

Genius



Tower, Sant' Andrea delle Fratte, Borromini

There are explosive minds of the kind of unstoppable genius that can bring forth whole worlds, that can render the content of their thoughts as communicable, experiential matter. The problem I have with this category of production is that it can only communicate through experience. The observer is offered no manner in which to discern the structure and order of the intellect and ideas that are displayed before him: his only enjoyment is that of an impression, an emotion. At the other end of the spectrum there are those whose control of the processes of their minds is so complete that their work takes on the form of a spatial summa through which one can wander whilst having principles and orders crisply revealed to you. This type of space can also be phenomenally rewarding in the secondary, consciously intellectual sense, though it is invariably lacking in the rich ambiguity and delight present in the work of geniuses of the first order. Occasionally one comes across something – a space, a canvas, a façade, a poem – in which there is either the two tendencies reconciled, or else the two in visible conflict. In reconciliation one is offered the chance of seeing both the growth of wild proliferation, the animal fertility of the human mind, and also spelled forth its innate illogic, logic, law or precise form of lawlessness. In conflict the two can provide a vital and exemplary spectacle of the creative construction, erosion, explosion and containment that occurs over time in the push and pull between the beautiful impetuosity of a wild and fecund wilfulness, and its internal death drive for clarity, communication, abstraction and a wider relevance beyond the baseness of instinct, the latter annihilating the former, and the former the latter,

in an endless trauma of the internalised dialectic. From this process fall the most pure artefacts of genius, spaces of tense equilibrium in which the impossible union of the subjective drive and the objective imperative is achieved in the forced and final reconciliation of real space.