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Deconstructivism: Ideology and Philosophies

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Abstract: ***Deconstructivist buildings and projects at first sight seem to be lacking logic and are fragmented. However, if you observe them from the angle of deconstructivism philosophy, they are unified. Deconstructivism concepts have been modified and remodeled to suit architecture. Deconstructivist architects do not depict all the concepts in their architectural designs, instead they take one or two concepts of deconstructivism to develop their own architectural style. Deconstructivism projects seem to be chaotic but they aren't in reality when analysed thoroughly.***
Keywords: Deconstructivism, architecture, non rectilinear, fragmented, chaotic

I. INTRODUCTION

This research emphasis of the concept of how the ideas of deconstructivism are translated to architecture and are merged with the existing context. It also focusses on explaining the key concepts of deconstructivist architecture. The works of various iconic architects like Peter Eisenman etc. have been critically analysed on the basis of how they really implemented these key concepts in their architectural works.

Deconstructivism is considered to be a post structuralism philosophy that begin in late 1960's. It was highly criticized when it was introduced (Hoteit, 2015).

The deconstructivism theory didn't aim at destroying the past principles of architecture, instead it tried to revisit those principles and analysed them in detail, that is why the term deconstruction was coined. We generally assume a residence to be made up of floors, walls, ceilings, various rooms, etc.

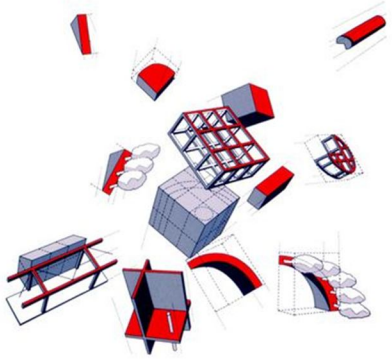

Figure 1: Deconstructivism (Krystle, 2020)

In general, it is assumed that complicated shapes are deconstructive. In fact in reality it is not true. We cannot define complicated and curvilinear forms at as deconstructive. An architect can claim his work to be deconstructivist by questioning the dualities in aesthetics and function.

Deconstructivist buildings and projects at first sight seem to be lacking logic and are fragmented. These buildings comprise of incompatible and dissimilar fragments that leads to further intensification of this feeling. But if one tries to analyse this in detail then he can say that all those fragments are somehow united under the concept and principle of deconstructivism (Hoteit, 2015).

Other than fragmentation, deconstructivism also aims at manipulating the skin of the structure thereby creating distorted non-rectilinear shapes. This architecture visually seems to be unpredictable and in a state of controlled chaos (Anon., 2020).

II. AIM

The aim of doing this research is to understand the ideology and the philosophy of deconstructivism and to further study and analyse how the basic philosophy of deconstructivism has been interpreted by the deconstructivist architects and how they have translated that philosophy into their works.

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III. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study is to analyse the philosophy of deconstructivism and its translation into architectural works. Specific objectives are:

A. To study the philosophy of deconstructivism.
B. To analyse the reason behind why the term deconstructivism is misinterpreted by many people and termed as chaotic.
C. To study how the deconstructivism architects have interpreted these philosophies.
D. To study and critically analyse the exteriors and interior of deconstructivism buildings.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The methodology followed to do this research is as follows:

A. Understanding about how and why the notion of deconstructivism came.
B. Understanding the basic philosophy of deconstructivism by going through the literature works of the contributors of deconstructivism.
C. Understanding all the research work that has been done on deconstructivism.
D. After reading all the philosophy, analyse why the present society considers deconstructivism chaotic.
E. Understanding how the masters of present day deconstructivism interpreted its philosophy and then applied it in their works.
F. Critically analyzing both the interiors and the exteriors of the deconstructivism building by studying its basic drawings and then reading about the surveys and the arguments held over it.
G. After studying both the philosophy and the works, through critical analysis try to establish the fact that deconstructivism is not what people think of it. It isn't chaotic in any sense and it also doesn't go against the rules of architecture.

V. SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The overall objective of the paper was to study the philosophy of deconstructivism and its translation in architecture. The limitations of the study are:

A. This research focuses only on the philosophies of deconstructivism which have been incorporated in the field of architecture. The other philosophies incorporated in fields such as art etc. have not been addressed.
B. This research will focus on the overall essence and philosophy of deconstructivism and how these have been interpreted by some specific architects. The point of view of only some specific architects will be analysed.
C. This research will critically analyse only some specific works of some specific architects. Other deconstructivism works will not be analysed.
D. This research will focus only on the analysis of the interiors and the exteriors of the building.

VI. LITERATURE REVIEW

Deconstructivist architecture is completely opposite to rationality observed in post modernism and modernism. It took a stand against architectural history and aim at disassembling architecture. Postmodern architecture in opposition to modernism tried to embrace the classical elements which modernism had opposed, but deconstructivism architecture rejected the concept of embracing such elements found in post modernism like ornamentation, etc. (Anon., 2020). “Complexity and contradiction in architecture”, a book written by Robert Venturi became the defining text for post modernism and deconstructivism. It argues against clarity, simplicity and purity found in modern architecture. It completely went against the functionality and rationality found in modern architecture (Anon., 2020). Transition from deconstructivist philosophy to theory of architecture was led by philosopher Jacques Derrida after getting influenced by Peter Eisenman. They both took some principles of deconstructivist architecture and collaborated together on projects like Parc de la Villette. Derrida and Eisenman, just as Daniel Libeskind were worried about the "metaphysics of presence," and this is the primary subject of deconstructivist reasoning in architecture theory. The presupposition is that design is a language fit for imparting meaning and of getting treatments by strategies. The argument of absence and presence, solid and void happens in quite a bit of Eisenman's projects, both unbuilt and built. Both Derrida and Eisenman accept that the locus, or spot of quality, is architecture, and a similar logic of absence and presence is found in deconstructivism (Hoteit, 2015).

Western metaphysics conventions were dismantled by deconstructive philosophy. Also it dismantled the principles of Euclidian geometry such as unity, stability and compatibility. Deconstructive architecture also aims at distorting the connection and relations between exterior and interior (Hoteit, 2015).

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VII. PRINCIPLES OF DECONSTRUCTION

Buildings created by deconstructivist architect challenge structure's harmony by disorienting its view. This is done by three methods. First method is using juxtaposition. It tries to create contrast between forms neighbouring each other. Deconstructivist architects tried to place such forms together which have clear contrast when viewed from different angles.

Second method is by usage of non-rectilinear shapes. Rectilinear shapes are those where straight lines meet at right angles, i.e. they are orthogonal. History of architecture has lot of depictions of these rectilinear shapes in the form of square and rectangles. Deconstructivist architects went against these conventions and refused the usage of such rectilinear forms. They focused on usage of triangles, unequal polygons, circles, etc.

Third method is manipulation of the skin of the structure. This is done by juxtaposition of irregular shapes on the exterior of the building, so that the whole building looks chaotic and disjointed. It appears to be caught between extreme stasis and hectic motion. Sometimes it looks like the building has exploded and frozen. To keep the focus on this chaotic arrangement of form, deconstructivist architects avoid any kind of ornamentation. Even if they use ornamentation it is at a very minimal level.

VIII. ARCHITECTS AND THEIR WORKS

A. Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum, Berlin, Germany

Jewish museum has a zig zag structure and is cladded with thin zinc sheet. Entire structure is punctured by windows in shapes which depict scars and wounds, and houses two centuries of German Jewish history. Jewish museum is built on the site on which earlier berlin wall was present and has a 18th century court abutting it which forms the part of the museum (Rogers, 2020).

The inspiration of the shape was taken from star of David which is warped in shape. To symbolize the thousands of Berliners killed in the holocaust, a huge void has been created in the museum's form.

Figure 2: Jewish Museum (Rogers, 2020)

Daniel Libeskind has tried to create a kind of new architecture which will reflect German Jewish history. It also provides us with a new kind of understanding and realization of the museum and the relationship between architectural space and program (Rogers, 2020).

B. Peter Eisenman's Wexner Center for the Arts, Ohio

Peter Eisenman, an architect based in New Jersey designed the first deconstructivist building located in American named Wexner Center for the Arts. This project was an experiment in the field of deconstructivism. It is a place for display of art but has been created in a dynamic way so that it appears as an art in itself. It is an open air five storey structure having a white grid work scaffolding like structure which has been intentionally left incomplete (Web Urbanist, 2011).

Figure 3: Wexner Center for the Arts (Web Urbanist, 2011)

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Significant controversies have come up because of the design since it somewhere interferes with the building's function. For example, direct sunlight is present in the exhibition spaces meant for fine arts which can damage those works of art. The project also doesn't have a well-defined entry with most of the structures having no doors. Due to colliding planes present in the design some visitors also complain of nausea (Web Urbanist, 2011).

Although the project is controversial, it is counted among the most important deconstructivist projects. It is full of abstract ideas and theories.

IX. CONCLUSION

Each and every idea of philosophy of deconstructivism cannot be translated to architecture. Deconstructivist ideas will always be in conflict with fundamental principles of architecture. It is because fundamental architecture is not done only for the sake of art.

Recent advancements and developments in architectural software and technologies has helped deconstructivism to reach new heights and architects have been able to unleash their creative and innovative ideas. Because of this deconstructivist architects have been able to invent and create their own new architectural styles which are now becoming quiet prominent. These buildings when analysed with the existing context sometimes appear to be alien and confusing to their audiences. But this chaos always has some hidden meaning which binds the whole building together and makes it meaningful.

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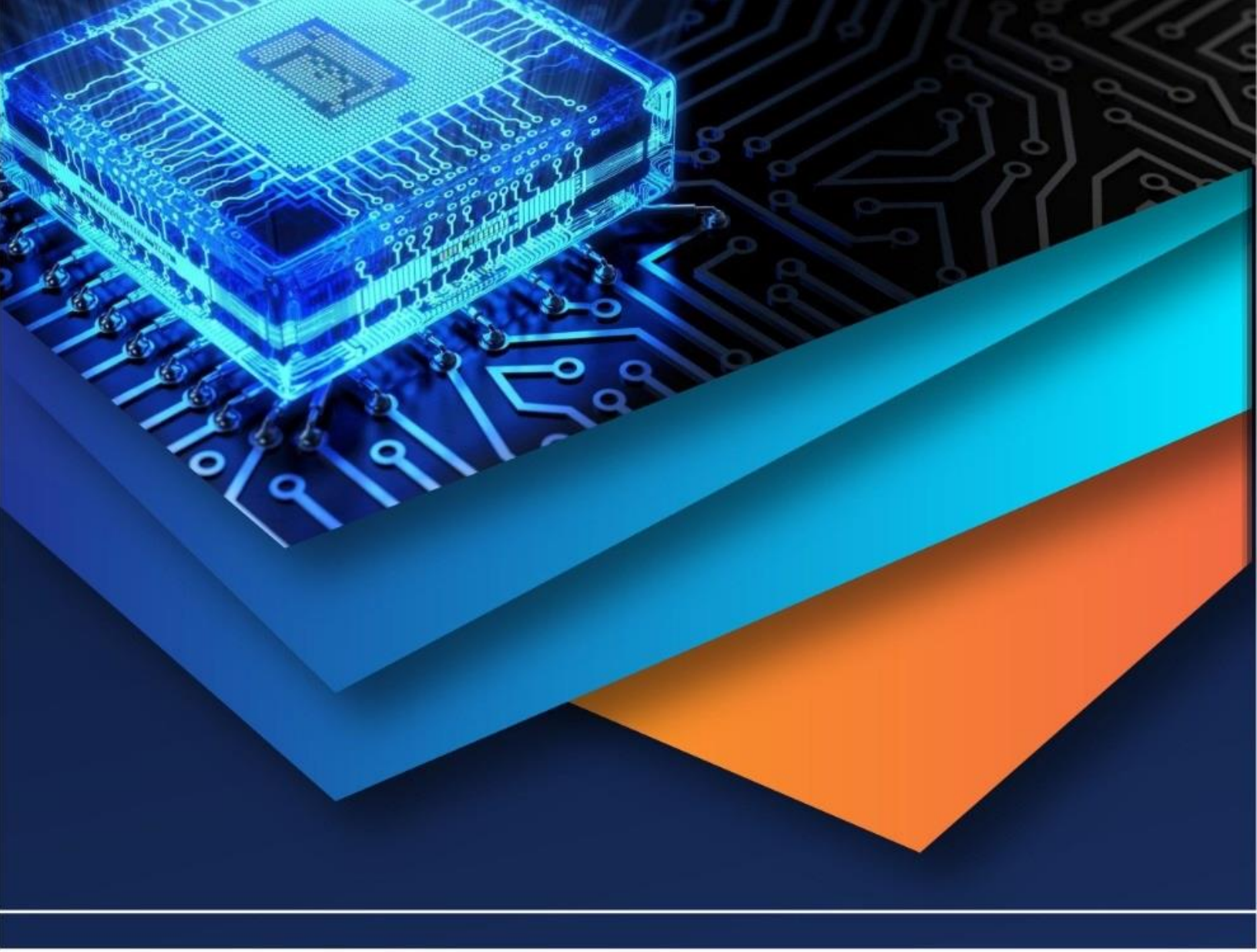

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