

The Underbelly of an Architect: Discursive Practices in the Architecture of Douglas Darden

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The frontispiece to Douglas Darden's 1993 publication *Condemned Buildings* is a portrait of Darden depicted as a semi-naked androgynous figure. Darden stares out of the centre of the portrait, breasts exposed beneath the quasi-religious robes of a monk, with an expression of complete ambivalence. This image provides an introduction to the work of Darden, delineating a self-proclaimed position of ambiguity towards the representation and production of architecture, developed further in his architectural projects. Darden's complex genealogical method of collaging incongruous elements and blurring intellectual barriers potentially locates the architect ambiguously outside of the structures (such as gender, class, denomination) that traditionally define architectural production and enters an unconventional relationship with the accepted limits of architectural representation. Several important connections link Darden's work with the legacy of the enigmatic French Enlightenment architect Jean Jacques Lequeu, most notably its stylistic similarities and concern with the fictionalisation of the design process. This paper examines the lineage that exists between Darden and Lequeu focussing on the heavily symbol-laden frontispiece to Darden's book and its numerous references to the work of Lequeu. It will look at the way in which both architects challenged the formal limits of categorisation, history and spatial organization, effectively blurring the boundaries that divide genders, classes and religions.

The theme of "limits" provides a useful starting point for an analysis of the work of the enigmatic American architect Douglas Darden, whose unbuilt projects and cryptic texts provide a stark counterpoint to the contemporary architectural canon. The work of Darden is replete with symbolism, parody, allegory and contradiction—a recipe that deliberately resists the conventional methods of scholarship yet, at the same time, seems to demand a scholarly investigation. In his "Six Aphorisms for Envisioning Architecture" Darden describes the act of architecture as the "execution of exquisite barriers" and, shortly thereafter as the "fiction of the age, critiqued in space".² Darden's fascination with "fictionalising" his architectural work, as well as the intellectual "barriers" he deploys to mask its interpretation, together define the major themes in *Condemned Buildings*, situating it at the limits of architecture and literature. Indeed these dual tendencies also prescribe the limitations that underscore the interpretation of Darden's work and complicate its assimilation within the context of architectural history. This paper will examine these themes in Darden's work and attempt to unravel some of its complex historical reference points. Of particular interest for this analysis will be the discursive practices implicit in Darden's work and its peculiar relationship to the work of the satirical French Enlightenment architect Jean Jacques Lequeu.

The starting point for analysing the work of Douglas Darden will be the bizarre frontispiece to his 1993 publication *Condemned Buildings* and the various literary fragments which accompany it. This pencil-rendered drawing provides a portrait of the architect depicted as a semi-naked, androgynous figure, neither black nor white, male nor female—classless, genderless, expressionless. Photos of the architect reveal that the likeness to Darden is uncanny. There can be no question that the image is intended to be a self-portrait of the architect. Darden stares out of the centre of the portrait clad in the quasi-religious robes of a non-denominational monk. He gazes blankly into space, as if trapped within the framework of the picture. The various ambiguities that undermine his identity seem lost upon the subject of the portrait. His expression is one of complete ambivalence and a melancholic mood pervades the picture. At the bottom left-hand corner of the image, written in tiny words concealed by deep shadows, is posed the rhetorical question: "is he free?"—a phrase echoed in the penetrating stare of Darden emerging from the shadowy centre of the image.

The question posed by Darden betrays the architect's relationship to a long ancestry of architectural representation and provides a direct link to the work of Jean Jacques Lequeu. Lequeu's enigmatic legacy, contained in the bundle of drawings, newspaper clippings and letters donated to the Bibliothèque Nationale in 1824, concerned itself with fictionalising the architectural canon and challenging widely held systems of organisation. Phillipe Duboy's 1986 book entitled *Lequeu: An Architectural Enigma* brought to a wider audience the work of the Enlightenment architect, who Middleton refers to in his introduction as "little known and barely understood."³ Whilst

Kaufmann⁴ and Rosenau⁵ had both written on Lequeu in the 1950s in their respective studies of Enlightenment architecture, and his work had appeared in the 1968 American exhibition "Visionary Architects"⁶, it remains marginal. Robin Middleton, challenges the frequent association of Lequeu with the other two more recognised "Revolutionary" architects Ledoux and Boullée, when he writes that in narrowly historical terms [Lequeu] is a marginal artist who barely impinged on his time and can scarcely be considered representative of it, however much earlier critics have tried to make use of his drawings for particular ends.⁷

However there is little doubt, despite his obscurity during his own lifetime, that Lequeu's work has exerted a powerful influence over many individual artists and architects this century. Duboy's work on Lequeu is unique in its attempt to unravel many of the fictions, both deliberate and otherwise, that are implicit within Lequeu's work. Central to this is, of course, the role of Marcel Duchamp, whose fascination with intellectual artifice and satirical or symbolic plagiarism drew heavily upon Lequeu's work in both nature and content. Duboy's important study (which was also the first publication of many of Lequeu's drawings) was published in 1986 shortly before the highly creative period which gave rise to Darden's ten unbuilt projects. There seems to be little doubt that this work influenced the architecture of Darden and in particular its relationship to interpretation and history.

The cover of Duboy's work depicts a drawing by Lequeu of an almost identical archway to that depicted in Darden's frontispiece, albeit rotated through 90 degrees. In Lequeu's drawing a shapely, apparently female, naked youth scrambles out of the arch towards freedom, inspiring the caption "he is free" which is also the title of the drawing. This fragment has an obvious relationship to Darden's rhetorical question "is he free?" which suddenly becomes pertinent when situated within this historical context. The subject in Darden's portrait, rather than escaping from the arch, seems strangely imprisoned by it.

This paper will examine in detail two of the themes raised in Darden's frontispiece and its associated historical counterpart. The first theme is the notion of turning, and in particular in its rhetorical and semiotic capacity (as a means of undermining inherent meanings). Secondly the paper will explore the theme of trans-gendering that underscores both drawings and will begin to unravel the implications inscribed within this.

Darden's decision to rotate Lequeu's composition through 90 degrees is significant and a technique characteristic to his work. Darden maintains a deep interest in the tangential readings of architectural space, in a manner more akin to literature than architecture. In his reading of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* Darden describes how he is "most enamoured" by the "numerous episodes which run at right angles to the plot"⁸. This is a characteristic that Darden tries to inscribe in his own work. The most

significant example of this kind of “turning” can be detected in Darden’s genealogical design method. Ninety degrees, among other things, is the difference between a plan and a section. Darden’s system of providing “Composite Ideograms” to accompany his projects also consistently enacts this process of rotation where plans are juxtaposed on top of sections, and occasionally axonometrics can be grafted onto 2 dimensional elevations.⁹ One example is his Night School where four images provide the historical narrative for the project; three of which are plan views, one of them sectional. They are all overlayed to form the basis for the new plan view proposed by Darden.

This fascination with the “turning” of things can be associated with the rhetorical device known as the “trope” which, coincidentally, comes from the Greek word meaning “to turn”. Tropes are an ancient concept, first postulated by Plato and Aristotle but given a more contemporary context in the early structuralism of Michel Foucault and the impenetrable Deconstruction of Paul de Mann. The trope implies a different meaning other than that typically ascribed to a word or phrase, a theme incorporated into semiotic theory through the pairing of “denotation” and “connotation.” Denotation represents the universal meaning inherent in the relationship between the signifier and signified, while connotation implies a hidden, idiosyncratic or discursive relationship or passage of meaning. Darden’s work, like that of Lequeu, demonstrates a fascination with “connotative meaning” and a challenge to linear or simplistic forms of communication and translation. In his essay “Tropes and Traps” Darden explicitly acknowledges this distinction in his work.¹⁰

References to turning, whether graphic or literary, provide a metaphor for redirecting preconceived meanings; a recurrent theme throughout Darden’s work. His determination to “undermine” existing modes of thinking is inherent in this approach. In one of the opening pages of *Condemned Buildings* he describes his architecture as constructed from a particular canon of architecture that has persisted throughout the centuries and the varieties of styles. The buildings are a turning-over, one by one, of those canons. Like the action of the plow, this is done not to lay waste to the canons, but to cultivate their fullest growth.¹¹

This gentle turning of the plow provides a perfect metaphor for the perpetually disruptive process that Darden intends to impart in his architecture. He returns again to this theme at the beginning of what remains the most comprehensive essay he wrote explaining his work. Darden quotes a passage from the diary of Captain James Cook giving an account of the ceremonial killing and cleaning of a pig within the Tahitian tribe of the Great Morai. The excerpt of Cook’s account, recorded in Darden’s epigram, describes in detail the role of the entrails in the ceremonial sacrifice, recording how after being exposed for some time (that those who chose might examine their appearances), the entrails were carried to the priests and laid down before them. While one of their number prayed, another inspected the entrails

more narrowly and kept turning them gently with a stick. When they had been sufficiently examined, they were thrown into the fire and left to consume.¹²

Within this gruesome account Darden implies a metaphorical reading of architecture. The role of the lonely priest “turning [the entrails] gently with a stick” is of particular importance, and approximates the role Darden adopts as an architect, continually re-evaluating the buried relationships that exist between content, representation and signification. This becomes self-evident in Darden’s frontispiece. As the architect turns the composition of Lequeu’s drawing, he doesn’t just alter its structural stability but brings forth a new meaning, symbolised in the letter D which is the initial with which Darden signs all of his drawings. The ultimate destruction of the entrails at the hands of the Morai is also a metaphor pursued by Darden, describing his buildings as “condemned from the start” and which are, after the relentless intellectual interrogation that gave rise to them, destined for obscurity.

The fascination with the turning of things is further revealed in the opening pages of *Condemned Buildings*. A cryptic fragment, which opens the work, reveals that

I am inclined while watching the turtle to turn it over and study its underbelly. From this unnatural position I see how this platonically solid creature makes its way through the world.¹³

Whilst this thought is apparently not original, the lines are attributed only with the words “Dweller by the Dark Stream” of which the two Ds are highlighted in bold, a likely reference to the initials of Douglas Darden (also immortalised in the arch of the Frontispiece). Further investigation reveals that the phrase “Dweller by the Dark Stream” is the meaning of the name Douglas (in Gaelic at least), which can also be translated as “Dark Stranger” or “Black Stranger”. Here, in two instances, the author has concealed himself within the text, attributing lines to himself, while at the same time burying or disguising his presence. A similar strategy of discursive misdirection operates in the composition of the Frontispiece.

The analogy of the turtle is given literal meaning in Darden’s Frontispiece which shows the process of inversion that the turtle undergoes. At the top of the image is the underside of the turtle, constrained by the ambiguous metal machinery which binds it to the stone. Dangling beneath the suspended turtle, held by a long metal rod, is another turtle, this time with its shell facing outwards, concealing its underbelly from the viewer. This turtle, like the arch itself has also been rotated through ninety degrees. The metaphorical reading of this image can see the iconic turtle transformed, rotated and suspended within the overarching machinery of architectural elements.

Without doubt the most significant “turning” at work in the frontispiece however is not the shackled turtle, but the graphic technique that allows the figure of Darden to be both a man and a woman. The body

attached to the seemingly male face of Darden is depicted, somewhat humorously, with breasts and erect nipples resting over the top of the fabric of the monastic robes. In this sense it is a female body with a male head. More subtle is the trans-gendering that occurs in Lequeu's drawing where the relationship between the "he" in the title of the drawing seems to refute the obviously female subject. Rosenau offers another possible reading: the absent (or escaped) male has escaped the "bondage of woman" towards his own independent freedom.¹⁴ Either way, the inconsistency in the portrayal of gender is only one of a number of instances in Lequeu's work where gender is deliberately confused or concealed.

Darden and Lequeu are probably unique, or at least exceedingly rare, among architects as examples of male architects anxious to portray themselves as women. Such transsexual tendencies are more familiar to the realm of art than architecture. Duboy detects similar tendencies in Duchamp's work and cites, as evidence, the French writer Péladan, who argued for a connection between Leonardo's self-portrait and the quintessentially feminine image of the Mona Lisa, which, for Péladan, took on a discernible resemblance to its author. Péladan describes how if we compare this portrait with his self-portrait we see that Leonardo looked and smiled with the eyes and lips of the *Giaconda*: the intellectual power of the man of genius merges into the voluptuousness of the seductive woman: this is moral hermaphroditism.¹⁵

This ambiguity was implicit in Duchamp's later crude reworking of the Mona Lisa with a moustache. Lequeu, of course, took "moral hermaphroditism" to new extremes. His experimentation and self-parody far surpassed the subtle deviations of Leonardo presenting a full-scale affront to his own sexuality. Of the many self-portraits that comprise his oeuvre, at least two of them depict female models, several depict men with overtly feminine characteristics, while one, the most disturbing of all, depicts a smiling lecherous male head on a female body, breasts clearly exposed to view. It is this image which Darden parodies in his own work, which, devoid of the lascivious overtones of Lequeu's portrait, takes on a profoundly serious mood.

The posture of Darden's portrait can be seen as a direct reference to another of Lequeu's drawings: that of an expressionless nun crudely exposing her breasts to the viewer and carrying the cryptic inscription "And we too will be mothers, for..." [*Nous aussi nous serons meres, car...*]¹⁶. The nun, like Darden himself, wears an ambivalent expression, and her lack of facial features suggests that the figure could be either male or female. Her right hand, again like Darden's, is used to lift the robes and reveal the breasts. In the case of Darden, holding a cloth that spills out of the frame carrying the words "Douglas Darden Architect". In both images the mischievous nudity undermines the religious message hinted at in the image, creating a composition which is tantalising as well as vaguely unsettling and immoral.

In describing Lequeu's image Duboy refers to a short novel by an anonymous author which has become associated with Lequeu and, for Duboy at least, provides the inspiration for this picture. He quotes a short passage from the novel, where the secret author describes how, behind two tall trees which hid me from his sight, I saw a pretty boy dressed in a nun's habit, sitting on the ground with outstretched legs and holding in his hand a [penis] which he was steadily manipulating.¹⁷

This manipulation of the penis is, in Lequeu's drawing, left to the imagination possibly taking place beneath the view of the picture by the unseen left hand. However in Darden's portrait, a reinterpretation of this passage becomes evident. The end of the cloth which he lifts to expose his breasts has become shaped suspiciously like a phallus, which the right hand of the figure subtly strokes. Phallic symbols occur frequently in Lequeu's works, most flagrantly in his erotically charged "Figures Lascives" series from 1792. The drawing at the start of the series shows a naked woman with her hand on her breast, wearing a piece of priapic jewellery. The rendition is of similar size, scale and complexion to the one that appears in Darden's frontispiece. However, while Lequeu frequently draws phallic symbols in his other works, his drawing of the nun seems to have no visible sexual imagery at all, and the end of the cloth, so anatomically charged in Darden's work, for Lequeu appears simply as a cloth. The manipulation described in the accompanying passage has been concealed. Darden's rereading of the original drawing and the passage not only shows an intense awareness of Lequeu, but also the passage cited by Duboy as its basis. It is evidence of the kind of complexity that is endemic in Darden's work.

Whilst Darden's frontispiece, as has been demonstrated, can be read as a combination and overlaying of a number of Lequeu's drawings and a mutual fascination with self-parody, it is also possible to speculate as to a deeper meaning for Darden's hermaphroditism; one related to his own personal situation. While Lequeu took delight in concealing and fabricating his own life, providing scant details of his own existence and covering his drawings with cryptic, falsified or unlikely records of his life, Darden's drawing seems to represent an affront to this. The ten projects that Darden reveals in the book were very much concerned with fiction, invention and literary falsification; writing architecture in a sense, as one might write a novel. However in 1991, the year following the completion of these projects, Darden was diagnosed with lymphoblastic leukaemia which, after a short period of remission, took his life in April 1996 at the age of just 45.¹⁸

The connection between some of the themes contained in his work and his own suffering has been made by a small number of scholars, most notably Peter Schneider, the American Academic charged with overseeing the Darden estate. Jean LaMarche, who also knew Darden personally felt a similar connection, writing that we can see in the topics and themes he explored a certain autobiography that brings us face to face with some of his own concerns

and fears. The general tenor of the darker of his works, for example, parallel his own struggle with himself, his body, his life.¹⁹

This is despite the fact that the works in question were completed before Darden was in fact diagnosed, regardless of the seemingly grim (or potentially biographical) content that they contain. The obvious starting point for such biographical readings is the Oxygen House, which remains the project where Darden most directly confronts the relationship between life and death. Speaking of the Oxygen House Darden himself says that “when I designed [it] I had no way of knowing how autobiographical it would become”²⁰ despite elsewhere suggesting that his body may have become subconsciously aware of the cancer inside it throughout the design process of this project. Despite the dangers associated with such post-humus relationships, one important component of the Oxygen House may provide a bridge between Darden’s architectural projects and his later frontispiece. In particular it may offer a clue to the architect’s fascination with trans-gendering that is made visible in the frontispiece.

The Oxygen House is Darden’s last published project. It is designed for a fictional character, Burden Abraham, who has been nearly fatally wounded by shrapnel from a nearby train derailment and condemned to life in an oxygen tent. Abraham buys the land where the accident occurred and commissions Darden to design for him a house directly over the tracks. The house is to provide an oxygen tent while the patient is alive and a tomb for him after his death. A strong, and highly symbolic geometry governs the Oxygen House, dictating both its plan and section. Within the plan the horizontal axis symbolises death, marked by the railway tracks that indirectly caused the accident. The vertical axis represents the forces of life, providing the supply of oxygen from the north, and visitors (in the form of friends) as well as medical supplies from the road to the south. The third, and most critical element is the diagonal,²¹ a symbolic vein which slices across the drawing. According to Darden, this vein marks the dry riverbed that, in the fictional account of the project, flooded to damage the tracks in the first place. The diagonal, marked in the design by an evergreen and a deciduous tree, symbolically mediates between life and death and houses the most fundamental relationship: that between patient and the nurse, whose house is set obliquely to the patient’s oxygen tent. The nurse is the one who makes the products of the vertical avenues (oxygen, friendship, supplies) available to Abraham. She screens visitors and allows them to enter, she supplies the oxygen to the patient and she also feeds and cleans the patient. In this way it is this diagonal element which sustains the life of Abraham, and shelters him from the omnipresent forces of death. In section the same principle becomes evident, where the nurse’s quarters physically separate Abraham’s tent above, and his final resting place below. The nurse becomes the diagonal hinge between life and death. More importantly, the healthy female body is positioned symbolically beneath the ailing and frail male body.

The possible connection between this geometry and Darden’s frontispiece lies in a fragment published by Darden. For Darden, the patient is reduced to a life of horizontality, his body has become inactive and is superseded in every sense by the body of the nurse. Darden writes that “I wanted a woman to act as a hinge for the man, mediating between his survival and his expiration.”²² Darden doesn’t specify why it must be a woman, but the woman, in this case, literally becomes the man’s body and also, in a pragmatic and symbolic sense, the separation between his life and death (the nurse’s quarters is sandwiched between the oxygen tent and the burial chamber). The patient is left to experience life vicariously through the body of the women. It seems entirely plausible, that as Darden’s own body began to suffer the ravages of cancer he, like the patient in the Oxygen House, yearned for a new body (and possibly a female body) that would rekindle the forces of life and empower his still functioning mind.

Given Darden’s insistence on the allegorical nature of his work, his decision to open his book with the image of a man’s head upon a woman’s body may be read in reference to the dramatic circumstances that altered his life in between the completion of the projects and the publication of his book in 1993. It implies a dissatisfaction with his own diseased body and a philosophical yearning for a new one. This may also be reflected in the ambiguous title to the book *Condemned Buildings* which, as well as describing the “unfulfilled desire” which is central to his architecture, seems to have an autobiographical relationship to the terrible illness which threatened his own existence at the time of its publication.²³ This theme is given form in the second frontispiece to the work which presents the title, inscribed upon a shiny guillotine blade. At the base of the drawing are battered timber plaques recording the initials of the “condemned” buildings that comprise the book. Inscribed along the side of the timber frame is a quote from Plato which reads “How many, think ye, have fallen into Plato’s Honey Head and Sweetly Perished there”—a reference to the dangers of Platonic metaphysics and a reaffirmation of Darden’s long held association with the Sublime. Dangling eerily from the centre of the framework at the top of the image is the executioner’s hood which hangs ominously over everything. It is this rather gruesome apparatus that seems to connect the drawing back to the original frontispiece. The ambiguous machinery that structures Darden’s self-portrait has an unspecified function. Darden, from his position at the centre, appears in control, with access to the rope that seemingly operates the machine and whatever its function might be. With the information available, the function of the apparatus and the connection that may exist between the two cannot be determined. What is apparent is that the two images, in tandem, may represent one final reply to Lequeu.

In 1793, as the excesses of the Terror were overflowing onto the streets of Paris, Lequeu produced a design for the *Porte de Paris* (Arch of the People). The drawing provides a plan, section and detail of a proposed arch to be built in Paris to celebrate the Revolution. Straddling the arch is

a fit, healthy and clearly male body brandishing a club and helmet and gazing into the distance. What differentiates the drawing from the others in Lequeu's collection is the cryptic remark scrawled on the back;—"Drawing to save me from the guillotine". This now famous scrawl reveals not only Lequeu's cynicism towards the politics of the revolution, but also a pertinent biographical insight. Its flippancy seems to undermine the seriousness of the guillotine and the threat that it exerted over Lequeu and his fellow inhabitants.

Darden's frontispiece, and the title-page which accompanies it, can be seen as challenging all of the premises inscribed in Lequeu's otherwise anonymous drawing. The arch is turned ninety degrees. The male body of the figure has become female; the feminine face of the figure has become masculine; the partially naked has become partially clothed. The club, wielded by the heroic statue has become the lever which, in Darden's hand, controls the unknown apparatus around him. Most importantly, the subject, rather than straddling the arch, is now entombed within it. Darden as well as blurring the typically Platonic foundations of empirical philosophy, is here confronting Lequeu with the reality of the guillotine and the threat it provided to his own cancerous body. This is possibly why Darden's lifeless figure, rather than clambering out of the arch, seems cruelly imprisoned within it, providing the answer to his rhetorical question "is he free?" Rather than sparing himself from the guillotine, Darden, through these two drawings places himself, and his work, right at the centre of it.

- 1 Douglas Darden, *Condemned Buildings*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993) p. 157.
- 2 Darden, *Condemned Buildings*, p. 157.
- 3 Robin Middleton, 'Foreword', In Philippe Duboy, Lequeu: *An Architectural Enigma*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1986, p. 7.
- 4 See: Emil Kaufmann, 'Jean Jacques Lequeu,' *The Art Bulletin* 31, 2 (June 1949): 130-135; See also: Emil Kaufmann, 'Three Revolutionary Architects: Boullée, Ledoux and Lequeu,' *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 42, 3 (1953): 431-564.
- 5 Helen Rosenau, 'Architecture and the French Revolution: Jean Jacques Lequeu,' *Architectural Review* 106 (August, 1949): 111-116.; Helen Rosenau, 'Postscript on Lequeu' *Architectural Review* 108 (October 1950): 264-265.
- 6 Jean Claude Lemagny (ed.), *Visionary Architects: Boullée Ledoux, Lequeu*, Houston: University of St Thomas, 1968.
- 7 Robin Middleton, 'Foreword,' p. 7.
- 8 Douglas Darden, 'Melville: An Architect's Reading of Moby Dick,' *A+U*, 272 (May 1993): 55.
- 9 An example of this is Darden's Oxygen House project. See: Douglas Darden, 'Oxygen House,' *Dimensions*, 7 (Spring 1993): 132-139.
- 10 Douglas Darden, 'Tropes and Tracts,' *University of Tennessee Journal of Architecture*, 10 (1988): 40-49.
- 11 Darden, *Condemned Buildings*, p. 7.
- 12 Captain James Cook, *Account of the Ceremonies of the Great Morai, Tahiti* (Tuesday, September 2, 1777), quoted in Darden, "The Architecture of Exhaustion," p. 13.
- 13 Darden, *Condemned Buildings*, p. 9.
- 14 Rosenau, 'Postscript on Lequeu,' p. 267.
- 15 Péladan quoted in Duboy, Lequeu, p. 95.
- 16 Duboy, Lequeu, p. 100.
- 17 Passage from a short novel by an anonymous Eighteenth Century author, quoted and translated by Duboy, Lequeu, p. 100.
- 18 See: Jean LaMarche, 'The Life and Work of Douglas Darden,' *Utopian Studies*, 9, 1 (1998), p. 165.
- 19 LaMarche, 'The Life and Work of Douglas Darden,' pp. 162-172.
- 20 Douglas Darden, quoted in Peter Schneider, 'The House at the End of Time: Douglas Darden's Oxygen House,' *PART: Journal of CUNY PhD Program in Art History* 7 (2001): 5 [online journal].
- 21 The diagonal and its relationship to life and death is revealed in a fictional letter from the patient to the architect where he reveals that "death no longer threatens me. It runs like soft gold between the shadow space, a diagonal vein passing through my life. Even though I hardly ever emerge from my tent, this vein gives me an enduring sense of sound movement, of amazement and of privilege. Darden, 'Oxygen House,' p. 133.
- 22 Douglas Darden, quoted in Schneider, 'The House at the End of Time,' 5 [Our Italics].
- 23 For a similar reading of the title see: LaMarche, 'The Life and Work of Douglas Darden,' p. 171.