Introduction

In April 2003 a symposium was held in Chicago on the future of the journal *Critical Inquiry* and more broadly on the future of theory in general in the context of the event of 9/11, the ascent of the Bush administration and the implications of the social, cultural and economic contexts that the dawn of the twenty-first century has thrust upon theoretical thought and postulation. Responses by *CI*’s editorial collective and Editorial Board to the symposium’s questions circulated by Editor Tom Mitchell were published in Volume 30, number 2 of *Critical Inquiry* in the winter of 2004.

Following on the heels of this symposium and the related *CI* issue, it must be asked by the architectural community at large and those directly involved in architectural criticism and theory, indeed by all theoretical architects and academics, whether involved in building or not, what are the implications of the question that might be posed as “The End of Theory?” on architectural debate and experimental architectural practice? Such a question is all the more relevant given the brief history of contemporary architectural theory (datable to have emerged from the second half of the 1950s onwards - if one adheres to Louis Martin’s thesis on the subject\(^1\)) and the nature of its intertwining development with that of the spread and influence of first structuralist and then poststructuralist theory in American academia.

To inaugurate the first *Haecceity Ink – Journal of Critical Architecture Theory* issue of Haecceity Inc., let me begin by posing to the architectural community the same set of questions that were posed by Tom Mitchell to the Editorial Board of *Critical Inquiry* in organising their symposia, albeit here, taking the liberty to insert the terms “in architecture” and “architecture” after two phrases in order to make the questions more pertinent to our own preoccupation:

“*What in your view, would be the desirable future of critical inquiry [in architecture] in the coming century? If you were able to dictate the agenda for theory and criticism in research and educational institutions, and in the public sphere, what would you imagine as the ideal structure of feeling and thought to inform critical [architecture] practice? And, above all, what steps do you think need to be taken in the present moment to move toward this desirable future? What, in short, is to be done?*”\(^2\)

2. The questions were adapted and reproduced from Tom Mitchell’s introduction to *Critical Inquiry* vol. 30, no. 2 (2004).
With the advent and spread of digital architecture practice in the 90s, such a set of questions could be no more apt than at the present moment. Indeed the rationale behind the *Critical Inquiry* symposium was an intention in part to address “the depressive and euphoric stance toward the place of humanities in a post human age”\(^3\). It might well be argued, that the hallmark of such a “post human” age and the decline of radical thinking in architecture theory over the past several years is directly attributable to the spread of so-called “paperless” educational contexts without recourse to criticality about how and what is being produced, a paperless context that has been championed in various and numerous schools in the past decade - not that this development shouldn’t be applauded for when it does accomplish the critical, albeit usually doing so outside the confines of educational contexts.

In the wake of these developments however, the above statement and the theme of our first issue could be rephrased for our own purposes, and might read something like this: to address the depressive and euphoric stance toward the “thisness” or haecceity of architecture in a post human age, in an age where critical architecture theory has seemingly been superseded and subsumed by a generation reared on computer games and Silicon Graphics, and by an increasing (architecture) educational institutional structure that aims to champion this paradigm shift without recourse to critical inquiry about what and how it produces what it does – with that being both its studio work and graduated students. It is with recourse to these observations that this issue asks the question: “The End of Theory?”

Paraphrasing Tom Mitchell again, it is hoped that this first issue of *Haecceity Ink – Journal of Critical Architecture Theory* will “engage in reflections on this new condition of knowledge production and aesthetic experimentation [both as it relates to architectural theory and to architectural production] as among the greatest challenges for [architecture] theory and criticism”\(^4\). The first issue of *Haecceity Ink* seeks to engage architectural theory in a political speculation of itself, and by doing so ferment a political address to architecture, one that not only addresses architectural writing as referred to by the term “architectural theory”, but also address in its wake experimental architectural practice and thought, even education. To ask the question “The End of Theory?” is an invitation to politics; to answer it is a political act - it is such acts of politics that Haecceity Inc. hopes to set in motion, and in which spirit the first issue of its journal is collated.

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