It was only through the explanatory renderings that respondents in our study claimed to learn something about how architectural knowledge can help to solve problems. In lieu of concealing consequences from non-expert decision makers to gain the commission or maintain aesthetic control, Behnisch sought to engage non-expert decision makers in a conversation about how the building itself could have agency in serving the institution's interests – about how bricks and mortar could stand in for citizens in the shaping of public space and local history. It is in this sense that the explanatory renderings might have transformed respondents' perception of, and responsibility for, actually creating the alternative realities they claimed to desire. In accepting responsibility for technological and visual choices these citizens might have learned how multiple forms of intelligence yield more satisfying outcomes;[11] they did not.

Benjamin Barber has described the nature of the "public talk" catalyzed by this type of rendering as that which does not describe the world, but that which "makes and remakes the world" (1984). His point is that the multiple and conflicting perspectives conjured up through public talk helps all parties, supporters and detractors alike, understand the consequences of building in a particular manner. This emphasis upon design process rather than the artifact suggests that public talk about architecture is transformative, meaning that the building is both socially and literally constructed through insights gained from differing perspectives. This logic should not suggest that the architect does nothing more than collage together the atomized desires of participants. Rather, the Behnisch firm has clearly demonstrated their skill in designing open-ended conversations that lead to deeper aesthetic and political satisfactions precisely because they are shared, not by passive consumers, but by a community of active participants in which the architect is less the sole author than s/he is an empathetic and "valuable stranger".[12]

6 Conclusion

6.1 Politics of Representation

The issue at hand is who gets to decide how we will live together and in relation to nature. Expert designers certainly have valuable aesthetic and technical knowledge about the relative consequences of building in one way compared another. But expert knowledge is general, or abstract, and cannot fully appreciate the way in which citizens hope to live in a particular place. Yet, precisely because expert knowledge is abstract it can see through and beyond the status quo. We argue, then, that a "good" rendering is not one that satisfies only the aesthetic desires of

[11] Latour (1986) uses the term "cascading images" to describe how many different perspectives, real and social, contribute to expanded meaning.

[12] Harding (1991).

consumers, but one that also teaches citizens how buildings stand in as their agents and solve community problems in the decades to come.

In conclusion we argue that unless citizens acquire social intelligence by continually testing their own imaginations they will remain dependent upon the formulas of technocrats or the private visions of artists. This is not to argue that technology and art are somehow suspect practices. Nor is it a proposal to substitute populism for elitism. To the contrary, we mean to argue a twin proposition: first, that technology and art are inherently human practices that can open up unexpected ways of living. But second, not all ways of living are desirable. The appropriate role of experts in a democratic society, then, is to collaborate with their fellow citizens to determine together what is desirable rather than what is technically possible, economically profitable or aesthetically stimulating.

Toward this end we recognize that some tools are better than others. This finding suggests that the technology of linear perspective has surely proven to be a valuable tool, but after 400 years of use we should recognize that it conceals as much as it reveals. New visualization tools are needed to help communities like Hartford understand the non-visual consequences of their choices. Fortunately, these new tool are already in the making.

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