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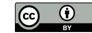

Collective, Collaborative, Corporate

MICHAEL KUBO

In the years during and after World War II, *collaboration* became the watchword for a generation of architects committed to challenging the legacy of the genius, inherited from the first generation of so-called modernist „masters," as inadequate for addressing the building problems of their time. For adherents of this ethos, faith in the principles of the Modern Movement was accompanied by a belief in newly collective forms of work that would unite the building disciplines in addressing the complex tasks of postwar construction and the making of a more democratic and equitable society. Young architects formed in this disciplinary climate combined interests in community design and large-scale regional planning with a commitment to the integrated, unifying character of modern architecture and design, seeking new structures of practice that would join the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, planning, and engineering into a new whole.

I study this generational interest in collective practice through the history of The Architects Collaborative (or TAC), founded in 1945 as an experiment in team-based design methods by seven young practitioners together with the German émigré Walter Gropius, the eminent practitioner associated with the Bauhaus and later with the Harvard Graduate School of Design.[1] Joined by their interests in democracy, collaboration, and modernism, these founding partners – Jean Bodman, Norman Fletcher, John Harkness, Sarah Pillsbury Harkness, Benjamin Thompson, Louis McMillen, Robert McMillan, and Gropius – were linked through a network of personal and professional connections formed in the shared climate of social and architectural optimism at the outset of the postwar building boom. In exploring this history, I argue that TAC is worthy of study as both an example of broader changes in the nature of professional practice after World War II, and as a firm whose work reveals the limits of how historians and practitioners have understand the broader range of collective, collaborative, and corporate practices that took shape in this period. In their first two decades of work, TAC came to embody the collective ethos of the postwar architectural generation and its uneasy attempts to realize these aspirations within the economic and authorial logics of market practice. As team-based entities like TAC expanded and changed in the years that followed, many of them eventually came to be known under the broad category of „corporate" architects or as producers of „corporate" architecture, just as TAC would be described in its later years, particularly after the death of Walter Gropius in 1969.

In this paper I will explore the challenges of language that have accompanied attempts to think the collective, collaborative, and corporate in the history of twentieth-century architecture, and in particular the language that has often been used to relate individual architects, like Gropius, to the work they produced within group frameworks. In focusing on key terms within this discourse – *influence, collaboration, teamwork, bureaucracy, anonymity,* and *collectivity* – I argue that the basic historiography of architectural modernism has been overburdened by a language that remains centered on the notion of singular architectural authorship, despite the fundamental impact of team-based architectural practices over the last century. Finally, I will offer a few concluding thoughts on what I see as the importance of revisiting the historiographic challenges of team-based practice via the legacy of Gropius and TAC, amid a growing resurgence of interest in collective and collaborative work that has manifested in a number of recent architectural practices.

Influence

The vectors of architectural influence are typically assumed to travel in one direction only: from master to disciple, elder to younger, originary author to legatee, „genius" to emulator. Take for example the master diagram that opens Roxanne Williamson's *American Architects and the Mechanics of Fame,* mapping the „career connections of major American architects."[2] (Fig. 1) The timeline purports to trace a pattern of correlation between architectural employers and „mentors" during their formative periods of development and the later successes of their employees and „protégés" in the field, ranked according to an „index of fame."

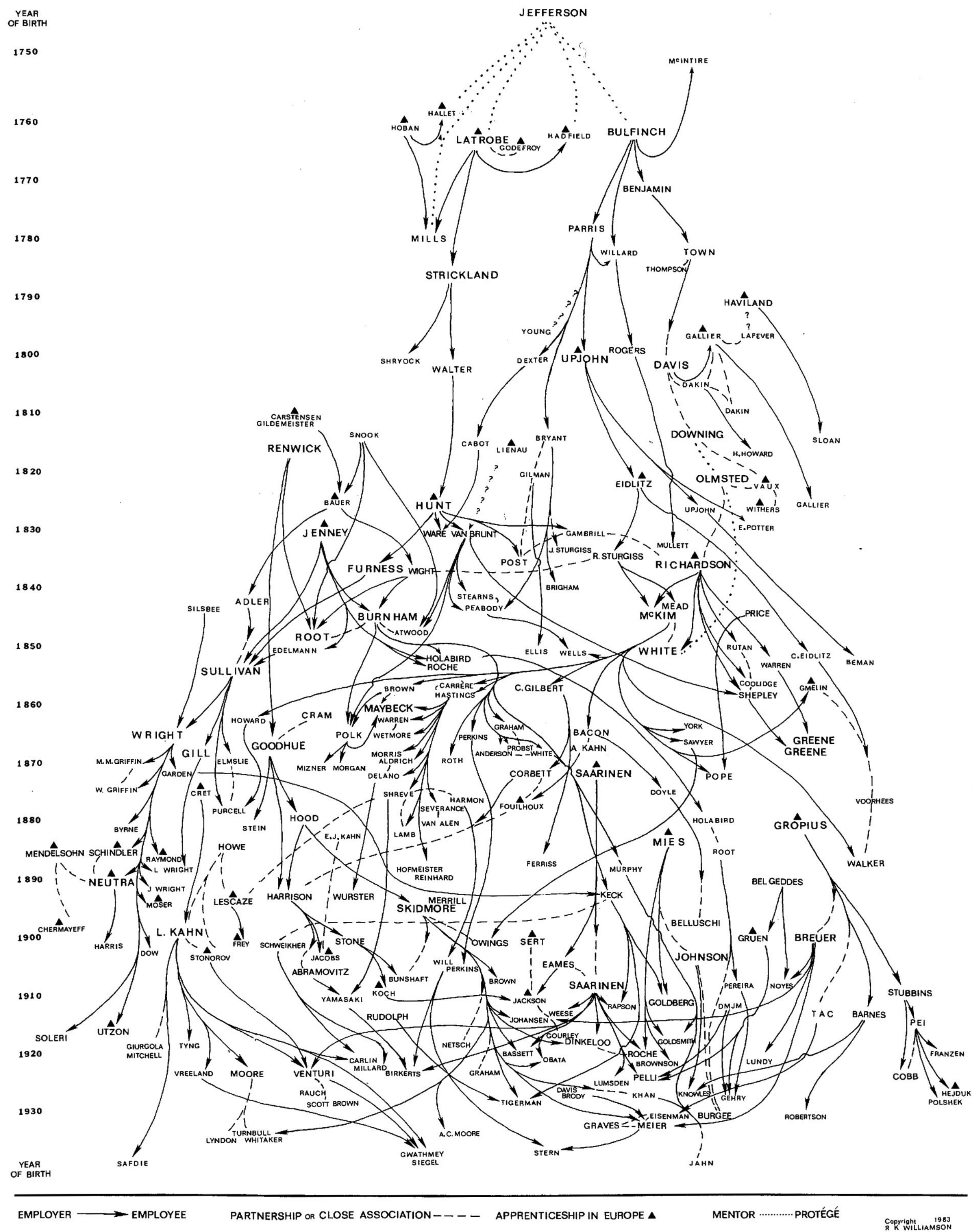

Fig. 1: Roxanne Kuter Williamson, „Career connections of major American architects"

The resulting tangle of lines illustrates both the extension and the limits of such arrows of influence, as the pathways along which much of the received history of twentieth-century architecture has been directed.[3] Rather than criticize the complication or the imprecision of Williamson's chart. Instead, we might seek to untangle the threads of historiography implied by its vectors, to look for evidence of other groupings that these arrows of influence carry away with them as they flow in time. Most conspicuously absent from such narratives, I argue, are precisely those collective, collaborative, and corporate practices that came to

dominate architectural production in both First World and Second World economies.

For example, we might trace the path of one of these postwar collectives and its working methods: the one enclosed in Williamson's diagram by the curving lines at bottom right – first solid (as from employer to employee), then dotted (designating „partnership or close association") – that bind the seemingly originary name of „Gropius" with the smaller and more cryptic entity designated by the acronym „TAC", separated by a distance of some thirty years. One of the two bodies tethered together across this temporal divide is The Architects Collaborative, the team-based firm established in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1945 and the largest dedicated architecture practice in the United States by the 1970s, with nearly 400 employees at its peak. The other is the figure of Gropius himself, the German émigré who was one of TAC's eight founding partners and worked within the firm for the last quarter-century of his career.

The formation of TAC reflected the unique conjunction of recent school graduates forming a partnership with an accomplished elder figure – already renowned first as the founder of the Bauhaus and later as chairman of the Harvard Graduate School of Design – in which all of the firm's partners insisted on their equality and lack of hierarchy in both practice and external appearance, regardless of their individual pedigrees. Diagrams of influence like Williamson's negate this image of equality, graphically separating the elder Gropius in order to assign him temporal and authorial primacy over his collaborators, often described in histories simply as „his" students. As such the arrow constructs an implied relationship of influence in time from the disciplined parent (*Pius*, as Gropius was known to his closest friends: pious, conscientious) to his presumed disciplinary subordinates (his filia, his afilliations).

Such attempts to trace the dynamics of legacy point us to the conventional means by which much of the history of modernism in the twentieth century has been narrated. These accounts have been canonized in flowcharts, maps, and timelines that seek to codify and make legible a historiographical framework of influence, via the avenues of temporality, geography, or intentionality.

In what follows, I argue that the discursive binary of Gropius and TAC came to play a characteristic role within these frameworks, as a conjunction that seemed to confirm the master narrative of an early twentieth century European avant-garde, personified in the figure of Gropius, and its dissolution in contact with the realities of mainstream architectural practice in the United States after World War II. Navigating against these currents of influence, we might seek to reverse the direction of the arrows, evading the chronology they imply to challenge the persistent myth that Gropius was the singular author of TAC's work, or that he established the office as „his" firm. This would enrich the stories we can tell around the historiography of collaboration in architecture, by avoiding the reduction of TAC's work to a mere translation of Gropius's visionary principles through a group of „disciples" who merely executed his ideas in practice. It would further nuance the weight typically given to Gropius's numerous statements advocating the virtues of teamwork among holistically-trained designers, in which he urged the next generation of architects „to learn to collaborate without losing their identity."[4] Yet in so doing, we might also take up Gropius's own warning to both architects and historians about the need to overcome „the ideology of the past century [that] has taught us to see in the individual genius the only embodiment of true and pure art."[5]

Collaboration

This inverted chain of direction bears a stronger historical relationship to the actual circumstances of TAC's formation in the fall of 1945. The seven recent graduates who came together to form TAC were linked not by an allegiance to Gropius but through a network of overlapping personal and professional connections, with Gropius as essentially the last piece in this puzzle of associations.[6]

In coming together, the varied activities of this group reflected the concerns they shared with other architects of their generation, who sought new models of collective work that would embrace the fields of large-scale regional planning, engineering, and landscape architecture. These efforts were inspired by both capitalist and socialist models of collectivity, including the large-scale federal infrastructural projects of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and other New Deal programs under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt; the Telesis planning group on the West Coast, an „environmental research group" of urban and regional planners, landscape architects, architects, and industrial designers that was associated with the housing and social development projects of the Farm Security Administration (FSA) and the Federal Public Housing Authority during World War II; and the cooperative pedagogy of the Bauhaus and its progressive analogues in the US, from the New Bauhaus in Chicago to Black Mountain College in North Carolina. These influences also included more openly leftist examples of collective architectural praxis within the market

economy, such as the Tecton Group in England, an anonymously named collective of designers led by the openly communist Russian-born architect Berthold Lubetkin.

A significant nexus for these interests and for the competition between socialist and capitalist conceptions of architectural collaboration was the group of students associated with the Harvard journal *TASK* in these years, a group that included future TAC partner Louis McMillen among the editors of the second issue. The first issue of the journal in 1941 included a cartoon depicting „A Group of Students Fighting Fascism With Out-of-Date Equipment," showing a young architect defending the „flower of democracy" against a Hitlerian caterpillar as well as the various „domestic pests" that might devour it.[7] Among the out-of-date tools in the architect's bug spray were various well-worn aesthetic tropes of modernism – form follows function, the flat roof, the cantilever – but also „the genius", among the outmoded concepts that failed to reach their target. The cartoon had been inspired by an earlier pamphlet, *An Opinion on Architecture*, published by an overlapping group of Harvard students as a critique of the school's formalist design pedagogy. Its authors called for collective work „among architects, engineers, contractors, and the working class," declaring that „COLLABORATION IS THE CREDO AND THE FAITH OF ARCHITECTURE TODAY."[8]

Acting on these ideals immediately after the conclusion of the war, in November 1945 Jean and Norman Fletcher, recent graduates of Harvard and Yale, wrote to their friends John „Chip" Harkness and Sarah Pillsbury Harkness, recent graduates of Harvard and the Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, to propose the formation of an office together. At the instigation of the Harknesses, the Fletchers followed with a letter to Gropius, Chip's professor at Harvard, who had just asked him to join the faculty as a teaching assistant in the master's classes there. In Gropius, they allied not only with a famous practitioner but with a highly sympathetic collaborator, one whose attitude toward the value of teamwork closely matched their own. In combining forces, they wrote, „our aims become, not architecture for architecture's sake, but architecture for the sake of a healthy society."[9] They were soon joined by other friends from Yale and Harvard – Louis McMillen, Benjamin Thompson, and Robert McMillan – to form TAC, which officially began its practice on January 1, 1946.

In the market context of postwar US practice, the collective ethos of The Architects Collaborative meant something very different from the efficiency and hierarchy common to other team-based practices that came to be characterized, as TAC would be in its later years, as corporate firms. Key to the TAC approach was the idea that teams should consist of generalists able to criticize each other as equals, rather than parceling tasks according to the managerial principles of specialization and division of labor. This structure was formalized through a weekly meeting in which all the partners gave shared criticism of each others' projects, Gropius among them.

Teamwork

The partners of The Architects Collaborative defined their practice not according to a language of influence, legacy, or inheritance, but rather through one of collaboration, teamwork, and anonymity. Its founders were united in the firm's early years by their belief in the model of shared input among holistically trained designers, a method capable of producing what Gropius described as „Total Architecture."[10] Yet the collaborative method at TAC was not simply design by committee. Its partners were careful to emphasize that their ideal model relied on individual as well as collective agency, formalized through the in-house rule that each project would be led by a single partner with ultimate responsibility for decision-making following this group criticism.

To understand the intended balance between individual and collective at stake within this structure of practice, we might turn to the statements made by the founding members of TAC around the closure of the firm's first twenty years of existence in 1966, marked by the publication of its first major monograph as well as the consolidation of its offices (by then with a staff of over 150 employees) in a purpose-built headquarters in Harvard Square. In designing its new headquarters, the partners sought to preserve their previous organization into smaller project teams led by individual principals, to avoid changing TAC's character into one of corporate „bigness."[11] Floors were organized around small studios rather than as single large drafting spaces, each with their own secretary, principals' offices, and conference room.

In the monograph, released the year prior to the opening of TAC's headquarters, both the titles of the essays by each partner and the structure of their separate contributions spoke to the delicate balance between signature and anonymity. Each partner's name was attached to an individually authored text, yet all sought to outline the principles of the collaborative ethos they shared.[12] Sarah Harkness suggested that the individual and the team were mutually dependent constructs, arguing that „The essence of collaboration

FIg. 2: The Architects Collaborative (TAC), partners, c. 1951. Bottom row from left to right: Jean Bodman Fletcher, Walter Gropius, Sarah Pillsbury Harkness. Top row from left to right: Benjamin Thompson, Norman C. Fletcher, Robert McMillan, Louis A. McMillen, John C. Harkness

is the strength of the individual. When collaboration is operating as it should, a good idea will be carried by conviction, recognized by others without loss of their own prestige."[13]

John Harkness affirmed the hope that „The interrelation of the principals in the firm should not weaken or reduce their individuality, but should make the work handled by each, singly or in groups, part of a common language."[14] Louis McMillen cited the firm's name as evidence of this shared goal among its members, declaring that „When we called our firm 'The Architects Collaborative' instead of Fletcher, Fletcher, Gropius, Harkness, Harkness, McMillan, McMillen and Thompson, we were conforming to our ideal of anonymity."[15]

For his part, Gropius sought to articulate a specifically democratic notion of collaboration, a persistent feature of his advocacy for teamwork in the Cold War context of U.S. postwar practice. He insisted that „It is one thing to condition an individual for cooperation by making him conform; it is another, altogether, to make him keep his identity within a group of equals."[16] Achieving this balance would guarantee „the protection of the individual against becoming a mere number."[17] As a German émigré, Gropius was particularly sensitive to avoid any association of collective labor with the specter of communism, accusations that had also plagued federal programs like the TVA before the war. According to this argument, TAC's balance between individual and collective offered a middle path between the anti-democratic extremes of groupthink on the one hand and the autocratic cult of the genius on the other.

Images of TAC in its early years revealed these tensions between the „ideal of anonymity" in practice and the individuality of its members. As the firm began to receive its first major commissions, two group portraits of the partners belied the equality claimed by the partners. (Fig. 2, 3) The evident presence of Gropius among the collective induced a subtle hierarchy to the-

FIg. 3: The Architects Collaborative (TAC), partners, c. 1951. From left to right: Sarah Pillsbury Harkness, Jean Bodman Fletcher, Robert McMillan, Norman C. Fletcher, Walter Gropius, John C. Harkness, Benjamin Thompson, Louis A. McMillen

se portraits, structuring them according to his figure. In both portraits Gropius is situated at the center of the composition, flanked symmetrically by his younger collaborators, hierarchically ordered by gender with the men above and the women below – dissociating for example the two married couples, the Harknesses and the Fletchers. The difference in tone between the two portraits – one more formal with the partners separated in rows facing the camera, the other effecting more casual poses along a staircase – suggests a kind of testing, or experimentation, in how the partners's group structure would be portrayed. Compare this with an informal photograph that captures the weekly partners' meeting, the central construct through which office projects were presented and criticized by all principals equally. (Fig. 4) The office members sit loosely encircled around a drafting table piled with drawings, surrounded by textile swatches and the everyday detritus of the office; Gropius appears here as simply one among the partners, embedded comfortably in this workaday context. Official portraits conflated the image of the firm with that of its work, taken not in the space of the office but on the site of its first major non-residential commission, in the Commons Building that anchors the Harvard Graduate Center complex. The informal picture captures the process of the Harvard Graduate Center in production, while the official photograph constructs an image of the office as a team, coincident with the image of its first major commission as the emblem of both these collective efforts and a collective public architecture.

Bureaucracy

In these early years of the postwar boom, architectural critics struggled to reconcile the work of this new wave of team-based practices with the historiographic demands of authorship that were seemingly required to assess the fate of modernism and its heroic prewar figures in the market-based context of mainstream practice in the U.S. At the same time that TAC was establishing itself in the years after World War II, the historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock speculated on the consequences of the shift toward team-based practice embodied by such firms, predicting the rise of an emerging „architecture of bureaucracy" that would enable the standardized, consistent quality of, in his words, „all building that is the product of large-scale architectural organizations, from which personal expression is absent."[18] In contrast, Hitchcock reserved what he called „an entirely different world" of design practice for more monumental or iconic cultural commissions – singling out museums in particular – that he felt required artistic or creative synthesis, what he called „the world of the architecture of genius." Here he defined the genius as the anti-bureaucrat, „the sort of architect who functions as a creative individual rather than as an anonymous member of a team"; his method would be „a particular psychological approach… which may or may not produce masterpieces."

Hitchcock already warned that this dichotomy between the competent prose of the bureaucrat and the imaginative poetry of the genius, at once productive and discursive, would require the architectural critic to develop new tools to evaluate the built results of such practices. It would no longer be possible to judge bureaucratic production on the same artistic criteria that had applied to the prewar avant-garde, whether the interpretive framework of signature and authorial intention or the expressive attributes of imagination, creativity, or synthesis.

Unsurprisingly in Hitchcock's account, Frank Lloyd Wright provided the inevitable model of Hitchcock's architectural genius, reinforcing an image maintained through the atelier-like atmosphere Wright cultivated at his Taliesin studios in Arizona and Wisconsin, as well as in books like his *Genius and the Mobocracy* of 1949. The Detroit office of Albert Kahn & Associates, known primarily for its factories for Ford, represented what Hitchcock called „the type of bureaucratic architecture par excellence." He praised „The strength

Fig. 4: The Architects Collaborative (TAC), partners meeting, c. 1950. From right to left: Louis A. McMillen, Walter Gropius, Norman C. Fletcher, Jean Bodman Fletcher, John C. Harkness

of a firm such as Kahn... [that] depends not on the architectural genius of one man... but in the organizational genius which can establish a fool-proof system of rapid and complete plan production.“ Such a system, organized in technical divisions from design to engineering to construction, enabled different sets of design information „to meet on the site with as perfect mutual co-ordination as machine parts come from the various sections of a factory.“[19]

By 1947, however, Fordist factory production was already an anachronistic model for large-scale, postwar organizations. A year before Hitchcock's text, the sociologist Peter Drucker predicted the emergence of the corporation as the representative American social institution.[20] In contrast to assembly-line production, Drucker argued that the managerial principles that would typify the coming economic boom would emulate the decentralized, distributed model of General Motors, the largest corporation in the world by the 1950s. Specialization, teamwork, and flexible feedback loops within a top-down hierarchy were, for Drucker, the characteristics that would mark the progressive application of corporate models across both business and institutional domains in the postwar context. Such managerial methods found their closest parallel in architectural practice in the Chicago offices of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), the firm that became uniquely synonymous with the term „corporate“ during this period. SOM's success was based on the development of the „package deal,“ in which large teams of architects and engineers delivered complex projects from site planning and structural engineering to detailed design, facade systems, interiors, budgeting, and administration.[21] Diagrams of the firm's organization published in architectural journals precisely represented Drucker's specialized, distributed corporation. Yet in practice, even the image of SOM as a firm characterized by consistent products rather than by signature architects – one supposedly so anonymous that a partner claimed „it could even be called the ABC Company“ – conflicted with contemporaneous descriptions of the firm's lead designer, Gordon Bunshaft, as office „dictator.“[22]

It is significant that in Hitchcock's formulation, the discursive categories of genius and bureaucracy were intended to refer to wholly distinct forms of practice. Nothing was said about how such binaries might be used to assess the work of a single collective entity, in which competing claims were made regarding the status of authorship. TAC constituted a particularly problematic case in terms of the bureaucracy-genius dichotomy, as a postwar collective of recent graduates,

but also the medium for the singular image of Gropius during the last twenty-five years of his work. This created a particular problem of anachronism, in which Gropius's legacy was seen to correspond increasingly to the prewar period, despite his evident role within a partnership that would become one of the largest offices of the postwar decades.

In confronting this temporal problematic, critics tended to fall back onto two primary modes of assessment, often in tandem: the extraction of an author (Gropius) from within the group, or the sublimation of authorship and intentionality through the abstraction of the collective (TAC). An early image of the tensions between these divergent narratives is provided by Sigfried Giedion's monograph on Walter Gropius (1954), enigmatically split into the binary subtitle „Work and Teamwork" – a curious juxtaposition of an authored Œuvre (work) with an anonymous mode of practice (teamwork). The cover, designed by fellow Bauhäusler and émigré Herbert Bayer, depicts an overlay of Gropius's face onto an abstracted, unidentified image of TAC's work.[23] Gropius's face is subsumed within the graphic cage of the building's facade pattern of windows and balconies, rendered in blue against a white background, not in front of this background but seemingly behind or even enmeshed within it, an ambiguous layering of personhood and anonymity. Such images locked the image of an author, the assignation of „his" work, and the abstraction of „teamwork" into an uneasy relationship of irreconcilable terms. These representational slippages induced an increasing tension between public representations of Gropius alone and those of TAC.

Anonymity

As TAC's commissions increased in scale and scope through its first two decades of practice, the partners' authorial claims were inevitably projected onto the interpretation of the firm's work, as critics searched for discernible traces of intentionality beyond the firm's rhetoric of anonymity. The narrative isolation of Gropius from the collective served to identify and account for his presumed signature within the firm's work, but also as a means to track the arrows of modernism's presumptive directionality after World War II: from prewar avant-garde to postwar mainstream, from Europe to the U.S., from socialist collectives to free-market corporations, and from the „founding fathers" to their inheritors. The consequence of these critical paradoxes has been a progressive rupture of the historiography of TAC into two opposed categories. One the one side stands the figure of Gropius as genius, a role he disavowed and a reputation his work could never adequately fulfill. On the other side of this binary there remains the history of his anonymous collaborators, reduced to the status of mere students or acolytes of the master, and ultimately condemned to the marginalia of architectural history.

In this sense, the consequences of teamwork in practice were far different from the „ideal of anonymity" expounded by the members of TAC. Such statements instead engendered a form of historiographic anonymity, rather than an anonymity of process or a positive sublimation of the individual to the broader social project of collectivity. Gropius's death in 1969 reinforced the collapse of TAC's reception after the 1970s, now fully detached from the biography of the author.

Once separated from this authorial presence, the abstracted image of TAC came to serve as a ready example for the critical dismissal of bureaucratic practice as a submission to the demands of capital. For Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co, the firm offered a paradigmatic example of these processes and their consequences: „Subject as it was to the laws of the American market, TAC very soon became a many-branched, impersonal concern equipped to deal with the major professional ventures and open to any sort of request from public or private clients."[24] In their view, by the 1970s TAC had become simply one among a group of equally technocratic U.S. firms, as the field of architectural production „came to be dominated not by individual architects intent on communicating their opinions of the world but by large studios... equipped to work at an intense speed of production and to fulfill demands for high technological levels in buildings as anonymous as the architectural concerns that build them."[25]

The evident anxieties over how to envision the work of TAC and other „anonymous" bureaucratic practices mark a particular form of historical closure by the close of the 1970s. Despite Hitchcock's call three decades earlier for new modes of criticism adequate to the bureaucratic office, it was still impossible to critically or historically situate the reality of such practices without a continued reliance on the conventional tropes of authorship, influence, and intentionality. In the case of The Architects Collaborative, the result was a falling back onto the simplifications of binary categories that repeated, in varying terms, the same fundamental dichotomy between signature and anonymity: the architecture of genius and the architecture of bureaucracy, work and teamwork, or the heroic prewar avant-garde and the postwar corporation.

A look at the historiographic absences that have taken place within the gaps of these dichotomies leads us to question the adequacy of the traditional

methodologies of architectural history in situating or assessing this kind of production. Attending to the case of TAC and its dissolution under the signature of Gropius requires us to confront both the shadings of anonymity with which the firm described its intentions and the abstraction into which its later history increasingly disappeared. This confrontation would necessarily undo the pernicious abstractions that have accompanied attempts to think the corporation in architectural terms.

A lasting residue of these historiographical abstractions is that The Architects Collaborative has remained largely absent from histories of postwar architectural practice, while the authorial presence of Walter Gropius has become the vehicle for dismissing the firm's work in the breach. In this way, the firm's „ideal of anonymity" gradually gave way to the anxiety of anonymity. The fifty-year arc of TAC's reception might thus serve as a cautionary tale for both the historian and the architect to be attentive to the nuances of such appeals to collectivity. For as we have seen, in the idealization of anonymity, historiographically speaking, one very often gets what one wishes for.

Collectivity

The language of collaboration is enjoying a generational resurgence in contemporary modes of architectural practice. Renewed attention is being paid to the history of forms of work that depart from the emphasis on the singular creative figure, a long-standing trope that has always mapped poorly onto the collective nature of design production. The wide range of these practices mirrors more specific challenges to the conventional structure of the architecture firm, one embodied in a new generation of politically engaged, collective design practices.

Such practices have also adopted new nomenclatures. These groups no longer employ the canonical three-letter acronyms that once branded corporate offices in the market context – originally derived from the initials of a firm's partners, like SOM, and later abstracted into emblems of more anonymous teamwork by firms like the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) or Foreign Office Architects (FOA). Instead, many younger practices have rejected these corporate acronyms in favor of names that point to the collectivity and the collaborative process itself: T+E+A+M, Assemble, Design With Company. At the same time, organizations like The Architecture Lobby have advocated for radical new forms of group practice that can change the ways in which architecture is produced within or beyond the market economy, tying their push for collective work to a more fundamental critique of the labor hierarchies inherent in the field and their entrenched inequities of race, class, and gender.

In this expanded field of collaborative thinking as a political project, it is especially important to go back to the postwar moment in which firms like TAC were formed, and to reassess the work that they produced in their idealism about the capacity of architects to design and build collectively for the sake of a healthy society. Significantly, for today's practices, this earlier moment of generational critique of individual authorship involved looking to both centrally planned and free-market methods of architectural production, to socialist and capitalist models alike. It was in this context, I argue, that The Architects Collaborative came to embody a collective ethos that sought to translate between these two domains and whose echoes can be found today in the disciplinary and political concerns of practices.

Credits

1 From American Architects and the Mechanics of Fame by Roxanne Kuter Williamson, Copyright © 1991. By permission of the University of Texas Press
2 Image courtesy of Perry Neubauer
3 Photograph published in The Architects Collaborative 1945–1965 (Arthur Niggli, 1966)
4 Image courtesy of Perry Neubauer

Notes

1 Portions of this text have previously appeared as: Collaborative Tasks, Log 48, Winter/Spring 2020, pp. 81–91; The Anxiety of Anonymity: On the Historiography of Walter Gropius and The Architects Collaborative, in: Terms of Appropriation: Modern Architecture and Global Exchange, ed. Amanda Lawrence, Ana Miljacki, London 2017, pp. 24–49; The Concept of the Architectural Corporation, in: OfficeUS Agenda, ed. Eva Franch i Gilabert, Amanda Lawrence, Ana Miljacki, Ashley Schafer, Zurich 2015, pp. 37–45.
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25 Ibid.