
  - 35 Sir Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture*, pp. 74-5.
  - 36 Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1129b1-1130a13. See also Alasdair MacIntyre's *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988, p. 111, for a discussion of this vice in relation to the modern conception of 'progress'.
  - 37 Hans-Georg Gadamer discusses Bacon's understanding of negative experience in *Truth and Method*. Second, Revised Edition, Translated by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. London: Sheed and Ward, 1989, pp. 48-50.
  - 38 Wotton is greatly taken by the ingenuity of Kepler's invention, but limits its possible application to chorography, commenting that "otherwise to make landscapes by it were illiberal, though surely no painter can do them so precisely." From Wotton's letter to Sir Francis Bacon of 1620, reprinted in Logan Pearsall Smith's *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*. in two volumes, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907, Letter no. 342, Vol. 2, pp. 205-6. Chorography is scientific geography/topography. Wotton distinguishes it from the liberal arts, which cultivate the mind for its own sake.
  - 39 Wotton's meditates on the fault of too much truth in paintings in *The Elements of Architecture*, pp. 90-95.
  - 40 Aristotle names induction and the syllogism as the two possible ways by which reason can attain new knowledge from old. *Analytica Posteriora*, 71a5.
  - 41 Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1180b26.

*Architecture Theory Review*, 6(2): 81-94.

42 Jonathon Swift, *Tale of a Tub and An Account of a Battel between the Ancient and Modern Books in St. James's Library*, pp. 242-8.