

time, have now faded into part of the remarkable story of erecting a monument which, with the Eiffel Tower, virtually symbolises Paris. What remains very clearly and has exerted considerable influence on very many subsequent buildings is the articulated exoskeleton and the flamboyant display of services. Centre Pompidou – as P_2 , the end of a particular sequence – altered our perception of architecture.

Rice's description of this design sequence, a personal account of events which may be seen slightly differently by others, fits closely the P_1 to P_2 steps which are part of the Popperian description of scientific research and which, I suggest, can also be applied to design.

Structure has played a strong mythical role in architectural theory as the essential and irreducible logical part of architecture. This view owes a great deal to the writings and lectures of Viollet-le-Duc in the middle of the 19th century. John Summerson considers him one of the two supremely eminent theorists in the history of European architecture (Summerson, 1963, p.135) the other being Leon Battista Alberti. Yet his theories are highly questionable, even though a whiff of them still lingers, often unrecognised.

Viollet-le-Duc's view was that architecture, the making of architecture, involves logical reasoning. Obviously that reasoning could most readily be applied to structure. He had a romantic attachment to the Gothic of northern France where structure was laid bare and could be analysed visually. His diagrammatic analyses are thus of such buildings as Sainte Chapelle in Paris (1242–48) where he sets out to show that each element has a logical placement and that, furthermore, that logic is controlled by a need to produce an economy of structure. It is, of course, true that structure, taken on its own, can be falsified on grounds of economy.

That drive to produce the least – not always the cheapest – structure has not died out. Buckminster Fuller judged his domes by comparing weight of structure against area covered.

Right
Viollet-le-Duc, Design
 for a Concert Hall in stone,
 iron and brick which
 appeared in *Entretiens sur
 l'Architecture*, 1863 & 1872

