



TED CAVANAGH

## THESIS = PLACE

No. Because I believe the potential of artificial light to be far greater than yet realized. In fact artificial light, even in its most primitive form, can be just as fine as any natural light source. And as the philosopher Jean Paul Monsanto points out so lucidly, without electricity, life itself would be impossible. Electricity is a natural phenomenon. This means artificial light IS natural light! The unity of opposites!

(GARY, in boredom, wanders over toward board).

TONY: Granted, but windows are also useful for ventilation, and it's nice to be able to see outside sometimes.

F.L.L.M. (sawing at model): Okay, you want windows, I'll give you windows. How about one here? (pokes window out, peers through new hole at critics).

TONY (exasperated): It just isn't that simple, Fielding--

F.L.L.M.: --Fielding Lloyd Mellish--

TONY: You can't just poke a window in a wall. You've had 69 months to think about this now. How would the window open?

F.L.L.M. (with prop): It could HINGE...

TONY: Well, it seems to me the details are more important than that.

GARY (rapping at board with knuckles): Jesus Christ! What is this, a Crucifix?

F.L.L.M. (proudly): Uh, Yeah, it is. I tried to think of everything.

JULIA (speaks to audience): Gary, I believe there's an issue yet to be brought up here, and it's right up your alley. (FARTS) Our young designer

*Thesis* comes from the Greek language. The root *-the-* forms the Greek word *tithemi* (or place) as well as *thesis* (or placing). Implicit in the sense of placing is a defined or measured aspect of location as well as a meaning derived from the value of this location through time or intention. The distinction just made is not intended to suggest that these two aspects can be isolated from each other, but more to explain placing more completely.

Three other words contain (and modify) the word thesis: *hypothesis*, *antithesis* and *synthesis*. *Hypothesis* adds to thesis the prefix *hypo-* or under, below, slightly (cf. *hyper-* or over, above, exceeding, excessive). This modifies thesis, or placing, by adding *at the starting point*. *Hypothesis* means placing at the starting point. Through time this defined (or measured) meaning of hypothesis has come to include the meanings *with foundation* and *with slight basis*. Thus it seems possible that the word has developed two completely opposite senses. There can be a hypothesis which sounds certain (with foundation), and something hypothetical which sounds uncertain (with slight basis). Instead, the meaning of placing at the starting point is still secure and the value of this starting point might be either solid or uncertain.

*Antithesis* adds to thesis the prefix *anti-* or opposition, contrast, in exchange, instead (cf. *ante-* or before). This modifies thesis, or placing, by adding *set against* (besides, not beside). *Antithesis* means placing against. This defined (or measured) meaning of antithesis has come to be superseded by the meaning of *placing in opposition*, rather than the equally correct senses of *placing in contrast* and *placing instead*. Again, the emphasis of the interpretation of antithesis should be on the defined, and perhaps more neutral, sense of *placing against* and to allow evaluation or intention to decide on the meaning of this placing whether it be in opposition, in contrast, or in exchange.

*Synthesis* adds to thesis the prefix *syn-* or with, together, alike. This modifies thesis or placing by adding *with* (cf. *ana-lysis* and *ana-thema*). *Synthesis* means placing with. This simpler, and perhaps more

neutral, meaning of synthesis has come to be superseded by senses of *placing together* and *placing with like*. The senses of matching and joining have become especially prevalent as synthesis has come to be described as joining (placing together) to form wholes and joining or matching to form systems. When synthesis is described as joining or matching it is important to realize that these are interpretations beyond the more defined, or neutral, sense of *placing with*.

The word *position* relates to the previous discussion of thesis as placing. In fact, *posit* has been suggested as an equivalent of thesis. *Posit*, in spite of its Latin root, shows some of the same overlaps and distinctions as thesis. It is from the Latin root *ponere*. *Posit* translated as place. Thus *positing* is placing, as is thesis. The importance of this apparent equivalence becomes clear when the derivatives of *positing* are identified; e.g. oppose, compose, propose, suppose, presuppose and juxtapose. Thus these operations might all be employed in the exploration of a hypothesis.

The word *pose* comes from an entirely different Latin root, *pausere* translated as pause, but the entry concludes with *pose...*, in some senses by confusion with the Latin *ponere* or place. Thus to pose a question is really to posit or oppose a question.

The hypothesis is the tentative statement of the thesis that is given initially and revised continually in order that the hypothesis approach the thesis. The thesis by contrast can be described as that which is to be maintained. The revisions to the hypothesis are due to explorations of antithesis and synthesis. The antithesis is a way of working within the thesis and extending or challenging the hypothesis. It is an attempt to exchange, oppose or contrast some aspects of the hypothesis so that they might or might not be maintained. The antithesis, then, forms an important part of the working method. Synthesis might occur many times during the working out, but definitely occurs each time there is an architectural representation of the hypothesis and antithesis in such a way that it allows synthesis in the critical viewer.