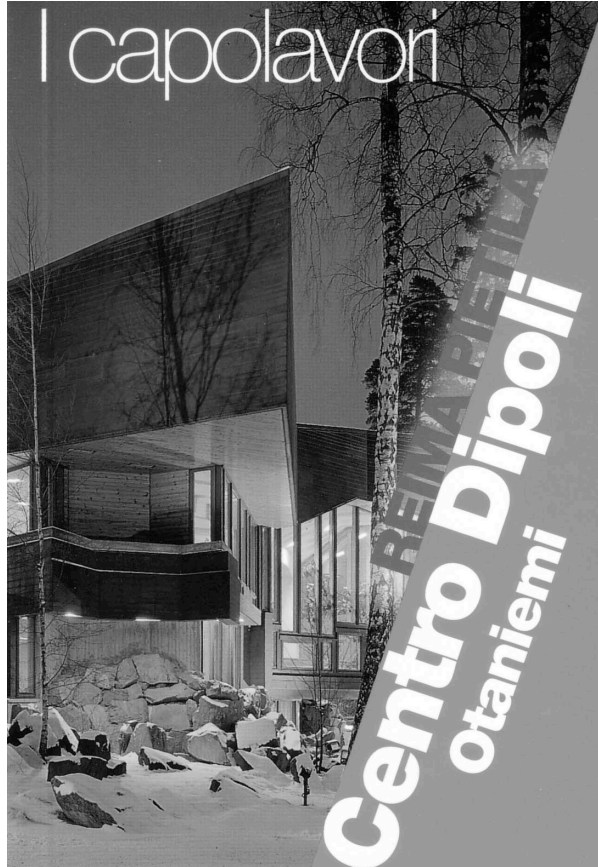


I capolavori



Roger Connah

Collana diretta da Bruno Zevi

42 testo *e* immagine

REMARCHE
Centro Dipoli
Otaniemi
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architettura

Literal Morphology
The Caveman's Wedding March ¹

Roger Connah

No generalities, only the particular is real.

Direct revelation, not analysis -

that is the heart of his vision

Isaiah Berlin ²

Otaniemi was left half-finished. It hasn't been completed
in the spirit of the indivisible synthesis of building and
landscape architecture. Grotesque and frustrated, Dipoli
preaches with its messianic gesture amidst the exploitation
of nature; it is a personification of Beckett's *L'Innomable*.

Reima Pietilä, 1984

LITERAL MORPHOLOGY

Reima Pietilä 1966



What would be said of Dipoli should be said if one could say it.

That it is a beginning.

That it is a becoming.

Don't speak of it as a complete

and final thing.

But rather as an attempt, a direction, something symptomatic.

Dipoli might be a torso.

It is unsettled architecture.

At the same time as being like a material sketch,

it is a sketch for architecture

too difficult to settle rightly as yet.

It is suggestive in the same sense as the spoken word.

Good if one can sense the meaning

Starting position before the idea: attitude.

Dipoli is an experiment in attitude

Dipoli is contrary to good taste; style-less

(in as much as style is the consistency of convention)

Dipoli is contrary to the tried and accepted rules of composition.

Defends the right to be different,

yet is architecture and believes

that the architect-flavoured type of building adds to our insight

of what a building is

Dipoli opposes the view that architecture is only good if it is deadly serious

Dipoli turns its back on the 20th century

whose spring had already faded and

looks towards the 10th.

Is a building that one at first cannot identify, is aesthetically classless

Is a candid un-doctrinaire, a criterion of consistency

Demonstrates the continuity of theory. Blurs frontiers.

Establishes a zone of possibilities and investigates it with curiosity.

Is local, consists of local stimuli.

Is importunate: a distinct individual as a building.

In place just an experiment; just structures and the development

of their counter structures producing shape

The Caveman's Wedding March

1 The Hunter / The Trekker

2 Architecture Degree Zero

3 Dipoli Might be a Torso

4 Signature in Blank

5 Literal Morphology

6 A Wager with Irregularity

7 Errors in the Sequence

8 Culture and Timing in Architecture

9 Narrative Myths

10 Inner Speech

11 The Caveman's Wedding March

12 The Magus of The North



modern architecture in finland

asko salokorpi



Then the old Väinämöinen
sings under his breath –
sang the wind into a whirl
worked the air into a rage;
he says with this word
he spoke with this speech:
'Take him, wind, into your craft,
gale, into your boat
to whisk him away
into dark Northland!'

The Kalevala³

It is an aspect common to the masters I have known.
They seem, but only seem, to be out of step with time.
Yet it would be a mistake to think that, because a man
is content to keep to the old ways, his mind is not up
to date. It is not that such individuals are living in the past,
but that their intensity of life includes both past and
present; and from that security they grasp the future.

Alan Garner⁴

The Hunter/The Trekker

I have forgotten the word I intended to say, and my thought,
unembodied, returns to the realm of shadows.

O. Mandelstam⁵

1961, the architect is walking on the site for a new building for the Helsinki University of Technology engineering students. The existing students' union, known as *Poli*, in the centre of Helsinki, is a *Jugend* building of matching solidity and elphish picturesqueness.⁶ The new site, outside Helsinki, is located in an area known as Otaniemi, an area strictly territorialised by Alvar Aalto's redbrick and marble-trim campus buildings. There, in the shadows of a soft urbanism it seems impossible to escape from Aalto's civilising horizon.⁷

The site, gently forested, rises to a small hill. Underneath, the ground is firm in places, squelchy and swampy in others. The architect imagines the Ice Age. The top of the hill would be refuge for the animals, for the hunters. Ferns spread over rock, disfiguring at the same time as sheltering the rock's harshness. There is slipperiness on the gradual incline and the smallest footstep registers the contour. The forest is texture to the feet as much as to the eye. A liquid, emancipatory sensation, like damp air trapped pleurably between woollen sweaters. *What we cannot speak about*, Wittgenstein said, *we must pass over in silence*. The architect disagrees. We do not articulate so undaringly. What we cannot speak about, we can distort, we can build. There is a memory to place as well as architecture. A morphic resonance!

To walk around the site, trees are encountered, brushed past and avoided. Yet there is no evasion here. A path through to the sea, however dense the trees, has been there for millennia. Occasionally the architect walks upwards, higher, and on top of an outcrop sees beyond the forest. This he does by moving lightly to the right or to the left, a sort of gestalt shift between the forest and the world beyond. The planes change place with each other. Where once ice, now to the east, a bay. Where once the barbarians, now to the south and west Alvar Aalto's predominantly brick educational corset. The building, the architect decides, will have a path right through it. And exits? Many exits, of course!

The contour of the land is subtle not wildly dramatic, yet the angles of rock are as small as needles. The spongy fern can be as deep as wells, a riverbed. *There are no general cases, no types to fall back on, no common factors, no supreme forms.*⁹ Feet register the rhythm of this landscape space as much as the eye. To the architect these morphological terrains are separate. Nature is imagery if you like, if you dare, that belongs to the Creation. Neither pre-literate nor beyond words, unsettled, unsentimental, they belong together. And the earth trodden could also be a roof!

From the air, there is an invisible architecture, as unsettled but as natural as this topology. In a forest there is an absence of equilibrium, few of the usual reference points. Nothing preconceived, space is ambivalent, outside can be inside. But this is not to be confused with the romance of an organic sentiment. This lack of equilibrium offers an architecture as resonant and as indeterminate as the shifting clouds above. Architecture that can carry habit and creativity, memory and outrage. One would see the 10th Century of the hunter as well as the 21st Century of the trekker. Both nomads. One would see a roof overgrown and flowing, dipping down and up, hunter or trekker picking their way knowingly through this environment: an essential livelihood or a sauntering idleness? The hunter is cunningly only momentarily in sight. The trekker is lost to the undergrowth. Themes are never as random as they might seem in a forest. From this is imagined an architecture as from an atom.

Or from morphology, the study of how the smallest meaningful units of language form words. This is the language of fractals before fractals formed a club of disarticulation and deconstruction for architects in the latter half of the 20th Century. And to achieve this architecture, the architect imagines an irregular slice through the earth. It's through death too. It is and must be a brave strategy; a strategy that *opposes the view that architecture is only good if it is deadly serious*. Tactile, topological, tectonic and scenographic! Or foolproof.¹⁰

*

Lift the earth like a geological shelf. Avoid the difficult rock in some places, cut through the soft fern in others and finally cut through to root and darkness, to riverbed, to bedrock. To a place based not on language or the sophisticated negation of it, but on the incomplete, on understatement. To a place based on the mythopoeic world of metaphor not abstraction; a form of de-structuring. If he achieves this, the architect thinks, the bedrock would become the floor, the route through. The sliced shelf of the earth would only need to be lifted some few metres up to become another environment.

The architect does not refer to it as a building, yet. Insinuated in the space and character already altered by the 'red houses in the forest', it is only space in between. There is, for the architect, *no continuous pattern controlling the shape, no morphological fields made explicit, no more advanced form to be found...* In fact, the architect refuses to speak of it as a building until the very last moment. That is, when it needs to be drawn and delivered to the competition jury. Even then, it is still never more than a torso, a beginning, a sketch. Unspecified like memory, like habit. Even then it is unsettled, incomplete, with no right way to arrive at this point.

Architecture Degree Zero

Reima Pietilä not only sported with the ahistorical when he spoke about Dipoli as a building turning its back on the 20th century and favouring the 10th century. He had in mind a *degree zero of architecture* where language no longer holds the key to the narrative of architectural form. In the form of poetry, nothing could hold back such a building. In the form of source, language was helpless in the face of this literal transcription of architecture's potential.¹¹ Not only in the imagination but also in reality it has been difficult to locate the sheer bravado, risk and outrage of this not-yet architecture that became known as Dipoli. Proving it was no less architecture than an unending, unsettled inexplicit space-filler, Pietilä proceeded to sketch and draw what his body and eye 'excavated', like a memory image. Architects have done it before for centuries and architects will go on doing it for some centuries more. Rarely though, will there be such risk, such degree zero of an attitude and timing to architecture itself.

The architectural image recalled is thick and angular. Yet at times it must be regular like careful root formation, or rock striations running together as tramlines. The sketches and drawings begin similarly exchanging smoothness and roughness, regularity and precision. They evade order and tyranny, imposing their own myths. Not an anti-geometry but beyond geometry. They begin to time space like an actor times the right pause. From a gestalt smudge test to the spidery traces of morphology, from the idea of footprints on paper to the dinosaur vision, *architecture in-between* emerges.¹² The note on one drawing refers to a dinosaur, suggesting the biomorphic can mix with the geomorphic and remind us also of a time when the land was much older - a non-historic vision of an architecture looking backwards and forwards. Acultural, this links us to a time that held more meaning, more 'morphic resonance'¹³ than we imagine today. Suddenly the architecture begins to echo more than the geomorphology of the site. A space traversed as if one moves up the land (*vertically*). Or space laterally, across and through the forest (*horizontally*) towards that clearing.

Morphological forms will be echoed in the building's carpentry, in the splayed and splaying geometry, the splintered branches, knots and joints. Lifted up, paradoxically under this flowing roof, a lower more secret space is imagined. Evading the mechanistic theory of nature, evading the determinism and the disembodied architecture of the mid-20th Century, Dipoli demanded a tighter irrationalism than anyone at that time imagined. To draw the seamless was inevitably a challenge to the contracted Modernism around.

*

If Dipoli is of the forest, then it is not to be feared. This is not the forest harbouring and sheltering demons and evil spirits. A friendlier giant - the caveman - awaits in the form of this architecture. These are not the spirits of the forest suspected by Sibelius or feared by Aalto; the demons that need civilizing. These are spirits of the Engineering God, the Jämerä cult, spirits of technology that Pietilä knew were paradoxically ignored over there in the Architecture Faculty buildings designed by Mr. Aalto. The risk and degree zero became clearer as the architecture needed detailing. *There is no virgin point of departure. Roots are set down spontaneously. We are building ourselves.*

The architect continues to sketch. He will still be sketching when the building is on site, under construction. He will sketch in the air as they supervise carpenters to imagine their own solutions to the bend of branch and beam. But the architect now also has the motto - *The Caveman's Wedding March* - for his building. It is a motto that will annoy as much as entice his colleagues. For this is to be the most untried architecture they have ever seen. It will have no precedent; irregularity rarely has. Exception demands no likeness. Yet it will resonate with the past and the future. Pivotal, it will be met by Erich Mendelsohn and Frank Gehry at both ends of the 20th Century. And always unseen, it will hence have to go on defending its right to be different into the next century.

Let us recall with some ruefulness Flaubert's definition of an architect from his Dictionary of Received Ideas: "*All imbeciles. Always forget to include the staircase.*"¹⁴ To appease the friendly spirits, the exaggerated inflated God of technology, and to show that architecture need not be so deadly serious, so classically tyrannical, the architect imagines a staircase. Of course it might be a staircase for the eventual extension onto the roof: which would provide a further ironic twist to the roof lifted up from the floor. But it is not as complex or as calculated as that. Instead, it would be preferable if we went along wholeheartedly with the poetic clue. The staircase leads *nowhere* but to another possible exit from the forest, from the site. It is a cupboard in the forest, an exit from the technology that tyrannises and frames our poetic spirit and visions. It leads also to the floor of the forest, to the roof of this building called - famously and infamously - Dipoli. An architecture with unusual spacial mobility; a building with 52 doors to the forest, 25 entrances and 27 exits!

3

Dipoli Might be a Torso

What is it in Dipoli that demands attention and deeper claim? First thing, it is important to read between these lines as much as we are prompted by Pietilä to read between his own lines. Distorted by his Wittgenstein readings or misreadings, *what would be said of Dipoli should be said if one could say it*. It is not over-important to read Dipoli but it is essential to experience it. In many ways Pietilä is inseparable from the building: the architect blurs with the built space. *We are always building ourselves!* In the competition in 1961, Pietilä's project shared joint second prize with the project by Osmo Lappo. It is no surprise though that the engineering students themselves opted for Pietilä's rogue work. Indeterminacy appealed to them more than to architects. Lappo's project, though delicately fanned in plan form (echoing Aalto's auditorium?) displayed everything of the angled and disembodied rationalism that then pre-occupied mainstream Finnish architecture.¹⁵

Nor is it an exaggeration. The innocence, cheek and sheer bloody-minded courage of the engineering students, plus the necessary innovation of the on-site craftsmen, ensured Dipoli would become the experiment Pietilä's rogue ideas suggested. The strength of this architectural statement left no one in any doubt in the early 1960s. In a rare consensus against the more predictable 'Finnish' architecture, ultimately the risk and the creativity in the achievement of Dipoli were shared.¹⁶ Of course there were other intentions behind the architect's slow steps as he traversed the virgin site, intentions that gave impetus to a work of architecture waiting to emerge. But despite Pietilä's continual effort and playfulness at trying to define Dipoli over the years, the building thankfully remains visceral and not cerebral. It is immediate and revelatory. It is the type of architecture that sticks to your foot like a luggage sticker at an airport reminding you of a recent voyage. Though Pietilä was fond of method and anti-method, fond of discussing and then swerving away from 'reason', Dipoli survives any verbiage we apply to it. It might survive anything *reasonable* we have to say of it. Herein lies its extraordinary significance.

You approach the building usually from the environs of Aalto's campus, an Aalto low white-and-copper-roofed shopping mall and a carpark. The tamed forest immediately entices you, as the walk up slightly tilts only to dip again into the main entrance. The subtlety of this small incline and then dip reminds one of the same device in Kaleva Church where Pietilä sloped the floor upwards at the entry only to soar downwards towards the nave. Adding verticality in Kaleva, it offers the sense of unexpected enclosure in Dipoli. From hereonwards, the outside forms echo and underlie the interior. From hereon nature animates the building at the same time as you are distanced from ready sentiment by shock and deceptive space. It is a correspondence that consistently blurs the individual idler as one seeks the outside within and the inside without. With none, absolutely none, of the usual reference points.

Once in, the ways open to the visitor are much those of the hunter or the trekker in the forest, the 10th Century being or the 21st Century backpacker. The lower ceiling level, the fragmented functions on the ground floor, already indicate the possibility of penetrating this forest space or being diverted. Magritte's planes come to mind, or those clever optical postcards sold in Paris to demonstrate to children the origin of cinema. Dipoli experienced resembles - frame by frame - animated movement. Sharp right from the main entrance, one is greeted by quite the biggest roterie ever seen. At least inside a building! Ostensibly, a whole pig if not a fictional bear could be roasted. The steelwork and robustness of the detailing warns us early of the unsettled and unsettling refinement. This is the space of a furnace, the Sampo-hearth, the roughness of the blacksmith's apron. It is also the smoothed areas on that apron after years of hammering iron.

Turn right and right again, stepping up gradually (minding your head on the branch) and the irregular fenestration recalls the forest yet breaks up the forest beyond by framing it. Horizontal windows fit in along with the vertical, recalling the possible structural geometry of forest space, pre-empting Pietilä's finest example of what Zevi terms 'four-dimensional de-structurisation' in his Suvikumpu housing later in the 1960s.¹⁷ It is as if Pietilä has drawn the gestalt switch between forest and space for the child about to grasp the flying bird. We read surface, backdrop, foreground and detail as we read Magritte's *Signature in Blank*. Now you see it now you don't. It is no mean achievement or a mean critical phrase: either you can't see the architecture for the trees, or then you cannot see the trees for the architecture!

Turning left and up the wide stairs before one enters the first floor, it is only when the ingenious multiple sliding-swing doors are pulled back to reveal an open space, a huge clearing within the forest (the ballroom or the great cave) that one grasps the adroit control, the majesty with which the plan is held in movement. Here is the open space to hold 2000 delegates, students, doctors or architects, all situated under the undulating raw concrete roof. Just as if someone had put up a huge blanket in the forest and found magic ways to support it.

Bowing to reality, Pietilä felt he had to characterise some spaces in order to reduce deception. If the main hall is a *complete cave*, the grand restaurant can be seen as a cave *partly torn from above*. His language is precise. But still no one can say where the shoulder ends and the breast begins. The smaller restaurant pushed out into the forest is a *small inside-outside* area, the reading room becomes a *pavilion out in the forest*.

Of course, externally Dipoli raises now a deeply engrained, darkened copper-retreating roofline. Once a series of shining copper beaks, or the suggestion of the headress worn by Lapps, the copper must give back. It must oxidise for it is, as Pietilä noted, an elusive, picturesque, schizoid material oversensitive even to those low Nordic light values. Pietilä, ever the realist as much as a gentle ironist, described this as *difficult architecture in copper*. His irony did himself no favours. To attempt to build a space that might house the forest itself, and then quietly invite the building back into the forest, was hardly a fashionable architectural strategy for the time. Pietilä's rogue antics were singularised, as an architect he was victimised. His idea that Dipoli could create the ruins of architecture before its time was hardly going to endear him to his more orthodox colleagues.

Hindsight allows us late wisdom. Pietilä was more like a writer than an architect. Architecture was only a truth if its fabrication was recognised.¹⁸ Dipoli was no precursor of SITE's environmental sculpture nor was it the romantic organicism that others found critically rewarding. Pietilä was never quite involved in the more careful syntactical games of the former, or the lost romanticism and formalism of the latter. Instead, we would do better to turn to the hunter and trekker to rediscover the movement in the building, the possibility of looking up through foliage, through trees, a curious anti-perspective. And through the deep troughs wedged out of the shuttered concrete, the trekker would see Ronchamp's windows lifted to the skyline. Instead of deep horizontal chasms of light slanting horizontally in Ronchamp, in Dipoli light slashes, low, blinding then clear.

Mocked it was to be, Pietilä's 'forest' faith laid out a challenge that always nagged at the more conventional ways of reading metaphysical gain from architecture. Nature, like architecture, was no ultimate datum from which he would ever suggest general cases. Angles are often quirked, squashed, fragmented. Materials, the wooden panels of Dipoli, are all amputated sculpturally, not cerebrally. The accidental energy and material treatment heighten the expressive space. Concrete suggests a deceptive depth to the roof space (to the bedrock?) within which all the air conditioning and energy of the building lie. Logical deduction, usual guarantees of infallibility hardly concerned Pietilä. Nature never quite offers this.

4

Signature in Blank

There is a painting by Magritte called, *Le Blanc-Seing*, the English title being *Signature in Blank*. A woman is seated on a horse and seems to be passing through the forest. Literally she is doing just that; the forest passes through her as Magritte slips and makes ambiguous the foregrounded planes. Were it not for the immediate disturbance between figure and ground, the gestalt switching, the scene of a woman on horseback would be rather expressionless! Yet this observation is facile. The shoulder ends, the forest begins. But where? Magritte's painting is more than a clever, subtle disturbance just as Dipoli's own play on depth, on ground and figure, destabilises the architecture we think we enter.

The significance between the two goes deeper. The abstract nature of painted images, like drawings and sketches, always challenges the concrete nature of real life. The literal obviousness of this is stupefying. Yet in such literalness Pietilä sensed just the type of unprecedented architecture he could not, in 1961, sketch. Magritte's child-like insight would be applicable surely to Pietilä and Dipoli: *Despite the complicated combination of details and nuances in a real-life landscape, I succeeded in seeing it as though it were a backdrop let down before my eyes. I became unsure of the depth of the landscapes, little convinced regarding the distance of the pale blue of the horizon, direct experience situating simply at eye level. I was in the same state of innocence as the child who thinks it can grasp the bird flying in the air from the cradle.*¹⁹

In his critical work on Magritte, Hammacher identifies the evolution in his work as a pre-renaissance space; movement frustrated, depth uncertain, opening up to the (infinite) possibility of inventive play with imaginary spaces. I think Pietilä did grasp the bird as it flew from the cradle. In 1961, his difference at competition stage, in drawn architecture, was immediate. The infinite was challenged. His spatial expressiveness so clearly differed from Alvar Aalto's stricter freeing of geometry and line within the cubist world. It is well to recall that Alvar Aalto was on the competition jury that originally awarded the joint prize to the two architects, Pietilä and Lappo. Though Lappo's mainstream rationalism lost out to Pietilä's poetic vision, therein lies the subtext of the debate that raged and put Pietilä and Dipoli up against the wall for decades. Anarchy became a loose, easily available uncritical term. And though Mantyniemi, the later Residence for the Finnish President, was significant in the 1990s, the re-thinking and re-drawing of the seriously expressive architectural community, through the emergence of the Bilbao Guggenheim and the Jewish Museum Extension, make Dipoli not Mantyniemi pivotal to this century. Pivotal not only to the Finnish society's discourse with identity, symbolism and the ideology of nature (*national romanticism*) within the culture but pivotal also in pushing for an architecture beyond the known.²⁰

The ideology of nature should not blind us any more than it should in Magritte's painting. Pietilä was too good an architect, and too much prowling the borders of architecture and philosophy, not to know that nature is but one alibi for architectural sequence, narrative and form. His alertness to mythology and metaphor, anthropology and analogy, made him reassuringly playful before someone else could get there. That he could design errors into the sequence meant that at least one of his works would be more than remarkable. No one can really doubt Dipoli's absurdity in *the plane of the feasible*. But Dipoli has proved significant precisely because of this. Pietilä was not interested, just as Beckett was not interested in the 1930s, about the plane of the feasible. There were enough examples of that around in the tightly ordered Finnish functional-internationalism. A different kind of architectural universe lay between the planes of Magritte's painting, Beckett's transgression and the swerves at all levels in Dipoli.

Literal Morphology

Let us not doubt it. Pietilä and Dipoli were put against the wall. The sniping at home was bewildering. In an attempt to define just what this architecture was, in 1967 *Arkkitehti* (*Finnish Architectural Review*) invited three foreign ‘experts’ to assess Dipoli.²¹ Pietilä’s own words had confused the situation even more. Few were to pay any attention to his remarkably open text *Literal Morphology*.²² The unknown clearly needed taming and it was no secret that the expectations of the critique in the profession were negative. The shock was compounded when Oskar Hansen, Udo Kultermann and Christian Norberg-Schulz all came out with bewilderingly creative assessments in favour of Pietilä’s radical architecture. Norberg-Schulz, stressing material and cult, recognised the *genius loci* agenda, the transformational and topological qualities of the project. He rightly tapped the obvious alibi of Finnishness. Kultermann saw the masterpiece immediately and comparatively. He put Pietilä not only in the forefront of Finnish Architecture but saw him as worthy member of the international community; Tange, Kahn, Castiglione, Van Eyck, Haring, Scharoun, Wright and – somewhat irritating to the Finnish establishment – Alvar Aalto. As Aalto was not particularly in favour during this decade, this doubled the negativity around. Oskar Hansen considered Dipoli of extreme importance in breaking the architectural mould and seminal as an example to young Polish architects.

This ensured Dipoli and Pietilä even more critical enemies. Pietilä’s own ability to detach himself also won him few friends at home. His deep preoccupation with indeterminacy had a logic that would fly in the face of sense. To recreate this slippage, this slide between void and solid, this gestalt switch between building and forest, would have been a significant achievement for Dipoli. But to deliver this also in a poetic text called *Literal Morphology* written a posteriori (1967) would be another of Pietilä’s unceasing attempts to self-locate his work. Yet at the same time, he could not resist throwing it open once more to ambiguity and incompleteness.

The descriptive way Pietilä approached Dipoli in this text also alienated a profession soon to be involved in political and cultural vandalism. Dipoli was to give the young militants a good reason to regularise architecture, to establish their own dogma. The language, as much as Dipoli, enraged them. Dipoli was *an experiment in attitude... contrary to preconceived good taste.... contrary to the tried and accepted rules of composition, styles...* Pietilä went as far as indicating that Dipoli *turns its back on the 20th Century and looks towards the 10th ... a building that one at first cannot identify.*²³ Ultimately, Pietilä knew whatever metaphysical nudging he might use, whatever debates he might call upon for his work, he would have to recognise the implications that *there is no general case, no types formed, no common supreme forms and no constant factors.* The collision of deconstruction in philosophy and architecture has spent a good decade manoeuvring around the same degree zero. The very claims that set Dipoli apart ensured the building little critical resonance at home. Revisiting Pietilä and commenting on this in 1994, Bruno Zevi's assessment is spot on: *No architect has ever expressed such a traumatic, daring and inspiring orientation.*

We can slice up architectural history here. Whole swathes of it have been tampered with, made manneristic with critical fetish and tinsel. To a natural like Pietilä, just as with Gehry, all such fidgeting is out of context, culturally embarrassing. Language and philosophy may be props for the departure in Pietilä's case more so than in Gehry's, but both architects reach for the bird that flies from the cradle. Their difference to contemporary trends in world architecture could not be clearer at the end of the century. Disarticulation brings poetry back into the picture not philosophy. To look towards the 10th century was not to look towards the past; it was not a Mediaevalism. It was and still is an *acultural* recognition, a way to respect the zero degree in architecture in relation to how it is 'written'. It is to dare to take on irregularity in architecture and realise that any building can only be tamed by multiplying those irregularities. Dipoli is not an architectural act of synthesis, as Aalto might have preferred, converging on the neatest scheme. It is an act of divergence, like many significant works this century, leading to one exception producing occasionally several others. Interpreting this as high individualism or a 'victorianism' is an accident of history betrayed by the Finnish radicals in the late 1960s. Fortunately, outside the society, Dipoli remained mostly untouched by critical vandalism.²⁴

A Wager with Irregularity

Dipoli is also styled from a 'creative' despair; it obeys its own obsessions. It simply cannot evade its own irregularity and would have been less than its own rupture if the building had tried to pull architecture back to its hopeless, metaphysical promise. Truly pragmatic is never so rudely pragmatic as we see with the innovative interior space. Innovation is not in the refinement and resolution of detail but in the 'spread' of detail, in the way the carpenters had to resolve fanning timber meeting concrete just as masons lent ancient interiors their own hand. These interior details in Dipoli fly, they do not resolve or plead to the comfort of the eye. Like a forest, they suggest planes through which we must see.

To *see through* is, in English, to discover the ruse, to reveal the mask. Here we see Dipoli revealing the architecture behind the quiet sensibility of cultural pretence and cold stylism. Dipoli, like all significant buildings, demands that we seek new vocabulary, stretch the language used for it. The arguments about Expressionism, Surrealism, Organicism, Genius Loci are available to follow the studies already existing on Pietilä's work. Not without insight, they can, though, critically date Dipoli unnecessarily. For it is the use of nature as an alibi for the free release of architectural departure that has often led to critical shortcomings.²⁵

Confused and incomprehensible Pietilä sometimes was, he did however light fuses. No dreary Mediaevalism informs these fantasies as was thought in Finland. Dipoli is timeless in the sense that architecture does not erase its past achievements. To use a cloud, restless and shape-changing by the minute, is not to attempt natural affinity or loan sentiment. These are important if vague gestaltic manoeuvres. They are *precise*, blurred, generic notions and - structurally - offered Pietilä notions for a space unresolved, for a wager with irregularity. To strip down the constraint of locality is also to vye with internationality. Prepared to take on the errors in the sequence - architectural, cultural and human - Pietilä sought a deeply humanising, individualising experience. He saw this in a space of pre-history, a degree zero again. He was approaching Aalto's human error from the other way. Which should only make us ask why Aalto took so long to recognise the errors in his own sequence!

There is no hiding Pietilä's adventure. It took many years before the largely reluctant approach to Dipoli and Pietilä in his own country reached some balance. Analytically slippery, Pietilä's integrity and radicality in Dipoli, as with Gehry's in Bilbao, remains a painful reminder of what might be left out of contemporary architecture. Only architects perhaps talk of an elevation-less building. Most people walking around Dipoli will take in the differences naturally, as angle and detail alter from deep overhang to sheer copper walling. Walking anti-clockwise, this then gives way to a lighter window wall, inviting the exterior within and the interior without. Pietilä as ever puts the cat amongst the architectural pigeons: *Going round Dipoli reveals strong character differences between the various facade segments. To the north the production building - to the west the school - to the south the welcoming face of the pavilion - to the east the building becomes an independent sculptural event. It is not only translation that makes Pietilä's language uncomfortably appropriate. He writes as if mocking the mechanistic language politics was forced to use in the late 1960s...The facade has not been programmed as the building's outer look. This is a building which does not look directly at the spectator. It has turned to look at its own immediate surroundings.*

Does the architect plan his own exit, see his own redundancy? Obsessions only risked by saints, criminals and schizophrenics? *It has been planned to wait for what will happen when the rocks settle and the metal ages, begins to turn green, and the backwoods, the Finnish garden, begins gradually to win their way back.*²⁶

Exit the architect!

Continuing anti-clockwise around the building, the forest shows its other faces. The once-nightclub is entered through a darkened slit; the ambiguity of the entry-exit, the ambiguity between basement and secret, between vault and vertigo, are all further reinforced in the way one is led down and down. The path is within a path, as it would be for mushroom pickers who know when to stray from the known path and go for richer routes. It is a tribute to the robustness of the internal plan and the material frankness that this part of the building has survived countless transformations and the type of short-term memory architecture we attribute to Planet Hollywood, Reebok and Pizza Hut. Rarely photographed, even less discussed, is the so-called rear wall, which used to house the village post-office and shop for the students. Dressed in copper and darkened timber, we get the first hint of the more regularly planned areas around the corner (facing Aalto's campus).

When Alvar Aalto finally met the Pietiläs after Dipoli was awarded joint first prize in 1961, he is known to have questioned Pietilä as to why the whole building was not free form. Coming from Aalto who often set out a space or created an echelon from the regular line only to inflect it with the curve, Dipoli's winged regularity in plan might have appeared a surprising element. Yet no real sense of this regularity is seen as the elevation wraps from one to another, almost seamlessly controlled as it is within the tight overall plan. Past the village wall, the higher outcrop is revealed and the building and route step up. Here Pietilä situated the administration offices, the necessary functional spaces for the Students' Union, some rooms chasmed deep, others perched up to overlook Aalto's architecture faculty.

Deeper research into the plan of Dipoli will reveal these striations off which the Dipoli fan seems to spread. If Aalto took off from line and echelon, to line and curve, with an ability to draw the negative of it, Pietilä expressed no interest in such 'regularity'. He would instead take the *line* of forest, the vertical and thrust it lengthwise, as if the eye in the forest could lie down. For a moment!

And this *line* is sometimes never more than the pine bark. Seen fractally, however, it is expansive, like the lakeshore or the thrashed glacial geology of Finland. Seen from a distance it has the unwavering straightness of shuttered concrete. Put your eye to it and it will never quite disappear into nothing, into eternity. For Pietilä, unlike Aalto, the forest is not infinite and thus threatening. It is the friendly side of making the city's architecture, the architecture of a university, more than acceptable.²⁷

7

Errors in the Sequence

Like all significant architects, Pietilä knew how to use a chance source - Beckett, Boccioni, Schwitters and Surrealism - and thrust it accidentally into wider architectural representation.²⁸ Arbitrary perhaps, but he always knew it brought with it a reference, a resonance to past (and future) architecture. This makes Dipoli above all a self-confessed architecture. It is an experiment in the netherland. Its liminal space is created when ambiguity closes off indeterminacy. It never really does in serious architecture, which is the point. The flow, just as in Gehry's Bilbao or as in Mendelsohn's work, is too strong. Dipoli can be seen as the result of, the essence of, flow and is as tireless in this respect as Pietilä himself was. He thought whilst he spoke, wrote whilst he drew. He obsessively raided his own thinking. He edited out parts of a life to create alarmingly energetic work. You had the feeling that he could design even the flaws in the architectural event.

Pietilä used ideas as impulses to shape his work and architecture. He upset even his own causality in the work. If one impulse faded another would take over. His thinking in this way too was incomplete and seamless. In Dipoli we get errors in the sequence. This is interiority. We get the twist in the forest, where not quite everything comes out as we think. Much of the type of thinking behind Dipoli demonstrates Pietilä's ability to sketch through (the Finnish) language. He spoke and created in his own language quite at will. Mischievously, he depended on creative re-interpretation. Language was literally as unstable, as unsettled and restless as cloud formation and architecture. Language and thought were as inseparable as the architecture made from it. Forgetting a word meant a return to the shadows!

It is important to recognise the *locality* within which Pietilä operated and the universality he continually sought with his work and words. Let's be clear about this. Few Finnish architects have had the ability and nerve to use architecture to interrogate their own strategies. Critical energy is always outwards, beyond the analytic, tending to promotion and journalism. Few architects have opted for the temptation that the arbitrary point of departure for architecture can be hunted, tracked down and then transposed, moulded into an architectural poetry all one's own. Whether these traces are the mythology of a lost site, the sound of The Red Army Choir, the random unending sentences from Beckett's *L'Innomable*, or the unceasing metaphor of incompleteness in Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*.²⁹ Always less interested in the actual metaphysics of the 'story' line in Beckett's *The Unnamable* or Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*, Pietilä *saw through* literature and language as an aid to structures for his own morphology. Landscape - transformational, topographical and seamless - also never lost the structural impulse for shaping the impossible in his architecture.

What then is the cultural resonance of Dipoli? What might it be now? The names and eclectic reference Pietilä logged into during the 1960s would sketch the genuine reach of Dipoli. It is important to stress from as early as the 1940s, when Pietilä showed an interest in Descartes and philosophy, he was able to read and re-script for his own purposes. It is possible now to see an early *against-method* methodology beginning, one which would continually try and correct itself and the architecture in a form of restless searching. More than a touch Borgesian, Pietilä invented 'reasons' for his architecture. He could conflate the process with a posteriori comments. He could throw out alibis for architecture, which always held more than a grain of truth about them.

There is no doubting that Dipoli contains most of Pietilä's ideas in some form or another. Later work can echo or develop various themes, but for architectural significance it had already been achieved in 1966. And there is no better example than Dipoli for architecture aware of the concrete, an awareness of the literal 'failure' of a building to be able to signify incompleteness. In the 1950s Pietilä's interest extended from mathematics, Surrealism and linguistics to the logics of indeterminacy. By the time of his first marriage to a surrealist poet in 1956 and the Kaleva Church competition first prize in 1958, Pietilä was testing ideas that Surrealism had rehearsed 30 years earlier. Strictness of disarticulation, the emergence of space from endless form, the indeterminacy of series and the controlled Dadaism of Kurt Schwitters seemed particularly close to Pietilä.

From Heidegger and Wittgenstein to Barthes and Levi-Strauss in the 1960s, then later Norberg-Schulz and McLuhan in the 1970s, and curiously the return to 'post-modern' texts in the 1980s when Heidegger and Wittgenstein came back into critical discourse, Pietilä was as ever a hunter and trekker through texts. He read quickly and creatively. He abstracted source out of context and brought it back into context by applying it to architecture. He was never far from acknowledging that the essentialist drama in contemporary Finnish architecture used Modernism as contingent, arbitrary conventions from which to construct a reductive clarity. The essentialist drama took on lucidity and symmetry, a classical nostalgia, as the higher exercise in architecture. This mission collided with a somewhat sermonising spatial simplicity. One might say a Lutheran space was born and still tyrannises today. A space which supposedly reflected frame and form, restraint and rightness. Finally embodying the national project, lucidity in the form of Rationalism became and remains cultural myth. Pietilä knew how well architecture could slip in between such myth. His international local passion was a universal not patriotic nationalism.

*Myth lends itself to history in two ways, Roland Barthes says in Mythologies, by its form, which is only relatively motivated; by its concept, the nature of which is historical.*³⁰ Form and concept! Ever since Dipoli became a cause célèbre in Finland in the early 1960s and a recognised contribution to international architecture, the cerebral and the metaphysical have been confused with the visceral. Interpretations of the building, the symbolic weight it carries for architects and non-architects, the representations it is held to and the wilder claims made for it, have made up a runaway encyclopaedia. Most of the confusion stemmed from nature. Always a matter of knowing how to read it, nature was never the easy sentiment and romance that Pietilä's detractors claimed his work relied on.

Of all earlier comments and critics, only Bruno Zevi remained lucid in assessing the ahistorical, acultural challenge and sheer outrage of Dipoli. Kahn was known not to want to be taken inside, considering it not to be architecture at all, a perception still held by many at the end of the century. Peter Cook said once that he remembered standing inside a faintly recognisable building, until he realised this was the 'famous Dipoli'. Stories abound more about this building probably than any other in Finland, precisely because it can call upon the primitive in the representation and the deceptive in our own fake visions of nature. It offers a literal version of environments many think are so un-urban as to be connected to a nature they attempt unhappily to evade.³¹

However, on the edges of myth and acknowledging the fragility of myth itself, Pietilä made no pretence of working within an ambiguous cultural resonance. Dipoli demonstrates better than most what this ambiguity between nature and culture is in built form. Narrative in architecture (part of the intention the architect may seek to layer his work with) always takes over the moment 'reading' occurs.

Only some buildings gain on being experienced. Only some buildings exist through experience. Experience invites witness and means that interpretation runs back and forth over what we require from architecture and what architecture requires from us. It is never only in the still photograph that meaning begins to turn into poetry. For a narrative to be relevant, Pietilä acknowledged architecture must seek fresh language, even an inner speech!

10

An inner Speech

Dipoli is in many ways this *inner speech*. It is not only the question of an errant contextualism (*Aalto and Dipoli*), a counter-discourse to rationalism (*Dipoli and Finnish Architecture*), or a gestaltic switch (*building and forest: nature and culture*). Dipoli is even more radical than that. Using current terminology, Pietilä was fond of the slippage in language, the slippages between time, architecture and culture. It is the poetry made from this that becomes timeless not the abstraction. For most of his life Pietilä was involved in an exercise that continually took him 'outside of himself'. The architecture should not confuse us. It is, when faced with an interiority of Pietilä's strength and abandon, an alibi for what is *Being and Speech*. Dipoli simply gets it better than almost any building in Finland this century if we think of the strength and abandon in equal contract. And, as a recourse to the 10th Century, does going back in time intellectually imply a less sharp focus on contemporary architecture? Clearly not! Such recourse, albeit generalised, allowed Pietilä to imagine the faded spring of what the last century was to face.

A building as discourse and narrative was hardly what the radicals would have acknowledged in the 1960s. But the sheer opposition to Dipoli suggested the strength with which this architecture's poetry was taken. To be denied so furiously, so inelegantly, smacked of recognition. True, the consistency with which Dipoli's radicality was ignored demonstrated the thinness of critical debate itself. It has by no means, however, reduced this architectural courage. Pietilä's inner *speech* in Dipoli was also that of the country. Whether this adds up to a tragic greatness or a great tragedy no longer depends on how Pietilä's own society sees through the cant applied to him. For Dipoli proved more than cant.

The way Dipoli folds everything back into itself and produces the reverse of architecture, will always remain relevant. If one says this is ultimately done to find oneself, it is equally done to lose oneself. To lose oneself in the dazzling openness of thought and language which architecture might present. This degree zero of architecture is not a simple strategy of negation. Going further, Dipoli began to contest the very architectural thinking used to produce it; and it did it as well as the best of this century.

The Caveman's Wedding March

I have attempted to avoid imposing wayward critical fantasies upon Dipoli, yet it is impossible to avoid the adventure in ideas, which became a way to test his own vision. There are no brilliant fictions that Dipoli forces us to worship. The building - *The Caveman's Wedding March* - is literal in its realness. In this it also jettisons any scaffold or reason it may have used to shape its vision. The language of nature, Isaiah Berlin claims, is not mathematics - God is a poet, not a geometer.³²

If the Dipoli competition prize was awarded in 1961, the drawings prepared between 1962-64, the building completed in 1966, it was not long before Dipoli became the most talked about building of the decade. Both building and architect became outsiders. The wayward polemics ensured Dipoli was the bete noire of the young radicals; those same radicals who interpreted the poetic individualism of form and space as the unnecessary and ugly side of architectural genius. The result was that Dipoli went unanalysed. Except for the critic Asko Salokorpi, no hint was given that the building had a logic of its own, albeit 'anarchic' to some: "This building is regarded by many as an architectural anarchy. It is anarchist in its relationship towards formal constructivism, *yet it is also the most natural and obvious solution to the problems it had to solve.*"³³

The gasp, the brutality and vulgar passion meted out to a building like Dipoli, was at times the product of envy, impossibility and naivety. To read Pietilä, and ipso facto Dipoli, as an aberration in the generally sound tectonic fiat and rational trends of Finnish architecture is to miss the point of the creative singularity of this architecture. Enforced phenomenological props that can rescue mundane architecture should not detract us critically. The breath on Dipoli's mirror escapes before we can make any neat critical fit. Dipoli is not as literal as it seems, nor is it merely an organic sculpture. In a country where nature is read as culture so relentlessly, many other architects prefer to remain detached critically from this dilemma. It is not the literal symbolism of Dipoli – the rocky exterior, the sheer cliff faced in copper, the forest labyrinth and the structure of geometry – that is on record for us to follow. It is the poetics of Pietilä's approach within architecture, the process by which a trace, a trigger and a tectonic is turned into built form, which still impresses.

But to identify singularity in this work, culturally, we are invited to look beyond to more telling signatures, to buildings that leave traces, to buildings that pick up where others leave off, to architecture that continues the discourse against a rational and classical tyranny. In everything, whether starting a page from the left not centralised, whether typing out his notes in lower case not upper, whether spacing words irregularly to give emphasis; in all this Pietilä was testing details in his own thinking that would extend to architecture

For an unhurrying man, hardly fleet-footed, never an actual hunter, Pietilä was to show remarkable lightness and – critically – always seemed ahead of the very game that was about to sentence his architecture to death. In the mid 60s, when Dipoli was finally finished and exaggerations were made about cost (always an easy claim with such architecture), those against Dipoli could only conclude with the ultimate put down at the time. Dipoli was for them a continuation of Aalto's expressionistic amoebic line, romance and local loyalty.³⁴ Disturbing validation is often something that takes years to assess. Now, at the end of the 20th Century with the new one about to arrive, we must seek fresher language, fresher reference and critical risk for Dipoli's significance.

Another Magus of The North

Such men are justly called prophets, and, whether they know it or not, are gifted with a historical sense beyond the usual degree. When they come too early, it is difficult for them to convey the sense of what they feel in every pore of their being to men with a more normal vision. For this perhaps unlikely concluding clue we have turned to Isaiah Berlin's essay on the radical counter-Enlightenment figure J. G. Hamann. Born in 1730 in the north of East Prussia, a solitary, idiosyncratic thinker, this self-styled sage was given the sobriquet The Magus of The North. *Romanticism, anti-rationalism, suspicion of all theories and intellectual construction as at best useful fiction, at worst a distorting medium - a form of escape from facing reality itself - virtually began with Hamann.*³⁵

Though Isaiah Barlin's claims soar, I would like to make a case for seeing the originality of Hamann similar to Pietilä. His desire to remain mysterious and some of his tortuous single-minded methods counter-productive to his own favour, his ability to see and struggle to articulate what others cannot as yet see, surely resonate. Could Berlin's interpretation of Hamann as the father of modern European irrationalism and a crucial forerunner of romanticism and existentialism hold clues for us 200 years on? Perhaps more questionable claims can be made for a building like Dipoli. As Hamann said, language, like all learning, *is not mere invention, bur rather reminiscence.*

Always passionate about comprehending the inner process, which by no means meant nostalgia towards the Middle Ages or a perverse fanaticism to avoid the rationalism of the age, Pietilä remained simply unconvinced that a systematic, cruder, mechanistic view of architecture could reveal any progressive essence in architecture. Architecture was not progressive in this way. It was not translated into a form by applying a system. Translation itself always distorts.

The architect is a poet not a geometer! No building after Dipoli – a contemporary masterpiece – seriously advanced Pietilä’s development in architectural vision. Naturally other works referred to it or commented on it, even furthered aspects incomplete within Dipoli. But it is clear with his ability to utilise chance knowledge for architectural vision, Pietilä achieved his most challenging and most significant work with Dipoli. The unsystematic was never quite as unsystematic as it seemed, but Pietilä’s raid on rationalism (here we parallel Hamann) indirectly ensures Dipoli an important place in hindering and hampering the complete eradication of such poetic architecture.

Theory was for Pietilä a practice, and practice was the exercise of a self-commitment, a passion for architecture. If it were not for the students’ body of the Engineering Union at the university, it is possible Dipoli would never have been built. But it now remains valid and – possibly – even more disturbingly so. Its achievement can be likened to Gehry’s Bilbao Guggenheim but only if one realises that the path had been cleared for the sheer disarticulatory tour de force Gehry achieved. In this respect, so far, only Libeskind’s Jewish Museum Extension produces a vision of such extraordinary poetry and significance that seems to have had so little of its way cleared. Hence the remarkable shock in its poetry.

Dipoli joins the sorts of buildings that defy the critical language we have to use to capture their shock and finesse. They force us to look elsewhere to describe their experience, their architecture. And like Fallingwater, Scharoun’s Philharmonic Hall, the Einstein Tower before or Bilbao after, Dipoli still stands in best for what architecture cannot be. It entertains the innocence of such architecture and interrogates it. That is why these buildings can look traditional, local, even wackily vernacular and avant-garde at the same time. Which is another way of saying, *ahistorical*.

It is also possible that the (fair word) monstrous way Dipoli was mistreated now holds a quiet victory in its attempt to subvert the false doctrine of the Finnish Rationalists. Though architectural militancy might have been dominant in the 1960s and 1970s, it is obvious that Dipoli's victory is a quieter, deeper one. Dipoli will remain a masterpiece of 20th century architecture even when it continues to remain ignored.

In sum, how can we re-state the full extent of Dipoli's lasting originality? The vision that obsessed Pietilä, of which Dipoli is its finest shape, is a world in process, altering and alterable, an architecture in the interstices of other spaces, in the *intermediate zones* to use his own phrase. It might be a vision of slower growth but it was never static, nor was it likely to be refined upon development or progress. Which is why Dipoli can never quite be erased or improved on. Dipoli is neither made more relevant by Pietilä's later work nor is its unsettled architecture any less because Bilbao's Guggenheim might seem to do it wilder and better. To think so is to miss the point of significant architecture; Borromini, Wright, Mendelsohn. This is architecture irreducible to rules, to general cases; this is architecture open to perpetual correction. And like all exceptions, Dipoli not only fights the obstinacy of propriety and correct architecture, it survives to widen that very architectural discourse itself.

To realise just how much Dipoli was untypical of its age is not to deny its relevance now, its subversion then and its consistently quiet, yet shocking victory for architecture outside history and critical myopia. Dipoli has gone in and out of forgetting. It is possible after some years that all debate will subside and a general Nordic belovedness will wash over the building. One hopes not. The building is too real, the finish too creatively brutal, the space too unfinished, the architecture too literal, to be smothered in philosophy and corporate makeover. Dipoli might have appeared waywardly irrationalist in its vision but its gentle success was to throw an untimely challenge to the claims of an orthodox Modernism that tried to answer central, sometimes impossible human questions. Like Hamann, the Magus of The North, it wasn't always certain what Pietilä meant, but his building speaks as if he meant something else too. Dipoli's successful outrage: Pietilä lit no better fuse in his life than this.³⁶

¹ This text was originally published only in Italian as Reima Pietilä Centro Dipoli Otaniemi, in *Universale di Architettura*, Bari, 1998 (ed. Bruno Zevi). In this text **Pietilä** is used as the combined signature of the architects *Raili and Reima Pietilä*. Where emphasis is on the development of the Dipoli project, the supervision on site etc., reference is assumed to the architectural practice, Raili and Reima Pietilä. Where theory is discussed, where sketches are the hand of Reima Pietilä himself, where dissidence and singularity are debated, the use of Pietilä refers to the phenomena that surrounded Reima Pietilä's speech, ideas, and texts. Because Dipoli itself is a beguiling summation of Reima Pietilä's approach, attitude, upsetting and fragmenting of architecture, often the building is spoken of as his. In fact, it is and should be acknowledged as the combined work of Raili and Reima Pietilä. The editor and myself have limited ourselves to minimal corrections except for footnote references where necessary. Of course since 1998 certain details in the text have clearly changed. These have been noted where relevant.

² Isaiah Berlin, *The Magus of The North. J.G. Hamann and the Origins of Modern Irrationalism*, Fontana, London (1994).

³ *The Kalevala*, translation Keith Bosley, Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1989. *Forging the Sampo*, Canto 10. p. 109.

⁴ Alan Garner, *The Voice that Thunders*, The Harvill Press, London (1997) p. 159.

⁵ Used to introduce *Thought and Word*, Chapter 7 of Lev Vygotsky, *Thought and Language*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. (1962).

⁶ The "Old Poli" (Vanha Poli) was sold in 1986 by the TKY Students Union and is nowadays the Lord Hotel. It is now Glo Art Hotel.

⁷ For an approach to this urbanism and Pietilä's own views on the Aalto Campus see Timo Koho, *Alvar Aalto, Urban Finland*, Rakennustieto, Helsinki (1997) pp. 51-63.

⁸ Footnote of misreading: I owe this observation to the editor Gareth Griffiths. Pietilä's interpretation of Wittgenstein is selective. It is what we cannot talk about factually that must be passed over in silence. But this is not a defence of scientific language, though some have argued that it is, quite the opposite. "There are indeed things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical." And it is the mystical/ethical and aesthetic/silence that ultimately interested Pietilä most. Architecture should not be attempting the factuality of scientific language. (Connah/Griffiths)

⁹ This and other italics in this section are paraphrased from Reima Pietilä's text on Dipoli, "Literal Morphology", *Arkkitehti*, 9/1967.

¹⁰ And foolproof? Cf., Zaha Hadid: My building looks like a mountain, who could be offended by a mountain." If it's not foolproof might there be more to this than we claim? Perhaps a critic like Frampton might say it that it was more than an idea or theory it was also human architectonic form. We should expect PhD theses on Pietilä's use of concrete shuttering. Indeed, this is now already happening with Aalto research (Note: Connah/Griffiths).

¹¹ It was Bruno Zevi who rightly identified Pietilä's emerging force in *Le Carré Bleu* in 1958 and, of all foreign critics, it was left later to Zevi to identify the seriousness of Pietilä's thrill and outrage and not just the romantic scenarios of Finnishness offered.

¹² For more details on the development of Pietilä's (gestalt) sketching from his 1957 *Smudge Studies*, the 1958 *Wooden Compositions* and the 1960 *Urbanism-Morphology* Exhibition sketches see Roger Connah, *Writing Architecture*, Rakennustieto/MIT Press, Helsinki (1989).

¹³ 'Morphic resonance' is a term used by Rupert Sheldrake, cf. *Natural Grace – Dialogues on Science and Spirituality*, Bloomsbury, London (1997), p. 145: "By consciously performing ritual acts in as similar way as possible... the participants enter into morphic resonance with those who have carried out ritual in the past. There is a collapse of time. There is an invisible presence of all those who have done the ritual before, a trans-temporal ritual community." Dipoli as a carrier of habit? Dipoli collapsing time, imitating older formative architectural principles; this has nothing to do with influence but actually the interplay of habit and creativity. It underlies the form and the behaviour of a poetic, animated architecture.

¹⁴ Gustave Flaubert, *The Dictionary of Received Ideas*. Syrens, Penguin, London (1994), p. 3.

¹⁵ Third Prize went to Leo Tenhunen and Ilmo Valjakka, whilst two projects were purchased, Helmer Stenros and Esko Lehti and the project of Jaakko Suihkonen. The remarkable similarity in form language of these other projects reinforced Pietilä's uniqueness and demonstrated the angled rationalism at the time and the predictable attempts to echo Aalto's main auditorium line.

¹⁶ For the original competition entries and jury report see *Arkkitehti* 4/1961. Pietilä's singularity in this competition was to set a precedent. A Pietilä entry was unmistakable in idea, approach, concept and drawn form. A repetition of this is to be found in the competition drawings for Mantyniemi, The President's Residence, Helsinki. Cf. Roger Connah (ed.), *Tango Mäntyniemi*, Edita, Helsinki (1994).

¹⁷ Bruno Zevi, "From the Tenth to the Tweny First Century", p. 202-207, *Tango Mäntyniemi*.

¹⁸ For this and other parallels with a writer's own mythopoetics see Alan Garner, *The Voice that Thunders*, op.cit. p.157: "The printed word, to be true to the primary voice, the voice in the shadow, must be proof against such performers. It must also communicate directly with the eye, and not obscure the story, so that it can speak to its other audience, the solitary reader."

¹⁹ cf. A.M. Hammacher, *René Magritte*, Abrams, New York (1985), p. 124.

²⁰ "Dipoli is regarded as an example of contemporary Finnish symbolic architecture. Dipoli takes as its starting point the established architectural form of the former Students Union, a granite building from 1903, containing cave-like space. The same technique was used to give Dipoli the national romantic mood of the old building." Asko Salokorpi, *Modern Architecture in Finland*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London (1970) p. 43.

²¹ *Arkkitehti – The Finnish Architectural Review*. Editor-in-Chief: Kirmo Mikkola, Assistant Editor: Maj-Lis Lappo.

²² A text in which Pietilä wrote out his bravest ideas on what Dipoli was and was not.

²³ Pietilä, *Literal Morphology*.

²⁴ For more details of this cultural vandalism see *Writing Architecture*, pp. 253 & 261 - 268.

²⁵ "With his Dipoli, Pietilä wanted to express the 'dream of the people of the forest.' To gain his end he used a new type of topological space which visualised the structure of the Finnish landscape... In general, Dipoli represents a culmination of the 'romantic' approach to architecture, and it is certainly not a 'model' to be imitated everywhere". Christian Norberg-Schuilz, *Genius Loci: Towards a phenomenology of architecture*, Academy Press, London (1980), p.200.

²⁶ Pietilä, *Literal Morphology*,

²⁷ Central European storytelling has invariably pictured the forest as a threateneing place, but traditionally in Finland it is shown as a refuge. Reference can be made to The Kalevala and Aleksis Kivi's novel, Seven Brothers. In the latter the brothers escape to the forest to seek consolation away from the threat of civilization. (Connah/Griffiths Note)

²⁸ For a more detailed discussion of all these 'sources' and their relevance to Dipoli see *Writing Architecture*, pp. 248-281.

²⁹ "I am so bad at transposing that I have managed to draw a building like this (Dipoli) while listening to Stalinist music". As ever, Pietilä then swerves: "I have only picked out some very amateurish emotional levels from the music." See *Writing Architecture*, p. 246.

³⁰ cf. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Pierre vives, Paris (1957).

³¹ J.M. Richards voiced the unspoken and official Finnish line which continued to treat Dipoli as a footnote only: "Also at Otaniemi is an elaborately romantic students' union building known as Dipoli, by Reima Pietilä..." *800 Years of Finnish Architecture*, David & Charles, London (1978), p. 174

³² Richards, *800 Years of Finnish Architecture*. p. 40.

³³ Salokorpi, *Modern Architecture in Finland*, p. 58 (italics added). Salokorpi continues: "The building is intended to reflect the natural background; the ground floor corridor for example, represents a river bed and even has rocks and boulders to heighten the effect."

³⁴ This became a famous double misunderstanding. It remains unclarified and further compromised as those who claimed this then in the 1960s now champion Aalto's work with no mention of Pietilä or a building once dismissed as continuing Aalto's materialist and humanist legacy and romanticism.

³⁵ Berlin, *The Magus of The North*, p. 23. Der Magus in Norden; an ironical, affectionate sobriquet given by F.K. von Moser connected to an essay by Hamann in 1762 on the Magi of the East at Bethlehem. It is to this Hamann of Berlin's that we liken Pietilä: "Hamann belongs to the small class of acutely sensitive persons with the gift – or the misfortune – of divining the contours of the future, whether to

welcome them or recoil, as he did, in fear and hostility... Such men as a rule scarcely have the vocabulary in which to express something that resembles feeling more than an articulated vision..."

³⁶ Some final comments about the fate of Dipoli; good and bad news. The building did originally bankrupt the Finnish Students' Union and it was sold to Helsinki Technical University for use as a conference centre. In 2015 it was undergoing renovation (ALA Architects, Helsinki) to be converted into the 'main building' of Aalto University (for ceremonial occasion/events). The entire campus is due to go through a huge remodelling/rebuilding project in the coming decade. It is quite likely Dipoli will become isolated within a preserved theme park pine forest. A relativized return to nature might emerge in some of the work of younger winning European architects .. (<http://europan.fi/europan-13/espoo/winners>)

As a further note there is one piece of estranged, 'expressive' architecture right next to Dipoli designed by Kurt Moberg. . Smaller, it is the home of the more financially successful Swedish-speaking engineering students' union. Over time many have assumed it to be another Pietilä building, though less ambitious. It is an impressive work and if Dipoli is the 'Caveman's Wedding March' then this building is The Trekker's Stag Venue. (Connah/Griffiths, 2016)