Commentary on Adele tutter's "Design as Dream and Self-Representation : Philip Johnson and the Glass House of Atreus"
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COMMENTARY ON ADELE TUTTER’S “DESIGN AS DREAM AND SELF-REPRESENTATION: PHILIP JOHNSON AND THE GLASS HOUSE OF ATREUS”

In this discussion of Adele Tutter’s “Design as Dream and Self-Representation: Philip Johnson and the Glass House of Atreus” (JAPA 59/3), the architect Elizabeth Danze and the psychoanalyst Stephen Sonnenberg highlight what they see as the most important of Tutter’s contributions as regards an understanding of Johnson’s work. They then discuss those contributions as they illuminate the study of the relationship of architecture and design, on the one hand, and psychoanalysis on the other.

Adele Tutter, in her essay “Design as Dream and Self-Representation: Philip Johnson and the Glass House of Atreus” (2011), meticulously examines Johnson’s home and masterpiece, the Glass House. Her central idea is that a work of architecture can be seen as if it were a dream; a model for this creative process is Freud’s description of the dream work in The Interpretation of Dreams (1900). She offers three reasons for comparing an architectural design to a dream: (1) both dreams and designs reflect wishes and aspirations; (2) because of conflict, dreams disguise psychic content, as do designs as well; (3) both dreams and designs are visual expressions of the self (this last is to us the most compelling reason).

Tutter emphasizes that the dream work involves compromise formation: the dreamer wishes to express and fulfill a wish and simultaneously struggles with the prohibition against that wish and its expression. Thus,
the manifest dream disguises the hidden dream wish; Tutter asserts that the same is true for an architect’s design, the visual representation of which is analogous to the manifest dream. She notes that in situations where a series of dreams deals with the same subject repetitively, the underlying, latent meaning of the dream may become increasingly clear, even as it still requires interpretation to be made conscious. The design process too, she argues, shares this characteristic.

While Tutter remains nuanced and never quite states this explicitly, the thrust of her essay suggests that dreaming and designing exert similar attractions on unconscious and conflictual wishes. This would be so because the visual holds great potential for representation, and thus for both the expression of wishes and their disguise.

If we are to assume that Johnson’s experience with his Glass House is shared in some ways by other architects, it seems clear that the design process adds a dimension to the life of its practitioners, potentially encouraging, sometimes very seductively, a fuller expression of their inner lives. Tutter offers a detailed description of the evolution of Johnson’s Glass House, a compilation of seven structures. She examines and considers them as a collective group created over almost fifty years, and also considers each structure as itself an individual design project. She tells of how various buildings in the complex were created by a planning process involving many designs, and that each design iteration is ever more revealing of the unconscious inspirations and aspirations motivating what Johnson built. The seven structures taken together reinforce that observation and conclusion: as a group they reveal with increasing clarity what was central to Johnson’s unconscious desires and conflicts.

Inspired by Tutter’s essay, we can hypothesize that the design process is a vehicle that activates, stimulates, and enhances a fuller experience and expression of one’s inner life, for the most part unconscious and conflictual. We can also infer that the inevitable existence of unconscious conflictual wishes might motivate the designer in his or her work. Thus, if one has the ability to design, a kind of ongoing psychological feedback loop might exist, in which unconscious conflict stimulates the design process, and the design process activates the expression of conflictual wishes. In a process that has its own psychodynamic power, conflict repetitively propels design, and design repetitively stimulates conflict.

Tutter shares with the reader her diligent search for clues to the intrapsychic building blocks of the Glass House. She develops her
evidence by noting and exploring what we know of Johnson from his life history, his own words, archaeological sites we know he visited and studied, ancient mythology we know he was familiar with, and the design detail of one building within the Glass House complex, the Painting Gallery, which Johnson acknowledged was based on the actual Tomb of Atreus. Tutter builds on all this to draw inferences about correspondences to ancient structures in the Glass House complex, of which she asserts Johnson was almost always not consciously aware.

In the course of this inquiry Tutter clarifies Johnson’s conflicted desires to be a king in a citadel. She does this by discussing the Painting Gallery. She explains that its model, the Tomb of Atreus, was part of an archaeological site, the Mycenaean Citadel, that was well studied during the nineteenth century. Johnson knew it well, having visited it when he was twenty-two, and long maintained an interest in it.

Tutter astutely notes that Johnson included other elements of the Citadel in the Glass House complex but, uncharacteristically, did not acknowledge their antecedents in the ancient past. Tutter concludes from this that these elements were not consciously understood for what they were by Johnson, and offers an explanation of why this might be so. Central to her argument is the effect the death of Johnson’s five-year-old brother had on him when he was two. That such a trauma can contribute mightily to shaping a life is clear, and it is not surprising that an awareness of that shaping might be unconscious. Consistent with this is that Tutter was not able to find a single reference to Johnson’s referring to that brother, or to his death, over the many decades of his life.

Tutter convincingly explains that Johnson’s interest in the Mycenaean Citadel is consistent with a preoccupation with Atreus, and the connected themes of sibling rivalry, fratricide, and loss. We would add that given his age at his brother’s death, Johnson would have been unable to understand it and mourn the loss, and yet might have struggled for the rest of his life with the unconscious effort to metabolize it. In fact, guilt over the death would probably have been developmentally impossible when it occurred, but could well have become organized outside of Johnson’s conscious awareness later in his life. Such an occurrence would have made Johnson’s task of working through the death even more complicated, and certainly could have predisposed him to dealing with it unconsciously in his work as an architect. We are familiar with how such efforts at reworking the traumatic past may appear repeatedly in the dreams of traumatized individuals over the span of life, and this is consistent with
Tutter’s conclusion that the dream is a vehicle for understanding Johnson’s design process in creating the Glass House.

Further supporting this line of inference is the fact that Johnson majored in the classics in college, after having been tutored in them from a young age by his mother. He knew the plays of Aeschylus well, and was very familiar with the *Oresteia* trilogy, in which the myth of the House of Atreus was dramatized (458 B.C.). It is hardly surprising, then, that the design of the Glass House complex, over time, brought to new life, even while disguised, the elements of the ancient Mycenaean Citadel.

Psychoanalytic clinicians are well aware that a dreamer will turn to experiences of waking life, often part of the day residue, to create dream images. Sometimes these building blocks of manifest dream content are structures like buildings or monuments, which are psychologically compelling and symbolically meaningful, though their compelling quality may or may not have been obvious to the dreamer while awake. Tutter’s investigation is so detailed and precise that it offers convincing support for her contention that the lens of the dream work, as exemplified by that common clinical phenomenon, is a valid way of using psychoanalysis to better understand Johnson’s architecture. Tutter’s meticulous consideration of space, form, and design detail in the Glass House complex establishes beyond doubt that it parallels what he saw in the Mycenaean Citadel. No further evidence is needed to support the validity of Tutter’s argument that Johnson’s Glass House borrowed from ancient structures that he knew, structures that held important psychological meaning for him.

We would, however, like to comment on Johnson’s use of glass. In 1932, as a practitioner and advocate of the fledgling modernist movement in the United States, Johnson curated the landmark exhibition *The International Style* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. This hugely influential show introduced the American public to modern architecture. Johnson embraced and exploited the particular properties of glass, steel, and concrete, materials put to new use by the modernists. More than any other material, glass embodies the extraordinary and otherworldly potential of these materials. Until the early twentieth century, the use of glass had been relatively restrained, due primarily to technological limits on the size of panes and on the structural members required to support a building.

As a material, glass was critical in propelling the agenda of the early modernist architects. Large panes of glass supported by light steel columns liberated the spatial constraints of traditional construction. For
the first time entire walls that enclosed space could exist physically, while visually and, more important, conceptually existing as effaced. Johnson’s Glass House introduced modernism into American residential architecture. In this sense, Johnson’s use of glass must be seen in its aesthetic and architectural context.

But there is more to this, as Tutter points out. Glass is transparent and obscuring, revealing and concealing. Effective at separating an interior from surrounding elements, the material at once both isolates its occupants and connects them to the outer world. Johnson’s Glass House is an adamant manifestation of this phenomenological duality. To make this concrete for non-architects, consider that at night, when the outside world is dark, a person standing in an illuminated room looks at a glass exterior wall and sees only a reflection: the glass has become a mirror. The next day it is a window through which the outside is readily observed. But then again, during the day, it may offer a mirror-like reflection of the observer and a view of the outside at the same time. It is, like the dream image produced by the dream work, an element with variable and rapidly changing properties.

We suggest, then, that like a dream image, objects affected by glass literally blend and mix in the perceptual world of waking experience. In selecting glass as the primary embodiment of his home, Johnson selected a material that possesses these complex and dreamlike phenomenological properties. The care in detailing and execution, the careful minimization of mullions and other necessary connections, support this idea. As an expression of the ideals of early modernism, it would have been enough to simply create the walls as minimally as possible, yet there is more at work here: Johnson is tapping into the more complex and multivalent properties of the glass elements and their seamlessly integrated detailing. We think this reflects the influence of dreamlike processes as he created his residence, and is another observation supporting Tutter’s hypotheses of how the process involved in Johnson’s design of the Glass House is analogous to a dream.

**BUILDING ON TUTTER’S ESSAY: DREAMING, DESIGNING, AND THE ROLE OF UNCONSCIOUS CONFLICT**

We will now discuss our own views on the architectural design process, as well as a design project in which we ourselves are engaged, in order
to further examine Tutter’s essay. Our goals include further inquiry into the nature of the relationship of dreaming and designing, and the role of unconscious conflict in the design process. At two points in this section the text will switch to a first-person account, reflecting the experience of one of us, though that experience took place in the context of our collaboration. In the end, our hope is to better understand the relationship of psychoanalysis and architecture, and we see Tutter’s essay not only as a vehicle for understanding Johnson’s Glass House, but as an important contribution to the evolving understanding of that relationship.

Tutter notes that little has been written about architecture from a psychoanalytic perspective, and seems aware that reductionism is a danger when visual works are examined psychoanalytically. Interestingly, several of the psychoanalytic articles she cites and seems to find of at least some value (Anderson 2005; Deamer 2005; Lebovitz 2005; Winer 2005) appeared in an issue of The Annual of Psychoanalysis devoted to architecture, which one of us (EAD) co-edited and to which both of us contributed essays (Danze 2005; Sonnenberg 2005). That shared experience set us on a course that has led to our collaboration, and one of our goals is to understand and describe the relationship between psychoanalysis and architecture without ignoring its complexity.

Tutter, in supporting her thesis that Johnson’s Glass House is a dreamlike self-representation, quotes the noted art and architectural historian Vincent Scully’s description of Frank Lloyd Wright’s work as a waking dream. That fundamental concept, that the barrier between dreaming and waking life may not be as constant and well defined as it is often assumed to be, is not well-elaborated or enthusiastically investigated by contemporary American psychoanalysts. It is familiar to us because it was employed by one of us, somewhat idiosyncratically (Sonnenberg 1985), in an attempt to understand certain experiences in people suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder. In that essay, the introduction to a book devoted to the study of war trauma in Vietnam veterans, it was proposed that flashback phenomena might be understood as the dream intruding into waking life. At the time the essay was written, the idea of dreaming while awake was meant literally by the author, though this is not made explicit in the text.

This idea of a form of dream intrusion into wakefulness was once the subject of considerable interest among American analysts. Bertram Lewin (1950) touched on it in The Psychoanalysis of Elation, as did Harold Levitan (1967) in an article on depersonalization and the dream. But in
our reading of these two authors, we believe that what they observed were certain characteristics of the dream state carrying over into waking life. While Lewin does state that in a hypomanic attack his “patient was partly asleep while awake” (p. 88), we do not interpret him to mean that a physiological dream state actually occurred while awake.

Today, following in that tradition, though the subject is not under active clinical investigation, there is a consensus among psychoanalysts that dreaming occurs when one is asleep. This view holds that while dreamlike thinking, characterized by such mechanisms as condensation, displacement, symbolization, and disguise, can occur when awake—Tutter’s basic idea about elements of Johnson’s design process—dreaming is a sleeping event. This does not preclude the idea that dream states and experiences can influence the dreamer upon awakening, that when awake a person may continue to be affected by what was experienced when asleep. A corollary of this consensus is that what occurs in waking life is daydreaming, or reverie, which is fundamentally different from the sleeping dream because the physiological state of consciousness of the daydreamer is different from that of the sleeping dreamer.

But we are in a position to ask, “What did Scully mean when he wrote that Wright’s design activity was a waking dream?” We find ourselves asking this for three reasons. First, we have engaged in a design process, and we do wonder, with the encouragement of reading Tutter’s essay, how that process relates to dreaming when asleep and awake. Second, since one of us is not a psychoanalyst, and is unencumbered by the psychoanalytic consensus or canon, we can wonder together about the nature of the designer’s waking dream while we ourselves step “outside the psychoanalytic box.” And, finally, the architect on our team asserts that when discussing the design process with colleagues, the experience is sometimes compared to dreaming, though admittedly they are not burdened by having studied the physiological, clinical, or metapsychological nature of dreaming.

Danze’s Account of Dreaming and Designing

Architectural design projects, and this is true for the one in which we are engaged (the three-dimensional Erikson model discussed below), are extraordinarily complex; they involve the resolution of myriad conflicting agendas and very often the unaligned interests and constraints of more than one client and more than one designer. Solutions are inevitably complex, involving a visual creative process that results in
three-dimensional, spatial, and volumetric propositions often created out of patterns and organizations outside of anyone’s awareness. Projects are imagined, drawn, and completely “built” before they are actually constructed. They are “dreams” that are both created and experienced by the designer before any construction on the site has begun.

It has been my experience that solutions present themselves, not in a purely logical, linear process, but often while in a state much like dreaming. I find idea generation to be most productive when I am able to suspend reality and respond to vague cues, memory impressions, subjective evaluations and stimuli, all with some degree of structure but also lacking clarity. Time after time my solutions seem to emerge from nowhere, as if attributable to a muse. The best of these solutions then appear logical and inevitable, as if the result of keen, linear intellect. But I know better.

I believe that a part of what accomplishes this resides deep into what is active in me while dreaming, and it is complex, spatial, and visual. Reinforcing these views of mine is that as a teacher working with a student I have often experienced the sudden inability to continue speaking, in midsentence, and I seem to be relying on a nonverbal dream state while very much awake and designing through drawing.

My teaching technique has evolved in relation to this kind of experience. To encourage inner orientation in my students I ask them to recall very specific moments of their past and to put the sensations or sensual qualities of their remembrances into a drawing or three-dimensional model. They are then compelled to make physical connections to the forgotten, the obscured, the essential, and the intuitive. The memory and the object become the same by distilling, abstracting, and overlapping. This involves the moving in and out of abstraction and concretization, encouraged by what I think of as a process of daydreaming, reverie.

I can’t say exactly what Scully had in mind regarding Wright, but certainly, with Tutter’s prompting, I am aware that while designing, my consciousness changes, and I believe processes are at work that have much in common with what happens when I’m asleep and creating dream images. In the end I think Scully, who as a scholar knows many architects intimately, was getting at this when he wrote of Wright’s “waking dreams.” I conclude from all this that once again Tutter seems to have defined something important about Johnson, and many of us.

Erikson’s Developmental Model

Now, to further investigate Tutter’s ideas about the relationship of unconscious wish, prohibition, and disguise within the design process,
we will discuss in detail the project on which we have worked: the design and production of a model in three dimensions of Erik Erikson’s developmental grid, which appears in two dimensions in his classic paper “The Problem of Ego Identity” (1956). We presented our model at the American Psychoanalytic Association’s poster session in January 2010 (Danze, Ruckman, Winn, and Sonnenberg 2010).

Our attempt to create the three-dimensional model was born in a 2006 study group led by one of us (SMS), in which we studied Erikson’s paper. As we discussed the grid, we were both struck not only by the richness and significance of its application, but by the limits of its two-dimensional configuration. Almost simultaneously we each proposed that the grid needed to be reconsidered in three dimensions, because its developmental perspective would then be more vivid and accessible to those using it for clinical, research, and teaching purposes. Soon after, at a meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association’s Committee on Scientific Activities, one of us (SMS) mentioned the proposed model, only to learn from the late Stuart Hauser, who then chaired the committee and had known Erikson, that Erikson himself believed that the grid should be executed in three dimensions. Creating the three-dimensional model turned out to be a far more complicated task than we had imagined. Now, six years since the project began, we have been able to describe the steps in interdisciplinary modeling research, which creates a bridge connecting architecture and design at one end with psychoanalysis at the other. The first step is the determination that a psychoanalytic concept will be better understood if presented in the form of a physical model. The second step is designing the model, and the third is building it. Steps two and three, it turned out in this case, were difficult. So let us begin with a brief description of these steps, of how we worked, in preparation for an account of how intrapsychic conflict complicated our task.

In Erikson’s two-dimensional diagram (see Figure 1), running across the grid horizontally at the top is infancy, and at the bottom mature (old) age. Between these are the other stages of life, all running across the grid. Running across in the center of the diagram is adolescence, with all its developmental challenges; the precursors and subsequent developmental iterations of the adolescent identity crisis run vertically. At the center, where these horizontal and vertical lines corresponding to adolescence cross, is the box representing the central developmental experience and challenge of adolescence, the identity crisis and the need to consolidate identity.
In designing the three-dimensional model we realized that infancy belonged at the base, and old age at the top, because each phase of life rests on what has come before it. So we flipped the grid, as is clear from Figure 2. We then needed to find a way to depict a spectrum of successful and unsuccessful development for every challenge on the model. We were able to do this by creating a color spectrum, with saturated red representing a poor adaptation at one end, and saturated blue a healthy adaptation at the other. Red was most saturated at the back of the model, and blue most saturated at the front. So adaptation was represented both spatially and with color. At the front of the model we re-created the original two-dimensional grid, with written indications of where each developmental experience is represented (though this is not fully shown in Figure 2). Finally, we created a version of the model (not pictured here) that allows the clinician to manipulate it using movable pieces to depict a person’s life course. At that point we realized that the model allows its user to actually experience the passage of time: as one uses it to plot the course of a person’s life, from infancy to whatever age the subject has reached, the very act of working with the model takes time. Though years are represented by the seconds and minutes it takes the clinician to work the model, it allows an actual experience and appreciation of time, rather than mere abstract thoughts about it. We now believed the
three-dimensional model we had created would encourage clinicians, researchers, and developmental educators to use Erikson’s seminal, and often neglected ideas, in their work.

Sounds simple and logical enough, doesn’t it? So why did it take so long to create the model? And why was it only at the 2010 poster session where we presented it that Sonnenberg, the analyst on our team, became consciously aware that the design process for him had been extraordinarily challenging, and at times confusing? And why was it only then that he became aware that it was extremely difficult for him to explain the model to others? Now we will hear from him in the first person, to learn the answers to these questions.
Sonnenberg’s Account of the Role of Unconscious Conflict in Designing

When we presented the model to interested analysts at the poster session, I was surprised to see that it demanded a great deal of effort on my part to explain it. I found myself really struggling to teach something I thought I knew very well. At the time, my focus was on describing the model to interested observers, and I didn’t allow myself time to think about how difficult it was for me to explain it, or why it was so difficult.

Encouraged by Tutter’s description of the relationship of Johnson’s unconscious conflicts and his Glass House architecture, recognizing the greater clarity of unconscious purpose that subtly emerged over almost five decades of his designing, and understanding the influence of compromise formation on his design process, I recently became determined to employ self-analysis to see if I could make more sense of my experience as interpreter of Erikson, as designer, and as teacher of what I had helped design.

What I have come up with relates to experiences that go back decades, and while I know that these in turn rest on my life experience going all the way back to childhood, there is a specific educational experience, a conflictual one, that I believe I was trying to work out in the design process for the Erikson model.

I was extremely fortunate to have been admitted to the psychiatry residency program I attended. There was, and is to this day, no doubt in my mind that I might just as easily have been turned away by that program, and that my acceptance depended on a relationship with a senior professor in that department whom I had met by chance as a medical student. In short, I was accepted to the residency because he was able to handpick one member of the incoming class, and I was his pick.

The program’s faculty was made up of the finest teachers from what at the time was arguably the foremost analytic institute in the United States. Further, they represented a particular point of view: they were focused on infantile sexuality and ego psychology. Almost everything we learned, in the end, reflected that orientation. But curiously, there was one exception: my benefactor, the man to whom I owed my acceptance into the program.

Even before this effort at self-analysis, I had a vivid memory of a course all first-year residents had to take. It was taught by a cadre of those outstanding ego psychologists, with one exception: again, my benefactor. And what did he teach? Erikson’s “The Problem of Ego Identity.” Over the years, I have often remembered the conscious conflict I experienced
as I listened to him teach that class. He conveyed Erikson’s ideas about how there was much to learn from studying the relationship of psychoanalysis with other disciplines, such as sociology and anthropology, and he spoke of development throughout the life cycle, of the interaction of a young person with society. He played down the exclusive importance of infantile sexuality. He preached heresy, and I have always remembered how conflicted I felt in class that day. Should I absorb and embrace what he was teaching, should I be loyal to him, or should I turn away from him and in my mind declare my allegiance to the ego psychology group?

Needless to say, my conflict did not abate once the class ended. I wanted very much to fit in, to be part of the studious group, learning from our department’s great teachers. Yet I simultaneously felt pulled to join my benefactor and embrace heresy. In the end, back then, I made what I know was the “safe” choice: I turned my back on my benefactor, on Erikson, on the exciting possibilities that were evident in the text of that paper, and on the developmental grid. And I felt guiltily disloyal and opportunistic.

But did I really turn my back on Erikson and my benefactor? Is that accurate? Is it the whole story? For along with becoming a quite conservative analyst, a practitioner of a traditional variety of ego psychology, I continued to pursue interests that connected me to scholars in other fields. I didn’t forget about anthropology and sociology, and developed interests in the law and international relations as they intersect with psychoanalysis. Nevertheless, despite participating in interdisciplinary research projects, and trying to apply lessons learned there to my clinical work, an unconflicted embrace and integration of my clinical and research interests was always elusive. And Erikson was always relegated to the sidelines.

Now, with the benefit of self-analytic effort, I recall that I intermittently (if barely consciously) thought of that teaching session led by my benefactor, and my conflict at the time, when I decided to assign Erikson to my study group, when we discussed the paper, and at the moment Elizabeth Danze and I thought, almost simultaneously, that the grid should be re-created in three dimensions.

In retrospect, I am sure that my labored contributions to the design process, which I know slowed it down, and the difficulty I had describing the model at the poster session, when for the first time I felt the pressure of teaching the model to others in a seminar-like setting, reflected exactly the kind of conflict between desire and prohibition, exactly the kind of compromise formation, that Tutter describes in Johnson’s Glass House.
architecture. I also understand why at the poster session I realized how confused I had often been during the creation of the three-dimensional model. My sense of confusion teaching the model, reminiscent as it was of my conflicted classroom experience as a resident, resonated within me with what had been rapidly repressed confusion, generated by my anxiety, during the design process. Further, I believe it is no coincidence that I developed an interest in architecture and design, and cultivated my relationship with Professor Danze, because among many other motivations, I believe I always wanted to rethink Erikson’s grid, and make right my relationship with my benefactor of decades ago. In the end, the visual did attract me; I was drawn to it; I worked to create opportunities to learn more about it and participate in the design process. My unresolved unconscious conflicts regarding my benefactor and Erikson motivated me to seek out opportunities to engage in designing the three-dimensional model. I am now very aware, as well, that the prospect and process of designing led to the reactivation and resurgence of my old conflicts over loyalty to my benefactor, and to Erikson, the person whose work he chose to teach.

It is striking to me that I didn’t recognize much of this before studying Tutter’s work, because I have written about the analyst’s use of self-analysis in teaching, clinical work, research, and writing (Sonnenberg 1990, 1991, 1993a,b, 1995), and for decades I have engaged in self-analysis regularly to enhance my performance in those areas, as well as to help me live my life as happily as possible. I have written of how conflict is reflected in the relationship between the analyst and research colleagues and research subjects (1993a), and of how the relationship of the analyst to a teacher from the past might influence clinical work in the here and now (1991). However, I am also aware that as we grow, as we encounter, seek, and undertake new challenges, new forms and expressions of conflict arise, and new self-analytic tasks must be undertaken. Tutter has taught me that designing is for me just such a challenge, and so requires awareness of how it interacts in a feedback loop with my unconscious processes, and demands self-inquiry. Inspired by Tutter’s research on Johnson I’m better able to understand myself; extrapolating from my self-analytic experience, I am convinced that Tutter got Johnson right.

CONCLUSION

In this commentary we have discussed Tutter’s investigation of Philip Johnson’s Glass House. We have described the way she gathered data to
support the view that for Johnson the dream work is a useful model for understanding his design process. That process reflects his conflict over actualizing his desire and prohibition against the expression of his desire, of disguise and compromise formation, and of a persistence of repression of what is behind his designs and completed structures. At the same time, as Tutter makes clear, Johnson’s conflicted unconscious wish became increasingly clear over the nearly five decades he spent building the Glass House complex. This is consistent with what Freud said about the increasing transparency of the meaning behind sequential dreams.

We have explored ideas about the relationship between unconscious conflict and the visual that emerged in Tutter’s essay, pointing out that the visual attracts the unconscious, that the unconscious stimulates the visual, and that there is a psychodynamic feedback loop that operates over time during the work of designing. This loop has a power of its own, as it operates as a self-stimulating system impelling the architect to design and build.

In the latter part of our commentary, we have described a research project of our own, the design of a three-dimensional model of Erikson’s developmental grid. This was presented to allow further consideration of Tutter’s ideas about the relationship of dreaming and dreamlike processes in the work of designing, and of conflict and compromise formation in the design process. After all, if we could validate that what was true for Johnson was observable also in our own work, we might then report to architects and analysts alike that collaboration between practitioners from the two fields might illuminate and enhance architectural efforts and increase the psychoanalytic understanding of creativity involving the visual. In each case, our understanding of our own work supports Tutter’s observations of the design process, as we conclude that the dream work is a useful model for understanding designing and building, and that unconscious conflict is a useful way of understanding what are impediments as well as stimulants to both activities.

In the end, we believe that Tutter’s work is a creative leap forward in understanding, encouraging, and enhancing the emerging relationship between architecture and psychoanalysis. We stand in her debt.

REFERENCES


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