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Presented by
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Urbanism and Autonomy

A dissertation presented by

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to

Harvard University Graduate School of Design

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Abstract

Urbanism and Autonomy

This dissertation introduces urbanism to the discourse on autonomy within design. Autonomy is a critical method in design, engaging the social, economic, political, racial, gender, or environmental tensions derived from the processes of urbanization. The introduction of autonomy into architecture in the 1930s created a design system sensitive to cultural phenomena. However, architectural autonomy gradually departed from social, cultural, human, and urban conditions as the century matured. The social and cultural unrest in the second half of the twentieth century precipitated the use, and abuse, of the term, acting as a catalyst to redefine the disciplinary parameters of architecture. When autonomous discourse within architecture reappeared, it overemphasized architectural form to counter the commodification of culture, the professionalism of architecture, reliance on quantitative methods, and the degradation of the modern city. But the impulsive conception of autonomous architecture remained prevalent, condemning the term's cultural and historical formation to oblivion, leading to the alienation of disciplinary knowledge over time.

This dissertation offers a critical reconsideration of the evolution of the term within the design fields, from its initial formulation in the eighteenth century by Immanuel Kant (autonomy of the will), to its introduction to architecture by the art historian Emil Kaufmann (*autonomen Architektur*) in 1933, to the successive interpretations of architectural autonomy in Europe and the United States. In contrast to etymological wisdom, Kant's "autonomy of the will" implies *engagement* rather than *detachment*. The Kantian autonomy influenced the construction of the

modern consciousness of the Western individual as both cause and consequence of eighteenth-century social and political changes, such as the French Revolution. Autonomy's influence on aesthetics, political theory, and architecture during the subsequent centuries attests to its importance as a reflection on our cultural successes and failures. Nevertheless, the design fields often omit that autonomy implies a productive tension between individual and collective aspirations. Galileo Galilei's use of the telescope promoted the autonomy of the modern individual. Scientific discoveries expanded our knowledge of the external world (Galileo's telescope) and motivated the philosophical exploration of our inner selves (Kant's epistemology). With these examples in mind, the more we look outside ourselves, the more we need to look inside ourselves. We have developed a critique within architecture (architectural criticism) but not a self-critique. Instead, it is a critique of design by design through our engagement with the urban condition. This self-awareness redefines the terms of our engagement as individuals, designers, or members of society with the world. Thus, the more design explores the urban reality, the more it needs to reevaluate the premises of its disciplinary engagement with the urban condition.

Individuality is not individualism. The general maxim of autonomy is that (disciplinary) self-governance is sensitive to social, cultural, human, and urban conditions despite, paradoxically, its rebuttal of cultural and historical determinism. The alliance between *Urbanism and Autonomy* adopts the artist's critical eye and rejects the supposed moral superiority of the religious and non-religious priest. In contrast, this dissertation aspires to operate in a social space that escapes the jurisdiction of traditional disciplines or the aesthetic blindness of dogmatic critiques. This effort advocates an epistemological search, through cinematic language, for new knowledge, experiences, methods, contents, contexts, and aesthetics.

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"…all life is based on appearance, art, deception, point of view, the necessity of perspective and error."

—Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*

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The violent transformation of the countryside around the city has had a strong effect on me. Before, there were immense groves of pine trees, very beautiful, which today are completely dead. Soon even the few that have survived will die and give way to factories, artificial waterways, and docks. This is a reflection of what is happening in the rest of the world. It seemed to be the ideal background for the story I had in mind—naturally, a story in color. The world that the characters in the film come into conflict with isn't the world of factories. Behind the industrial transformation lies another one—a transformation of the spirit, of human psychology. . .

—Michelangelo Antonioni, *L'Humanité Dimanche*, September 23th, 1964

Il Deserto Rosso (Red Desert)
Michelangelo Antonioni
1964

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Introduction

The Scope of Autonomy

> *I believe that the Canalettos or the Piranesis of our time are the directors, the people of the cinema; they describe the modern city, its center, and its outskirts. . . . Film is a precious instrument from many points of view. In the first place, it is an instrument of intelligence, and not only for that which it describes, but also for that which it distorts or repeat; in other words, for that which it discovers. The outskirts of Pasolini's Rome, or of Milan by Antonioni or Brusatti were discovered first in cinema, rather than by architects.*
>
> —Aldo Rossi, *Interview in Process: Architecture, 1989*

Autonomy is a self-governing condition that implies a necessary distance from which to criticize cultural and historical circumstances that, paradoxically, justify, explain, and constitute the existence of the critical attitude. The cultural, historical, and ideological complexity conveyed by the term has been gradually repressed within design as its philosophical roots faded into oblivion. The last century witnessed the introduction of autonomy into architecture. Architectural autonomy transitioned from a system sensitive to cultural phenomena to a disciplinary reduction devoid of empirical reality as the century matured. Autonomy's return to the discipline advocated the redefinition of the parameters of architecture to counter the means-end pragmatism of professionalism, technoscience, and the quantitative methods precipitating the term's impulsive interpretation amid the cultural and social unrest of the 1960s and 1970s. The urgency of the answer repressed the patience of research. At the turn of the century, autonomy acquired a negative connotation within design. Its critical character was assumed, by promoters and detractors on both sides of the Atlantic, to be an *ex-nihilo* creation, indifferent to its own cultural causes and consequences. Subsequently, the critical impetus of autonomy was abandoned to propose a pragmatic yet detrimental approach to the concreteness of theory. In contrast, this dissertation

aspires to provide a projective theory based on the empirical reality of theory and the theoretical dimensions of practice. It examines the philosophical, political, aesthetic, and architectural progression of autonomy during the last three centuries, which attest to the social, economic, political, and historical substance of its critical character. It introduces urbanism to the discourse on autonomy within design. The urban interpretation of autonomy aspires to provide a design index sensitive to the contents of the world of phenomena—a critical framework for design to intervene upon urbanization.

Autonomy is not the synonym of independence or alienation, nor is it a disciplinary reduction. The critical character of its philosophical genesis entails *engagement* rather than *detachment*. This fact is demonstrated by the influence of the Kantian "autonomy of the will" at the outbreak of the French Revolution, the autonomy of "the political" formulated by Hannah Arendt, and the role that the progression of art and aesthetics played within society from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. However, the scope of autonomy within architecture evolved toward self-referentiality as the twentieth century unfolded.[1] This dissertation conceives "autonomy" as a cultural synthesis whose alliance with urbanism sublimates it as a design method. The alliance between urbanism and autonomy synthesizes the tension between individual and collective aspirations that operate within society and the urban condition. Disciplinary concerns (the individual) must not necessarily imply a conceptual departure from sociocultural values (the collective). Thus, the reevaluation of the contemporary importance of autonomy implies a disciplinary reflection sensitive to cultural phenomena that nevertheless rejects its subordination to cultural determinism. Autonomy is not proposed as a narcissistic disciplinary redefinition but as a culturally and historically conscious design method committed to an epistemological search for new knowledge, new methods, and new contents that escape the scope of traditional

disciplinary expertise. It implies a culturally and historically constructed distance that is necessary to scrutinize its object of critique (society or culture). Paradoxically, this distance is essential to reevaluating and criticizing the social and cultural role of design.

The scope of autonomy is relational (outwards) rather than restrictive (inwards) when autonomy scrutinizes the role design plays within society. Thus, our design efforts become inherently political once autonomy is conceived as a design method. But the political dimension of autonomy does not restrict its impetus to the managerial and pragmatic scope of governance or ideological obsessions. It operates within every domain of our social coexistence in which individual and collective aspirations constantly negotiate—from the family to a cultural level. In contrast, the antagonistic attitude of architectural autonomy relied on a disciplinary reduction. It distinguished between *what architecture is* and *what architecture is not.* The antagonism that informed architectural autonomy during the second half of the twentieth century suppressed any negotiation based on shared values by unconsciously distinguishing *who we are* from *who we are not* as members (individuals and designers) of a collectivity—design versus non-design.

Human distinctness differs from *otherness*.[2] The conception of "the other" (urbanization, capitalism, or culture) as the enemy is paradigmatic of the exacerbated antagonism of architectural autonomy. This conception of "the other" contrasts with Hannah Arendt's defense of *action* and *speech* as activities that actualized the human condition of natality and plurality, respectively. Thus, action implies the possibility of taking the initiative or beginning something, while speech implies the possibility of living together among equals without sacrificing our individuality. Processes of "difference" are common to human distinctness and otherness, but their construction of identity as relational or internal vary. Design and culture are not equivalent, but they do constitute each other. African, Asian, European, Latin American, and North American identities

are not equal. Thus, their respective individuality must be based more on respect than the homogeneity that "includes" them in the main current of history through magnanimity. The processes of "difference" operate *antagonistically* within Peter Eisenman's architectural autonomy and *agonistically* within Chantal Mouffe's political theory. Eisenman internally renovated the architectural syntax based on a purely "objective" aspiration. At the same time, Mouffe advocated a "constitutive outside" that redefines our personal, individual, collective, cultural, or disciplinary identities constantly, based on an agonistic negotiation between the inner self and the external world—Who am I? Who are we?

The disciplinary reduction of autonomy overlooked the social, economic, and political causes and consequences of the foundational "autonomy of the will" formulated by the philosopher Immanuel Kant in the eighteenth century. The exploration of the universe in the early seventeenth century led to the reevaluation of the relationship between the human mind and the unbounded external enormity of the universe. It urged the individual (a human being, a society, a nation, a discipline) to reevaluate its place within the spatial and temporal laws of an overwhelming phenomenal system (the world, the urban condition, the universe). When the cultural scope of autonomy is reconsidered within design, the significance of the Kantian system suggests a productive tension between cultural contingencies and disciplinary knowledge as the basis of an epistemological search for a projective theory. Thus, the Kantian "autonomy of the will" does not represent the dissociation between design and society. It represents the productive and unsolvable tensions between collective and individual aspirations, society and architecture, the critical character of autonomy and urbanism, and urbanization and design.

The Kantian "autonomy of the will" was introduced into architecture during the 1930s. But, in the second half of the century, the redefinition of the disciplinary parameters of architecture

through autonomy to counter internal and external "threats" resulted in the term's contemporary animadversion within design. Its initial formulation did not antagonize culture or society. The *autonomen Architektur* (autonomous architecture), formulated by the Viennese art historian Emil Kaufmann during the 1930s, was mainly a cultural concern. He retroactively transposed the zeitgeist of the Enlightenment into a design system sensitive to the causes and consequences of social, economic, and political phenomena—an emerging pavilion-like architecture paralleled the construction of the consciousness of the modern individual. However, the scope of the autonomy of architecture was gradually restricted to the *history of the discipline,* relegating the *history of autonomy* and its philosophical genesis. Autonomy was used, if not exploited, as a historical incident by the urgency of architecture to redefine its qualitative (formal) parameters against functionalist, pragmatic, and technoscientific approaches. The heritage of the two great wars of the last century was the skepticism toward concepts, categories, ideas, or institutions that survived the armed conflicts. Debates about cultural constructions such as human nature, discipline, power, or history revealed that "culture" was not static but a category that demanded constant redefinition. Architecture, like other disciplines, was entangled in the struggle between self-government and cultural determinism. An impulsive disciplinary reduction of autonomy was embraced amid the social unrest and cultural crisis of the second half of the twentieth century. Most of the interpretations of autonomous architecture that followed Kaufmann's initial formulation overemphasized formal features, exacerbating the distance between design and society instead of exploring their interdependence.

The antagonistic attitude of a disciplinary interpretation of autonomy was assumed by repressing its cultural and historical substance at the turn of the century. In Europe, a politically perceptive return to the discipline defied the means-end logic of professionalism and the

degradation of the modern city. Across the Atlantic in the United States, a lifeless conceptual understanding of disciplinary knowledge dominated the debate during the second half of the last century. This dissertation regards the work of Aldo Rossi, Peter Eisenman, and Pier Vittorio Aureli as paradigmatic within the discourse on architectural autonomy. The following descriptions do not intend to oversimplify their theoretical and practical projects but to differentiate their motivations. The political sensitivity of Rossi provides the European perspective of a cultural critique. The apolitical commitment of Eisenman represents the conceptualism of the North American (United States) approach. The autonomy of architecture unifies the disparities between these approaches. They attest to the heterogeneity of architectural autonomy. Rossi was more a cultural critic than a revolutionary. He formulated an aesthetically sensitive urban project whose goal was to redefine the parameters of architecture. However, his Eurocentric approach overlooked the heterogeneity of urban processes throughout the world. Eisenman focused on a conceptual architecture indifferent to the world of phenomena. He aimed to jealously preserve the "objective" parameters of the discipline based on the dogmatic certainty of *what architecture is*.

In the twenty-first century, the bad reputation of autonomy was broadly accepted as irrevocable. The disciplinary interpretation of autonomy within design was abandoned without serious scrutiny of its history, which paralleled the progression of philosophy and architecture. The most recent redefinition of architectural autonomy, formulated by Pier Vittorio Aureli, restricted its horizon to political theory overlooking the philosophical and aesthetic progression of the term "autonomy" as well as its role in the consolidation of scientific knowledge—such as biology, political economy, urbanism, or psychoanalysis—during the nineteenth century. It subscribed to the radical antagonistic attitude of architectural autonomy that advanced the frame of design versus non-design. This framing exacerbated the rift by relying on the most extreme political distinction

between friends (architectural form) and enemies (urbanization and capitalism). In contrast, this dissertation does not consider urbanization as the enemy but as a cultural condition that design needs to tackle without the mediation of morality or ideology as the main filters. The alliance between urbanism and autonomy proposes a projective theory based on empirical evidence that aspires to create and scrutinize experiences and theoretical formulations equally. Autonomy offers the distance necessary to scrutinize the validity of traditional disciplinary knowledge within a social realm toward the discovery of unexplored intellectual and cultural territories.

The urban condition does not belong to any discipline. The return to the discipline of architectural autonomy conceived interdisciplinary approaches as sterile solutions for the sclerosis of disciplinary knowledge amid the social unrest of the mid-twentieth century. Interdisciplinary approaches are praised as a panacea today due to the contemporary animadversion against autonomy's supposed restrictive character. Disciplinary knowledge must be curious and creative, rather than restrictive, constantly scrutinizing its own validity within a social realm. Interdisciplinary approaches must not bypass disciplinary concerns, but disciplinary concerns must be considered preconditions for interdisciplinary collaboration. From an intellectual or methodological standpoint, if architecture does not scrutinize its own contents and methods, it cannot contribute to interdisciplinary discourses significantly. Because without any friction with an exterior context, it cannot know whether its own disciplinary knowledge is relevant.

In this way, an interdisciplinary approach differs from an *inter*-disciplinary exploration. The philosopher Roland Barthes argued that when disciplines come together to collaborate, they collide violently to produce knowledge that traditional disciplines cannot sanction. After all, that knowledge did not exist before the collaboration. In this context, interdisciplinary entails a peaceful collaboration between disciplines that are indifferent to the epistemological search for

new knowledge that operates in unknown territory. This dissertation does not conceive a disciplinary review as an end but rather a means to a cultural reflection based on an epistemological struggle that rejects any subordination to traditional siloed perspectives. The contemporary dogmatic lethargy tends to deify interdisciplinary approaches as omnipotent collaborations with healing powers. In contrast, an inter-disciplinary exploration proposes new intellectual and methodological territories (between disciplines) through the emphasis on the prefix *inter-* to counter the moral, intellectual, and methodological restrictions imposed by dogmatism (within disciplines) and interdisciplinary panacea. The alliance between urbanism and autonomy proposes the transition from interdisciplinary approaches (i.e., urban design) that are indifferent to critical and theoretical frameworks to inter-disciplinary searches for new knowledge, new methods, and new contents to tackle the challenges of urbanization from a design perspective.

Urbanism

Urbanism derives from the Latin *urbs*, which refers to the spatial and material construction of the city. The Roman *urbs* expanded unrestrictedly toward the territory to organize it, while the political essence of the Greek *polis* was defined spatially and physically by a wall.[3] Ildefons Cerdà coined the term *urbanización* in the second half of the nineteenth century. Its translation into English, as both urbanization and urbanism, referred to the processes that constitute the urban condition as well as the principles that guide the discipline, respectively. The term urbanization is widely used in social sciences to describe the transformations of the urban environment. In comparison, the scientific foundation of urbanism has drawn correspondences with diverse cultural realms such as art, biology, economy, geography, psychology, sociology, political economy, and architecture.

In contrast to the North American (United States) dismissal of the urban condition, the European (Italian) interpretation of architectural autonomy understood architecture as a cognitive process capable of producing and storing knowledge due to its scientific status. This approach countered the decreasing relevance of architecture in urban matters, which could be traced back to the political reconfiguration that destroyed the Renaissance's patron-architect relationship. The European sensibility progressively identified architecture as one of the fine arts through the impulse of the *Academie royale d'architecture* created by Louis XIV. The balance between *necessitas* (necessity), *commoditas* (commodity), and *voluptas* (aesthetic pleasure), formulated by Leon Battista Alberti, was abandoned to overemphasize the aesthetic dimension of architecture, relegating the laws of necessity inherent to its study as urban science.[4] Aesthetics, therefore, was deprived of any cultural substance. The urban character of the European architectural autonomy echoed the critical impulse that informed Cerda's *Teoria General de la Urbanización* and consolidated the conceptual autonomy of life and social sciences through the ideas of Darwin and Marx, among other thinkers. The study of architecture and urbanism as urban sciences aspired to tackle the social and historical processes that paradoxically defined their own autonomy through a critical reflection that rejected any determinism.

Autonomy

Terminology normally clarifies the meaning of words, but the definition of the term "autonomy" operates otherwise. It suggests creating *ex nihilo*—out of nothing—a "freedom from external influence."[5] The dictionary reveals the critical character of the term solely as a half-truth. It conceals its sociohistorical determinacy and ideological motivation.

Autonomy (from the ancient Greek *αὐτονομία*: autos = self + nomos = law) refers to the aspiration of an individual or a collectivity to use its own laws. In medieval times, it differentiated the state from the church, while its modern use explains our contemporary understanding of aesthetics derived from the rational revolution of Immanuel Kant.[6] The architectural interpretation of autonomy has rarely recognized that the philosophical roots of the term verify a self-governing condition that is culturally and historically determined. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Contrat Social* preceded Immanuel Kant's "autonomy of the will" toward the emancipation of the modern consciousness of the individual. The paradigmatic consequence of the rational awakening of the Enlightenment was the French Revolution, which reduced the preceding centuries to a "prehistory," according to Karl Marx.[7] Thus, the critical character of autonomy is both cause and consequence of Western cultural development.

It is not a coincidence that autonomy constantly reemerges when Western societies and cultures face existential crises. The tension between a critical method and cultural contingencies played a significant role in the outbreak of the Mother of Western Revolutions as well as in the aesthetic rebellion of Cubism and Dadaism, the political rift in modernity that the two World Wars represented, and the formulation of *autonomen Architektur* by a brave Jewish scholar in 1933, when Nazism came to power. Autonomy has historically provided a productive contemplation of the role played by philosophy, art, politics, or architecture, among other cultural realms, within society. It paradoxically tackles unsolvable questions formulated by individuals, collectivities, cultures, or disciplines throughout the history of humanity: Who am I? Who are we? The political, social, economic, and environmental challenges, which the Covid-19 pandemic only exacerbated, suggest that the conception of autonomous urbanism is justified and urgent as a reevaluation of the role design plays within society in the twenty-first century.

System

The autonomy of architecture originated as a system based on cultural transformations rather than formal fixation. In 1933, Emil Kaufmann formulated *autonomen Architektur* as a system in which form was secondary. His formulation relied on "the reality of change" rather than "the fixation on style" and reduced formal transformations to symptoms of systemic changes that operate at a cultural level.[8] Kaufmann considered that the rational revolution of Immanuel Kant paralleled Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's designs. He drew correspondences between the challenge of the Kantian "autonomy of the will" to the heteronomy of past philosophies and the departure of Ledoux's pavilion-like architecture from the heteronomy of Baroque compositions. The transition from the Renaissance-Baroque system (unified masses) to the autonomous architecture of Ledoux (separated masses) was the outcome of a gradual process sensitive to cultural transformations rather than a sudden break informed by brilliance. Kaufmann identified Ledoux as the precursor of modern architecture—*Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier* (From Ledoux to Le Corbusier)—tracing the gradual formation of an autonomous system propelled by "the reality of change" of intangible (social, economic, and political) forces.[9] This idea was echoed by the Italian architect Aldo Rossi, who considered himself a pre-modern rather than a post-modern architect. This distinction responds to the sensitivity of his work to the cultural concerns of the architecture of the Age of Reason and the sociopolitical program of modern architecture of the first half of the twentieth century.

During the second half of the twentieth century, the autonomy of architecture represented a critique against the economic and technocratic raison d'etre, which promoted ideological notions

like *change, newness,* and *progress* on both sides of the Atlantic. Architectural autonomy progressively developed a skepticism toward technical and economic objectives that responded to capitalistic development.[10] The most radical of these interpretations reduced culture to prejudices, resulting in cultural blindness of purely "objective" aspirations. The overemphasis on form—on concepts over contents—developed skepticism toward cultural biases while questioning capitalism's technical and economic objectives. The exacerbated formalism attacked the alienating conditions of modernity. But, paradoxically, the attack resulted in obedience, detaching design from other disciplines and other cultural realms. This phenomenon does not totally describe the discourse on autonomy within design—the architectural autonomy that followed Kaufmann was heterogeneous. This critique developed in two main currents on two different continents. In Europe, it built critically on the heroic tone of modernism, while, in America, it departed from it. In the United States, the introspective tendency operated within the boundaries of architecture even though it was influenced by linguistics or philosophy. This tendency led to the theorization of the space "between culture and form" while failing to recognize that culture and form constitute each other.[11] In Italy, a politically engaged autonomy of architecture built ideas from different cultural realms such as geography, sociology, political economy, philosophy, art, or semiology. Scientific rigor (description, definition, classification) informed the study of architecture as urban science. Architecture defined and verified its principles through the development of the city over time—i.e., typological studies or the dialectical relationship between permanence (monument) and the urban dynamic. The sympathy for the partisan left influenced the Italian autonomy, whose crucial moment was the political nature of "choice" as a critical reflection about the degradation of the modern city. In the United States, the rationality of architectural autonomy mainly reduced culture

to prejudices that acquired a negative connotation. It retreated from cultural constructions to focus on the internal history of the discipline.

During the first two decades of the twenty-first century, Pier Vittorio Aureli detached critically from urbanization to propose a unilateral idea of the city through the means and architecture methods. His conception of autonomy is culturally and politically sensitive but antagonistic enough to exclude enemies from the "truths" of architecture. This exclusionary conception of architectural autonomy has condemned most postwar interpretations to disciplinary or dogmatic isolation. Its opposite, the post-critical attitude, proposed the abandonment of the critical project of architecture to finally break old disciplinary boundaries and engage with cultural concerns. But the fleeting life of the post-critical discourse was doomed by its own premises: First, it rightly condemned lifeless conceptualism but assumed that it equaled the empirical reality of theories formulated by Ludwig Hilberseimer, Manfredo Tafuri, Andrea Branzi, Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Aldo Rossi. Second, its object of critique was the subsequent interpretations of architectural autonomy that followed Kaufmann. Thus, it omitted the fact that Kaufmann's *autonomen Architektur* derived from the cultural formation of the Kantian "autonomy of the will," whose philosophical genesis was cause and consequence of social, economic, and political phenomena that changed the history of Western cultures. Third, it advocated a pragmatic conception of architecture overlooking the fact that even the empiricism of St. Thomas Aquinas, Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, or David Hume is composed of theoretical principles. Fourth, the post-critical discourse paradoxically consolidated the monopoly of architectural criticism by assuming that the ideas borrowed from critical theory are the *only* valid critical method. The post-critical approach homogenized critical concerns in the image and likeness of Eurocentric and North American (United States) reflections. Its pragmatism canceled

the validity of *other* critical attitudes derived from Latin America, Africa, and Asia or other cultural realms such as philosophy and art, which taught us that autonomy entails *engagement*. Consequently, the post-critical attitude failed to formulate a design framework sensitive to the acceleration of empirical knowledge produced at an urban level and dismissed the benefits of an epistemological struggle or inter-disciplinary approach (unexplored intellectual and methodological territories).

Cinema

This dissertation builds on architectural autonomy's theoretical and empirical construction through the paradoxical synthesis of different disciplines and cultural realms. It regards inter-disciplinary studies (beyond traditional disciplinary jurisdictions) as a struggle that strives for a new epistemology rather than a shallow and populistic solution to the creative crisis of traditional forms of knowledge. In the same way that Aldo Rossi built on geography, economy, sociology, history, or art, this dissertation builds on diverse disciplines and forms of expression, especially cinema, to reflect on our urban reality. Rossi considered that film directors such as Antonioni, Visconti, and Pasolini discovered the outskirts of Milan and Rome before architects. This dissertation considers film more perceptive than architecture to urban phenomena. Film, according to Roland Barthes, is "simply normal like life." Unlike photography, it is "protensive," thus, it extends dynamically in time.[12] Architecture is also protensive because its concreteness guarantees the historical continuity of the urban spatial structure. But that is precisely problematic when the fixation on the style of lethargic formal expressions tends to relegate the reality of change to the urban condition and life itself.

The resemblance between cinema and life not only relies on content but also on method. Walter Benjamin considered that films resemble reality because the illusory character of cinema, freed from the camera, allows the penetration of reality by technological means. The alliance between science and art suggests the analogy between the unconscious optics revealed by cinema and the unconscious impulses scrutinized by psychoanalysis in their mutual exploration of daily life.[13] The Cubist collage introduced montage into painting to counter the compositional coherence of the Renaissance, while film appropriated montage as the basis of its technical process. Painting guaranteed the relatively stable reception of its content despite the fragmentation that Cubism proposed, but cinema introduced changing images triggering the instability of our senses and our judgment. This aesthetic instability, which the procedures of film (shooting or cutting) assure, parallels the unstable urban condition whose experience resembles that of the Cubist collage, the Surrealist automatism, or the discontinuous narrative and acting in Bertolt Brecht's plays. It is precisely within this urban instability and unpredictability that the tension between the individual aspiration of autonomy and the collective logic of urbanism is so pervasive and natural that it remains unnoticed.

In the late 1960s, Alison and Peter Smithson argued that since the introduction of high-speed transportation, people hardly ever walked, and consequently, "we don't experience the city as a continuous thing anymore, rather as a series of events."[14] The fragmentation of the city's spatial structure has turned into the fragmentation of experiences whose mutual struggle operates *agonistically* rather than *antagonistically*. The alliance between urbanism and autonomy synthesizes the unconscious distinction between "motivated" and "arbitrary" change at an urban level. This continuous synthesis between theory and practice is indecipherable, but it challenges the guarantee of cultural, historical, or disciplinary continuity, that is, the eventual obsolescence

of inherited truths. The urban condition presents the necessity to make (individual and collective) choices that cannot be sanctioned by traditional disciplinary boundaries—i.e., architecture, landscape, or urban planning. These choices range temporally and spatially from the public to the private realms, from the house to the region, from academia to the street, from the cellphone to the internet, from seconds to years.

Cinema provides a form of expression that rejects the banality of ideological resentment. It gives a sophisticated cultural critique based on the artistic elevation of daily events to social and historical paradigms. The sensitivity of cinema to depict the temporal and spatial ranges of reality—i.e., the decay of the modern city and its inhabitants, the nature of human passions during the postwar period, or the relentless passage of time—is an analytical language barely explored by design. This dissertation rejects Manichean design approaches that exploit morality as a coercive method in favor of the artist's modus. It builds on the philosopher Roland Barthes' respect for Michelangelo Antonioni's aesthetic sensitivity, whose critical eye refrained from accusing sociocultural factors. The correspondences throughout the dissertation between urbanism, autonomy, and architecture are analyzed under a cinematic lens. They aspire to tackle the inescapable aesthetic reflection necessary to assimilate our cultural successes and failures as designers. This effort, therefore, builds on the axioms of the visionaries of autonomous urbanism, such as Gustave Flaubert, who categorically asserted, "There is more to Art than the straightness of lines and the perfection of surfaces. Plasticity of style is not as large as the entire idea. . . We have too many things and not enough forms."[15]

. . . . .

This dissertation examines the culture inherent to the history of autonomy beyond the limits of design (chapter 1) and the role architectural autonomy played within the social and cultural unrest of the second half of the twentieth century (chapter 2). It then compares the development of architectural autonomy in Europe and the United States, starting in the second half of the twentieth century (chapters 3 and 4). Finally, the dissertation focuses on the aesthetic dimension of agonistic political relationships common to autonomy, the human condition, and urbanization (chapter 5).

Chapter 1, "The Culture of Autonomy," surveys the progression of the term autonomy within different cultural realms from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. It initially problematizes the disciplinary autonomy that, mainly in the United States, dissociated design from culture and society based on the fallacious belief that autonomy implied detachment. It then surveys the philosophical genesis of the "autonomy of the will" formulated by Immanuel Kant in the eighteenth century; the attempt of the avant-garde movements to restore the links between art and society; the defense of the political sphere by Hannah Arendt and Carl Schmitt against the normalization of behavior prescribed by the social realm; the side effects of the rational character of autonomy perceived in all their clarity during the twentieth century; and the urban dimension of *autonomen Architektur* retroactively formulated by Emil Kaufmann.

Chapter 2, "The Polemics of Autonomy," studies the cultural and historical context that precipitated the impulsive use of autonomy within architectural theory during the second half of the twentieth century. It problematizes the disciplinary reduction of autonomy by confronting the social and historical tensions of the era. It analyzes the role autonomy played in the consolidation of a common language within the analogy between architecture and linguistics. It then focuses on the cultural and historical sensitivity of its architectural interpretation and its ontological affiliation with the modern notion of *process* that shaped the disciplinary consolidation of biology, political

economy, or urbanism during the nineteenth century. The chapter concludes with the examination of the critical scope of autonomy's representational capacity.

Chapter 3, "The Political Sensitivity: Aldo Rossi," surveys the collaborative predisposition of Rossi's architectural autonomy that drew connections with art, science, and urbanism, among other disciplines. The correspondences between cinema, architecture, and urbanism synthesized an analytical and propositional autonomy whose scope extended beyond the limits of any field. This chapter revisits Rossi's sensitivity to the violent transformations of the second half of the twentieth century that extended urban jurisdictions beyond the intellectual and practical restrictions that the term "city" entails. Thus, it studies the productive tension in Rossi's theory between the city and its outskirts, architecture and urbanism, design and culture, and history and memory. It presents an autonomy that operates within the work of the Italian master as a spatial and temporal index in which formal resolutions are concrete abstractions of oscillating relationships.

Chapter 4, "The Apolitical Commitment: Peter Eisenman," studies Eisenman's conceptual retreat from history to focus on the internal history of architecture. It surveys his use of the analogy between architecture and language to borrow textual operations as a methodology and displace the subjective agency of authorship from a central position during the design process. This chapter highlights that his urban engagement in the *Cities of Artificial Excavations* restricted its scope to an architectural strategy transposed to the city. Finally, this chapter responds to the supposed novelty of Eisenman's non-formal autonomy at the beginning of the twenty-first century, which omitted that the *autonomen Architektur* proposed by Kaufmann in the 1930s was a non-formal formulation based on cultural changes.

Chapter 5, "The Agonism of Autonomy," recognizes the intellectual capacity of Emil Kaufmann to merge the modern construction of the individual consciousness in Western societies and the sociopolitical program of modern architecture—from Ledoux to Le Corbusier. It studies the similarities and differences between Kaufmann's *autonomen Architecktur* and its subsequent interpretations. This chapter situates the political dimension of autonomous urbanism within our daily social coexistence. It argues that the political negotiations that operate within the human and urban conditions—from the family to society—must be resolved through the respect provided by *agonism* rather than the resentment of an ideologically exacerbated *antagonism*. The last part of this dissertation explains why Kaufmann relegated form to a secondary place within the initial formulation of *autonomen Architektur*. It builds on the dissolution of form that unifies the urban and aesthetic projects of Piranesi, Flaubert, Tafuri, Wright, Hilberseimer, or Archizoom, as well as the avant-garde—Munch, Citroen, or Picasso. It also explores the distinction between the *action in space* and the *action of space* that the alliance between architecture, urbanism, and art suggests as a critical language. Finally, it advocates a critical method based on the pervasive aesthetics within the urban condition, which is often relegated by "official" trends of design criticism.

Notes

[1] The definition of "scope" refers to the area over which a branch of knowledge, an inquiry, or a concept operates or is effective. See OED Online, "scope, n.2," Oxford University Press, accessed March 24, 2021, https://www-oed-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/Entry/172974?rskey=KbTsNJ&result=2&isAdvanced=false.
[2] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition,* Charles R. Walgreen Foundation Lectures (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 176.
[3] Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (Cambridge, MA; London, UK: MIT Press, 2011), Location 116 Kindle edition.
[4] Francoise Choay and Denise Bratton, *The Rule and The Model: On the Theory of Architecture and Urbanism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), 191.
[5] OED Online, "Autonomy, n," Oxford University Press, accessed March 24, 2021, https://www-oed-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/Entry/13500?redirectedFrom=autonomy
[6] Paul Barry Clarke, *Autonomy Unbound* (Alershot; Brookfield USA: Ashgate, 1999), 2.
[7] Quoted by Hubert Damisch and Erin Williams, "Ledoux with Kant," *Perspecta* 33, Mining Autonomy, (The MIT Press, 2002), 14.
[8] Emil Kaufmann, *Architecture in the Age of Reason: Baroque and Postbaroque in England, Italy, and France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), 75.
[9] Emil Kaufmann, *De Ledoux a Le Corbusier: Origen y Desarrollo De La Arquitectura Autónoma* (G. Gili, 1982).
[10] The alliance between architecture and philosophy that constitutes the autonomy of architecture originated in an era, the eighteenth century, when cultural progress strived for moral perfection.
[11] K. Michael Hays, "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form," *Perspecta* 21 (1984).
[12] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (Reading; Berkshire: Vintage, 1993), 88.
[13] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (New York: Prism Key Press, 2010).
[14] Alison and Peter Smithson, "Where to walk and where to ride in our bouncy new clothes and our shiny new cars," January 28, 1967.
[15] Gustave Flaubert quoted by Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference,* trans., Alan Bass (London: Routledge Classics, 1978), 1.

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Ideal City of Chaux
Claude-Nicolas Ledoux
18th century

(Harvard Fine Arts Library)

Chapter 1

The Culture of Autonomy

> *At the time when Kant rejects all the moral philosophies of the past and decrees the 'autonomy of the will as the supreme principle of ethics,' an analogous transformation takes place in architecture. In the sketches of Ledoux these new objectives appear for the first time in all their clarity. His work marks the birth of autonomous architecture.*
>
> —Emil Kaufmann, *Die stadt des Architekten Ledoux: Erkenntnis der Autonomen Architektur, 1933.*

The first chapter of this dissertation is a counterargument to the disciplinary reduction of architectural autonomy. It situates the discourse on autonomy beyond the limits of architecture to expose its cultural complexity and sociohistorical formation. This chapter studies its philosophical genesis amid the sociopolitical changes of the eighteenth century, which explains its influence on aesthetic, political, and architectural theory during the subsequent centuries. It counters the lifeless conceptualism that permeated most of the architectural autonomy of the second half of the twentieth century as a disciplinary whim that responded impulsively to the conditions of the era without theoretical or historical foundations.

Narcissus
Caravaggio (Michelangelo Merisi)
1597-1599

(Palazzo Barberini, Gallerie Nazionali)

1.1. The Fallacy of an Absolute Autonomy

The development of the autonomy of architecture during the second half of the twentieth century differed substantially from its initial formulation during the interwar period. It originated as an autonomous system sensitive to cultural changes and became a disciplinary redefinition based on formal parameters—immanent and universal values often indifferent to contents and contexts. The reduction of autonomy to a disciplinary concern was based on its fallacious interpretation as *detachment*. It resulted in the polarization of architectural theory between resistance (to cultural determination) and skepticism (toward an autonomous architecture). Alternatives to the irrevocable destiny, the dissociation between architecture and society, tried to bypass the dead end. They explored what lies "between culture and form" or a "quasi-autonomy," but they paradoxically exacerbated the polarization and denied a self-evident truth: culture and architectural form constitute each other.[1] The failure of a disciplinary reduction of autonomy is symptomatic of the incapacity of a dogmatic architectural theory to fully acknowledge that a critique of "the other" (culture) implies a critique of "one's own self" (the culture that constitutes architecture). The critique of architecture toward culture or capitalism implies a critique of its own substance and vice versa. Architecture synthesizes cultural concerns as it questions and produces cultural values; otherwise, it is reduced to a decorative form-making. If there is to be a *critical architecture,* it must be a *self-critical architecture*.[2]

The study of the cultural substance of autonomy acquired importance during decisive times. The Viennese art historian Emil Kaufmann formulated *autonomen Architektur* (autonomous architecture) in 1933 as Nazism seized political power democratically. The social and cultural unrest of the second half of the twentieth century, which questioned inherited knowledge, gave a

new impulse to Kaufmann's formulation.[3] His analogy between the Kantian "autonomy of the will" and Ledoux's rebellion against Baroque architecture attests to the importance of philosophy as much as design in the development of Western societies. In the twenty-first century, autonomy provides a critical framework for design within cultural conditions that demand social and political engagement amid racial, gender, economic, health-related, and environmental tensions.[4]

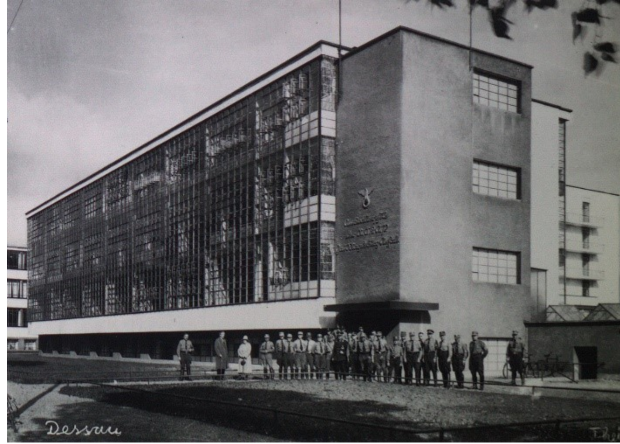

Figure 1.1. The Bauhaus transformed into a school (*NS-Gauführerschule*) for Nazi party officials, 1935.

(Stadtarchiv Dessau/Dessau, Fotografisches Atleier und Kunstverlag, Dessau-Ziebigk)

The heritage of the two great wars of the last century was the skepticism toward concepts, categories, ideas, and institutions that survived the armed conflicts.[5] Debates about cultural constructions such as human nature, discipline, power, and history revealed that "culture" was not static but a category that demanded constant redefinition. Architecture, like other disciplines, was entangled in the struggle between self-government and cultural determinism. But the impatience of architecture succumbed to an impulsive interpretation of autonomy. It relied on the "qualitative" values of the discipline to counter internal and external challenges such as a technological fascination, the adoption of biological terms and sociological methods, or the rise of a consumer society and mass culture. However, the result was paradoxical obedience through *alienation* that led architecture to detach from society. The *autonomy of architecture* formulated in the 1960s and 1970s, especially in the United States, must be renamed as the *alienation of architecture*.

But the autonomy of architecture was not homogeneous—a culturally and historically sensitive interpretation developed on both sides of the Atlantic. Peter Eisenman, in the United

Figure 1.2. Typical main street, USA

(Photo by Wallace Litwin / Reprinted in Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, page 105)

"Some of the vivid lessons of Pop Art, involving contradictions of scale and context, should have awakened architects from prim dreams of pure order, which, unfortunately, are imposed in the easy Gestalt unities of the urban renewal projects of establishment Modern architecture and yet, fortunately are really impossible to achieve at any great scope. And it is perhaps from the everyday landscape, vulgar and disdained, that we can draw the complex and contradictory order that is valid and vital for our architecture as an urbanistic whole."

—Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*

States, and Aldo Rossi, in Italy, led the return to the discipline based on a cultural and historical reflection on architecture. However, Eisenman's highly conceptual approach differed from Rossi's cultural critique. In 1966, Rossi's *The Architecture of the City* and Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* revitalized architectural theory relying on historical analysis. Rossi advanced the cultural development of type in relation to urban form and collective memory. At the same time, Venturi drew on humanism, anthropology, semiotics, sociology, mannerism, and pop art to expose the cultural complexity that has historically influenced architecture.[6] But the *impure* autonomy, theorized by Rossi and Venturi, was countered by the conceptualization of disciplinary *purity* during the following decades, especially in the United States. Venturi's theory was sensitive to the everyday urban landscape, while the photographer Robert Frank captured the bleak complexity of the social reality of the United States by the mid-twentieth century. But "official" architecture obstinately turned inwards. Diana Agrest formulated the struggle between "Design vs. Non-Design," emphasizing the hermeticism of design vis-à-vis other cultural realms such as film, literature, music, painting,

Figure 1.3. Trolley, New Orleans by Robert Frank, 1955

(From The Americans/The MET Museum, Gilman Collection, Purchase, Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee Gift, 2005)

or photography. On the other hand, she argued that culture permeated the public domain through its social codes as if design was deprived of social codes or inaccessible to the public.[7] Stanford Anderson praised the tension between conventions and practices, which produced a "quasi-autonomous" architecture that is neither self-referential nor obedient to external circumstances. But the use of a prefix explicitly assumed the absolute condition of autonomy. The prefix *quasi-* is redundant when autonomy already refers to the paradoxical cultural and historical formation of a self-governing condition.[8] The ideas of Agrest and Anderson regarding autonomy belong to a genealogy that confused autonomy with independence derived from an impulsive interpretation.[9]

The debate on autonomy persisted at the turn of the century. Hubert Damisch and Anthony Vidler built on the often-overlooked philosophical genesis of architectural autonomy. Both authors revisited the alliance between architecture and philosophy that formed *autonomen Architektur* and, according to Kaufmann, set the beginning of Modern architecture during the Enlightenment as part of a "long process of political and aesthetic struggle."[10] Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting put forward a critique of the disciplinary reduction of autonomy, advocating for the pragmatism of a "projective" architecture.[11] Their post-critical position built on Rem Koolhaas's skepticism toward architectural criticism due to its "inability to recognize there is in the deepest motivations of architecture something that cannot be critical."[12] But this discourse is problematic because it

implicitly asserted that all theory is full of lifeless conceptualizations. George Baird warns about the risk of a merely practical approach that relegates theory via the skepticism toward the supposed detachment of its critical attitude.[13] Baird challenged the post-critical effort advocating for the development of a projective theory to counter any decorative pragmatism.[14] The most recent architectural autonomy, formulated by Pier Vittorio Aureli, characterizes the antagonistic relationship between architecture and urbanization as the political distinction between friend and enemy. The idea of "the formal" and the idea of "the political" overlap, according to Aureli, because "both address the possibility of separation, composition, and counterposition."[15] The heterogeneity of architectural form confronts the processes of urbanization. Aureli is aware that urbanization is not homogeneous, it "is not an apparatus made of flows; it is made of closures and of strategic forms of containment." He argues that urban governance dialectically establishes the "smoothness" of global economic transactions and trade vis-à-vis walls, enclaves, or closures.

Figure 1.4. The effects of urbanization in Favela Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro, 2019

(Photo by Juan Luis Rod/El Pais)

Figure 1.5. The effects of urbanization in Hudson Yards, New York City

(Photo by Mark Wickens/The New York Times)

However, Aureli's unilateral approach is problematic because it fails to identify the cultural heterogeneity that characterizes the effects of urbanization in different locations, countries, or regions.[16] Are not the effects of urbanization processes, from region to region, as heterogeneous

as the “quality” of architectural form? Is not the *idea* of architectural form as homogeneous as the *idea* of urbanization?

Figure 1.6. Absorbing Modernity 1914-2014
(OMA, Office for Metropolitan Architecture)
The *idea* of urbanization as the *idea* of architectural form.

This dissertation calls into question the anachronism of mere antagonistic approaches that led to armed conflicts globally and the isolation of the disciplinary knowledge during the last century. It advocates the self-critical dimension that inheres within the critical character of autonomy as an antidote to the excesses of morality. It argues that the more we discover about the external world, the more we need to explore our inner self, and vice versa.[17] The more any design interpretation of autonomy engages with urban phenomena, the more it needs to reevaluate its own self as well as its relationship with the urban condition. Thus, critical efforts within design must overcome any dichotomic reduction based on an opposition (Agrest’s “Design vs. Non-Design”), connection/separation (Hays’s “Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form”), or dry antagonism (Aureli’s *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*). Culture and architecture constitute each other; thus, any *critical architecture* implies a *self-critical architecture*. But the prevalence of a narcissistic architectural reflection has dominated the discourse on autonomy within design. It has prevented the formulation of design’s cultural critique based on autonomy as a methodological alternative to the dead-end of an *alienating* criticism.

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The sight of a mountain whose snow-covered peak rises above the clouds, the description of a raging storm, or Milton's portrayal of the infernal kingdom, arouse enjoyment but with horror [...] Night is sublime, day is beautiful. Temperaments that possess a feeling for the sublime are drawn gradually, by the quiet stillness of a summer evening as the shimmering light of the stars breaks through the brown shadows of night and the lonely moon rises into view, into high feelings of friendship, of disdain for the world, of eternity.

—Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*

Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer (Wanderer above the Sea of Fog)
Casper David Friedrich
1817

(Hamburger Kunsthalle / © Stiftung für die Hamburger Kunstsammlungen
Photo by Elke Walford)

1.2. The Philosophical Genesis: Kant

The modern age increased the tension between the history of the self and "the history of History" that has haunted humanity to the present day.[18] The individual and collective search for identities that today seem to permeate any social realm is inherent to the modern sensibility. The scientific discoveries that have expanded our knowledge of the external world—external to the individual and external to planet Earth—motivated the philosophical exploration of our inner selves. The autonomy of the modern consciousness of the individual, formulated by Immanuel Kant in the eighteenth century, was sensitive to the scientific revolution consolidated by Galileo Galilei's use of the telescope a century before. The more we look outside ourselves, the more we need to look inside ourselves. Individuality is not individualism. Totalizing perspectives and ideological blindness systematically undermine individual agencies, reducing them to an obsessed individualism within capitalist logic. However, this dissertation values the negotiation and even reconciliation of the seeming contradictions that typify autonomy.

The origins of the Western notion of individuality can be traced back to the decay of medieval society. The scientific developments of the seventeenth century anticipated the construction of the modern individual consciousness and the sociopolitical changes of the subsequent century. In the early 1600s, Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) revolutionized science and challenged the limited reality of the senses with the use of the telescope. The battle between the senses and reason has been debated since ancient Greece.[19] However, the telescope made intelligible what exceeded our physical and intellectual capacities. Rene Descartes's methodical doubt called into question what was considered unquestionable through his proverb *Je pense, donc*

je suis ("I think, therefore I am") originally written in French.[20] His *Discourse* argued that everyone could distinguish true from false through reason and proposed a moral code as a guide in the search for truth. He formulated a skeptical method of the authority of the expert and the experience of the senses in which the only certainty is doubt itself.[21] The Cartesian heritage not only influenced the introspection of the self in modern philosophy but also informed Skepticism, Empiricism, and Materialism.[22]

Figure 1.7. Two views of the Moon, Galileo Galilei from *Siderius Nuncius* (The Starry Messenger)

(The MET Museum/Smithsonian Institution Libraries, Washington, D.C.)

Renaissance erudition sustained an immaculate vision of a perfectly spherical moon, but Galileo's observations and drawings revealed an imperfect and rugged surface defined by craters and mountains.

The formal or "noumenal" character (the thing-in-itself) of the Kantian "autonomy of the will" hindered its interaction with the causality external to the subject. This externalized causation influenced modern German philosophy and the more recent critique of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) and Theodor Adorno (1903-1969). Fichte considered "the ego as absolute subject" and indifferent to external causality. He believed that it constituted the basis of all experience to exceed the Kantian dichotomy between the "noumenal" and the "phenomenal." Hegel questioned the Kantian moral subjectivism of autonomy that arguably overlooked the objective reality constructed by tradition or custom as essential for the ethical dimensions of life. Schelling arguably retreated from rationalism, building on Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (1790) to advocate for the aesthetic faculty of cognition and arguing that knowledge was a matter of "intellectual intuition."[23] Friedrich Nietzsche contended that "the thing-in-itself is nonsense" because if a thing is deprived of its relations, qualities, and activities, "the thing itself does not remain."[24] Nietzsche thus called into

question the moral and noumenal nature of the Kantian autonomy, impermeable to phenomena, or what Adorno called a "residual" philosophy that remains once ephemeral or unpredictable variables are subtracted.[25] In the first half of the twentieth century, Adorno condemned autonomy as the manifestation of the coercive character of society and as the precursor of the barbarism of fascism and the irrationality of capitalism. This brief genealogical account attests to the influence of the Kantian autonomy often manifested as a critique.[26]

Before Kant, the legitimacy of rational and empirical knowledge was equally questionable. Empirical knowledge was susceptible to a skepticism that interrogated our limited human experience due to the imperfect capacity of our senses.[27] On the other hand, our rational judgments were regarded as empty because they were empirically based rather than *a priori*; thus, they lacked any additional information that transcended or even preceded their empirical formation. Kant proposed establishing a court of justice based on the self-knowledge of reason that could protect "its own eternal and unchangeable laws."[28] He considered that the point of departure of cognition was experience despite not everything being derived from experience. Kant thus defended the existence of *a priori* cognitive principles independent from *a posteriori* empiricism. This focus on theoretical deduction implies that if any judgment is regarded as universal, it cannot derive from experience but from an *a priori* cognition. He challenged the notion that knowledge must conform to the experience of objects, proposing that the experience of objects should conform to knowledge—distinguishing noumenon (a thing-in-itself) from phenomenon (a thing known through the senses). This proposition rejected the determinism of the empirical world and the lack of any principle of obligation to the "heteronomy of choice," arguing that the "autonomy of the will is the sole principle of all moral laws."[29] Kantian autonomy contrasts with any utilitarian end; it evaluates actions (good or bad) based on their consequences. The tension between autonomy

and the laws of necessity/causality of the empirical world is often regarded as the weakness in Kantian thought. But this tension is integral to this dissertation's effort to investigate the connections between the external and internal universes of both the contemporary individual and contemporary knowledge.

Figure 1.8. Galileo and personifications of Astronomy, Perspective and Mathematics, frontispiece for 'Opere di Galileo Galilei' by Stefano della Bella, 1656

(The MET Museum/The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1951 by exchange)

During the early seventeenth century, the exploration of the universe prompted the philosophical curiosity to reevaluate the relationship between the human mind and an unbounded external magnitude. It urged the individual to rethink its place within the spatial and temporal laws of an overwhelming phenomenal system. Kant concluded the *Critique of Practical Reason*, describing poetically the existential tension that concerned his reflections: "the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me."[30] The tension between the undecipherable external universe and the mysteries of the internalized individual self still haunts us today as it did at the beginning of the modern age. The more we look outwards, the more mysterious our inner nature becomes, demanding the consideration of any critique as a self-critique. It is not a coincidence that the space race of the Cold War developed in the mid-twentieth century while debates on "human nature" occurred between Michel Foucault and Noam Chomsky in the early 1970s. More recently, in 2010, the Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells wrote, "In a world of global flows of wealth, power, and images, the search for identity, collective or individual, ascribed or constructed, becomes the fundamental source of social meaning."[31] The rise of nationalism in international politics at the apotheosis of globalization

permeates diverse cultural realms and legitimizes Castells' observation. The exploration of new horizons, such as the Moon or Mars, expands the frontiers of our knowledge and feeds our Freudian need to know more about our inner selves. New knowledge redefines, consciously or unconsciously, our relationship with the world as the self strives for autonomy. The tension between the autonomy of the self and its cultural formation necessarily reveals a perpetual and unsolvable question: Who or what defines the self?[32]

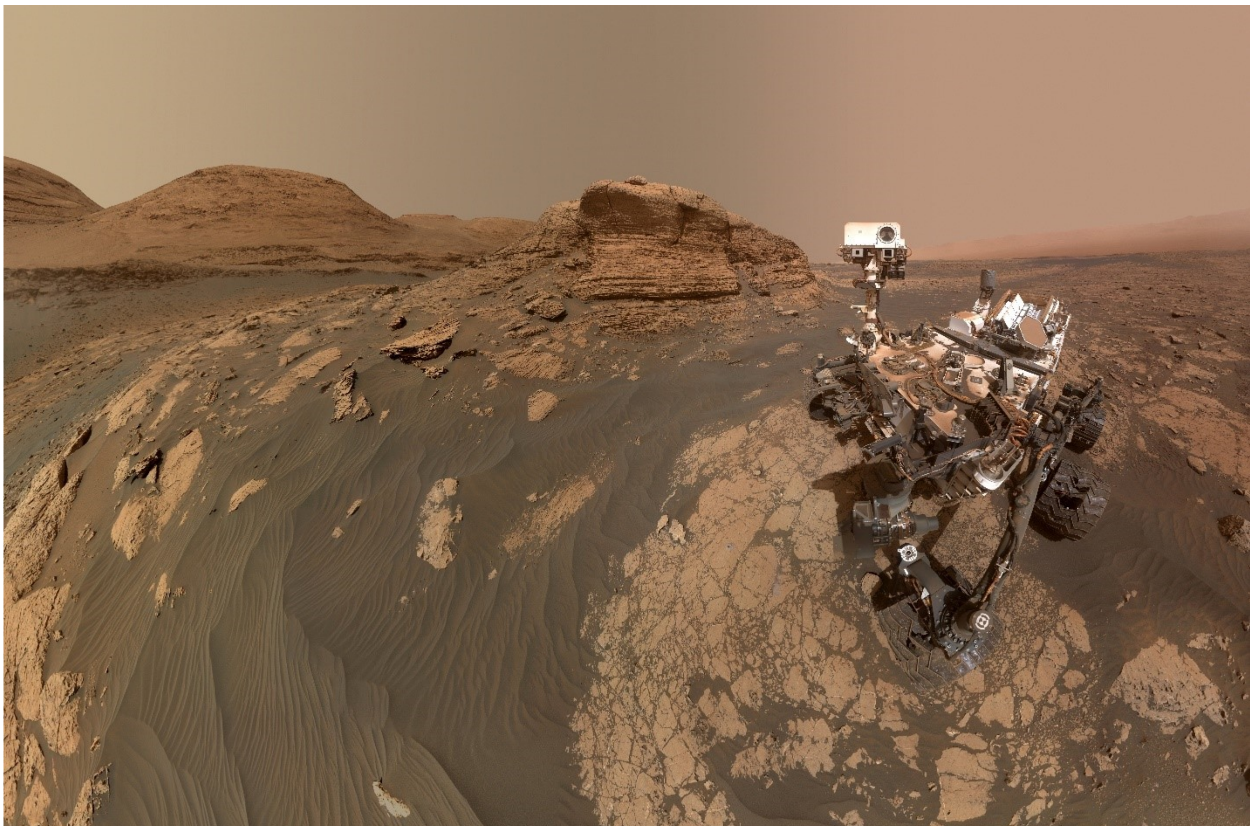

Figure 1.9. Curiosity Mars rover's selfie in front of Mont Mercou. The panorama was taken on March 26, 2021, the 3,070th Martian day, or sol, of the mission. NASA's Curiosity Mars rover is part of the mission Mars 2020, whose main goal is to "seek signs of ancient life and collect samples of rock and regolith (broken rock and soil) for possible return to Earth."

(Mars 2020 Mission/NASA)

Rousseau and Kant advocated for a rational "self-governing condition" that counters any external determinism. *L'Encyclopédie* (1751-1765), the United States Declaration of Independence (1776), and the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and Immanuel Kant

(1724-1804) set in motion the paradigmatic rebellion of the Western individual consciousness, which ultimately led to the French Revolution (1787-1799).[33] Kant's philosophy was as influential as the ideas of Rousseau and *L'Encyclopédie* on the outbreak of the French Revolution. In fact, Rousseau's *Du Contrat social* (The Social Contract, 1762) begins stating: "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. One believes himself the others' master, and yet is more a slave than they."[34] On the other hand, according to the poet Heinrich Heine, the Kantian intellectual revolution cut off the head of metaphysical ideas, resembling the precision of a guillotine:

> It is said that night-wandering ghosts are terrified when they see the sword of an executioner. But what terror must they then feel if anyone holds out at them Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*? This book is the sword with which deism was decapitated in Germany. To tell the honest truth, ye French in comparison with us Germans are tame and moderate. At best you could only kill a king, and he had lost his head long before you chopped it off.[35]

The relevance of the Kantian autonomy for the emancipation of the modern individual in Western societies attests to the cultural and historical formation of its critical character. Therefore, autonomy *was, is,* and *will be* a cause and consequence of Western cultural development. Its cultural, social, and historical engagement provides the methodological means to challenge the conventions, customs, and habits that permeate disciplinary pseudo-knowledge, the contempt for theory, or the oblivion that relegates philosophy.

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Marcel Duchamp smoking in front of Fountain
Duchamp Retrospective, Pasadena Art Museum, 1963

(Photo by Julian Wasser/Robert Berman Gallery)

1.3. The Successful Failure of the Avant-Garde: Art and Society

The Kantian autonomy informed our modern understanding of aesthetics revealing the cultural implications of any aesthetical consideration even though the latter is often discriminated as an apolitical and asocial anecdote. In the nineteenth century, the poets Charles Baudelaire and Stéphane Mallarmé set an aesthetic rebellion against a world that did not comprehend the artist. Their position informed the art movements Aestheticism and *l'art pour l'art* (art for art's sake), which left out sociopolitical themes. But the next century, Walter Benjamin considered that fascism rendered politics as aesthetics, while communism politicized art.[36] The cultural critique of the avant-garde movements such as Dadaism suppressed the distance between art and the praxis of life, between aesthetics and the means-ends rationality of capitalism. This lack of knowledge overlooks the social, economic, and political causes and consequences of aesthetic autonomy, favoring the merely decorative and the neutralization of critique.

Is it a matter of common sense to consider anything that has a shape to be either beautiful or ugly? This question suggests that the aesthetic realm exists since the *homo faber* (man the maker) and the *homo sapiens* felt the need to develop tools or seek shelter. But a philosophical aesthetic set the foundations of the autonomy of art until the eighteenth century. Art has historically oscillated between its subordination to and its independence from power structures. However, it seemed to preserve its status as a *special* human activity regardless of its relationship to power.[37] The processes involved in the formation of aesthetics as an autonomous realm are open for debate but not its consolidation as a philosophical category that differed from other cultural domains. The shift from the sacral art of the Middle Ages to its secular counterpart during the Renaissance preceded an autonomous art whose precondition was the bourgeoisie's rise to economic and

political power.[38]

The Enlightenment influenced the development of Western thought through the transformation or consolidation of different forms of knowledge—such as aesthetics, architecture, cartography, and philosophy, among others. The rational revolution of Immanuel Kant molded the realm of aesthetics with the conception of "autonomy." At the same time, Friedrich Schiller argued for the capacity of art to restore the humanity lost through the alienating social processes derived from the division of labor. However, the means of artistic production remained subordinated to stylistic principles until the twentieth century despite the restoration of moral autonomy and dignity that Kant and Schiller intended.[39] Dadaism superseded stylistic concerns by proposing the means of capitalist production as an artistic means. It abolished the distance between art and practical life, questioning the nature of the work of art and introducing the laws of chance as part of the creative process. The artist Hans Richter described how Jean (Hans) Arp, frustrated with an untamable drawing:

Figure 1.10. Untitled (Collage with Squares Arranged according to the Laws of Chance), Jean (Hans) Arp, 1917.

(© 2021 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn)

> Finally tore it up, and let the pieces flutter to the floor of his studio. . . . Some time later he happened to notice these same scraps of paper as they lay on the floor, and was struck by the pattern they formed. It had all the expressive power that he had tried in vain to achieve. How meaningful! How telling! Chance movements of his hand and of the fluttering scraps of paper had achieved what all his efforts had failed to achieve, namely expression. He accepted this challenge from chance as a decision of fate and carefully pasted the scraps down in the pattern which chance had determined.[40]

Kant considered that the analysis required to determine the beauty or ugliness of an object must be based upon a judgment of taste.[41] Thus, the object does not possess any aesthetic quality because a subjective consideration of the object only constitutes the latter. The faculty of aesthetic judgment is

defined as "taste" mainly because, like any dish or food, the subject tries it with its own tongue and palate, placing a judgment based on an opinion rather than universal laws.[42] Taste was paradoxically considered in the Kantian system as "the faculty of estimating what makes our feeling in a given representation universally communicable without the mediation of a concept."[43] The judgment of taste is therefore *intuitive* rather than *logical*. Any logical judgment "subsumes a representation under a concept of the object" through which it asserts universality and necessity. In contrast, the judgment of taste guarantees universality and necessity through a subjective verdict.

The universality of a subjective judgment of taste reaffirms its *sensus communis.*[44] The latter weighs our judgment with the possible judgment of others through an abstraction that allows us first to take the position of "the other" and, second, to detect and detach from the objective contingencies that affect our subjective verdict. The powerful aporia of autonomy—a subjective as much as universal judgment—is thus embodied by *sensus communis,* which Kant supports with the following maxims: first, to think for oneself (unprejudiced thought or understanding); second, to think from the standpoint of everyone else (enlarged thought or judgment); and third, to think consistently (consistent thought or reason).[45] The antithesis of the first leads to prejudice and superstition. The second implies a universal reflection of subjective judgment. The third is a synthesis of the first two maxims.

The "disinterested" nature of the Kantian judgment of taste is fundamental to understanding its social, economic, and political implications.[46] Kant advanced the disinterestedness of art by studying a subjective taste rather than the objective representation of the work. The rejection of any objective concept operates between the senses and reason and in opposition to any interest or "faculty of desire"—i.e., the maximization of profit. The

"disinterested" taste thus defends its autonomy vis-à-vis the capitalist logic of bourgeois society.

Schiller considered that human beings bore some resemblance to the alienating reality of the division of labor. They became fragments, losing any sense of humanity, within a class society that could never be abolished through a political revolution unless their humanity is restored. He considered that art could perform this restoration, not through its operation within society but precisely through its detachment in relation to the means-end logic of capitalist production.[47] Schiller's autonomy of art confronted the dehumanization of the individual within societies dominated by commercial exchanges. From the Renaissance until the end of the nineteenth century, the concept of "genius" developed as a reaction to "the frustration of the human person inherent in a community of producers and even more in commercial society."[48] Kant defined "genius" as "the exemplary originality of the natural endowments of an individual in the free employment of his cognitive faculties."[49] This aesthetic reaction rejected what bourgeoise culture established as morally "right" and stylistically "accepted." But its most radical interpretation abolished the social, economic, and political contingencies of the aesthetic autonomy conceived by Kant and Schiller.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the movement *l'art pour l'art* adopted the philosophical claims of aesthetic autonomy. This means that the movement adopted the autonomy of art, but it radicalized it to the point where it departed from any sociopolitical concern. The artist is thereby exiled because the world did not comprehend his or her creations. Poetry experienced a shift from "mimesis" to "expression," allowing the artist to overcome imitation and express freely. A paradigmatic example is Stéphane Mallarmé, who was influenced by Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* (The Flowers of Evil, 1857), a work condemned as an attack on bourgeois morality. In the poem titled "Albatross," Baudelaire highlighted the contrasts between his thought and life

through the analogy between a poet and an albatross. The poet mocked the sailors before he was captured, alienated from his environment, and "exiled on earth, amid the jeering crowd, / With giant wings that will not let him walk."[50] Mallarmé aspired to create poetry *ex nihilo*, creating what Walter Benjamin called a "theology of art" in which description or imitation was replaced by God-like creation. Schiller, Baudelaire, and Mallarmé explored the redemptive capacity of art that, like religion and science, failed to provide a refuge for humanity within the increasing social alienation of modern life. Friedrich Nietzsche's defense of art against an "objective" truth acquired meaning in this context: "Truth is ugly: we have art lest we perish from the truth."[51] At the end of the century, the artistic movement Aestheticism negated the means-end logic of capitalism and regarded the distance between art and the praxis of life as the content of the work of art.

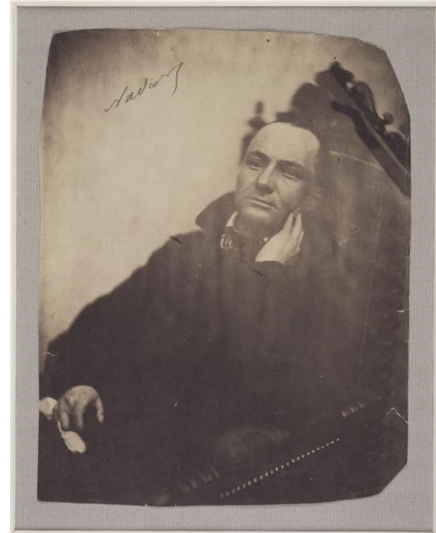

Figure 1.11. Charles Baudelaire, photograph by Félix Nadar, 1855

(© Musée d'Orsay, dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Patrice Schmidt)

In the twentieth century, the avant-garde movements—such as Dadaism, Surrealism, and the Russian artists that emerged after the October Revolution—attacked art as an institution to eliminate the divide between art and practical life promoted by Aestheticism.[52] The notion of "art as institution" refers to the logistical, intellectual, and productive apparatuses that mediate our reception of artworks under specific historical circumstances.[53] Dadaism's critique did not operate within art, like previous artistic styles, but *against* art, questioning its social function.[54] Aestheticism, according to the art historian Peter Bürger, was the precondition for avant-garde movements. Avant-garde could develop a self-critique of "art as institution" only after art detached from the praxis of life and was deprived of sociopolitical content.[55] Technical means and processes

Figure 1.12. *Bicycle Wheel*, Marcel Duchamp, New York, 1951 (third version, after lost original of 1913)

(© 2021 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris / Estate of Marcel Duchamp)

were analogous to their artistic counterparts in Marcel Duchamp's "readymades." If a mass- produced urinal possesses a certain style, it would be immediately absorbed by the homogeneity of the capitalist modes of production. Duchamp and Dada tried to reject the issue of quality and to abolish the distance between high and "less high art." But their failure was consummated when the less high art of the *Fountain* and the *Bicycle Wheel* were absorbed by the *museum as institution*.[56] This successful failure of the avant-garde productively questioned the cultural formation of an autonomous or critical work of art.

But the critical character of autonomy questions not only its own cultural and historical formation but also its ideological motivation. Peter Bürger identified "autonomy" as an ideological concept whose aesthetic interpretation only consolidated after the bourgeoisie seized political and economic power.[57] Thus, "autonomy" is constituted, like any ideological concept, by "an element of truth (the apartness of art from the praxis of life) and an element of untruth (the hypostatization of this process, which is a result of historical development as the "essence" of art)."[58] The more the autonomous work of art opposes reality, the more art commits to its social, economic, and political contingencies. Theodor Adorno exemplified his dialectical thought as follows: "An officer of the Nazi occupation forces visited the painter (Picasso) in his studio and, pointing to *Guernica*, asked: 'Did you do that?' Picasso reputedly answered, 'No, you did.'"[59] Adorno argued that autonomous works of art oppose empirical reality precisely by depicting historical horrors—in this case, the Spanish Civil War. This tension between

Figure 1.13. *Guernica*, Pablo Ruiz Picasso, 1937

(Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia)

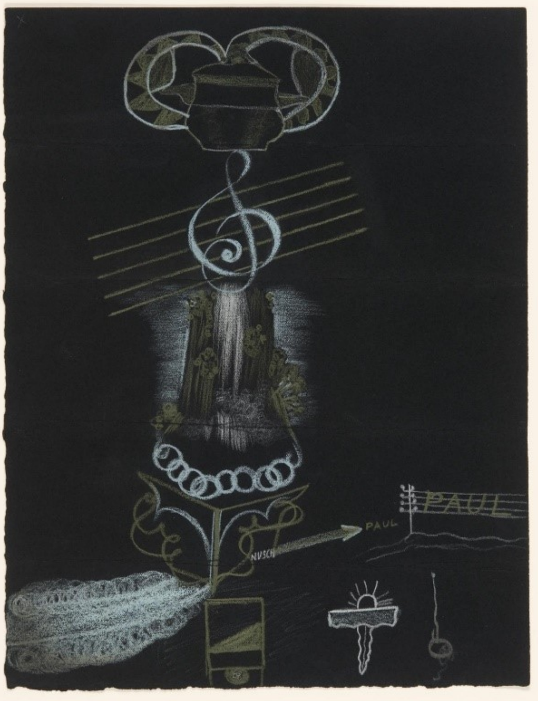

Figure 1.14. Exquisite Corpse, André Breton, Nusch Eluard, Valentine Hugo, Paul Eluard, 1930.

(Tate Modern)

"Because of their primary function as proposed delineations of personalities, the *cadavres* tend[ed] inevitably to raise anthropomorphism to its highest pitch and accentuate vividly the continuing relationship uniting the exterior world with the interior world."

—André Breton, *The Exquisite Corpse, Its Exaltation*

reality and the work of art increased through montage, the fragmentation of reality that Cubism, Surrealism, and cinema put forward. The organic work of art can be understood in entirety as the preservation of the coherence of the Renaissance composition. Conversely, the fragments of a non-organic work do not necessarily relate to reality because they constitute a new one.[60] In the surrealist's method of "Exquisite Corpse," a new reality was constituted by the conflation of an external and an internal world mediated by anthropomorphism.

The Renaissance composition implied continuity and wholeness, whereas avant-garde stimulated critical thinking in relation to life through discontinuity and shock.[61] Organic work preserved its meaning with substance acquired from context. The non-organic work of the avant-garde considered its substance as a fragment alienated from its

context and thus deprived of traditional meanings. The insertion of fragmentation into painting by the cubist collage created an aesthetic effect through its reconciliation with a heterogeneous empirical reality.[62] Introducing the surrealist logic, André Breton stated that "the eye exists in its savage state" to distinguish the savageness of vision from the rationality of bourgeois culture.[63] Breton's psychic automatism led to an unconscious experience, to a new order which differs from "real forms" and "real objects." Duchamp intended to reconcile the artistic and technical means of production, while Breton found a correspondence between psychic automatism and the mechanical automatism of new technical means such as the camera.

The surrealists explored the correspondence between psychic automatism and photography. Concurrently, Walter Benjamin claimed that the reproduction of the work of art has always existed but that the intensity of technical reproduction represented a new artistic process. Benjamin argued that the nineteenth-century lithography enabled both the tracing of a design in stone and the exchange of the artwork in the market, given its processes were as fast as those of printing. But lithography was soon replaced by photography. The cult value of past artworks justified its mere existence while the exhibition of photography and film quickly superseded any artistic function to address their worldliness.[64]

The cubist collage introduced montage into painting as a reaction against the complete and coherent constitution and reception of the Renaissance composition and its meaning. But film appropriated montage as the basis of its technical process through the succession of photographic images that (re)create the constant movement of their continuous and discontinuous content. When the eye confronts a painting, the object of its perception remains relatively stable despite the fragmentation that cubism proposed. But when the eye is exposed to a film, the instability of the changing image guarantees the instability of our rationality, our senses, and thus our judgment.

This aesthetic instability that the film procedures (shooting or cutting) assure parallels the unstable urban condition whose experience resembles the fragmentation of the cubist collage, the surrealist automatism, or the discontinuous narrative and acting in Bertolt Brecht's plays. It is precisely within the urban instability that the tension between the individual logic of autonomy and the collective logic of urbanism is so pervasive and natural that it remains unnoticed.

Figure 1.15. The Kuleshov effect, explained by Alfred Hitchcock in an interview with Fletcher Markle, 1964 (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Program "Telescope")

The Kuleshov effect embodies the persistent tension between the individual and the collective that architectural theory tends to view as antagonism (enemies, to be destroyed) but that an urban interpretation of autonomy suggests as agonism (adversaries, to be respected). Alfred Hitchcock defined the assembly of film that Lev Kuleshov's experiment implies as "pure cinematics."[65] He explained that in a cinematic sequence, a smiling old man could be considered gentle if the next frame shows a woman with a baby, but if the sequence shows a smiling old man observing a woman in a bikini, he could be considered lustful. The Kuleshov effect reveals two maxims of *an urban interpretation of autonomy through a cinematic effect*: First, communication is produced through the interaction of a sequence of shots rather than their isolation; and second,

the autonomous film director selects the shots of the cinematic sequence and their order despite any contingency. The interaction between the fragments (sequence of shots) guarantees the production of meaning. The autonomous logic of the fragment (avant-garde collage) ensures the agonistic struggle between autonomy and the experience of urbanism in contrast to the antagonistic logic of architecture. The autonomy of the film director, the problem of choice, resembles not only our design decisions in relation to the urban condition but also the daily choices of the individual at the simplest level—i.e., when the pedestrian turns either right or left, when we open the door with the right or the left hand, or when we choose between chocolate or vanilla. Film penetrates so deeply into reality that we overlook its effects. It offers a powerful method to question the deficiencies of life. As Benjamin suggested, "The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses."[66] The alliance between cinema, autonomy, and urbanism allows us to question the banality of design as much as the banality of life.

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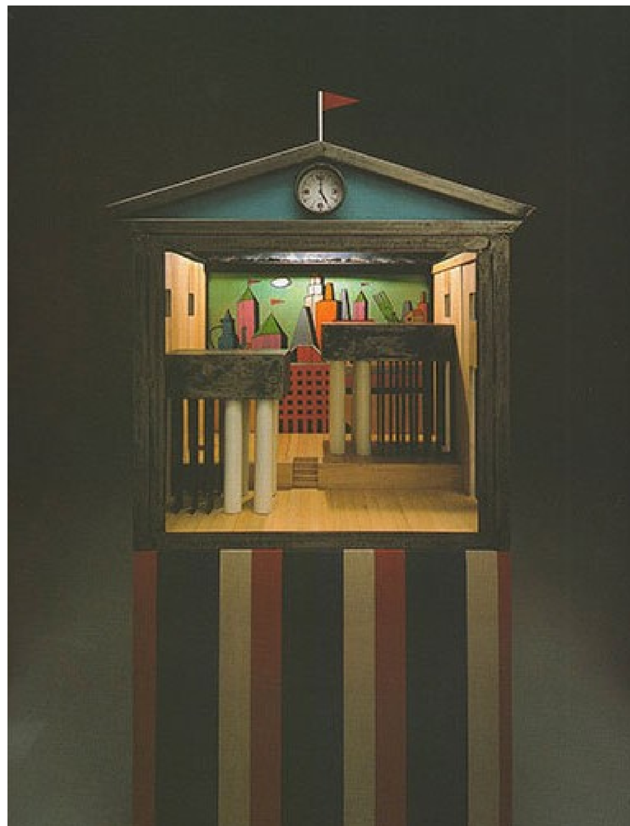
. . . people are like actors; when the footlights go up, they become involved in an event with which they are probably unfamiliar, and ultimately, they will always be so. The lights, the music, are no different from a fleeting summer thunderstorm, a passing conversation, a face.

—Aldo Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*



Teatrino Scientifico (The Scientific Theater)
Aldo Rossi, Gianni Braghieri, and Roberto Freno
1978

(© Eredi Aldo Rossi / Fondazione Aldo Rossi)

1.4. The Autonomy of the Political: Arendt and Schmitt

This dissertation studies the autonomy of "the political" through the pluralism advocated by Hannah Arendt and the sovereignty of the state defended by Carl Schmitt. The study of the tension created by these antipodal positions intends to bypass the self-proclaimed moral superiority of ideological blindness that is incapable of a self-critique *or* the sophisticated critique of the artist. This research does not reject ideology or morality; on the contrary, it accepts them as inevitable within the political character of the human condition that allows our social coexistence. However, it rejects the *ideology of morality* and the *morality of ideology* because their perversion has led to the proliferation of torture or genocide in the last century. In other words, this research discounts the characterization of "the other" as an *object* rather than as a *subject*.[67]

The ideas of Arendt and Schmitt distinguished "the political" from politics and rejected the conformism of society. Schmitt considered that the concept of the state was analogous to the concept of *the political*. However, he recognized that the development of the modern state challenged its own monopoly through an internal political struggle between new and evolving internal forces.[68] Arendt considered that modern privacy—"to shelter the intimate"—was discovered to contrast the social realm. She argued that the rise of mass society exemplified how society tends to "normalize" the behavior of its members, excluding the possibility of *action* and *speech* that result in human plurality.[69]

Action and speech, for Arendt, are manifestations of the human condition that necessarily derive from thinking. In 1961, she covered the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Israel—a member of the Nazi *Schutzstaffel* (Nazi-SS)— for *The New Yorker*. Arendt emphasized how Eichmann's inability to speak during the trial was closely related to his inability to think, especially from the perspective

of someone else. Eichmann followed orders and never reflected on the idea of banishing Jews from Germany in the 1930s.[70] Years later, Arendt declared that "to think always means to think in a critical manner. . . there are no dangerous thoughts, because thinking in itself is a very dangerous enterprise." She concluded that not thinking is even more dangerous.[71] The exacerbation of ideology exempts the individual from its autonomy, consciousness, and ethical and moral responsibility. The tension between the individual and the collective is evoked by Arendt through the correspondence between autonomy, as the self-governing capacity of the individual, and the exercise of political power: "The supreme criterion of fitness for ruling other is, in Plato and in the aristocratic tradition of the West, the capacity to rule one's self. Just as the philosopher-king commands the city, the soul commands the body and reason commands the passions."[72] Political ideologies tend to totalize the way societies work by absorbing individual agencies within a "collective" (or coercive) view of life. This occurs because these utopian ideologies are convinced that the end justifies the means. This leads to "collective" goals repressing individuality despite, the promotion of the individual's hypocritical concentration of political power (think of the *Führer* or the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) within hierarchical societies.

The political ideas of Arendt and Schmitt challenged each other. Arendt contested the concept of "sovereignty"—supreme dominion, authority, or rule—with the manifestation of "human plurality" through *action and speech*. Schmitt conceived the state as the decisive political entity necessitating an "enemy" to coalesce authority. He opposed pluralism, anarchism, liberalism, and their attempts to undermine the authority of the state.[73] On the other hand, Arendt opposed "sovereignty" because its mastership rejects freedom and plurality.[74] However, both authors agreed that "the political" was inherent to human life but often illegible. Both theorized the legibility of "the political" in everyday life to prevent the normalization of depoliticizing social

behavior.

The tension between universal and individual agencies suggests the impossibility of "absolute" autonomy. The comparative analysis of Arendt's and Schmitt's ideas strengthens this premise. Since the scientific discoveries of Galileo and Newton, the word "universal" implies something "valid beyond our solar system." Thus, the word "absolute" refers to time and space when, in turn, time and space on Earth are regarded as "relative."[75] Schmitt considered "the political world is a pluriverse, not a universe." He elaborated this idea declaring that "as long as a state exists, there will always be in the world more than just one state."[76] On the other hand, Arendt argued that "no man can be sovereign" because men inhabit Earth, and man's limited strength made him dependent on others.[77] Thus, the autonomy of "the political," formulated by Arendt and Schmitt, relied more on dependence than independence.

Arendt and Schmitt agreed on a relational, political dimension but differed in the notion of a public realm. The public realm is, for Arendt, where actions can take place and, for Schmitt, where the enemy can be identified. Arendt used the *polis* to exemplify how people *act* and *speak* together, constructing an entity that transcends any physical organization. Schmitt considered that "an enemy exists only when, at least potentially, one fighting collectivity of people confronts a similar collectivity." Thus, the enemy is a public enemy.[78] Schmitt proposed that the distinction between friend and enemy characterized the political realm as the most extreme antagonism derived from the real possibility of physical violence. This political antagonism does not necessarily lead to war, but war must be a latent possibility when recognizing "the other" as an enemy.[79] Contrarily, Arendt argued that *human distinctness* differed from *otherness*.[80] She defended *action* and *speech* as activities that actualize the human condition of natality and plurality, respectively. *Action* implies the possibility to take the initiative, while *speech* suggests

the potential to live together among equals without sacrificing individuality.[81]

Figure 1.16. Hannah Arendt speaks at The New School, Manhattan, New York, February 19, 1969.

(Photo by Neal Boenzi/New York Times Co./Getty Images)

"The result of a consistent and total substitution of lies for factual truth is not that the lies will now be accepted as truth, and the truth defamed as lies, but that the sense by which we take our bearings in the real world — and the category of truth vs. falsehood is among the mental means to this end — is being destroyed."

—Hannah Arendt

The notions of action and speech within Arendt's system constitute a rebellion against totalizing political ideologies. The tension between external phenomena and the philosophical autonomy of the individual is always present in Arendt's political theory. In contrast, Schmitt's National Socialist political sympathy disclosed the distinctiveness of the individual through an idea of sovereignty that absorbs the uniqueness of the subject as a person within a collective entity. However, in both cases, the constitution of "the political" depends on the freedom of choice. Schmitt paradoxically argued that people cease to exist politically as free when they allow someone else to distinguish between friend and enemy for them. On the other hand, Arendt countered the prescription of social behavior with our capacity for action, implying "that the unexpected can be expected" or that human beings can perform the improbable.

In architecture, Aldo Rossi's Scientific Theater evokes the capacity to expect the unexpected through *memory as repetition*. Rossi was keen on the rigor of science, its repetition, and the continuity of rituals. For him, architecture was more a ritual than a creative process. To expect the unexpected derives from the paradoxical changes allowed by repetition and continuity.

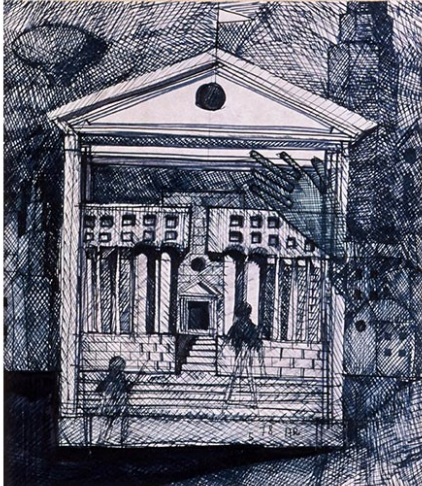


Figure 1.17. Teatrino Scientifico (Scientific Theater), Aldo Rossi, Gianni Braghieri, and Roberto Freno, 1978

(© Eredi Aldo Rossi / Fondazione Aldo Rossi)

The repetition of rituals and scientific procedures is the breeding ground for creation and invention. The analogy between Arendt and Rossi, *action* and *theater*, suggests the political connotation of the term "actor," which means a "person who performs or takes part in an action."[82]

The political distinction friend-enemy, proposed by Schmitt and adopted by Pier Vittorio Aureli, epitomizes the prevailing dichotomy in architectural theory that distinguishes *what architecture is* and *what architecture is not.* But while architectural criticism has not developed a self-critical model, Schmitt's antagonistic theoretical model advocated for the formulation of a self-critical attitude. He argued that Europe had experienced a succession of historical stages since the formation of the modern state—from theology to metaphysics, morality to economics, and the advent of technicism—that tends toward neutralization and depoliticization without realizing that any new stage represents the actualization of political struggles.[83] This political actualization was central in Schmitt's self-critical model, which concluded that the antithesis of life is not death, "For life struggles not with death, spirit not with spiritlessness; spirit struggles with spirit, life with life, and out of the power of an integral understanding of this arises the order of human things. *Ab integro nascitur ordo* (A new world order is born)."

Schmitt's description of progressive neutralization and depoliticization arguably describes the progression of architecture. The historical stages that Western architecture has gone through—Vitruvius, post-Vitruvian treatises, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the battle of styles, Modern architecture, Post-Modernism—also tended toward neutralization and depoliticization of

internal struggles, including a naïve interpretation of an “autonomous” detachment. If Schmitt considered that life does not struggle with death, but life struggles with life, architectural autonomy must struggle with architecture to reevaluate its role within culture and society. The self-critical battle of architecture has been dismissed, and its process of redefinition was reduced to a disciplinary narcissism devoid of life, culture, and society that precipitated its own alienation.

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What is important to me in my work is the identity that is hidden behind so-called reality. I search for a bridge from the given present to the invisible, rather as a famous cabalist once said, 'If you wish to grasp the invisible, penetrate as deeply as possible into the visible.'

—Max Beckmann

Die Granate (The Grenade)
Max Beckmann
1915, published 1918

(Museum of Modern Art, New York / Mary Ellen Meehan Fund, Johanna and Leslie J. Garfield Fund, and Frances Keech Fund / © 2021 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn)

1.5. The Darkness of Autonomy: Adorno

In the eighteenth century, the concept of human progress was arguably regarded as moral and intellectual perfection due to the shift from superstition to reason.[84] However, the development of human reason has raised some skepticism about its supposed healing powers over time. The moral and intellectual perfection of the Enlightenment gradually evolved into the economic and technical notion of "progress" during the twentieth century. This conceptualization favors the feats of the scientist or the entrepreneur over those of the philosopher or the artist. As the artist Barbara Kruger suggested the "progress" of the atomic bomb derived from the appropriation of science by political and ideological manias. The verdict of the philosopher Theodor Adorno was that "the more rational and reasonable we become, the more convinced we become of the objective irrationality and alienation of the world."[85] Adorno, along with Max Horkheimer, considered that the promise of a human state, per Enlightenment values such as freedom or autonomy, developed into the barbarism of fascism and the irrationality of capitalism.[86] During the second half of the twentieth century, the new rational impulse that informed the disciplinary interpretation of architectural autonomy considered the benefits of autonomy but not its drawbacks. The main problem was that autonomy within architecture was arguably considered a historical contingency, derived from the urgency to redefine the qualitative parameters of the discipline amid cultural unrest. The consideration of its philosophical roots, along with the validity

Figure 1.18. *Untitled*, Barbara Kruger, 1986

(© 2020 Barbara Kruger /
Photo © President and Fellows of Harvard College)

or obsolescence of its rational character, was dismissed.

The consideration of the false promises of autonomy would discourage the neophyte, but not Adorno, who valued the contradictory nature of philosophy and the novelty of Kantian thought. Philosophy, considered as "thinking on thinking" by Aristotle, is a critical system that does not seek a coherent and "objective" solution but strives for the *critical* struggle between different philosophical currents. For Adorno, the history of philosophy is the history of criticism whose unifying factor is "the unity of the problem."[87] The novelty of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* relies on its self-critique of reason, or philosophy itself. Thus, it is a contradictory condition in which reason becomes the defendant and the prosecutor at the same time.[88]

The originality of the Kantian system lies in understanding "critique" as the scrutiny of the truth of reason. Kant accepted the validity of science, but he questioned *why* science acquired such validity. It could be argued that the telescope changed the understanding of our empirical reality (the primacy of the senses), inaugurating the alliance between scientific progress and new instruments to question the arrogance of reason. But as Adorno warned us, it would be a mistake to consider that the rationality and subjectivism of Kantian philosophy denied empirical reality.[89] Throughout Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason,* "the object of knowledge and the subject of knowledge" work together. Kant did not exalt subjectivism (individual consciousness) to downgrade objectivity. On the contrary, he "grounds objectivity in the subject as an objective reality." But the paradoxical result is that knowledge becomes illusory. The closer the subject comes to the object of knowledge, the more the subject shapes the world in its image.[90]

The tension between a *lasting truth* and *the new,* or permanent and ephemeral values, is described by Adorno as a residual theory of truth identified in the works of Descartes, Leibniz, and Kant. This residual theory argues that truth remains "once everything sensory, everything

ephemeral and hence deceptive has been subtracted."[91] Adorno pointed out that the idea of an enduring truth is inherent to bourgeois society. The *new*, thus, is downgraded and regarded as a threat because it does not conform to prevailing concepts. The enduring truth is what Hegel and Nietzsche opposed because it could become a sterile formula. The universal validity of reason is problematic. First, reason could lead to an illusory objective knowledge shaped in the subjective image; and second, because truth could be received as predetermined and antagonistic to *the new*.[92] The formalism of Kantian philosophy, its reliance on the universal validity of reason, downgraded the validity of changing concepts whose affiliation with the world of phenomena escape from the control of the subject. But this critical attitude regarding the world's objectivity is not a form of *detachment* but rather a form of *engagement*. According to Adorno: "The Kantian theory of cognition proclaims that the world in its objectivity is actually the product of my subjectivity. This means that the world is not just something that has to be accepted passively, and obeyed, but that it is something that can be mastered by me."[93]

The correspondences between the Kantian autonomy and the architectural interpretation of Aldo Rossi are exposed when considering the principles of architecture as "unique and immutable" and viewing the sensitivity of architectural responses with actual human situations. Rossi argued: "On the one hand, therefore, is the rationality of architecture; on the other, the life of the works themselves."[94] Both Kant and Rossi accepted that rationality cannot escape from the contingencies of empirical reality and that the crucial question is if we tackle them passively or proactively. The problem of "choice" is proactively political to Aldo Rossi, while "choice" is dismissed as purely subjective in the disciplinary reductionism of conceptual architectural autonomy.

Rationality not only revealed but also precipitated the irrationality of fascism or capitalist production. The philosophical roots of rationality reveal its failures and its often-overlooked

successes. The success of Kantian autonomy, according to Adorno, is that it has a *regulatory character*. Thus, it does not aspire to *constitute knowledge*. This characteristic corresponds to the capacity of design to visualize alternative scenarios. The *regulatory character* of the Kantian system and Rossi's political choice strived to define the world as *it ought to be*, a world that must be mastered rather than accepted.[95]

On the other hand, the purely conceptual and disciplinary autonomy of architecture aspired to the *(re)constitution of knowledge* and intended to preserve its world as it is—the internal history of architecture. It thus rejected what reason cannot control—the "irrationality" of *what architecture is not,* that is, the urban condition or culture. The territory of the alliance between urbanism and autonomy is the darkness of rational autonomy. Its raw material is the irrationality inherent to rationality that formal approaches (the unrepressed impotence of reason to control the world of phenomena) overlook due to their reductionism.

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Saline de Chaux
Claude-Nicolas Ledoux
1775-1779

(Harvard Fine Arts Library)

1.6. The Urban Character of autonomen Architektur: Kaufmann

The Viennese art historian Emil Kaufmann built his reputation during the first half of the twentieth century by analyzing the architecture of the Age of Reason. His scholarship focused on the French architecture of the Enlightenment, which faded into oblivion during the nineteenth century. Kaufmann argued that the rebellion of the parts against the compositional coherence of the Renaissance-Baroque system originated in Italy during the sixteenth century. However, this rebellion of geometric parts against the whole and the sincerity of the material of a new architectural system matured first in England and then in France at the end of the eighteenth century. The sculptural architecture that characterized the Italian Baroque was replaced by its rational counterpart imbued with the ideals of the Enlightenment, such as Rousseau's freedom and Kant's autonomy. The alliance formulated by Kaufmann between Kant's philosophy and Ledoux's architecture proposed an *autonomous system.* The cultural substance of *autonomen Architektur* synthesized "the general mental attitude of a particular era," the Enlightenment, rather than "the periodic appearance and disappearance of forms."[96] What concerned this new attitude is not the *isolated* detachment of the parts but their *autonomous* engagement through the tension between a sovereign whole and its proactive parts. The historical, political, and social pedigree of this attitude informs the permanent struggle between the individual aspiration of autonomy and the collective logic of urbanism.

The doctrine of proportions, a recurrent theme of the Renaissance and the Baroque treatises, was abolished by an increasingly geometric autonomy during the Enlightenment. Prior to the Renaissance, medieval works merged with the natural environment by adapting to the topography. But the era of Leone Battista Alberti, who distinguished between *the making* and *the*

Figure 1.19. *Santa Maria Novella (facade),* Leon Battista Alberti, Florence, Italy, 1470.

(Harvard Fine Arts Library)

design of architecture, witnessed the compositional autonomy of an emerging, professional and artistic, architecture. Alberti (1404-1472), Palladio (1508-1580), and Scamozzi (1552-1616) advocated the concepts of *concatenation, gradation,* and *integration,* which are central to the Renaissance-Baroque doctrine of proportions. Scamozzi referred to *concatenation* as harmonious proportions, to *gradation* as the relationship between subordinate and ruling parts of a composition, and to *integration* as the consolidation of the parts to constitute a whole. These principles, according to Kaufmann, prevailed until the eighteenth century when they were gradually replaced by the principles of *repetition* (juxtaposition) and *antithesis* (contrast in size and texture or interpenetration) ruled by the concept of *independence*.[97] The extroversion (expressionism) of the Baroque was replaced by introversion (individuality) inherited by the sobriety of twentieth-century architecture. The rational use of materials (Ledoux's stone, Le Corbusier's concrete, and Mies's steel) left behind the plasticity of "the epoch of the architecture-

Figures 1.20 and 1.21. *The Rape of Proserpina,* Gian Lorenzo Bernini, 1621-1622

(Photos by Steven Zucker/Smarthistory)

sculptor" (Brunelleschi, Michelangelo, and Bernini). The post-revolutionary architects dismissed the metaphysics and semiotics of construction materials to consider the stone as stone.[98]

The anti-Baroque architecture was rooted in England and Italy during the eighteenth century, but it consolidated in France when the Enlightenment ideals acquired an architectural character. The great teacher Jacques-Francois Blondel set the foundations of revolutionary architecture even though his doctrine was still traditional. His rational methods questioned anthropomorphic forms. The concept of "the natural," for Blondel, superseded the previous imitation of organic nature to conform to "the rational adaptation of the forms to their purpose, and their conformity to the material."[99] His students Etienne-Louis Boullee, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, and Jean-Jacques Lequeu led the transition from the Baroque to a new architectural attitude.[100] In Boullee's work, the vestiges of the Baroque and its last stage, the Rococo, are untraceable. On the other hand, the ideals of a new social order permeated throughout Ledoux's architectural types—from the humble house to the palace. But the change was gradual. The Palace of the Prince de Montmorency (1770), designed by Ledoux, showed Baroque features both in plan and facade. The basement and the two stories, linked by the Ionic columns, constituted a unified composition. The spatial hierarchies of its plan respected the traditional main axis that was resolved innovatively in a corner. His public service complemented Ledoux's private practice. In 1771, he joined the corps of industrial inspectors to supervise the manufacturing processes of the royal factories. They eventually carried out the construction of the Saline de Chaux in Franche-Comte. His idealization of architecture as a democratic endeavor had already

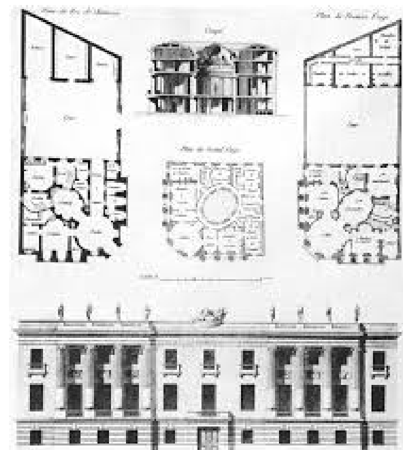


Figure 1.22. Hôtel de Montmorency, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. Plans, section, and elevation.

(From *Ornements d'Architecture*, pl. 163 Harvard Fine Arts Library / Frances L. Loeb Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Design)

materialized in some rural works and the design of bridges whose beauty, according to Ledoux, consists in the purity of their lines.[101]

Ledoux diagnosed a haphazard layout of the salt works of Lorraine and Franche-Comte. Thus, he proposed constructing a new saline close to the Forest of Chaux in Franche-Comte. Louis XV ordered the Saline de Chaux in 1773 and Ledoux designed two plans. The first project (1774) was conventional for its time; it distributed living and working activities in a homogeneous structure that surrounded an enclosed courtyard. Kaufmann described as

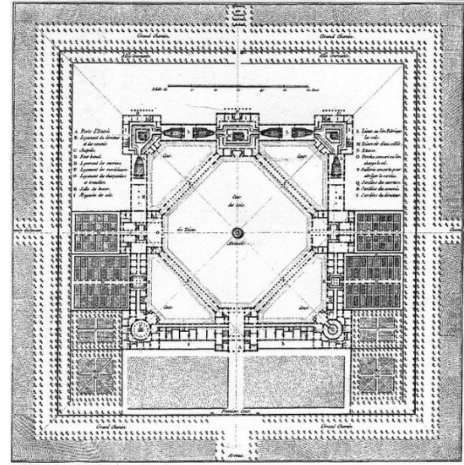


Figure 1.23. First plan of the Saline de Chaux, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux.

(From *L'Architecture*, plate 12)

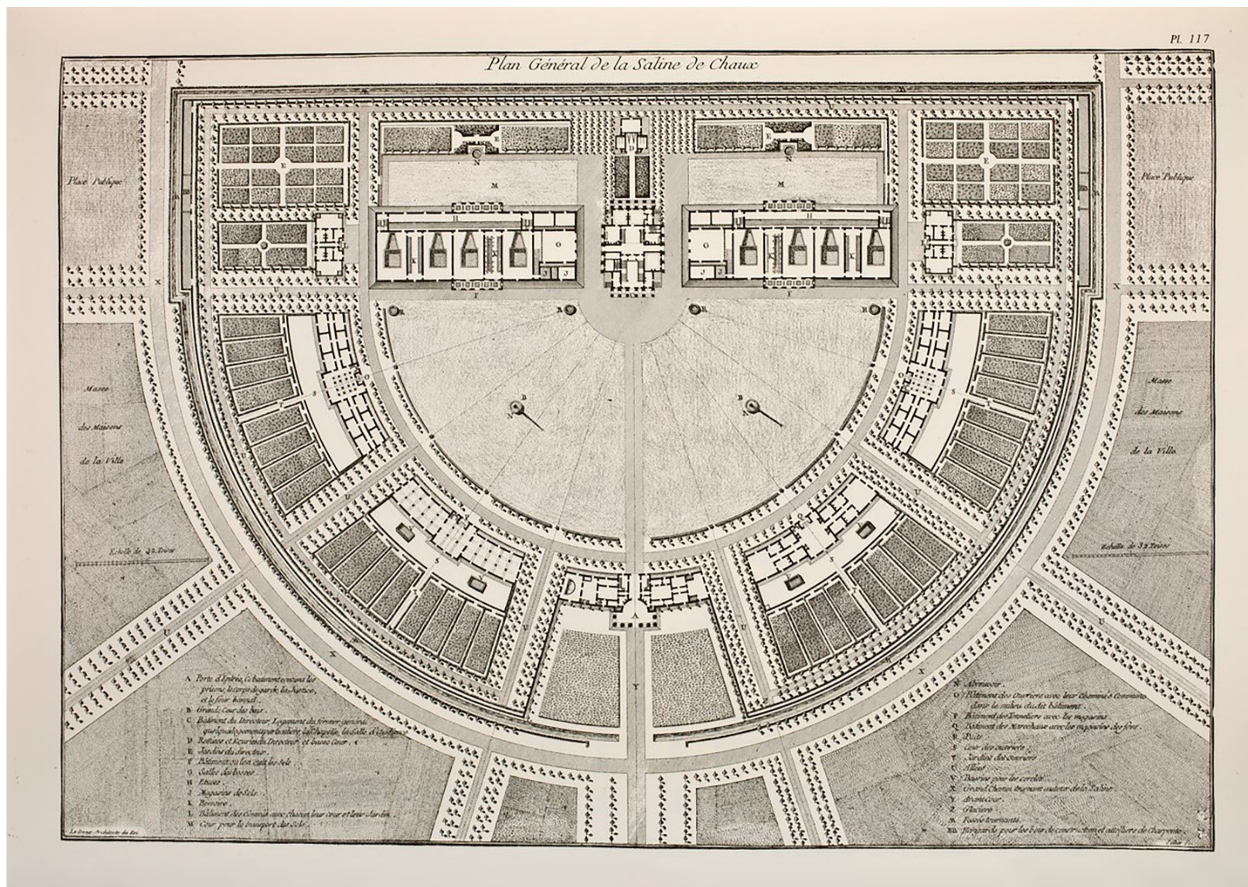


Figure 1.24. Second plan of the Saline de Chaux, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux.

(From *L'Architecture*, plate 16 / Harvard Fine Arts Library)

Baroque the subordination of the geometrical plan and the layout of the façade to a dominant center.[102] Ledoux found resistance to his aesthetic of production because a factory was low hierarchically regarding architectural types. Louis XV argued that the use of columns was a prerogative of temples or royal palaces. Thus, the architect proposed a second plan, whose construction started in 1775, sensitive to the debate on the design of hospitals to counter the unhygienic conditions of the factories. The semi-circular plan of the second project of the Saline de Chaux responded to Ledoux's assertion that "everything is circular in nature."[103]

The spirit of the era was keen on nature, from which Rousseau deduced his social system and Ledoux his architectural project.[104] But Ledoux's architecture at the Saline also responded to aesthetic concerns that Kaufmann called "a pavilion system" in which the "association of independent elements" replaced the subordination of the parts to the Baroque composition.[105] In the Baroque unity, "one part predominates over the others, but all the parts constitute a whole." On the other hand, in the new system, "the part is autonomous within a framework defined by the whole."[106] The pavilion-like architecture of the Saline de Chaux strived for the autonomy of its buildings, such as the director's house or the saltworks. The social ideals of freedom and autonomy, proposed by Rousseau and Kant, paralleled the autonomy of the architectural units in Ledoux's architecture. The semi-circular plan of the Saline—a royal form and sign of power—visually connected its different pavilions, resembling an amphitheater and anticipating Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon. "As type and

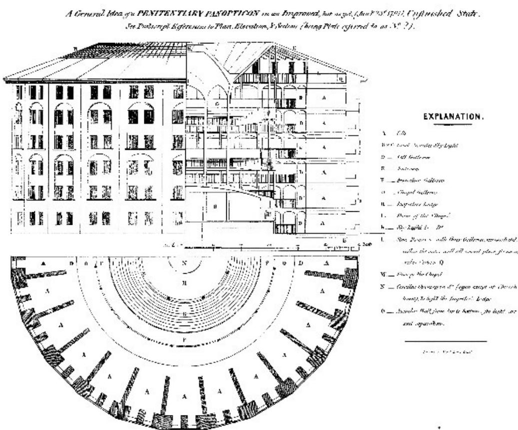
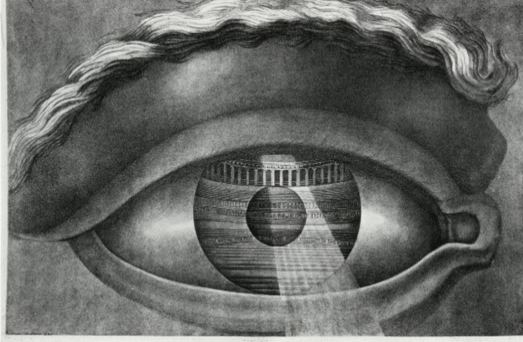
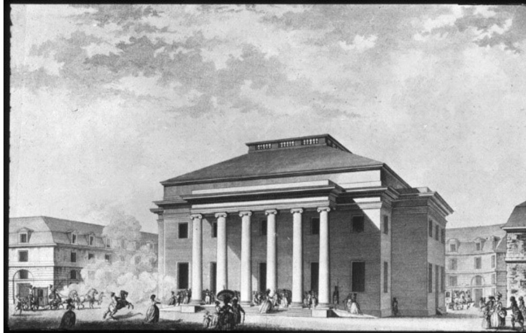


Figure 1.25. Penitentiary Panopticon Plan, Jeremy Bentham, 1843 (originally 1791).

(From *The works of Jeremy Bentham vol. IV, 172-3*)





Figures 1.26 and 1.27. Eye reflecting the interior of the Theatre of Besancon and the main facade, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Doubs, France, 1778-1784.

(Harvard Fine Arts Library, Special Collections)

metaphor," according to Vidler, "the theatrical plan controlled and gave substance to Ledoux's complex mixture of social and political idealism at Chaux."[107] Both the Theatre of Besancon and the Saline de Chaux were designed in conjunction. Ledoux referred to the theater as the microcosm of the Saline, which was part of regional development. This analogy represented the relationship between theatrical and social themes, between architecture and the region.[108]

The Saline de Chaux embodied a transition from the heteronomy of Baroque unity to the autonomy of a pavilion-like architecture and an *autonomous attitude* that exceeded the desires of any discipline. The semi-circular plan of the Saline de Chaux was expected to be doubled as the city developed. The project was part of a governmental strategy to renew agriculture and promote trade and commerce in the east of France.[109] Ledoux situated the center of the Ideal City of Chaux at the intersection between a north-south axis that connected Besancon and the Loue River. In contrast, the east-west axis connected the towns of Arc and Senans. His design celebrated the diversity within the trade network that represented the intersection of both axes: "Some polish the steel, chase the brass, blow the glass; others cast the white-hot metal that sustains the rights of nations."[110] The physiocratic theory—an eighteenth-century economic model that promoted agriculture as the source of all wealth—informed the idealism that constituted Chaux as much as the practical knowledge of agronomy. Kaufmann pointed out that Ledoux was the precursor of Haussmann

when he declared in the introduction of *L'Architecture*: *Je presenterai les Chemins destines a desobstruer l'interieur de la ville: ces magnifiques boulevards, sans exemple pour l'etendue. . .* ("I will present the paths intended to unblock the interior of the city: these magnificent boulevards, without example regarding their expanse. . ."). Ledoux conceived the city, according to Kaufmann, not as a merely utilitarian task or an agglomeration of buildings but rather "the crown of all architectural endeavors."[111] Thus, this dissertation builds on the architectural character of an urban autonomy whose foundations date back to the eighteenth century.

Notes

[1] See K. Michael Hays, "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form," *Perspecta* 21 (1984), 15-29.
[2] A self-critique implies the difficult task to take distance from the self. "Critique," for Cornelius Castoriadis, "entails a distance relative to the object, if philosophy is to go beyond journalism, this critique presupposes the creation of new ideas, new standards, new forms of thought establishing this distance." See Cornelius Castorladis, "The Retreat from Autonomy: Post-Modernism as Generalized Conformism," *Thesis Eleven* 31, no. 1 (1992), 17.
[3] Emil Kaufmann, *Von Ledoux Bis Le Corbusier: Ursprung Und Entwicklung Der Autonomen Architektur. Unveränderter Nachdruck* (Stuttgart: G. Hatje, 1985).
[4] Unlike Pier Vittorio Aureli's project of autonomy whose character is exclusively political, this dissertation builds on the philosophical genesis of *autonomen Architektur* formulated by Kaufmann without relegating its political dimension. See Pier Vittorio Aureli, and Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture, *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture within and against Capitalism,* Buell Center/FORuM Project Publication; 4 v. (New York: Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008).
[5] The postwar years left behind the scientifically defined "modern age," inaugurating what Hannah Arendt defined politically as the "modern world" which forced us into an unknown era. See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition,* Charles R. Walgreen Foundation Lectures (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 5-7. Important social, economic, technological and political changes informed a post-modern skepticism toward metanarratives and institutions, described by Jean-Francois Lyotard. See Jean François Lyotard, Geoffrey Bennington, and Brian Massumi, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, Theory and History of Literature* 10 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), Introduction xxiv. For example, the rise of mass culture, the invention of the transistor (1947), the outbreak of the Cuban Revolution (1959), the space race of the Cold War (1959), the pill to control human birth (1959), the strength of the Feminist movement, the Civil Rights act (1964), the Vietnam War (1954-1975), the oil crisis (1973). See Fred Kaplan, *1959,* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009).
[6] The relationship between architecture and pop art could be traced back to 1956 when Alison and Peter Smithson published the essay titled "But Today We Collect Ads," while Denise Scott Brown's "Learning from Pop" (1971) announced the theoretical reflection on social values communicated across space of Learning from Las Vegas (1972). K. Michal Hays writes in, *Architecture Theory since 1968*, that the essay, "But Today We Collect Ads," was published in *Ark* (1956) in tandem with the exhibition "This Is Tomorrow," of the Independent Group at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London, consolidating the relationship between architecture and pop art. See K. Michael Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968,* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 60.
[7] Diana Agrest, "Design vs Non-Design," in *Architecture Theory since 1968,* ed. K. Michael Hays (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 200-213.
[8] Stanford Anderson, "Critical Conventionalism in Architecture," *Assemblage*, no. 1, (1986), 7–23.
[9] Michael Hays presented Mies van der Rohe's Glass Skyscraper (1922) and the Barcelona Pavilion (1929) as a critical architecture, "That claims for itself a place between the efficient representation of preexisting cultural values and the wholly detached autonomy of an abstract formal system." Kenneth Frampton said that "among the many aspects of the cultural enterprise," architecture is arguably the least autonomous considering "the contingent nature of architecture as a practice." His observation focused on architecture as practice and assumed that the critical character of autonomy is impermeable to contingencies rather than determined paradoxically by them. See K. Michael Hays, "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form," *Perspecta,* vol. 21, (The MIT Press, 1984), 15. And Kenneth Frampton, "Reflections on the Autonomy of Architecture," in Out of Site: a Social Criticism of Architecture, ed. Diane Yvonne Ghirardo (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991), 17.
[10] The essays published in *Perspecta* (Mining Autonomy) are "Ledoux and Kant" by Hubert Damisch, and "The Ledoux Effect: Emil Kaufmann and the Claims of Kantian Autonomy" by Anthony Vidler. See "Mining Autonomy," *Perspecta* 33, (2002).
[11] See Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting, "Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism," *Perspecta* 33, (2002), 72–77.
[12] Koolhaas proposed that the ability of the architectural project to engage with economic, social or political phenomena is arguably uncritical. Quoted by George Baird, "'Criticality' and Its Discontents," *Harvard Design Magazine*, no. 21 (2004), 16–21.
[13] The post-critical discourse ignored that the modern alliance between knowing and making informed the development of the autonomy of architecture based on the Kantian system in which theory and practice, like objectivism and subjectivism, are two sides of the same coin. Kant wrote in 1755: "Give me matter and I will build a world from it, that is, give me matter and I will show you how a world developed from it." In the words of Hanna Arendt, "few centuries of knowing in the mode of making were needed as the apprenticeship to prepare modern man for making what he wanted to know." Quoted by Arendt, *The Human Condition,* 296.
[14] George Baird, "'Criticality' and its Discontents," 19-21.
[15] Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (Cambridge, MA.; London, England: MIT Press, Kindle edition, 2011), Location 35.
[16] Ibid., Location 317-325.
[17] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2015), Location 129, Kindle edition.
[18] The concept of "the history of History" was used by Foucault to refer to the traditional way that we write history. See Michel Foucault, The Order of Things, (London, New York: Routledge Classics, 2005), 403.
[19] Democritus (c. 460 bce - c. 370) predicted the victory of the mind over the senses as a paradoxical defeat since the mind takes its arguments from the senses. See Arendt, *The Human Condition,* 275.
[20] Descartes wrote *Discourse on Method* (1637) in French—despite the philosophical works used to be written in Latin until then—to democratize learning and incentivize everyone to think autonomously.
[21] See Richard A. Watson. "Descartes, René," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition*, 2019, accessed February 6, 2020.
[22] The British empiricists, George Berkeley (1685–1753) and David Hume (1711–1776), questioned the rational capacity to comprehend a different reality than the acquired through experience. The Idealism of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) built on the universality of reason triggering the subsequent critique of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831) and F.W.J. Schelling (1775–1854).
[23] See Richard Wolin, "Continental Philosophy," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition*, 2019, accessed February 16, 2020.
[24] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power,* trans. R. Kevin Hill and Michael A. Scarpitti (United Kingdom: Penguin Random House, 2017), Section 583, Kindle edition.
[25] Theodor W. Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (1959)*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 41.

[26] Ibid., 55.
[27] Clement Greenberg wrote that Kant was the first real Modernist because he "was the first to criticize the means itself of criticism." See Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays*, Beacon Paperbacks 212 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965).
[28] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Location 2382, Kindle edition.
[29] Kant considered that "pure reason is practical of itself alone and gives (to the human being) a universal law which we call the moral law." See Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Location 30, Kindle edition.
[30] Ibid., 129.
[31] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture,* Volume I, Information Age Series, 2nd edition (United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), Location 3, Kindle edition.
[32] See the philosophical definition of "Self." (Oxford Enligh Dictionary) The ego (often identified with the soul or mind as distinct from the body); the subject of all that one does and experiences during one's existence; a true or enduring personal identity. Also: a person as the object of introspection; that to which a person refers by singular first-person pronouns (as opposed to other persons or things). And the etymological origin of "Identity." (Oxford Enligh Dictionary) post-classical Latin identitat-, identitas quality of being the same (4th century.), condition or fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else (8th century).
[33] *L'Encyclopédie, Ou Dictionnaire Raisonné Des Sciences, Des Arts Et Des Métiers* (Encyclopaedia, Classified Dictionary of Sciences, Arts, and Trades) advanced and disseminated the philosophical and political discoveries of the Enlightenment that called into question traditional knowledge of nature, the universe and God. The United States Declaration of Independence confronted the course of political events that subordinated the North American British Colonies to Great Britain, defending what today seems a self-evident truth, "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Fourteen years earlier, in 1762, Rousseau's *Du Contrat social* (The Social Contract) opened chapter 1 stating that "man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. One believes himself the others' master, and yet is more a slave than they." Then, he continues in chapter 4 stating that "since no man has a natural authority over his fellow-man, and since force produces no right, conventions remain as the basis of all legitimate authority among men." The point is not to evaluate the influence of Rousseau's political philosophy on The United States Declaration of Independence but to evince the desire of emancipation led by the rational revolution of the Enlightenment.
[34] Rousseau went on by saying that "since no man has a natural authority over his fellow-man, and since force produces no right, conventions remain as the basis of all legitimate authority among men." See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Victor Gourevitch, *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 41, 44.
[35] Heinrich Heine, and Paul Lawrence, *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany,* James Cook University of North Queensland Historical Publications. (Townsville, Qld.: Dept. of History, James Cook University of North Queensland, 1982), 84.
[36] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (New York: Prism Key Press, 2010), Epilogue.
[37] First, the "autonomous" work of art preserved the handicraft mode of production within the historical process of the division of labor (B. Hinz); second, the Renaissance artist rejected his status as a craftsman to defend the intellectual character of his work (P. Bürger); third, the autonomy of art was a reaction to the emerging capitalist economy (M. Muller); fourth, the transition from artistic patronage that commissioned specific artwork to the collector that emerged together with the "autonomous" artist whose production engaged a growing, and anonymous, art market (Winckler and Hausler). See Peter Bürger, Theory of the Avant-Garde*,* Theory and History of Literature 4, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 35-37; and Peter Bürger, "On the Problem of the Autonomy of Art in Bourgeois Society," in *Art in Modern Culture: an Anthology of Critical Texts*, edited by Francis Frascina and Jonathan Harris, (New York: Phaidon Press, 1992), 52.
[38] While Habermas regarded autonomy as the emancipation of the work of art from their use, Bürger refers to autonomy vis-à-vis the social demands of the work. See Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde,* 24.
[39] Peter Bürger argues that despite the bourgeois aesthetics of the eighteenth century "freed itself of the stylistic norms that had linked the art of feudal absolutism and the ruling class of that society, art nonetheless continued to obey the 'imitation naturae' principle." Ibid., 17.
[40] MoMA Online Collection (Museum of Modern Art, New York Learning), accessed March 25, 2021, https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/jean-hans-arp-untitled-collage-with-squares-arranged-according-to-the-laws-of-chance-1916-17/.
[41] In his first Critique (1781), Kant proposed to establish a court of justice presided by reason and, in his second Critique (1788), he condemned the lack of obligation of the "heteronomy of choice," arguing that the "autonomy of the will is the sole principle of all moral laws." In the third one, Critique of Judgment (1790), he defines judgement as "the faculty of thinking the particular as contained under the universal," and taste as "the faculty of estimating the beautiful." Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964) Location 293, Kindle edition, IV. Judgment as a Faculty by which Laws are prescribed *a priori*.
[42] "Taste lays claim simply to autonomy," according to Kant, "to make the judgements of others the determining ground of one's own would be heteronomy." Ibid., Location 1936 Kindle edition, SS 32. First peculiarity of the Judgment of Taste.
[43] Ibid., Location 2155 Kindle edition, SS 40. Taste as a kind of *sensus communis*.
[44] *Sensus communis* is considered as "a critical faculty which in its reflective act takes account (a priori) of the mode of representation of everyone else, in order, as it were, to weigh its judgement with the collective reason of mankind, and thereby avoid the illusion arising from subjective and personal conditions which could readily be taken for objective." Ibid., Location 2121 Kindle edition, SS 40. Taste as a kind of sensus communis.
[45] Ibid., Location 2126-2141 Kindle edition, SS 40. Taste as a kind of sensus communis.
[46] The "disinterest" was initially formulated, in Great Britain, by Anthony Ashley Cooper and later, in Germany, by Karl Philipp Moritz who considered that "the beautiful object yields a higher and more disinterested pleasure than the merely useful object." Karl Philipp Moritz: "in contemplating a beautiful object… I roll the purpose back into the object itself: I regard it as something that finds completion not in me but in itself and thus constitutes a whole in itself and gives me pleasure for its own sake…" Quoted by Casey Haskins, et al, "Autonomy," *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, (2014), 171.
[47] Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 41-46.
[48] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 209.
[49] Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, Location 2352 and 2529 Kindle edition, SS 46. Fine art is the art of genius and SS 49. The faculties of the mind which constitute genius.
[50] In the words of the literary critic Nicholas Lezard, "the idea of the poet who is scornful or terrified of everyday life" begins with the Romanticism of Baudelaire. Nicholas Lezard, "The Flowers of Evil by Charles Baudelaire Review—the Essence of a Genius," accessed October 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/may/11/flowers-of-evil-charles-baudelaire-review-essence-genius
[51] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, Section 822, Kindle edition.

[52] In *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Peter Bürger put forward two main theses: first, that the avant-garde made possible a retroactive understanding of the development of art in bourgeois culture because it exposed general categories of the work of art; and second, that art (as social subsystem) developed a self-critique through the avant-garde movements. The first thesis considers that a traditional chronology that studies the avant-garde through the understanding of the preceding artistic phases overshadows the fact that the latter can only be understood through the former. This logic accepts contradiction in the historical process of the autonomy of art rather than a traditional idea of linear progress. The second thesis proposes that Dadaism criticized the development of art as institution within bourgeois society. However, Bürger accepts that some pre-avant-garde categories, that antedated it, are rejected in the avant-garde works. See Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 20-28.
[53] Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 22.
[54] Dadaism is paradigmatic of a necessary critique of the social role of art that parallels the study of the social role of design through autonomy that its architectural interpretation has generally omitted by operating within the boundaries of the discipline.
[55] In Bürger's theoretical model the autonomy doctrine "as the normative instrumentality of an institution in bourgeois society becomes the object of the investigation." Theodor W. Adorno and Georg Lukács assessed the avant-garde as positive and negative, respectively, operating within the institution of art, according to Bürger. Adorno considered the avant-garde as the highest stage of art, whereas Lukács regarded it as decay. Thus, their critique could be considered system-immanent, whereas Bürger proposed that the avant-garde put forward the self-criticism of art as institution. Ibid., Introduction.
[56] Clement Greenberg, "Avant-garde Attitudes: New Art in the Sixties," lecture at the University of Sydney, Australia, May 17, 1968, *Studio International* 179, (1970), 142-145.
[57] The theoretical model used by Bürger to reveal the contradictions inherent to the aesthetic "autonomy" built on the complexity of Marxist criticism. Marx exposed the contradictory structure of religion, through his critique of ideology. The truth of religion is its protest against misery, while its untruth is the non-existence of God. Its social function counters misery with the illusion of happiness, paradoxically, preventing the experience of true happiness.
[58] Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 46.
[59] Theodor Adorno, "Commitment," in Andrew Arato, Eike Gebhardt, Andrew Piccone, and Paul Piccone, *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (New York: Continuum, 1982), 313.
[60] Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 55-59.
[61] The dada montage, according to Michael Hays, "overwhelms the individual subject by constituting another place, another history, another way of thinking beyond the self, more powerful than the self." See K. Michael Hays, *Modernism and the Posthumanist Subject: the Architecture of Hannes Meyer and Ludwig Hilberseimer* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 170.
[62] In "In the Name of Picasso," Rosalind Krauss compares two paintings by Picasso: Seated Bather (1930) and Bather with Beach Ball (1932). Both paintings highlight the reception of an isolated form within the frame: "Both conceive the figure as constructed out of parts whose provisional coherence effects a transformation from one thing (bone, balloon) to another (pelvis, breast)." Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 23.
[63] Rosalind E. Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," in Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, 93.
[64] Photography, which supposed for Benjamin, "the first truly revolutionary means of reproduction" because it replaced the cult value of art with a renewed exhibition value. Benjamin explains that the prehistory of photography could be traced back to the lithography of the nineteenth century, the engraving and etching of the Middle Ages, woodcut and the founding and stamping practiced by the Greeks. And graphic art could be reproduced mechanically through woodcut for the first time. See Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,* Chapter V and VI.
[65] Alfred Hitchcock equated the Kuleshov effect with pure cinematics in 1964, during an interview to the CBC television series *Telescope* with host-director Fletcher Markle. https://www.lightsfilmschool.com/blog/what-is-the-kuleshov-effect-agj
[66] Benjamin, *The Work of Art,* XIII.
[67] Octavio Paz stated that the history of the twentieth century is the history of utopias turned into concentration camps. Joaquín Soler Serrano interviewed Octavio Paz in "A Fondo" *RTVE*, 1976.
[68] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political,* expanded edition, trans. George Schwab (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 3.
[69] This "rebellion of the heart" against the conformism of society was orchestrated by Rousseau and Romanticism. See Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 39.
[70] When Eichmann was asked about the idea that Jews must be banished from Germany, he replied: "In 1934-35, I never gave a thought of these matters." See Vita Activa: The Spirit of Hannah Arendt. Dir. Ina Fichman and Ada Ushpiz, Zeitgeist Films, 2015.
[71] Arendt during an interview for the French TV in 1973. See the documentary *Vita Activa: The Spirit of Hannah Arendt.*
[72] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 224.
[73] In the prehispanic tradition of Mesoamerica, this tension between Arendt's pluralism and Schmitt's sovereignty arguably coincided. The Aztec sovereign was called "tlatoani" (from the nahuatl tlahtoani, tlatoa which means "to speak," and tlatolli which means "word") which means "the one who speaks," "orator," or "emperor." The paradox is that the "tlatoani" synthesized both speech which for Arendt, together with action, embodies the political character of the human condition and the concentration of power on one single entity, an emperor, which in Schmitt's theory is represented by a state. See "tlatoani." Gran Diccionario Náhuatl (online). Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Ciudad Universitaria, México D.F., 2012. http://www.gdn.unam.mx
[74] She considered that if both concepts could be considered as analogous, "no man could be free, because sovereignty, the ideal of uncompromising self-sufficiency and mastership, is contradictory to the very condition of plurality." Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 234.
[75] Ibid., 269.
[76] Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 6.
[77] Chris Thornhill explains that, in modern societies, "the political" emerged as autonomous through "a process in which resources of social power were gradually abstracted from the highly diffuse, familial, local, and ecclesiastical forms of feudal society and incrementally invested in formally structured institutions." Thornhill concludes that "the political" was constructed as an element of "the social." Therefore, the formation of "the political" depended on the abstraction and transmission of power through law as a technical apparatus of legitimate authority. The latter argument—that the concept of "the political" present in the modern state emerged from "the social" structure of feudal society—could be contested but Thornhill's point is the impossibility of the "absolute" autonomy of "the political" at the most abstract level. See Chris Thornhill, "The Autonomy of the Political: A Socio-Theoretical Response," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 35, no. 6 (2009), 705–735. See Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 234.
[78] For Hobbes, the state of war involves individuals, while, for Schmitt, the state of war involves groups (nations). See Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 3.

[79] The friend-enemy distinction deviates from traditional criteria such as morality (good and evil), aesthetics (beautiful and ugly) or economics (profitable and unprofitable). See Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 2.
[80] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 176.
[81] The theoretical genealogy of Arendt is diffuse because she draws on the classical philosophy of Plato or Aristotle as much as on the scientific achievements of Galileo or Newton, the political thought of Rousseau and even Jesus Christ. On the other hand, Hegel's influence on Schmitt and German political science (Lorenz von Stein, Rudolf Gneist, Albert Haenel) is identified with the supremacy of the state over society.
[82] See the definition of "actor, n." *OED Online*, (Oxford University Press, June 2020), accessed July 6, 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/1963.
[83] In a lecture titled "The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations" (1929) in Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 80.
[84] This historical moment shifted, according to Carl Schmitt, "from religious fanaticism to intellectual liberty, from dogma to criticism, from superstition to enlightenment, from darkness to light." Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 8.
[85] Theodor W. Adorno. "Lecture Ten, 23 June 1959, The Concept of the Thing II." in Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 113.
[86] We can go even further recalling Nietzsche's words: "Mankind does not advance, it does not even exist. The aspect of the whole is much more like that of a huge experimenting workshop where some things in all ages succeed, while an incalculable number of things fail; where all order, logic, co-ordination, and responsibility is lacking." See Nietzsche, *The Will to Power,* Section 90. And Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002).
[87] Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 56.
[88] This self-critique was performed by the avant-garde movements against art as institution, questioning (not defending) the role of art within society. A self-critique that has yet to be developed in architecture and urbanism using autonomy as method.
[89] Adorno argues that: "It would be a gross misunderstanding of Kantian idealism if we were to conceive of it as an acosmic philosophy, as a denial of empirical reality; or if we were even to go so far as to impute to Kant the desire to suggest that the world if no more than a dream—a suggestion made by Descartes in his Meditations…" See Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 96.
[90] The tradition of subjectivism to which Kant belongs dates from the ancient Eleatics (pre-Socratic philosophy), Plato, Aristotle, and Descartes. But despite his thought used doubt as method, he differed from skepticism to identify with Platonic thinking. Kant echoed the "eternally immutable realm of truth" proposed by Plato, while his detachment from skepticism relied on the role played by empirical reality in his philosophy. On the other hand, experience does not play a significant role in skepticism. Descartes considered the world as a dream, while Kant considered the interdependence between empirical reality and the timeless truths of reason. See Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 96 & 175-177.
[91] Ibid., 25.
[92] Rosalind E. Krauss explains, in "Sculpture in the Expanded Field" (1978), the absorption of the ideology of the new under the logic of historicism through the analysis of the sculpture of postwar American art. She argues that the term sculpture was manipulated to include unexpected things. "The new," according to Krauss, "is made comfortable by being made familiar, since it is seen as having gradually evolved from the forms of the past." The shock of change, of the new, is mitigated by the idea of evolution—not from an immediate past but from a distant one. These echoes of the past appear, for example, in the radical philosophy of Nietzsche through the idea of "primitive" aesthetics and in Giacometti, as well as in the pre-Columbian fascination of Anni and Josef Albers. The new appeals to the old to legitimize its own condition. See Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, 277.
[93] Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 135.
[94] Aldo Rossi and Peter Eisenman, *The Architecture of the City,* Oppositions Books (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), 116.
[95] The parallel between philosophy and design in this sense is striking. Adorno on Kantian autonomy as regulatory principle. In "The Science of Design: Creating the Artificial," Herbert A. Simon argues that the standard logic of sciences is concerned with assertions and statements about phenomena, the world, whereas design "is concerned with how things ought to be" which is a task identified by Adorno in Kantian philosophy. See Herbert Simon, "The Science of Design: Creating the Artificial," *Design Issues* 4, no. 1-2 (1988), 69; and Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 137.
[96] Emil Kaufmann, *Architecture in the Age of Reason; Baroque and Postbaroque in England, Italy, and France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), 76.
[97] The antithesis of the architectural elements in Hawksmoor's architecture (England), the hostility among the elements in Piranesi's Prisons (Italy) and the geometric frankness of Boullee and Ledoux (France) superseded the ornamental excesses of Bernini, Fontana and Borromini. See Ibid., 94, 188.
[98] Anthony Vidler, "The Ledoux Effect: Emil Kaufmann and the Claims of Kantian Autonomy," *Perspecta,* vol. 33 (2002): 16–29.
[99] Emil Kaufmann, *Three Revolutionary Architects: Boullée, Ledoux, and Lequeu*, American Philosophical Society (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1952), 439.
[100] For Kaufmann, Boullee represents "the struggle for new forms"; Ledoux, "the search for a new order"; and Lequeu, "the tragic ultimate stage of the revolutionary movement." See Ibid., 435.
[101] Anthony Vidler and Claude Nicolas Ledoux, *Claude-Nicolas Ledoux: Architecture and Utopia in the Era of the French Revolution* (Basel, Boston: Birkhäuser, 2006), 34.
[102] Ibid., 509-510.
[103] The doctor Antoine Petit proposed a circular plan arguing against an orthogonal one because it was expensive and encouraged the stagnation of water. See Ibid., 46.
[104] Ledoux wrote, "la forme est pure comme celle que decrit le soleil dans sa course," equating the forces of nature with the forces of a formal idealism. The semi-circular plan of the Saline de Chaux and its siting, according to Kaufmann, was determined by practical decisions in contrast to the subordination of nature to the artistic intentions of the Renaissance-Baroque system. Ledoux's preoccupation with the winds is part of a lineage—from Vitruvius to Gropius, to Hilberseimer—concerned with the dispersion of smoke in living and working communities. See Kaufmann, *Three Revolutionary Architects*, 512.
[105] Emil Kaufmann, *De Ledoux a Le Corbusier: Origen y Desarrollo de la Arquitectura Autónoma,* Colección Punto y Linea (Barcelona: G. Gili, 1982), 33-42.
[106] Kaufmann, *De Ledoux a Le Corbusier*, 40.
[107] Vidler, *Claude-Nicolas Ledoux*, 49.
[108] Ibid., 81-82.
[109] Vidler describes the Saline de Chaux as part of an urban strategy as follows: "Jean Querret, the chief engineer of the province, proposed a renewal of the canals, and his project was expanded by another engineer, Philippe Bertrand, in the 1770s, who projected a canal joining the Doubts to the Saone, and thence through Alsace to the Rhine; a project that he conceived would, with the addition of the Canal de Bourgogne

already started, form a network to make Franche-Comte 'the centre of commerce between the three seas, and make of it the most magnificent establishment.'" See Ibid., 117.
[110] Ibid., 122.
[111] Kaufmann, *Three Revolutionary Architects*, 512.

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Lafayette Park, Detroit
Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig Hilberseimer, and Alfred Caldwell

(Photo by Jamie Schafer)

Chapter 2

The Polemics of Autonomy

> *Order is not, like organization, a mechanical addition of parts, or a pattern superimposed upon an object. Order grows out of the nature of things, seeks harmony, relates parts of the whole and the whole to the parts, and gives each part and every activity its place according to its value and function. Order creates a balance between the individual and society as well as between the forces of matter and spirit . . . The organic order is autonomous; its guiding principle is that each part must develop according to its own law, that each part must have its due place, according to its importance and function, within the whole.*
>
> —Ludwig Hilberseimer

The second chapter studies the role of autonomy within architecture amid the sociocultural tensions of the second half of the twentieth century. It problematizes the disciplinary detachment of architecture by exposing autonomy to the era's cultural, historical, disciplinary, and multidisciplinary debates. This method questions the dead end that architectural criticism has reached due to the discrimination of alternative cultural, historical, and disciplinary knowledge for the sake of an illusory and conceptual purity.

The Tower of Babel (Vienna)
Pieter Bruegel the Elder
1563

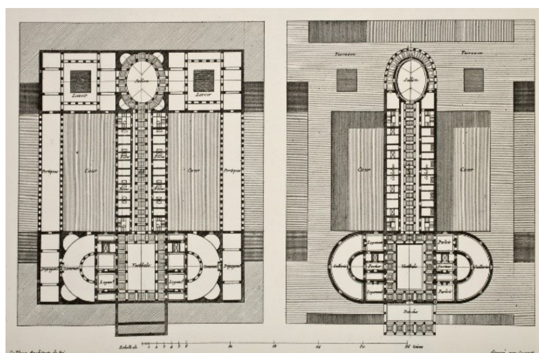
(Kunsthistorisches Museum)

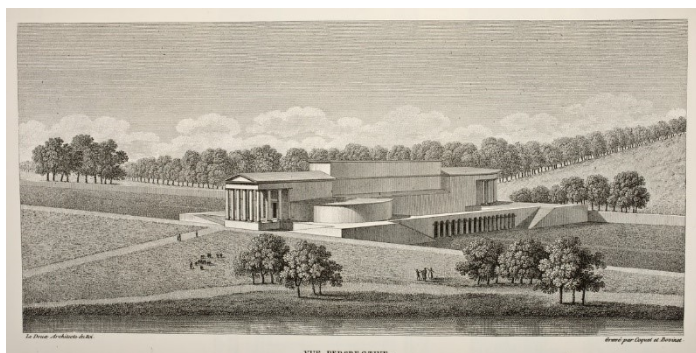
2.1. Tower of Babel: Architecture and Language

The Judeo-Christian Bible describes a past in which "the world spoke a single language and used the same words."[1] Men organized and communicated to build a city whose top would reach heaven. God realized that no goal could be out of reach for men whose thoughts and acts proved to be evil. Thus, God confused their speech and dispersed them over the face of the Earth. Men stopped building the Tower of Babel, whose name derived from a "babble of the language."[2] The mythical conception of the Tower of Babel, according to Aldo Rossi, is ambiguous. It represents the disorder of institutions, the confusion of language, and the complexity and contradictions inherent to the design and construction of reality. Its historical and human meaning is synthesized by the "secular effort of humanity to construct rationality" as it acquires an architectural image.[3]

The historical analogy between architecture and language was formulated reciprocally. This relationship strengthened as structural linguistics originated in the nineteenth century, but its antecedents could be traced back to the preceding century when architecture speculated with its own communicational ability. In addition to Boullee's and Ledoux's *architecture parlante*, the French architect Germain Boffrand compared the parts that constituted a building with the words that constituted speech.[4] The founder of structural linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure, wrote that "each

Figures 2.1. and 2.2. Oikèma, Ledoux, Claude Nicolas (Harvard Fine Arts Library)





linguistic unit is like a column of an antique temple: this column is in a real relation of contiguity with other parts of the building."[5] Saussure coined the term "semiology," the "science concerned with the study of linguistic signs and symbols" in social life.[6] In the second half of the twentieth century, Charles Jencks considered that semiology emerged from linguistics simply because language manifests when signs are present: "One sees the building, has an interpretation of it, and usually puts that into words."[7] This interpretation sought to expound the meaning of the building against functionalist approaches whose considerations of utility restricted architecture's significance. The alliance between semiology and architecture derived partially from the struggle between functionalism and architectural meaning because utilitarian approaches tend to repress any significance that transcends use, such as the cultural dimension of aesthetics. The relationship between architecture and semiology explored the symbolic action of architecture to counter the meaningless meaning of utility, described by Hannah Arendt.[8]

When Christian Norberg-Schulz asked: "What, then, is covered by the term 'meaningful architecture?'" He echoed philosophical concerns that date back to the eighteenth century.[9] Kant formulated a subjective aesthetic judgment, which was *disinterested* in the means-end rationality of bourgeois society. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing asked rhetorically, "And what is the use of use?" Friedrich Schiller proposed that art could restore the humanity destroyed by the division of labor.[10] In the second half of the twentieth century, this debate resonated in the rational theory of Aldo Rossi and Peter Eisenman and its structuralist logic. Rossi synthesized the city's cultural development through typological studies and their formal resolutions to condemn a naïve functionalism. Eisenman went a step further, replacing semantics with syntax through the term "cardboard architecture." This term referred to a conceptual architecture that challenged empirical reality by resembling it to counter the cultural prejudices implicit in the search for meaning.[11] This

analogy between architecture and language operated at different levels during this period: first, language as a common denominator; second, the grammar (or structure) of language; and third, the reflective dimension of language.

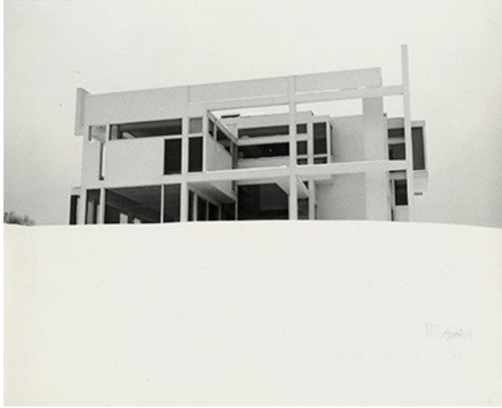


Figure 2.3. A photograph of Peter Eisenman's House II mistaken for a model by a French magazine

(Eisenman Architects/an-onymous.com)

First, as a common denominator, language is derived from the return to the discipline postulated by the autonomy of architecture. In the 1960s, a decade before the debate about "meaning in architecture" gained impulse, the late writings of Ludwig Hilberseimer advocated for a common architectural language within formal anarchy that resulted from political and economic unrest in Western societies. He recognized the scientific and technical achievements of the era, but he was uncertain about their future development. Hilberseimer quoted Einstein to explain the dilemma of those years: "The characteristic of our time is the perfection of tools and the confusion of aims."[12] At the beginning of the decade, Aldo Rossi wrote about "the polemic against the alienation of (architectural) language" posed by Adolf Loos. He described the vehement attack against the ornament formulated by the Austrian master as part of the rationalist tradition of the Enlightenment, Neoclassical architecture, and the Romanticism of Goethe, who denounced the immoral reduction of art to ornamentation. For Rossi, the following words of the writer Karl Kraus synthesized Loos's battle: "The German language is the most profound; the German discourse is the most miserable."[13]

The relevance of this debate today lies in the influence that the new technologies and our

digital tools have had on architecture and urbanism at the turn of the century. The computer-aided designs of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao and the Yokohama International Port Terminal reveal a paradox. It seems that the more objective the means, the more subjective the results. Alan Colquhoun suggested that "in most of the projects where form determinants are held to be technical or operational in an avant-garde sense, rationalism and cost are discarded for forms of a fantastic or expressionist kind"—i.e., the architectural group Archigram, whose forms derived from engineering or pop art.[14] The technical logic of our computer-aided design seems to promote a free formal play closer to Ronchamp than Maison Dom-Ino. The hyperrational digital age seems the precondition for the return to the sculptor-architect—from Gehry to Borromini. The rationalism that once sought order and a common architectural language throughout the twentieth century—Le Corbusier, Mies, Hilberseimer, and Rossi—seems to result in a subjective architectural display. The efficiency of the Guggenheim as urban strategy and the masterful merging of architecture, infrastructure, and landscape of the Yokohama Terminal have been reduced to form-making, via imitation, by the populism of social media.

Figure 2.4. Guggenheim Bilbao, Frank Gehry (Museo Guggenheim Bilbao)

Second, the structure of language means the analogy between grammar and architecture as applied to their respective structures, semantics, and syntax. Architecture assumed its role as a communication system because semiology considers any social phenomenon as such. George Baird cogitated that the semiological distinction, made by Saussure, between langue and parole resembles the sociological and psychological challenges of modern design in three different levels

of social phenomena: first, the langue constitutes the collective dimension, while the parole the individual; second, the langue is considered as the unconscious aspect, while the parole as the conscious; and third, the langue is the code, while the parole the message. In this system of linguistic and architectural communication, "'information' occurs as a function of 'surprise' within a matrix of 'expectancy.'"[15]

Christian Norberg-Schulz and Charles Jencks explored the semantic dimension of the analogy between language and architecture, while Peter Eisenman countered it. Norberg-Schulz described the transition from the lost cosmological order of the Middle Ages to the functionalism of the architecture of the last century by asserting that "we are no longer satisfied with making our buildings functional but want them also to be 'meaningful.'" Jencks considered that we are "condemned to meaning," implying that the immediate translation of any of our forms or functions to signs happens as they come into being.[16] This idea also indicates that meanings constantly reconsider their changing cultural substance while questioning and accepting it simultaneously. The early houses of Peter Eisenman responded to the semantic concerns of architecture whose significance derived from "external" sources. Their formal syntax was a clear example of a grammatical exploration intended to overcome any inherited meaning external to architecture.[17]

Eisenman focused on the *process* by means of *form*.[18] Through the architectural syntax, he excluded any meaning related to the cultural significance of language to conform to the internal laws of architecture. Eisenman's syntax questioned the tendency of traditional architecture toward the creation of "histories of absolute presence through the suppression of architecture's intrinsic absence." The premise being, "In language, signs are not objects, but the indications of the absence of an object. Unlike language, architecture is both object, a presence, and sign, an absence." Eisenman advocated a "dislocating text of architecture" that, unlike the experience of conventional

Figure 2.5. Presentation model including Cannaregio West and Le Corbusier's Venice Hospital, Peter Eisenman, 1978

(Peter Eisenman fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
© CCA)

architecture that focuses on the architectural object, explored the implicit absence evoked by presence. This dislocation leads to "an avoidance of origin, an avoidance of the reification of the functional object; an avoidance of specificity with respect to scale, place, and time."[19] He argued that the architectural object constitutes the integration of *fiction and error* rather than a conventional *ideal essence.* Architecture projects such as Cannaregio Town Square (Venice, 1978) or Romeo and Juliet (Verona, 1985) invented their own site and program challenging the actual urban conditions that paradoxically informed their own creation.

This Eisenmanian shift from language to text, from semantics (meaning) to syntax (grammatical arrangement), echoed cultural phenomena that challenged our traditional conceptions of language and knowledge through the evolution of Marxism and Freudianism and the development of anthropology, architecture, urbanism, and linguistics. Michel Foucault proposed *discontinuity*—what he called "the stigma of temporal dislocation"—as a fundamental element of historical analysis. On the other hand, Roland Barthes reconsidered the validity of disciplinary knowledge and discursive traditions before the emergence of "the Text."[20] "The Work," according to Barthes, is "a fragment of substance" (a book), an object of consumption, and a process of filiation whose father is the author. In contrast, the Text is a method, which is plural

(it does not produce several meanings but irreducible meanings) and a subversive force that challenges old classifications. For instance, the pluralism of the Text can be construed as evil for any monadic philosophy that relies on an indivisible or simple entity—such as the "truth" of reason, freedom, or progress. Thus, Barthes proposed, as the motto of the Text, "the words of the man possessed by demons (Mark 5:9): 'My name is Legion: for we are many.'"[21]

Eisenman focused on the history of architecture rather than the emergence of the Text. The scope of Eisenman's "dislocating text of architecture" was constrained by disciplinary boundaries. In contrast, Barthes asserted that: "What is new and which affects the idea of the work comes not necessarily from the internal recasting of each of these disciplines, but rather from their encounter in relation to an object which traditionally is the province of none of them." The mutation toward new categories of the Text embraces change, break, and unpredictability:

> Interdisciplinary is not the calm of an easy security; it begins effectively (as opposed to the mere expression of a pious wish) when the solidarity of the old disciplines breaks down—perhaps even violently, via the jolts of fashion—in the interests of a new object and a new language neither of which has a place in the field of the sciences that were to be brought peacefully together, this unease in classification being precisely the point from which it is possible to diagnose a certain mutation.[22]

Third, the reflexive dimension of language is illuminating when the urban condition is its object of study. It reveals the increasing difficulty of a changing urban environment to conform to traditional meanings or conventional categories of knowledge. It is increasingly evident that the physical structure of our cities partially represents cultural phenomena. But it would be naïve to think that our independence from lethargic, formal systems is synonymous with democracy or directly proportional to this relative emancipation. Rem Koolhaas rightly declared that now that the market seems to dominate, "you are given unlimited freedom to express yourself except the freedom to address any serious issue."[23]

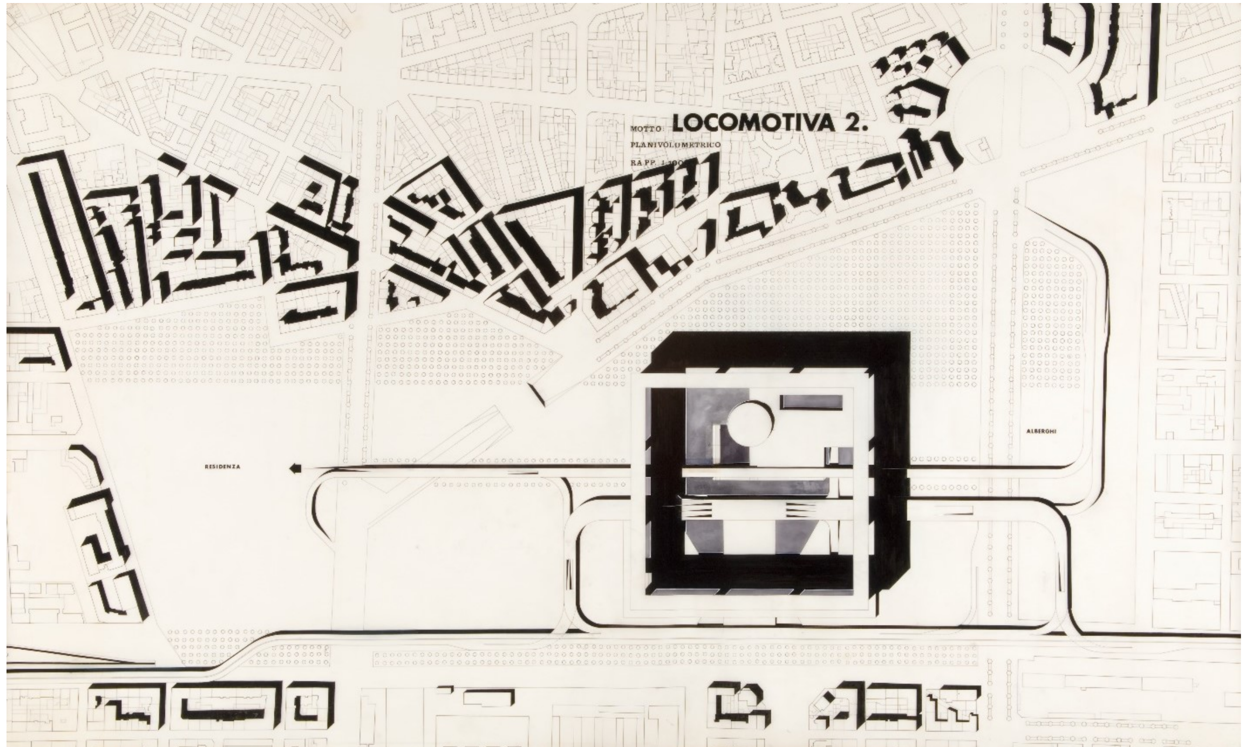
The industrial and postindustrial built-up environment retained only a restricted meaning from their medieval predecessor. The cosmological vision of the Middle Ages and pre-Columbian cultures, the absolute authority of the Catholic Church, and the correspondence between spaces of production (workplace) and reproduction (domestic space) were abolished over time. The urban condition of the twentieth century substituted them with “a system of economic efficiency” whose raison d'être was its productivity based on technological and economic aspects.[24] The eighteenth-century notion of “progress” as moral perfection evolved into its twentieth-century technical and economic counterpart. In the information age in which people and their identities have been reduced to profitable data, this supposed liberation from our physical environment leads us to an unknown territory.

Traditional notions of meaning seem retrograde before the rhythm of the contemporary urban condition, whose physical structure has been increasingly challenged by temporal sequences. The call for unity or organizing ideas and forms with architecture evokes Alberti’s heroic architect more than a feasible response to the challenges posed in the not-so-new century. We are witnessing the development of new urban dilemmas, representing environmental issues, migration crises, political unrest, and identity struggles.[25] Thus, we might not fully understand the complexity of these dilemmas, but we must try to make sense of them through, if possible, non-traditional means. Reason, as it endured since the Renaissance, is not enough. It must recognize its internal contradiction, its frustration because if history is made of presences and absences, it is also made of failures, irrationality, and madness. The Holocaust, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, the Gulags, and Apartheid attest to a recent history shaped by irrationality as much as by rationality.[26] However, this madness is barely considered as structural in the study of history. If we are condemned to meaning, as designers, we should embrace the explicit meaning of reason and the

implicit meaning of failure as part of our cultural development.

According to Rossi, the mythical Tower of Babel synthesizes the confusion of language and the contradictions inherent to the rational construction of reality. But being a partial representation of the rationality of architecture, it is also a cause and consequence of irrationality and unpredictability without which the architecture of the city would be merely academic. As defined by Le Corbusier, an "academician" is:

> One who does not judge by himself,
>
> Who accepts results without verifying their causes,
>
> Who believes in absolute truths,
>
> Who does not involve his own self in every question.[27]



Plan for Centro direzionale di Torino
Aldo Rossi
1962

(Aldo Rossi fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
© Eredi Aldo Rossi / Fondazione Aldo Rossi)

2.2. The Cultural Sensitivity

The analogy between architecture and language was part of the debate on architecture's role within society during the 1960s and 1970s. The decay of the social significance of modern architecture demanded a revitalized theory to counter its inadequate communicable capacity and its decreasing relevance in the construction and transformation of the urban environment. Architecture built upon other disciplines as other cultural realms such as art, linguistics, philosophy, political theory, and sociology became interested in architecture. But the redefinition of architectural parameters through autonomy informed antipodal positions based on a different conception of culture and history. In the United States, culture was reduced to prejudices to be exorcized from a conceptual architectural system. Thus, the discontinuous development of history distinguished between past and future architectural problems. The search for origins was dismissed within conceptualism based on pure syntax. In Italy, culture was conceived as the engine behind the architectural reinvention of the city. In this sense, history was envisioned as a continuous method that unified past and present design concerns. Typological research synthesized the cultural memory of architecture through typological forms such as the courtyard of the *Centro direzionale di Torino* that countered the degradation of the modern city and the generalizations of the general plan. The autonomy of architecture resulted in a heterogeneous development during the 1960s and 1970s. One interpretation became allergic to culture, paradoxically, by subordinating itself to an increasingly alienating reality, while another interpretation was conceived as a cultural critique, sensitive but not subservient to increasingly alienating modernity.

By the mid-twentieth century, architecture and art looked toward a new individual expression to supersede the sclerosis of the Modern movement and the historical styles. Ludwig

Hilberseimer borrowed Einstein's words to explain the hallmark of those years as "the perfection of tools and the confusion of aims." On the other hand, the art critics Clement Greenberg and Rosalind E. Krauss diagnosed the "state of confusion" of art in the 1960s and a postmodern artistic attitude open to "individual choice or will," respectively.[28] New technological developments increasingly permeated every domain of life—from the mass consumption of televisions to the space race. Artistic tendencies changed as technology updated. Greenberg argued, innovations "pile up in a welter of eccentric styles." This diversified order questioned inherited conventions and defined boundaries but often for the sake of an agnostic pluralism. The limits that distinguished high and pop art increasingly blurred while the correspondences between architecture and biological, linguistic, sociological, and philosophical methods increased. This context explains the new impulse of architectural autonomy and its redefinition as a discipline.

The varying currents that diversified architectural discourse in the mid-twentieth century reacted against the lethargic inheritance of the Modern movement by contrasting the cultural significance of means and methods. The geometrical repetition of the classical world appealed to architects that revised the Modern movement. For instance, Aldo Rossi's urban projects resembled De Chirico's aesthetic in ways that simultaneously accepted and scrutinized classicism. The human associations explored by Team X in Great Britain; the biological basis of metabolism led by Kenzo Tange in Japan; the historical consciousness of both *La Tendenza*, in Italy, and Robert Venturi, in the United States; the apolitical architecture of the New York Five; the problem of identity tackled by Luis Barragan in Mexico; the technical exuberance of Paulista Brutalism; and the pluralistic postmodernism of Charles Jencks exemplify the reaction of the architectural discourse to the cultural unrest of the 1960s and 1970s. The debate between various architectural journals resembled a battlefield in which the social meaning and relevance of architecture were disputed.

Figure 2.6. Arrival of the Moving Van, Giorgio de Chirico, 1965 (signed in 1951)

(Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico, Rome)

Figure 2.7. *Teatro del Mondo,* Aldo Rossi, Venice, 1979

(© Eredi Aldo Rossi / Fondazione Aldo Rossi)

"Early and Late De Chirico works have inspired a generation of Post-Modern architects such as Aldo Rossi and Leon Krier and artists such as Gerard Garouste and Stephen McKenna. The appeal of his enigmatic allegories lies perhaps in their portrayal of a lost, classical world; a dignified image of man, nature and architecture set in quixotic disruption. Many other Modern artists—Picasso, Moore, Balthus, Morandi, Magritte—have had an equal influence on Post-Modernists and thus one can speak of an evolution from, as well as a contrast between, the two periods."

—Charles Jencks, *What is Post-Modernism?*

A productive architectural deliberation, both internal and external to its discourse, was informed by the European leftist groups, especially those coming from France and Italy within which Derrida, Foucault, Tafuri, Grassi, and Rossi stood out. The critique of architecture through a Marxist critique of ideology acquired importance as part of a comprehensive urban analysis.

The editorial effort was instrumental in the renovation of the social significance and dissemination of the architectural language—the question was not only *what* to communicate but also *how*. The *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM) served the propagandistic ends of the Modern movement to disseminate the heroic message. At the same time, other publications—from the fleeting comic-like *Archigram* magazine to the *Architectural Review* (AR)—were both propagandistic and critical. In 1959, *Architectural Design* (AD) reported the failed attempt to resuscitate the Modern movement. Shortly thereafter, in 1960, the *Architectural Review* published the photo of some members of Team X announcing the "death of CIAM."[29] The Otterlo '59 Congress marked its end, triggering the polemics of the following decades within architecture theory. The design and construction of Torre Velasca in Milan (1950-1958) by BBPR,

Figure 2.8. Torre Velasca, Milan

(Photo by David Orban/Flickr)

in which Ernesto Rogers was involved, prompted criticism against its supposed historical reference to the architecture of medieval Italy. The critique was synthesized by the term "neoliberty" that implied the reevaluation of the early Modern movement that began with neo-medieval revivals and ended with rationalism.[30] "Neoliberty" was, for Reyner Banham, an "infantile regression" that dismissed the revolution initiated by Marinetti's Futurism or Loos's Ornament and Crime. Rogers refuted the allegations and called Banham the "curator of refrigerators." The expressionism of Ronchamp, which James Stirling described as a crisis of rationalism, and the confrontation between "tradition" and "technology," or "science" and "history," as Reyner Banham proposed, presaged the subsequent development of architectural theory.[31]

The groups that emerged from the breakdown of CIAM, Metabolism and Team X questioned the historical significance of the Athens Charter for lacking an instrumental framework of urban renewal to tackle postwar challenges. Team X sought to reintroduce cultural concerns, and their aesthetic implications, into architecture to supersede functional premises. It advocated "human associations" and the recognition of technology's effect on changing life patterns. The publication *Metabolism 1960* and the World Design Conference in Tokyo set the foundations of architecture and urbanism that envisioned a new future. Members of Team X, such as Alison and Peter Smithson, joined Reyner Banham, Nigel Henderson, Eduardo Paolozzi, and John McHale in the British Independent Group. The group was interested in the aesthetic shift shown by pop art,

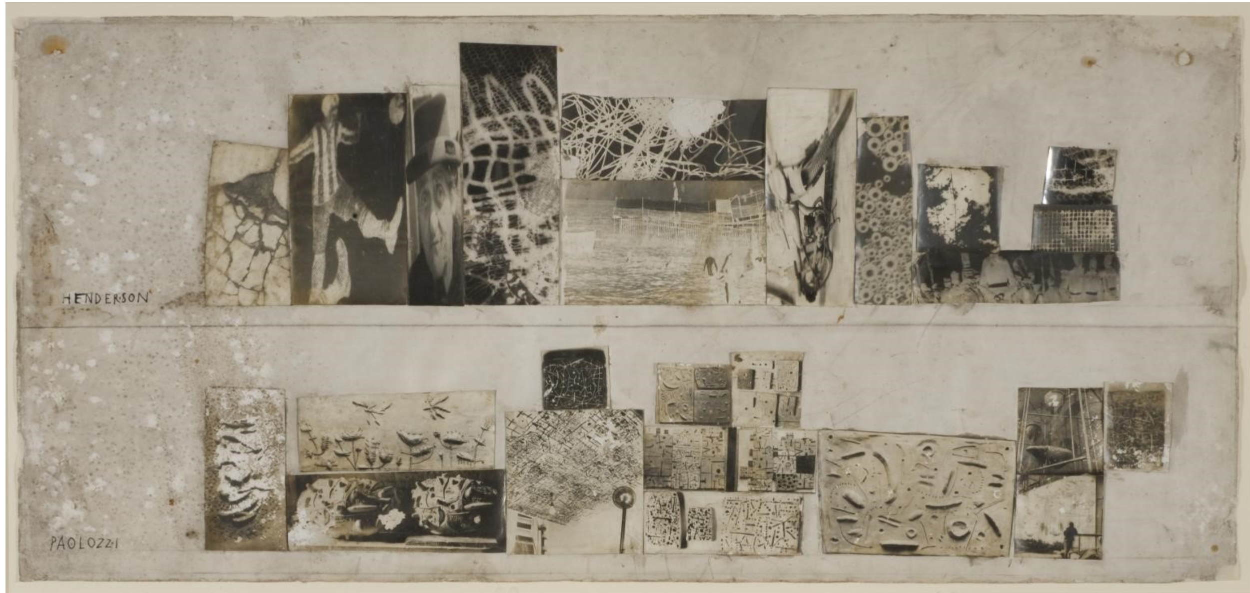


Figure 2.9. *Untitled (Study for Parallel of Life and Art),* Nigel Henderson, Sir Eduardo Paolozzi, 1952

(Tate Modern
© The estate of Eduardo Paolozzi, 2018. All Rights Reserved DACS/The estate of Nigel Henderson)

This work was part of the exhibition *Parallel of Life and Art* at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London in 1953, organized by Nigel Henderson, Eduardo Paolozzi, Alison and Peter Smithson, and Ronald Jenkins.

"The editors of this exhibition ... have selected more than a hundred images of significance for them. These have been ranged in categories suggested by the material which underline a common visual denominator independent of the field from which the image is taken. There is no single simple aim in this procedure. No watertight scientific or philosophical system is demonstrated. In short it forms a poetic-lyrical order where images create a series of cross-relationships."

—ICA press release for the exhibition

mass culture, and the skepticism toward traditional disciplinary boundaries. The Metabolists, led by Kenzo Tange, were perceptive to the social needs and economic optimism of postwar Japan—i.e., the lack of land and housing shortage. The biological analogy allowed the continuous adaptation of buildings and cities to a relentless process of modernization and the omnipotence of nature. Japanese Metabolism and the British Group Archigram devised techno-utopias in which architectural form was determined by a technicism that discarded rationalism for "forms of a fantastic or expressionist kind."[32] Archigram started publishing its own journal in 1961. This group was influenced by engineering as much as by pop art. Archigram, along with Team X, Cedric Price, John Turner, and John McHale was supported by the *Architectural Design* (AD) journal to

search for a technological, ecological, and social basis of architecture in the 1960s following the lessons of Banham. In the United States, Christopher Alexander published "The City Is Not a Tree," which exemplified what Alan Colquhoun called the "City as Process" or the "cybernetic model." Unlike "City as Form" or as "spatial structure," the cybernetic model advocated deurbanization and the revitalization of the city through biological or mechanized means and methods.[33] In France, *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* supported Jean Prouve and Georges Candilis under the editorship of Andre Bloc, while the journal of the sociological *Utopie Group* first appeared in 1967.

Most of the theoretical basis of these groups focused on a biological, technological, artistic, philosophical, or sociological rationale to renovate architecture, while other theoretical efforts also built on external references but focused on the history of architecture. In the United States, Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966) preceded the postmodernism of Charles Jencks. In New York, the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies published the journal *Oppositions* (from 1973 to 1984) under the leadership of Mario Gandelsonas, Kenneth Frampton, and Peter Eisenman, using critical theory as a framework. The brief existence of the Conference of Architects for the Study of the Environment (CASE) came into being in 1964 by Eisenman's initiative. The group advocated for the discipline's autonomy, but an internal split divided defenders and detractors of architecture's resistance to its subordination to social, economic, and political conditions.[34] Eisenman erased culture from his conceptual and "objective" architectural system to erase cultural prejudices and subjective meanings. In Italy, La Tendenza, a Milanese group, consolidated around Aldo Rossi and redefined the parameters of architecture through autonomy. According to Massimo Scolari, the group did not immerse into "political, economic, social, and technological events only to mask its own creative and formal sterility." It

aspired "to understand them so as to be able to intervene in them with lucidity—not to determine them, but not to be subordinate to them either."[35] The theory of La Tendenza provided an alternative to the abstraction of revolutionary utopias, disenchanting dystopias, geometric fascination devoid of cultural concerns, and the professionalism that proliferated in architecture. The journals *Casabella-Continuita* and *Controspazio* were effective platforms for the maturation and dissemination of Rossi's theory and the formation of La Tendenza around him.[36] More recently, the magazine *San Rocco* provided a podium to discuss contemporary architecture by reevaluating past theories and practices. It reviewed the projects of Aldo Rossi and Giorgio Grassi as "innocent" architecture, describing them as "weak yet convincing, brave yet naïve" whose ambitions "never really found legitimate heirs."[37]

During this period, architecture attracted the interest of other cultural realms and fields, including philosophy, linguistics, and political theory—each with far-from-neutral disciplinary understandings. From Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida's study of the Text to Gilles Deleuze's study of Leibniz to Jacques Lacan's analysis of Freud, architecture found itself the center of scrutiny. It was examined as an ideology by the Marxist critique of institutions.[38] Michel Foucault's dissection of institutional discourses questioned the discipline's surreptitious power, focusing on the connection between typologies and institutions, such as prisons, hospitals, and asylums since the eighteenth century. Manfredo Tafuri pointed out that the formal apparatus of Renaissance architecture was instrumental for the institutions of power to control subjectivities.[39] Tafuri claimed that the development of the structures of capitalist production increasingly absorbed the stability of the traditional structure of architecture. Piranesi's *Iconographia Campi Martii* was, for Tafuri, the paradigm of a "battle waged by architecture against itself" that confronts the organizational power of typology against "the obsessive repetition" of the formal invention

that rejects archaeological reality and reduces the "urban organism" to a "useless machine." Tafuri declared, "Rationalism would seem thus to reveal its own irrationality. . . The individual architectural fragments collide with one another, indifferent even to the clash, while their accumulation attests to the uselessness of the inventive effort made to define their form."[40]

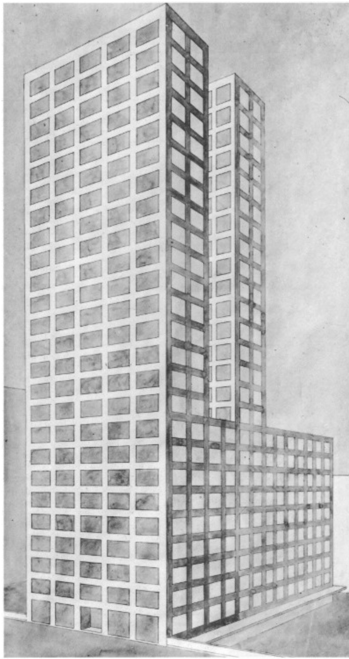


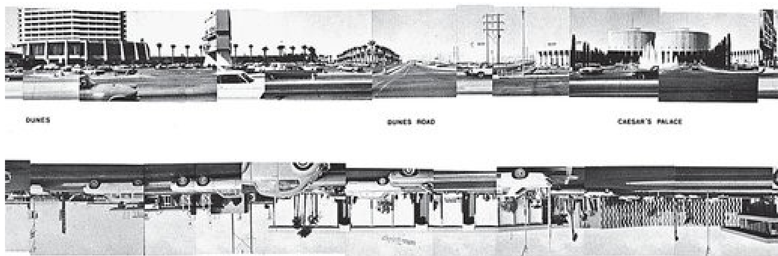
Figure 2.10. Chicago Tribune Building, Ludwig Hilberseimer

(From 'The City as a Project' Research Collaborative/Reprinted in San Rocco 2, "The Even Covering of the Field")

The Piranesian urban organism was arguably fully developed in the metropolis of the nineteenth century, whose organization depended primarily on economic and technical paranoia. Hilberseimer's refusal to design objects confirms the Piranesian perspective in the twentieth century before the absorption of architecture into the organization of capitalist production. Piranesi and Hilberseimer preceded Tafuri toward his "Critique of Architectural Ideology," which was formulated in the context of the Vietnam War, the implementation of neo-liberal policies, the increasing political agnosticism of a consumer society, the oil crisis, and the Italian political movements *Operaism* and *Autonomia*. During the 1960s, Operaism proposed the autonomy of "the political" within the working class, which implied the empowerment of the workers vis-à-vis capitalism to influence the evolution of capital.[41] By the end of the decade, Autonomia condemned the leftist institutions as the embodiment of cultural and social sclerosis within the capitalist logic. Operaism defended communism, while Autonomia was anti-communist.

Pier Vittorio Aureli argues that the autonomy that emerged from these theories was proactive. It was *autonomy for* rather than *autonomy from*. Tafuri's critique of architectural

ideology described the absorption of the specificity of architecture by capitalist production. On the other hand, Rossi's autonomy did not reject "the reality of the emerging postindustrial city, but of the empirical interpretation of that reality and of the naïve embrace of techno-utopian visions of the contemporary world."[42] The formal resolutions of Rossi's theory were influenced by his sympathy for the communist party. At the same time, the non-figurative architecture of Archizoom was informed by the Operaism influenced by the political thinker Mario Tronti. However, as Aureli argues, the similarities between Mario Tronti's political ideas and Rossi's theory of architecture were striking. The application of the Operaist autonomy of the political to concrete places rather than to urban planning was analogous to Rossi's theory of the city made of "exceptions and singularities." The specificity of architectural form could represent the autonomy of "the political," which was claimed by the working class. This conception runs in contrast to Tafuri's idea that the city is constituted by production systems. The method of the Italian autonomy of "the political" and its architectural counterpart was not the dusty outcry against capitalism but the search for a feasible alternative through a deep cultural analysis of the capitalist rationale. On both sides of the Atlantic, the autonomy of architecture was sensitive to cultural and historical developments. But antipodal positions reacted antagonistically to the new life patterns imposed by the postwar era. It was an epistemological debate on the limits of the postindustrial city, postmodern culture, and new conceptions of history.



Detail: An "Ed Ruscha Elevation of The Strip" from Learning from Las Vegas, 1972, studio members / Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates Inc
Denise Scott Brown

(Carriage Trade, New York
From the Exhibition “Denise Scott Brown Photographs, 1956 – 1966”)

2.3. The Historical Pedigree

The downfall of the Modern movement evidenced the cultural awareness of the renovated architectural discourse and its desire to reconcile its history. The autonomy of architecture reevaluated rationalism, from the Enlightenment to the early Modern movement, within the theoretical polemics of the mid-twentieth century. But the historical horizon of this new rational attitude that propelled the autonomous perspective was the development of architecture, as discipline and profession, over time. Thus, it relegated the history of autonomy to a lower order. By focusing on the trajectory of rationalism within architecture rather than within Western history, the autonomy of architecture overlooked the fact that the postmodern skepticism toward metanarratives and inherited cultural constructions—such as the notions of *freedom* and *autonomy* that emerged from the Enlightenment—demanded a broad cultural reevaluation beyond the boundaries of design. An often-resentful reflection on architecture discriminated the history of History. The most radical architectural autonomy was self-absorbed enough by its image that it became historically blinded over time. It overlooked the need for an alternative critical project before the unrealized Marxist prophecy of a post-capitalist era, which rendered the political distinction between left and right obsolete. The unfortunate by-product is the sociocultural animadversion between "we" and "they." The indiscriminate implementation of free-market policies precipitated form-making and the shallow cult of the image, and the proliferation of the individualism of design practices whose urban interventions do not necessarily prioritize collective concerns. Individuality is not individualism. The confusion between autonomy and individualism gradually trapped architecture within its boundaries because it overlooked the historical pedigree of the tension between individual and collective aspirations that autonomy entails.

This dissertation considers the trajectory of reason (its success and failure) within Western history to study the relationship of design with our past and our future at a cultural level. Cultural engagement overcomes the seemingly irreconcilable positions of autonomy (its individual aspiration) and urbanism (its collective character). Autonomy and urbanism engage in a perennial negotiation in which antagonism is not suppressed but sublimated into a consensus among adversaries that respect each other. This daily negotiation permeates every aspect of the reality lived by the individual and society whose mutual relationship is redefined constantly, from birth to death. The broad cultural concern of the alliance between autonomy and urbanism proposes the constant redefinition of the individual as a person, as a particular cultural realm, or as a discipline through its continuous interaction with society. Kant described this inevitable negotiation as follows:

> Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me. . . The first starts at the place that I occupy in the external world of the senses, and extends the connection in which I stand into the limitless magnitude of worlds upon worlds, systems upon systems, as well as into the boundless times of their periodic motion, their beginning and continuation. The second begins with my invisible self, my personality, and displays to me a world that has true infinity. . . ."[43]

The autonomy of architecture focused on the internal law of the discipline to dismiss the external world (the urban condition) because it overlooked autonomy's philosophical genesis and history. This omission describes how its North American (United States) chapter operated. It is true that the Italian chapter of architectural autonomy derived from an urban reflection. Thus, it was sensitive to the Kantian tension between the external and the internal worlds. However, its goal was to redefine the parameters of architecture as a discipline and the qualitative character of Rossi's *The Architecture of the City*. The autonomy of architecture relied on a neo-rational, or revived, approach rather than a self-critical approach that considered its own deficiencies.

The relationship between architectural autonomy and the history of History was complex. It could be read as nostalgic and critical at the same time. The group that gathered around Ernesto Rogers, editor of *Casabella-Continuita*, advocated for the continuity of the history of architecture, while the modern tradition discriminated against inherited principles in its attempt to respond to the zeitgeist. The aesthetic of the machine replaced the academic and stylistic concerns of the nineteenth century as the new century matured. But by the mid-twentieth century, the "humanization" of modern functionalism seemed to be insufficient for the interest of the Italians in the continuity of the discipline and its cultural implications. They questioned the modernist fascination with mechanical and technological progress by revising the Enlightenment as a reservoir of immanent ideas that informed the cultural and historical continuity of typological research. "As part of a more general 'postmodern' technology," Alan Colquhoun argued, "this type of rationalism must be seen as a defensive reaction to the current social conditions of production and consumption."[44] Sigfried Giedion denounced the alienating conditions of modernity, echoing Adorno, Benjamin, Kracauer, and Simmel. He pointed out the schism between "thinking and feeling" in the 1940s, which "produced individuals whose inner development was uneven, who lacked inner equilibrium."[45] The division of labor, denounced by Schiller as guilty of increasing inhumanity, produced objects that lacked the aesthetic unity of the classical tradition. According to Georg Simmel, the unitary notion of the "ego" protects the "self" through the unity of an object that is shaped according to our own image. Therefore, an object deprived of that unity affects the personality of the subject-creator at a psychological and practical level.[46] It was not the process of alienation concerned with activities, but the process of reification, which affected personal relations, turning them into relationships between things. Reification is what the philosophical and sociological ideas of Lukacs and Simmel considered a precondition for

architectural Modernism.[47] Similar concerns led Walter Benjamin and Paul Valery to study the transformation of the notion of art, the loss of the artwork's aura, brought about by "the age of mechanical reproduction."[48] In this context, as Colquhoun suggested, the animadversion against technological or sociological determinism developed by Aldo Rossi and La Tendenza movement "contradicts the conflation that Adorno and the Frankfurt School made between modernism and cultural resistance."[49] Rossi's historical consciousness considered that "it is only through the manifestation of its autonomous codes that architecture can relate to social practice, this necessarily suggests, at some level, a homology between these codes and social practices."[50] Eisenman allied with critical theory and cultural resistance to paradoxically alienate architecture itself, while Rossi echoed the historical continuity of the sociopolitical concerns of Modern architecture that could be traced back to the Enlightenment.

The Italian autonomy of architecture differed from the sociopolitical tone of the architectural discourse in other contexts. In Latin America, Modern architecture appealed to the political rhetoric of a social and economic "developmentalism"—embodied by Brasilia (its construction began in 1957) or *Museo Nacional de Antropologia e Historia* in Mexico City (1963-1964). In the United States, the disciplinary interpretation of autonomy tended to suppress the political problem of choice through textual operations and their displacement of the author. The latter is a half-truth because the notion of "intention" was central in the early houses of Peter Eisenman in which the language of architecture was reduced to a matter of syntax rather than semantics. However, it was an *apolitical* intention that distinguished architecture from sculpture or construction. Eisenman's architectural objects, which only responded to the internal history of the discipline, disregarded any kind of external meaning or history.

In contrast, this notion of autonomy rejected the cultural prejudices that were central to the

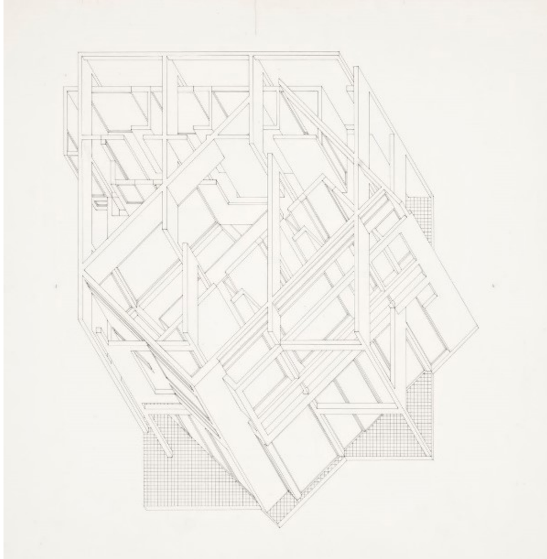


Figure 2.11. *Axonometric for House III,* Peter Eisenman, Lakeville, Connecticut, 1969-1975

(Peter Eisenman fonds, Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal)

theory of Robert Venturi. His attempt to revitalize the architectural discourse highlighted the increasingly irrelevant distinction between "high" and "low" culture. In Europe, pop art and mass culture influenced the work of Archigram and the Independent group. In America, Venturi used the vulgarity of the urban landscape as the raw material of an architectural renovation. He concluded *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, published in 1966, anticipating the search for a diversity of meanings within the urban landscape and mass media theorized in *Learning from Las Vegas*:

> Some of the most vivid lessons of Pop Art, involving contradictions of scale and context, should have awakened architects from prim dreams of pure order, which, unfortunately, are imposed in the easy Gestalt unities of the urban renewal projects of establishment Modern architecture and yet, fortunately, are impossible to achieve at any great scope. And it is perhaps from the everyday landscape, vulgar and disdained, that we can draw the complex and contradictory order that is valid and vital for our architecture as an urbanistic whole.[51]

The same year, Rossi published *L'architettura della città* (*The Architecture of the City),* where he identified the rational construction of architecture with the autonomous and historical development of the city. The singularity of the locus, or place, not only referred to the singularity of architectural form but also typological form, what Rossi called "a more general design." His theory paradoxically relied on abstraction as a concrete reality of typological research, whereas Venturi's

empiricism lacked any resolution in his praise of complexity and contradiction.

Figures 2.12, 2.13, and 2.14. *Las Vegas Studio,* Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi (Archive of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown/University of Pennsylvania)

For both Rossi and Venturi, the idea of type borrowed its "cultural baggage" from the continuity of history. Rossi considered that type is a cultural element that cannot be reduced to a particular form because it is a general category that refers to any form. Conversely, Venturi discriminated any functional characteristic of type from which architecture borrowed meaning based on familiarity.[52] Venturi's pragmatic empiricism and Rossi's interest in the problem of "choice" prevented historicism's reduction of their conception of history. Rossi refuted any accusations of historicism, arguing that the problems of the past have continuity in the present.[53] On the other hand, Venturi contradicted the modern rejection of historical references. He constantly referred to the classical harmony of dogmatic architectural examples throughout *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* but focused on ambiguous meanings or symbolic contents, finally developed in *Learning from Las Vegas* at an urban level.[54]

The context of these ideas was different and even contrasting on both sides of the Atlantic. In North America, the critique of modern planning by Jane Jacobs, Lewis Mumford's regional interests, Buckminster Fuller's technological skill, Marshall McLuhan's media analysis, and the

heyday of pop art collectively revitalized the architectural and urban discourse while an architectural debate about the relevance of history took place in Europe.[55] The influences of Ludovico Quaroni and Mario Ridolfi on Rossi's theory and the battle between Reyner Banham and Ernesto Rogers attest to the role played by history on architectural autonomy in Italy leading up to the mid-twentieth century. The "nostalgic" reaction of La Tendenza against processes of reification and alienation was influenced by the interpretation of the Italian social reality depicted by cinema. In the first shots of Michelangelo Antonioni's film *L'eclisse* (The eclipse), the legs of the main character Vittoria (played by Monica Vitti) intermingled with the legs of the tables, highlighting an ongoing process of reification. The Italian Tendenza considered that it was precisely through the autonomous condition of architecture, as cultural continuity and as critical space, that it could engage with the social and political concerns within the era of mass culture. In the United States, autonomy tended to reject any inherited cultural meaning or symbolism.

Figure 2.15. *L'eclisse,* Michelangelo Antonioni (Archivio Antonioni)

The autonomy of architecture developed in North America differed from the Italian notion of historical continuity. For Rossi, history was continuous, while for Eisenman, history was discontinuous. Eisenman's position is close to Tafuri's understanding of history as "an enormous collection of utopias, failures, betrayals. . . faith in violent breaks, in the jump into the unknown, in the adventure accepted with no guarantees." Rossi's critique of capitalist production and consumption was formulated with the architectural lessons of the Enlightenment. On the other hand, Eisenman's critique of cultural failures was informed by a sense of history that forced the

discipline of architecture to focus on its internal development and obey the alienation prescribed by capitalist culture.

History, for Eisenman, consists of "presences and absences." The presences attest to the continuity of history and stand for universal values—such as the notion of an origin or the authority of God and nature. The absences are ruptures within the continuous historical development whose vitality "rushes in to fill the void." According to Eisenman, history abolished the historical and cultural continuity of the type and its reference to an origin. The modernist process of making the autonomous object consolidated after the progression of historical stages led to the fatidic rupture between our past and our present that the atomic explosions of Hiroshima and Nagasaki supposed.[56] For Eisenman, the irrevocable destiny of architecture during the twentieth century was the autonomous process of making the architectural object without the mediation of the architect. The post-critical discourse countered this self-alienating position of conceptual architecture at the turn of the century. But it was based on an "irresponsible" attitude that overlooked the practical dimension of any theoretical or critical reflections on the environmental, political, and social crisis of the last decades.

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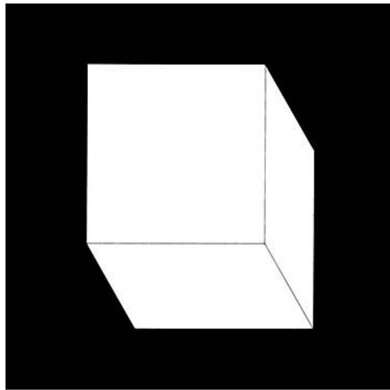
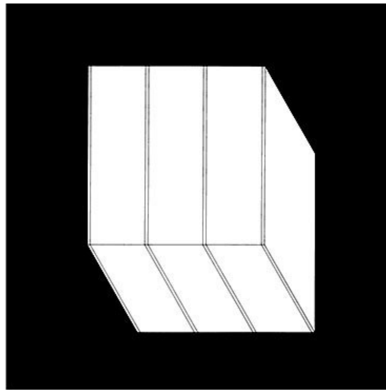
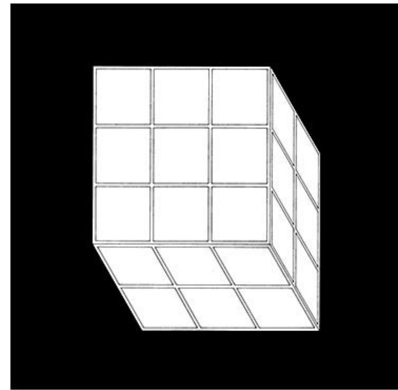
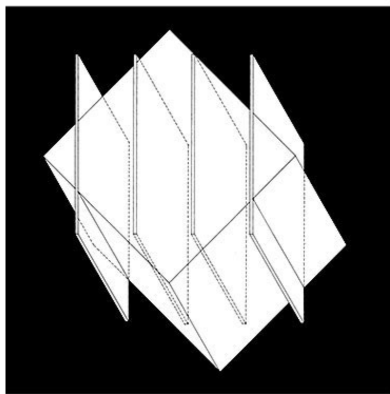
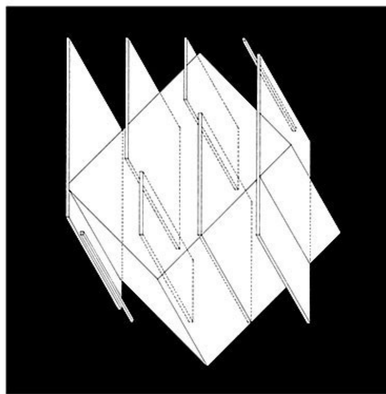
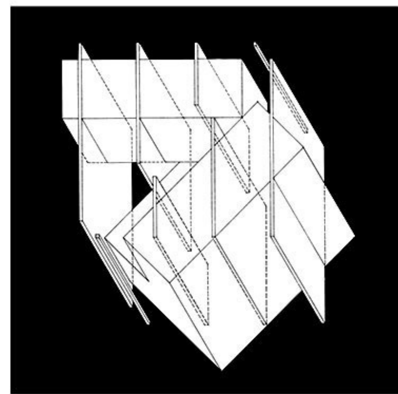
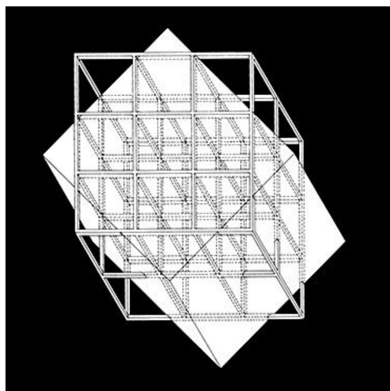
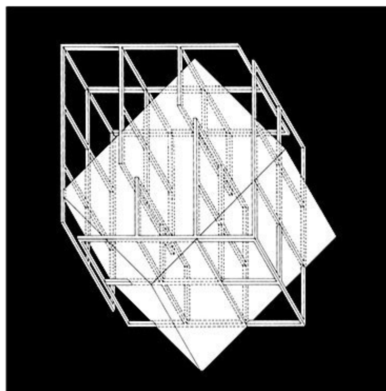
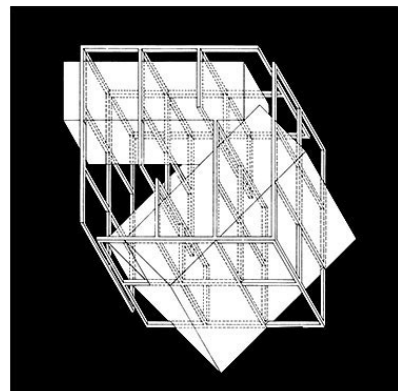










HOUSE III
Peter Eisenman
Lakeville, Connecticut, 1969-1971

(Peter Eisenman fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
© CCA)

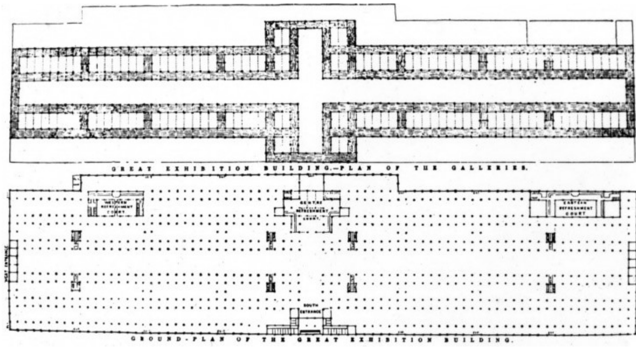
2.4. The Modern Notion of Process

It seems a tautology to consider that the notion of "process" was inherent to the autonomy of architecture since its inception because it has arguably constituted the history of Western knowledge since Hegel. This notion of process must be challenged as much as accepted. History was understood as a process in which knowledge was not lost but dialectically superseded, as post-Kantian epistemology left behind the archetypes and universal values of the Enlightenment. The processual logic has informed the development of scientific and artistic knowledge since the nineteenth century. The discourse on autonomy within architecture, its critical character, was also susceptible to the notion of process. But it not only aroused its sense of history but also restricted its scope to a dogmatic approach that led to politically exacerbated dialectics. The fleeting attempt to surpass the paradoxical alienating critique of alienation replicated the failure. The post-critical discourse did not provide an efficient alternative to the *alienation of architecture* because it was based on the dialectical reductions that dominate the most radical interpretations of a process.

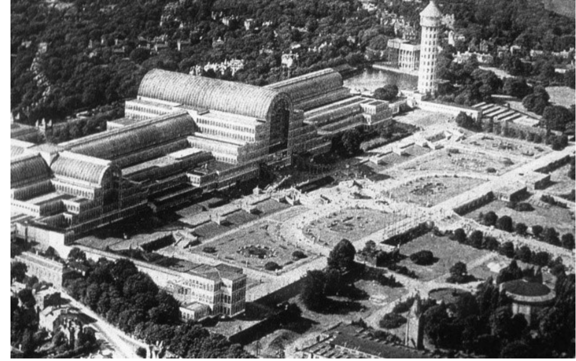
In the times of Kant, Rousseau, and Hume, principles of knowledge were constant and universal. But the ethical dimension of Hegelian dialectics informed the understanding of history as the process in which theoretical models or universal values become obsolete within an empirical experience that constantly actualizes them dialectically.[57] Friedrich Engels described how:

> "The dialectic of concepts itself became merely the conscious reflex of the dialectical motion of the real world. . . the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of readymade things, but as a complex of processes, in which the things apparently stable. . . go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away. . . this great fundamental thought has, especially since the time of Hegel, so thoroughly permeated ordinary consciousness. . . ."[58]

The idea of a historical transformation engineered by Hegelian dialectics promoted the development of relativity concerning history. This relativity is described by Alan Colquhoun as



Plan



Aerial View

Figures 2.16, 2.17, 2.18, and 2.19. *Crystal Palace,* Sir Joseph Paxtion, Great Exhibition of 1851, London (Hyde Park), England

(Harvard Fine Arts Library
Frances L. Loeb Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Design)

follows: "The different types of aesthetic language that exist in time and space are no longer seen as so many partial aspects of a universal norm but as the outcome of historical forces that produced them."[59] This cultural debate fragmented the architectural discourse during the nineteenth century, leading to the ideas represented in the book *In What Style Should We Build? The German Debate on Architectural Style* by Heinrich Hübsch and Wolfgang Herrmann. New construction tools and materials such as iron, used to conceive Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace and the Eiffel Tower, rendered obsolete the inheritance of the Neoclassical style.[60] Architecture left behind universal norms to conform to the power of historical forces.

Interior Perspective (Drawings)

Interior Perspective (Photograph)

It is not a coincidence that the Modern notion of process consolidated the alliance between design (architecture and urbanism) and life sciences (biology, anatomy, psychology, or physiology). The theories of Darwin, Marx, and Cerdá share the same historical context. Engels himself equated the relevance of Marx's ideas for history with Darwin's ideas for biology.[61] *Das Kapital* (The Capital) and *Teoría General de la Urbanización* (General Theory of Urbanization) were published in 1867. Marx echoed Hegelian ideas by considering labor a productive source and a "natural" activity.[62] For Marx, labor was the synthesis of nature and the metabolism of the human being. Labor and consumption were part of the same life process that continuously assimilates its products to guarantee the motion of the human body, thus, its capacity of production. The analogies between architecture, urbanism, and the human body consolidated with the scientific discoveries of the seventeenth century and the consequent formulation of sciences as autonomous forms of knowledge, but they date back to Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*.[63] The interest in the body as a source of knowledge also exposed the relations of power inherent to its biological disposition for production.[64] During the subsequent centuries, the body's life processes increasingly permeated other disciplines and cultural realms, such as cinema and theatre.

Figure 2.20. *The old wall, Desconegut, Barcelona, 1860s.*

(Any Cerda, Archivo Fotográfico de Barcelona)

Cerdá's theory was foundational for the discipline of urbanism, but it also informed the influence of biological analogies in the development of its discourse until today. The contemporary distinction between urbanization, a concept primarily used in social science, and urbanism, common within design discourses, was unknown in Cerdá's term *urbanización*. His scientific approach built on history as much as on statistics, biology, anatomy, and physiology to propose an

Figure 2.21. *Topographic survey, Barcelona, Ildefonso Cerdá, 1855*

(Any Cerdá, Archivo Histórico de la Ciudad, Ajuntament de Barcelona)

The black concentration (bottom-center) is the historical center of the city whose walls were destroyed allowing the expansion of the city to tackle hygienic, economic, and social issues.

expansive urban grid for Barcelona. A historical understanding of the evolution of cities was crucial since the history of *urbanización*, according to Cerdá, was human history. Technological development propelled the evolution of human settlements in this unfolding of time. The importance of the means of transportation for Cerdá's understanding of history, as Françoise Choay suggested, paralleled the importance of the means of production for Marx's sense of history. Thus, the destiny of any city is to grow as a biological organism. This notion of destiny implied the study and adoption of an urban taxonomy (classification of parts) and urban physiology (function of living organisms).[65] The individuality of a taxonomical classification expresses the

specificity of its functions and vice versa. Thus, form and function acquire a common significance through this interdependence.

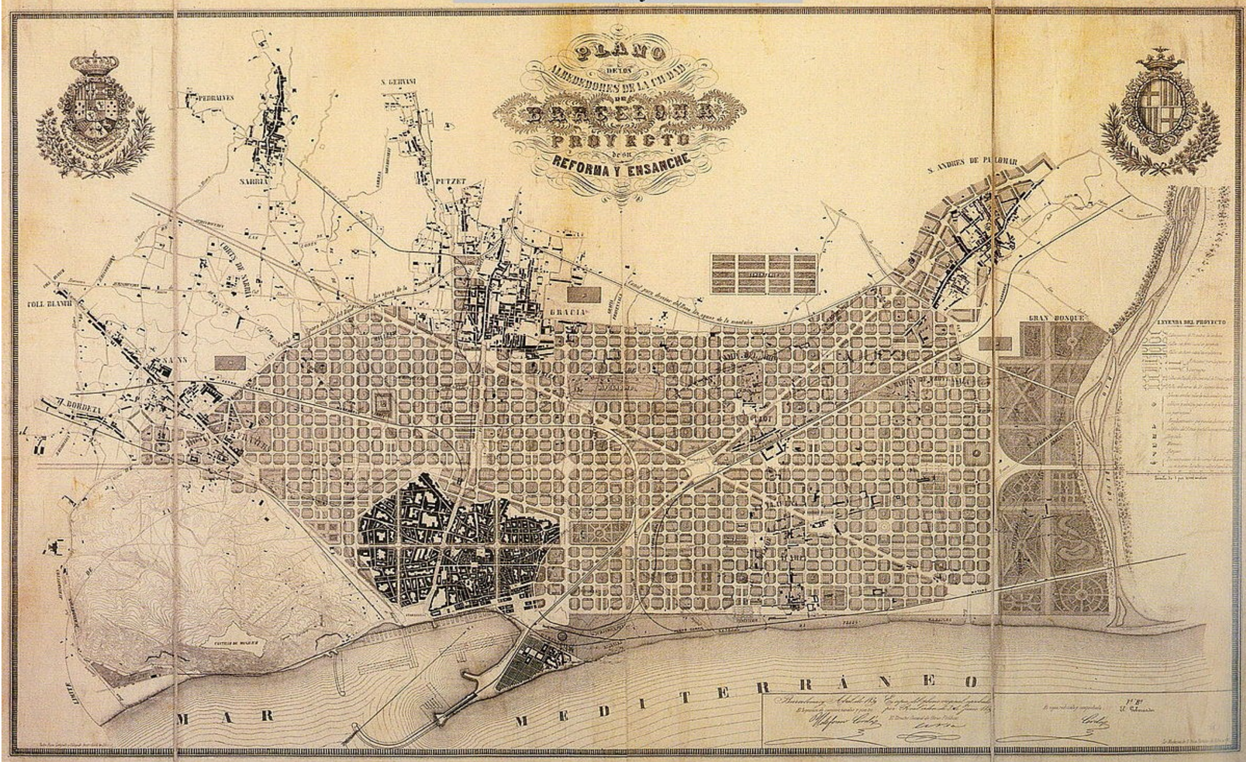


Figure 2.22. *Plan of the Reform and Expansion of the city, Barcelona,* Ildefonso Cerdá, approved on June 7, 1859.

(Museu d'Historia de la Ciutat, Barcelona/Archivo Histórico de la Ciudad de Barcelona)

Figure 2.23. *Aerial view of Ciutat Vella, Barcelona, 1880s.* Photo by Antoni Esplugas.

(Photo by Antoni Esplugas/Any Cerda, Archivo Fotográfico de Barcelona)

But Cerdá's *Teoría* influenced not only the consolidation of urbanism as discipline and profession but also the architectural discourse and its debate on aesthetics and commodity. The Catalan master used the term *urbe* to refer to any settlement regardless of form (quality) or size (quantity). Alberti considered that the house and the city were analogous. In

contrast, Cerdá argued that the only difference between an *urbe* (urban settlement) and a *casa* (house) was that the former referred to a complex collectivity and the latter to a simple collectivity.[66] Cerdá focused on *necessitas* and *commoditas*, while his immediate successor prioritized the beauty of the city. Camillo Sitte's *Stadtebau* focused on aesthetics over pragmatic concerns.[67] Ebenezer Howard's spatial model attached to this urban genealogy proposing a social reform by the end of the nineteenth century.[68] During the first half of the twentieth century, the Modern urbanism of CIAM mainly acquired a functional character.

Modern architecture adopted scientific terminology and abstraction in its urban interventions. Sitte had already argued that the morphology of the industrial city, its lack of beauty or illness, was a degeneration of the natural beauty of the ancient city. In the twentieth century, Le Corbusier used medical terms to describe the sickness of the world, its cities, and the lack of a surgeon to intervene them. Frank Lloyd Wright considered the growth of modern cities to be analogous to metastasis. In parallel, the development of cinema built on medical research—from the Lumiere brothers to the physiological studies of Muybridge and Marey based on their interest in motion. At the Bauhaus, Oskar Schlemmer created *Das triadisches Ballett* (the Triadic Ballet) in which the geometry of the costumes accentuated the spatial expression of the mechanization of the human body. During the second half of the twentieth century, the legacy of the Modern movement was built on biological

Figure 2.24. *Gruppenfoto aller Figurinen im Triadischen Ballett* (Group photo of all the figurines of the Triadic Ballet), Oskar Schlemmer, 1927.

(Bauhaus-Archiv)

metaphors exacerbating the notion of process. The Japanese avant-garde borrowed the biological term metabolism to tackle the social challenges of the postwar years at an architectural and urban level. Team X built on Patrick Geddes's Valley Section. Geddes' book *Cities in Evolution* begins by arguing that "the evolution of cities is here treated, not as an exposition of origins, but as a study in contemporary social evolution, an inquiry into tendencies in progress." Thus, his intention is closer to the development of life science since the seventeenth century than the universal values of Enlightenment or an originating agent.

The notion of process acquired more relevance during the second half of the twentieth century. It even ridiculed the normativity of laws. In 1962, Umberto Eco theorized "the poetics of the open work," while the Argentinian writer Julio Cortázar proposed the ironic *Instrucciones para llorar* (Instructions to cry) or *Instrucciones para entender tres pinturas famosas* (Instructions to understand three famous paintings). In music, the indeterminacy advocated by John Cage and Miles Davis's spontaneity embodies the tension between process and law. They did not discriminate the importance of a normative framework. On the contrary, their work attests to the importance of the knowledge and assimilation of basic rules—such as notes and musical chords—as preconditions for compositional manipulation or even disruption.

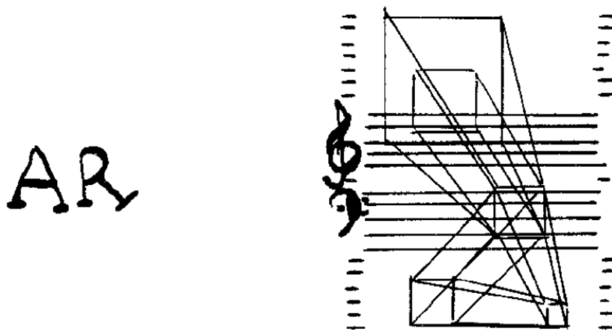


Figure 2.25. *Solo for Piano, Notation AR,* John Cage.

(Henmar Press Inc., New York / Peters Edition Limited, London)

Some notations composed by John Cage demand the measurement and calculation of space, but Notation AR is open to the imagination and prejudices of the performer despite concrete geometries suggest a prescribed temporal and spatial structure.

From the political implications of the space race, literature, music, philosophy, and architecture, each cultural realm was permeated by the notion of process as a complex cultural

critique. The idea of type, central in Aldo Rossi's theory, can be analyzed as both a reference to an origin and a cultural process that guarantees an ongoing synthesis. He built on the Enlightenment's rationalism, which ontologically implies a classical reference to nature as a prime source. "The city," for Rossi, "as above all else a human thing is constituted of its architecture and of all those works that constitute the true means of transforming nature."[69] On the other hand, he built on the ideas of Francesco Milizia and Quatremere de Quincy to conclude that type is "a cultural element," a "structuring principle of architecture." Thus, it was crucial to analyze any urban artifact to describe its generalities and its particularities. The general character of the theories and principles of any science can only be demonstrated through specific cases. This specificity is attained through typological forms that allow the description, definition, and classification of the elements of the urban artifact.[70] The complexity of the critical nature of type operates "dialectically with technique, function, and style, as well as with both the collective character and the individual moment of the architectural artifact." Rossi would conclude that "type is the very idea of architecture." But since architecture constitutes the city, the cultural significance of the notion of type transcends any formal character in the definition of the *fatto urbano* (urban artifact), which, for Rossi, "implies not just a physical thing in the city, but all of its history, geography, structure, and connection with the general life of the city."[71] The dialectical relationship between the physical structure and the life of the city attests to the modern notion of process within his theory. Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig Hilberseimer, and Hannes Meyer preceded Rossi and Eisenman in a rational genealogy that studied formal resolution as a process rather than as a goal.

In the United States, the dialectics that operates within Peter Eisenman's architectural autonomy excluded any external agent. Eisenman's early houses resulted from an autonomy that studies the tension between the self-referential character of the elements of architecture—such as

walls, doors, and columns—and the process of making the autonomous object. As Manfredo Tafuri assured, "Eisenman, since the late sixties, has not been interested in results but in process."[72] Eisenman arguably echoed the compositional processes of Cage and Davis by stripping the elements of the architectural object to manipulate its syntax. He did not manipulate the objecthood of architecture. However, by excluding its signification and function, the architectural sign derived from the agency of "intention" that distinguished architecture from construction. The essential discrepancy of this autonomy with that of Modernism was the displacement of the author, influenced by the contemporary textual operations of linguistics. Eisenman's intention was "to remove the designer, with his inherent cultural prejudices, from a position of authority in the design process" to counter the historical and teleological basis of Modernism. Thus, the generative process that characterizes this autonomy "depends on distancing both the architect from the design process and the object from a traditional history." But his autonomous objects subscribe to the Modernist notion of a process that dominates the central course of Western history. By denying traditional history, Eisenman paradoxically succumbed to its absolute power as a linear process instead of proposing an *alternative* conception of history. The only alternative devised by Eisenman was the

Figure 2.26. *Calendario Azteca o Piedra del Sol (Sun disk)*, Mexico-Tenochtitlan.

(Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City, Mexico
Harvard Fine Arts Library)

The sun disk was discovered on December 17, 1790. It represents the Mexica (Aztec) conception of time, the eras of the world. At the center, Tonatiuh (The Sun God) symbolizes the unity between life and death surrounded by 20 signs that comprise a month of 20 days.

"a face of flames, face that is eaten away,
the adolescent and persecuted face
the years of fantasy and circular days
that open upon the same street, the same wall,
the moment flares up and they are all one face,
the procession of faces of this calling,
all of these names are unified in one name,
all of these faces are now a single face,
all centuries are now a single instant
and throughout the centuries of centuries
the path to the future shut by these two eyes"

—Octavio Paz, Piedra de Sol *(Sun Stone)*

internal, or self-referential, history of architecture. But Rossi was bold enough to defend memory and rituals as valid categories within any historical analysis. These categories resemble the myths inherent to the circular time of pre-Columbian cultures and defy the chronometric time derived from Hegelian processual history that dominates the academicism of architectural history. In the twenty-first century, Aureli's absolute architecture reestablishes the political dimension of the city to respond to the "dialectic of integration and closure" that constitutes urbanization. He transposed the dialectic that operates within urbanization to a dialectic that operates between architecture and urbanization. But this position is as problematic as Tafuri's focus on class struggle. Tafuri's Theories and History of Architecture is paradigmatic of the dead end reached by architectural criticism that excluded the possibility of history that is different from the history of class struggle, whose political exacerbation derived from the ethical dimension of Hegelian dialectics.

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Narcissus,
in his immobility,
absorbed by his reflection with the digestive slowness of carnivorous plants,
becomes invisible.

—Salvador Dalí, *Metamorphosis of Narcissus*

Metamorphosis of Narcissus
Salvador Dalí
1937

(Tate Modern
© Salvador Dali, Gala-Salvador Dali Foundation/DACS, London 2021)

2.5. The Autonomy of Representation

The evolution of representation in architecture and urban theory has responded historically to changing cultural processes that have influenced our conception and depiction of reality. Alberti's foundational *De re aedificatoria* attests to the primacy of the word over the image during the Renaissance. On the other hand, the subsequent neo-Vitruvian and Classical treatises attest to the primacy of the image over the word, which prevailed until today. The description of beautiful architectural objects subverted the cultural implications of aesthetics and the critical use of representation in compositional analysis. The replacement of the architect-hero by the architect-artist disrupted the Albertian interdependence between *necessitas* (necessity), *commoditas* (commodity), and *voluptas* (aesthetic pleasure), focusing on the latter. This change responded to the transformation of European political power, which abolished the instrumental capacity of the architect to intervene in the city by institutionalizing her/his artistic activity. The academic thought influenced the understanding of autonomy as detachment by the architectural consciousness as cause and consequence of its consolidation as fine art. On the other hand, cultural realms such as cartography, biology, photography, and cinema adopted the image as an analytical and critical tool. The autonomy of representation attests to *another* reality depicted by the avant-garde, such as Surrealism or Cubism, as well as the analytical and communicable capacity of design to propose *what ought to be*.

The overemphasis on most post-Albertian architectural treatises' *voluptas* (aesthetic pleasure) gradually excluded the city as an object of study. But the publication of Ildefonso Cerdá's foundational *Teoría General de la Urbanización*, in 1867, built on history, physiology, and statistics as much as on architecture to focus on the urban complex.[73] As the Renaissance relation

patron-architect vanished, the ruling power marginalized architecture through the foundation of the *Académie Royale d'Architecture* (Royal Academy of Architecture) founded by Louis XIV at the end of the seventeenth century. Architecture progressively detached from *necessitas* and *commoditas,* reducing its influence in urban affairs. The Baroque abolished Aristotelian essences through what Umberto Eco called a "psychology of impression and sensation," and the Enlightenment witnessed the material sincerity of an *architecture parlante* by building on the laws of nature. The progressive distinction in architecture between reason (structural and scientific logic) and feeling (artistic logic) stimulated the architectural debate in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[74]

The use of images in architectural representation differed from science. The scientific revolution of the seventeenth century influenced the consolidation of life and physical sciences as well as their analytical use of the image during the subsequent centuries. The classical notion of natural history, its visual study of living beings, was only constituted as biology until the nineteenth century. The evolution of natural history strengthened its influence as a communicable capacity of seeing; visible things and their attributed signs comprised history until the sixteenth century.[75] But signs emancipated from things during the seventeenth century when they became modes of representation. The anatomy and habits of the living being were stripped from any semantic attribution received through words. Natural history provided the possibility of naming

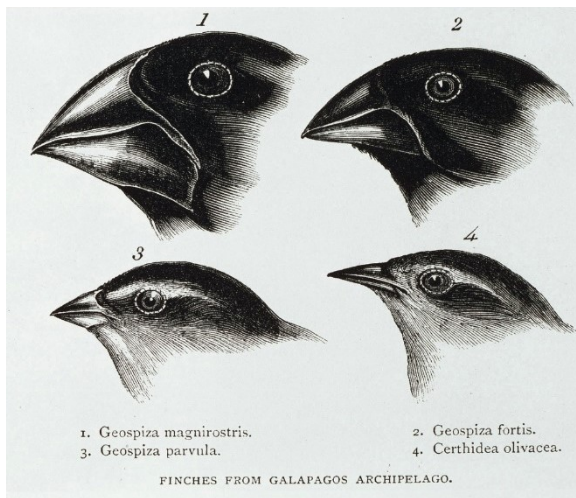

Figure 2.27. *Finches from the Galapagos Islands from The Voyage of the Beagle, Charles Darwin*

(University of California, San Diego, Artstor)

These four species of finches showed physiognomic variations derived from different functions. It is a taxonomic representation of living beings rather than a mimetic depiction.

what we previously saw rather than seeing what we previously named. Michel Foucault defined natural history as "nothing more than the nomination of the visible." This definition made available the knowledge and description of living beings, but as Foucault suggested, "biology was unknown" in the eighteenth century. Thus, "life itself did not exist."[76] In the nineteenth century, biology consolidated a body of knowledge to propose the structural classification of organisms into different taxonomic categories. These categories rendered more evident the distinction between the object of study and its representation that relied on the visual aspect of the object and the signification of structural and functional categories.

Figure 2.28. *Nuova Pianta di Roma,* Giambattista Nolli, 1748

(William H. Schab Gallery, New York; Arthur Ross Foundation, New York, to 2012; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Conn.)

Architecture and urbanism were not impervious to the consolidation of analytical representation. In 1748, Giovanni Battista Nolli published his *Nuovapianta di Roma,* which depicted the distinction between architectural and urban space rather than public and private space. Nolli's map was part of an interest in antiquity, which led cartography to build on the humanist tradition and emerging scientific research.[77] This new approach was only possible when Rome became politically stable, and the implementation of long-term urban reforms was possible during the eighteenth century. The preceding centuries witnessed the succession of Popes that exercised their political power through short-term reforms, often architectural, that were condemned to be eventually superseded. When the political influence of the Church progressively decreased, as Pier Vittorio Aureli suggests, "papal efforts shifted from building monuments to promoting urgent urban reforms." Nolli's map thus was the precursor of the scientific approach of Roman urban management. In the eighteenth century, Pierre Patte's work suggested a broader scope than traditional architectural treatises. His work oscillated between architecture, science, and utopia.[78] He was interested in the urban structure and sub-structure, anticipating structural interventions that Cerdá and Haussmann echoed decades later.

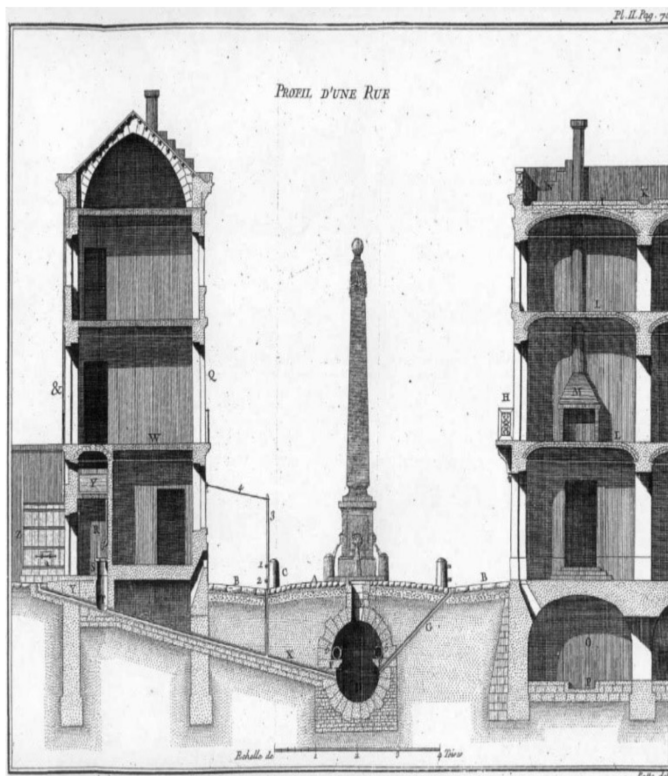

Figure 2.29. *Section of a modern sewer system,* Pierre Patte, 1769. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

The subsequent centuries witnessed the maturation of the critical scope of representation. Architecture immersed itself in the battle of styles during the nineteenth century that anticipated a pluralistic view.[79] But the distinction between the object and its representation—set in motion centuries earlier, by natural history, biology, and cartography—matured, during the twentieth century, as the impossibility of any artistic representation to conform to a unitary idea of reality. The progression of natural history suggested that the history of the object was analogous to the object itself. But, in the twentieth century, Roland Barthes argued that realism consisted in copying copies rather than copying nature because "to depict is to. . . refer not from language to a referent, but from one code to another." This implies that the representation of an object or a subject cannot be merely mimetic; it must be a critical reflection on reality executed through the analytical means and methods of another reality—the autonomy of representation. Painting does not necessarily evoke presence because its symbolism is mediated by human consciousness, while photography is, according to Roland Barthes, "a certificate of presence." For Andre Bazin, the object is freed from time and space by its photographic image, which is analogous to the object itself—the autonomy of presence. However, Barthes considered that the evidence of the photographic image does not reside in the object but on time—the autonomy of time. The "doubling" of surrealism presented the existence of simulacrum as an image.[80] The surrealist effort aspired to present reality as a sign, or reality as representation, to reconcile the sign with the object or living being dissociated during the development of representation within natural history and biology.

Figure 2.30. *Double Portrait with Hat,* Dora Maar, 1936-1937.

(The Cleveland Museum of Art © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris Gift of David Raymond)

The analytical and critical capacity of representation informed the development of

photography, cinema, architecture, and urbanism during the twentieth century. The scientific basis of the development of representation in natural history and biology informed Muybridge's cinematic experiments by the end of the nineteenth century. Understanding photography as "the seizure and freezing of presence" was fundamental for the visual representation of motion.[81] The perception of motion created by the zoopraxiscope preceded the illusionary nature of film, allowing its engagement with reality. Breton and Antonioni highlighted the distinction between the ideal and the real by paradoxically canceling the distance that separated them. Antonioni's movie *Identification of a Woman* portrayed the relationship between the ideal and the real that vanishes when Niccolò, a movie director (played by Tomás Milián), no longer knows if he is searching for a woman for his film or his life. As Antonioni described, "the women in his life and the women in his mind" become the same when *the ideal* and *the real* merge. Thus, the highly

Figure 2.31. *Ville contemporaine de trois millions d'habitants,* Le Corbusier, 1922.

(© FLC/ADAGP / Fondation Le Corbusier)

technical processes of cinema allowed its merging with reality rather than its mimesis. Le Corbusier and Hilberseimer used theory to demonstrate the critical power of the image to represent an analogous reality as a cultural critique. Both masters proposed general rules that could be applied to concrete problems through the means of theory. The *Ville Contemporaine* and the *Hochhausstadt* (Highrise City) tackled the chaos of the metropolis during the first half of the twentieth century as theoretical experiments whose representational autonomy guaranteed the critical character of practical instrumentality.[82] Paradoxically, the image itself became a theoretical formulation that was abstract enough to tackle the reality of specific cases. But the image could even claim its analogous character to propose an alternative sense of time that counters the linear or chronometric history of Western thought through the recreations of memory.

Figure 2.32. *Città analoga,* Aldo Rossi, 1981.

(Aldo Rossi fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
© Eredi Aldo Rossi / Fondazione Aldo Rossi)

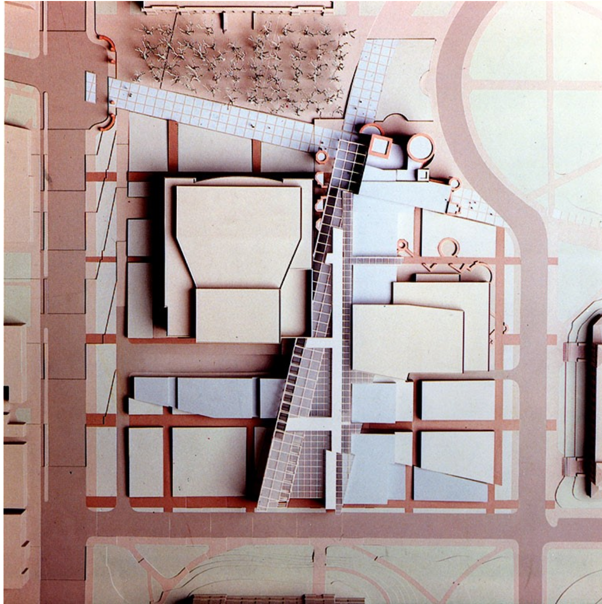

Figure 2.33. *Wexner Center for the Visual Arts and Fine Arts Library,* Peter Eisenman, Columbus, Ohio, 1983-1989.

(Eisenman Architects)

Figure 2.34. *Fake images created by University of Washington professors Jevin West and Carl Bergstrom with machine learning algorithms to warn about the downsides of a data-driven society.*

(Source: Wired, from the online game *Which Face is Real?*)

"The world is awash with bullshit, and we're drowning in it. Politicians are unconstrained by facts. Science is conducted by press release. Silicon Valley startups elevate bullshit to high art. Colleges and universities reward bullshit over analytic thought. The majority of administrative activity seems to be little more than a sophisticated exercise in the combinatorial reassembly of bullshit. Advertisers wink conspiratorially and invite us to join them in seeing through all the bullshit."

—Carl Bergstrom and Jevin West, *Calling Bullshit: The Art of Skepticism in a Data-Driven World*

The reflections on the autonomy of representation permeated the autonomy of architecture during the second half of the twentieth century. The Rossian typological and classical references evoked an "absent" architecture. In contrast, the "absent" grids superimposed in the Eisenmanian artificial excavations alluded to a past that informs the configurations of the actual city.[83] Rossi and Eisenman conceived representation as another reality that traced the history of architecture as a source of invention and the autonomous process of making architecture, respectively. Both architects focused on a becoming that belongs more to the Modern notion of a process than to the being of architecture. Their efforts preceded a contemporary design representation that seems to have succumbed to *The Society of the Spectacle* or fake images. For Guy Debord, life was gradually absorbed by the representation and accumulation of spectacles prevalent within modern capitalist societies. These spectacles

were less “a collection of images” than “a social relation. . . mediated by images,” amid the paranoia of the capitalist logic whose omnipotence and omnipresence favors political agnosticism.[84] But Debord also fell prey to an impulsive interpretation of autonomy. “The spectacle,” according to him, “is a concrete inversion of life, an autonomous movement of the nonliving.”[85] Nietzsche considered morality the enemy of life, while Debord considered the “autonomous movement” of the spectacle as the antithesis of life. But this dissertation counters Debord’s phobia about autonomy. The autonomy of representation is not an apology for political agnosticism or indifference toward life. On the contrary, it attempts to expose the progression of representation over time from mimesis to critical analysis within the history of knowledge. It tries to counter the cult of images of the contemporary design *spectacle* that has condemned the cultural substance of a critical autonomy to oblivion.

Notes

[1] Joint Committee on the New Translation of the Bible, *The New English Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 13 Genesis 10-11.
[2] Ibid., 13 Genesis 10-11.
[3] Aldo Rossi, "La Torre de Babel," *Para Una Arquitectura De Tendencia: Escritos, 1956-1972*, Colección Arquitectura/Perspectivas (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1977), 211-214.
[4] George Baird, "'La Dimension Amoureuse' in Charles Jencks and George Baird, *Meaning in Architecture*, (New York: G. Braziller, 1970), 79.
[5] Saussure explains that: "…if this column is Doric, it reminds us of the other architectural orders, Ionic or Corinthian; and this is a relation of substitution." Quoted by George Baird, "'La Dimension Amoureuse' in Architecture," in Jencks and Baird, *Meaning in Architecture*, 91.
[6] *1916 F. de Saussure Cours de Linguistique Générale iii. "On peut donc concevoir une science qui étudie la vie des signes au sein de la vie sociale; elle formerait une partie de la psychologie sociale, et par conséquent de la psychologie générale; nous le nommerons sémiologie (du grec sēmeîon 'signe').* (We can therefore conceive of a science which studies the life of signs in social life; it would form a part of social psychology, and consequently of general psychology; we will name it semiology.)"; OED Online, "semiology, n," June 2019, (Oxford University Press, June 2019), accessed August 09, 2019, https://www-oed-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/Entry/175715?redirectedFrom=semiology.
[7] Charles Jencks, "Semiology and Architecture" in Jencks and Baird, *Meaning in Architecture*, 15.
[8] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition,* Second Edition (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 154.
[9] Christian Norberg-Schulz, "Meaning in Architecture," in Jencks and Baird, *Meaning in Architecture*, 223.
[10] Arendt, *The Human Condition,* 154.
[11] Colquhoun describes the structuralism that informed these theories as follows: "According to this approach the ability of signs to convey meaning, within any sign system whatever, depends on an arbitrary and conventional structure of relationships within a particular system and not on the relation of signs to pre-existent or fixed referents in outside reality. The application of this linguistic model to architecture enabled 'function' to be seen as the false reification and naturalization of a set of culturally determined values that might or might not be considered as part of the system of meaning constituted by a building." See Alan Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism*, (London: Black Dog, 2009), 240.
[12] Ludwig Hilberseimer, *Contemporary Architecture: Its Roots and Trends*, (Chicago: P. Theobald, 1964), 202.
[13] Aldo Rossi, "Adolf Loos: 1870-1933," *Casabella Continuita,* no. 240 (1960) in Aldo Rossi, *Para Una Arquitectura De Tendencia: Escritos, 1956-1972,* 52.
[14] Alan Colquhoun, "Typology and Design Method," *Arena* 83, (June 1967) in Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism*, 49.
[15] Baird borrows Barthes words from *Elements de semiologie:* "The langue is both a social institution and a system of values… it is essentially a collective contract, which, if one wishes to communicate, one must accept in its entirety. What is more, this social product is autonomous, like a game which has rules one must know before one can play it…." On the other hand, "the parole is an individual act of selection and actualization." See Baird, *"La Dimension Amoureuse"* in Jencks and Baird, *Meaning in Architecture,* 81-82.
[16] Norberg-Schulz, "Meaning in Architecture" and Jencks, "Semiology and Architecture" in Jencks and Baird, *Meaning in Architecture*, 223, 15.
[17] As Mario Gandelsonas asserts "the work of Peter Eisenman, tries to address the more basic questions of language, the grammatical questions" through the structuralist theories of Noam Chomsky. And Rosalind E. Krauss refers to Lacan: "For the child, a sense of history, both his own and particularly that of others, wholly independent of himself, comes only with the full acquisition of language. For, in joining from language, the child enters a world of conventions which he has had no role in shaping." See Mario Gandelsonas. "From Structure to Subject: The Formation of an Architectural Language," in K. Michael Hays, *Oppositions Reader: Selected Readings from a Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture, 1973-1984* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 202. And Rosalind E. Krauss. "The Originality of the Avant-Garde." in Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-garde and Other Modernist Myths*, First MIT Press Paperback ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 197.
[18] Manfredo Tafuri asserted "that Eisenman, since the late sixties, has not been interested in results but in process. The diagrams of his projects clearly express this fact; but the "notes without text" of his paradoxical 1970 article articulate it even more clearly." See Manfredo Tafuri. "Peter Eisenman: The Meditations of Icarus," in Peter Eisenman, Rosalind E. Krauss, and Manfredo Tafuri, *Houses of Cards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 168.
[19] Peter Eisenman, "Misreading," in Eisenman, *House of Cards*, 185.
[20] This mutation might well be not only the objective irrationality of rationality, described by Adorno, but also the discontinuities and ruptures evoked by Foucault via Bachelard that "suspend the continuous accumulation of knowledge, interrupt its slow development, and force it to enter a new time, cut it off from its empirical origin and its original motivations, cleanse it of its imaginary complicities; they direct historical analysis away from the search for silent beginnings, and the never-ending tracing-back to the original precursors, towards the search for a new type of rationality and its various effects." See Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2002), 4; See Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in Roland Barthes and Stephen Heath, *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana, 1977), 155-164.
[21] Barthes, *Image, Music, Text,* 155-164.
[22] Ibid., 155. Additionally, Alan Colquhoun asserts that "the main purpose of cross-disciplinary discussions is not to blur the distinctions between the different arts, but to be able to define, and if necessary redefine, these distinctions with greater precision." See Alan Colquhoun. "Postmodern Critical Attitudes" (First published in Modernity and the Classical Tradition: Architectural Essays 1980-1987, 1989) in Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism,* 233.
[23] In an interview published in *Project Japan: Metabolism Talks*, Kenji Ekuan expressed a more optimistic interpretation arguing that, "Just when people seem to be looking more than ever for unconstrained experimentation, it's such a shame we can't respond to that sentiment. Something's wrong when we can't respond to what people are looking for." Hans Ulrich Obrist's opinion echoed that of Koolhaas saying that, "There was an obsession with the idea of democratization. It's the opposite of what we have now, where everything is becoming design." See Rem Koolhaas, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Kayoko Ota, James Westcott, and Office for Metropolitan Architecture. AMO, *Project Japan: Metabolism Talks* (Koln; London: Taschen, 2011) 478-503.
[24] Francoise Choay, "Urbanism and Semiology," in Jencks and Baird, *Meaning in Architecture,* 34.
[25]OED Online "form, n," (Oxford University Press June 2019), accessed August 11, 2019, https://www-oed-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/Entry/73421?rskey=yQN9UU&result=1&isAdvanced=false. *Shape.* The visible aspect of a thing; now usually in narrower sense, shape, configuration, as distinguished from colour; occasionally, the shape or figure of the body as distinguished from the face. *Philosophy.* In the Scholastic philosophy: The essential determinant principle of a thing; that which makes anything (matter) a determinate species or kind of being; the essential creative quality. In the usage of Kant and Kantians: That factor of knowledge which gives reality and objectivity to

the thing known, and which Kant regards as due to mind, or as (in his sense) subjective; the formative principle which holds together the several elements of a thing.

[26] According to William Mulligan, "Peace was at the centre of the First World War, providing meaning to the conflict. In turn, peace was imagined and constructed in new ways that had an enduring legacy in twentieth century international relations … Peace became a conceptual repository, a short-hand for people's aspirations for a better, more just, and more prosperous world … and came to embrace a much wider and deeper set of social and international relations, including labour regulations, the principle of nationality, constitutional reform, trusteeship, welfare, transnational associations, and international institutions…." See William Mulligan, T*he Great War for Peace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 4–5.

[27] Le Corbusier, et al., *Precisions on the Present State of Architecture and City Planning* (Zurich, Switzerland: Park Books, 2015), 23-33.

[28] See Clement Greenberg, "Avant-garde Attitudes: New Art in the Sixties," Lecture at the University of Sydney, Australia, May 17, 1968.; and Krauss, "The Originality of the Avant-Garde," 196.

[29] See Eric Paul Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 263.

[30] The same year, Reyner Banham published, in the Architectural Review, "Neoliberty: The Italian Retreat from Modern Architecture" in which he argued that the Art Nouveau was not "the first of the new styles" but "the last of the old" and that the style "Liberty" belong to the past since it happened before the revolution of the Manifesto of Futurism or Adolf Loos's Ornament and Crime. Banham concluded: "The performance of the revolutionaries may not have matched their promise, but the promise remains and is real. It is the promise of liberty, not Liberty or 'Neoliberty,' the promise of freedom from having to wear the discarded clothes of previous cultures, even if those previous cultures have the air of tempi felici." See Reyner Banham, "Neoliberty: The Italian Retreat from Modern Architecture," *The Architectural Review* 125, no. 747 (April 1959), 235. But the Italians refered to Neoliberty as the reevaluation of the first part of the modern movement. Portoghesi: *"Innanzi tutto va chiarito che per neoliberty—aggettivo che adoperiamo per semplicità più che per malignità—intendiamo quel vasto moto di rivalutazione del primo tempo del movimento moderno (che inizia pressappoco con i revivals neomedievali e si conclude con il razionalismo) che ha esercitato una influenza diretta sulla produzione più recente di alcuni architetti italiani sia della generazione dei giovani che di quella di maestri."* See Paolo Portoghesi, "Dal neorealismo al neoliberty," *Comunita*, Anno XII, no. 65 (Dicembre 1958), 78.

[31] Gropius wrote that the neoclassicism of Schinkel was part of his heritage, thus, he denied any conflict between the New Architecture and tradition. "Respect for tradition," Gropius argued, "does not mean the complacent toleration of elements which have been a matter of fortuitous chance or of individual eccentricity; nor does it mean the acceptance of domination by bygone aesthetic forms." It meant: "The preservation of essentials in the process of striving to get at what lies at the back of all materials and every technique, by giving semblance to the one with the intelligent aid of the other." See Walter Gropius, and P. Morton Shand, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*, (New York, London: Museum of Modern Art; Faber and Faber, 1936), 79. And Anthony Vidler, "TROUBLES IN THEORY PART III THE GREAT DIVIDE: TECHNOLOGY VS TRADITION," *The Architectural Review* 232, no. 1386 (Arts Premium Collection, August 2012), 96.

[32] Alan Colquhoun, "Typology and Design Method," in Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism,* 49.

[33] Colquhoun distinguishes between "the cybernetic and the formal, or the City as Process and the City as Form." He describes the cybernetic model as a set of "disurbanist ideas" or techniques informed by the mechanisms of biology and machinery, exemplified by Christopher Alexander's position in "The City is Not a Tree," See Alan Colquhoun, "The Superblock," in Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism,* 70.

[34] Stanford Anderson, "Quasi-Autonomy in Architecture: The Search for an 'In-Between'," *Perspecta* 33, (January 2002): 33-35.

[35] See Massimo Scolari, "The New Architecture and the Avant-Garde," in K. Michael Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1998), 126-145.

[36] See Pier Vittorio Aureli, "The Difficult Whole," *Log*, no. 9 (Winter/Spring 2007), 39-61. And Claudio D'Amato, "Fifteen Years after the Publication of The Architecture of the City," *The Harvard Architecture Review* 3, (Winter 1984), 83-92, Autonomous Architecture, Fogg Art Museum.

[37] San Rocco, "0. Innocence," Venezia, Summer 2010.

[38] Anthony Vidler, "Troubles in Theory Part I: The State of the Art 1945-2000," *The Architectural Review* 230, no. 1376 (2011):, 102.

[39] See Pier Vittorio Aureli, "Redefining the Autonomy of Architecture: The Architectural Project and the Production of Subjectivity." *Harvard Design Magazine,* no. 35 (2012), 107.

[40] Manfredo Tafuri, "Toward a Critique of Architectural Ideology," in K. Michael Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 10.

[41] Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture within and against Capitalism.* Buell Center/FORuM Project Publication; 4 v. (New York: Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008), 8-9.

[42] Ibid., 13.

[43] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), Location 129 Kindle edition, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy.

[44] Alan Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism*, 175.

[45] Quoted by K. Michael Hays, *Modernism and the Posthumanist Subject: The Architecture of Hannes Meyer and Ludwig Hilberseimer,* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 15.

[46] Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money.* (London; Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1978), 454, Social Theory.

[47] K. Michael Hays explains the difference between alienation, commodification and reification as follows: "*Alienation:* derives from the division of labor, the splitting of life into separate activities in which the individual worker's experience of a unified and self-contained process is destroyed; *Commodification:* is the organized process whereby the work of art, like all objects, is alienated from its primary and traditional status as an object of use value and of aesthetic experience, and becomes an object of exchange value, one whose character is determined first and foremost by its relation to the market; *Reification:* the penetration of commodification into the very core of personal experience, a condition in which the relations between persons is reduced to that of an illusory, impersonal relationship between things." See Hays, *Modernism and the Posthumanist Subject,* 8.

[48] The increasing "mechanization, commodification, and rationalization of everyday life […] and their psychological consequences" as K. Michael Hays describes it, "that are recommended as the raw material of a critical aesthetic practice for producing new subjectivities." See Hays, *Modernism and the Posthumanist Subject,* 52.

[49] Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism,* 243.

[50] Ibid., 244.

[51] Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1977) 104.

[52] Colquhoun argues that, "For Venturi a type is an element, such as a roof or a window, which derives its meaning not so much from its function but rather from its familiar character. A type is a conventional iconic form which lends a building meaning. See Alan Colquhoun, "Architectural

Manifestos of the 1960s in America," (First published in *Faces*, 1993/1994, revised 2008) in Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism,* 317.

[53] Rossi declared: "We are insensitive to accusation of historicism; we have simply taken away from the schools the boring courses of historical enumeration, and have instead repurposed the history of architecture as a living part of it…and from history, we have logically linked up to the modern movement without special or private sympathies. Simply because the problems of that time are the problems of today…even elements seemingly unrelated to the historical argument…have a precise sense of their own history….Hence the investigation into the type as the basic form of architecture is closely related to this research." Quoted by Claudio D'Amato, "Fifteen Years after the Publication of The Architecture of the City," 89.

[54] Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, departed from modern architectural theory. According to Colquhoun, it exposed "that many 'logics' were involved in the design of a building and that architectural design was a process of 'accommodation' rather than deduction." See Alan Colquhoun, "Sign and Substance: Reflections on Complexity, Las Vegas and Oberlin," First published in *Oppositions* 14, Autumn 1978 in Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism,* 106.

[55] See Colquhoun, "Architectural Manifestos of the 1960s in America," in Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism,* 315-320.

[56] The tragic end of World War II was preceded by cosmology and the authority of God that preceded the Renaissance; the subsequent anthropocentrism that replaced God as the mediator between reason and nature; the consideration of man as object of study, thus, the displacement of man, as an originating agent during the eighteenth and the nineteenth century; the division of labor and the dissociation between object-product and subject-producer.

[57] Ibid., 101.

[58] Friedrich Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* (LeoPard Books India, 1994), Location 61-62 Kindle edition.

[59] David Hume considered that "Mankind are so much the same in all times and places that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature." While for Rousseau's Social Contract the idea of history as process was alien. As Colquhoun argues, "Rousseau was not interested in the historical transformation that has led to society's present state. What interested him was applying to a future society the truths that had been lost in the ramifications of history—truths that possible, he supposed, were understood in some remote golden age." See Alan Colquhoun, "Historicism and the Limits of Semiology," in Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism,* 100.

[60] This debate influenced the architecture of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, in France, for whom architectural form should derive from technological development rather than historical styles.

[61] Friedrich Engels, "Communist Manifesto, Preface to the English Edition of 1888," (London, January 30, 1888).

[62] The theoretical genealogy that considered labor as a "natural" activity goes from labor as a source of property (John Locke), to labor as the source of wealth (Adam Smith), to labor as productive source (Karl Marx). See Arendt, *The Human Condition,* 101.

[63] For Alberti: "Beauty is that reasoned (certa ratione) harmony (concinnatas) of all the parts within a body, so that nothing may be added, taken away, or altered, but for the worse." Quoted by Francoise Choay, and Denise Bratton, *The Rule and The Model: On the Theory of Architecture and Urbanism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), 91.

[64] See Linda Williams, "Film Body: An Implantation of Perversions," *Ciné-Tracts Iii*, no. 4 (1981), 19-35.

[65] Cerda adopted the principles of biology in his study of the urban condition. Francoise Choay wrote that, "After the general categories of genus, species, and organism, he proceeds quite deliberately to adopt the concept of regulation (homeostasis) for his analysis of the urban functions of circulation, nourishment, digestion, and elimination, in which he plays with the concepts of nucleus and development, borrowing from Lamarck's theory of adaptation…." See Choay, *The Rule and The Model,* 241.

[66] Cerda: *"Que es la urbe? Un conjunto de habitaciones enlazadas por medio de una economía viaria…? Que es la casa? Ni mas ni menos que un conjunto de vías y de habitaciones, lo mismo idénticamente que la urbe…No hay, pues, otra diferencia entre la grande urbe y la urbe-casa, que la que va de lo mas a lo menos, de lo grande a lo pequeño, de una colectividad complexa a una colectividad simple y reducida."* Quoted by Choay, *The Rule and The Model,* 241.

[67] In the context of the formulation of a science of art, exemplified by Alois Riegl's Kunstwollen (will to art) or the preeminence of art over life proposed by Nietzsche in a world absorbed by the "truths" of science.

[68] Some examples are: Arturo Soria y Mata, Ciudad Lineal (Madrid, 1894); Ebenezer Howard, To-Morrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform (London, 1898); or Tony Garnier, Une cite industrielle, etude pour la construction des villes (Paris, 1917); Ibid., 156.

[69] Aldo Rossi, et al, The Architecture of the City (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), 35, Oppositions Books.

[70] "No type," according to Rossi, "can be identified with only one form, even if all architectural forms are reducible to types." See Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, 41.

[71] Ibid., 22.

[72] Manfredo Tafuri, "Peter Eisenman: The Meditations of Icarus," in Eisenman, *House of Cards*, 168.

[73] Choay argues that "In the sixteenth century, Palladio's treatise is the only one that preserved a place for the city, but its status if by no means comparable to that conferred by Alberti's paradigm." See Choay, *The Rule and The Model*, 188.

[74] The architecture of Viollet-le-Duc exposed the interdependence of reason and sentiment, as Colquhoun explains: "On the one hand, reason is opposed to sentiment, logic to fantasy, system to instinct, in a way that allies him to a rationalist tradition extending, mutatis mutandis, from Descartes to Comte; on the other, sincerity, honesty, and truth are opposed to pretense, falsehood, and lies. In this circular argument, Viollet appeals to subjective feeling to justify the rational, and to the rational to justify subjective feeling." See Alan Colquhoun, "Rationalism: a Philosophical Concept in Architecture" in Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism,* 168.

[75] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, (London, New York: Routledge Classics, 2005), 139-145.

[76] Foucault wrote that "Historians want to write histories of biology in the eighteenth century; but they do not realize that biology did not exist then, and that the pattern of knowledge that has been familiar to us for a hundred and fifty years is not valid for a previous period. And that, if biology was unknown, there was a very simple reason for it: that life itself did not exist. All that existed was living beings, which were viewed through a grid of knowledge constituted by natural history." Ibid., 139.

[77] Pier Vittorio Aureli. *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (Cambridge, MA; London, England: The MIT Press, 2011) Location 941-943 Kindle edition, Writing Architecture.

[78] Patte was interested, according to Françoise Choay, in the role played by "chemistry, hydrology, geology, and hygiene… in the production of the built domain." See Choay, *The Rule and The Model*, 214.

[79] Colquhoun argues that, "From a situation in which 'style' was finally to be superseded, we find ourselves in a situation in which everything is 'style'—including the forms of the Modern Movement itself—a type of eclecticism more arbitrary than that of the nineteenth century, since at that

time the choice of a style was based on its ability to represent certain political, philosophical, or religious ideas." See Colquhoun, "Rules, Realism and History," in Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism,* 55.
[80] Rosalind E. Krauss explains that the double (doubling) is "the simulacrum, the second, the representative of the original," while "spacing is the indication of a break in the simultaneous experience of the real, a rupture that issues into sequence." For example, "Photographic cropping is always experienced as a rupture in the continuous fabric of reality." The surrealist photographers thus register reality itself through the strategies of spacing and doubling to present reality as sign or "presence transformed into absence, into representation…." See Rosalind E. Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," in Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, 109-110.
[81] Ibid., 107.
[82] Hilberseimer argued that, "The chaos of the contemporary metropolis can only be confronted with experiments in theoretical demonstration. Their task is to develop, in the abstract, the fundamental principles of urban planning according to contemporary requirements. This will produce general rules that enable the solution of certain concrete problems." And referring to the *Ville Contemporaine*, Le Corbusier wrote that, "Proceeding in the manner of an experimenter in his laboratory…I excluded all accidents, I gave myself an ideal terrain. The object was not to overcome the conditions of the pre-existent city, but to construct a theoretically watertight system, to formulate the fundamental principles of modern urbanism. These principles, if they are not contradicted, can form the skeleton of the contemporary system of urbanism; they are the rule according to which the game can be played." See Ludwig Hilberseimer, Richard Anderson, and Pier Vittorio Aureli. *Metropolisarchitecture and Selected Essays*. (New York: GSAPP Books, 2012), 112, Columbia University GSAPP Sourcebooks; 2. And Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme*, (Paris: Editions Cres, 1924), 158.
[83] Rosalind E. Krauss explains that the double (doubling) is "the simulacrum, the second, the representative of the original," while "spacing is the indication of a break in the simultaneous experience of the real, a rupture that issues into sequence." For example, "Photographic cropping is always experienced as a rupture in the continuous fabric of reality." The surrealist photographers thus register reality itself through the strategies of spacing and doubling to present reality as sign or "presence transformed into absence, into representation…." See Rosalind E. Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," in Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, 109-110.
[84] Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, translated by Ken Knabb (United States: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2014), 62.
[85] Ibid., 53.

The caption on the back of this Polaroid taken by Aldo Rossi refers to Roman Polanski's horror film "Rosemary's Baby" (1968), whose plot took place at The Dakota building in Manhattan where John Lennon was assassinated months after the photo was taken.

Hotel Rosemary's Baby, Ajaccio (Cyrnos), Corsica
Aldo Rossi
June 21, 1980

(Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
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Chapter 3

The Political Sensitivity: Aldo Rossi

> *The architect must seek the autonomy of his own work, precisely in the study and the cultural awareness of the value of other disciplines.*
>
> —Aldo Rossi, *Nuovi problemi*, Casabella-Continuita, 1962

The third chapter of this dissertation studies the cultural sensitivity of the autonomy of architecture formulated by Aldo Rossi. He conceived an architectural autonomy conversant with other forms of knowledge and different cultural realms. His theory counters the lifeless conceptualism of an autonomy detached from culture and society. His projects attest to the operative dimension of theory and history during the design process. This dissertation values the contradictory contents of Rossi's theory, such as the tension between the city and its outskirts, history and memory, and the self-governing character of a culturally sensitive autonomy as a creative force. However, it calls into question his Eurocentric approach and his omission of the natural landscape on debates about the form of the city (*la forma della città)* exposed by the sensitivity of cinema.

Clint Eastwood on the outskirts of Rome
Film *Per qualche dollaro in più* directed by Sergio Leone
1965

(Photo by Tazio Secchiaroli
Reprinted in Tazio Secchiaroli: Storie di cinema, edited by Giovanna Bertelli, Contrasto, 2004, 60-61)

3.1. The Metropolitan Area and the Concept of The City

By the mid-twentieth century, the world experienced an urban transformation that stimulated the debate about the significance of terms such as "metropolitan area" or "the city." Italy offered a paradigmatic case on the worldwide disparity between the city and the countryside, north and south.[1] The Italian architects, grouped around Ernesto Rogers, considered the city a reservoir of historical codes and values. At the same time, social sciences were interested in the demographic and economic changes happening in different geographies at new territorial magnitudes and scales.[2] But the defense of the civic, historical, and political conditions of the city by the Italians cannot be reduced to a nostalgic rejection of the new cultural conditions.[3] Aldo Rossi's theory relied on the singularity of the *locus* (place) to counter the capitalist integration of the city and the countryside as well as the excesses of mass culture. He considered that the new urban reality that challenged the notion of the city was symptomatic of the crisis of European society and the transition toward a new historical dimension. The Italian city kept its status as a center because the processes of decentralization and suburbanization were less significant in Italy than in the United States. Nevertheless, Rossi accepted that the formation of the "city-region" during the second half of the twentieth century superseded traditional boundaries—i.e., economic, geographic, social, and physical. "The term city," according to Rossi, "was not enough anymore to define the new urban reality."[4]

The group of young architects gathered around Ernesto Rogers—Aldo Rossi, Manfredo Tafuri, Carlo Aymonino, Giorgio Grassi, among others—was unified by a leftist political view and the study of the heterogeneous Modern movement that contradicted the simplicity of a functional interpretation. The journal *Casabella* was a platform for a cultural critique that reflected

Figure 3.1. Piazza Colonna, Rome, 1955.

(Archivio Allori, Reprinted in *Storia Fotografica d'Italia 1946-1966*, 156)

On March 9, 1955, the automobile company Fiat introduced in the market the Fiat 600 and triggered the *motorizzazione di massa* (mass motorization).

Figure 3.2. The two protagonists of the film Ben-Hur (1959), Charlton Heston and Stephen Boyd with a Vespa.

(Reporters Associati, Reprinted in *Storia Fotografica d'Italia 1946-1966*, 215)

on the downsides of the postwar economic prosperity, *il boom*, that triggered the *motorizzazione di massa* (mass motorization) and a high number of commissions that precipitated the professionalism of architecture. The Italian architectural autonomy was influenced by the philosophy of Galvano della Volpe; the texts of Rudolf Wittkower; the dialectics of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer; Louis Kahn's work; Hans Sedlmayr's critique of modern industrial society; the Neoclassicist aesthetic of Georg Lukács; and the political and intellectual movements *Operaism* and *Autonomia*.[5] But while common political views unified the critique of the Italian group, their individual assessments of terms such as "the city" or "city-territory" differed. In 1962, Tafuri and Piccinato proposed the term "city-territory" to synthesize the ongoing urban transformation.[6] They considered that the new modes of transportation and industrial production increasingly integrated the city and the countryside, while Rossi argued that the formal choices sanctioned by the cultural dynamic of "type" and the singularity of the "locus" countered such

capitalist integration. For Pier Vittorio Aureli, the theory of the city proposed by the Operaist political autonomy was closer to the singularity of Rossi's autonomy of architecture than to Tafuri's critique of architectural ideology.[7]

Figure 3.3. Real estate speculation and marginal houses in Milan, 1956. (Contrasto, Reprinted in *Storia Fotografica d'Italia 1946-1966*, 176)

Rossi's theory belongs to a critical genealogy in which typological studies were recurrent to scholarship on the ever-changing urban reality. His theory was sensitive to Alberto Aquarone's analysis of Italian cities such as Rome, Milan, or Naples, whose structures transformed into metropolitan areas. Rossi borrowed Aquarone's words to defend the civic features of the city and the countryside. He considered it necessary to prevent the melancholic reduction of "'optimal housing,' on a regional scale to an immense suburban strip in which the television is, if not the only, the main expression of cultural life, the reduction of 'communion with nature' to the pool in a meadow, and the limitation of the civic spirit of citizens to the rugged cultivation of their own orchard."[8] Rossi also built on Giancarlo de Carlo's studies about the metropolitan area that focused on global urban development, but specifically the European experience of Germany and England where the new urban phenomenon had developed for years. Rossi subscribed to de Carlo's observation that the city-region constituted "a dynamic relationship that substitutes the static condition of the traditional city," offering new and rich possibilities linked to the dynamic of social processes.[9] Ludovico Quaroni and de Carlo supported Tafuri's and Piccinato's formulation of the

"city-territory."[10] But Rossi considered Quaroni as his master; thus, it was not a coincidence that both published a book titled *L'Architettura della Citta* (The Architecture of the City). Quaroni's publication (1939) preceded Rossi's (1966) toward the study of the city as a *fatto architettonico* (architectural fact). The young generation valued Quaroni's reflections on the responsibility of architecture to tackle the deterioration of the modern city.[11]

The analysis of *The Architecture of the City* was based on typological studies. Rossi's interest in typology as a cultural element developed in parallel to Carlo Aymonino's study of Modernism through the conception of typology and Giorgio Grassi's immutability of type as a critique against the idea of "process" as invention.[12] New voices such as Greppi and Pedrolli, architectural students in Florence and militant defenders of Operaism, put forward the autonomous appropriation of the city through concrete urban signs, or typologies, that allowed precise formal "choices" to counter the generalizations of urban planning. Both students were critical of the concept of "city-territory," proposed by Tafuri and Piccinato, which simply demonstrated the efficiency of capitalism to dominate the city. Greppi and Pedrolli considered that capitalist repression disguised as democracy through the new urban reality: "Behind the definition of the city-territory there is only the attempt

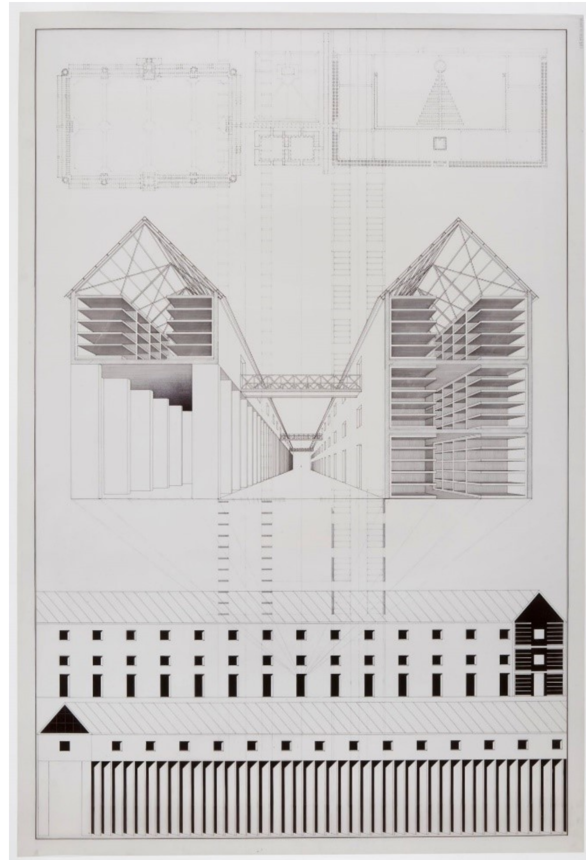

Figure 3.4. Cimitero di San Cataldo, Modena, Italy (plans, sectional perspective and elevations), 1971-1978.

(Aldo Rossi fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/
Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
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to integrate the labor force more within the development of capitalism, this time not through repression but through democratic institutions and even through the battles of the Left for greater social justice."[13]

Rossi's pedagogic efforts mainly developed in Venice and Milan, and Saverio Muratori put forward a critique of architectural culture in Venice and Rome, denouncing academia permeated by dry technicism and "sterile estheticizing nonsense."[14] Muratori proposed an architectural theory and practice that relied on a scientific approach to develop the correspondences between urban and typological development.[15] Rossi built on the idea of an "urban science" to study the complexity and richness of urban phenomena. He accepted the usefulness of different scales in the study of urban artifacts but rejected the correlation between their size and their development: "To reduce metropolitan problems to problems of scale means to ignore completely the existence of a science of the city, in other words to ignore the actual structure of the city and its conditions of evolution."[16] The consideration of architecture and urbanism as urban sciences challenges the impossibility of mere functionalism to comprehend the cultural and historical character of urban artifacts. Rossi built on the ideas of Henry Pirenne and Max Webber about the importance of the economic, social, and political system in the constitution, and the destruction, of the city's spatial structure. But he rejected the positivism of the nineteenth century that permeated social sciences and architecture through theories of functionalism. Rossi valued the work of the French school of urban geography. He referred to the studies of Chabot and Tricart, who proposed a classification of cities based on their function and the study of the social content of the global, the neighborhood, and the street, respectively. Rossi also praised the concerns about an urban science of Marcel Poete and Pierre Lavedan, who proposed to counter functionalism with an approach that deals with the complexity and richness of the formation of any urban

phenomenon.[17] Rossi's structuralist approach countered quantitative euphoria with qualitative insights.

New urban realities call for new epistemologies, but the obsession with economic indexes often overemphasizes problems of scale, relegating the qualitative aspect of urban challenges and the denied sociopolitical dimension of aesthetic concerns. In 1950, the population of developing countries accounted for less than 40 percent of the world's urban population, but it is expected to reach 80 percent by 2030. The term "world city" (1960s) explained the increasing globalization of the urban condition. In the 1990s, the term "global city" was used in financial circles. The urban progression led to the "global city region," which describes "sprawling polycentric networks of urban centers clustered around one or more 'historic' urban cores." "The urbanization of the world," proposed by Edward Soja and Miguel Kanai, described "the extension in the spatial reach of city-based societies, economies, and cultures to every place on the planet" since the second half of the twentieth century.[18] The fixation on scale within social sciences has studied a totalizing "planetary urbanization" to propose new terms that describe worldwide urban transformations. On the other hand, Rossi subscribed to Ludwig Hilberseimer's and the geographer Richard Ratcliff's idea that the new urban problems cannot be reduced to magnitudes or scales.[19]

Rossi's theory contrasted the dry abstraction of the general urban plan with the spatial concreteness of the sectorial plan. He distinguished between the study of the city through its functional systems (social, economic, and political) as generators of urban space and the city as a spatial structure in which the work (the project) triggers the spatial transformation of the territory. According to Rossi, the formal resolution of architecture guarantees cultural and historical continuities and provides a framework for the succession of actions and functions.[20] However, functional systems are central to Rossi's *fatto urbano* (urban artifact), which cannot be reduced to

a physical manifestation.[21] Therefore, the term "form" is as paradoxical as the term "city" in Rossi's theory. Both terms are important critical devices but not definitive. They are critical of the degradation of the modern city. Still, they fall short of tackling the cultural challenges that design has confronted since the mid-twentieth century until today.

Cadastral cartography was the first cartographic effort to organically link the form of a region, its economic organization and productivity, and its social control—its territorial statistics. In Rome, Nolli connected this approach with the new archaeological impetus that developed in reaction to the city's political and cultural decline. The resulting Nuova Pianta di Roma was the first rigorous scientific survey of Rome.

—Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*

Nuova Pianta di Roma
Giovanni Battista Nolli
1748

(William H. Schab Gallery, New York; Arthur Ross Foundation, New York, to 2012; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Conn.)

3.2. Urban Science: Architecture and Urbanism

Aldo Rossi's scientific study of the city was concerned with the development of the *fatto urbano* (urban artifact)—the geographic, historical, social conditions of the city and its spatial structure. Rossi and *La Tendenza* associated a theory of the city with a theory of architecture and rejected interdisciplinary approaches as unreflective solutions to the crisis of architecture.[22] The Italian return to an autonomous discipline considered architecture as a cognitive process—a reservoir of knowledge—whose method studied the cultural conditions of the city without subordinating to them.[23] A cognitive object does not represent or subordinate to historical or social imperatives that precede and outlive it, but, according to the Italian architect Massimo Scolari, it is "an image of the interrogative process itself." Thus, when architecture is understood as a cognitive process or an urban science, it becomes a form of knowledge that critically intervenes in the urban condition. Paradoxically, architecture and urbanism become reservoirs of knowledge through their scientific status not by representing or understanding reality but, on the contrary, by acknowledging that reality cannot be fully grasped or controlled.

Science produces knowledge derived from methodological consensus, but its results are arguably paralogical rather than logical. In the postmodern era, science created knowledge rejecting a single logic. Jean-François Lyotard argued that the search for replicable procedures within scientific practices is legitimized, paradoxically, by generating new ideas in a process that reproduces itself.[24] Modernist sensibility was keen on the "truth" of reality, while paralogical open-endedness was implicit in Lyotard's postmodernism and explicit in the poetics of Umberto Eco's open work. This principle of open-endedness is central in Rossi's study of urban science as a beauty that cannot be anticipated rather than an ill-defined attribute.[25] Rossi denied any affiliation

with the postmodern architectural sensibility. He argued that he was more of a premodern than a postmodern architect because his design concerns corresponded with the cultural and social concerns of Enlightenment architecture. While the historical continuity of Rossi's theory was built on eighteenth-century architecture, he was skeptical of any prescribed logic or historical and academic formula. The proactive history that operated within Rossi's design process flirted with the rejection of single logics of postmodern science. The historical pedigree of typological forms scrutinized an urban dynamic whose impossibility to be fully grasped is the only thing that can be anticipated.

Rossi considered that analysis and composition, in addition to history, constituted architecture. First, a scientific analysis describes phenomena, defines principles, and classifies particularities to anticipate scenarios methodologically. As Rossi put it, to describe is to define, and to define is to classify.[26] Typological studies were tools to define and classify urban artifacts. But since urban artifacts could not be reduced to form, typology also belongs to social sciences because research dealing with spatial problems often have social, economic, and political implications.[27] The moment of analysis played a significant role in the scientific consolidation of biology, architecture, and urbanism. The description, definition, and classification inherent to the analysis distinguishes scientific statements (architectural, biological, and urban) from their narrative counterparts that relegate any verdict. If we recall Foucault's words, "biology was unknown" during the eighteenth century, then "life itself did not exist." In the nineteenth century, the constitution of biology was cause and consequence of the classification of organisms based on structure or function. It is impossible to understand the challenge to ancient erudition and mysticism posed by the oeuvres of Nolli and Piranesi (cartography and archaeology) and Patté and Cerdá (urbanism) without studying the scientific consolidation of their disciplines as autonomous,

not independent, realms in which representation operated as an analytic tool. The unfolding of scientific knowledge, cartography, and archaeology countered the excesses of ideology and antiquarian knowledge during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Giovanni Battista Nolli's *Nuova Pianta di Roma* (1748) preceded Giovanni Battista Piranesi's *Campo Marzio* (1762), superseding the positivism of a scientific survey with a design method sanctioned by certainties, failures, intuition, and decisions.[28]

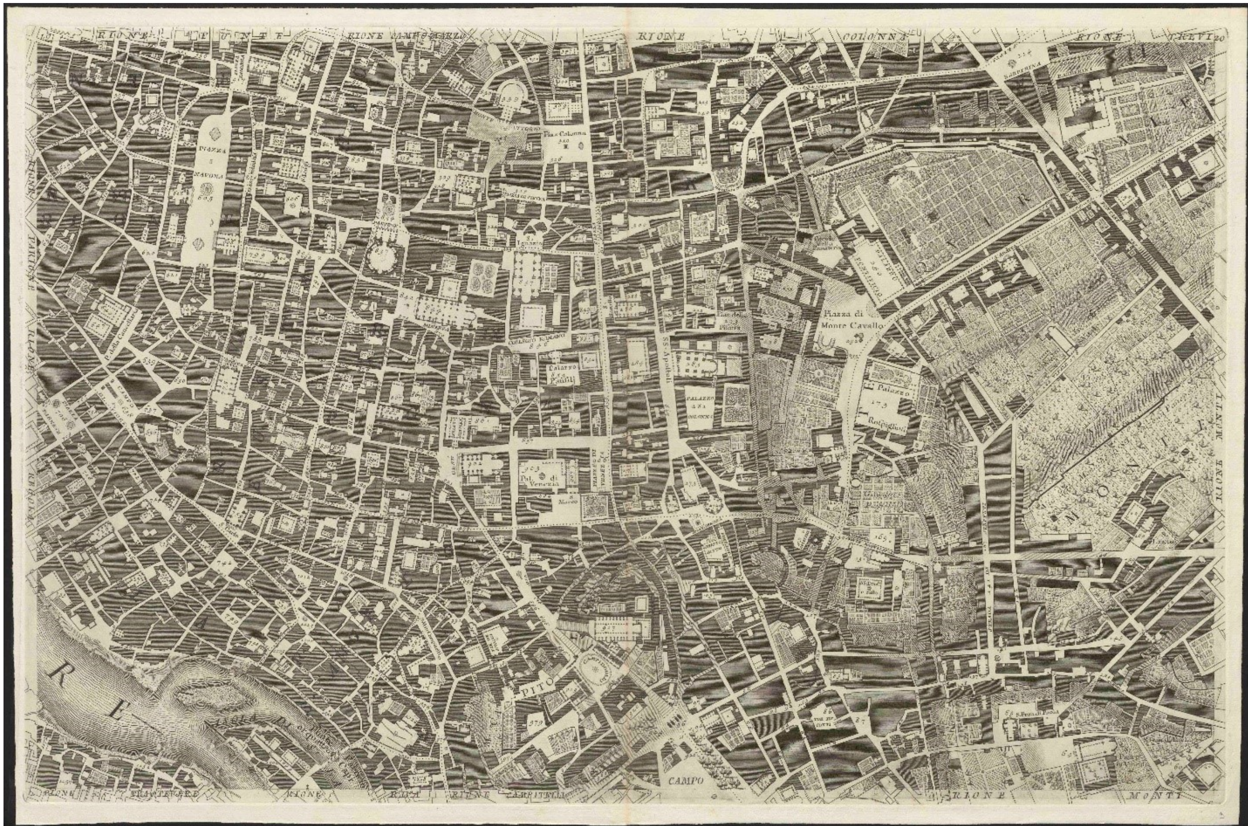


Figure 3.5. *Nuova Pianta di Roma,* Giambattista Nolli

(Frances L. Loeb Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Design)

Second, the problem of composition (or projection) is decisive because it implies the moment of choice or transformation. Rossi's study of the tension between permanence and transformation in the city was influenced by linguistic structuralism, but the subject does not disappear in his theory. The death of the subject was symptomatic of a choice absorbed by the

disciplinary reduction of architectural autonomy. On the other hand, the Italian architectural autonomy never underestimated the subjective dimension. The political nature of the problem of choice was an antidote against both disciplinary formulas and technoscientific approaches that naively omitted the subjectivity in algorithms or computer-based systems. The moment of choice within the design process exposes the tension between the individual and the collective inherent to autonomy.

Third, Rossi considered that "the history of architecture is the material of architecture." Kaufmann's reevaluation of the architecture of the Enlightenment influenced Rossi's accusation against historians who had barely studied the phenomena that informed the architecture of the eighteenth century—such as topographic studies, the relationship with institutions, and the formation of the urban cadastral system. For Rossi, the latter allowed social, economic, and political reforms and set the foundations for an urban scientific study. He borrowed the words of the Italian philosopher Carlo Cattaneo to explain that the city, as the focus of this scientific study, "is the only principle by which the thirty centuries of Italian history can be reduced to an evident and continuous demonstration."[29] The rationalism of architectural autonomy operated beyond stylistic concerns. The architects of the Age of Reason witnessed a series of cultural transformations—such as the French Revolution—that influenced the development of the discipline of architecture. The ancient authority (Vitruvius) informed the consolidation of architecture as an autonomous domain during the late fifteenth century. However, three centuries later, a new rational attitude called into question the authority of ancient erudition. The foundational analogy between Kant's philosophy and Ledoux's architecture inherited the belief of the seventeenth-century rationalist philosophy of Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibnitz that science was an *a priori* (theoretical) activity that questioned the authority of inherited ideas revealed by

God or an incontestable power. Reason, as judge, scrutinized any empirical knowledge. The difference between Kant's philosophy and his predecessors was not his scrutiny of the authority of science itself but his scrutiny of the processes through which science acquired such authority.[30] But this critical process did not lack contradiction. The Kantian system was based on a model (science) that constructs reality and nevertheless rejects the reduction of reality to this model.[31] Thus, it represents the tension between a philosophy that aspired to understand reality while accepting the impossibility of fully comprehending reality. The paradigms of this tension are *freedom* and *autonomy*, which operate as *regulatory ideas* rather than *components of knowledge*. For Adorno, this means that "Kantian philosophy strives to define the world as it ought to be" rather than as it is. This postulate departs from the "objectivity" of traditional scientific models and their relative skepticism toward new statements.

Rossi's conception of science did not lack the contradiction present in Kant's philosophy. Rossi considered it foolish to depart from the rules that comprise the discipline of architecture or the classical treatises. He was keen on the rigor of science, but he explored its experimental dimensions. He considered the repetition of scientific principles as a precondition for invention, stating, "It seems to me that to continue to make the same thing over and over in order to arrive at different results is more than an exercise; it is the unique freedom to discover."[32] Rossi referred to his projects, the *Little Scientific Theater* and the *Fagnano Olona Elementary School*, to describe the tension between invention and imitation. The theater revealed the tension between permanence (architectural parameters) and transitoriness (life): "Inside the theater, nothing can be accidental, yet nothing can be permanently resolved either."[33] Memory, as repetition, constituted the essence of the theater. On the other hand, he anticipated the elements of the school precisely to allow for programmatic freedom.

Figure 3.6. *Scuola elementare a Fagnano Olona, Aldo Rossi, Italy, 1976*

(Aldo Rossi fonds /Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/
Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal / © Eredi Aldo Rossi / Fondazione Aldo Rossi)

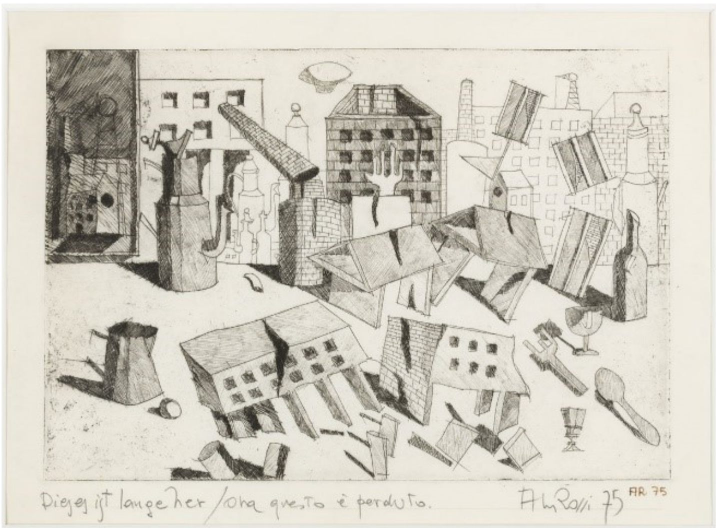


Figure 3.7. *Dieses ist langer* – Ora questo è perduto, Aldo Rossi, 1975

(© Eredi Aldo Rossi / Fondazione Aldo Rossi)

Adorno considered that the deepest idea in Kant's philosophy was the aspiration to understand reality despite recognizing the impossibility of the task. The deepest idea in Rossi's theory is arguably the invention that the repetition of urban science paradoxically allows. He considered that the event constituted the novelty of any project, which possesses different lives—the built, the written, the drawn, and the life framed by architectural form. Rossi considered the drawings produced between 1974 and 1980 as the synthesis of a screenplay. They show a "limited disorder of things" that can be accepted as the transformation of architecture or a built place (locus) derived from personal modifications. Rossi's film "Ornament and Crime," created for the 1973 Triennale di Milano, was "a collage of architectural works and pieces of different films which tried to introduce the discourses of architecture into life and at the same time view it as a background for human events."[34] His scientific (repetition as a precondition of invention) and filmic (collage about life) method

transcended architectural methods. He recognized that he went beyond architecture with the film presenting both Venice's historical center as accomplice and background of the impossible love story of Visconti’s *Il Senso* and the new urban challenges through the outskirts of Milan. Thus, Rossi appealed to a different form of autonomy, an aesthetic and cognitive instability, sensitive to urban phenomena. This cinematic autonomy conforms to the protensive character of film and is susceptible to temporal phenomena that exceed the spatial concerns of traditional notions of architecture and urbanism.

Italian director Luchino Visconti, Annie Girardot, and Alain Delon on the set (Milano Duomo) of Rocco and His Brothers
Milano Duomo, 1960

(Titanus/Les Films Marceau/Astor Pictures)

3.3. The Modern City, Cinema, Architecture

The Kantian rational rebellion informed the outbreak of the French Revolution, attesting to its profound cultural implications. But after Kant formulated the autonomy of an aesthetic judgment disinterested in the means-end concerns of bourgeois society, some artistic approaches radicalized their position in relation to society—autonomy was increasingly misinterpreted as *detachment*. The romanticism of Baudelaire depicted an artist disturbed by life. This sentiment led Aestheticism to consider the distance between art and the praxis of life as the content of the artwork at the end of the nineteenth century. The avant-garde movements, such as Surrealism and Dadaism, countered this position by canceling this distance years later. However, the debate persisted as the discourse of autonomy matured within architecture during the second half of the twentieth century. The revision of the Modern movement, led by Ernesto Rogers in Italy, studied the historical relationship between architecture and the city and how philosophy, urban geography, political theory, and art offered an analytical framework to study the development of the modern city. Aldo Rossi disapproved the understanding of art as "liberation," which belonged to "superficial criticism."[35] Autonomy, for Rossi, entailed a *social and political engagement* capable of formulating a cultural critique rather than the indifference of a disciplinary interpretation. Thus, literature and cinema were often regarded as aesthetic indexes that superseded the analytic and critical capacity of architecture to depict and scrutinize the ongoing urban transformations. Their precision documented the temporal and spatial ranges of life. The Realist film directors revealed the cultural changes experienced by the modern city and its inhabitants during the postwar years, such as the economic boom, poverty, sexual liberation, or mass consumption.

Figure 3.8. A real *sciuscià* (shoeshine boy) in Italy, 1946.

(Archivio Riccardo Carbone)

This photo was taken the same year that Vittorio de Sica released his film *Sciuscià* to depict the poverty suffered by Italian children during the postwar years.

Figure 3.9. Frame from the film *Sciuscià* (shoeshine boy), Vittorio de Sica, 1946.

(British Film Institute, London, National Film Archive/Societa Cooperativa Alfa Cinematografica)

The second World War plunged Italy into a social crisis with increasing unemployment rates that triggered a massive migration to cities. Prices rose 30 times in relation to the prewar period, while wages increased only three times since 1939. The maritime sector reported that 90 percent of the ports were destroyed, 60 percent of the road network and 50 percent of railway installations were out of service, and three million rooms of the housing sector were destroyed. The postwar years were marked by the new government of Alcide De Gasperi, of *Democrazia Cristiana* (Christian Democracy party) that replaced the anti-fascist Ferruccio Parri by the end of November 1945. Only days before assuming control of the country, the new liberal leadership declared: *L'inefficienza nella direzione di governo e le leggi*

Figure 03.10. The migration in the 1960s from the southern to the northern Italian cities allowed peasants to work on factories to improve their quality of life.

(Photo by Carlo Orsi)

epurative provocano frattura fra il paese legale e il paese reale. ("The inefficient governance and the purging laws caused a rift between the legal country and the real country.")[36] This Italian reality was depicted by film directors such as Luchino Visconti, Michelangelo Antonioni, and Pier Paolo Pasolini. They were interested in the transformation of the Italian urban landscape in a way that escaped the methods and contents of architecture.

Figures 3.11 and 3.12. Nuovo Cimiterio San Cataldo, Aldo Rossi
(Photos by Jakob Börner)

The notion of time, the certainty of decay, is central to the Realist dimension of Rossi's theory. The dialectical relationship between the collective nature of typology and the personal, or autobiographical, invention of urban events is not a nostalgic search for origins but complex geography of human experiences shaped by the reality of life and death. The direct experience acquired a theoretical dimension and vice versa. When Rossi talked about architecture—a theater, a cemetery, a school, a house—he talked about "life, death, imagination." Thus, the cemetery of San Cataldo in Modena only acquired its real significance when death appropriated it in 1979 when the first corpses represented the most disturbing certainty and prompted the wave of memories necessary to live.[37] The fact that architecture is relegated among the interplay between life and death attests paradoxically to the importance of architecture "insofar as it serves imagination and

action." Rossi referred to the photos that depicted a stoic Brandenburg Gate amid the destruction of postwar Berlin as a vivid example of a forgotten architecture: "What was left certainly did not belong to architecture. It was rather a symbol, a sign, at times a tiresome memory."[38] The city's reconstruction had to proceed not merely from architectural ruins but also from the vestiges of the human condition's historical memory.

Figure 3.13. Brandenburg Gate, Berlin, 1945.
(Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung)

The Italian reformulation of the disciplinary principles of architecture did not consider architecture as its methodological horizon. Rossi argued that architectural form was the most concrete moment of the urban experience. Still, he believed that the spatial and temporal experiences that constitute the cultural processes of the urban condition were captured with more fidelity by literature or cinema than architecture. He was skeptical of purism and fond of "the unlimited contamination of things, of correspondences." Thus, he considered any form of representation—photographs, portraits, drawings, the screenplay of a film—as the definition of a specific aesthetic experience that motivates the expansion of memories or events.

Literature and cinema transcend the stylistic fixation of the discipline of architecture to conform to the spatial and temporal dimension of daily life. Both artistic expressions provided aesthetic indexes that Rossi used to synthesize the general dimension of typology and the individuality of human events that operate analytically throughout his oeuvre. He evoked the stories of Raymond Chandler and Anton Chekhov to exemplify how the idea of space of the

Figure 3.14. Salone of the Villa Cornaro, Andrea Palladio

(Photo by Paolo Marton, Reprinted in *Andrea Palladio: The Architect in his Time* by Bruce Boucher, 116)

"'Light-radiating!' There is no such word in conversation or in books, but you see he invented it, he found it in his mind! Apart from the smoothness and grandeur of language, sir, every line must be beautified in every way; there must be flowers and lightning and wind and sun and all the objects of the visible world."

—Anton Chekhov, *Easter Eve*

Palladian villa could be transposed to other contexts and human experiences. The spatial qualities of the villa, described by Chandler and Chekhov, are revealed as common denominators of cultural events whose capacity to conform to daily life allows their transposition from California or Moscow to other sociopolitical and historical contexts through the memories and desires of the reader. Rossi highlighted the sensitivity of Chekhov's interiors to seasons. This mental image triggered his subsequent search for an architecture that "filters that distinctive light, that evening coolness, those shadows of a summer afternoon"—an atmospheric and spatial dimension that "is stronger than the building itself."[39] The primacy of actions and atmospheres allowed by the architectural condition is at the core of his study of architecture as urban science, which implies the repetition of accepted methods. When Rossi discussed the attempt to take the same photo more than once, he declared that "no technique is ever sufficiently perfect to prevent changes introduced by the lens and the light."[40]

Rossi elevated the dissociation of architectural projects, paintings, and films from their respective techniques to the status of precondition to project a reality. This view echoed Walter Benjamin's reflections about the technical apparatus of film that paradoxically penetrates reality

to resemble life without any evidence of technological interference.[41] Rossi associated Michelangelo Antonioni's film *Professione: Reporter* (translated as The Passenger) with a place on the island of Elba because both evoked a loss of identity. The project *Casa dello studente di Chieti* (Student housing at Chieti) concluded a genealogy of associations and correspondences that followed the drawing *Cabina dell'Elba* (The Cabins of Elba) but began with Antonioni's film. This genealogy oscillated between typological forms and concrete memories. The Cabins represent the minimal dimension of life that a house encloses and whose sensitivity to seasons evoked Chekhov's interiors. Therefore, the locus is not identified with the city, but "the locus is inside, or is identified with whoever lives in the house for a time."[42] The Cabins suggested the idea of a house that has no place because it implodes by referring not only to typology but also to human events subjected to the instability of life. This emphasis on concrete places does not refer exclusively to the civic and political codification of the spatial structure of the city—i.e., the collective importance of the monument, public space, and the concreteness of form. It also refers to the personal experiences of each person that the realism of literature and cinema codified as collective values.

Figure 3.15. Cabina dell'Elba, Aldo Rossi, 1980-1982.

(© Eredi Aldo Rossi / Fondazione Aldo Rossi)

The concept of tradition acquired a progressive character within a debate about the importance of history in architecture when used by architecture, literature, and cinema to denounce the degradation of the postwar Italian city. Saverio Muratori's typological studies and Ludovico Quaroni's consideration of the historical city as a reference point influenced young architects such

as Aldo Rossi, Manfredo Tafuri, Carlo Aymonino, Paolo Portoghesi, and Giorgio Grassi, among others. The new generation considered tradition as a current that constituted reality and departed from the "rhetorical and evasive formalism" of the Modern movement. A group of young students from Politecnico di Milano—identified as *Giovani delle Colonne* by Giancarlo di Carlo—comprised by Rossi, Guido Canella, Vittorio Gregotti and Giuseppina Marcialis argued that neoclassicism was more progressive than functionalism. Rossi's revision of Modern architecture was not Manichean. He rejected its functionalism but praised the housing research of German rationalism and Emil Kaufmann's scholarship that documented a modern approach that focused on social reality. The historical concerns of Italian architecture informed the first international exhibition of the Venice Architecture Biennale 1980 curated by Portoghesi, *La Presenza del Passato* (The Presence of the Past), which revitalized the debate on the future of architecture in relation to its past. But they also informed the adoption of cinema as a cultural critique to question the frantic modernization experienced in Italy.

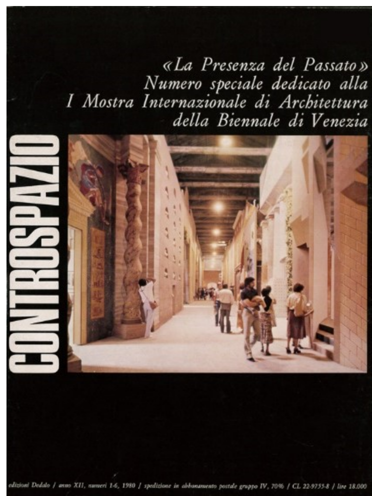


Figure 3.16. Controspazio, no. 1-6, 1980.

(Edizioni Dedalo)

The concept of tradition operated as a common denominator within the literature, political theory, architecture, and cinema against picturesque formal effects, the abstraction of the Modern movement, or the practical concerns of bourgeois society. Rossi considered that neoclassical architecture represented a complex formal experience linked to the rationalism of the Enlightenment, which synthesized the problem of the history of architecture derived from social reality. Thus, the problem of architecture did not correspond to the organic evolution of formal successions but responded to the historical evolution of society. This approach corresponded to

Kaufmann's *autonomen Architektur*, which derived from "the reality of change" rather than "the fixation on style."[43] For Rossi, the tradition did not conform to formal heritage but to a rational search for historical continuity toward understanding present realities. Architecture thus became a problem of historical consciousness that transcends the urgency of the answer that responded to external threats.

The relationship between theoretical and empirical knowledge is present in Rossi's theory because he embraced Realism until he wrote *The Scientific Autobiography* (1981). The historical responsibility of the human being acquired prevalence in Realism through this knowledge, while the correspondences between architecture and autobiography are evident in the scientific dimension of his personal story. Rossi's formative years transitioned from a realist education (1953-1957), the relationship between architecture and the city (1958-1963), to typological studies (1964-1966) that culminated in *The Architecture of the City* (1966). The first period informed the correlations between concepts such as tradition, history, and reality; the second sought for transdisciplinary references from art, economy, sociology, and urban geography to tackle the mid-century urban transformations; and the third identified the concept of type as a cultural element whose complexity cannot be reduced to form even though every form refers to a type. Rossi was fond of the contamination of things rather than purism. Thus, the correspondences between personal experience, architecture, literature, cinema, urban geography, tradition, and collective memory made possible his synthesis between "old sensations with new impressions."[44]

In the 1940s, daily life was unusual. The film director Michelangelo Antonioni argued that "reality was a burning issue."[45] The focus on social issues, on life, attested to the anti-fascist position of neorealist cinema. Italian documentaries did not focus on the reality of poor people because it was a forbidden subject during the Fascist regime. Thus, Antonioni's first documentary,

Figures 3.17 and 3.18. Frames from *Gente del Po,* Michelangelo Antonioni, 1947

(Archivio Michelangelo Antonioni, Associazione Michelangelo Antonioni)

Gente del Po (1947), was a political decision that informed the subsequent development of neorealist cinema by focusing on the working people of the Po valley, close to his hometown Ferrara. Neorealist cinema depicted the new postwar reality through the relationship between the individual and society. Roberto Rossellini's *Germania anno zero* (Germany Year Zero) and Vittorio De Sica's *Ladri di biciclette* (The Bicycle Thief) were two paradigmatic films of this period—both were released in 1948. Rossellini and De Sica located the camera outside the characters to capture their relationship with their environment. Two years later, Antonioni's *Story of a Love Affair* placed the camera inside the characters. French critics described this kind of film as "interior neorealism."[46] His goal was to

Figure 3.19. Germani Anno Zero, Roberto Rosellini, 1948

(Tevere Film/SAFDI/Union Générale Cinématographique (UGC)/Deutsche Film, DEFA, British Film Institute)

Figures 3.20 and 3.21. Ladri di biciclette, Vittorio de Sica, 1948.

(Archivio Giuditta Rissone - Emi De Sica, conservato presso la Cineteca di Bologna)

analyze the psychological consequences of war and the moral degradation of certain members of society who privileged individual interests over collective concerns.[47] The 1950s witnessed the transition from passive documentation of reality to the intensification of social and historical paradigms through individual crises connected with each member of society regardless of socioeconomic conditions, profession, or birthplace. Luchino Visconti's *Senso* (1954) elevated the political status of ordinary events by connecting individual experiences with the collective struggles derived from Italy's desire for independence.[48] In the next decade, Antonioni directed a trilogy of psychological films *L'Avventura* (1960), *La Notte* (1961), and *L'Eclisse* (1962) that depicted the ongoing degradation of life at a personal level. He declared that this crisis was emotional in *L'Eclisse*, while "emotions are taken for granted" in *Il Deserto Rosso* (1964). Thus, psychosis haunted the main character Giuliana (played by Monica Vitti in *Il Deserto Rosso*) to detach her from the environment because industry dominated life through factories and products. Antonioni described this condition as follows:

Figure 3.22. L'Eclisse, Michelangelo Antonioni, 1962. (Associazione Michelangelo Antonioni)

> They haunt us from the advertisements, which appeal ever more subtly to our psychology, to our subconscious. I would go as far as to say that by setting the story of Red Desert (*Il Deserto Rosso*) in the world of factories, I have got to the source of that crisis that, like a river, collects together a thousand tributaries and then bursts out into a delta, overflowing its banks and drowning everything. . . . I think that in the next few years we will see some major violent transformations, both in the physical world and in man's psyche. The current crises derive from this spiritual confusion, which is also moral, religious, and political.[49]

Antonioni associated the violent transformations of the physical world and the internal world of the human being with an aesthetic transition from the "gray, brown, and smoky" industrialization of the nineteenth century to the change of taste that informed pop art. The adoption of television

Figure 3.23. Michelangelo Antonioni and Monica Vitti in the set of Il Deserto Rosso.

(Archivio Enrico Appetito)

as a massive mode of communication increasingly colored the world to leave behind black-and-white films. *The Architecture of the City* emerged from the tension that brought together cinema and reality. But it was only when the problem of architecture was identified as "atmospheric," in *A Scientific Autobiography* (1981), that it became thoroughly conversant with what the Italian writer Cesare Pavese called *Il Mestiere di vivere* ("The business of living") made up *di sottilissimi momenti interiori* ("of very subtle inner moments") rather than great scenes.[50]

The fact that cinema could "document man's life in its total dimension of space, time, and place," as the Italian writer Vasco Pratolini asserted, influenced the correspondences between reality, tradition, and history in Rossi's theory.[51] However, his interest in cinema did not derive from the succession of events or images, proper to its technique, but from a representation of reality capable of synthesizing daily events whose temporal and spatial dimension ranges from personal to collective habits. Rossi considered that the capacity of representation that cinema possesses to depict reality was superior to that of design: "Pasolini, Visconti, Fellini, and other directors have expressed the characteristics of the periphery in a much more powerful way than any book on architecture or urbanism could have done."[52]

Rossi set aside the projective capacity of design to praise the explanatory power of cinema to depict urban transformations whose consequences impacted people at a psychological, economic, social, and political level. But he was arguably aware that the realism of cinema provided a sophisticated cultural critique based on the artistic elevation of daily events to social

and historical paradigms rather than on the banality of resentment so present in pretentious political critiques:

> Even if the degradation of Visconti's characters and the desolate lyricism of Fellini's urban landscapes seem far from a desire for change or renewal, the abandonment seen in these images is still able to represent the incommunicable bitterness, and a hard encounter with reality—the changing urban reality of the modern city inhabitants.[53]

The reluctance of art and cinema to make accusations deviates from aesthetic blindness—from a tasteless denouncement of the excesses and failures of prevailing economic, social, and political conditions based on supposedly moral superiority.[54] In "Cher Antonioni (Dear Antonioni)," the philosopher Roland Barthes referred to the distinction formulated by Nietzsche between the priest and the artist: "Today we have many priests, both religious and non-religious. But artists?"[55] He described the vigilance, the wisdom, and the paradoxical fragility that characterized Antonioni's work to conclude, "As opposed to the priest, the artist is full of astonishment and admiration. He may look critically but never accusingly. The artist knows nothing of resentment."[56]

The aesthetic depth of cinema and literature was central to Rossi's realist sensitivity. He considered Visconti's *Ossessione* (1943) and Cesare Pavese's *Il Compagno* (The Comrade) crucial in his architectural formation. Visconti depicted the class struggle through the love affair between a small businessman's wife and a stranger who set aside any moral and ethical restriction to be together. On the other hand, Pavese's story represented the communist sympathy of its unemployed and uneducated protagonist. The narrative explored the daily experiences framed by the urban space of Rome and Torino rather than their monumental concreteness.[57]

Rossi's only attempt to explore the practical means and methods of film borrowed its title from Adolf Loos's writing "Ornament and Crime," which Rossi found contradictory because he considered the text an apologia rather than a condemnation.[58] In Nietzschean terms, Loos is not a

priest but an artist because the text refers to decoration as *what has been lost*. In both Loos's text and Rossi's film, the cultural concerns operate beyond architecture: *in tutto il film l'architettura e uno strumento, uno sfondo* ("throughout the film, architecture is an instrument, a background").[59] The film is a collage whose eclecticism combines material that refers to Walter Benjamin, Marcel Poete, Adolf Loos, and Paul Klee. It includes shots of films such as Visconti's Senso, Bolognini's Senilita, and Fellini's Roma. The film concludes by drawing correspondences between the movement of the trains arriving at Milan's train station and the Roman life depicted by Fellini. The final sequence of images showed a carnival that resembles *semplicemente la vita quotidiana della citta moderna* ("simply the daily life of the modern city").[60]

Figure 03.24. A frame from *Ornamento e delitto, a film for the 15th Triennale Milan*, Aldo Rossi, 1973.

(Reprinted in "Realism and Rationalism: An Italian-German Architectural Discourse" by Silvia Malcovati/MAXXI Museum, Rome
© Eredi Aldo Rossi / Fondazione Aldo Rossi)

The interest of postwar Italian architecture on *il mestiere di vivere* ("the business of living") rendered the problem of choice as political. At the same time, the disciplinary interpretation of autonomy in the United States reduced choice, or intention, to the distinction between architecture and construction. The young generation of architects built on Antonio Gramsci's search for an alternative to bourgeois interests based on popular traditions and a critique of orthodox Marxism. The idea that neoclassicism was more progressive than the abstract formalism of Modernism derived from this political commitment.[61] But while Rossi developed a theory identified with the urban development of the European city, the film director Pier Paolo Pasolini reflected the urban

transformations of the Italian reality and foresaw a global reality yet to come.

Pasolini advocated for popular traditions to defend the harmonic development of the modern city with nature disrupted by aesthetic and economic speculation. He referred in a documentary to *la forma della città* ("the shape of the city") as the (aesthetic, economic, social, and political) correlations between the city and nature.[62] The problem of historical and cultural heritage dominates the short film with a precision that suggests its contemporary importance. Rossi emphasized the historical persistence in *The Architecture of the City* that could be easily identified with sociohistorical European conditions, while Pasolini's precocious judgment demanded the protection of the environment. He used the city of Orte to describe how the shape of the city was disturbed by the excesses of real estate practices eager for profits that disregarded any reflection on the relationship between the old and the new as well as the city and nature. Pasolini stressed the need "to defend something not sanctioned or codified, which no one bothers to defend, and which is the work, so to speak of a population, of a whole history, of the whole history of a city's

Figures 3.25 and 3.26. *Pasolini e la forma della città,* 1974.
(Archivio Rai Teche)

population." Pasolini's aesthetic sensibility denounced outdated legal mechanisms of cultural protection that defend a work of art, a monument, or a church but do not protect the popular past of a street, the civic baggage of public space, or the anonymity of a natural landscape. Obsolete

notions of conservation and preservation exacerbate the *frattura fra il paese legale e il paese reale* ("the rift between the legal country and the real country") described by the politician De Gasperi in 1945.[63] They fail to acknowledge the cultural importance of "the reality of change" by focusing on "the fixation on style," in the same way that the representative capacity of architecture falls short of depicting the spatial and temporal ranges of life.

Unità Residenziale, Quartiere Gallaratese 2
Aldo Rossi
Milan, Italy, 1968-1973

(Photo by Burcin YILDIRIM)

3.4. Typology and Monumentality: Gallaratese and San Cataldo

The notions of typology and monumentality reinforce the priority of an autonomous architectural system based on a complex cultural reality within Aldo Rossi's theory. Their relationship propels urban development through the paradoxical invention provided by historical references and counters the reduction of autonomy to tyrannical disciplinary formulas. Thus, the historical pedigrees and the cultural developments of the type and the monument could not be dissociated from urban development. Both typology and monumentality operate as critical tools against the degradation of the modern city exploited by individualism at economic and aesthetic levels. Their formal resolutions become only a means for the cultural sensitivity of typology and monumentality to express a collective goal in urban terms.

The correspondences between the everyday reality depicted by cinema and the scientific repetition of life arguably informed Rossi's interest in architectural types. The systemic character of the dialectical relationship between typology and the urban event confronts a collective understanding of the city with the singularity of architecture whose cultural dimension cannot be reduced to stylistic concerns. His consideration of type as "a cultural element" transcends architecture as a special cultural realm.[64] For Rossi, typology is "the analytical moment of architecture" that could be identified "at the level of urban artifacts."[65] Rossi's interpretation of type derived, explicitly, from Saverio Muratori's typological studies and referred, implicitly, to Carl Jung's psychological types via cinema. Rossi's idea of type could be traced back to the Enlightenment through the ideas of Quatremère de Quincy and Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand. On the other hand, it could be associated with the distinction between introverted and extroverted psychological types that permeate our human interactions.[66]

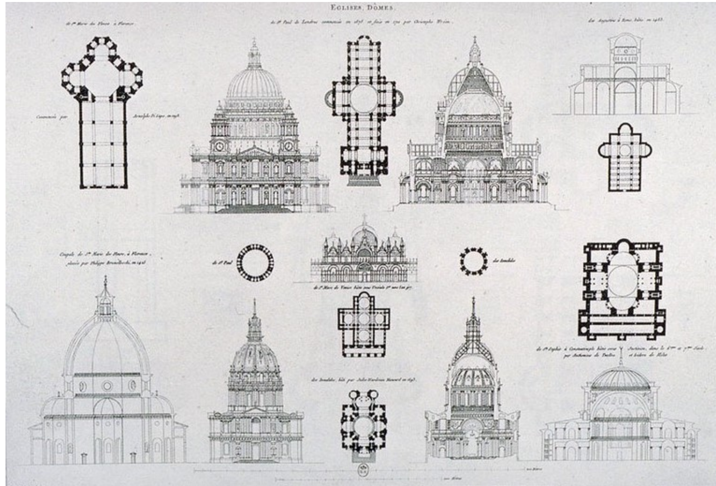
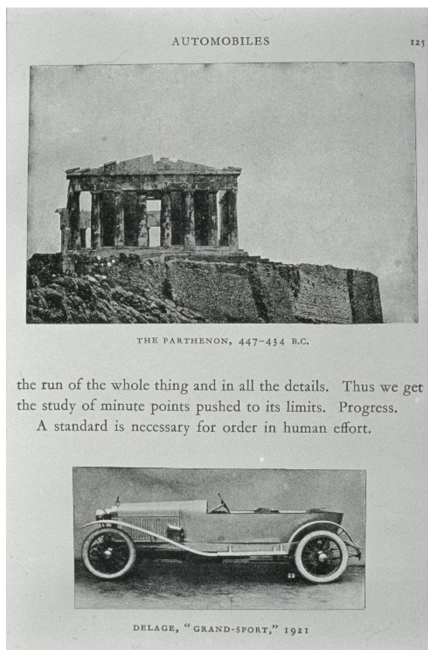


Figure 3.27. Plate from *Précis des leçons d'architecture données à l'École Royale Polytechnique,* Durand, Jean Nicolas Louis, 1802-1805.

(Frances L. Loeb Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Design)

De Quincy distinguished between the vagueness of the type and the precision of the model, while Durand stated that (public and private) buildings "are subdivided into a great number of types, and each type in turn is capable of an infinity of modifications."[67] These formulations are explicitly found in Rossi's definition of type as "a logical proposition that is prior to form and comes to constitute it."[68] The typological studies that derive from this intellectual genealogy do not produce traditional architectural images, they simply provide clarity to the process "of becoming" in the architectural rationale. In contrast to these positions being indifferent to stylistic concerns, Anthony Vidler argued that the urban dimension of Rossi's autonomous architecture was the third typology.[69] The first emerged in the mid-eighteenth century when Abbe Laugier proposed the primitive hut as "a natural basis for design." The second was conceived by Le Corbusier, who equated the production process with its architectural counterpart to respond to the conditions of mass production that proliferated during the nineteenth century. The third typology was the city as a political artifact that represented "the continuity of form and history against the fragmentation


AUTOMOBILES 125

THE PARTHENON, 447–434 B.C.

the run of the whole thing and in all the details. Thus we get the study of minute points pushed to its limits. Progress.
A standard is necessary for order in human effort.

DELAGE, "GRAND-SPORT," 1921

Figure 3.28. A page from *Vers une architecture,* Le Corbusier, 1923.

(Harvard Fine Arts Library, Digital Images & Slides Collection)

produced by the elemental, institutional, and mechanistic typologies of the recent past." Thus, *La Tendenza* proposed an urban reflection that synthesized the past and the current experience of the city to challenge the Modern urbanism of tabula rasa. But the problem with Vidler's interpretation of the city as a third typology is his conclusion since it is concerned with stylistic problems. He wonders if "archittetura autonoma (autonomous architecture)" is not simply another "smokescreen" to cover the "aesthetic free-play" of forms that conform to the neoclassical style.

Figure 3.29. Constructing the City, project, Aldo Rossi, 1978.

(Museum of Modern Art New York
Gift of the Architecture and Design Committee in honor of Marshall Cogan)

Thus, Vidler relegated aesthetics to an innocent operation and neglected to recognize that form is secondary in the autonomous system of architecture since Kaufmann's *autonomen Architektur*. On the other hand, the psychological types proposed by Jung could be identified within the Italian reality depicted by realist cinema. The urban transformations throughout the world—the consolidation of the metropolitan area, massive migration to cities, rampant industrial advancement, and mass consumerism—compromised the preservation of nature through industrial advancement and supposed both a transformation of the urban landscape and human psychology.[70]

Postwar Italian cinema documented daily reality through neorealism. It depicted the social, economic, and political unrest through personal tragedies whose particularities revealed precisely common denominators across different social sectors. Michelangelo Antonioni's documentary *Gente del Po* (1947), Roberto Rosellini's *Germania anno zero* (1948), and Vittorio De Sica's *The*

Bicycle Thief (1948) depicted the relationship between human beings and their environment. During the following decades, Antonioni's films—*Story of a Love Affair* (1950), *L'Avventura* (1960), *La notte* (1961), and *L'Eclisse* (1962)—explored the depths of human psychology through the psychotic and alienating consequences of the ongoing industrial transformation.[71] "When we consider the course of human life," according to Carl Jung, "we see how the fate of one individual is determined more by the objects of his interest, while in another it is determined more by his own inner self, by the subject."[72] The analytical capacity of postwar Italian cinema transitioned from extroversion to introversion if we use Jung's terminology based on human psychology. Jung's types could be associated with a genealogy that identified the urban environment as its object of study based on its sociological, economic, aesthetic, psychological, or architectural effects. The subjectivity shaped by modern life, according to Georg Simmel, exacerbated its nervous personality "with every crossing of the street, with the speed and the diversity of economic, professional, social life."[73] The avant-garde depicted the intensity of urban life—from Edvard Munch's *The Scream* to Paul Citroen's *Metropolis*. Aldo Rossi identified the notions of typology, monumentality, and urban artifact as cultural and historical indexes that correspond to the spatial and temporal ranges of urban life, including the increasing nervous

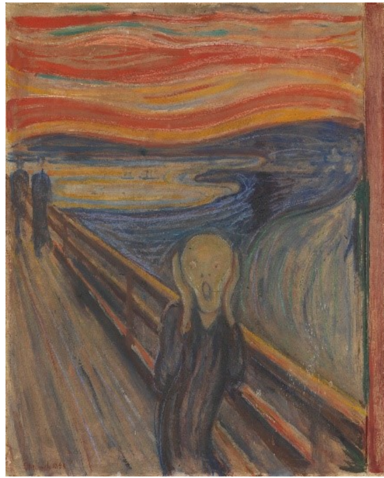


Figure 3.30. *The Scream*, Edvard Munch, 1893

(Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design, The Fine Art Collections / Photo by Børre Høstland Gift of Olaf Schou 1910)

Figure 3.31. *Metropolis*, Paul Citroen, 1923

(Museum of Modern Art New York Thomas Walther Collection. Gift of Thomas Walther
© 2015 Paul Citroen/Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York/Pictoright, Amsterdam)

personality of the modern individual.

Rossi highlighted the interdependence and tension between the concept of typology and the singularity of the urban event. The concept of typology refers to the different dimensions that constitute the city—the historical, geographical, sociological, economic, spatial, or formal. The singularity of the urban event identifies a partial and concrete architectural intervention that nevertheless contributes to the development of the city. The urban artifact that permeates *The Architecture of the City* counters the intentions of urban design. The latter, for Rossi, usually developed in relation to context to construct "a homogeneous, coordinated, and continuous environment that presents itself with the coherence of a landscape."[74] However, the singularity of the urban artifact and the event often operates as an exception that "constitute forms rather than continue them."[75] The contextual coherence of urban design resembles the aesthetic stability of Renaissance compositions. On the other hand, the singularity of the urban artifact corresponds to the fragmented logic of the avant-gardist collage that challenged the Renaissance stability and the status quo that constructs the modern metropolis. The lack of theoretical concerns of urban design mimics the immediate physical needs of urban development for the sake of coherence but without reflecting on the cultural formation of the city. In Rossi's words:

> A conception which reduces the form of urban artifacts to an image and to the taste which receives this image is ultimately too limited for an understanding of the structure of urban artifacts. In contrast is the possibility to interpret urban artifacts in all of their fullness, to resolve a part of the city in a complete way by determining all the relationships that can be established as existing with respect to any artifact.[76]

The architectural type opens its own experience and knowledge to conscious and unconscious correspondences by rejecting the crystallization of the model. Rossi recognized that the architectural interpretation of the type contributes to the development of other cultural realms and vice versa. The implicit correspondences between Rossi's idea of type, Jung's psychological types,

and Antonioni's "interior neorealism" suggest the alliance of different disciplines as a precondition to analyze and intervene in the different dimensions of any urban transformation. Rossi surveyed the contribution of the spatial dimension of typological studies to sociological or political problems. He considered that some rationalist investigations on housing revealed that the typological studies surpassed their objective and that "constructive typologies belong to social sciences."[77] The *Existenzminimum* problem tackled a political issue in design terms, while the free plan of *Maison Dom-Ino* provided a framework necessary for the evolution of functions over time. The sociological and political character of the architectural type provides the cultural traction needed to analyze its urban dimension.[78] The paradox is that to tackle the housing problem, we need to isolate it as a whole to consider the interdisciplinary correspondences that allow its study in the first place. However, the problem of the housing type, and type in general, cannot be considered from the isolation of a *detached* autonomy. Peter Behrens thought that to criticize the construction of urban housing from bureaucratic formulas is misleading "because there is nothing more mutable and heterogeneous than the necessities, the traditions, and the multiple situations of a population that lives in a specific region."[79] These views not only reinforce the distinction between the openness of the type and the precision of the model but also consolidate the alliance between architectural typologies and urban life through the cultural sensitivity of urban artifacts.

Rossi's understanding of typology was aligned with the intellectual heritage of the Enlightenment as much as it differed from his contemporaries. He built on the cultural complexity of the type described by de Quincy or Durand, while he deviated from Robert Venturi's ironic syntax that countered coherent historical references. Type, for Venturi, was an iconic form whose meaning derives from its ordinary persistence rather than historical continuity. The rejection of historical references deprives this notion of an architectural type of defined syntax or inherited

semantics. According to Alan Colquhoun, the Venturian relations between the door, the window, the roof, and the wall constitute a building whose borrowed, and fragile quality resembles the fragmentation of a collage. If Cubism challenged the stability of Renaissance composition through the collage, Venturi's type challenged the prescribed stability of the architectural image via an ironical syntax.[80]

Figures 3.32, 3.33, 3.34, and 3.35. *Vanna Venturi House,* Robert Venturi, 1959-1964

(Frances L. Loeb Library,
Harvard University Graduate School of Design,
Harvard Fine Arts Library,)

The problem of type stimulated a deep aesthetic debate that revealed ideological motivations in which the political nature of choices occupied a central role. These political choices allowed by architectural types challenged the "objectivity" of technoscientific approaches. The same year of the publication of *The Architecture of the City*, Thomas Maldonado referred to the architectural forms derived from types as "a cancer in the body of the solution" that should be eliminated as "our techniques of classification become more systematic."[81] The rejection

of the problem of choice inherent to type is implicit within Maldonado's technical, perhaps technocratic, tone. However, against all odds, the problem of choice played a central role even within the functionalism of Modern architecture. Colquhoun used Yona Friedman's and Le Corbusier's methods to exemplify the power of intuition when mathematical and computing limits are reached. Friedman recognized that the designer faces diverse choices "all of which are equally good from an operational point of view" after "computing the relative positions of functions within a three-dimensional city grid." Yannis Xenakis, who worked in the design of the Philips Pavilion in Le Corbusier's office, "used mathematical procedures to determine the form of the enclosing structure."[82] But, like Friedman, he acknowledged that the more evident the operational limitations of this method, the more apparent the compositional power of intuition.

The limitations of the operational procedures of mathematics and computing pave the way for the choices made by the designer. These choices occur as the continuity of history in Rossi's type is elevated to a compositional force. "Ultimately, the history of architecture is the material of architecture. In the process of constructing a large and unique project over time, working on certain elements which alter very slowly, one steadily arrives at an invention."[83] Tafuri defined Rossi's use of type as a "typological critique," analogous to his "operative critique," that revealed correspondences between present and past through historical references that are still alive.[84] For example, the Roman monuments, the Renaissance palaces, the Gothic cathedrals always return, "not so much as history and memory, but as elements of planning."[85] When typological forms confront the social, economic, and political conditions that shaped the urban grids over time, the designer needs to make some choices derived from the consideration of the type or the monument as design methods (ever-changing functional and formal correspondences) rather than scientific tools (used to describe, classify and verify). The scientific dimension of architecture and urbanism

aligns with the design choices at that moment a decision is made. Thus, the repetition inherent to the scientific character of type and the monument becomes a precondition for invention. Futurism conceived originality as a ground zero devoid of historical references, while Rossi's notions of type and monument suggested the reinvention of the past as future possibilities are considered. The projection of a desirable scenario reconsiders its historical references under the scrutiny of a new light.[86] It is worth remembering that Paolo Portoghesi's evocation of "*La Presenza del Passato* (The Presence of the Past)," during the Venice Architecture Biennale 1980, condemned the lack of attention to "the Renaissance paradox of 'refound antiquity.'"[87]

The adoption of the structuralist logic served as an antidote against historical determinism and functionalism. The structuralist premise suggests the primacy of spatial over temporal processes inherent to language or architecture.[88] The architectural parameters, derived from history rather than a muted past, became the raw material for the practice of architecture through the means of its own autonomous knowledge. The generations of Italian architects who learned from Ernesto Rogers assimilated the idea that the Enlightenment and the early phase of the Modern movement represented a practical intellectual heritage to tackle the urban challenges of the second half of the twentieth century.[89] Structuralism also allowed the dissociation between function and organization as it rejected the linear causality of historical determinism.[90] Rossi learned from Milizia that "functional organization cannot always be regulated by fixed and constant laws, and as a result must always resist generalization."[91] The examples that Rossi provided, such as the Palazzo della Ragione in Padua or the Roman Coliseum, attest to how their form

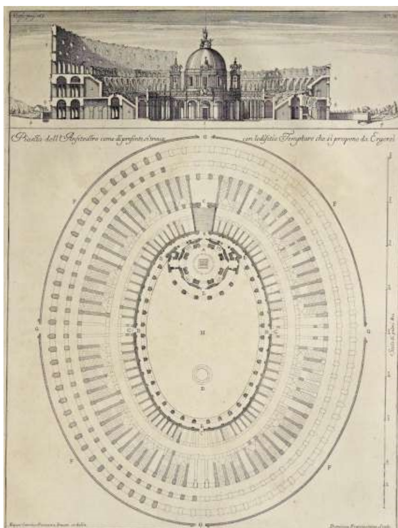


Figure 3.36. *Church designed in the arena of the Roman Colosseum, elevation and plan,* Carlo Fontana.

(London, Sir John Soane's Museum)

responds to the logic of persistence as their functions contradict the crystallization of cultural dynamics. But Milizia's function, according to Rossi, is more a "relationship" than a "scheme of organization."[92] The function cannot aspire to the organizational capacity that belongs to the type in Rossi's theory.

The dynamic of the urban condition is a tautology only if we overlook that the status quo could be as dynamic as lethargic. It is paradoxical how Rossi considered monuments "as propelling elements of development" within an urban condition that "tends more to evolution than preservation."[93] Evolution and change are understood not as apolitical leaps forward for the sake of dubious "progress" but as choices that mediate between past experiences and the will to become. However, monuments could become isolated elements that reject the contamination of infinite urban correspondences. They thus become as pathological as the architectural theory that considers autonomy as an absolute condition. Rossi's idea of monument derived from Poete's notion of persistence and Lavedan's plan as a generator of the city's spatial structure. Rossi also took from the public vocation, location, and fitness criteria proposed by Milizia and the civic dimension of the city's physical reality formulated by Pirenne. The accentuation of unique spatial qualities proposed by Sorre's notion of *locus* informed Rossi's urban artifact and countered the aesthetic blindness of formal reductions.[94] The relationship between the *locus* and the urban artifact rejected the illusion of the contextual approach that emphasizes scenic images based on functions rather than the spatial construction of the city over time. For Rossi, monuments were "signs of the collective will expressed through the principles of architecture."[95] When they are not pathological or isolated, these fixed points propel urban development by operating dialectically in relation to the urban dynamic. Thus, their historical awareness counters the degradation of the modern city precipitated by the quantitative paranoia of economic and aesthetic speculation. The collective

character of monumentality uses its formal simplicity and rationality to counter the stylistic fixation that tends to serve the pragmatic goals of the few.

The physical dimension of Rossi's monument is only a tool that often conceals its distinctive features. He emphasized the theoretical and historical pedigree of the monument, while some of his contemporaries focused on its formal features. Nino Dardi described the physical characteristics of the architectural object to the detriment of its theoretical and historical dimension.[96] Dardi concentrated on style, while *La Tendenza* denied "the determinism between form and function, which is based on a faith in the 'positive' objectivity of the givens."[97] Architecture is simply a synthesis of the processes involved in the cultural formation of the monument and its use as a design method. Rossi countered the stylistic fixation by emphasizing that the monument cannot be reduced to its physical features.

The notion of "the project" embodies decisions informed by certain types. The political nature of any choice is central to Rossi's understanding of architecture as an autonomous discipline. When formal choices are made through the means of architecture, the first impulse is to crystallize the concreteness of the project as a model. But the type prevents the understanding of formal choices as models through a counter-intuitive process that theory reveals. The project is a moment of the type rather than the wholeness of the model. Massimo Scolari evoked Paul Klee's words to describe the artistic correspondence of this process that aspires "to liberate the crystalline from the murkiness of the real."[98] This struggle draws an imaginary surreal halo in Rossi's idea of architecture. He even subscribed to the closeness of imagination to our intimate human nature by quoting Andre Breton: "Beloved imagination what I love about you is that you don't forgive."[99] Rossi thus drew the connection between imagination and memory to reveal the conscious and

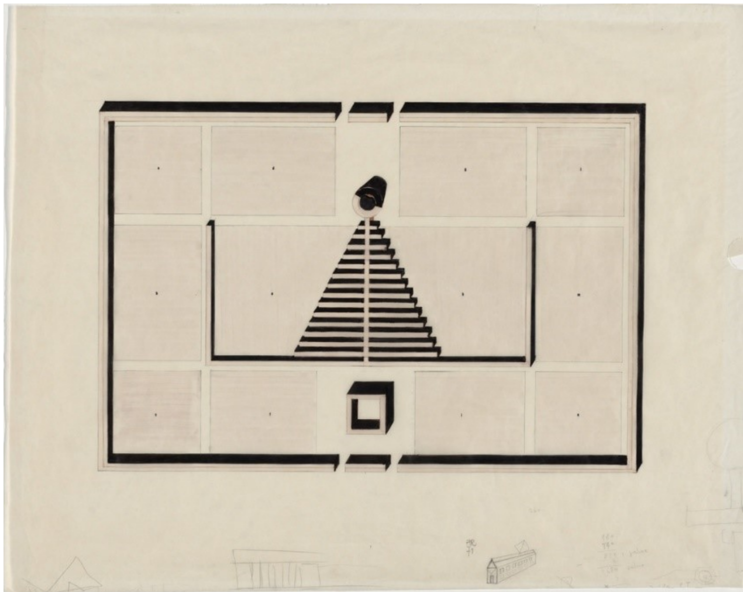
unconscious autobiographical dimension of any human endeavor.

Figure 3.37. *Unità Residenziale, Quartiere Gallaratese 2,* Aldo Rossi, Milan, Italy. 1968-1973

(Photo by Burcin YILDIRIM)

The housing project in the Milanese quartiere of Gallaratese and the Cemetery of San Cataldo in Modena tackled the problems of type and monumentality, but from contrasting perspectives. Both projects evoke the paradoxical urban dynamic triggered by the continuity of the type and the permanence of the monument.[100] The first project provided housing for the living, and the second provided housing for the dead. Both possess an overwhelming monumental dimension that transcends their physical condition. The concrete and simple geometries of Gallaratese evoke the greatness of the ancient Italian past as it houses the working class. The classicist repetition of its composition synthesized opulence and poverty. Peter St. John described the project as "a palace occupied by people" because it feels as "if all Italy was there, its grandeur and its poverty, its monuments and ruins."[101] In Rossi's words, the typology of the gallery and the allusion to old Milanese houses of Gallaratese evoke the gallery as "a form of life saturated with everyday history and relationships."[102] The typological and monumental clarity of Gallaratese adhered to the Diocletian's Palace that, according to Rossi, offers the possibility to reinterpret the

city as an alternative to the disorganized urban development. On the other hand, he used the rational dimension of architecture to draw analogies between architecture and the city in the San Cataldo Cemetery and evoke the tensions between the finished and the unfinished, typology and form, life and death.



Figures 3.38 and 3.39. *Cemetery of San Cataldo, Modena, Italy, Plan and Drawing,* Aldo Rossi, Gianni Braghieri, 1971

(Museum of Modern Art New York
Gift of The Howard Gilman Foundation
© Eredi Aldo Rossi / Fondazione Aldo Rossi)

The architecture of the cemetery is analogous to the architecture of the city. Its meaning derives from the historical reservoir of architecture as autonomous knowledge. This correspondence between the city of the dead and the city of the living suggests a reflection about the social meaning of death as well as a substitution of history by memory.[103] The interdependence between life and death operates not as knowledge acquired through the pedantic erudition of historical studies but as a social process from which personal stories cannot be relegated.[104] Octavio Paz considered *La muerte es un espejo que refleja las vanas gesticulaciones de la vida. . . . Si nuestra muerte carece de sentido, tampoco lo tuvo nuestra vida* ("Death is a mirror that reflects the vain gestures of life. . . . If our death has no meaning, neither our life.")[105] Typology attests to the historical references of the house of the dead, while memory strengthens the explicit

autobiographical dimension of Rossi's oeuvre that contradicts its own rational roots and the morality of "official" history and theory that discriminates ordinary life. In Rafael Moneo's words, "expressive value is given to the unfinished, to the lacking, to the missing" through the cemetery.[106] San Cataldo is the paradigm of an autonomous condition whose driving force is change. What is the form of love, friendship, madness, life, or death? Do not love, friendship, madness, life, and death propel urban development as much as rationality? Flaubert was right, "We have too many things and not enough forms."

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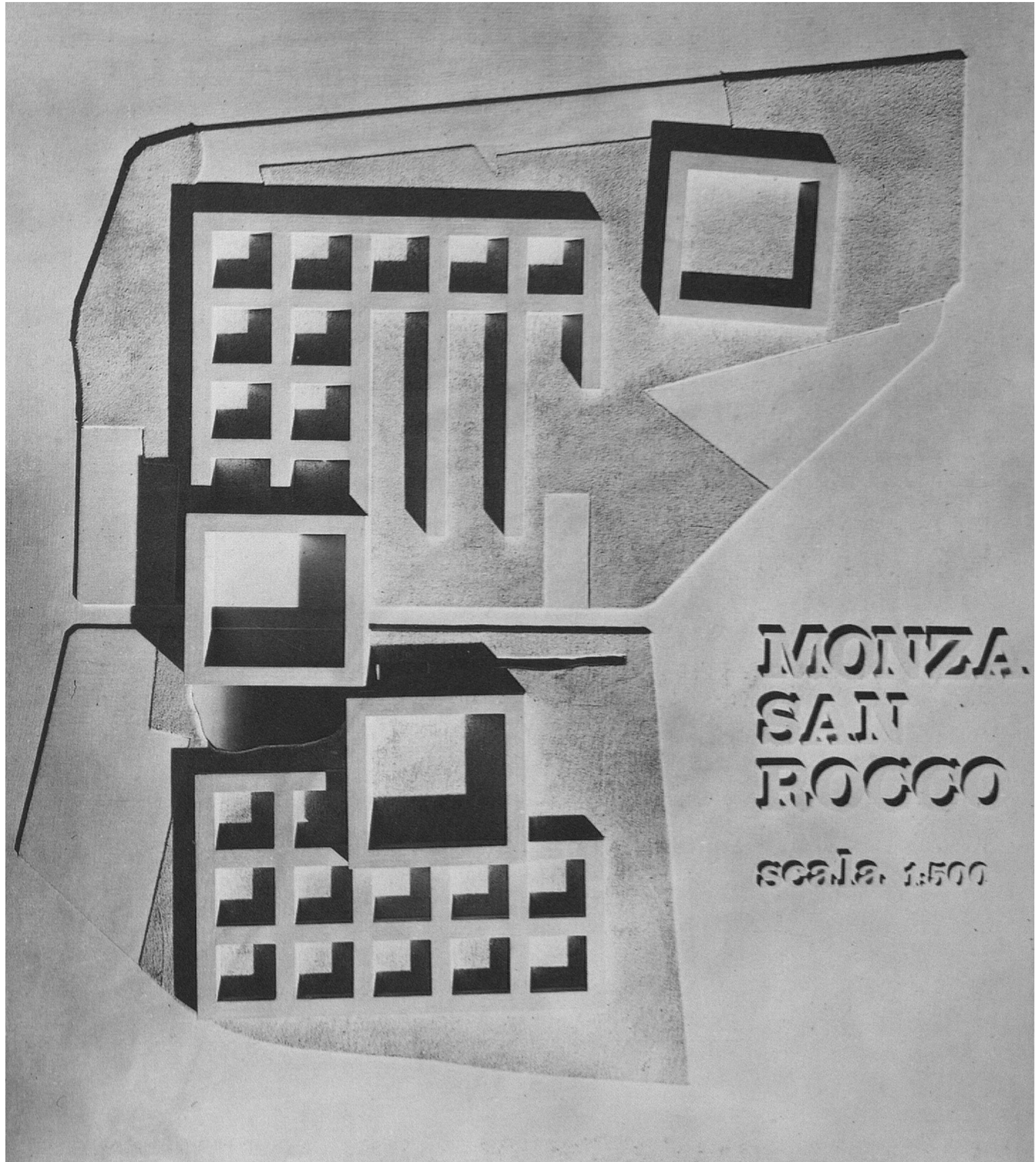

San Rocco Housing Competition
Aldo Rossi and Giorgio Grassi
Monza, 1966

(Aldo Rossi fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
© Eredi Aldo Rossi / Fondazione Aldo Rossi)

3.5. The Concreteness of Abstraction: San Rocco

The housing projects Gallaratese in Milan (1970) and San Rocco in Monza (1966) are investigations on the paradoxical concreteness of typological abstraction. Their formal resolutions refer to a basic idea, an architectural typology that belongs to the historical genealogy that guarantees the continuity of the city's spatial structure. Gallaratese is a large volume whose simple geometries refer to the classicism of the arcades that promote civic life throughout Italy. At the same time, San Rocco inverts the orthogonal urban grid by replacing the fullness of the block with the emptiness of the courtyard.[107] Suppose the limits of mathematical and computing methods evidenced the importance of intuition in functional Modernism. In that case, the analytical capacity of the type is a framework that allows the operation of the political nature of choice. Thus, it is necessary to distinguish between typological analysis (description, classification, and verification) and the design capacity of typology (the cultural and historical dimension). The typological method exposes the importance of cultural and historical processes within the design method. The concreteness of abstraction materializes in typological forms the political nature of design choices.

The discourse on autonomy has almost vanished from architecture theory because it became a disciplinary paranoia that revolves on its own axis. During the second half of the twentieth century, the narcissistic cells operated within architectural autonomy and assumed a detached attitude that muted the possibility of choice through universal rules that precede and outlive any subjective intention—*l'architecture pour l'architecture*. Absolute values suppressed individual autonomy, and much like in any totalitarian regime, it was for the sake of the collective. The problem is, as described by Tafuri, that the identification of disciplines such as art and architecture with "perennial and metahistorical values" leads to "desperate nihilism," which

"belongs to those who, realizing the wearing out of the myths at the base of their personal faith, can see in front of them only irrevocable destiny."[108] The passage of time unmasked the rational faith that stubbornly theorized autonomy as *detachment*. The paradox is that the political nature of choice (Rossi) is not a testimony of personal faith or subjective aspirations. The autonomy of architectural knowledge encourages the making of choices. Those decisions are the responsibility of the designer, whose causes and consequences can be anticipated neither by the rules that govern the discipline nor by any individual desire. Rossi referred to the laws of mechanics that explain "the unforeseen crack, the visible but contained collapse" of the Pantheon as the source of beauty that cannot be anticipated and a reference for his decision to slightly alter the symmetry of San Rocco.[109]

The design of the housing block of San Rocco responded to the correspondences between architecture and urban dynamics. Its rejection of perfect symmetry derived from Rossi's critique of *limitatio,* which was a survey that preceded the Roman *cadastre*.[110] The geometric simplicity synthesized the rationality of the Roman grid and suggested its extension to dominate the territory of Lombardy. But Rossi slightly offset part of San Rocco's grid to resemble a broken mirror "in a way that could be described not as a desire for asymmetry, but rather as an accident which slightly altered the reflection of the face."[111] This accident was sensitive to cultural and historical contingencies escaping any disciplinary prescription or individual desire. The analogy of the broken mirror, San Rocco's accident, reminded Rossi "of the farmers in the Veneto who, as a result of their centuries-old poverty, broke down the Roman measurement of the fields, building on both the cardo and the decumanus."[112] In Rossi's view, this social and historical process rejected the private appropriation of the public character of the street by an abstract imperial power that had already appropriated the fields. Thus, the formal configuration of San Rocco confers social,

Figure 3.40. *The Italian countryside, 1950.*

(Photo by Federico Patellani,
Federico Patellani Fund/Museo Fotografia Contemporanea)

Industrial production thrived from 1948 to 1953 while peasants resisted the privatization of land.

economic, and political responsibilities to any design choice. The apathetic disciplinary reduction of architectural autonomy condemned the problem of choice to an "illusion." San Rocco attests to architectural autonomy as a cultural critique that is only possible when the designer assumes her or his collective and individual engagement as a member of society.

The historical and cultural experience of typology and the study of architecture as an urban science provided a methodological framework for Rossi. Both allowed the consideration of architecture as a ritual that depends on repetition rather than a creative process based on originality or brilliance.[113] Rossi considered that "rituals give us the comfort of continuity, of repetition, compelling us to an oblique forgetfulness, allowing us to live with every change which, because of its inability to evolve, constitutes a destruction."[114] Typology, thus, provides a cultural and historical index whose continuity synthesizes tradition and the reality of change initially proposed by Kaufmann as the core of *autonomen Architektur*. However, tradition and change are not antithetical.[115] Tradition becomes a critical device (paradoxical destruction) that resists the seduction of the ideology of the new. It is skeptical of "uniqueness" precisely thanks to its sensitivity to cultural change. The interdependence between tradition and ritual acquired a negative connotation for Walter Benjamin, who suggested that "for the first time in history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual."[116] Benjamin

considered that the "aura" of any work of art could not be completely dissociated from its ritual function—ritual and uniqueness were inseparable. Benjamin's ritual referred to an "authenticity" that resists cultural change, while ritual, for Rossi, is associated with the paradoxical invention allowed by "repetition."

The same year that Rossi published his ideas about the "ritual" in *A Scientific Autobiography* (1981), Rosalind Krauss wrote about the "ritual" as "repeated form" in the essay "This New Art: To Draw in Space."[117] According to Krauss, the aesthetic authority of the repetition that characterizes the ritual relies on the evocation of a forgotten referent. The ritual develops a "formulaic" relationship to its referent rather than "mimetic." In the same way that typology cannot be reduced to the mimetic logic of the model, the ritual embraces the emblematic dimension of the copy to suggest that "the copyist is not only the slave of imitation. He is also, at times, the master of invention."[118] Rossi reinterpreted the Roman grid in San Rocco. But he critically referred to the imperial aspirations of the Roman mechanisms of land survey and its social, economic, and political connotations. The invention is the courtyard itself is the most significant housing typology along with the linear Gallaratese. San Rocco evoked an emblematic referent, an architectural typology that cannot be reduced to form because it signifies the concrete social and political struggle of the farmers who resisted the private appropriation of the street by an abstract imperial power. San Rocco's cultural sensitivity thus belongs to the genealogy of the autonomy of urbanism that rejects the moral fixation of style: "The copy is simultaneously a term of demystification and process, or rather of demystification because of process."[119]

Notes

[1] *Il miracolo economico produsse anche questo: un rimescolamento senza precedenti della popolazione italiana. Tra il 1955 e il 1971 oltre nove milioni di italiani del sud si riversarono nel triangolo industriale. Torino divento la terza piu grande citta "merdionale" dopo Napoli e Palermo, passando in pochi anni da 700 mila abitanti a 1,124,000; Milano assorbi 400 mila immigranti nel giro di 15 anni. Ma la citta del nord erano impreparate ad un cosi massiccio afflusso di immigrazione. Le nuove famiglie meridionali dovettero percio trovare alloggio in scantinati, nei solai del centro o nelle cascine abbandonate dell'estrema periferia.* ("The economic miracle also produced this: an unprecedented reshuffling of the Italian population. Between 1955 and 1971 over nine million southern Italians poured into the industrial triangle. Turin became the third largest "meridional" city after Naples and Palermo, passing in a few years from 700 thousand inhabitants to 1,124,000; Milan absorbed 400 thousand immigrants within 15 years. But the northern city was unprepared for such a massive influx of immigration. The new southern families therefore had to find lodging in basements, in the attics of the center or in the abandoned farmhouses of the extreme periphery.") See Attilio Wanderlingh, Ursula Salwa, and Luciano Pennino, *Storia Fotografica D'Italia: 1946-1966: La Ricostruzione, Lo Scontro Politico, Il Boom Economico* (Napoli: Edizioni Intra Moenia, 2008), 279.

[2] Edward Soja and Miguel Kanaan, "The Urbanization of the World" in Richard Burdett and Deyan Sudjic, *The Endless City: The Urban Age Project* by the London School of Economics and Deutsche Bank's Alfred Herrhausen Society (London: Phaidon, 2007), 54-69.

[3] K. Michael Hays, and Lauren Kogod. "Twenty Projects at the Boundaries of the Architectural Discipline Examined in Relation to the Historical and Contemporary Debates over Autonomy." *Perspecta* 33 (2002), 54-71.

[4] Aldo Rossi, "Nuovi problemi," *Casabella Continuita*, no. 264, (1962) in Aldo Rossi, *Para Una Arquitectura De Tendencia: Escritos*, *1956-1972* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1977), 107, Colección Arquitectura/Perspectivas.

[5] Ignacio Sola-Morales, "Critical Discipline" in K. Michael Hays, *Oppositions Reader: Selected Readings from a Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture*, 1973-1984 (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 661-662.

[6] Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture Within and Against Capitalism,* Buell Center/FORuM Project Publication; 4 v. (New York: Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008), 59-61.

[7] For Aureli, Rossi's architecture was "a careful tuning of Marxist politics to the irreducible singularity of the places where those politics were applied" to counter the effects of the capitalist logic. Ibid., 53.

[8] Rossi, "Nuovi problemi," 113-114.

[9] Ibid., 113.

[10] Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy*, 62.

[11] Claudio D'Amato, "Fifteen Years after the Publication of The Architecture of the City," *The Harvard Architecture Review* 3, (Winter 1984), 85, Autonomous Architecture, Fogg Art Museum.

[12] Sola-Morales, "Critical Discipline," 664-665.

[13] Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy*, 60-61.

[14] D'Amato, "Fifteen Years after the Publication of The Architecture of the City," 85.

[15] Paolo Portoghesi, *After Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1982), 42.

[16] Aldo Rossi, et al. *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge, MA; London, England: MIT Press, 1982), 160.

[17] Rossi, *The Architecture of the City,* 55-61. The German sociologist Georg Simmel echoed Poete's and Lavedan's interests in the following way: "The most significant essence of the [metropolis] lies in the functional size beyond its physical limits: (...) a city exists mainly due to the globality of the effects that emerge from its interior beyond its immediacy. This is its real contour, in which its being is expressed." Quoted by Jorge Francisco Liernur, "Acerca De La Actualidad Del Concepto Simmeliano De Metrópolis," *Estudios Sociológicos* 21, no. 61 (2003): 99.

[18] Soja and Kanaan, "The Urbanization of the World," 54-55.

[19] Unlike the fixation on the planetary scale of Neil Brenner, Hilberseimer defined the adaptable characteristics of his Settlement Unit (its traffic backbone, residential areas outside a green belt that surrounds industrial, commercial, and administrative areas) after analyzing not only the scale but also the function and layout of some projects such as Wright's Broad Acre City, Soria y Mata's Ciudad Lineal, Le Corbusier's Ville Contemporaine, among others. Rossi quoted Ratcliff regarding problems of scale: "To consider the problems of locational maldistribution only in the metropolitan context is to encourage the popular but false assumption that these are the problems of size. We shall see that the problems to be viewed crop up in varying degrees of intensity in villages, towns, cities, and metropolises, for the dynamic forces of urbanism are vital wherever men and things are found compacted, and the urban organism is subject to the same natural and social laws regardless of size. To ascribe the problems of the city to size is to imply that solutions lie in reversing growth process, that is, in deconcentration; both the assumption and the implication are questionable." See Ludwig Hilberseimer, *The New City: Principles of Planning* (Chicago: Paul Theobald, 1944), 55-74. And Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, 49 and 160.

[20] Aldo Rossi, "Ciudad y territorio en los aspectos funcionales y figurativos de la planificación continua," in Aldo Rossi, *Para Una Arquitectura De Tendencia: Escritos, 1956-1972* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1977), 179, Colección Arquitectura/Perspectivas.

[21] Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, 22 (Note).

[22] What the Italian architect Massimo Scolari called "its creative and formal sterility." See Massimo Scolari, "The New Architecture and the Avant-Garde," in K. Michael Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 131.

[23] "Thought and cognition." according to Hannah Arendt, "are not the same." Thought is an act, an attribute, of the mind that is not necessarily subjected to any transformation, "whereas the chief manifestation of the cognitive processes, by which we acquire and store up knowledge, is the sciences." See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition,* Charles R. Walgreen Foundation Lectures (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 170 Kindle edition.

[24] See Alan Colquhoun, "Postmodern Critical Attitudes," first published in *Modernity and the Classical Tradition: Architectural Essays 1980-1987* (1989) in Alan Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism* (London: Black Dog, 2009), 235.

[25] "I always liked the settling of the Pantheon described in the books on statics; the unforeseen crack, the visible but contained collapse, gave immense strength to the architecture because its beauty could not have been anticipated." See Aldo Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, Oppositions Books (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981), 37.

[26] The consideration of problems of typology as problems of definition and classification is related to the methods of taxonomy and biology, which constructed their autonomy through the classification of living beings. See Rossi, *The Architecture of the City,* 27; And Rossi, *Para Una Arquitectura De Tendencia,* 175.

[27] Type is considered a cultural element that could not be reduced to form, even though every form refers to a type. Rossi, *The Architecture of the City,* 41.
[28] Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (Cambridge, MA; London, England: The MIT Press, 2011), Location 943 Kindle edition.
[29] Quoted by Rossi, *Para Una Arquitectura De Tendencia,* 282.
[30] Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason,* 29-30.
[31] Adorno claims that in this system: "Knowledge is illusory because the closer it comes to its object, the more it shapes it in its own image…" Ibid., 176.
[32] Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography,* 54. The American art critic Rosalind E. Krauss uses architectural production to exemplify the making of art as the copy of other forms of art. She explains that the design process of a building consists on borrowing details from here and fragments of plans from there. See Rosalind E. Krauss, "This New Art: To Draw in Space," in Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-garde and Other Modernist Myths,* First MIT Press Paperback ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 125.
[33] Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography,* 33.
[34] Ibid., 72.
[35] Ibid., 38.
[36] Wanderlingh, *Storia Fotografica D'Italia,* 27.
[37] St. Augustine: "All these things that are very good will come to an end when the limits of their existence is reached. They have been allotted their morning and their evening." See Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography,* 77.
[38] Ibid., 82.
[39] Ibid., 35.
[40] Ibid., 78.
[41] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (New York: Prism Key Press, 2010), Chapter XI.
[42] Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography,* 42.
[43] Emil Kaufmann, *Architecture in the Age of Reason; Baroque and Postbaroque in England, Italy, and France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), 75.
[44] Rossi, A Scientific Autobiography, 75.
[45] Michelangelo Antonioni, "A Talk with Michelangelo Antonioni on his work," from a transcript of an open discussion that took place at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia of Rome on March 16, 1961, in Michelangelo Antonioni, Marga. Cottino-Jones, Carlo Di Carlo, and Giorgio. Tinazzi, *The Architecture of Vision: Writings and Interviews on Cinema* (New York; St. Paul, MN: Marsilio Publishers, 1996), 22.
[46] Michelangelo Antonioni, "Apropos of Eroticism," From Playboy, November 1967 in Michelangelo Antonioni, Marga. Cottino-Jones, Carlo Di Carlo, and Giorgio. Tinazzi, *The Architecture of Vision: Writings and Interviews on Cinema* (New York; St. Paul, MN: Marsilio Publishers, 1996), 159.
[47] Antonioni described his intentions as follows: "I felt somewhat annoyed with all this sense of order, this systematic arrangement of the material (Giovanni Paolucci's documentaries which in accordance with the set of standards of the day, followed blocks of sequences). I set out to do a montage that would be absolutely free, poetically free. And I began searching for expressive ways and means, not so much through an orderly arrangement of shots that would give the scene a clear-cut beginning and end, but more through a juxtaposition of separate isolated shots and sequences that had no immediate connection with one another, but which definitely gave more meaning to the idea I had wanted to express and which were the very substance of the documentary itself; in the case of N.U., the life of street-cleaners in a particular city." See Antonioni, *The Architecture of Vision,* 24.
[48] Pier Vittorio Aureli, "The Difficult Whole," *Log*, No. 9 (Winter/Spring 2007), 43.
[49] Antonioni, *The Architecture of Vision,* 289.
[50] Aureli, "The Difficult Whole," 43.
[51] Ibid., 42.
[52] Quoted by Aureli, "The Difficult Whole," 44, originally from Aldo Rossi, "Il Linguaggio di Perret," *Il Contemporaneo*, no. 33 (1955).
[53] Ibid., 44.
[54] The preachings of Jameson, Harvey, and their masters come to mind.
[55] Roland Barthes, "Textos. Cher Antonioni," *Cuadernos De Cine Documental*, no. 7 (2013): 77-83.
[56] Ibid., 78.
[57] Aureli, "The Difficult Whole," 43.
[58] "A maieutic dialogue with Aldo Rossi," *Firenze Architettura* 2 (2017), 6. This interview with Aldo Rossi was conducted by Maria Grazia Eccheli on February 5, 1992.
[59] Description of the Film "Ornamento e Delitto" by Aldo Rossi. Archives of the MAXXI Museum, Rome.
[60] Description of the Film "Ornamento e Delitto" by Aldo Rossi. Archives of the MAXXI Museum, Rome.
[61] Ignacio Sola-Morales explained the influence of the Aristotelian Neoclassicist aesthetic formulated by Gyorgy Lukacs in the architecture of Giorgio Grassi. See Ignacio Sola-Morales, "Critical Discipline," in Hays, K. Michael, *Oppositions Reader: Selected Readings from a Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture, 1973-1984* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 660-670; and Aldo Rossi, "El concepto de tradición en la arquitectura neoclásica de Milán," in Rossi, *Para Una Arquitectura De Tendencia,* 3-14.
[62] Pier Paolo Pasolini in the documentary "Pasolini e... la forma della città," produced by RAI TV and directed by Paolo Brunatto in the fall of 1973 (it was broadcasted on February 7, 1974) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLgpg1LbiU4
[63] Wanderlingh, *Storia Fotografica D'Italia,* 27.
[64] Hermann Muthesius, from the Deutschen Werkbund, declared: "From the individualism to the creation of type is the organic way of development. Essentially, architecture tends toward the typical. The type discards the extraordinary and established order." Quoted by Mark Mack who asserted that, "It is the usage of the type that enables architectures of different eras and ideologies to form a coherent architectural appearance. What Quatremiere De Quincy, a French rational critic wrote around 1800 in his Dictionaire d'Architecture applies again today: 'Type presents less the image of something to copy or imitate completely, than the idea of an element itself has to serve as rule for the model…everything is precise in the model while everything is more or less vague in the type.'" See Mark Mack, "Other Architecture (or The Need for Serious Post-Modernism)," in Autonomous Architecture, *The Harvard Architecture Review* 3 (Winter 1984), 18, 22.
[65] Rossi, *The Architecture of the City,* 41.
[66] Carl G. Jung, *Psychological Types,* translated by H. G. Baynes (London; New York: Routledge Classics, 2017), 3 Introduction.

[67] Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand and Antoine Picon, *Précis of the Lectures on Architecture; With, Graphic Portion of the Lectures on Architecture,* Texts & Documents (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute, 2000), 77 Introduction.
[68] Rossi, *The Architecture of the City,* 40.
[69] Anthony Vidler, "The Third Typology," in K. Michael Hays, *Oppositions Reader: Selected Readings from a Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture, 1973-1984* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 13-17.
[70] Antonioni, *The Architecture of Vision,* 283-286.
[71] Ibid., 159-166.
[72] Jung, *Psychological Types,* 3 Kindle edition.
[73] K. Michael Hays, *Modernism and the Posthumanist Subject: The Architecture of Hannes Meyer and Ludwig Hilberseimer,* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 65.
[74] Rossi, *The Architecture of the City,* 116.
[75] Ibid., 116.
[76] Ibid., 116.
[77] Rossi, *Para Una Arquitectura De Tendencia,* 142.
[78] Adolf Loos considered that "the housing problem is not a pertinent issue; it is a product that has to be administered and improved continually; its nature is closely related to the urban reality." See Ibid., 143.
[79] Quoted by Rossi, *Para Una Arquitectura De Tendencia,* 144.
[80] Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism,* 317-318.
[81] Quoted by Colquhoun. Ibid., 45.
[82] Colquhoun explained that Yona Friedman's methods of computing and Le Corbusier's mathematical procedures used to design the Philips Pavilion relied on intuition as much as objective calculations. See Colquhoun, "Typology and Design Method," in Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism,* 47.
[83] Rossi, *The Architecture of the City,* 170.
[84] Scolari, "The New Architecture and the Avant-Garde," in Hays, *Architecture Theory Since 1968,* 133.
[85] Rossi quoted by Scolari. Ibid., 133.
[86] Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-garde,* 157.
[87] Portoghesi pointed out that "In early Renaissance texts, it is in fact not rare to find the terms modern and moderns referred not to new, but to old culture, to Gothic culture, for many years the dominating culture, opposed by humanistic thought." See Paolo Portoghesi, "The re-emergence of archetypes," *Controspazio* II 1-6 (1980): 2.
[88] Colquhoun verdict on structuralism is worth citing: "But by the 1960s, just at the time that some architects had reduced the idea of functionalism to a would-be behaviouristic system, a weapon of attack against functionalism became available—a weapon that itself seemed to possess all the credentials of a positive science. This was Structuralism, as inaugurated by Ferdinand de Saussure and as developed variously by Roman Jakobson, Claude Levi-Strauss, and Roland Barthes. According to this approach the ability of signs to convey meaning, within any sign system whatever, depends on an arbitrary and conventional structure of relationships within a particular system and not on the relation of signs to pre-existent or fixed referents in outside reality. The application of this linguistic model to architecture enabled 'function' to be seen as the false reification and naturalization of a set of culturally determined values that might or might not be considered as part of the system of meaning constituted by a building." See Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism,* 240.
[89] Scolari praised Rogers's teaching capacities: "His lectures on the problems of the modern movement, on Wright, Behrens, van de Velde, Pagano, and Terragni, on democratic commitment in the university, remain exemplary; as does his slogan—the utopia of reality—utopia as "the teleological charge that projects the present into the possible future," and reality as the reasonable surpassing of contingent boundaries." The cognition of history constrained the architectural choices, according to Rossi, while Vittorio Gregotti considered that, "History presents itself . . . as a curious tool, the knowledge of which is indispensable; but once this is attained, it is not directly usable. It is a kind of corridor through which one must pass in order to gain access, but which teaches us nothing about the art of walking." See Scolari, "The New Architecture and the Avant-Garde," 133-134, 138.
[90] Structuralism detached from the behavioral focus of functionalism and historical determinism. Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism,* 240.
[91] Quoted by Rossi, *The Architecture of the City,* 54.
[92] Ibid., 54.
[93] Ibid., 60.
[94] Ibid., 57-61, 103-107.
[95] Quoted by Scolari, "The New Architecture and the Avant-Garde," 140.
[96] Nino Dardi: "The systematic use of geometry, the frequent manipulation of scale and distortion of dimension, and the renewed attention paid to orchestrating the different materials within the disciplinary sphere of composition, constitute the distinctive features of the monumentalist tendency; but they are also, at the same time, the elements that make up the research of the most interesting currents in the architectural production of recent years." Quoted by Scolari, "The New Architecture and the Avant-Garde," 141.
[97] Scolari about La Tendenza: "It sets itself up as a system, with its own geography of choices and theoretical principles that style measures and brings into form." See Ibid., 141.
[98] Ibid., 143.
[99] Rossi, *Para Una Arquitectura De Tendencia,* 271.
[100] Claudio D'Amato: "The "theory of permanences" is extremely important from this point of view: in fact, what Aldo Rossi calls aesthetic intentionality is nothing more than the interpretive answer that the works of entire generations of architecture have given to the aesthetic solicitations deriving from the monuments (permanences) that interpret the genius loci to its maximum: 'the dynamic process of the city tends more to evolution than preservation, and…in evolution monuments are not only preserved but continuously presented as propelling elements of development.'" See Claudio D'Amato, "Fifteenth Years after the Publication of The Architecture of the City by Aldo Rossi," 86.
[101] Peter St John, "Inspiration; Aldo Rossi's Gallaratese Housing," *Building Design Magazine,* issue 2008 (London: April 2012), 12–15.
[102] Autonomous Architecture "The Work of Eight Contemporary Architects," in Autonomous Architecture, 98.
[103] Roland Barthes considered that, "Earlier societies managed so that memory, the substitute for life, was eternal and that at least the thing which spoke Death should itself be immortal: this was the Monument. But by making the (mortal) Photograph into the general and somehow natural witness of 'what has been,' modern society has renounced the Monument." See Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* translated by Richard Howard (London: Vintage, 1993), 88.

[104] Theodor Adorno: "I would remind you here of the role of memory in Kant—and if that is so, you have a strong pointer to history. For it is not possible to speak of time in the absence of some inner intuition, something inwardly present that experiences time in itself—and in this recourse to something that possesses time the historical is necessarily implied." See Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason,* 167.
[105] Octavio Paz, *El Laberinto de la Soledad,* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2004), 58 Colección Popular.
[106] Rafael Moneo, "Aldo Rossi: The Idea of Architecture and the Modena Cemetery," in Hays, *Oppositions Reader,* 119.
[107] Rossi, *Para una Arquitectura de Tendencia,* 271.
[108] Manfredo Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture*, translated by Giorgio Verrecchia (New York: Icon Editions, 1976), xviii Note to the second (Italian) edition.
[109] Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography,* 37.
[110] *Cadastre*: a land information system and, in the case of ancient landscapes, its physical remains. In Roman *cadastres* these are often seen as minor roads, ditches and other modern boundaries conforming to the *limites*. The establishment of a formal Roman *cadastre* was preceded by surveying (*limitatio*) and the establishment of survey markers (*terminatio*). Not all such surveys were *centuriations*. It is thus technically incorrect to use that word to signify all types of Roman land planning and allotment. For this reason, and because it embraces all aspects of the system, the term "*cadastre*" is to be preferred. See the glossary of terms used in Roman land surveying, University of East Anglia, accessed on November 2019. https://archive.uea.ac.uk/~jwmp/glossary.html
[111] Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography,* 37.
[112] Ibid., 37.
[113] The avant-garde movements—such as Futurism—understood originality as an origin, while Rossi built on the scientific repetition that precede any new formulation. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde,* 157.
[114] Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography,* 37.
[115] Tradition is alive and changeable, while "the unique value of the 'authentic' work of art," according to Benjamin, "has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value." See Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,* Chapter IV.
[116] Ibid., Chapter IV.
[117] Krauss, "This New Art: To Draw in Space," in Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde,* 125.
[118] Ibid., 125.
[119] Ibid., 129.

HOUSE VI
PETER EISENMAN ARCHITECT
RANDALL KORMAN ASSISTANT

This is one of a series of houses which collectively represent for me, a search for the nature of meaning in architecture. My concern for meaning in this context is not the making of images or symbols but rather involves a study of the structure of form which affects any meaning. It is my belief that in every building we make as architects, no matter what meaning we may give to it - functional, social, or symbolic - there is a potential level of communication which may exist merely becuase of the nature of architectural form and because of our capacity to understand that nature: because of the way we see and the way we think. My work is an attempt to raise our level of consciousness about this potential communication to the point, where as designers and users, our architecture may have a more precise mode of communication, and thus hopefully a more enriched meaning and significance. My premise for undertaking this work is that architectural form is not merely geometric abstractions or a repertory of conventional signs, but in essence a set of archetypal relationships which affect our most basic sensibilities about our environment. These relationships may exist regardless of the superficial style or shape we may give to any particular structure of form. These relationships can be manifested and thus potentially understood in certain juxtapositions of solids and voids. Our understanding of the nature of these conditions remains at present intuitive and instinctual. It is my belief that the designer should attempt to understand these relationships - in what certain conditions of geometry they become manifest - so that he may give to architecture, to its program and function, an archetypal structure of form which has a potential to bring us in closer contact with our environment. This is said in the face of a culture where the impoverishment of symbols is considered clever, and the imprecise use of language is thought to be avante-garde. As such this work makes no pretension to being relevant in the present nor even to being prototypical for the future. Rather, it is my belief that it is the pursuit of knowledge, the concern for the structure of reality in a more general sense, which may ultimately possess a more timeless level of social relevance.

In this house some of these archetypal formal relationships were studied in terms of our conception or rather preconception of them: these were the relationship of inside and outside; of front and back; of facade as an exterior plane as opposed to facade as interior plane; of dense center and sparse edge; of frontal comprehension of aspects of symmetry and asymmetry as opposed to the oblique understanding of these relationships; the capacity of planes (walls) to act as volumes; and finally the capacity of a horizontal datum to be something other than the ground - that is, the relationship of things seen as 'right side up' as opposed to 'upside down'. The result is an attempt to manifest in physical reality a formal structure, systematically realized through the ordering of these archetypal relationships, which because of this structure has the capacity to communicate to an individual at a less-than-conscious level a fuller understanding of that physical reality.

Presentation panel for House VI, Cornwall, Connecticut
Peter Eisenman
1970-1971

(Peter Eisenman fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
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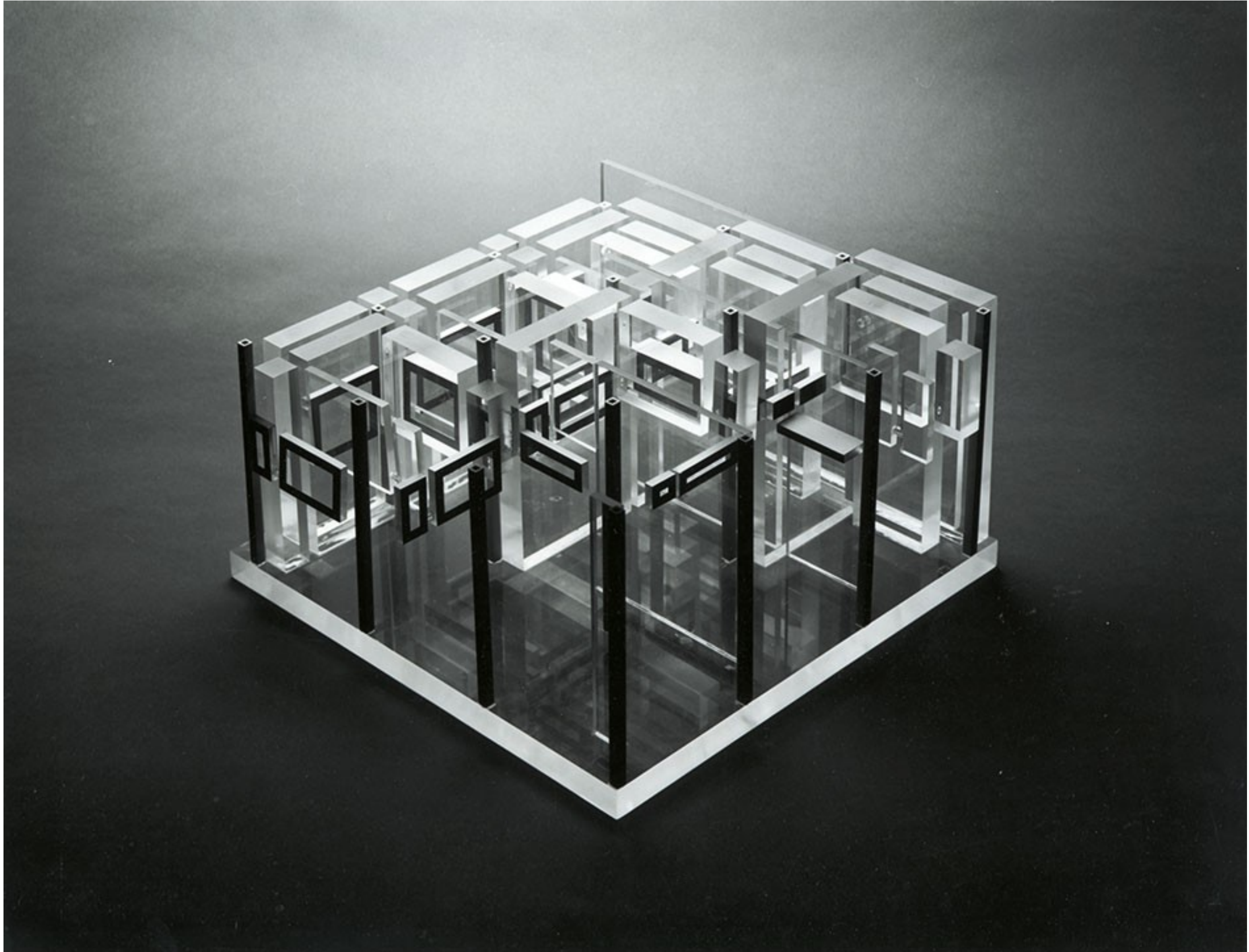
Chapter 4

The Apolitical Commitment: Peter Eisenman

> *It (architecture) is always in the process of becoming, of changing, while it is also always establishing, institutionalizing. It has the potential to be a creation and a critique of the institutions it builds.*
>
> —Peter Eisenman, *House of Cards*

The fourth chapter of this dissertation calls into question the critical character of Eisenman's architecture. It argues that his conceptual work is anti-autonomous rather than autonomous. Because it obeys and mimics the alienating conditions of modern life instead of providing a creative alternative. His focus on the internal history of architecture not only retreated from the history of History but also from the ungovernable urban condition that rejects the control exerted by formal formulations. Thus, Eisenman's self-centered architectural conceptions arguably discriminated against cultural constructions external to architecture because they reject the control of a radical formalism (philosophical and architectural) indifferent to the contents of life and the urban condition.



Model for House II, Hardwick, Vermont
Peter Eisenman
1969-1970

(Peter Eisenman Architects)

4.1. The Internal History of Architecture

Peter Eisenman's commitment to architectural form is polarizing. Although he did not consider society in his work, this dissertation conceives Eisenman's conceptual formulations as question marks to reflect on the role design plays within society. His work is a contradiction that draws on the experience and knowledge of other cultural realms like philosophy and linguistics to focus on architectural form. Thus, Eisenman's conception of architectural form can be studied from many perspectives. Four of these fronts of engagement are mainly concerned with the discourse on autonomy: first, the overemphasis on the history of architecture; second, the external influences that informed the study of architecture as discipline; third, the interdependence between architecture and culture; and fourth, the self-affirmation of architecture disguised as a dubious self-criticism. Paradoxically, Eisenman's autonomy surrendered to historical determinism. This capitulation condemned architecture to implode within its own internal history. Is Eisenman's autonomy a critical project or an act of escapism?

The consideration of the Modern movement as an object of critique overemphasized the *history of architecture* and relegated the *history of autonomy*. The alliance between architecture and philosophy that originated from *autonomen Architektur* does not predominate Aldo Rossi's and Peter Eisenman's autonomy. However, Emil Kaufmann's assertion that Ledoux's autonomous architecture set the foundations of Modern architecture informed the continuity of architectural history advocated by Rossi. On the other hand, Eisenman argued that the discontinuity of history resulted from the possibility of nuclear annihilation. Rossi praised the Modern program derived from sociopolitical problems, while Eisenman proposed to supersede the humanist oscillation between form and function with the internal dialectic of form. Rossi's interest in Modernism

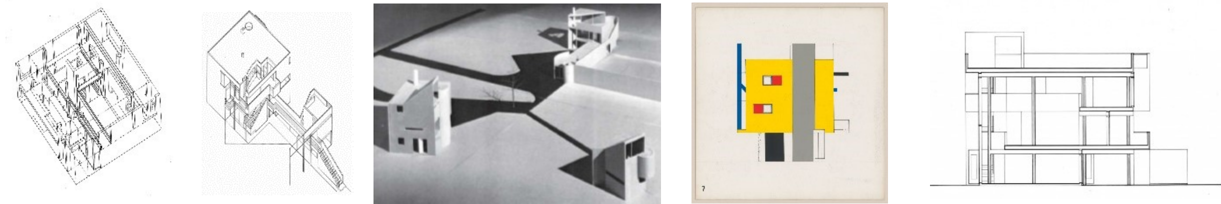
transcended architecture, while Eisenman's challenge against Modern architecture precipitated his overemphasis on a self-referential architectural form.

Figures 4.1 and 4.2. (Left) Seagram Building, Mies van der Rohe, 1958; (Right) Dewitt Chestnut Apartments, SOM, 1965.

(© Ezra Stoller/Esto – Seagram, Canadian Center For Architecture
© Hedrich Blessing (Dewitt Chestnut))

The lack of social and political pedigree of the imported Modernism was more a self-affirmation for the architecture of the United States than a possibility for reflection. According to Colin Rowe, "when in the Nineteen-Thirties, modern European architecture came to infiltrate the United States, it was introduced as simply a new approach to building—and not much more. That is, it was introduced, largely purged of its ideological or societal content. . ."[1] Kant stimulated the critical thinking of the modern individual in relation to external forces, while Rowe accepted the progression of past events as an irrevocable destiny. The historical determination of architectural autonomy became escapism rather than a critical reflection on the conditions of its formation. Modern architecture and architectural autonomy relegated sociopolitical contents in the United States. Rowe's description of the architecture of *Five Architects*—Peter Eisenman, Michael Graves, Charles Gwathmey, John Hejduk, Richard Meier—is symptomatic of a condescending architectural attitude: "We are in the presence of anachronism, nostalgia, and, probably, frivolity. If modern architecture looked like this circa 1930, then it should not look like this today; and, if the real political issue of the present is not the provision of the rich with cake but of the starving

with bread, then not only formally but also programmatically these buildings are irrelevant."[2] In contrast, this dissertation elevates the role design plays within society to the level of content to counter the role a top-down design plays in an unrepresentative social minority.



Figures 4.3. House I, Peter Eisenman, Princeton, New Jersey, 1967-1968. (Eisenman Architects)
4.4. Hanselmann House, Michael Graves, Indiana, 1967.
4.5. Gwathmey Residence and Studio, Charles Gwathmey, 1966.
4.6. Elevation for Bernstein House, John Hejduk, 1968. (CCA)
4.7. Smith House, Richard Meier, 1965-1967 (Richard Meier & Partners Architects LLP)

The disciplinary reduction of architectural autonomy in the United States was anti-autonomous. It subjected architecture to the Marxist critique of ideology but not the term autonomy. Thus, architecture was found complicit in the excesses of capitalism as revealed by Tafuri, while autonomy was naively stripped of its ideological motivations. This accommodating method served a self-referential architecture by omitting the paradoxical sociohistorical determination of autonomy. Architecture was included in the group of institutions that failed to tackle the postwar reality.[3] The Cold War, mass culture, and the feminist and anti-racist movements are only some examples of the context within which architecture claimed its status as a specific cultural realm.[4] The need for a communicable theory capable of guiding architectural production was increasingly evident. John Summerson's fixation on the program, Reyner Banham's technological impetus, Peter Eisenman's formalism, Aldo Rossi's typological studies, and Robert Venturi's complex and contradictory formulations all intended to contribute critically to the consolidation of such a theory and the redefinition of architecture.[5] The role of history,

tradition, and science within design was up for debate, while Peter Eisenman focused on the internal history of architecture.

The emphasis on the internal history of architecture relied on the study of the universal values of form *tout court*. Eisenman did not reference autonomy or the historical *a posteriori* events that legitimized his formal fixation in his doctoral thesis, "The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture" (1963). His reference to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945) highlighted a shift in humanity's consciousness that compromised the continuation of historical processes before the certainty of uncertainty and the specter of sudden death. Thus, the retreat from the history of History justified an *autonomy from* (detachment). The autonomous architectural object derived, according to Eisenman, from a historically explained cultural transition. The transition from theocentric wisdom to Renaissance anthropocentrism gradually destroyed the pre-industrial balance between subject and object. The object dissociated from the subject during the industrial era to consolidate the displace any originating agent. Thus, "objects," for Eisenman, "are seen as ideas independent of man."[6]

Figure 4.8. Ruins of Hiroshima shortly after the dropping of the atomic bomb, September 1, 1945.

(Photo by US Air Force/The LIFE Picture Collection via Getty Images)

Eisenman argued that in the post-1945 era, the idea of an origin's significance was lost because of the potential destruction of the world at the hands of an atomic catastrophe, creating a historical rift.[7] The irrationality of rationality deprived the human being of any signifying agency and produced autonomous objects indifferent to creative subjects. History was also made of breaks for Tafuri:

"Even today we are obliged to recognize in history not a great reservoir of codified values, but an enormous collection of utopias, failures, betrayals. . . faith in violent breaks, in the jump into the unknown, in the adventure accepted with no guarantees."[8] But while Tafuri saw the exhaustion of architectural possibilities as a process synthesized by Piranesi, de Stijl, Dada, and Hilberseimer, Eisenman formulated the autonomous processes of making architectural objects by the mid-twentieth century. According to Rowe, Modern architecture "was simply a rational approach to building. . . [and] it should be regarded in these terms, as no more than the inevitable result of twentieth century circumstances."[9] This is how Rowe characterized the functionalism and technological bias of the Modern movement, but Eisenman's architectural autonomy conformed to the same historical determinism. The formation of his obedient autonomy was determined by causes external to the architectural will rather than the productive tension between sociohistorical contingencies and the self-governing condition of architecture.

The detachment from society led architecture to implement borrowed methods in purely architectural terms. External contents and methods permeated architecture through the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Jean Baudrillard, and Paul Virilio on media theory; Roland Barthes, Noam Chomsky, and Jacques Derrida on linguistics and semiology; and Michel Foucault on the surreptitious methods of institutions to gain political control.[10] Foucault influenced the study of architectural typologies at an architectural and urban level since the eighteenth century—from hospitals and prisons to the city itself as typology. However, the reduction of these studies and their methods to mere architectural problems exorcised psychological, social, economic, and political by-products. Carl Jung's psychological types and the panoptic reach of Foucault's interpretation of discipline were excluded from the redefinition of architectural parameters. But the European autonomy of architecture differed from its American counterpart. Aldo Rossi used

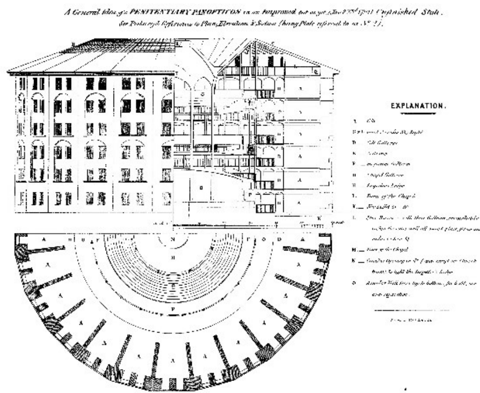


Figure 4.9. Penitentiary Panopticon Plan, Jeremy Bentham, 1843 (originally 1791).

(From *The Works of Jeremy Bentham* vol. IV, 172-3)

"If it is true that the leper gave rise to rituals of exclusion, which to a certain extent provided the model for and general form of the great Confinement, then the plague gave rise to disciplinary projects….Bentham's *Panopticon* is the architectural figure of this composition…. The crowd, a compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together, a collective effect, is abolished and replaced by a collection of separated individualities. From the point of view of the guardian, it is replaced by a multiplicity that can be numbered and supervised; from the point of view of the inmates, by a sequestered and observed solitude.

—Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*

typological studies to associate the historical and political dimension of urban form and collective memory, while Eisenman dismissed any meaning external to the "internal" processes of architectural form. However, neither Rossi nor Eisenman reflected seriously on the political and coercive effects of disciplinary methods revealed by Foucault. Tafuri advanced the critique of architectural ideology, but the critique of disciplinary ideology to counter subtle political operations of bourgeois liberal states is yet to be developed via the discourse on autonomy within design.

Since the classical age, the body has been conceived as a docile agent subordinated to external powers. But after the seventeenth century, according to Foucault, "disciplines became general formulas of domination."[11] This process exacerbated the exponential mechanism that interrelated the obedience and usefulness of the body. The body's anatomy was conceived as a "political anatomy" that expressed "mechanics of power" both analogically and operatively. Discipline produces "docile bodies."[12] It increases "the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)."[13] Thus, the architectural autonomy formulated in the United States is anti-autonomous in the Kantian sense. It escaped the tension between external and internal forces by imploding within architectural discipline. In contrast to the eighteenth-century *autonomen*

Figure 4.10. "Lecture on the evils of alcoholism in the auditorium of Fresnes prison."

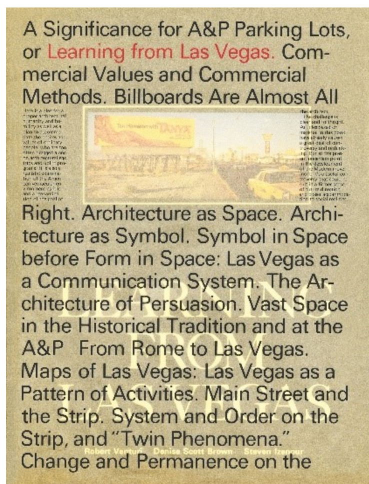
(Reprinted in *Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*)

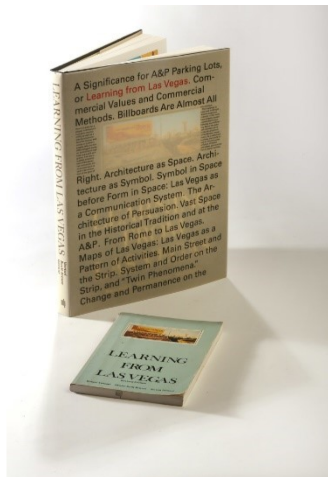
Architektur, it did not reflect on the cultural conditions of its production. It retreated from them. This autonomy of architecture demanded blind obedience and sanctioned everything within reach of its coercive jurisdiction. Paradoxically, this coercive discipline was docile because the autonomous architectural object conformed to the alienating historical conditions. But it was mainly coercive because it sanctioned *what architecture is*, detriment of *what architecture is not.* Its excessive morality distinguished *good* from *evil*—architecture from culture, design from non-design.

Architectural theorists omitted broad ideological motivations behind not only the "discipline" but also architecture as an "institution." Architecture sanctioned the laws of architecture but more as a self-affirmation than a self-critique.[14] Diana Agrest's distinction between design and non-design was concerned with any ideological motivation within the limits of architecture to preserve its normativity. This institutional conception differed from Peter Bürger's analysis of the avant-garde movements, which attacked *art as institution* to elevate the relationship between art and society to the status of content and method. Thus, the categories "institution" and "autonomy" derive from an aesthetic analysis to reveal the contingencies imposed by the cultural apparatus within which art operates. Bürger's study of *art as institution* refers to the logistical and intellectual determinants that condition its production.

On the other hand, Bürger's study of the ideological dimension of *autonomy* reveals the truth (the distance between art/design and society) and the untruth (the historical development of

such distance) of its own formation. The alienation of architecture rejected external phenomena to operate jealously within the traditional succession of styles. In contrast, Dada's aesthetic did not operate *within* art but *against* art as an institution questioning its social function. Both Eisenman's self-referential formal system and Agrest's antagonistic formulation of design versus non-design omitted the ideological load of disciplinary formulations in relation to social practices. Aldo Rossi did not make significant references to the ideological motivations of disciplinary formulations *à la* Foucault. Although, his cultural and historical sensitivity assumed the social, economic, and political causes and consequences of such operations for design.



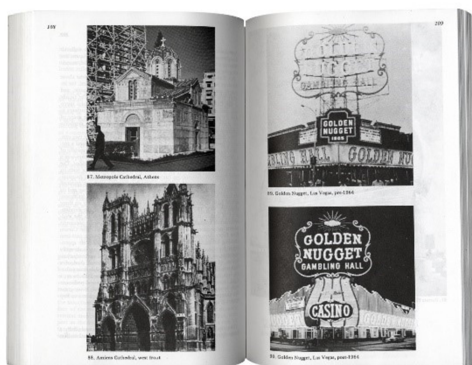


Figures 4.11, 4.12, 4.13, and 4.14. A facsimile edition of *Learning from Las Vegas* designed by Muriel Cooper

(The MIT Press, Ivory Press)

"Las Vegas is to the Strip what Rome is to the Piazza."

—Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*



The relationship between culture and architectural autonomy has been intense and, in most cases, antagonistic in the United States. The 1960s witnessed the initial formulation of Eisenman's generic properties of form. He advocated a formal, conceptual system of architecture while pop

culture inspired different interpretations of art, architecture, and urbanism. While Eisenman deprived architectural form of any metaphysical and aesthetic meaning, Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi found meaning in the worldliness of the urban landscape. These antipodal architectures were arguably culturally conscious, and they absorbed the cultural unrest as part of their reflections. But Eisenman retreated inwardly, while Scott Brown and Venturi accepted what culture offered as raw material for an implicit formulation of an autonomous architecture. The reevaluation of cultural constructions related to art, ecology, linguistics, politics, philosophy, race, sociology, and technology redefined the parameters of architecture based on either *detachment* or *engagement*. The distinction between *what architecture is* and *what architecture is not* was symptomatic of a condescending rational architecture that saw in "the other" an opportunity for self-affirmation *per via negativa*.[15] But once the retreat from external reality was set in motion, the use of autonomy within this self-referential architecture became part of an evolving stratagem.

The use of autonomy as a strategy of legitimation comes and goes as it suits. In 1963, the autonomy of architecture was implicitly formulated in Eisenman's *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*. From 1967 to 1975, the formulation of the autonomous object explicitly resulted in his early houses (I-VI). It was a critique of the Modern concern on social issues such as mass housing, mass production, and mass transportation. Eisenman focused on the consequent social alienation suffered by the individual under such conditions. Modern architecture, according to Eisenman, focused on an outward aesthetic while he transposed this individual detachment to the house. But after house VI, the dislocation of "the Text" as a method replaced autonomy. The absent reference inherent to the Text supplanted the absolute presence of the object promoted by architectural conventions. Eisenman left behind, at least verbally, his initial search for a Platonic architectural essence that overemphasized the information provided by the object to engage with

fiction and errors inherent to dislocating texts. But as the "post-critical" discourse gained momentum, in 2000, Eisenman published an apologia for "Autonomy and the will to the critical." But the return of the critical character of autonomy relied on inaccurate statements. First, he claimed that "traditionally any project of autonomy was primarily formal" and that "prior autonomies were created between architecture and other disciplines as difference for its own sake."[16] These statements are refuted by Kaufmann's *autonomen Architektur* that relegated form and the fixation on style to a secondary role within an autonomous system primarily concerned with the reality of cultural change. Eisenman's renovated autonomy was presented as a dynamic process based on the difference allowed by the singularity of architecture. Second, the critical is not any more "reactive or resistant" but "generative," a method that internally renovates the discourse of architecture through the struggle between abstraction and a latent figural. Thus, for Eisenman, this critical autonomy focused on the internal processes of architecture to supplant a past autonomy that operated in relation to other disciplines. But his initial understanding of the critical derived from Kant is misleading. His fixation with self-referentiality interpreted the Kantian critical character as "the possibility of knowledge within knowledge" rather than the rational scrutiny of knowledge by knowledge.[17] Eisenman used the idea of knowledge within knowledge to legitimize his disciplinary retreat. But Kant's philosophy questioned reason through the means of reason—not science itself but the validity of science. On the other hand, Eisenman never questioned the validity of architecture regarding its social role through the critical character of autonomy. Self-assertion was disguised as a supposed self-criticism.

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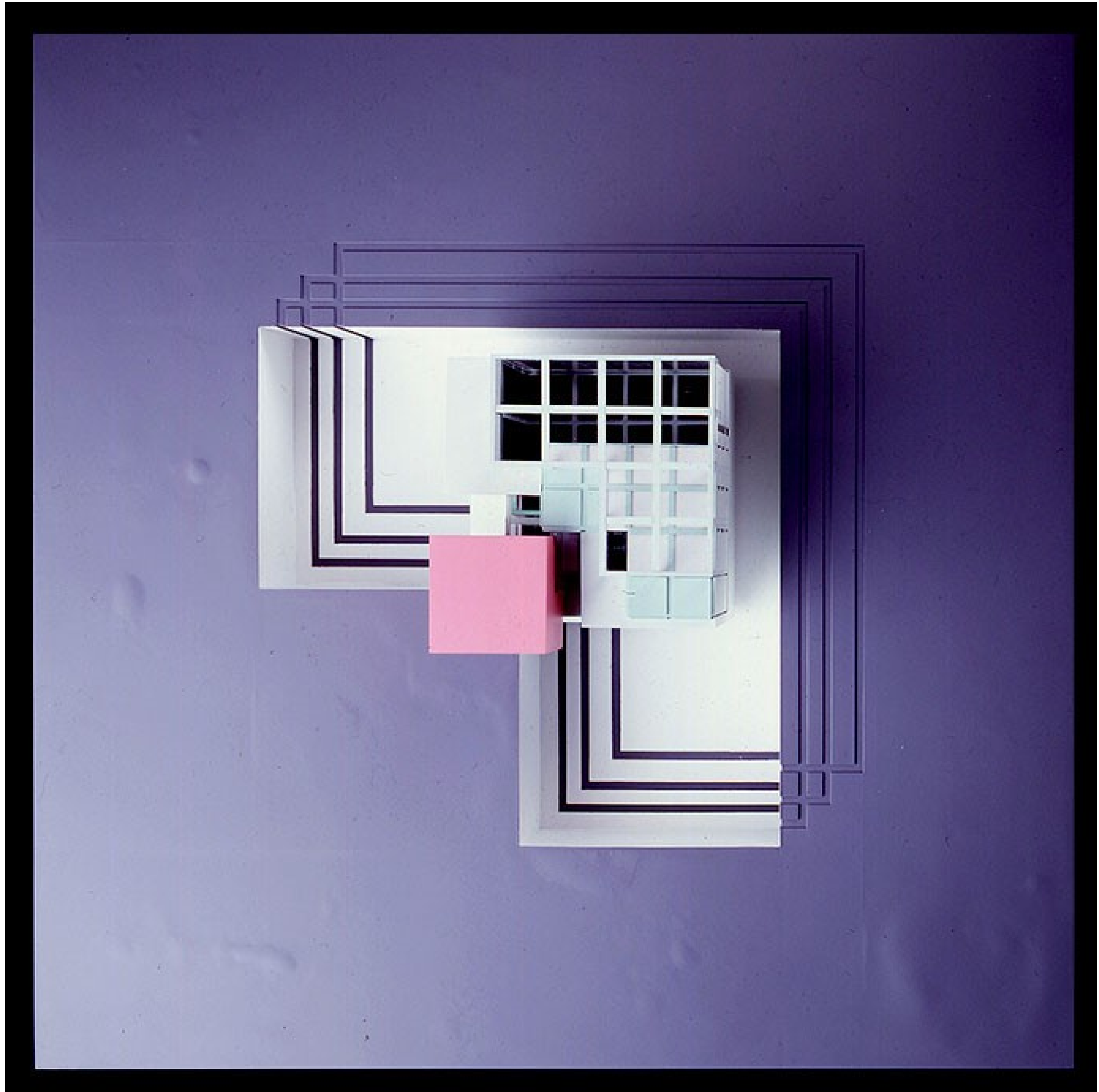


Model for Fin d'Ou T Hou S
Peter Eisenman
1983

(Peter Eisenman Architects)

4.2. From Language to Textuality

The cultural dimension of language is the cause and consequence of the political character of societies. Its success guides contrasting positions toward mutual respect and tolerance, while its failure exacerbates the will to destroy antagonistic positions. But the social and political dimension of language was expelled from Peter Eisenman's overemphasis on the formal language of architecture. The concrete reality of language—such as the non-hierarchical interrelationships within the semiological triangle (language, thought, and reality)—was excluded from a conceptual architectural language impermeable to reality to meaning, to passions.

We learn to communicate through linguistic conventions that precede and transcend our existence as human beings. This cultural synthesis between individual and collective imperatives to communicate confronts infants with the arduous historical formation of society. The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan described the early stage of "the I"—from six to eighteen months of age—as a "mirror phase" when the child recognizes its own image.[18] The Lacanian formation of the I, grants us a sense of individual and collective history in our early lives through the conventions of a language given to us. The child would eventually engage with a human community to leave behind the primitive stage and objectified form of the I. This progression comprises a political process entailing the identification of the subject by another subject. Language forges our social interactions as subjects, as political beings. Thus, its failure precipitates the identification of "the other" as an object. This manner of objectification can lead to the inhumanity of war.

Diverse voices, internal and external to architecture, reflected the cultural dimension of language during the twentieth century. The linguist Ferdinand de Saussure studied the "science

(semiology) concerned with the study of linguistic signs and symbols" in social life; Claude Levi-Strauss's structural anthropology informed the study of non-verbal systems as communication apparatuses; the philosopher Roland Barthes distinguished between the social institution of language (langue) and its individual action (parole); and the architects Charles Jencks and George Baird reflected on the meaningful correspondences between architecture, language, and human experience. However, Eisenman built on Noam Chomsky's grammatical research and Jacques Derrida's advocacy of writing in the study of language to strip architecture of any meaning, use, and subjective agency. Descriptive linguistics identifies the construction of the grammar of a language as "a system of rules that expresses the correspondence between sound and meaning."[19] The grammar exposes the formal conditions of its own system of rules, its empirical interpretation, and the data that makes it available to a language learner. Chomsky called it a "universal grammar" that defines an infinity of "attainable grammars" and produces principles from which the correspondences between sound, meaning, and the forms of its own system derive. Eisenman's discretional study of the formal structure of architecture as language is relative to its use derived from structural linguistics via Chomsky.[20]

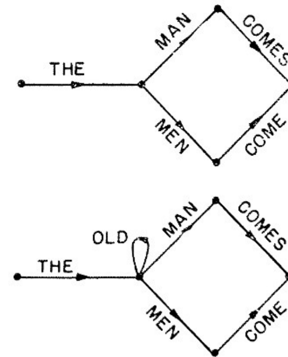
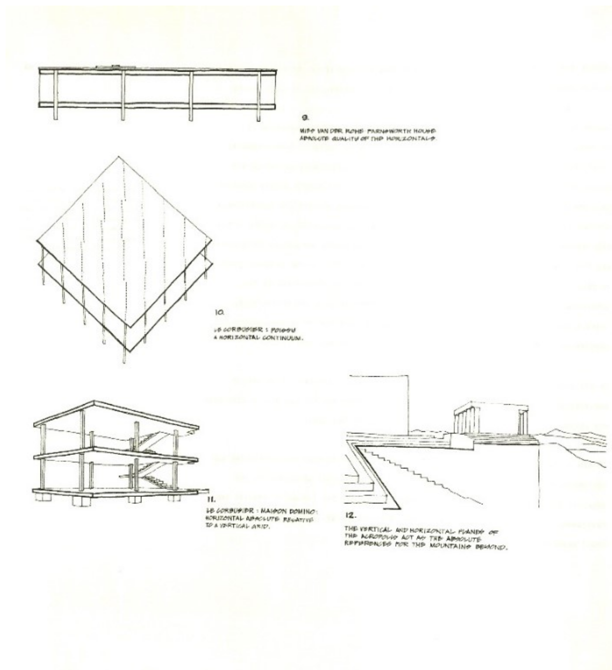


Figure 4.15. Two diagrams from Noam Chomsky's *Syntactic Stuctures* that represent "a finite state grammar" and "an infinite number of sentences" through the addition of "closed loops" (i.e., the word "old").

(Mouton & Co., N.V., Publishers, The Hague)

On the other hand, Derrida's challenge to de Saussure's reduction of writing as a visual encoding of speech and an experience of reading legitimized Eisenman's analogy between writing and architecture. Writing transcended its identification with a script to conform to the parameters of speech and architecture. Derrida argued that de Saussure's exclusion of writing is complicit



Figures 4.16 and 4.17. Diagrams from Peter Eisenman's *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, 1963

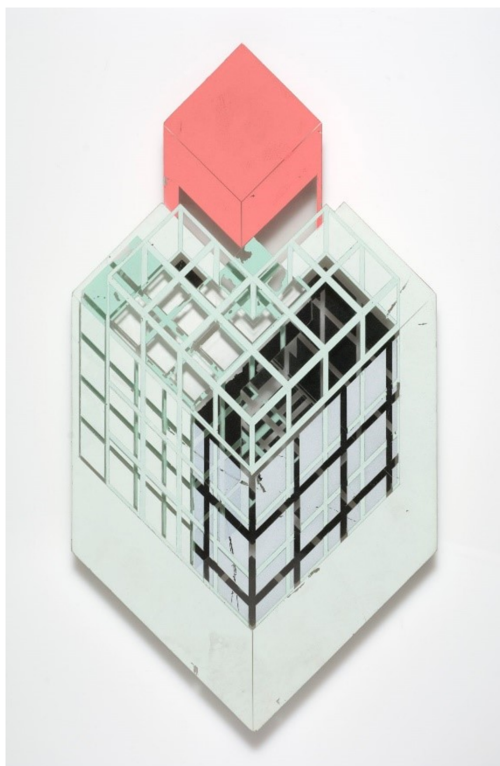
(Lars Müller, Baden, Switzerland)

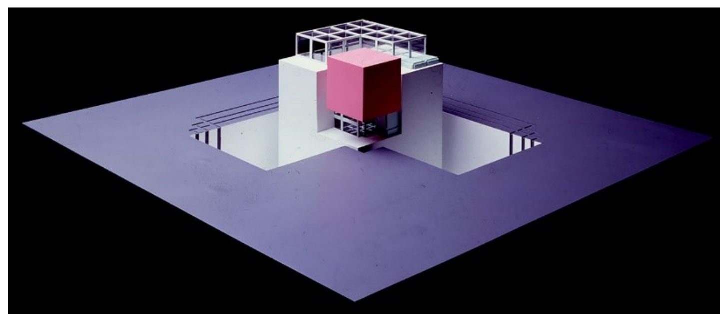
with the delusion of absolute objective truth because "no practice is ever totally faithful to its principle."[21] Thus, the experience of reading entails the possibility of misreading.[22] The impossibility of correct decoding provided by a transcendental signified (the meaning expressed by a sign) resulted in an endless play of signifiers (the physical form of a sign), which Derrida defined as *différance* to indicate that no meaning is achieved. But Eisenman's endless play between architectural elements—i.e., walls, doors, columns—devoid of meaning and function did not derive from this formulation. Derrida's *Of Grammatology* first appeared in 1967, while Eisenman's fixation on architectural form was set in motion in *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture* presented in 1963. Derrida's ideas were arguably used as a post-rational legitimation.

Figures 4.18 and 4.19. Cutouts for one or more presentation drawings and model for House X, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, Peter Eisenman, 1960-1977.

(Peter Eisenman fonds, Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal)

But Eisenman's obsession with the linguistic analogy of an arguably essentialist formal order omitted the subjective dimension of reading that necessarily accompanies the writing experience. The cultural prejudices of the writer and reader were abolished from the definition of a self-referential formal system. The formal and spatial coherence of a composition sanctioned by the architect was replaced by decomposition as the transformation of form through an evolution governed by form itself. But this process resulted in an object, House X (1975), rather than a transforming will.[23] In *Fin d'Ou T Hou S* (1983), the impossibility to attain meaning through architecture as writing was informed by the impossibility of the human being to define an absolute reference. The name of the project suggests an endless recoding that never consolidates as meaning. Does *Fin* refer to "fin" or "find"? Does *d'Ou T* refer to "doubt" or "out"? It suggests decoding into the language (French, English, or even Spanish) that accepts an endless play of interpretations.[24] The goal was to present architecture as a process rather than an object.[25] But as Kipnis argued, Eisenman did not incorporate use as an important parameter of "reading" an architectural experience. Eisenman's response was the formulation, for the sake of a post-rational legitimation, of a conscious reader as "reader" rather than as "user." It is assumed that this reader is impervious to any external





Figures 4.20 and 4.21. Axonometric and model for *Fin d'Ou T Hou S*, 1983.

(Peter Eisenman fonds, Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
© CCA)

value system and ignores what "architecture should be." Architecture must be read as a Text rather than decoded into an inherited architectural system: "Thus the new <<object>> must have the capacity to reveal itself first of all as a text, as a reading event."[26] And reading is not understood as a method to attain meaning but as the recognition of something as a language. But Eisenman's projects—from the early houses to *Fin d'Ou T Hou S*—have not departed from their identification as "objectified" objects. The impossibility to thoroughly read Eisenman's projects as Texts admitted the failure of the post-rational legitimation. Eisenman accepted failure as an opportunity to revise the explanation of the architectural fact rather than a learning method for the benefit of a projective theory. In *House of Cards* (1987), *misreading* supplanted *reading* to justify projective architectural intentions resistant to change, reflection, and self-criticism.[27] Absence and error were now accepted as inherent to the Text and as alternatives to the presence and truth and the traditional reading of the architectural object.

The formal essence of the architectural object was condemned to an open-ended process trapped within itself. The analogy between architecture and language was a legitimate method to study the meaning of architecture that led Eisenman toward a syntactic reduction to the detriment of meaning. We usually find words to communicate our desires, passions, and opinions. Thus, semiology emerged out of linguistics mainly because our interpretations of buildings, cities, and urban events are transposed into words. But those interpretations cannot be explained without the reality of cultural heterogeneity or prejudices excluded from the self-contained system of architectural forms outlined by Eisenman. As a cultural reflection, architecture can trace the aspirations and failures of diverse cultures articulating the non-hierarchical correspondences that operate within the semiological triangle (language, thought, and reality). But Eisenman's conceptual architecture never confronts the cultural heterogeneity of reality and the diversity of

languages that the Tower of Babel represents. Eisenman builds explicitly on Kant's philosophy on few occasions but implicitly since his doctoral thesis:

> The argument will try to establish that considerations of a logical and objective nature can provide a conceptual formal basis for any architecture. . . the principles in this discussion are rather to be thought of as being universally valid. Moreover, the contention will be that formal considerations are basic to all architecture regardless of style, and that these considerations derive from the formal essence of any architectural situation.[28]

His implicit evocation of Kant relies on universality and formalism. But he discretionally omitted the social dimension of Kant's formulations as he omitted the social and political dimension of language.

First, *a priori* judgments must be universal, according to Kant. Both Kant and Eisenman claimed that the universality of rational judgments must be valid for any experience. Thinking, according to Kant, would not be possible otherwise, and "blind intuition" would reign supreme within a mere pragmatic realm deprived of concepts. Universality applies to all humankind, which means that a social subject perceives concepts and forms. Thus, individual consciousness is relegated to secondary importance when collective consciousness is prioritized. Kant's third critique exemplifies this social and collective dimension of judgment through "taste," which is subjective as an attribute of the tongue whose verdict—liking or disliking—is expected to reach a universal consensus when extrapolated to other individuals. But Eisenman's notion of universality operates within a self-contained realm rather than a social one. In the fifth chapter of his doctoral thesis titled "Closed-ended and Open-ended Theory," Eisenman argued that his theory is open-ended. Thus, it reaches "no conclusions as its aim is limited to providing a basis for a clarification of conceptual thought."[29] This position countered, according to him, the closed-ended method of past architectural theories, such as the theory formulated by Alberti, concerned with "a fixed and

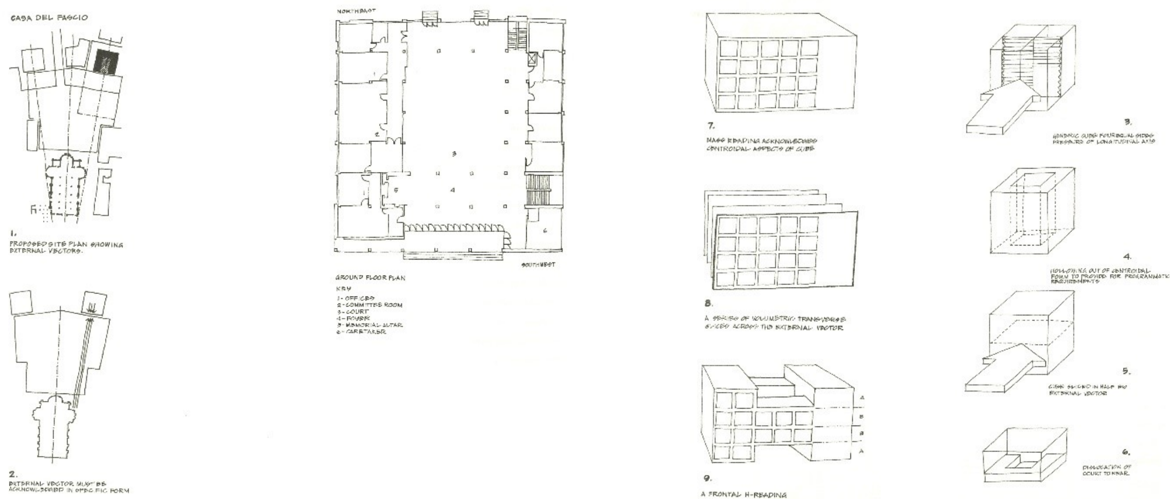
limited investigation."[30] Eisenman's theory could be described as an open-ended theory within the straitjacket he calls "architecture."

Second, both Kant and Eisenman could be accused of formalism. Kant focused on the ahistorical attributes of reason, while Eisenman focused on the ahistorical attributes of conceptual architecture. According to Theodor W. Adorno, Kant "had to confine himself to formal constituents because he had no control over the constantly changing contents."[31] This description could perfectly apply to Eisenman's architecture. But their formalisms contrast from each other precisely through their conception of autonomy. Kant considered that reason cannot fully comprehend and bring order into the chaos of external data. But reason has the power to decide if the application of a specific form of knowledge to tackle external data is convenient or not. Thus, the political and social dimension of the problem of choice is fundamental in Kant's autonomy. Conversely, Eisenman eliminated any external stimulus and data from his mere formal concerns. Eisenman reduced the problem of choice to the distinction between architecture and construction through "intention."[32] He committed with a closed-ended system, or rather an open-ended system within architecture that abolished any sense of reality by overlooking its social contingencies.

The concept of "system" exacerbates Eisenman's departure from the autonomy formulated by Kant and Kaufmann. Kant considered that pure reason was a system, a unity, that prevented the intrusion of the non-identical into it.[33] However, the power of his philosophy is precisely the tension between this rational system and the recognition of its limitations to govern the non-identical. Kaufmann's autonomous system was not concerned with style or "the periodic appearance and disappearance of forms" but with "the general mental attitude of a particular era," that is, the individual and collective sentiments that informed the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.[34] For Eisenman, a geometric-based order evolves from a system that stimulates formal

transformations: “Systems deny only the arbitrary, the picturesque and the romantic: the subjective and personal interpretations of order.”[35] But every time that Eisenman tries to abolish any subjective agency, he negates reality itself and departs from the philosophical roots of architectural autonomy. Kant was more concerned with “the objective nature of cognition” than with a purely subjective or objective reality.[36]

The most evident aversion to the project of autonomy comes from Eisenman’s definition of what architecture is in essence: “The giving of form (itself an element) to intent, function, structure and technics. Thus form is raised to a position of primacy in the hierarchy of elements.”[37] Eisenman distinguished between “generic” and “specific” form. The generic form is an entity defined by Platonic inherent laws (essence), while the specific form is a physical resolution that responded to intent and function. Therefore, the generic form is considered objectively and discriminates aesthetic preferences, while the specific form demands subjective responses that identify properties such as proportion, symbolism, and texture.[38] The primacy of generic form is anti-Kantian because it discriminates a subjective liking or disliking, focusing on the inherent and “objective” laws of form. Eisenman rightly argued that a specific form produces different



Figures 4.22, 4.23, and 4.24. Drawings of Casa del Fascio from Peter Eisenman’s *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, 1963.

(Lars Müller, Baden, Switzerland)

experiences in an engineer, a religious leader, a psychologist, and an architect. But the reduction of formal choices to a geometric problem excludes the productive tension that autonomy represents between reason and external data, design, and society. Eisenman argued that the choice between a dome and a cruciform building depends on the accessibility of a site. The centroidal form of the dome would be more appropriate than the cruciform building when the site can be accessed from four sides. But Eisenman overlooks the chaos and passions of life. He omits that autonomous decisions must deal with the life of a street in Manhattan that differs socially, economically, and politically from the life of a street in Berlin, Lagos, Mexico City, or Rio de Janeiro. Thus, the perception of accessibility that prevails in the life of Fifth Avenue is antipodal to the life of favela Rocinha where it is a matter not only of life but also death.

Figure 4.25. Fifth Avenue, New York, 1968

(Photo by Joel Meyerowitz
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of James Danziger
© Joel Meyerowitz, courtesy Howard Greenberg Gallery)

Figure 4.26. Favela Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro, 2019.

(Photo by Juan Luis Rod/El Pais)

The validity of Eisenman's analogy between his architecture and language seems irrelevant when the primary concern of this dissertation is the interdependence between design and society. It is unclear if the explanatory notes that aspire to legitimize his architectural projects attempt to strengthen the alliance between architecture and language or are mere post-rational stratagems. The attempts to understand the meaning of these explanations escape the scope of this dissertation. But they are examples to remember that virtues such as clarity, generosity, lyric power, and verbal gallantry belong to poets who say without explaining.

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Saint Jerome Writing
Michelangelo Merisi, “Caravaggio”
1605-1606

(Collezione del cardinale Scipione Borghese
Borghese Gallery)

4.3. The Deaths of the Authors

> "Deaths," rather than death, to problematize the rejection of authorship as a post-structuralist theoretical reduction.

> "Authors," rather than author, to support the conviction that the constitution of knowledge is only attained through the cultural nuances of a geographical and intellectual diversity.

The unreflective acceptance of "The Death of the Author" as a post-structuralist theorem was symptomatic of the aesthetic and cultural blindness that permeated the postwar discourse on architectural autonomy in the United States. The study of its singular conceptual form omitted what the plurality of "The Deaths of the Authors" reveals: first, the possibility of a collective subject; second, the operation within the social sphere of a Work and a Text; third, the cultural specificity and feelings of the human person behind the category of authorship; and fourth, its temporality. The following lines are not an apology for the dramas and passions behind categories such as authorship or work. They attempt to prove that the transposition of the fiction inherent to textuality into a self-referential architectural theory and practice was reduced to fiction.

The post-structuralist debate on authorship within French literary theory refers typically to Roland Barthes's "The Death of the Author" (1968) and Michel Foucault's lecture "What is an Author?" (1969).[39] The former made explicit that the identity of writing starts when the identity of the subject is lost, while the latter only referred to death at the end of the lecture. Both Barthes and Foucault defined the cultural and social formation of the Modern notion of "authorship" as the consolidation of individual prestige within the development of capitalist ideology and the history of knowledge. These two texts synthesized a historical debate that dates back to the seventeenth

century: Lope de Vega's *Fuenteovejuna*; Stéphane Mallarmé's preference of language over its "owner," the author; Paul Valéry's distinction between the verbal essence of literature and the superstition of writers' interiority; Surrealism's formulation about the redundancy of the author in the process of writing; Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades; Luigi Pirandello's oscillation between the reality and the fiction of the author; and Samuel Beckett's indifference to who speaks exemplify the death of the author. But while architecture praised the Text to the detriment of the author, the post-structuralist debate on authorship belongs to a genealogy interested not only in the death (of the author) but also in the need and desire for both an individual and collective author.

Figure 4.27. Interpretation of Lope de Vega's *Fuenteovejuna* by Antonio Gades Co.

(Photo by Tomoaki Minoda/El Pais)

In the play *Fuenteovejuna* (1619) by the Spanish poet Lope de Vega, the collectivity gradually became the protagonist, the author of a crime. It was based on real accounts that occurred in 1476 when the inhabitants of Fuenteovejuna (Córdoba, Spain) killed the tyrannical Comendador Fernan Gómez de Guzmán of the chivalric Order of Calatrava. When the royal authorities investigated the crime, all the villagers said, "Fuenteovejuna did it." No individual culprit was identified. Thus, collective consciousness is constructed as the play unfolds—from a mass governed by individual interests (Act I), the construction of the ideological and shared sentiments (Act II), to the consolidation of a collective consciousness that could save everyone together (Act

III). But Lope de Vega did not shift from individuality to collective populism because the individual character of the protagonists changed as they, in turn, shaped Fuenteovejuna's collective consciousness. The political context was the era of the Catholic Kings that Lope de Vega conceived as a period of national consensus in which even enemies could eventually be part of the collectivity.[40] Mallarmé and Barthes, centuries later, considered that language speaks, not the author. The impersonal dimension of the former represses the personality of the latter. Valéry attacked the central position occupied by the sense of pride of the creative process in the artistic production of bourgeois society. The subsequent critique of individual production, performed by Surrealism and Dadaism, confirmed the death of the author. The Surrealist automatism, conferred to gaze and to write, undermined the legitimacy of a rational author because language only accepts its constant reconstitution as its meaning is subsequently reformulated regardless of any individual agency. The individual author cannot be the creator of Duchamp's conception of the urinal as artwork even though the "artist's signature" (the pseudonym R. Mutt) artistically legitimized the mass-produced object. This genealogy attests to an aesthetic concern on authorship synthesized by a post-structuralist formulation and mimicked by the North American discourse on architectural autonomy.

The collective consciousness of Fuenteovejuna reveals the impossibility to identify authorship with a single abstract logic that denies the human experience, temporality, and the social space within which works and Texts operate. Barthes's theorization of the Text led him to undermine the author's agency and the work, while Foucault's sole interest was "the relationship between text and author." Foucault intended to problematize the category of the author despite predicting the eventual disappearance of its function. He contended that in the future, authorship might be performed as an experience. In his view, Samuel Beckett synthesized the ethical principle

of writing in the era through his indifference to whoever speaks.[41] Foucault highlighted the disregard that dominated the contemporary practice of writing. He argued that writing lacked expression and demanded a reflection on its relationship with death.

First, writing became a self-referential practice by freeing itself from any theme of expression. In this way, it was more interested in its essential signifier than its signified content. However, writing transcended its own limits and rejected any confinement within its interiority. This idea was confirmed by Barthes but omitted by Eisenman. The theory of the Text coincided with the practice of writing. The Text is "that social space which leaves no language safe, outside, nor any subject of the enunciation in position as judge, master, analyst, confessor, decoder."[42] It operates in an intertextual domain where "origins," "works," or "disciplines" have no authority. The transition "From Work to Text" represents an "epistemological slide" that derives from the disruptive collision of traditional forms of knowledge searching for new knowledge, new language, and new expression.[43] But the exclusionary meaning given to autonomy within architecture deprived it of its social practice by focusing on the self-referentiality of writing and the textual abolition of origins rather than the epistemological search that autonomy as engagement entails.[44] A projective theory could only arise from the conflation of theory and practice, as in the Kantian system. This differs from Eisenman's essentialist architecture that derives from a purely objective illusion. In *House of Cards*, Eisenman argued that the written text that describes his first six houses was part of the design process.[45] But if the Text, as a method, became a form of invention, it would have transcended the architectural identity, becoming an epistemological search in the intertextual domain and social space where traditional disciplines (such as architecture) have no authority.

Second, Foucault reflected on the actual death of the author and not only the narrative end of the category of authorship, to which Barthes generally referred. This cultural reflection on the death of the human author, what she or he left behind, necessarily motivates the study of the desire or need of an author as well as the temporal dimension of authorship. Foucault countered "the empty affirmation that the author has disappeared" precisely through the concepts of "work" and "writing."[46] The contempt for the work must necessarily derive from a study of *what the work is,* but any verdict would be unsatisfactory due to the absence of a theory of the work. Before accepting the transition from work to Text, we should ask: What is a work? Who can be considered an author? Is Nietzsche the author or co-author of his posthumous book *The Will to Power,* along with his sister Elisabeth and the editors? What are the limits of authorship—the writing of a book, the shopping list, an email, a love letter? Foucault argued that writing gradually transposed "the empirical characteristics of the author into a transcendental anonymity."[47] However, the individuality of the author's name distinguishes the transcultural validity of discourse from the cultural specificity of everyday speech. The validity of the discourse on psychoanalysis has been widely accepted. Still, the German language used by Sigmund Freud differs from society to society—from Austria to Switzerland to Germany. But Freud can also be called a "transdiscursive" author as the founder of psychoanalysis.

For Foucault, a discursive practice contrasts scientific formulation and is independent of its future development. The work of Galileo and Newton had to be evaluated by the laws of physics and cosmology, while any post-Freud work refers to psychoanalysis only as "origin" rather than a scientific assessment (to deem it either true or false). What Foucault calls a "return to the origin" is necessary if the aspiration is to transform a discursive practice. Eisenman subscribed to Foucault's idea of a new episteme, derived from man's displacement as an originating agent, to

detach from the humanist dichotomy form/function. However, he discriminated all the cultural implications that this operation entailed, such as the need to consider any reference of the discourse on architectural autonomy—such as the works of Ledoux, Kaufmann, Rossi, and Venturi—as a discursive "origin" via the individual and cultural specificity of such names.

The censorship against the author paradoxically promoted it. The death of the author simply revealed the need and desire for the author. When the Italian playwright Luigi Pirandello was asked about his plays and his characters, he replied, "How should I know? I'm the author."[48] He nevertheless explored the topics of the falsification of reality, the fiction of reality, and the need for someone to tell the dramas of life. In the play *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* (*Six Characters in Search of an Author*, 1921), Pirandello tells the drama of a family—two middle-aged parents and four children—in search of an author because they want their tragedy to be told. The death of the author represented an opportunity for Eisenman to depart from the classical and humanist tradition of the treatises, which featured the architect-author and architect-hero. But modern authorship cannot disappear overnight. It will disappear in the same way that it gradually appeared, but until then, we will have to acknowledge its human and temporal dimensions.

Barthes wrote about the desire for the author years later when he wrote about the death of the author. His books *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* (1971), and *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973) attest to this desire: "The pleasure of the Text," he argued, "also includes a friendly return of the author."[49] Jacques Derrida also engaged with the human author as an exercise to mourn the dead of his friends. He published some memorial essays for his friends in 2001—such as Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, Sarah Kofman, and Gilles Deleuze—despite considering this an indecent act that reduced friendship to the abstraction of authorship. In contrast to Eisenman, whose theorization exorcised any personal connection, Derrida exalted the inevitable human

dimension of the author. Finally, Derrida evoked the temporal dimension of the author in a memorial to Barthes, titled "The Deaths of Roland Barthes," with three forms of engagement: first, the dead of authors before we read them; second, living authors when we read them; and third, authors that died recently or a long time ago but that we personally knew and even loved.[50]

Eisenman's architectural system directly excluded this temporal dimension through an essentialist, ahistorical, and purely objective aspiration whose by-product was the purely abstract death of the author. The latter initially rejected the commercialization of authorship and the work in a capitalist society. Paradoxically, the unreflective acceptance of "The Death of the Author" as a purely abstract theory that informed a conceptual architecture degraded the individual human in the same way that the *excesses* of capitalism degraded human existence.

Model for Cannaregio Town Square, Venice, Italy
Peter Eisenman
1978

(Peter Eisenman Architects
Peter Eisenman fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
© CCA)

4.4. Cities of Artificial Excavations

The Cities of Artificial Excavations (1978-1988) represented a before and after in Peter Eisenman's work. The interest in the palimpsestic memory of a site replaced the "automated" process of making the architectural object. But the graphic and written evidence suggests that the transition was more scalar than methodological. The formal investigation was transposed to the site to deal, in Eisenman's words, with the "ground as object."[51] Representation took precedence in this supposed "urban" investigation. Two-dimensional cartography replaced the axonometric view that intended to suppress subjective traces in previous projects. The geometric and graphic dimensions of maps and grids were adopted as part of the design process, but their political, social, and ideological iconographies were suppressed. The fiction of reality was revealed to the detriment of the reality of fiction. The fiction of reality was exposed by projects such as Cannaregio or Romeo and Juliet, in which architecture even invented its own site. At the same time, the operativity of urban grids—from the Spanish colonies in Latin America, Berlin, New York, to Barcelona—was reduced to a picturesque illusion that denied social, economic, and political contingencies.

The Cities of Artificial Excavations is paradigmatic of the struggle between a controlling utopia that inhabits designers' minds and the ungovernable urban condition. Kant proposed the power of reason to be applied to external phenomena despite its inability to control them, while the autonomous urbanist proposes to intervene, not control, the urban reality through the means and methods of design. On the other hand, the ancient disciplinary control over docile bodies, studied by Michel Foucault, inadvertently permeated the disciplinary reduction of architectural autonomy. Eisenman understood Postmodernism as a linguistic project and focused on the never-ending play between signifier and signified within the (controlled) internal history of architecture.

But the need to touch the ground became evident in 1980 when Manfredo Tafuri characterized his work as “The Meditations of Icarus”—a reference to the mythological figure who flew so close to the sun that his wax wings melted.[52] Eisenman’s conceptual search for the deep structure of architecture; the method of decomposition investigated in House X; and the topological investigations of House 11a, House El Even Odd, and Fin d'Ou T Hou S were finally willing to confront the imponderables of practice and the historical complexity of specific sites.

Figure 4.28. The Fall of Icarus, Giulio Pippi known as Giulio Romano, 1536. (Photo M. Bellot/Musée du Louvre, RMN-Grand Palais)

The Cannaregio Town Square (Venice, Italy, 1978) proposed the architectural invention of a site. It considered the unbuilt hospital designed by Le Corbusier (1964-1965) and Eisenman’s House 11a (1978) as its contextual reference. The IBA Social Housing (Berlin, West Germany, 1981-1985) superimposed urban and geographical grids to mediate between the realities separated by World War II, such as the memory (specificity) and anti-memory (universality) of Berlin. Moving Arrows, Eros, and Other Errors, Romeo + Juliet (1985) fully embraced fiction as a point of departure for architectural and urban interventions. The University Art Museum (Long Beach, California, 1986) was conceived as an archaeological discovery based on the conflation of architectural and cartographic experimentations. The Wexner Center for the Visual Arts and Fine Arts Library (Columbus, Ohio, 1983-1989) reconciled the city grid and the Ohio State University

Oval geometrically. Eisenman collaborated with the philosopher Jacques Derrida in La Villette (Paris, France, 1987), representing the dead end of the artificial excavations. The combination of Bernard Tschumi's La Villette project and Eisenman's Cannaregio proposed to replace traditional notions of time, space, and scale through a design intervention that drew analogies between the past and the present of the site.

But Eisenman never fully engaged with the ungovernable urban condition. His lack of curiosity found natural excavations boring. Thus, he reduced excavation to an artificial method of abstraction and conceptual reconstruction of sites. The analogy between Icarus and Eisenman was symptomatic of a will to an exacerbated abstraction that eluded any engagement with reality. *The Cities of Artificial Excavations* were not critical architectural efforts willing to intervene in the city and, at the same time, accept the frustration derived from its incapacity to control cultural phenomena and the urban condition. Instead, they were a retreat from alienating cultural conditions that became a form of obedience paradoxically. If Cannaregio is a cultural reflection, it is symptomatic of our cultural failures. Its self-reflexive formalism represents faithfully the process of reification—the increasing commodification of personal experiences—from which any subjective agency has been obliterated. K. Michael Hays wrote regarding Cannaregio: "Eisenman's architecture is accurate and legitimate but perhaps so, in its representation of a culture dispossessed of meaning, obedient."[53] If any, Cannaregio is a cultural diagnosis rather than a cultural critique.

The artificial excavations consolidated formal automation using representation. The procedure switched from the making to the finding of objects. Eisenman's attempt to eliminate any trace of authorship originated from the search for the geometrical interactions that were associated with the site. The primacy of plans over axonometric drawings resulted in the

importation (from previous projects) and the extrusion of forms. The design process selected geographical, architectural, and urban features from historical maps that cannot erase their ideological origins and their authors. Thus, this process contradicts the supposed repression of subjective traces. The drawings documented and relocated visual traces through the process of scaling.

In contrast to traditional scales whose referent is the human figure, scaling, for Eisenman, alters the size and location of the documented geometries to prevent their identification with any site or context. The drawings gave visibility to the abstract recollection of history that architecture tends to reduce obsessively to form. Cartography, in Eisenman's words, was "a prosthetic device, to manufacture figuration."[54] Thus, Eisenman assumed that cartography lacks any ideological motivation. He overlooked that the artificial excavations were interpretations mediated by his successes, failures, prejudices, anxieties, and desires. Fredric Jameson found striking "the return of history, via the discontinuities of the site itself" in Eisenman's artificial excavations: "the layerings are now historical, ghosts of various pasts, presents, and futures which may in fact be alternate

Figure 4.29. Aerial photomaps of Venice, 1982. Plates 5-8, 18-21, 32-35, 45-48 from Venezia Forma Urbis (Venice: Marsilio Editori, 1985)

(CCA Library/Reprinted in *Cities of Artificial Excavations: The work of Peter Eisenman, 1978-1988*)

worlds, but whose tensions and incompatibilities are all mediated through some larger absent cause which is History itself."[55] The artificial excavations were an attempt to "formalize," to control, the history of History.

Figure 4.30. A map of Venice showing Cannaregio West and the Train Station, Giambattista Garlato and Paolo Ripamonto Carpano, 1847. Plate 1 from Venezia e le sue lagune (Venice: Nell'L R. Privil. Stab. Antonelli, 1847, vol. I.)

(CCA Library/Reprinted in *Cities of Artificial Excavations: The work of Peter Eisenman, 1978-1988*)

In 1978, the Cannaregio project initially emerged as a design seminar organized by the city of Venice and the Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia to discuss how to intervene in European historical centers.[56] The Cannaregio district experienced accelerated industrialization during the nineteenth century. The need to connect Venice with the mainland justified the construction of the railway bridge and station in the western part of the district in 1841 and 1860, respectively.[57] In 1962, a new hospital designed by Le Corbusier was proposed on the edge of the lagoon, where the municipal slaughterhouses were built between 1841 and 1843.[58] The seminar suggested the investigation of housing proposals while Venice's population was decreasing. Eisenman concluded that the city had "an adequate housing stock," and he decided to "make holes" using the unbuilt hospital as a fictional site.

The superimposition of the grid of Le Corbusier's unbuilt hospital and the existing grid of the area countered any reference to the geographical and industrial history of the site. The operation intended to expose the emptiness of the future, the present, and the past. First, the extension of the unbuilt hospital's grid on the Cannaregio district came from a series of sites (holes) for future

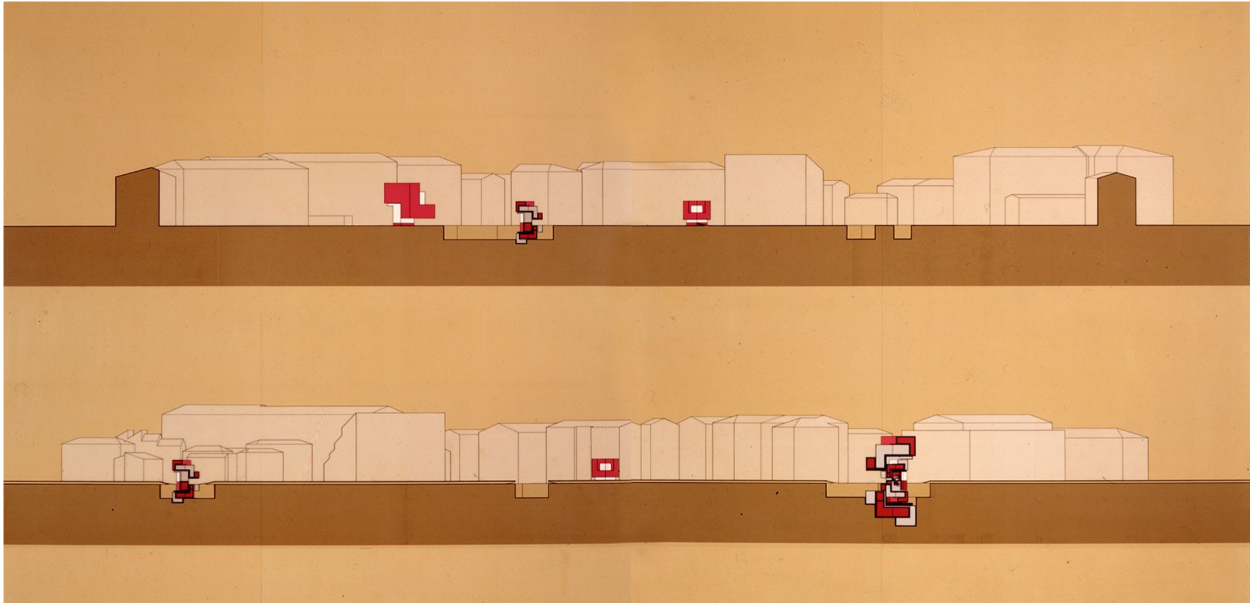


Figure 4.31. Sections of three houses, Cannaregio, Venice, 1978.

(Eisenman Architects)

Figure 4.32. Axonometric of Eisenman's intervention and Le Corbusier's hospital, Cannaregio, Venice, 1978.

(Peter Eisenman Architects, Peter Eisenman fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal, © CCA)

houses or graves, which symbolize the emptiness of the rationality inherent to heroic Modernism. Second, some traces on the ground left by lifeless objects suggest "the absence of their former presence."[59] The forms and scales of the three objects are variations of House 11a—1) smaller, 2) like, and 3) bigger than a house. Their different scales called into question the nature of the objects through their names. Is the smallest object a house or a model of a house? Is the house-size object a house or a model of itself? Does the fact that the

biggest object also contains a smaller one turn it into a museum of houses? Third, the objects align along the topological axis traced on the ground. This diagonal "scar" suggests a subterranean reality suppressed by the rationality of the axis. The suppression of Euclidean geometry complemented the suppression of the author during the process of making the autonomous object. Topology replaced Euclidean geometry to displace the perennial reference of formal transformations to the human body and to focus on the inherent properties of geometric structures subjected to continuous transformations. The continuous surface derived from the transformational interaction of the "els" that comprise House 11a replaced the cube "interior" and "exterior" notions that accompanies the stability of the cube. The topological progression, captured by a cinematic system of single shots that governed House 11a, was transposed to the ground. The early drawings show a flexible grid suffering a topological transformation that extends throughout the district of Cannaregio. Eisenman's grid seems to follow the growth pattern of the hospital, which resembles the city itself.[60] Eisenman flirted with urbanism by depicting his intervention and Le Corbusier's hospital with the same line weight suppressing any graphic distinction between the architectural objects, the hospital, and the city of Venice. But he abandoned the urban investigation of growth patterns to retreat to the limits of architecture. The negotiation between the grid of Le Corbusier's hospital and Eisenman's topological method finally produced a series of sites (holes) throughout the

Figure 4.33. Eisenman's sketch of the site plan with a deformed grid, Cannaregio, Venice, 1978.

(Peter Eisenman fonds, Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/
Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal, CCA DR1991:0017:001)

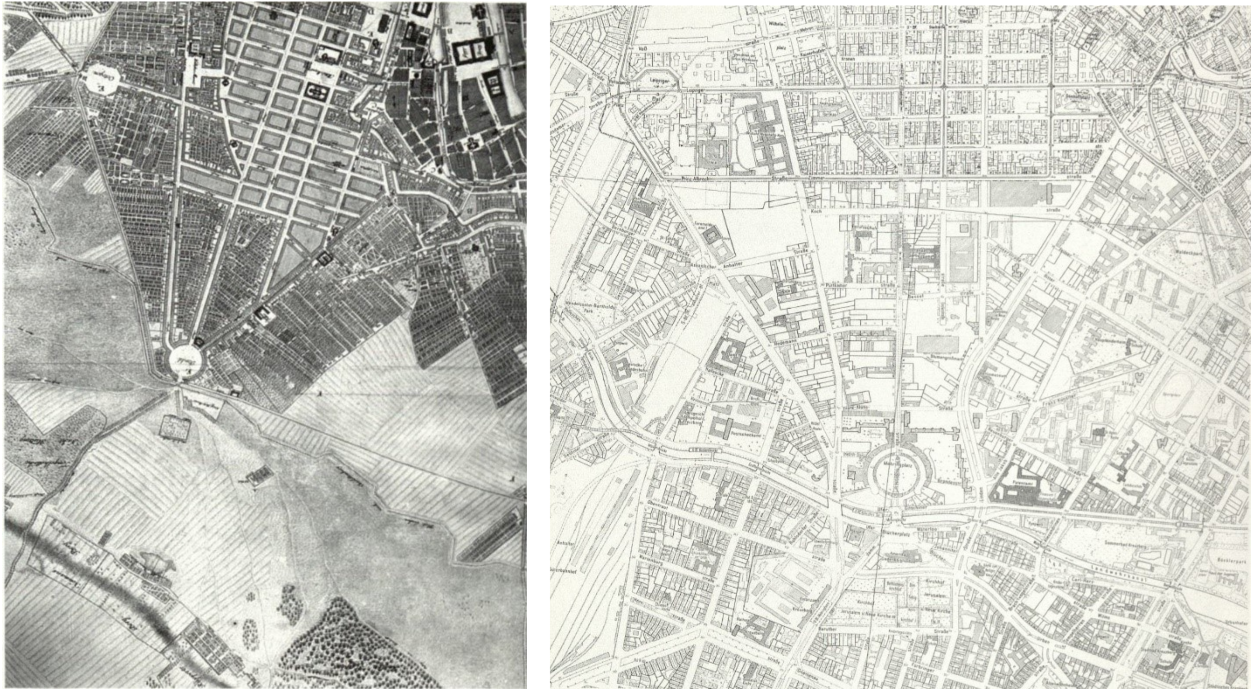
irregularity of the study area and a diagonal axis that connected two bridges, *il Ponte dei Scalzi* to the south and *il Ponte dei Tre Archi* to the north.

Figures 4.34 and 4.35. The Rise of the Berlin Wall. (Left) This fence separated friends and families at the end of World War II when Berlin was divided into four zones. France, Great Britain, and Americans worked together as the Soviets increasingly worked in isolation, 1953. (Right) A daughter, at the West side of the wall, talks to her mother who stayed at the East side, 1961.

(Ralph Crane and Stan Wayman / Time Life Pictures / Getty)

But the focus on the internal history of architecture became untenable when the IBA project in Berlin confronted Eisenman with the overwhelming history of the city. Berlin was the paradigm of a postwar divided world. The unrestrained ambitions of the two victorious ideologies led to the construction of the Wall to separate the east from the west. Its presence destroyed many families and large areas of the city, while its absence has failed to reunify Germany due to the antagonistic political projects inherited from the twentieth century. The restricted competition, sponsored by the Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin, was an attempt to regenerate an area of the Kochstrasse and Friedrichstrasse in the district of South Friedrichstadt next to the famous Berlin Wall crossing point known as Checkpoint Charlie. Since its foundation in 1688, Friedrichstadt triggered development toward the west and the south. The district became an important political and commercial hub during the nineteenth century. However, the construction of the Wall changed this condition. Thus, the proposed site, once at the limits of the urban expansion of the city, became the limit between Eastern and Western ideological obsessions. The premise of the competition was

to design mixed-use buildings and preserve three existing structures in the proposed lots at the intersection of Friedrichstrasse and Kochstrasse, with the option of expanding to other blocks. Eisenman/Robertson's scheme included several buildings at the corners of the block whose facades replicated the superimposition of grids operating on the ground. Only one housing building was built in 1986.[61]



Figures 4.36 and 4.37. (Left) Map of Berlin, Samuel von Schmettau, 1748. (Right) Plan of Friedrichstadt, Berlin, 1980.

(Archiv Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin 1987 and CCA DR1991:0018:478:1/ Reprinted in *Cities of Artificial Excavations: The Work of Peter Eisenman, 1978-1988*)

The twofold design strategy intended to render visible both "the particular history of the site" and the sacrifice of Berlin's identity by occupying the center of modern history.[62] Eisenman's concept of anti-memory countered the nostalgic reference of memory to the past. It denies the reality of the past to create an alternative one. The design resulted in "a suspended object" or "a place" that produced "its own time" by denying the past and the future.[63] The Berlin project forced Eisenman to forget the internal history of architecture to deal with the overwhelming history of the city. How can the history of Berlin acquire an architectural image? The complexity of the task

led Eisenman to replace the burden of history with the worldliness of time. This architectonic logic informed his understanding of site and time as purely formal artifacts. Eisenman's notion of the site focused on the area within the block at the intersection of Friedrichstrasse and Kochstrasse and relegated the historical and cultural significance of the city. According to the project description, the design is specific to the site because it is derived from the three surviving buildings and the Berlin Wall on the north. But the abstract reduction of the historical traces that physically constructed the site over time is unmasked by the conceptual and final drawings from which the city was obliterated, except for the sidewalks.

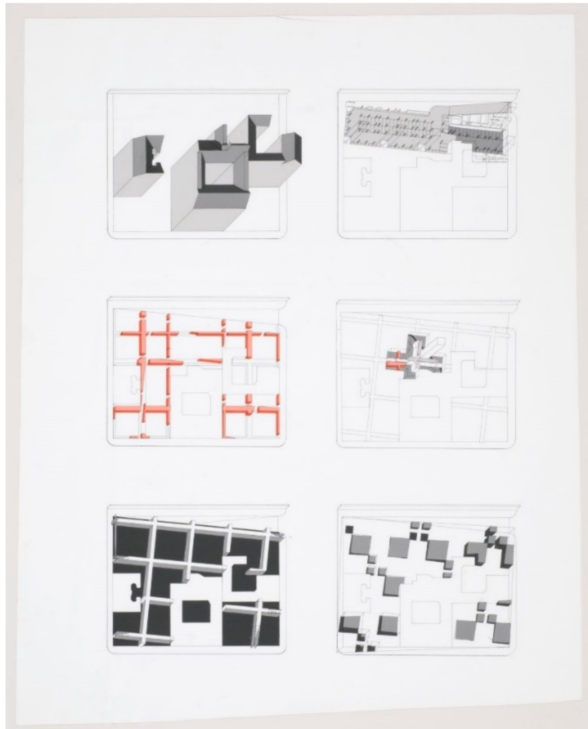


Figure 4.38. Site plans with axonometric projections, IBA project by Peter Eisneman, 1980-1985.

(Peter Eisenman fonds, Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal)

Figures 4.39 and 4.40. IBA Social Housing, Peter Eisneman, Berlin, 1980-1985.

(Eisenman Architects)

The references to Cannaregio and Berlin are not attempts to understand the intentions of the projects but to study how autonomy operates within Eisenman's theory and practice. The use of cartographic tools in Berlin is a clear example of the dissociation between a critical autonomy and an apolitical tendency in Eisenman's oeuvre. From the eighteenth century to the Berlin Wall, the design process conflated different sets of absent and actual walls and grids as a strategy to make legible (to formalize) the historical progression of the site. The Mercator grid was the most important tool of the artificial excavation to produce anti-memory. It was conceived as "a universal geometric pattern without history, place, or specificity, this grid ties Berlin to the world; it is the most neutral and artificial system of marking."[64] This grid produces anti-memory because it constituted a different set of walls built at the same height as the Berlin Wall (3.3 meters) to counter the memory associated with the actual historical walls. This process tries to dissolve the identity of the site. But the use of the Mercator grid during the design process is inconsistent with the

Figure 4.41. The distortion of the actual size of landmasses depicted by the Mercator World Map.

(Mary Evans/Science Source/National Geographic)

history of the cartographic tool. His rejection of history and authorship reduced the Mercator grid to a tool created *ex-nihilo*. Thus, Gerardus Mercator did not receive any credit for developing what we know as Mercator projection. This omission is derived from the erasure of the ideological motivations of cartography and the use of its tools. Was America discovered or invented as the Mexican historian Edmundo O'Gorman suggested? He argued that America was invented rather than discovered to conform to the ideological need of a new political and social project, which the old European consciousness was incapable of developing on its own continent.[65] America, and more specifically the New Spain, represented for some underprivileged members of the Spanish society a place to find a privileged political and social position. The production of maps and adventurous stories of the recently "invented" territories were a geographical reference as much as an ideological construction and commercial strategy to collect funding for future expeditions. Thus, cartography is far from being neutral because a map is not a faithful *presentation* but rather

Figure 4.42. A world map by Martin Waldseemüller, 1507. The term "America" appears on the lower leftmost panel and Amerigo Vespucci, the explorer who put forward that the discovered land was part of a new continent, is represented on the top panel of the third column.

(Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington, D.C.)

an ideological *representation* mediated by a subjective interpretation—the very thing that Eisenman insisted on repressing.

The grids and traces manipulated during the design process—the Mercator grid, the grid of the city of Berlin, the traces of historical landmarks such as the Berlin Wall—were reduced to self-referential architectural signifiers that exploited the city as an excuse. In 2017, Eisenman accepted, in an interview with Thomas Weaver, that the name of the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies could have omitted "Urban Studies," but after the social unrest of the 1960s, he needed "a certain amount of cover."[66] Subsequent projects such as Romeo and Juliet, Long Beach, Ohio State, and La Villette replicated the *exploitation* of the city. But they contributed to the debate on memory within architectural theory and practice in Europe and America.

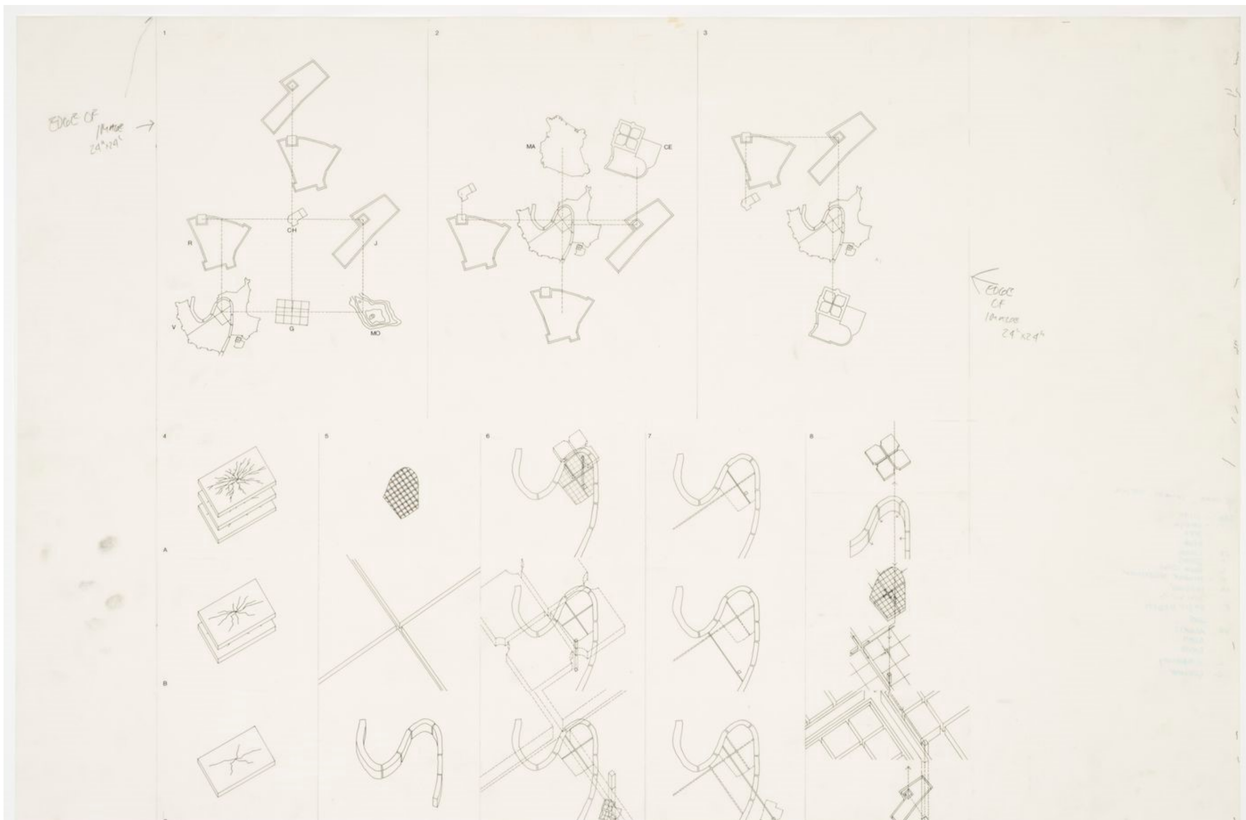


Figure 4.43. Design development drawings for Moving Arrows, Eros, and Other Errors, Romeo + Juliet, Peter Eisenman, 1985.

(Peter Eisenman fonds, Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/
Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal / © CCA)

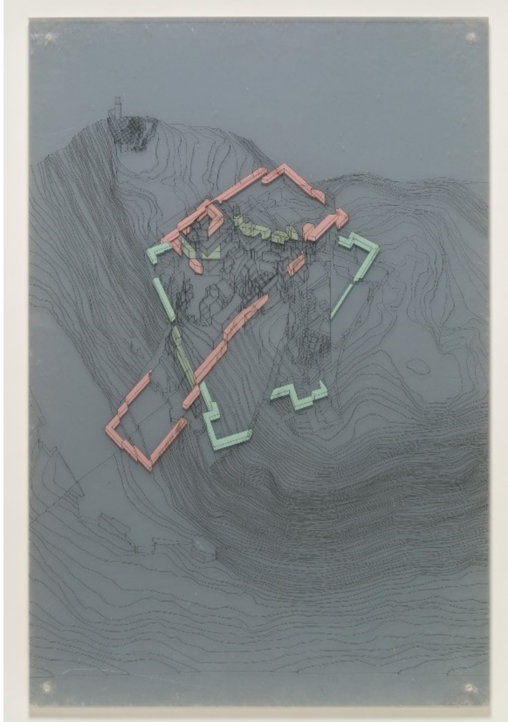


Figure 4.44. Axonometic for Moving Arrows, Eros, and Other Errors, Romeo + Juliet, Peter Eisenman, 1985.

(Peter Eisenman fonds, Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal)

The Romeo and Juliet project questions the classical prevalence of presence by focusing on the interaction between the fiction of William Shakespeare's story and its real setting in Italy. The use of scaling manipulated the size and location of the design to interchange and often substituted reality by fiction. But the design paradoxically resulted in what it initially challenged: the architectural formalization of a fiction that cannot be reduced to a presence. It resembles the pathetic attempts to give a "real" face to Leon Tolstoy's Anna Karenina or a "real" urban image to Gabriel Garcia Marquez's Macondo. The same impulse to represent the absences left behind by history was used in the University Art Museum of the California State University at Long Beach. The superimposition of maps recreated the footprints of the campus and the proposed site, the original location of the city of Long Beach, the shifting coastline, the city grid, and the Newport-Inglewood geographic fault. The final drawings, a colorful composition that resembles a collage, conform more to the stability of a painting than the dynamic of a film.

Figure 4.45. Model for University Art Museum of the California State University at Long Beach, Peter Eisenman, 1986.

(Eisenman Architects)

Representation crystalized and restrained history and time. The design seems an imposition on the site rather than an archaeological discovery. The prosthetic design intervention refused to negotiate with the temporal dimensions of art, archaeology, and geography. According to the written explanation, a museum must "symbolize. . . the relationship of art to society or of art to politics, or it could criticize the institution of the museum or propose a new institution."[67] But Eisenman's detached autonomy has refused to question architecture as an institution, and it has declined to examine the role architecture plays within society. His project has simply scrutinized the place his own architecture occupies within architectural history.

Figure 4.46. Site plan for University Art Museum of the California State University at Long Beach, Peter Eisenman, 1986.

(Peter Eisenman fonds, Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/ Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal / © CCA)

Figure 4.47. Sketch plan that merged the Cannaregio and La Villette sites, Peter Eisenman, 1985-1986.

(Peter Eisenman fonds, Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/ Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal)

The last of this genealogy, the Villette project, aspired to propose the analogical time, scale, and place of an actual site in Paris. The superimposition of maps and drawings merged the sedimented history of both sites, Eisenman's

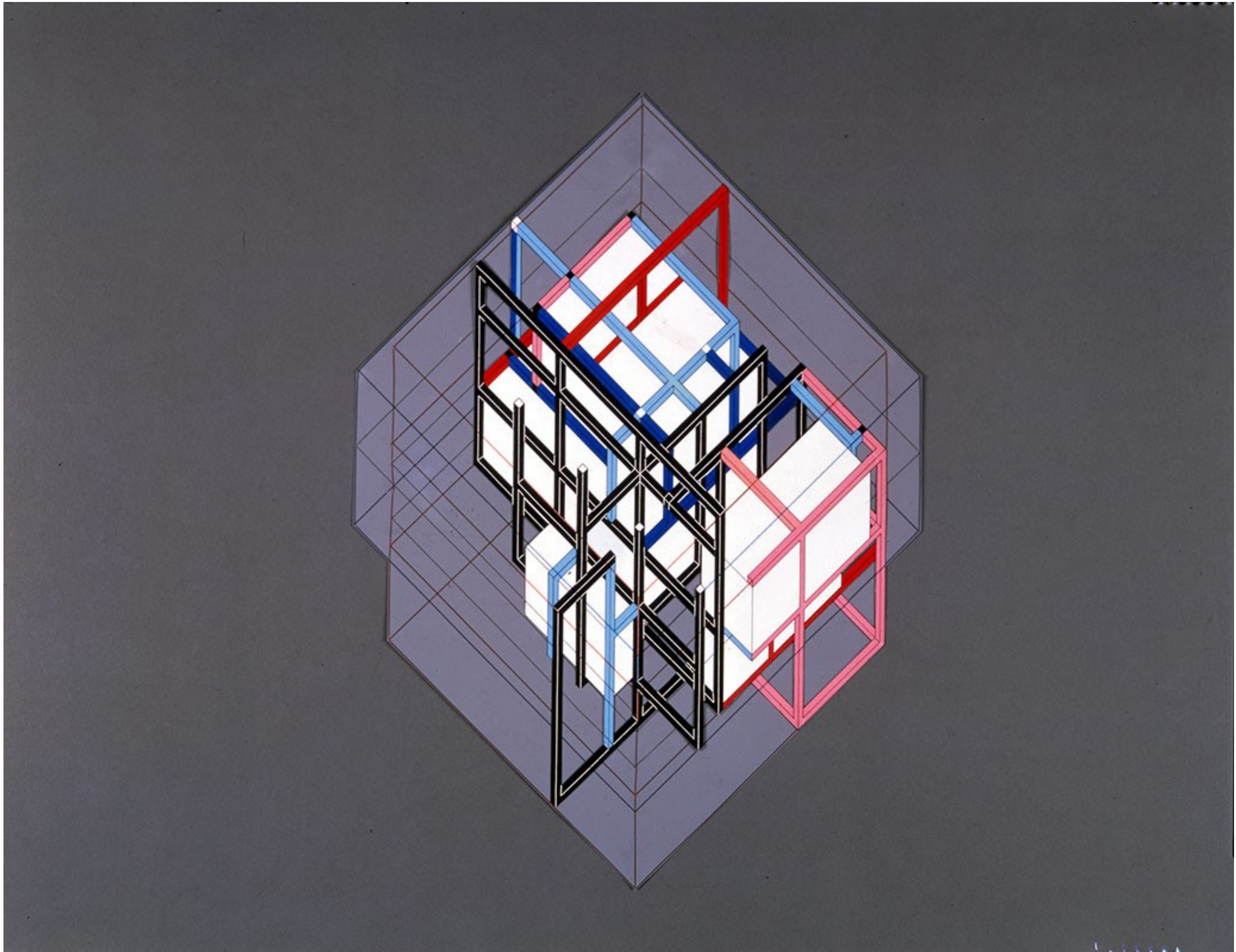
Cannaregio and Bernard Tschumi's Parc de la Villette, the history of Venice and Paris. Tschumi described his new urban park as "the biggest discontinuous building in the world."[68] Its fragmented configuration allowed the intervention of other architects within a scheme comprised of red follies, orthogonal walkways, and long strips of gardens called "promenade cinematique." The idea was to invite an architect, an artist, and an intellectual to design a park, which ended up in the collaboration between Eisenman and Jacques Derrida. Paris became the new site for the Cannaregio project, where it assumed a different scale to dialogue with Tschumi's Parc de la Villette. But the focus on the structure of architecture rejected reality. Derrida precipitated the end of the artificial excavations and questioned a self-referential architecture. In 1987, he said, "No deconstructive project exists, no project whose aim is deconstruction."[69] Architecture was condemned to signify through function or materiality because "architecture will always mean."[70] Paradoxically, a philosopher intended to restore the reality denied by an architect.

Figure 4.48. Model for La Villette, Peter Eisenman, 1987. (Eisenman Architects)

The visualization of memory is not the same as its layering. This formulation was articulated as a form of critique coming from Asia. Arata Isozaki made the distinction between visualization and layering that operates in Eisenman's *Cities of Artificial Excavations*. The layering technique was directly related to transformational grammar, while visualization was not associated with architectural formalization but rather with a complex cultural construction that differed from region to region. Isozaki argued that for the inhabitants of Paris and Berlin, "nothing

is more troublesome than the memory that is buried in them."[71] Hegel thought that America was the land of the future. Thus, perhaps having this in mind, Isozaki ventured to say that in America, "the past can be easily ignored or consigned to oblivion" without informing a process of critique.[72] Suppose we ignore the imprecision that equated America with the United States, obliterating the perennial cultural struggle of the Spanish and Portuguese colonies in Latin America to assimilate their history. In that case, Isozaki's reflection on Eisenman's artificial excavations is precise. The autonomy of architecture in the United States (not America) is reduced to a geometric grid. In Latin America (and even in Philadelphia and New York), it is a political grid. The political, social, and economic differences were substantial between the Spanish colonies in which an orthogonal urban grid was imposed, while the Portuguese colonies generally lacked this urban order.

The *Cities of Artificial Excavations* tried to engage with practice, but the result was arguably the opposite. The inclusion of cartography, supposedly devoid of ideological motivations, was symptomatic of a design effort indifferent to its own cultural effects. The lesson derived from these projects is that the trivialization of a multidisciplinary populism diminishes the search for an epistemological transformation. In the words of Yve-Alain Bois: "Eisenman's recent exchange with Jacques Derrida marks a recognition, on both sides, that perhaps it is now time to put an end to the reciprocal trivialization of their own discourses and the flood of gobbledygook that poured out of their sycophants' word processors."[73]



House VI, Cornwall, Connecticut
Peter Eisenman
1972-1975

(Peter Eisenman Architects)

4.5. A Non-Formal Autonomy

The critical character of the postwar architectural autonomy is often reduced to a disciplinary detachment from other disciplines and society. A reasonable explanation for the overemphasis on the history of architecture is that architectural autonomy was regarded as a mere architectural response to historical conditions. Thus, the need to redefine the qualitative, or formal, parameters of architecture to counter quantitative methods during the 1960s and 1970s prevailed over the need to reevaluate the philosophical agency of a critical autonomy under pressing cultural conditions. This omission limited the capacity of autonomy to tackle ongoing urban transformations.

The analysis of the *autonomen Architektur,* formulated during the interwar period, requires the comparative study of "critique" within architecture and philosophy. The goal is to problematize the monolithic criticism that dominated the postwar discourse on architectural autonomy, especially in the United States. The fascination with the healing powers of critical theory focused on a negative, resistant, and antagonistic position. This monologue canceled other forms of critique and institutionalized a resistance that exhausted itself over time. The consequence was the skepticism toward the fallacious absolute condition of a "critical," or rather self-alienating, antagonistic attitude devoid of cultural substance. It is crucial to understand the correspondence and differences between the architectural and philosophical interpretation of the notion of "critique" within the autonomous discourse. But before surveying these interdisciplinary connections, a clarification is needed.

The autonomy of architecture is often considered a formal problem. It overemphasized architectural form. However, the philosophical discourse on autonomy is not strictly formal. Theodor W. Adorno clearly explains this condition: "When Kant is accused of formalism—as he

was by Max Scheler—what this represents is the price Kant had to pay for his preoccupation with the transcendental. . . with the fact that he had to confine himself to formal constituents because he had no control over the constantly changing contents."[74] The relevance of Kantian formalism for the architectural and urban interpretation of autonomy is revealed by the fact that *no rational formulation* can order the chaos of the external stimuli that we constantly receive as human beings. Designers can intervene in the urban condition but not control it. Thus, the formal character granted to architectural autonomy is arguably symptomatic of a repressed frustration: *the impossibility to control the urban condition transformed into the obsession to control architecture through the coercive mechanisms of the discipline*. But Kant's system is not strictly formal. Adorno concluded that "the Critique of Pure Reason is a formal doctrine of consciousness inasmuch as consciousness possesses valid knowledge. On the other hand, however, it is also a doctrine about the relation of these forms, not to a specific content, but to the fact that such a thing as content actually exists."[75] If this is translated into architectural terms, neither form follows function nor function follows form. Both concepts are interdependent because form relates to and is motivated by *the existence of function* rather than *a specific function*. The alliance between philosophy and architecture assumed cognition as a conceptual operation informed by concrete experience rather than a purely conceptual operation that precedes experience. The complexity of the *Critique of Pure Reason* relies on its operation as an ungovernable, perhaps autonomous, system that denies its purely formal or purely experiential constitution.

The prospect of a projective theory of design is advanced clearly in Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason,* where pure reason is defined as "practical of itself alone and gives (to the human being) a universal law which we call the moral law."[76] The reason is explained as practical because our actions, as human beings, derive from laws or principles and are sanctioned by judgments that

determine if an action is worth pursuing. When Eisenman officially abandoned autonomy, he reduced the choice to self-referential architectural intention to differentiate architecture from construction. On the other hand, Rossi renewed his commitment to the autonomous project by proposing that the problem of choice is political. Thus, the typological choice of a specific project was conceived by Rossi as a cultural critique operating at a practical level—such as the critique of the privatization of space and land in San Rocco. The genealogy that unites Kant and Rossi consolidated when Kant argued that he entitled his work *Critique of Practical Reason* rather than *Critique of Pure Practical Reason* because it accepts the existence of a purely practical reason. In other words, Kant's interest was to analyze "reason's entire practical faculty."[77] Kant did not feel the need to criticize the *pure* faculty because if reason is practical, "it proves its reality and that of its concepts by what it does and all subtle reasoning against the possibility of its being practical is futile."[78] The correspondence between this philosophical autonomy and its architectural counterpart is illuminating. Eisenman failed to prove the practical dimension of his conceptual architecture precisely through futile explanations, while Rossi succeeded like the poets who say without explaining.

After this interpolation, it is time to return to the notion of "critique" that Rossi and Eisenman formulated within the autonomous discourse. In Europe, Rossi used type as a critique of the excesses of modernity, such as mass consumption and industrialization, that have degraded the modern city. The persistence of historical references in the city propelled urban development through the negotiation between past and present conditions. Invention, for Rossi, required historical precedents from which immanent parameters of architecture derive. Thus, a revision of past architectures that responded to social realities resulted in a theory and practice of architecture based on history as a propeller. His attack against "naïve functionalism" relied on the linguistic

model of Structuralism, which focused on the relationships within a system comprised of signs that convey meaning. Thus, the historical persistence of Rossi's formal resolutions accommodated diverse functions over time.[79] During the 1960s, as Ludwig Hilberseimer asserted, architecture lacked legibility since it became a formal game subordinated to personal whim.[80] Thus, the linguistic analogy was the opportunity to redefine the parameters of architecture that precede and outlive any architect. But Colquhoun rightly highlighted the downside of Structuralism regarding the correspondences between design choices in relation to specific historical situations. It privileges the problem of choice, disregarded by historicism or functionalism. But structuralism failed to acknowledge the motivations, such as functional contingencies, behind design and formal choices.[81] No purely formal philosophy exists within the Kantian autonomy, and the same is true about its architectural interpretation. Rossi's typological forms accommodate diverse functions over time. But these functions only represent the existence of a specific *a posteriori* purpose subordinated by Structuralism. Whereas Kant's formalism paradoxically relied on the existence of content (function), which constantly relates to an interdependence discriminated by Structuralism.

In the United States, Eisenman's understanding of "critique" built on the linguistic analogy derived from Chomsky and Derrida's research on grammar. His doctoral thesis set the tone of his career-long research focused on form as a critique of Modernism. Autonomy is only one of the concepts, along with dislocation and decomposition, used to perform this critique for over four decades since the 1960s. But at the beginning of the twenty-first century, his autonomy transitioned from a formal to a non-formal method. The fact that this change was presented as innovative attests to his omission of the secondary role form plays within Emil Kaufmann's *autonomen Architektur*. The divorce between the architectural autonomy formulated by Kaufmann and Eisenman exemplifies the rift between the European and the North American development of Modernism

and the contrasts between Kant's and Eisenman's notion of critique. First, the Europeans—Kaufmann and Rossi—valued the historical continuity of the sociopolitical concerns of Modern architecture. But the North American counterpart, which parallels Eisenman's and Clement Greenberg's sense of detachment, represented a formal retreat from external contents. "The essence of modernism," Greenberg argued, "lies in the use of the characteristic methods of a discipline itself not to subvert it, but to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence."[82] Paradoxically, Eisenman's effort to depart from the Modern project only strengthened his filiation based on detachment. Second, Eisenman's conception of critique differs deliberately from Kant's critical system. But the basis of the deviation is imprecise, or at least incomplete. Critique, for Kant, was not a test from which truth emerged but rather a process that scrutinized an already assumed truth. Thus, reason scrutinized reason not to prove its own validity but to inspect the terms of such validation. Eisenman translated Kant's critique into "the possibility of knowledge within knowledge," or the possibility of architecture within architecture.[83] But Eisenman's departure from the Kantian critique is through the nature of the validation of architecture (or reason). Kant focused on the universal values of reason; this means that its truth must be timeless or not affected by the passage of time. However, rational truths "are not free-floating entities, but are timeless only with regard to experience; they are the supreme principles that actually make experience possible, rather than truths detached from experience."[84] Thus, Kant appealed to experience to validate the truth of pure reason, while Eisenman's conceptual architecture downgraded the validity of experience. In 2000, Eisenman attempted to formulate a "generative" critical attitude rather than "reactive or resistant" in his essay, "Autonomy and the Will to the Critical." The post-structuralist influence led Eisenman to problematize the value of origin and the new within a progressive sense of history. Thus, Eisenman replaced the latter with the notion of a signifier's singularity—i.e., a door, a

column, a wall—which suggested a renewed architectural autonomy by repressing the functional and semantic value of the sign and motivating its "will to difference." The difference between the architectural sign and its formal possibility triggered a continual process, which "is neither formal nor semiotic per se; rather, it opens the internal processes of architecture to their own internal possibilities."[85] But the attempt to formulate a non-formal autonomy could not renew the critical discourse; it was instead the preamble to the post-critical attitude.

The first two decades of the twenty-first century have witnessed the late stage of the erosion of a supposed "critical" architecture. The entrenchment of the discipline, disguised as a dubious self-critique, precluded the architectural rationale from developing methods to engage with a changing reality. The supposed renewal of the internal history of architecture lagged gradually behind the history of History until its foundation on critical theory finally crumbled due to its inability to tackle the practical challenges of the new century. But this irrevocable destiny paved the way for a cure that was as problematic as the illness. The short-sightedness of the post-critical discourse mirrored the strategy of refusal of the critical architecture that motivated its own critique, therefore further entrenching the critical monopoly. Both discourses—the critical and the post-critical—overlooked the interdependence between theory and practice inherent to the Kantian system and the cultural critique of Aldo Rossi and Manfredo Tafuri. Their criticism operativity differed from the bureaucratic complaints of the Communist Party. The architecture of Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, based on pavilions, was critical of the heteronomy of the Baroque in which even the materials such as stone were subordinated to the stylistic motivation of the sculptor-architect. But Ledoux's autonomous system also responded as an urban strategy that articulated the economic, social, and political logistics of the region of Arc-et-Senans. Thus, its critical character empirically validated its theoretical efficiency. The postwar development of architectural

autonomy was heterogeneous regarding the interdependence between theory and practice. Aldo Rossi's typological critique paralleled Tafuri's operative critique because it relied on history as an active force within the design process despite Rossi focused on the civic character of the city and Tafuri on urban systems. But both authors unified the benefits of theory and practice that Tafuri described as "an intimate complicity between criticism and activity."[86]

On the other hand, Eisenman privileged criticism over *action*, in Hannah Arendt's terms. His conceptual architecture focused on the entrails of the discipline to even propose an architecture that invented its own site in Cannaregio. Eisenman's theory rejected the contingencies of practice as a rejection of alienating social and economic conditions. However, this theoretical position sacrificed practice as a form of thinking and controlled and exploited the discipline to the point of exhaustion. The post-critical attitude reversed the logic and sacrificed theory as a form of doing for the sake of pragmatism.

Architectural criticism theorized the space "between culture and form."[87] This attitude failed to recognize that culture and form constitute each other. Form is not culture, and culture is not form. But form informs culture, and culture informs form. Consequently, they are not strictly separated. This is precisely what K. Michael Hays concluded, using Mies van der Rohe's architecture as an example, that nevertheless contradicts its premise that separated culture and form through the preposition "between."[88] Thus, the belligerent attitude of a critical architecture was never a self-critical architecture, in the Kantian sense, that scrutinizes its own validity through its practical capacity. In the last decade of the twentieth century, Rem Koolhaas articulated the self-evident crisis of the critical discourse as follows: "The problem with the prevailing discourse of architectural criticism is [the] inability to recognize there is in the deepest motivations of architecture something that cannot be critical. . . . Maybe some of our most interesting

engagements are uncritical, emphatic engagements, which deal with the sometimes insane difficulty of an architectural project to deal with the incredible accumulation of economic, cultural, political but also logistical issues."[89] Justifiably, he advocated for a form of engagement with reality, but the essential problem of this statement is that the death of the critical discourse suggested the impossibility of alternative critical methods to tackle the crisis. Koolhaas implicitly indicated that the failure of the architectural criticism, developed in Europe and the United States until the turn of the century, cancels the possibility of an alternative (non-European or non-North American) critical attitude sensitive to intellectual and geographical diversity.

The "post-critical" discourse questioned the dialectical and reactive attitude of the preceding criticism to advocate for the performative and active capacity of architecture. Its genealogy drew upon business management methods (Michael Speaks), art (Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting), pop culture and commercial activities (Stan Allen), and the "ephemeral" within design (Sylvia Lavin). Interestingly, these positions challenged "the formal" in an architectural and philosophical sense without fully acknowledging it. The formal dimension of Kant's philosophy corresponded to his interest in the lasting and enduring truth of reason, while Rossi and Eisenman's formal attitude corresponded to the redefinition of the inherent values of architecture. This need for perennial truths emerges, according to Adorno, "where urban exchange societies (bourgeois) have developed. That is to say, that the new is actually a source of insecurity, a threat, something worrying."[90] For Adorno, the separation of manual and mental labor privileged the fixed logical forms to the detriment of a supposedly inferior experience. Thus, the value of truth is attributed to that which is permanent while degrading that which is transient or new. The post-critical attack against the critical discourse is an assault on the status quo of architecture. But it timidly restricted its field of action to an understanding of the discipline "as force and effect"

that replaced a misleading interpretation of autonomy as detachment. It failed to extend its own interest to the "urban exchange societies" from which the "autonomy of the will" originally emerged. The post-critical discourse failed to understand, like its critical counterpart, that autonomy emerges and constantly reemerges within Western societies.[91] Both kidnapped criticism as a prerogative of few and turned it into a monopoly that excluded the cultural nuances of alternative ways of living that emerge in Asia, Africa, or Latin America. The biggest failure of architectural criticism relied on its incapacity to formulate an autonomous theory sensitive to geographical and intellectual diversity. The twenty-first century has painfully shown us that the more social, economic, and political systems establish their global dominion, the more our cultural nuances refuse to conform to a general idea of social coexistence. Autonomy is a productive tension between the individual and the collective as well as theory and practice. Thus, it represents a method that vindicates the cultural importance of design as discipline and profession.

Since the mid-twentieth century, cultures and societies have undergone structural transformations, while the monopoly of architectural criticism has focused on formal debates. The critical and post-critical debates have ignored cultural contents that inform the development of any form of knowledge and society at large. The result has been *the critique of the status quo from the comfort of the status quo*. The legibility project of a critical architecture has not been formulated yet in other terms than formal. It has excluded the spatial and temporal dimensions explored by sociology, literature, and cinema, among other disciplines and practices. Rossi theorized a culturally sensitive architecture that never fully assimilated the influence of function on form, while Scott Brown and Venturi studied a wide range of cultural and social correspondences within

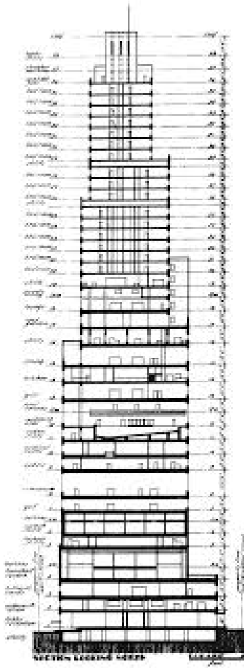
Figure 4.49. Las Vegas at night.

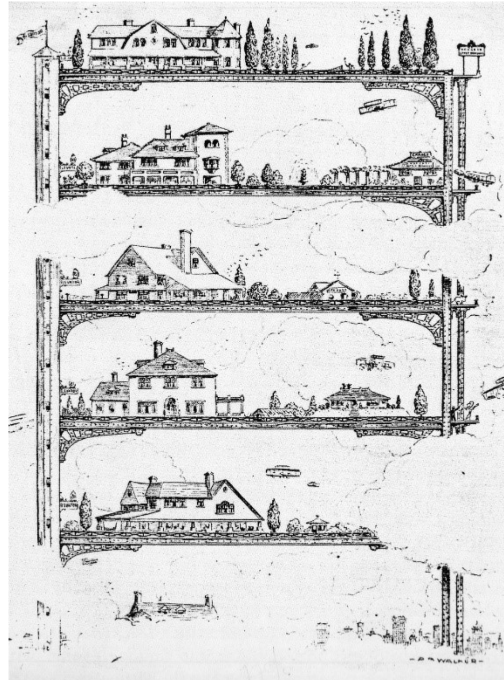
(*Las Vegas Studio: Images from the Archive of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown* edited by Hilar Stadler and Martino Stierli. Chicago University Press, 2009)

our daily reality as cause and consequence of the architectural rationale. *Learning from Las Vegas* was closer to Henri Lefebvre's study of everyday life and social space than to the critical architecture of the East Coast, whose belligerent character and aristocratic aspiration obliterated any trace of worldliness. "The Las Vegas Strip at night, like the Martorama interior, is symbolic images in dark, amorphous space; but, like the Amalienburg, it glitters rather than glows. Any sense of enclosure or direction comes from lighted signs rather than forms reflected in light."[92] Las Vegas and New York, as Koolhaas argued years later, are testaments to an architecture sanctioned more by the will to modernization than Modern architecture: "The site has now become a miniature state; the program its ideology; and architecture the arrangement of the technological apparatus that compensates for the loss of real physicality."[93] The pedagogic resources of Las Vegas and New York contrast, as formulated in *Learning from Las Vegas* and *Delirious New York*. The former uncovered the social, economic, and political relationships that produce space, while the latter challenged an overemphasis on form to focus on the program's instability.

Figure 4.50. Bird's Eye View of Coney Island at night, 1906.

(Postcard by P. Sanders, Reprinted in Rem Koolhaas's Delirious New York/The Monacelli Press)





Figures 4.51 and 4.52. (Left) The section of Downtown Atlhetic Club and (Right) the 1909 theorem of a multi-purpose Skyscraper.

(Reprinted in Rem Koolhaas's Delirious New York/The Monacelli Press)

The post-critical discourse, specifically Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting, omitted the cinematic research of temporal and spatial constituents of the urban condition formulated by Scott Brown and Venturi. It instead endorsed the projective capacity of Koolhaas's interpretation of the Downtown Athletic Club to counter a reactive critique. But this post-critical attitude inherited the top-down procedures that it initially criticized. It could not articulate a theory derived from a street-level reality. In 2013, a conversation between Sarah Whiting and Peter Eisenman—representatives of the post-critical and critical discourse—confirmed the impulsive interpretation of autonomy within postwar architecture. At the end of the conversation, Whiting said: "I'm interested in a project of engaged autonomy, both on the architectural scale and the urban scale, where a project has its legibility as itself, but not in the sense of an icon where it's purely isolated. It's engaged, not as contextualism but through more nuanced models of relational form and program."[94] Her critique of contextualism challenged the unreflective intentions of urban design to merge obediently with existing conditions. On the other hand, she advocated for an engaged autonomy that Kaufmann already formulated. The conversation not only confirmed the impossibility of the critical monopoly in architecture to devise

a legible project other than formal or programmatic but also the reduction of *engagement* as a bureaucratic and administrative category. "Legibility," according to Whiting, "is another word for engaging the public," but through "policy and politics rather than through populism."[95] Whiting reduced the human condition of Arendt's political dimension to meetings with "local politicians and every other person who might have the means of changing things."[96] But she omitted a crucial question: Is party politics the antidote or the guarantee of populism today? Thus, Whiting's appeal to the operativity of top-down politics downgrades the political intervention of the everyday urban condition by sociology, design, art, or any human being.

During the twentieth century, spatial and temporal sensitivities could have potentially extrapolated autonomy to the urban condition developed in Europe and the United States. But they went unnoticed by the fixation on the form-function debate of the critical monopoly. The exception was Aldo Rossi, who praised the representational and critical capacity of cinema identified decades before by the Modern movement. He was sensitive to the Italian realist and neo-realist cinema committed to depicting the dynamic and misery of a social reality that Fascism tried to conceal. In 1963, the Italian filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni distinguished the shared necessity of seeing, developed by a painter and a director. The former depicts reality through a static medium despite painting can represent temporal and spatial rhythms, while the latter captures a reality that denies its crystallization to present it as a new perception. Film, for Antonioni, was not about sound or picture; it was "an indivisible whole" that extends in time resisting its mere figurative expression: "The people around us, the places we visit, the events we witness—it is the spatial and temporal relations these have with each other that have a meaning for us today, and the tension that is formed between them."[97] But both architecture and cinema underwent a depoliticized process when European ideas arrived in the United States. In 1935, New York's Museum of Modern Art

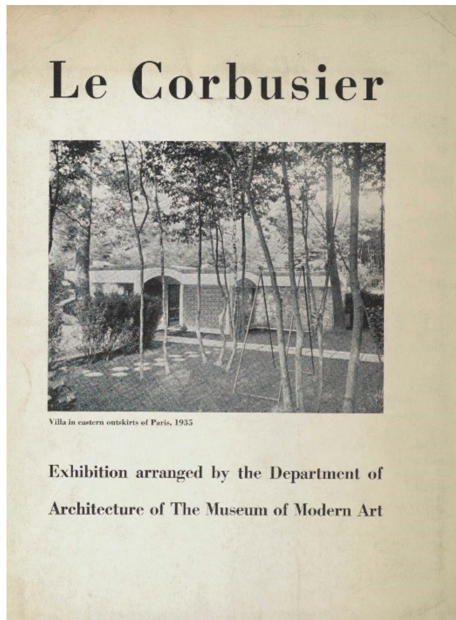
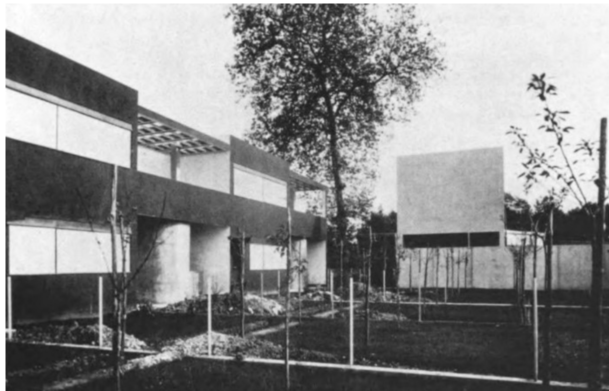


Figure 4.53. Cover of the Catalogue of the Exhibition "The Recent Work of Le Corbusier," Museum of Modern Art New York, 1935.

(Museum of Modern Art New York)

(MoMA) exhibited "The Recent Work of Le Corbusier," an exhibition intended to present film as a didactic technological mediator to engage with audiences rather than as a design method. This conception contrasted with the European progression of film. "Architecture and film," Le Corbusier asserted, "are the only two arts of our time."[98] Sigfried Giedion advocated for montage as a principle of Modern architecture that intended to be perceived as dynamic: "One would have to accompany the eye as it moves; only film can make the new architecture intelligible."[99] This comment referred to the housing complex at Pessac designed by Le Corbusier, who paralleled his own architecture to Sergei Eisenstein's films. Whiting



Figures 4.54, 4.55, 4.56 and 4.57. Housing Settlement in Pessac, Le Corbusier, 1925-1926.

(Reprinted in Sigfried Giedion's *Building in France, building in iron, building in ferro-concrete*/Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities)

Figures 4.58, 4.59, 4.60, and 4.61. Parc de la Villette, Bernard Tschumi, 1985.

(Photos by Elizabeth Barlow Rogers/Foundation for Landscape Studies)

advocates for a dusty legible project of design based on “more nuanced models of relational form and program.” In contrast, Le Corbusier and Eisenstein advocated for a barely explored alliance between cinema, architecture, and urbanism a century ago.[100] Bernard Tschumi advanced this investigation through the cinematic promenades of La Villette and the cinematic representation of *The Manhattan Transcripts*. Eisenstein described the interaction between an increasingly accelerated world of phenomena and the synthesis of the spectator that could describe Tschumi’s concerns:

> The word path is not used by chance. Nowadays it is the imaginary path followed by the eye and. . . the mind across a multiplicity of phenomena, far apart in time and space, gathered in a certain sequence. . . and these diverse impressions pass in front of an immobile spectator. In the past, however, the opposite was the case: the spectator moved between [a series of] carefully disposed phenomena that he observed sequentially with his visual sense.[101]

Alfred Barr, the first director of MoMA from 1929 to 1943, promoted film since László Moholy-Nagy and Walter Ruttmann made a great impression on him when he visited the Bauhaus Dessau two years before his appointment. He intended to counter the American public's indifference to film. In 1935, the museum opened a film department thanks to a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. Three years later, film played a central role in MoMA's first international exhibition titled *Trois Siècles d'art aux États-Unis* (Three Centuries of American Art) at Jeu de Paume Museum in Paris. It presented a silent-film *Evolution of the Skyscraper* by the filmmaker Francis Thompson that narrated the social and architectural evolution of the skyscraper since the mid-nineteenth century. Its narrative was divided into four phases—origins, construction, design, and problems—that focused on the built form using the tallest load-bearing brick building, the Monadnock Block in Chicago, and Le Corbusier's and Richard Neutra's designs as protagonists. The didactic film used the biological evolution of crustaceans and vertebrates to analogically illustrate the evolution of building types from masonry to steel-frame structures.[102] But the appropriation of film as a method in the United States differed from discipline to discipline during the subsequent decades.

Figure 4.62. Frame from the film *Empire*, Andy Warhol, John Palmer, Jonas Mekas, 1964.

(Original film elements preserved by The Museum of Modern Art, New York)

Andy Warhol's eight-hour film entitled *Empire*, shot along with John Palmer and Jonas Mekas, featured the Empire State building as a supposed protagonist. But the opposite was true. The built expression of architectural form was only an excuse to register and distort time. The shooting took place between about 8:10 p.m. and 2:30 a.m. on July 25 and 26, 1964, on the 41st floor of the Time & Life

Building at 50th Street and the Avenue of the Americas. The shooting lasted almost six and a half hours at 24 frames per second, but Warhol gave it a touch of unreality, as Mekas said, by screening the movie at three-quarters speed, in black and white, and silent.[103] Thus, the movie's length paralleled the eight hours of a worker's shift when it was first presented on March 6, 1965. The art critic Blake Gopnik argues that the real subject of this work is the endless and parallel staring of the filmmaker and the spectator.[104] But the expectation for the unexpected that derives from the act of staring, also implicit in Gopnik's description, is more powerful and subtle. The film starts recording time using, perhaps exploiting, the immutability of architectural form. The laws subjected to Chronos replaced the supposed protagonism of architecture sooner than later. The beacon atop the Met Life Tower appears on the shot flashing every hour with Benedictine discipline, while the lights that illuminate the interior and the exterior of the building turn on and off to the rhythm imposed by the sun and the moon. Like the Italian realist and neo-realist filmmakers, Warhol confirmed Walter Benjamin's axiom: "The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses."[105] The alliance between the film and our first impulse focuses initially on the banality of architectural form that is gradually relegated by the passage of time, which is usually taken for granted. In a conversation among the members of Warhol's crew—Henry X, John Palmer, Marie Desert, and Gerard Malanga—Warhol described the critical character of cinema as an artistic expression during an exchange about the film:

> John: Why is nothing happening? I don't understand.
> Henry: What would you like to happen?
> John: I don't know.
> Henry: Andy?! Now is the time to pan!
> John: Definitely not!
> Andy: Henry, what is the meaning of action?[106]

Figures 4.63 and 4.64. Splitting, Gordon Matta-Clark, 1974.

(Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture
© Succession of Gordon Matta-Clark and Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art / Museum of Modern Art New York, Art Institute Chicago /Acquired through the generosity of Walter J. Brownstone and The Family of Man Fund /© 2021 Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York)

Warhol's rhetorical question exposes the correspondences between the beginning of the shooting of a movie and the act of questioning the meaning or meaninglessness of our interactions with our cultural environment. The architect Gordon Matta-Clark—trained by Colin Rowe at Cornell, who was one of Peter Eisenman's mentors—also used film as a critical device. He documented his "anarchitecture" to awake the critical sense of the public through new spatial conceptions: "Buildings are fixed entities in the minds of most. . . . The notion of mutable space is virtually taboo – even in one's own house."[107] His rebellion against the architectural status quo led him to "cut through a building for surprise and to transform space into a state of mind."[108]

The critical attitude of Warhol's and Matta-Clark's aesthetic expressions did not permeate the discourse on architectural autonomy in the United States despite their common historical and cultural contexts. The cinematic logic was nothing more than a diagrammatic process in Eisenman's early houses. The formal character of this cinematic representation is symptomatic of the indifference of the discourse on architectural autonomy in the United States to the unconscious contents of daily life that are often taken for granted, as Warhol and Matta-Clark argued. Its

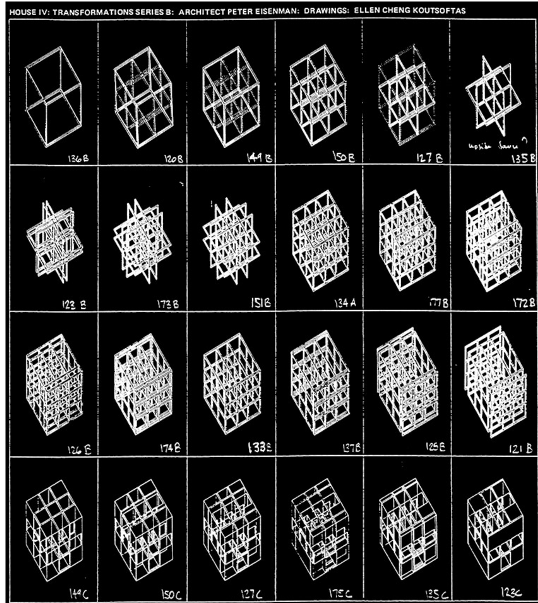


Figure 4.65. House IV, Peter Eisenman, Falls Village, Connecticut, 1971.

(Eisenman Architects)

dogmatic reference to Modern architecture and the humanist dichotomy of form/function overlooked the heterogeneous effects of modernity that differed from region to region and from discipline to discipline. The critical monopoly, which includes the post-critical discourse, downgraded the cultural and disciplinary impurity that consolidates knowledge. It despised the epistemological turn toward an urban interpretation of autonomy that was more latent than ever at the turn of the century.

Notes

[1] Colin Rowe (Introduction), Museum of Modern Art, *Five Architects: Eisenman, Graves, Gwathmey, Hejduk, Meier* (New York: Wittenborn, 1972), 4.
[2] Ibid., 4.
[3] Manfredo Tafuri, "Toward a Critique of Architectural Ideology," in K. Michael Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 2-35.
[4] Fred Kaplan, 1959 (Newark: John Wiley & Sons, 2009).
[5] Anthony Vidler, "Troubles in Theory Part I: The State of the Art 1945-2000." *The Architectural Review (London)* 230, no. 1376 (2011), 105.
[6] Peter Eisenman, "Post-Functionalism" in K. Michael Hays, *Oppositions Reader: Selected Readings from a Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture, 1973-1984* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 11.
[7] The Japanese architect Arata Isozaki argued: "When Japan surrendered in 1945… I could feel that history was disrupted….As a boy of 14, I saw the cities of Japan burnt to the ground before my very eyes. Running through the rapidly collapsing streets like a hunted animal, I escaped the incendiary bombs; but not the complete and utter destruction of everything I knew which ensued in their wake…. The effect was psychologically traumatic." Quoted by Jörg H. Gleiter in "The traumas of modernization: Architecture in Japan after 1945" in Susanne Kohte, Hubertus Adam, and Daniel Hubert, *Encounters and Positions: Architecture in Japan* (Boston: Birkhäuser, 2017), 238.
[8] Claudio D'Amato, "Fifteen Years after the Publication of The Architecture of the City," *The Harvard Architecture Review* 3, (Winter 1984), 88, Autonomous Architecture, Fogg Art Museum.
[9] Rowe, *Five Architects,* 3.
[10] Anthony Vidler, "Troubles in Theory Part I," 105.
[11] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 2nd Vintage Books (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 137.
[12] Ibid., 135-169.
[13] Ibid., 138.
[14] According to Diana Agrest: "Its institutional character is manifested in the normative writings and written texts of architecture, which fix its meaning and, therefore, its reading. These texts insure the recording of the codes of design and guarantee their performance as filters and preservers of unity. They assure the homogeneity and closure of the system and of the ideological role it plays. The absence of a normative written discourse in non-design, on the other hand, precludes defining it as an institution and makes possible the inscription of sense in a free and highly undetermined way; we are here presented with an aleatory play of meaning. Thus, while design maintains its limits and its specificity, these defining aspects are lost in the semiotically heterogeneous text of non-design." See Diana Agrest, "Architecture from Without: Theoretical Framings for a Critical Practice" in *Architecture from Without: Theoretical Framings for a Critical Practice* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 49.
[15] K. Michael Hays, "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form," *Perspecta* 21 (1984), 15-29.
[16] Peter Eisenman, "Autonomy and the Will to the Critical," *Assemblage*, no. 41 (2000), 90-91.
[17] Ibid., 90.
[18] It consists of a "symbolic matrix in which the I is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject." See Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror-phase as Formative of the Function of the I," *New Left Review*, no. 51 (1968), 72.
[19] Noam Chomsky, "Remarks on Nominalization" in *Studies on Semantics in Generative Grammar* (The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1972), 62.
[20] Chomsky: "It seems that grammars contain a substructure of perfectly formal rules operating on phrase-markers in narrowly circumscribed ways. Not only are these rules independent of meaning or sound in their function, but it may also be that the choice of these devices by the language-learner (i.e., the choice of grammar on the basis of data) may be independent, to a significant extent, of conditions of meaning and use." See Noam Chomsky, "Some Empirical Issues in the Theory of Transformational Grammar," in *Studies on Semantics in Generative Grammar* (The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1972), 198.
[21] Quoted by Jeffrey Kipnis, "Architecture Unbound: Consequences of the recent work of Peter Eisenman," in Peter Eisenman, Nina Hofer, Jeffrey Kipnis, and Architectural Association, *Fin D'Ou T Hou S* (London: Architectural Association, 1985), 15.
[22] In the words of Jeffrey Kipnis: "The desire for truth in presence, for a thing 'to be what it is,' for a voice 'to say what it means,' which is the desire for a transcendental signified, a final objective certainty, is always frustrated." See Ibid., 15.
[23] Ibid., 18.
[24] Ibid., 19.
[25] Hofer: "Fin d'Ou T Hou S suggests that the architectural object must become internalized so that its values lies in its own processes… It proposes an intrinsic value system as an alternative to a context of arbitrariness; it is true to its own logic. Faced with an object that admits no discursive element external to its own processes, our customary role as subject is futile, and we are bereft of our habitual modes of understanding and appraising architecture." See Nina Hofer, "Fin D'Ou T Hou S," in Peter Eisenman, Nina Hofer, Jeffrey Kipnis, and Architectural Association, *Fin D'Ou T Hou S* (London: Architectural Association, 1985), 3.
[26] Peter Eisenman, "The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End," *Perspecta* 21 (1984), 172.
[27] Peter Eisenman, "Misreading," in Peter Eisenman, Rosalind E. Krauss, and Manfredo Tafuri, *Houses of Cards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).
[28] Peter Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture* (Baden, Switzerland: Lars Muller, 2006), 17-19.
[29] Ibid., 353.
[30] Ibid., 339.
[31] Theodor W. Adorno, and Rolf Tiedemann, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (1959)*, trans., Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 44.
[32] Peter Eisenman, "Aspects of Modernism: Maison Dom-ino and the Self-Referential Sign," in K. Michael Hays, *Oppositions Reader: Selected Readings from a Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture*, 1973-1984 (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 193-197.
[33] Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason,* 18.
[34] Emil Kaufmann, *Architecture in the Age of Reason; Baroque and Postbaroque in England, Italy, and France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), 76.
[35] Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture,* 21.

[36] Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason,* 1.
[37] Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture,* 33.
[38] Ibid., 33-49.
[39] See Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in Roland Barthes and Stephen Heath, *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977) and Michael Foucault, "What is an Author?" Lecture presented at the *Société Française de Philosophie*, February 22, 1969.
[40] Teresa J. Kirschner, *El Protagonista Colectivo En Fuenteovejuna De Lope De Vega*, *Acta Salmanticensia*. Studia Philologica Salmanticensia. Anejos. Estudios; 1, (Salamanca: Universidad, 1979).
[41] In "Texts for Nothing" (1967), published before Barthes's and Foucault's formulations on authorship, Beckett denounced the ubiquity of lifeless words: "…there are voices everywhere, ears everywhere, one who speaks saying, without ceasing to speak, Who's speaking?, and one who hears, mute, uncomprehending, far from all, and bodies everywhere, bent, fixed, where my prospects must be just as good, just as poor, as in this firstcomer." See Samuel Beckett, "Texts for Nothing," *The Transatlantic Review*, No. 24 (Spring 1967), 115.
[42] Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 164.
[43] Ibid., 155.
[44] The abstract fixation on architecture as self-referential writing cancelled the benefits of discursive formations and the prospects of a projective theory derived from Foucault's archaeology: "[Discursive formations] must not be understood as a set of determinations imposed from the outside on the thought of individuals, or inhabiting it from the inside, in advance as it were; they constitute rather the set of conditions in accordance with which a practice is exercised, in accordance with which that practice gives rise to partially or totally new statements, and in accordance with which it can be modified." See Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Great Britain: Routledge Classics, 2004), 230.
[45] Eisenman, *House of Cards*, Preface.
[46] Foucault, "What is an author?".
[47] Ibid.
[48] Michelangelo Antonioni, Marga. Cottino-Jones, Carlo Di Carlo, and Giorgio. Tinazzi, *The Architecture of Vision: Writings and Interviews on Cinema* (New York; St. Paul, MN: Marsilio Publishers, 1996), 35.
[49] Quoted by Jane Gallop, *The Deaths of the Author: Reading and Writing in Time* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 5.
[50] Ibid., 6.
[51] Peter Eisenman, Jean-François Bédard, and Alan Balfour, *Cities of Artificial Excavation: The Work of Peter Eisenman, 1978-1988* (Montreal: New York: Canadian Centre for Architecture; Rizzoli International, 1994), 120.
[52] Manfredo Tafuri, "Peter Eisenman: The Meditations of Icarus," in Houses of Cards (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 167-173.
[53] K. Michael Hays, *Architecture's Desire: Reading the Late Avant-garde,* Writing Architecture (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), 86.
[54] Eisenman, *Cities of Artificial Excavations,* 122.
[55] Fredic Jameson, "Modernity versus Postmodernity in Peter Eisenman," in *Cities of Artificial Excavations,* 34.
[56] The study area, at the northwestern edge of the city, neighbored the railway station (southwest), the Grand Canal (southeast), the lagoon (northwest), and the Cannaregio canal (northeast).
[57] Eisenman, *Cities of Artificial Excavations*, 47-58.
[58] The design was modified upon his death and finally suspended in 1971. See Alan Colquhoun, "Formal and Functional Interactions: a Study of Two Late Buildings by Le Corbusier," in *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism* (London: Black Dog, 2009), 27-29.
[59] Eisenman, Cities of Artificial Excavations, 47.
[60] In the words of Alan Colquhoun: "In Venice, the city itself is the building, and the Hospital is an extension of this building spreading tentacle-like over the water." See Colquhoun, "Formal and Functional Interactions," 29.
[61] Eisenman, *Cities of Artificial Excavations*, 82-86.
[62] Ibid., 74.
[63] Ibid., 76.
[64] Eisenman, *Cities of Artificial Excavations*, 76.
[65] Edmundo O'Gorman, *The Invention of America; an Inquiry into the Historical Nature of the New World and the Meaning of Its Histor*y (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1972).
[66] Thomas Weaver, and Peter Eisenman. "Peter Eisenman in Conversation with Thomas Weaver." *AA Files*, no. 74 (2017), 150-72.
[67] Eisenman, *Cities of Artificial Excavations*, 131.
[68] Ibid., 190.
[69] Quoted by Jean-Louis Cohen, ''The Architect in the Philosopher's Garden: Eisenman at La Villette," in *Cities of Artificial Excavations*, 224.
[70] Derrida explicitly said to Eisenman: "Architecture will always mean; it cannot help but have meaning, whereas language can move freely because the signs don't mean anything. Architecture is trapped in the metaphysical project." See Peter Eisenman, and Carlos Brillembourg, "PETER EISENMAN," *Bomb* (New York, NY), no. 117 (2011), 69.
[71] Eisenman, *Cities of Artificial Excavations*, 229.
[72] Ibid., 229.
[73] Yve-Alain Bois, "Surfaces," in *Cities of Artificial Excavations*, 41.
[74] Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason,* 44.
[75] Ibid., 44.
[76] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, Kindle Edition, 2015), 29. Kindle Edition.
[77] Ibid., 3.
[78] Ibid., 3.
[79] Alan Colquhoun characterized Rossi's use of typology as a translation of the structuralist critique into architectural terms. See Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism,* 241.
[80] Ludwig Hilberseimer, *Contemporary Architecture: Its Roots and Trends* (Chicago: P. Theobald, 1964), 221.
[81] Colquhoun, *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism,* 245.
[82] Hal Foster, "(Post) Modern Polemics," *Perspecta* 21 (1984), 151.
[83] Eisenman, "Autonomy and the Will to the Critical," 90.
[84] Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason,* 31.
[85] Eisenman, "Autonomy and the Will to the Critical," 91.
[86] Manfredo Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture,* 1st US (New York: Harper & Row and ed. Icon Editions, 1980), 1.

[87] K. Michael Hays, "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form," *Perspecta* 21 (1984), 15-29.
[88] Ibid., 27.
[89] Quoted by George Baird, "'Criticality' and Its Discontents," *Harvard Design Magazine*, no. 21 (2004), 16–21.
[90] Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason,* 25.
[91] Manfredo Tafuri, Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1976), 16.
[92] Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1977), 116.
[93] Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* (USA: The Monacelli Press, Digital Edition (Kindle), 2014), Location 686.
[94] Sarah Whiting and Peter Eisenman, "I am interested in a project of engaged autonomy," *Log*, No. 28 (Summer 2013), 118.
[95] Ibid., 114.
[96] Ibid., 117.
[97] Michelangelo Antonioni, "The Event and the Image," in Michelangelo Antonioni, Marga, Cottino-Jones, Carlo Di Carlo, and Giorgio Tinazzi, *The Architecture of Vision: Writings and Interviews on Cinema* (New York; St. Paul, MN: Marsilio Publishers, 1996), 51.
[98] Quoted by Pete Collard, "The Modern Art of Filmmaking: Architecture On-screen at MoMA," *Film, Fashion & Consumption* 7, no. 1 (2018), 8.
[99] Ibid., 9.
[100] Whiting and Eisenman, "I am interested in a project of engaged autonomy," 118.
[101] Sergei M. Eisenstein, Yve-Alain Bois and Michael Glenny, "Montage and Architecture," *Assemblage* Dec. 1989, No. 10 (December, 1989), 116.
[102] Collard, "The Modern Art of Filmmaking."
[103] Interview with Jonas Mekas, "The Making of Andy Warhol's 'Empire,'" Heni Talks, accessed December 22, 2020. https://henitalks.com/talks/making-of-andy-warhols-empire/
[104] Blake Gopnik, "Monumental Cast, but Not Much Plot," *The New York Times* (New York, N.Y), 2014.
[105] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (New York: Prism Key Press, 2010), Chapter XIII.
[106] Mekas, "The Making of Andy Warhol's 'Empire.'"
[107] Quoted by Adrian Searle, "How Gordon Matta-Clark Took a Chainsaw to 70s New York," *The Guardian*, Fri 30 Nov 2018, accessed December 22, 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/nov/30/gordon-matta-clark-new-york-art-deconstruction
[108] Ibid.

If you film the beauty and the beast but the beauty is not a little princess and the beast does not become a prince, there is a political attitude. Fantasy cinema illuminates the political in a very powerful way through a parable.

—Guillermo del Toro

The Shape of Water
Guillermo del Toro
2017

(© 2017 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation/Fox Search Light Pictures)

Chapter 5

The Agonism of Autonomy

> *There is an aesthetic dimension in the political and there is a political dimension in art. From the point of view of the theory of hegemony, artistic practices play a role in the constitution and maintenance of a given symbolic order, or in its challenging, and this is why they necessarily have a political dimension. The political, for its part, concerns the symbolic ordering of social relations, and this is where its aesthetic dimension resides.*
>
> —Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics*

The fifth chapter of this dissertation emphasizes that autonomy's cultural engagement as a design method represents the basis for our engagement with other disciplines, other individuals, other collectivities, and other cultures. It argues that the alliance between urbanism and autonomy advocates an epistemological struggle that operates in unexplored social spaces that escape the jurisdiction of traditional disciplinary knowledge. It situates the political dimension of design at the level of our social coexistence to counter ideological obsessions. The chapter studies the dissolution of form that dates to the eighteenth century and was ignored due to the fixation on form in subsequent interpretations of architectural autonomy that followed Kaufmann's formulation. It also studies the distinction between the *action in space* (subordinated to technique) and the *action of space* (which manipulates technique) within design and artistic representation. It finally questions the return to traditional forms of critique based on antagonism and advocates a renovated critical attitude within design based on aesthetics as a cultural index at an urban level.

I needed to talk about a lot of things that are happening in cities and cultures that I love – whether it's issues of the Mexico/US border problem or the misrepresentation of Muslims as terrorists. I want to address these issues. . . . The government of my country doesn't stop the smugglers, and the government of the US needs to arrive at a conclusion that's not about building walls, but creating a solution to make these people feel like human beings and not invisible citizens. In the film, I wanted to treat these issues with subtlety because it's more effective. I don't want to preach or make propaganda, or judge. Babel is about how our everyday lives are affected by walls, miscommunications and barriers.

—Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2009

Babel
Alejandro González Iñárritu
2006

(© 2006 Paramount Vantage, a division of Paramount Pictures/Anonymous Content/Zeta Film/Central Films)

5.1. The Progression of Autonomy within Design

The philosophical genesis of the "autonomy of the will," as well as its subsequent aesthetic, political, and architectural interpretations, have been causes and consequences of the development of Western societies since the eighteenth century. The introduction of autonomy into architecture in the 1930s was not indifferent to the cultural sensitivity of the term. The *autonomen Architektur* (autonomous architecture), formulated by Emil Kaufmann, was a system that identified the formal transformations experienced by the architecture of the Age of Reason as only one symptom of the gradual cultural changes that eventually led to the publication of *L'Encyclopédie,* the United States Declaration of Independence, and the outbreak of the French Revolution. Kaufmann identified the cultural formation of the architecture of the Enlightenment as the precursor of the sociopolitical program of Modern architecture. However, the interpretations that followed Kaufmann, except for that of Aldo Rossi, dismissed the cultural and historical pedigree of architectural autonomy to emphasize a supposed "objective" essence. The mere "objectivity" of disciplinary reductions gradually dissociated architectural autonomy from society. Thus, the twenty-first century developed an allergic reaction against the baseless assumption that the critical character of autonomy implied detachment. The historical progression of autonomy attests to a cultural engagement that provides a critical design method tackling the challenges of urbanization. This method materializes before our eyes as a real Tower of Babel that represents our incapacity to communicate or even engage with others at an interpersonal, cultural, and design level. The post-Kaufmann architectural autonomy aspired to redefine a common architectural language to counter the architectural cacophony, while this dissertation advocates a common human and cultural language (visual and non-visual) through the means and methods of design.

Autonomy cannot be reduced to a disciplinary concern. It is a social, economic, political, philosophical, aesthetic, and design problem that operates at the core of the negotiation between individual and collective aspirations that mediate our social coexistence. Autonomy presents a cultural question that transcends disciplinary boundaries. However, a disciplinary concern *is* a legitimate point of departure toward a cultural reflection based on autonomy as a design method. Nevertheless, a disciplinary concern must not be a goal. It must entail an epistemological struggle (*inter*-disciplinary) that escapes the jurisdiction of traditional disciplines in the search for new knowledge, new methods, new contents, and new contexts. The productive friction between theory and practice actualizes disciplinary knowledge. The jealous architectural debates that dissociate theory from practice (critical) or practice from theory (post-critical) are condemned to the lifeless conceptualism of a disciplinary straitjacket devoid of empirical reality. Autonomy does not represent a conceptual detachment impervious to the contents of life. The Kantian rational revolution did not criticize the pure faculty of practical reason because if reason is actually practical, "it proves its reality and that of its concepts by what it does and all subtle reasoning against the possibility of its being practical is futile."[1] Paradoxically, the *theoretical substance of the Kantian system* is not scrutinized by what it says or promises but by *what it does*. The alliance between urbanism and autonomy emerges from an empirical reality that demands a critical framework for design to intervene upon the processes of urbanization during the twenty-first century. In turn, it will be assessed by what it does as a potential projective theory.

Autonomy, as engagement, synthesizes the productive tension between cultural contingencies and a self-governing condition. Autonomy is not independence. It implies a culturally and historically constructed distance from the object of critique. This dissertation

performs a critique of culture and a self-critique of design by the design field. On the one hand, it identifies urbanization—its social, economic, and political processes—as an object of critique based on contemporary cultural conditions. These conditions have called into question the validity of "the city," the metropolitan area, and quantitative reductions based on scale since the second half of the twentieth century. Thus, autonomous urbanism questions the lethargy of design ideas, methods, and representation to tackle the spatial and temporal processes of the human and urban conditions of the twenty-first century. This disciplinary lethargy has resulted in the interdisciplinary obsession that adopts ideas and methods at convenience without the minimum interest in examining the empirical reality of theory and the theoretical basis of experience. Urban design has exploited interdisciplinary discourses before the urgency of the answer. Its relentless pragmatism and impulsive character have not developed a theory capable of evaluating its own validity to tackle the challenges of urbanization.

But an interdisciplinary approach differs substantially from the reflective alliance between the prefix *inter-* and the word *disciplinary*. The term "interdisciplinary" relates "to more than one branch of knowledge."[2] By the mid-twentieth century, the conception of urban design connected architecture, landscape architecture, and urban planning for a common purpose. Shortly thereafter, architecture prevailed within this interdisciplinary approach. On the other hand, an inter-disciplinary approach (between disciplines) could operate like the transition "From Work to Text" formulated by Roland Barthes. Eisenman's architecture incorporated unreflectively textual operations as part of the design process. Because the Text, according to Barthes, is "that social space which leaves no language safe, outside, nor any subject of the enunciation in position as judge, master, analyst, confessor, decoder." In this in-between space, "origins," "works," or "disciplines" have no authority. Thus, the alliance between *Urbanism* and *Autonomy* aspires to

operate as an “epistemological slide” that derives from the implosion of traditional forms of knowledge toward the investigation of barely explored intellectual and empirical horizons within the autonomous discourse.[3]

Consequently, the more we engage with the urban condition, the more we need to question the contents and methods of design to tackle the challenges of urbanization. Are the methods and contents of design outdated? Is an interdisciplinary approach, normally indifferent to disciplinary reevaluation, the most efficient way to update the methods and contents of design to tackle ever-changing cultural conditions? Who owns the new methods and contents that result from an epistemological collision of urbanism, autonomy, philosophy, and cinema?

The accumulation of knowledge and the prevalence of services within the informational mode of development gradually relegate industrialism's “strong” outputs.[4] This transition implies not only social, economic, and political transformations but also psychological or aesthetic consequences that design needs to address through the reevaluation of its own contents and methods. But the indifference of disciplinary reductions condemned a fallacious interpretation of autonomy within design to a dead end that resulted in the lack of a critical framework for design to tackle contemporary social, economic, political, racial, gender, and environmental tensions. The indifference of a lifeless conceptual architecture teamed up with a critical attitude incapable of repressing its excess of morality through an intransigent antagonism. The counterargument to this approach, the post-critical discourse, failed to provide an alternative to the dead end reached by an alienating architectural criticism. Its animadversion against dry conceptualism and the militancy of critical theory resulted in excess of pragmatism that did not preclude the accumulation of arrogance that overlooked alternative critical projects derived from the cultural sensitivity of other disciplines or other geographies. Neither architectural criticism nor the post-critical discourse

Figure 5.1. Guillermo del Toro on the set of The Shape of Water with Doug Jones as Amphibian Man and Sally Hawkins as Elisa Esposito.

(BBC / © 2017 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation/Fox Search Light Pictures)

realized that beauty could be represented as other than a princess, and the beast not necessarily becomes a prince. The Mexican film director Guillermo del Toro argued: *Si tú haces la bella y la bestia, pero la bella no es princesita y la bestia no se transforma en príncipe ahí hay una actitud política. El (cine) fantástico, a través de una parábola, ilumina lo política de manera muy potente.* ("If you film the beauty and the beast but the beauty is not a princess and the beast does not become a prince, there is a political attitude. Fantasy cinema illuminates the political in a very powerful way through a parabole").[5] The sociopolitical context is the most interesting part of this statement. He made it in 2017 when his film *The Shape of Water*, which depicts the love story of a mute woman and an Amazon monster, was released, and the US Federal Government

Figure 5.2. A frame from The Shape of Water, Guillermo del Toro, 2017.

(© 2017 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation/Fox Search Light Pictures)

unrestrictedly defamed difference, that is, “the other.” Del Toro concluded his remark as follows: *Soy mexicano, he sido la otredad toda mi vida.* (“I am Mexican, I have been the otherness all my life”).

Figures 5.3 and 5.4. Erasing the Border (Borrando la Frontera), Ana Teresa Fernández, 2012.

(Credit: Ana Teresa Fernández)

The impulsive interpretation of post-Kaufmann architectural autonomy and the post-critical discourse overlooked the lessons provided by other disciplines and other cultural sensitivities. Aldo Rossi advocated the formulation of an autonomous architecture based on the cultural importance of other cultural realms or disciplines. But Rossi was an exception within the post-

Kaufmann interpretation of architectural autonomy that tended to restrict its own horizon to the internal history of the discipline to the detriment of other histories, other sensibilities, other passions. The urban interpretation of autonomy has been repressed by Eurocentric and North American (United States) approaches that have dismissed the acceleration of urban processes throughout the world since the mid-twentieth century. The contribution of Aldo Rossi and La

Figure 5.5. Young boys fly kites in the Providencia favela, Rio de Janeiro.

(Photo by João Pina/The New York Times)

Tendenza to urban studies was based more on method than content. It is, nevertheless, still a valid method to study the instrumentality or operativity of history within the design process, the tension between persistent spatial structures (monuments) and urban dynamic (social, economic, and political processes), and the political dimension of design "choices" responsible for a thriving *or* deteriorated urban condition. But the limitation of Rossi's theory relies on the exclusion of the acceleration of urban processes throughout the world

since the demographic explosions of the second half of the twentieth century. The urban phenomena have been excluded mainly by the Eurocentric and North American (United States) approach of architectural autonomy and the post-critical reaction. The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated poverty indexes. By the end of 2020, 209 million people lived in poverty in Latin America, representing an increase of 22 million people from 2019.[6] The exacerbation of poverty and social inequality, stemming from the acceleration of urbanization, is not exclusive of poor countries; it also affects rich countries. What are the mid- and long-term social consequences of the pandemic? How could design tackle them collectively? The "young, neophyte, clumsy, and crude" European moral sentiment, denounced by Nietzsche at the end of the nineteenth century, recognized the political independence of regions, such as Latin America, but not their aspirations for cultural autonomy. Nietzsche attacked the poor knowledge of "moral philosophers" evidenced by their "crude knowledge of moral facta, selected arbitrarily and abbreviated at random – for instance, as the morality of their surroundings, their class, their church, their Zeitgeist, their climate and region." In contrast, the alliance between urbanism and autonomy must be sensitive to other moralities through the productive tension

Figure 5.6. Photo by Margaret Bourke-White, The Louisville Flood, 1937, printed c. 1970.

(Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of Sean Callahan
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between individual and collective aspirations. After all, "genuine problems involved in morality. . . only emerge from a comparison of many different moralities."[7]

The post-Kaufmann interpretations of architectural autonomy have transitioned from the return to disciplinary knowledge as a goal (Rossi and Eisenman) to a political focus that dismissed disciplinary reflections (Aureli), to a disciplinary reflection with collective aspirations based on an epistemological search for new knowledge, new methods, new contents, and new contexts (urbanism and autonomy). This dissertation builds on the reality of the cultural change of Kaufmann's *autonomen Architektur*, which demands our interest in the human dimension of urbanization, its effects on our lives, and our intimacy. As a discipline and a profession, urbanism differs from the circumstances that comprise the urban condition. Paradoxically, the critical character of urbanism defends its own autonomy—its constitution as a critical design discipline and practice—when the contents of our daily experience demand its disappearance. Koolhaas elucidated this fact with a question: "How to explain the paradox that urbanism, as a profession, has disappeared at the moment when urbanization everywhere—after decades of constant acceleration—is on its way to establishing a definitive, global "triumph" of the urban condition?"[8] It is precisely when Koolhaas called us to be "irresponsible" because "we are not responsible" that the alliance between autonomy, as critical engagement, and urbanism acquired its true significance.[9]

Figure 5.7. The effects of Hurricane Teddy within a rental beach house in Avon, North Carolina. (September 22, 2020)

(© Daniel Pullen 2020)

Canal Street, New Orleans
Robert Frank
1955, printed ca. 1977

(The Met Museum
Purchase, Anonymous Gifts, 1986
© 2005 Robert Frank)

5.2. A Critical Engagement: The Political

The scope of autonomy is relational, not restrictive. The human being, according to Aristoteles, is a political animal. Human beings live in society, in the *polis*. The political dimension of our social coexistence permeates every cultural domain—from the house to the city, the city to the countryside, birth to death, and from earth to sea. On the other hand, the managerial scope of governance restricts politics to the means-end logic of political parties despite their apparent compassion toward their constituents. The political dimension of design choices differs from party politics because our design efforts do not necessarily conform to the Machiavellian voracity for votes as ends. The political dimension of design is inherent to the alliance between autonomy and design. Kaufmann and Rossi were sensitive to the sociopolitical program that united the architecture of the Enlightenment and Modern eras. Eisenman's commitment to architectural form was explicitly apolitical, whereas Aureli's conception of architectural form is exclusively political. This dissertation advocates the agonistic dimension of the urban condition, that is, a political antagonism based on adversaries to be respected rather than enemies to be destroyed. This position aspires to counter the antagonistic detachment derived from the aesthetic blindness of both apolitical and political paranoia that has kidnapped architectural form.

The *autonomen Architektur*, formulated during the first half of the twentieth century, focused on cultural change and relegated formal concerns to secondary importance. The post-Kaufmann architectural autonomy adopted form as the core of its disciplinary redefinition. The autonomy of the architectural project, formulated in the twenty-first century, emphasizes the political dimension of form to counter the processes and effects of urbanization. On the other hand, a philosophically sensitive autonomous urbanism conceives form, or rather formalism, as the

unrepressed impotence of reason to control the contents of the world of phenomena. This dissertation builds on John Cage's aesthetic sensitivity and his appeal to the tension between rational and empirical knowledge: "Ideas are either in the head or outside of it. I would rather think that the ideas outside the head open the head better than the ones inside the head."[10] The raw material of the urban interpretation of autonomy is the ungovernable urban condition that responds to a complex logic of interrelationships. Thus, the alliance between urbanism and autonomy points out the downsides of the new impulse of rationalism that has permeated architectural autonomy since its initial formulation in the 1930s. Its method is built on aesthetics to question the morality and formalism of reason. During the twentieth century, film director Michelangelo Antonioni highlighted the irrationality of rationality: "Mentally ill people see things that we cannot see. I do not believe in reason too much. Reason does not provide happiness; reason does not explain the world, or love, or anything that is important."[11] During the last two centuries, the critique of rationality did not reject life. On the contrary, its argument precisely denounced the allergic reaction of rationality to empirical reality, passions, and life.

Figure 5.8. The Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke, Richard Dadd, 1855–64

(© Tate Modern/CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 (Unported))

"This scene shows a number of different characters, including the Pope and Dadd's father. In the centre the 'fairy-feller' is about to split a large chestnut, to be used to build a new carriage for Queen Mab, a fairy mentioned in William Shakespeare's play Romeo and Juliet. The picture is painted in great detail. Dadd worked on it for between six and nine years. He painted the work while he was at Bethlem Hospital, having been sent there after killing his father and experiencing mental illness."

—Gallery label, July 2020

"The most glaring daylight," Nietzsche wrote, "rationality at any cost, a cold, bright, cautious, conscious life without instinct, opposed to instinct, was itself just a sickness. . . . To have to fight the instincts – that is the formula for decadence: as long as life is ascending, happiness is

equal to instinct."[12] Nietzsche's madness, Foucault argued, made possible that his "thought opens out onto the modern world."[13] The madness of Dadd, Nietzsche, Van Gogh, and Artaud created "a moment of silence, a question without answer," to trigger "a breach without reconciliation where the world is forced to question itself."[14] How can we explain that madness did not prevent Dadd or Van Gogh from mastering academic formulas and artistic canons? The irrationality, or madness inherent to rationality, counters the predominance of thinking over feeling. It is as Charles Chaplin stated in *The Great Dictator*: "Our knowledge has made us cynical. Our cleverness, hard and unkind. . . . We think too much and feel too little. More than machinery we need humanity. More than cleverness we need kindness and gentleness. Without these qualities, life will be violent and all will be lost."

Figure 5.9. Frame from the film *The Great Dictator*, Charles Chaplin, 1940.

(United Artists)

This dissertation puts forward a criticism of experiences that inform the development of concepts, and vice versa, rather than a sterile formulation of hypotheses or revolutionary propaganda allergic to empirical evidence. It builds cautiously on the critique of ideology and institutions formulated by Peter Burger (art) and Manfredo Tafuri (architecture) through "direct and empirical contact with the thoroughly new questions of the avant-gardes."[15] In the 1970s, Tafuri asserted, "Art and architecture have been dominated by the ineffability of hypothesis, and have been so little creators of experiences."[16] This dissertation engages with the new challenges imposed by urbanization that need a theoretical engagement sensitive to empirical knowledge. Thus, it refuses to formulate the alliance between urban design and autonomy because urban design

is arguably too young as a discipline or profession. The unrepressed impetus of urban design precipitates its involvement in impulsive interdisciplinary collaborations devoid of any theoretical framework that potentially could consider inter-disciplinary research (unexplored space between disciplines) as an epistemological exploration.

Is not urban design today more a redemption from architectural sins than a form of knowledge? It seems to lack the cultural roots of increasingly mature urbanism that emerged from a nineteenth-century revolution of knowledge common to the consolidation of evolutionary biology, political economy, and the foundations of psychoanalysis. Denise Scott Brown arguably would agree with the first part of this proposition because, for her, "urban design lacks a penumbra of scholarship, theory, and principles, a set of generally recognized working methods, an institutional setting, and a mass of practitioners" that constitute disciplinary knowledge.[17] She was influenced by the urban sociologist Herbert Gans and Jane Jacobs at Penn University, who criticized the lack of social sensitivity of urban designers and architect-planners.[18] Scott Brown considered architecture a window to engage with the world personally and professionally, while urban design was a question of approach rather than scale.[19] Her urban approach was more concerned with relations, linkages, and contexts than objects themselves. But Scott Brown's understanding of the agency and scope of urban design remains problematic in the way it is still conceived today. She considered that "the best way to train urban designers is to set them within a strong architecture program but then hold them in 'creative and even painful tension . . . (with) a skeptical, critical, social sciences-based department of urban planning.'"[20] This proposal adhered to the intellectual genealogy that aspires to tame the urban condition through the healing powers of the architectural rationale, or worse, through the rationality of architecture.[21] What is the role of artists, biologists, engineers, philosophers, sociologists in tackling climate change through

urbanism? What is the role of design in biological, scientific, philosophical, sociological approaches that study urbanization? It is assumed that an architect must adopt the status of "orchestrator" (urban designer) when design deals with the urban condition. Yet, Aldo Rossi (an architect) explicitly explained the limitations of architecture to assimilate the changing cultural landscape of the urban condition, explaining: "The outskirts of Pasolini's Rome, or of Milan by Antonioni or Brusatti were discovered first in cinema, rather than by architects."[22]

The alliance between urbanism and autonomy demands another set of methods that deviate from traditional design disciplines. The relevance of Wright's Broadacre City and Hilberseimer's Settlement Unit relied on a new spatial conception that deviated from the obsessive debate between form and function. They deviated from cosmetic urban design operations whose architecture-based perspectives adopt sociological, environmental, or political approaches at convenience. A comprehensive urban consciousness that unifies Wright's and Hilberseimer's designs is palpable in the definition of a new regional pattern from which the Settlement Unit derived:

> The new regional pattern will be determined by the character of the landscape; its geographical and topographical features, its natural resources; by the use of land, the methods of agriculture and industry, their decentralization and integration; and by human activities, individual and social, in all their diversity.[23]

Both Broadacre City and the Settlement Unit relied on an organic regional order and the importance of the individual at a social level while offering collective frameworks for urban development. These design efforts put forward the social and cultural critiques that attest to the relevance of individual agencies that tend to be oppressed by totalizing ideological blindness. After arguing that "city planning must take account of both individual and collective needs and their inter-relations," Hilbseimer cited G. K. Cherteston to explain *What is wrong with the World*: "If I might pursue the figure of speech. I might say that the whole collectivist error consists in saying that because two men can share an umbrella, therefore two men can share a walking stick. . ."[24]

This assessment is not praising a subjective-individual approach so much as demonstrating an awareness of a fallacious objective-collective project that paradoxically subordinates the rights and obligations of the individual within hierarchical societies and coercive governmental systems—*a lá* Orwellian Big Brother.

Figure 5.10. Robie House, Frank Lloyd Wright, Chicago, 1906. (Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation)

The concepts "organic," "individuality," and "democracy" developed together with the new regional organization. Hilberseimer considered that Wright was the first to develop an autonomous architecture during the twentieth century because the indifference to the distinction between interior and exterior space of his houses preceded the sense of openness and integration of agrarian and urban living of Broadacre City. Horizontality was used to engage with the reality of the ground. The reduction of structural elements and the elimination of basements and attics created continuous spaces to conflate houses and landscape. Louis Sullivan, according to Hilberseimer, was the predecessor of an organic architecture based on the endless interrelation between form and function.[25] But Hilberseimer highlighted that Sullivan's architectural conception could only develop within a democratic society. The imitation of past styles imposed on buildings was analogous to feudalism imposed on individuals as a social system. Thus, creative architecture replaced imitative architecture. The democratic spirit that informed Sullivan's and Wright's work conformed to "a moral principle, a spiritual law, a profound subjective reality in the realm of man's spirit" to supersede the most pragmatic notion of politics.[26]

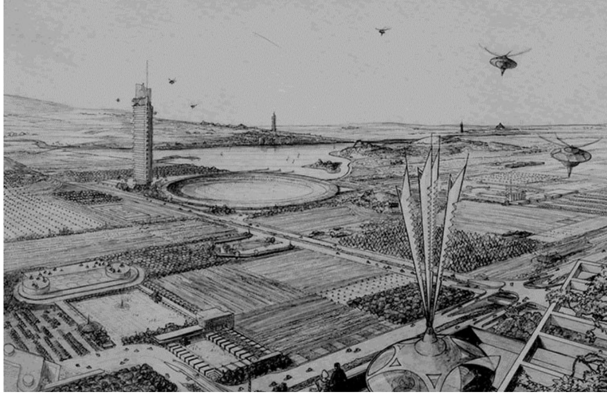


Figure 5.11. Broadacre City, Frank Lloyd Wright, 1934-1935.

(Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation/Reprinted in *B. Pfeiffer, Frank Lloyd Wright 1943–1959: The Complete Works* [Vol. 3], edited by Peter Gössel, published by Taschen, 2009.)

Broadacre City was a critique of what Wright called "rugged individualism" based on a capitalist logic that differed from individuality.[27] He associated capitalism with individualism and considered individuality as an "organic spirituality" dissociated from any militancy.[28] The organic unity, formulated in *The Disappearing City*, associated the conflation of agrarian and urban life with a critique of the democratic ground lost by the centralization that exceeded the social and functional capacity of North American cities. The urban project responded to the Great Depression (1929-1939) that caused a high unemployment rate, bankruptcies, seized many farms from Midwestern families, and exacerbated racial and social tensions. It formulated a critique of the aesthetic and economic speculation that overbuilt cities through an organic integration of architecture, communication, transport, energy, commercial, industrial, and landscape infrastructure that received its name from the acquisition of an acre per family as a birthright. Broadacre City was sensitive to the will advocated by Henry Ford to decentralize North American cities, which justified the regional policies of the Tennessee Valley Authority that triggered economic development and energy generation. What justifies the relevance of this project today is that Wright imagined "the future city as a future for individuality in this organic sense: individuality being a fine integrity of the human race. Without such integrity there can be no real culture whatever what we call civilization may be."[29] A collective design project today must

acknowledge the importance of the individual within its own framework to bypass the morality of ideology that oppresses individual expressions supposedly for the sake of a collectivity.

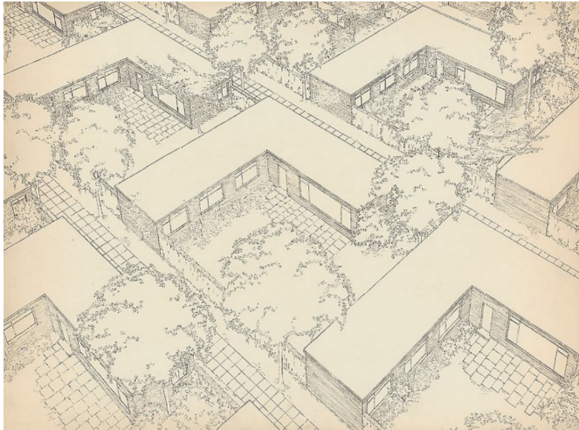


Figure 5.12. Settlement Units Density Studies, Aerial Perspective, Ludwig Karl Hilberseimer, c. 1943.

(Art Institute of Chicago
Gift of George E. Danforth)

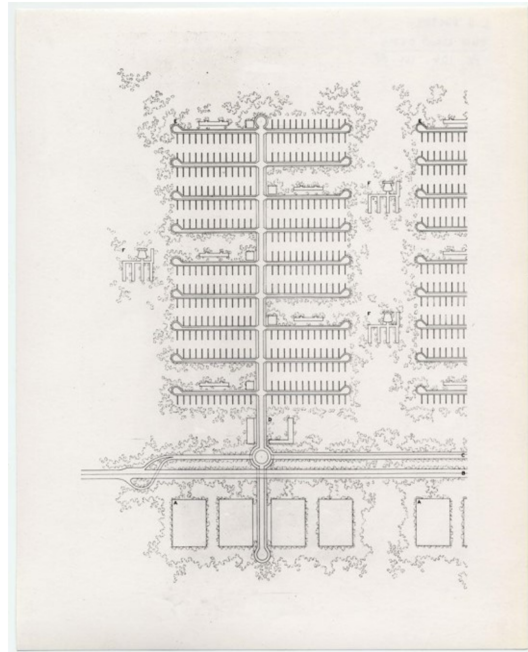
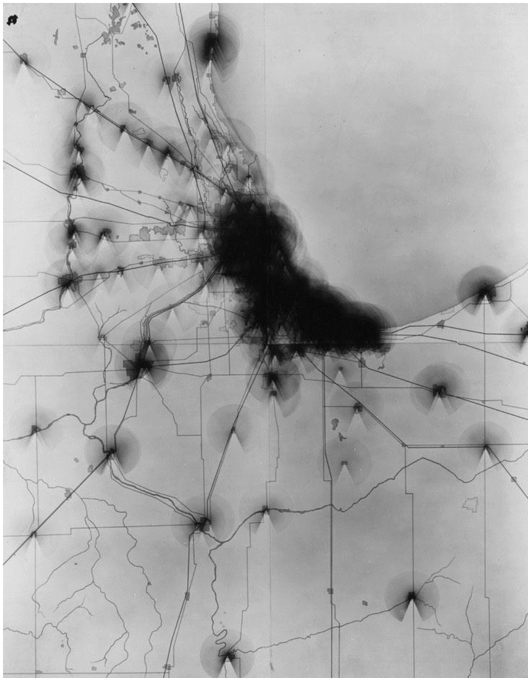


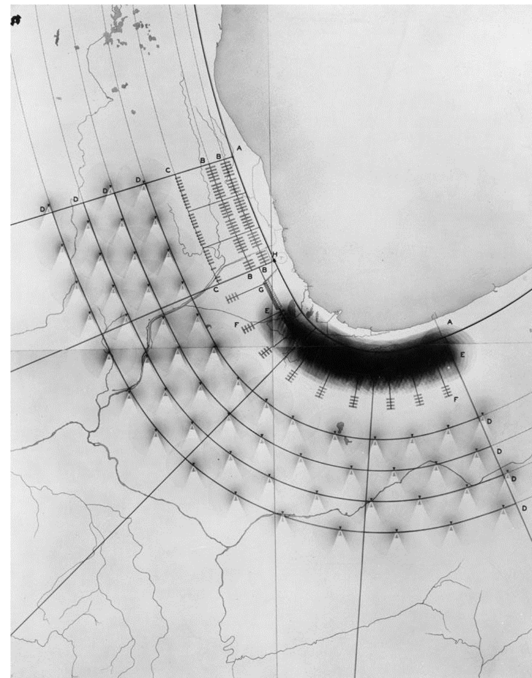
Figure 5.13. Settlement Unit, Ludwig Karl Hilberseimer, 1944.

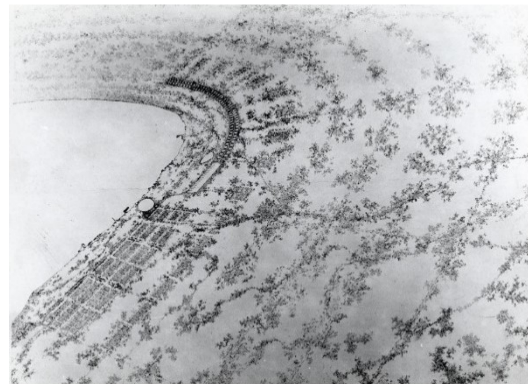
(Art Institute of Chicago / Chicago Collections
Ryerson & Burnham Archives)

The Settlement Unit shared several convictions with Broadacre City: the inclusion of agricultural production as part of the urban structure, the interrelationship between the individual and the collective, or their status as theoretical formulations capable of emerging from the social reality to intervene upon it. Wright's Broadacre City proposed a new urban scenario, while Hilberseimer's Settlement Unit advocated the idea to replan actual cities like Chicago. He defined the region as the "interrelated part of a nation, a natural unit, self-contained by reason of its geographical characteristics, its natural resources, the conditions of its soil, the natural and artificial transportation routes used and developed by its people."[30] Its constitution derived from "an interrelated community, in which individuals and groups of individuals all bear their share in working toward the good of all." The economic, social, and political dimensions of the region thus

were conceived as an organic unity whose primary goal is the "homogeneity of living conditions" at a national level through the harmonious interrelationship between heterogeneous regions. The Settlement Unit tackles the replanning of cities by integrating housing, light industry, education, commerce, farming, landscape, leisure, and transport infrastructure into a flexible unit. This diagrammatic plan can gradually adapt to different geographic, social, economic, and political conditions.







Figures 5.14, 5.15, and 5.16. Diagrams for the Replanning of the City of Chicago: (Upper Left) Present State and Condition, (Upper Right) Planning Proposal, (Right) The Redesigned City, Ludwig Karl Hilberseimer, 1944.

(Chicago Collections / Ryerson & Burnham Archives)

In the same way that Wright's houses merged with the landscape, Hilberseimer's aim was that the metropolis could merge with the landscape. He aspired to revive the city of Chicago's

motto, "urbs in horta" (the city set in a garden).[31] The strategy comprised four steps: first, the present condition; second, the construction of transport infrastructure and the relocation of polluting industries; third, the removal of factories that belong to polluting industries; and fourth, the reorganization of the city. The organic correlation between the region, the city, and the means of production belonged to a deep cultural development in the eyes of Hilberseimer. He considered that "organic settlements" and "free communities" were associated, while "geometric settlements" were "the typical form of autocratic communities."[32] The former represented a natural growth based on environmental conditions expressed in the urban whole as much as in individual urban elements—i.e., the organic adaptation of Noerdlingen to its topography. The latter subordinates the social, economic, and political dimensions of the urban condition to "an abstract principle of planning"—i.e., the monarchic system that created the palace of Versailles.[33] However, Hilberseimer also identified geometric settlements that emerged from organic principles, such as the Latin American colonies or Philadelphia. The geometrical character of William Penn's plan represented the colonial spirit and the democratic aspiration of a new beginning.[34] Broadacre City and the Settlement Unit transcended the debate on scale that torments architecture and urban design. Because pure style, form, function, bigness, and smallness become redundant when democratic principles, organic development, or social integrity are at stake.

The correspondences between concepts such as "organic," "individuality," and "democracy" suggest the analysis of urban "order." During the first half of the twentieth century, the works of Le Corbusier and Ludwig Hilberseimer adhered to a design-based urban genealogy—Cerda's *Teoria General de la Urbanizacion*, Sitte's *Der Stadtebau*, Wagner's *Die Großstadt*, Garnier's *La Cite industrielle*, and Wright's *The Disappearing City*. A twofold attitude characterized this set of works: a diagnosis of the unhealthy and chaotic urban condition and a will

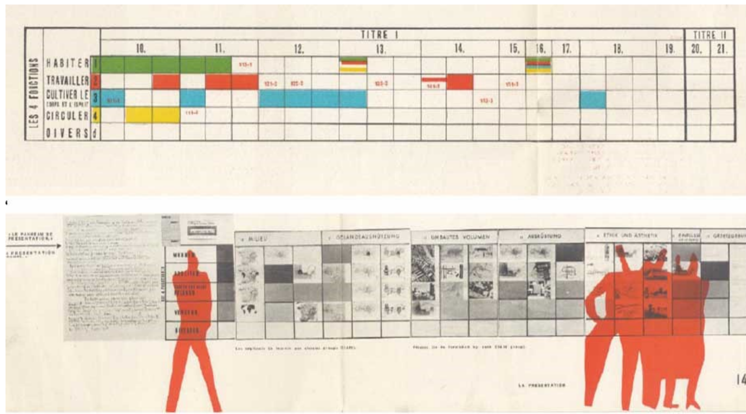


Figure 5.17. Analytical and functional-based grid presented at CIAM VII in Bergamo, 1949.

(Harvard University Library Repository)

to impose order. But Le Corbusier's functional order differed from Hilberseimer's philosophical order. The Athens Charter later echoed the socialist conviction of the Declaration of La Sarraz that conferred a functional nature to urbanism and its interest in urban and rural settlements. Urbanism focused on four main functions: "inhabiting, working, recreation (in leisure time), and circulation."[35] The Athens Charter made explicit the region's importance as a complex configuration of social, economic, and political processes. It also clarified the juxtaposition between cultural phenomena and the person from which a synthesis between individual and collective interests necessarily derived. Urbanism was the remedy for all urban illnesses. Where urbanism was lacking, anarchy reigned.[36] Architectural and urban order were based on standards. For instance, the Parthenon and engineering feats, such as automobiles or airplanes, are products of selection applied to these standards. Thus, the notions of "order" and "aesthetics" adopted by Le Corbusier derived from engineering, while those same notions came from philosophy for Hilberseimer.

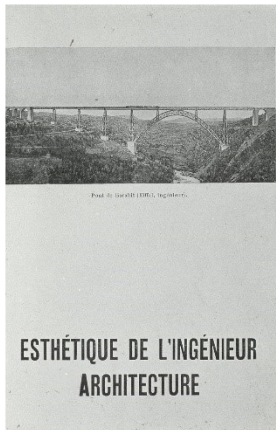


Figure 5.18. A page from Vers une architecture, Le Corbusier, 1923.

(Harvard University Library Repository Getty Research Institute)

Hilberseimer's rationalism assimilated what the most radical post-Kaufmann autonomy of architecture systematically repressed—cultural contingencies and urban phenomena—as "others." Hilberseimer's city

planning emerged from an urban analysis. Thus, his philosophical sensitivity revealed that the city is not "the other." Paradoxically, the city constitutes the potential design intervention even before the project is conceived. The relationship between design and the city is not a reciprocal relationship between design and non-design. Instead, it is an interdependence between design and existing cultural conditions exposed by critical rather than whimsical procedures.

Figure 5.19. Museum for a Small City project (Interior perspective), Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1941-1943.

(Museum of Modern Art, New York / Mies van der Rohe Archive, gift of the architect / © 2021 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn)

Both Mies and Hilberseimer were clearly influenced by philosophy to develop their cultural critiques.[37] Mies van der Rohe synthesized the cultural contingencies that conditioned architectural production into the metropolitan intensity reflected by the Friedrichstraße Skyscraper and his photocollages. Hilberseimer reduced architectural form to a generic ensemble, even overwhelmed by the cultural conditions imposed by modernity in the Chicago Tribune Building or the Highrise City (Hochhausstadt). They captured the cultural causes and consequences of aesthetic decisions through the influence of Friedrich Nietzsche, whose way of thinking, according to the philosopher Alois Riehl, was the "mirror of the modern soul."[38] For Nietzsche, existence itself was first and foremost an aesthetic phenomenon. In 1927, Mies wrote: "Only through philosophical understanding is the correct order of our duties revealed and thereby the value and dignity of our existence."[39] The same year, Hilberseimer argued: "The chaos of the contemporary metropolis can only be confronted with experiments in theoretical demonstration."[40] He advocated the abstraction of the general rule to tackle concrete problems and to bring the chaos of the

metropolis into "an order of dense relationships."[41] The primitive aesthetic of Hilberseimer's projects, derived from Nietzsche's philosophy, countered the reproductive aesthetic inherited from the imitation of ancient culture during the Renaissance.

In contrast to mere rational approaches, Nietzsche considered that the "science of aesthetics" had succeeded in deriving its principles from logical reasoning and direct perception.[42] Thus, the reproduction of ancient values was replaced by a productive barbarism inherent to aesthetics. He argued that the development of art relied on the duality of Apolline (visual art of the sculptor) and Dionysiac (non-visual art of music), "just as the reproduction of species depends on the duality of the sexes, with its constant conflicts and only periodically intervening reconciliations."[43] But this dichotomic relationship comprises forces that are not mutually hostile. Dionysiac entails the nature of reality, while Apolline represents the appearance of reality. This metaphysical aesthetic view of the world, according to Nietzsche, represented a purposeless abstract will that synthesized the pain and pleasure inherent to the Attic tragedy—a work of art that is as Dionysiac as Apolline. This abstraction allowed Hilberseimer to reconcile the dense relationships of reality and its generic appearance through a primitive architectural form. He praised the purity of primitive artworks "because they have not yet fallen to the civilizing urge for beauty."[44] The generic form and vertical configuration of the Highrise City (Hochhausstadt) and the Berlin Development Project in the Friedrichstadt District were aesthetic critiques against the pragmatism of American architecture and the efforts to decentralize European settlements without reflection. The urge for beauty and profit was his main object of critique rather than capitalism as such because Hilberseimer was an artist, not a priest. In 1944, he challenged aesthetic and economic speculation equally while he subscribed to Henry Ford's praise of decentralized and

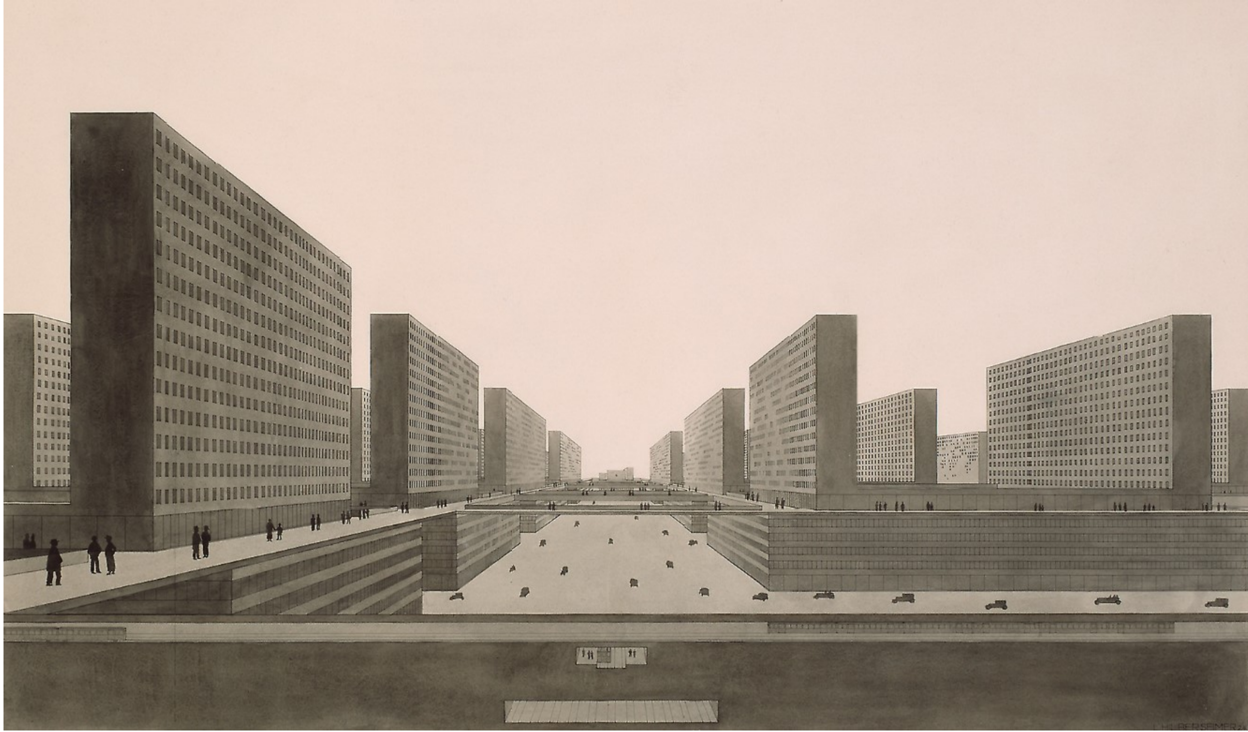
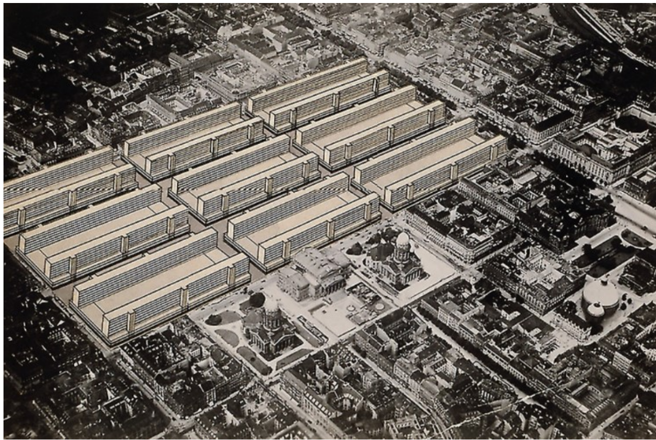


Figure 5.20. Highrise City (Hochhausstadt): Perspective View: North-South Street, Ludwig Karl Hilberseimer, 1924.

(Art Institute of Chicago / Gift of George E. Danforth)



Figures 5.21. Berlin Development Project, Friedrichstadt District, Office and Commercial Buildings, Berlin, Germany, Perspective View, Ludwig Karl Hilberseimer, 1927-1928.

(Art Institute of Chicago / Gift of George E. Danforth)

communal coexistence as an inevitable consequence of the demographic and economic pressures of urban cores due to the unsustainable concentration of industrial production. The aesthetic critique was coupled with more practical considerations in the Settlement Unit. The generic aesthetic of the Highrise City was now translated logistically through a replicable collective module that articulated living, working, and recreational activities at different transportation levels, from pedestrian to regional movements.[45]

Philosophy, through aesthetics, supported an urban interpretation of autonomy that was omitted by the critique and revision of the Modern movement performed by architectural autonomy during the second half of the twentieth century. Aesthetics was common to the urban work of Hilberseimer and Le Corbusier, who considered, "City planning is a matter of aesthetics, only if at the same time it is a matter of biological organization, of social organization, of financial organization. . ."[46] The postwar architectural autonomy disregarded the cultural implications of aesthetics. As the main protagonists, Peter Eisenman and Aldo Rossi overemphasized the redefinition of the intrinsic parameters of architecture. Eisenman systematically dismissed any engagement with the urban condition to focus on an arguably essentialist formal concern. In comparison, Rossi restricted his urban engagement to an architectural end. Rossi's contribution to urban studies is clear: the historical continuity of type as a critique of the degradation of the modern city, the role of the monument and collective memory in urban development, and a cultural critique based on the critical character of art and the political nature of choice. Rossi praised the critical dimension of art. However, his overemphasis on the political and civic character of the European city failed to assimilate the natural landscape as part of *la forma della città* (the shape of the city) as Pier Paolo Pasolini did or the heterogeneity of urban transformations throughout the world.

Nietzsche argued that morality was hostile to life. The conceptual antagonism of architectural autonomy was as hostile as morality to the fact that, as political animals, we are social beings that engage with other individuals, cultures, and disciplines through respect rather than a lifeless antagonism based on an ideologically driven enmity. Human beings are political animals influenced by passions and fears, not political concepts governed by omnipotent rationality, fighting the "evils" of urbanization and capitalism. The distinction between *what architecture is* and *what architecture is not* was more detrimental than beneficial to the return to the discipline.

The reduction of autonomy to a narcissistic discipline omitted the rhetorical questions produced by the cultural roots of the "autonomy of the will": Who am I? Who are we? Diana Agrest's *Design versus Non-Design,* K. Michael Hays's *Between Culture and Form*, or Peter Eisenman's "objective" architecture are paradigmatic examples of the dissociation between design and other disciplines or culture. The exception was Aldo Rossi's political dimension of autonomy, which was conversant with other forms of knowledge such as sociology, geography, and art. But the most radical antagonism survived the turn of the century as a remnant of "strong" modernity in the theory of Pier Vittorio Aureli. His architecture-based idea of the city was built on the political distinction between friend and enemy, formulated by Carl Schmitt to antagonize urbanization and capitalism.[47]

In contrast to Carl Schmitt's antagonism, this dissertation builds on the political agonism formulated by Chantal Mouffe, which identifies adversaries rather than enemies within the political dimension of our daily social interactions.[48] The principle of social coexistence demands interactions and respect rather than destructive aesthetic blindness. Mouffe's political agonism acquires reality through the empirical knowledge of social coexistence to counter ideological and conceptual excesses. She subscribed to William Blake's proposition that "opposition is true friendship" by accepting antagonism as inherent to any political dimension but not as its fate. In addition to antagonism, Mouffe argues that the notion of hegemony is also crucial in grasping any political dimension.[49] Hegemonic practices create and fix "orders" as well as social institutions as they exclude alternatives through the perpetuation of dominant models. This myopic exclusion of alternative practices is perhaps the main reason formalism—viewed as a philosophical concept that excludes what it cannot control—has been at the core of architectural autonomy from Eisenman to Aureli. Order, therefore, takes the form of a "discipline" that controls docile bodies,

as Foucault asserted, and represses dissent through hegemonic "rational" constructions, such as architectural form or an intransigent antagonism. The antagonism that has informed architectural autonomy excludes *what architecture is not*, while the agonism that informs autonomous urbanism promotes a multipolar approach in which conflicts take agonistic configurations.

What Mouffe defines as "agonistic pluralism" is a democratic model that questions rationalism and universalism. It does not propose the pluralization of hegemonies. Instead, it promotes equal relations between diverse poles of practice and thought. It distinguishes "the political" from "politics." The former is defined as the ontology of antagonism, while the latter refers to the organization of human coexistence through practices, laws, and institutions. Mouffe questions the insensitivity of the dominant trends within the pluralistic conception of societies advocated by liberal thought, which is based on individualism and the aspiration to reach consensus thanks to the supposed omnipotence of reason.

The varying use in architecture and political theory of Jacques Derrida's *différance* is paradigmatic of the distinction between lifeless conceptualism and empirically driven political thought. Derived from the verbs "to differ" and "to defer," Derrida defined *différance* as difference and the deferral of meaning. He expounds on the fact that no meaning is linguistically achieved when correct decoding of a "transcendental signified" (the meaning expressed by a sign) cannot be achieved, resulting in an endless play of signifiers (the physical form of a sign). In this way, meaning is experienced through misreading rather than reading. Derrida's ideas were supportive of Eisenman's concept of architecture as writing that focuses on "objective" laws to the detriment of a transcendental signified influenced by subjectivity. Thus, *différance* operates internally to redefine constantly the identity of architecture.

On the other hand, Chantal Mouffe is interested in the construction of a relational identity whose processes of "difference" operate externally. Mouffe built on a "constitutive outside," which allows us to constantly revise our personal, individual, collective, cultural, and disciplinary identities: Who am I? Who are we?[50] The political theorist, not the architect, provided the basis for scrutinizing the role design plays within society. The redefinition of disciplinary or political identity formulated by the architectural autonomy that followed Kaufmann has relied more on concepts or ideology than empirical reality. In contrast, Mouffe's political agonism conceives identity as an epistemological search that actualizes itself through political friction with the external world.

Figure 5.22. Charleston, South Carolina, Robert Frank, 1955, printed ca. 1977.

(The Met Museum / Purchase, Anonymous Gifts, 1986 © 2005 Robert Frank)

The concept of "identity" that Mouffe tackles is particularly relevant for design because it constitutes the core of our social relationships under contemporary conditions of cultural production.[51] But the search for identity is not exclusive to the era of Instagram, Facebook, or Amazon; it has always been the core of the consolidation and the redefinition of disciplinary knowledge since the seventeenth-century scientific revolution. The alliance between urbanism and autonomy does not consider urbanization and capitalism as "the others." But if such was the case, they are not the enemies of design. The political dimension within social coexistence entails the construction of "us" in relation to "they" because it is ontologically concern with "collective forms of identification."[52] But in contrast to Eisenman, Mouffe intends to stress the relational character of identity through the capacity of "difference" and to distinguish "we" from "they" as a political

Figure 5.23. M. Lamar, Lyle Ashton Harris, 1993

(Lyle Ashton Harris/ Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco / Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of the artist and Miyoung Lee and Neil Simpkins
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resolution that is not necessarily antagonistically destructive. The agonistic democratic model, proposed by Mouffe, questions the two prevalent democratic approaches: the *aggregative* in which political actors privilege their interests and the *deliberative* in which reason and morality prevail. She advocates an alternative political model based on the coexistence of pluralism and antagonism and the search for collective identities and affects/passions. The role of the adversary is crucial to preserve a vibrant and healthy democracy. But far from the liberal reduction of adversaries to "competitors," Mouffe's adversaries defend the legitimacy of each other to fight for their ideas. Antagonism, in this way, is not eliminated but "sublimated," that is, passions are mobilized "towards democratic designs, by creating collective forms of identification around democratic objectives."[53] Is not the urban condition the breeding ground for such agonistic coexistence?

I love her very much and I will write this in my paintings.

—Pablo Picasso, talking about his lover Marcelle Humbert. He depicted her in “Ma Jolie” (my pretty one).

"Ma Jolie"
Pablo Picasso
Paris, winter 1911-12

(Museum of Modern Art, New York
Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest (by exchange)
© 2021 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York)

5.3. Urbanism: The Dissolution of Form

Form has operated within the autonomy of architecture either as a secondary or primary concern. Kaufmann's interest in an autonomous architectural system sensitive to cultural changes relegated architectural form to a secondary role, while post-Kaufmann interpretations of architectural autonomy have overemphasized form to redefine the qualitative parameters of the discipline or its political dimension. But the autonomy of architecture barely mentions the dissolution of form set in motion since the eighteenth century as a testament to the urban transformations that unify the ideas of Piranesi, Kaufmann, Wittkower, Tafuri, Hilberseimer, and Archizoom. In the nineteenth century, Gustave Flaubert synthesized the theoretical efforts of these authors as an epigram full of empirical reality: "There is more to Art than the straightness of lines and the perfection of surfaces. Plasticity of style is not as large as the entire idea. . . . We have too many things and not enough forms."[54] Architectural autonomy focused on the rejection of style to advance a disciplinary approach, but this attitude dismissed the empirical evidence that motivates the acceptance or rejection of style in the first place.

The fixation on form of post-Kaufmann architectural autonomy prevented its engagement with the urban transformations of the second half of the twentieth century. Kantian formalism resulted from the impossibility of reason to control the ever-changing external data. Thus, the limited power of reason over the world can only sanction the convenience of the terms of the intervention upon the world of phenomena. On the other hand, the retroactive introduction of autonomy into architecture juxtaposed the self-governing aspiration of architecture with the ungovernable urban condition. Ledoux's architecture was part of an urban strategy that promoted agriculture and the consolidation of trade networks. Kaufmann even considered that this strategy

informed Haussmann's transformation of Paris. But the post-Kaufmann architectural autonomy developed a love-hate relationship between architecture and the city. Aldo Rossi's contribution to urban studies is invaluable despite his theory's failure to assimilate, like the director Pier Paolo Pasolini, the natural landscape as part of *la forma della città* (the shape of the city) as well as the heterogeneity of urban transformations throughout the world beyond the European city. Peter Eisenman dismissed the urban condition. He advocated an "objective" architecture allergic to life and the city. In his dissertation *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture,* defended in 1963, Peter Eisenman considered architecture volumetrically, not spatially, due to the possibility to particularize volume as contained space. Eisenman discriminated the term "space" as an "unbound condition," while Henri Lefebvre redefined the political particularities of "space" through its social dimension a decade later. Eisenman focused on the generalities of the architectural realm that resulted in a lifeless abstraction, while Lefebvre focused on the friction between the generalities of the human condition and the particularities of social coexistence.

One of the most powerful attacks against the omission of the particularities of broad urban processes was a project that advocated architecture without qualities. Archizoom's No-Stop City was a response to democratic attempts to reform the city amid the increasing domination of the capitalist logic. The project intended to exorcise linguistic analogies or formal debates from architecture.[55] It proposed an alternative theory of the city to leave behind the figurative signifiers of

Figure 5.24. Residential Park, No-Stop City project (Plan), Archizoom, 1969

(Museum of Modern Art New York
Gift of The Howard Gilman Foundation)

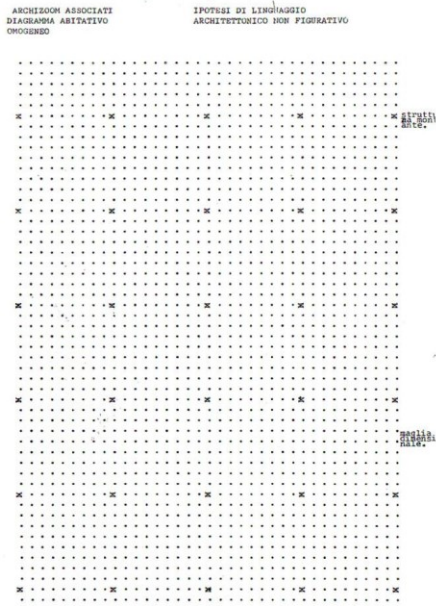

Figure 5.25. No-Stop City, Archizoom, 1969

(Archizoom Associati/Andrea Branzi)

Figure 5.26. Untitled, Mark Rothko, 1969

(Museum of Modern Art New York
Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc.
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/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York)

the pre-industrial reality. The result was a city without architecture, a space where diverse social, economic, and political exchanges take place, including the production and sharing of information. The project transposed the ultimate consequence of artificial illumination and ventilation of thriving urban typologies such as shopping malls or factories to the urban reality by depicting an inexpressive city subordinated to the quantitative obsession of economic paranoia. By the end of the 1960s, No-Stop City proposed "a city without qualities for a man (finally) without qualities—that is, without compromise—a freed society (freed even from architecture) similar to the great monochrome surfaces of Mark Rothko: vast velvet, open oceans in which the sweet drowning of man within the immense dimensions of mass society is represented."[56] Andrea Branzi's description of the project subscribed to the critical power of aesthetics rather than revolutionary political preaching. No-Stop City was not a design that proposed an alternative scenario; it was "a radical level of representation of the contemporary city" under the authority of "an alienating political system without destiny."[57] This project echoed the subtle but powerful cultural critique of the postwar Italian filmmakers. They

depicted the outrageous social reality left behind by fascism and the alienating effects of mass consumption. It also inadvertently echoed the cultural critique formulated by the Mexican poet Octavio Paz, who considered that modern masses are agglomerations of loners subordinated to the excesses of capitalist production: “Work, the only modern god, has ceased to be a creator. Endless, or infinite, work corresponds to the purposeless life of modern society.”[58]

Figure 5.27. The City of the Captive Globe, Rem Koolhaas and Zoe Zenghelis, 1972.

(Museum of Modern Art New York
Gift of The Howard Gilman Foundation
Reprinted in Rem Koolhaas’s Delirious New York/The Monacelli Press)

At the end of the 1970s, *Delirious New York* documented the impact of the processes of modernity on the metropolis. Rem Koolhaas recorded the constant redefinition of the physical and ideological urban construct through the coalescence of the “culture of congestion” and emerging technologies. The book is a diagnosis of our life within urbanization that nevertheless could not transcend its architectural interpretation. Koolhaas argued that the Manhattan grid represents “an archipelago of ‘Cities within Cities’” in which the plurality of values is celebrated while it reinforces “the unity of the archipelago as system.”[59] Change is accepted as inherent to the different islands that comprise the archipelago and the paradoxical impossibility to revise the system due to its perennial instability. The City of the Captive Globe faithfully depicted an ever-changing urban condition that outdated the search for functional order of the Modern movement. But it was as faithful as obedient to a typical interpretation of pluralism, as defined by Chantal Mouffe: “We live in a world in which there are indeed many perspectives and values, but due to empirical limitations, we will never be able to

adopt them all; however, when put together, they could constitute a harmonious and non-conflictual ensemble."[60] The individuality of the skyscraper within the archipelago operated through lobotomy and schism. Koolhaas used the word "autonomy" and avoided the term "individualism," but the use of individualism is more appropriate due to the way he described autonomy that is closer to *detachment* than *engagement*. Architecture thus managed to separate interior and exterior realities. The exterior of the skyscraper, according to Koolhaas, is devoted to formalism, while the interior serves functionalism. This divorce between form and function, which Koolhaas regarded as a solution, confirmed the pluralist detachment within an urban interpretation "where permanent monoliths celebrate metropolitan instability."[61] Delirious New York came to terms with the instability of the metropolitan condition through detachment.

A new critical attitude emerged at the turn of the century. Archizoom's No-Stop City attested to the impossibility to represent the city through the dogmatism of architectural form. But Andrea Branzi's cultural critique deviated from the Marxist approach by the end of the century, perhaps due to the unrealized Marxist prophecy of the proletariat revolution crushed by a relentless liberation of the market. In the light of an outdated form of critique, a renovated critical project was needed. The project Agronica (1995) represents the prospects of weak urbanization that stressed the importance of the design of agricultural and natural infrastructures as part of the urban structure. The design explicitly embodies an urban synthesis capable of overcoming the antagonistic dialectics of "the strong and

Figure 5.28. Agronica — Weak Urbanization, Andrea Branzi, Dante Donegani, Antonio Petrillo, Claudia Raimomdo, and Tamar Ben David, 1995.

(Andrea Branzi/ Centre Pompidou, Paris)

concentrated modernity of the twentieth century."[62] Branzi argued that "in the contemporary city, information, technologies, nature, the production of series, animals, myths, and religions are no longer opposed to one another, but must instead live together as integral parts of a highly complex service system."[63] This new sensitivity towards weak urbanization departs from the social, economic, and political hostility of the twentieth century that permeated every aspect of society, including our disciplinary knowledge through the interpretation of autonomy as detachment within architecture. Other current and valid design projects—such as Landscape Infrastructure, Landscape Urbanism, Ecological Urbanism, and "città diffusa (diffuse city)"—attach to this sensitivity, proposing an autonomous character that departs from inherited dichotomies such as design versus non-design, urban versus nature, and discipline versus discipline. What is common to these design conceptions, and clearly explained by Bernardo Secchi, is the effort to tackle an evolving cultural landscape with the lessons derived from experience challenging the pretentious theories and concepts that cling to an outdated reality or foresee a future that never arrives:

> During the past decades, there were attempts to spell out what seemed new in European territories. It was not the periphery—a phenomenon which had already become evident during the twentieth century—nor was it the peri-urban or the process of suburbanization, which occurred during the first two thirds of the twentieth century. It was not something that was born in the city and, from the city, radiated outward into the territory. The novelty was the 'diffuse city'—something that had its roots in the territory, its inhabitants, and their history.[64]

How can we describe the new cultural attitude that rebelled against the intransigence of the political dialectics that proved to be as harmful as "the disease" (capitalism) they purported to cure? Do we strive to "moderate" our polarization by embracing the value of the political center? No, because that's too vulgar, too antithetical to the political reality of our daily social coexistence. Instead, should we embrace agonism and strive for sensitivity? Andrea Branzi shifted from strong modernity to the weak and diffuse modernity of the twenty-first century based on *incompleteness*

and *reversibility*.[65] Other disciplines, such as economics, sociology, and philosophy, were equally sensitive to the transition from the industrial to the informational mode of development that revolutionized our cultural relationships based on the intensification of economic, social, and political networks globally. However, the project of autonomy within architecture subscribed to the old principles of strong modernity. The redefinition of the autonomy of architecture, already formulated in the twenty-first century, echoed the antagonism that permeated every cultural sphere throughout the last century. This dissertation argues that such an antagonistic sensitivity needs to be abolished, especially when the intention is to formulate a culturally conscious design reflection.

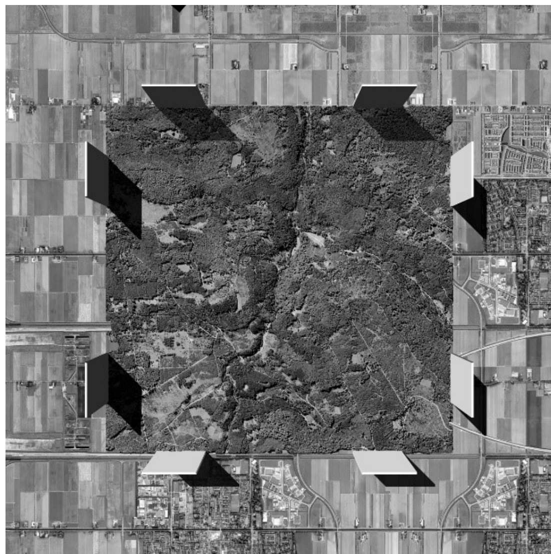


Figure 5.29. Stop City, Dogma (Pier Vittorio Aureli and Martino Tattara), 2007-2008.

(Dogma)

The individualism of architectural form was explicitly formulated within the discourse on autonomy in the twenty-first century. *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* proposed a "unilateral synthesis" based on "architectural form as the index for the constitution of an idea of the city."[66] Pier Vittorio Aureli used the word "absolute" to emphasize the distinction between architectural form and urban phenomena. In Hilberseimer's urban project, the city and architecture merged as an aesthetic project like the non-hostile duality of Apolline and Dionysiac. But Aureli's absolute architecture studied the non-relational and non-comparative constitution of something once removed from its other: the city. Thus, his position adhered to the genealogy of architectural autonomy that built on an antagonistic critical theory. Aureli's main attempt is to highlight the political dimension of the city as a construct comprised of different parts.

The critical character of architectural form confronts the managerial and expansive logic of urbanization. Thus, it prevents the subordination of the civic and political dimension of the city to the rise of capitalism. This interpretation conceded that urbanization is not only constituted by flows but also by closures.[67] However, the overemphasis on architecture failed to acknowledge that urbanization is not homogeneous, and its heterogeneous effects differ from region to region. *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* elevated Koolhaas's lobotomy and schism to the status of a formal resolution of the city through the notion of the archipelago. The islands that comprise the archipelago enter an agonistic relationship amongst each other and an antagonistic relationship with the sea of urbanization. It is not urbanization that defines the form of the islands, but it is the critical attitude of architectural form that *unilaterally* defines the sea.[68] No-Stop City depicted the irrationality of the capitalist rationale *ad absurdum*. At the same time, Aureli's Stop City challenged the relentless expansion of the capitalist logic by implementing architectural form as an obstacle to expanding urbanization. Aureli proposed "the autonomy of the project" as "an alternative idea of the city" based on a judgment of the reality within which the project is conceived and produced.[69] But his urban project conformed to the dead end of the traditional critical project of architecture based on the dichotomy form-function, a unilateral approach, and an exacerbated antagonism.

Aureli's intellectual and practical project represents one of the most important critical projects within contemporary design because he defends the political nature of our design efforts. But his method to define "the political" provides more problems than alternatives today. Aureli adopted Carl Schmitt's idea of "the political" defined by the distinction between friend and enemy. Indeed, any political dimension of debate or consensus entails antagonism, but this exacerbation "denotes the utmost degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or

dissociation."[70] The Mexican poet Octavio Paz defined the twentieth century as "the history of utopias that turned into concentration camps."[71] Thus, the current century must avoid replicating the failure at all costs. But the rise of environmental, gender, racial, social, economic, and political tensions in the first two decades of the twenty-first century seems to attest to our incapacity to coexist respectfully. Design should neither subscribe to the polarization nor abandon its political dimension. An agonistic political coexistence comprised of adversaries rather than enemies, as defined by Chantal Mouffe, is a potential alternative to a detached, dead-end architectural criticism.[72] Neither liberalism's systematic repression of the political dimension for the sake of an illusory peaceful coexistence nor the intransigence of authoritarian socialist positions that represses disagreement have provided efficient critical methods for design. This dissertation subscribes to the *agonism* formulated by Mouffe as an alternative way of thinking about the world politically. The aim is to provide an alternative critical method for design practice and thinking that deviates from dogmatic formalisms as much as antagonistic forms of negation or resistance.

Form is central to post-Kaufmann architectural autonomy despite the crisis of form dates to the eighteenth century. By the mid-eighteenth century, the study of antiquity based on scientific rigor deviated from the dilettantism of the Renaissance. Emil Kaufmann studied the rebellion against the past in England and Italy that preceded the autonomous architecture in France. This critical attitude questioned the continuation of architectural ideas that linked the early Renaissance to the late Baroque period. The emerging doctrine deviated from the old formalism to propose a functionalist viewpoint based on practical and material concerns. It consolidated in Italy up to the end of the eighteenth century and in France shortly after, synthesizing the correspondences between architecture and the revolutionary sentiment. Kaufmann described the rebellion as a transition from the sensualism, animism, and hierarchical organization of the Baroque to the

“mood of rationalism” and the idealism of “the rights of the individual.”[73] The Viennese art historian focused on Ledoux’s architecture as the full realization of *autonomen Architektur*. Still, he overlooked that the same historical impetus exposed, only a few years earlier, the latent autonomous urbanism found in Piranesi’s work. The Enlightenment witnessed the emergence of an alliance between philosophy and architecture that responded to the *Zeitgeist*—the power of reason and the search for freedom—by questioning the heteronomy of past philosophies and antiquated architectures. But, more importantly, it witnessed the critique of the critique. The cultural critique put forward by Giovanni Battista Piranesi exposed the deficiencies of rational approaches. His “negative utopia” foresaw the alienation of a powerless modern individual.

The foundation of a critical alliance between urbanism and autonomy was an arduous development that, like any significant work, admitted contradiction. Piranesi’s critical spirit—developed from 1743 (*Prima Parte di Architetture e Prospettive*) until 1769 (*Diverse Maniere d’adornare i cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizi*)—predated the foundations of *autonomen Architektur*, which comprise Kant’s *Critiques* (1781-1790) and Ledoux’s two projects for Saline de Chaux (1774-1779). Before 1761, according to Rudolf Wittkower, the character of Piranesi’s work was archaeological; thus, “no aesthetic confession” was admitted.[74] The works of this period conformed to the logic of antiquarian books comprised of engravings that characterized Roman publications since the sixteenth century. But before analyzing the post-1761 work, it is important to highlight the importance of the *Carceri d'invenzione* (1750) for the alliance between urbanism and autonomy. Wittkower regarded the character of this work as archaeological. This omission perhaps responds to Piranesi’s dismissal of traditional architectural forms or rules. Kaufmann considered that “neither antiquity nor architecture proper play any considerable role” in this work.[75] It depicted the demise of the Baroque: the kingdom of chaos, the decomposition of space,

that left behind a traditional representation of the body and a unified notion of space. Design must thenceforth indulge in the coexistence of the parts rather than their isolated existence. The parts menace each other amid "a pandemonium of hostile forces."[76] According to Kaufmann, Piranesi's aversion to order and attraction to the grandiose paralleled the German poets of the *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress) and the architects of the French revolution.[77] This spatial proposition does not differ substantially from Ledoux's pavilion-like architecture in which autonomous forms operate as part of a whole. However, Piranesi's *Carceri* anticipated more dramatically than Ledoux's autonomous architecture the modern fate of the individual and a powerful urban vision. Kaufmann himself wrote: "Just as the ecstasy of the early Renaissance was visualized by Filarete, and that of the High Baroque by the Bibbiena, so was the unrest of the eighteenth century visualized by Giovanni-Battista Piranesi."[78]

Figure 5.30. Carceri d'Invenzione, Giovanni Battista Piranesi.

(Photo by Volker-H. Schneider / Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg/ARTSTOR
Berlin State Museums, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

Manfredo Tafuri formulated the social implications of the crisis of order and form depicted in *Carceri d'invenzione*. The idea of a center was obliterated; thus, disorder is imposed on ancient values. The authorship of such a violent act must be attributed paradoxically more to reason than Piranesi. Tafuri considered that the destruction of past notions of integral space through the representation of "infinite" space was analogous to a new human existence within a radically changing society. Paradoxically, the critique of reason against

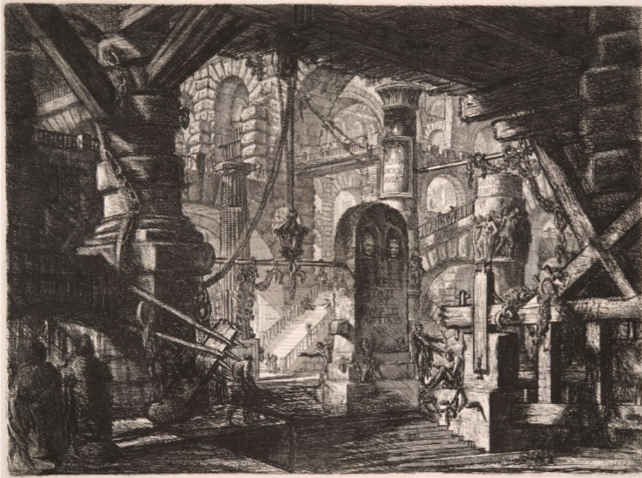


Figure 5.31. Carceri d'Invenzione — The Pier with Chains, Giovanni Battista Piranesi.

(Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University, Gift of George W. Davison (B.A. Wesleyan 1892), before 1953)

ancient values turns reason itself into irrationality. Reason thus liberates as it condemns our collective existence as human beings. Piranesi arguably foresaw the darkness of the Kantian "autonomy of the will" even before its formulation. Referring to the Carceri, Tafuri argued, "Piranesi translates into images not a reactionary criticism of the social promises of the Enlightenment, but a lucid prophecy of what society liberated from the ancient values and their consequent restraints, will have to be."[79] He concluded that Piranesi foretold the exhaustion of any possibility other than "global voluntary alienation in collective form" derived from the anguish of the "anonymity of the person and the silence of things."[80] If Tafuri's conclusion is correct, then Piranesi's *Carceri* foretold the social reality of the subsequent centuries and formulated a design reflection on culture that differs substantially from the cultural reflection on architecture that led the post-Kaufmann architectural autonomy towards a narcissistic resolution.

The projects developed since 1761 have consolidated a latent alliance between urbanism and autonomy. In *Della Magnificenza e d'Architettura de' Romani* (1761), Piranesi responded polemically to the painter Allan Ramsay's *The Investigator* and Le Roy's *Les Ruines Des Plus Beaux Monuments de la Grèce* (1758). Le Roy argued that Greek architecture anteceded Roman architecture, while Piranesi argued that Etruscan architecture was older and more perfect than the ornamental prettiness of Greek architecture. Etruscans were the masters of the Romans, and their

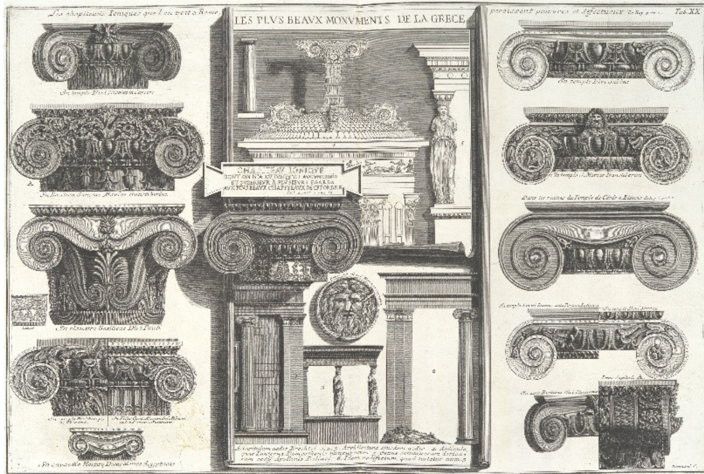


Figure 5.32. From Della Magnificenza e d'Architettura de' Romani (On the Grandeur and the Architecture of the Romans by Gio. Battista Piranesi, Fellow of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of London), 1761.

(The MET Museum, New York / Rogers Fund, transferred from the Library)

non-ornamental work was comparable to Egyptian architecture. Piranesi echoed Padre Lodoli's doctrine, which stated that an architecture should either respond to function and necessity or respect the nature of the materials to overcome the past. He thus questioned the plasticity of the Baroque to tackle what Kaufmann called the problem of the era: the abolition of form. The true challenge was to express the sentiments of a changing society architecturally. Thus, form occupied a secondary role amid the social reality that precipitated the seizure of power by the bourgeoisie and the outbreak of the French Revolution. The polemic between Le Roy and Piranesi, according to Wittkower, belonged to the classicist doctrine. Both architects defended objective law and simplicity in architecture.[81] However, Piranesi abandoned Vitruvian principles in *Parere sull'architettura* (1765). It presents a dialogue between Didascolo (the Master) and Protopiro (the Novice). The content of the debate juxtaposed the creativity of the former (Piranesi's voice) with the rigorism of the latter. Piranesi also depicted sections of buildings covered with ornaments derived from his own invention to critique principles sanctioned by reason. His contradictory outburst depicted a decorated Roman architecture to challenge the simplicity of its Greek counterpart. Moldings, cornices, and entablatures despised any traditional sense of order by conforming to Piranesi's creative spirit. Wittkower argued that: "Archaeological material now becomes a weapon in the hands of a revolutionary modernist."[82]

Historical heritage became the raw material of creative variations in the hands of masters such as Piranesi or Jacques-François Blondel, Ledoux's teacher.

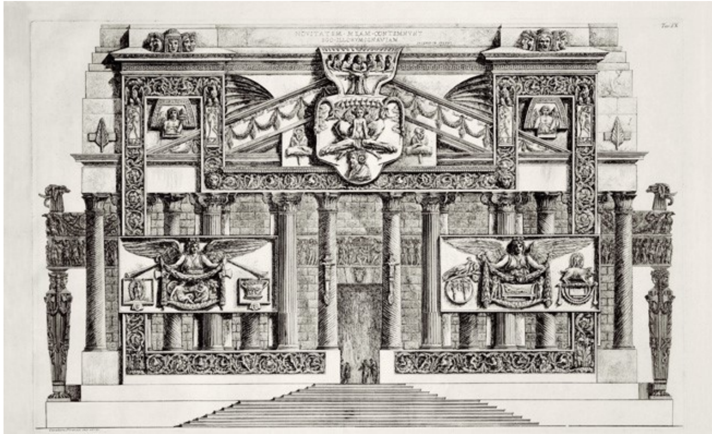


Figure 5.33. From Parere sull'architettura, Giovanni Battista Piranesi, 1765. (Colección Banco Santander)

The *Parere* revealed a latent "autonomy of the will" that Kant formulated years later. Piranesi's work attests to the perennial negotiation between individual and collective aspirations. If Kant described it as the awareness of the tension between the world of phenomena and the inner world of the individual, Piranesi cited a quote from Terence's *The Eunuch*: "It is reasonable to know yourself, and not to search into what the ancients have made if the moderns can make it."[83] Wittkower argued that this is a justification for independence in contemporary creations. Nevertheless, it seems more appropriate to regard it as a justification of an engaging and critical autonomy for the sake of precision, considering its historical context. Wittkower confirmed this justification when he argued that Piranesi did not advocate for "complete liberty" by rejecting inherited rules.[84] Piranesi's procedures were rooted in the Italian tradition, which was reversed by his creative skills. The structural character of the pediment became decorative, while ornamental features became structural. The viewer's judgment is constantly challenged when confronted with the conflicts operating in the designs of the *Parere*. Tafuri considered that the *Parere* was "the most sensitive literary testimony" of the opening of late Baroque to the ideological impetus for the revolution, while Campo Marzio was its graphic representation.

Tafuri’s devastating critique of architectural ideology elevated Campo Marzio (1762) to the status of paradigm. It embodies the ideological development of Enlightenment architecture after superseding the symbolism of Ledoux or the geometry of Durand. The seizure of power of the bourgeoisie permeated the city, and architecture assimilated its formal conformity to the urban system as a necessary consequence. The autonomy of the city rejected the order proposed by the organic constitution of form. The formal invention became useless when the singularity of building types menaced each other paradoxically, destroying their own historical formation as coherent and ordered language. Thus, the city could not be known through a formal (rational) conception. It escaped the intellect since the rationality of its historical development revealed its own irrationality: “rationality and irrationality are no longer mutually exclusive.”[85] *The Architecture of the City* is dead; long live the “equilibrium of opposites” within the city as an agonistic experience.[86] The theoretical alliance between Piranesi and Mouffe is highly pragmatic. It represents the political dimension that operates at the worldly social level of our daily experience. Thus, it is crucial to consider the location of the project to justify its contemporary relevance.

Figure 5.34. Rendition of Leonardo Bufalini’s map of Rome (1551) by Giovanni Battista Nolli, 1748.

(North Carolina State University Libraries)

Piranesi’s critical reevaluation of ancient values as heritage and as raw material for creative invention, at the same time, exploded in Campo Marzio. He argued that, according to the classical references, Campo Marzio “was that level ground (pianura) of the city between the hills and the Tiber, situated at one time outside the walls.”[87] The site had a

marginal location in ancient times. However, it accommodated a medieval city after the fall of the Roman Empire and a densely built and populated settlement during the time of Piranesi. The new condition of the eastern side of the city, where Christian basilicas, baths, and triumphal arches were abandoned, was depicted by Bufalini and Nolli. During the Empire, Campo Marzio was used for leisure activities and military exercises that have always taken place on site. Stanley Allen highlights that the marginality of the site could be defined as "otherness," as a locus excluded by the city walls where activities such as funerals, burials, tombs, military activities, physical exercises, and circuses took place.[88] But the peripheral condition of the site in relation to the Roman greatness reversed over time, and the cinematic sensitivity of Piranesi was fully aware of it:

> "The Campo no longer appeared to be an appendage of Rome, but, more properly, Rome, the sovereign of all cities, an appendage of the Campo, as Strabone has attested."[89]

Figure 5.35. From Diverse Maniere d'adornare i cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizi desunte dall'architettura Egizia, Etrusca, e Greca con un Ragionamento Apologetico in defesa dell'Architettura Egizia, e Toscana, opera del Cavaliere Giambattista Piranesi Architetto (Diverse Ways of ornamenting chimneypieces and all other parts of houses taken from Egyptian, Etruscan, and Grecian architecture with an Apologia in defense of the Egyptian and Tuscan architecture, the work of Cavaliere Giambattista Piranesi), 1769

(The MET Museum, New York / Rogers Fund, transferred from the Library)

Allen formulated a crucial question: "Why, in a project devoted to reconstructing ancient Rome, has he ignored the historic, monumental center of Rome, where the existing ruins were concentrated and stood more or less free of the contemporary building?"[90] Piranesi seemed to indirectly answer this question in *Diverse Maniere d'adornare i cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizi* (1769). He presented several

fireplaces and other architectural elements, depicting a stylistic variety derived from ancient authority. There is no reason to despise doctrines anymore. According to Wittkower, Piranesi operates autonomously beyond them: "Let us borrow from their stock, not servilely copying from others, for they would reduce architecture and the noble arts to a pitiful mechanism."[91] Accordingly, Campo Marzio is not only an urban operation that conferred greatness to what once was an appendage of an Imperial city but also a design that intervenes the sense of time. The

Figure 5.36. Scenographia Campi Martii, from Il Campo Marzio dell'antica Roma, Giovanni Battista Piranesi, 1762.

(Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum Museum purchase through gift of Eleanor and Sarah Hewitt)

autonomy that operates in this urban project is temporal. The ruins depicted in *Scenographia Campi Martii*, as Pier Vittorio Aureli proposes, can be read either as "what survived the subsequent development of the city" or as "conceptual guides for the reconstruction of a new city" showed by the *Ichnographia* plate.[92] Piranesi critically engaged with the city's ancient heritage that is about to be reinvented as the most important precedent of the alliance between urbanism and autonomy.

Figure 5.37. Ichnographiam Campi Martii Antiquae Urbis (Ichnographia of the Campus Martius of the Ancient City) Giovanni Battista Piranesi.

(Yale University Art Gallery / The Arthur Ross Collection)

Tafuri's description of Campo Marzio as "the most advanced point of Enlightenment architecture" and a warning "of the imminent danger of losing altogether the organic quality of form" seems to correspond to Kaufmann's and Wittkower's diagnosis of the era.[93] However, Kaufmann argued that the abolition of form had to precede a new form capable of representing the changing attitudes of the period. Thus, Kaufmann formulated *autonomen Architektur* building on Ledoux's architecture. For Kaufmann, Ledoux's creativity formulated an architectural and urban reflection on cultural contents in which form had only a secondary role. Thus, autonomy is concerned more with historical phenomena than essences. *Autonomen Architektur* is conversant with the sensitivity of Piranesi to the ongoing dissolution of form that has not ceased to haunt us until today. But the autonomy of architecture suffered from a crucial misinterpretation. The post-Kaufmann autonomy of architecture overlooked this dissolution and adhered to the cult of form to counter "the others" or "enemies"—such as quantitative approaches, culture, professionalism, urbanization, and capitalism.

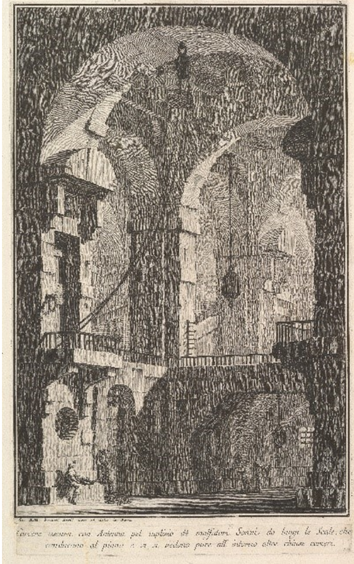
Figure 5.38. Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma, Giovanni Battista Piranesi

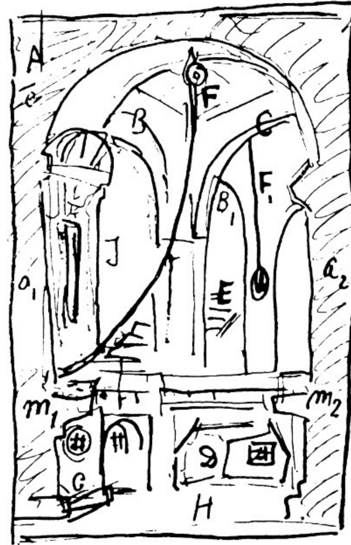
(Smithsonian Design Museum/Cooper Hewitt Collection
The John Jay Ide Collection)

The urban substance of *Campo Marzio* and *Carceri* is paradigmatic of the crisis of form and order that challenged the rational mood of the Enlightenment, the shortages of forms in life described by Flaubert that derived in a stylistic battle during the nineteenth century, and the neo-rational, formal impetus of the post-Kaufmann architectural autonomy. The latter is what Tafuri described as the drama of architecture in the 1960s and 1970s: the return of architecture "to pure

architecture; to form without utopia; in the best of cases to sublime uselessness."[94] How to avoid this "regressive utopia"? Philosophically, the architectural rationale embraced form (rationality) to repress the frustration of not controlling urban and cultural phenomena. But the postwar autonomy of architecture was not homogeneous. Aldo Rossi formulated a cultural critique to redefine the immanent parameters of architecture; Peter Eisenman developed an architectural critique of architecture based on the alienation of the modern individual; and Pier Vittorio Aureli puts forward a political critique that relies on the certainties of architecture. On the other hand, Piranesi embraced rationality and irrationality, the will to form and the will to formlessness, as the raw material of his urban reflections. Duchamp, Simmel, Munch, Citroen, Eisenstein, and Picasso followed Piranesi's steps. The avant-garde movements echoed the cultural reflections of the Venetian master. Duchamp's "Readymades" did not harmlessly depict the rift between art and society. They were critical reflections that challenged the submissive acceptance of such a rift. Simmel, Munch, and Citroen were sensitive to the shock experienced by the modern individual when encountering the anxiety and uncertainty emanated from the metropolis.[95] The architecture of the city became either a regressive utopia impermeable to anxiety and uncertainty or complicit by conforming to the destiny of the city as one more part of its technological and economic cycles. For Tafuri, the absorption of the city and its architecture into the capitalist economy resulted in an "absurd machine" during the subsequent centuries. It confirmed the transhistorical importance of Piranesi's vision. The metropolis is paradigmatic of the crisis of reason, the crisis of architectural and philosophical formalism by defying universal values and traditional knowledge.

The metropolis motivated a study that rejected purity. Georg Simmel's sociological formulations, the philosophical observations of Max Weber or Walter Benjamin, the historical studies of Karl Scheffler, or the aesthetic sensitivity of Ludwig Hilberseimer condensed the reality





Figures 5.39 and 5.40. (Left) Dark prison with a courtyard for the punishment of criminals… (Carcere oscura con Antenna pel suplizio dè malfatori…), Giovanni Battista Piranesi, ca. 1750. (Right) Diagram of Piranesi's Carcere oscura by Sergei M. Eisenstein, ca. 1947.

(The MET Museum, New York / Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1937)

of the metropolis. Hilberseimer's Hochhausstadt (Highrise City) arguably depicted not a necropolis, as he regretted decades later, but rather the "downfall of reason" as the impossibility of a "rational" architecture to tackle the complex urban reality. Eisenstein described Piranesi's etching *Carcere oscura*, that he had in his house in Potylixa, like a window that represented the concrete urban expansion of Moscow spatially. The etching inhabited a section of wall flanked by two windows in a corner. Eisenstein proceeded to "ponder over what would happen to this etching if it were brought to a state of ecstasy, if it were brought out of itself."[96] The calm contained within the limits of the work was disrupted by the effects of a powerful hurricane that suggests the ejection of staircases, ropes, arches, and stones in all directions. The perspectival quality is preserved; thus, Eisenstein argued that madness is derived from the juxtaposition of objects that cancel the possibility of a coherent composition. But the explosion of the work entails the transgression of its own limits to speak to other forms of knowledge. This operation is threefold and includes Piranesi's encounter with Cezanne; the discovery of the young Picasso, Gleizes, and Metzinger; and the unrestrained power of Picasso's disintegration of the object. Eisenstein pointed out that in the dialogue between Piranesi and Picasso, Piranesi's legacy becomes evident through the dissolution of objects.[97] This legacy exploded the object into lines and elements from which

Figure 5.41. Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, Pablo Picasso, Paris, June-July 1907.

(Museum of Modern Art New York
Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest (by exchange)
© 2021 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York)

fragments were given the task of constructing a new world out of new interrelationships between spaces and volumes. Thus, Eisenstein identified Piranesi's legacy as the construction of a new world from fragments that interact through the logic of collages. The urban condition stops being a continuous series of events apprehended unreflectively. It becomes urbanism, whose autonomous constitution articulates the dialogue of different forms of knowledge to intervene upon urbanization through design. The avant-garde depicted "the anarchic collision of commodities" that took place in the metropolis of the first half of the twentieth century.[98]

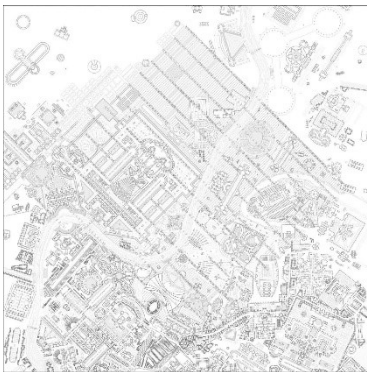
The discourse on architectural autonomy was also sensitive to Piranesi's charm. Rossi considered him, along with Canaletto, the great discoverers of the outskirts of the European city. Eisenman argues that Piranesi's Campo Marzio represents the idea of an autonomous architectural time through a critical reinvention that avoided a literal transposition of a *Zeitgeist* or *genius loci*. And Pier Vittorio Aureli suggests that Piranesi's depiction of ruins that survived the passage of time and the assaults on nature only exalted "architecture as a resistant form."[99] But Rossi did not develop his ideas on Piranesi beyond allusions, while Eisenman and Aureli intervened upon Campo Marzio, as part of the Venice Biennale 2012, to reaffirm its contemporary importance. Eisenman reduced Campo Marzio to "A Field of Diagrams," a palimpsestic record of spatial and temporal qualities that nevertheless suggests the intervention of ground as an object *à la* artificial excavations. Aureli (Dogma) proposed "A Fields of Walls" to highlight the political relations often

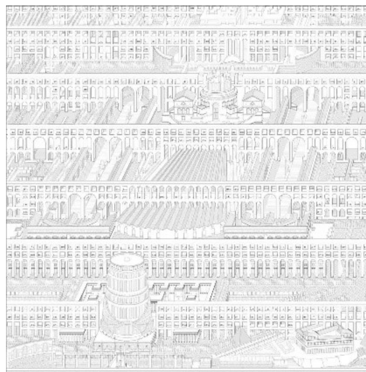
Figure 5.42. A rendering of A Field of Diagrams, Peter Eisenman, 2012.

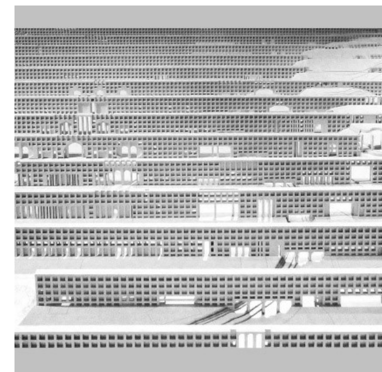
(Eisenman Architects)

repressed by a whimsical architectural production.[100] However, his substantial analysis of Campo Marzio placed it within the tradition of the *instaurato Urbis* (the installment of the city) that, since the fifteenth century, intended to reconstruct Rome through its ruins as indexes of reinvention.[101] Piranesi, with Benedictine discipline, traced the plans of each of the buildings based on his creative talent as much as archaeological evidence. Aureli rightly highlights the importance of Piranesi's use and critique, at the same time, of scientific tools of mapping through design.

Campo Marzio responded to the increasing importance of cartography as a scientific investigation during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Rome's political and cultural decline precipitated this scientific and managerial impetus amid the social unrest of the Lutheran Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation during the seventeenth century, as well as the depiction of Rome (the epicenter of Christianity) as a symbol of corruption and irrationality. These events led to the strengthening of rationalism during the eighteenth century. Cadastral cartography







Figures 5.43, 5.44, and 5.45. A Field of Walls, Project on Giovanni Battista Piranesi's Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma, Research project, Dogma, 2012.

(Dogma)

Figure 5.46. The meeting of the Via Appia and the Via Ardeatina viewed at the second milestone outside the Porta Capena, from Volume II of the "Antichità Romane," Giovanni Battista Piranesi, first issued in 1756.

(The British Museum)

came from the need to analyze the correspondences between natural and social resources. It provided a means of regional production and economic organization to articulate efficient urban management. A prominent result was Nolli's *Nuova pianta di Roma* (1748), which was "the first rigorous scientific survey of Rome." Piranesi, according to Aureli, revived in *Le antichite Romane* (1756) and Campo Marzio (1762) "the formal thinking of the instaurato Urbis as an ideological reading of the city."[102] In *Le antichite Romane*, Piranesi depicted structures and infrastructures that architecture tends to marginalize, such as tombs, aqueducts, city walls, and foundations. But where Kaufmann saw an "overabundance of incongruous features and the lack of a definitive plan of organization," Aureli identified a stone-based architecture inherited from an Etruscan past liberated from classical orders.[103] Aureli also deviated from Wittkower's and Tafuri's interpretations of the *Carceri*. Wittkower and Tafuri considered that Piranesi depicted the crisis of the traditional conception of form, order, or space and the misery of reason and human existence. At the same time, Aureli limited himself to exalt the simplicity of an architectural form "made exclusively of large stones" from which an alternative idea of the city could emerge.[104] From left to right of the political spectrum, lifeless conceptualisms and utopias have persuaded modern individuals and

Figure 5.47. Carceri d'Invenzione — The man on the rack, Giovanni Battista Piranesi.

(Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University, Gift of George W. Davison/ARTSTOR)

collectivities to daydream. But these empty illusions led us to nightmares "where the mirrors of reason multiply torture chambers."[105] Kant theorized the procedures of reason, while Piranesi depicted how rational (formal) obsessions torture us. *Carceri* attested, according to Tafuri, to the fact that both the "sleep of reason" and the "wakefulness of reason" conjure up monsters equally.[106] The empirical relevance of our design sensitivity must be aware of the arduous cultural transformations that constantly redefine our social coexistence within the urban condition. The reason is to counter the neo-rational dreams of the most intransigent post-Kaufmann architectural autonomy indifferent to contents and contexts.

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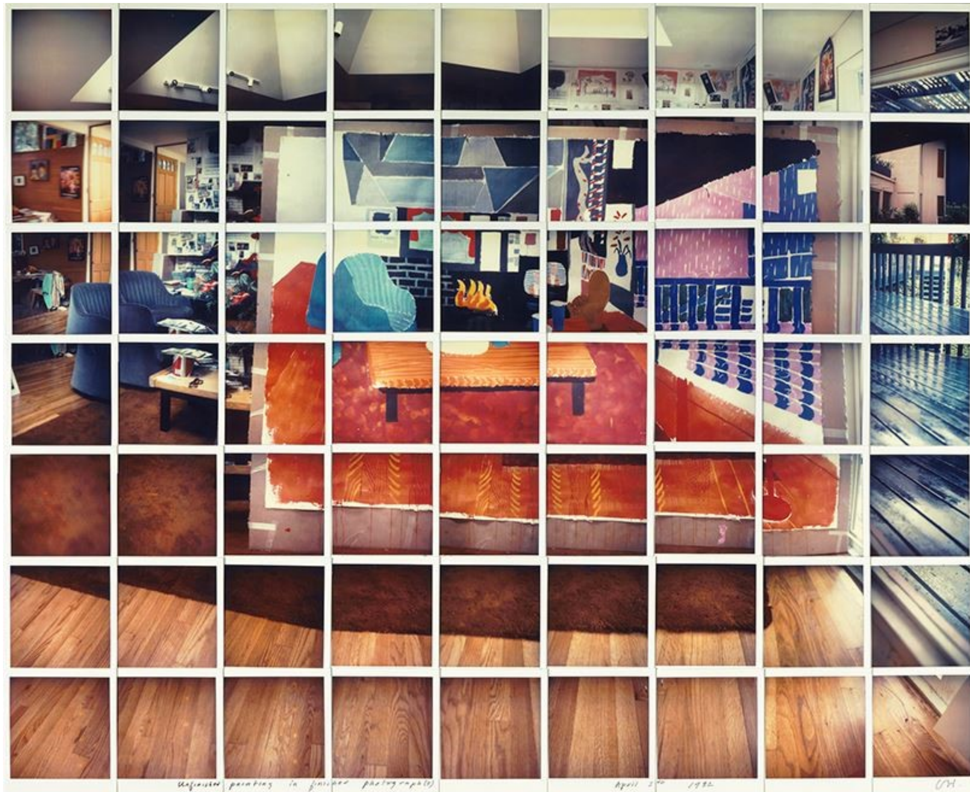


Unfinished Painting in Finished Photographs(s)
David Hockney
April 2, 1982

(David Hockney Foundation)

5.4. Space, Time, Form

The *action in space* differs from the *action of space*. The former implies an action performed within a container or mathematically conceived order, while the latter suggests the movement or transformation of the container or order itself. The fixation on form has trapped the discourse on architectural autonomy within the never-ending monologue that juxtaposes form with function. Thus, the debate tends to focus on the actions or functions performed within or without a building. The use of the building is reconsidered over time at best. An ontological trap, the mathematical conception of space, condemns this design conception to devise and manufacture spatial structures that will eventually contain actions. But this unilateral approach—the overemphasis on architectural form—discriminates the influence of actions, functions, and uses on the initial conception or subsequent transformations of spatial structures as well as their social production, as Lefebvre noted. On the other hand, space moves and mutates as cinema and design consider the creation of social, economic, and political conditions. The *action of space* counters the conscious or unconscious formal concerns of *actions performed in space*. The alliance between urbanism and autonomy argues that the resemblance between life, cinema, and the urban condition informs a potential theory of urbanism based on the correspondences between the fragmentary character of life, the logic of collages, and the transformations of space over time.

Life is usually perceived as a flow of events when it is seen from within, but life is constituted by fragments when it is seen from the distance of a critical reflection or when it confronts empirical reality. A flow of events reduces life to monotonous occurrences, while a critical reflection focuses on the interdependence between autonomous (not independent) entities and contents such as disciplines, practices, concepts, representations, institutions, ideologies, and

human and non-human beings. In 1916, the sociologist Georg Simmel formulated this complex distinction in "The Fragmentary Character of Life."[107] This oversimplified explanation is unjust but necessary due to the complexity of Simmel's argument, which is crucial to understand the complexity of the alliance between urbanism and autonomy.

An impulsive verdict on the notion of "fragment" considers only its negative connotation. Simmel argued that a fragment typically stands for incompleteness, accident, frustrated desires, or deficient (moral or material) accomplishments:

> A fragment is normally thought of as something left over when parts fall away from a preexisting whole. This indeed frequently seems to be the way in which an individual life is experienced, as though, at some hidden level or from the perspective of a divine eye, this life formed a complete whole, at one entirely with its Idea, yet breaking up into innumerable pieces when it passes over into empirical reality.[108]

For Simmel, the "real" world is comprised of specific worlds. His sociological approach proposed that if we consider that "only one world exists," we privilege "the predominance of our practical, existential preoccupations that make it difficult for us to contemplate artistic, religious, or scientific-theoretical contents other than in relative isolation."[109] It is true that each world—i.e., architectural, artistic, scientific, and religious—develops its own laws or language to articulate the contents of practical knowledge. This is precisely why architects, artists, and scientists intervene upon the urban condition from their respective approaches, which differ from each other while sharing the same contents of experience. Simmel's

Figure 5.48. Città and Frammenti urbano a NewYork (City and Urban Fragments in New York), Aldo Rossi, 1977

(© Eredi Aldo Rossi / Fondazione Aldo Rossi)

understanding of the interactions that constitute life is analogous to the interactions between the worlds that constitute the urban condition.[110] The urban contents perceived by our mind and our experience form a "patchwork," comprised of portions of knowledge. The fragmentary character of life relies on the will of each piece to transcend its own meaningful existence. Urbanism differs from the set of circumstances that comprise the urban condition.

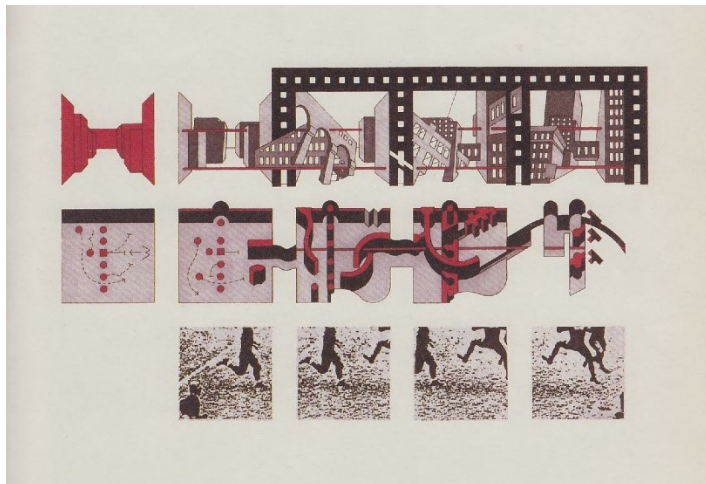


Figure 5.49. A plate from The Manhattan Transcripts, Bernard Tschumi, 1981. (© Bernard Tschumi Architects)

The resemblance between life, cinema, and the urban condition informs a potential theory of urbanism based on the correspondences between the fragmentary character of life formulated by Simmel and the logic of collages. Dada's and Cubism's fragmentary logic challenged the stable coherence of the Renaissance composition. It preceded the cultural critique of Italian realist and neo-realist cinema that conformed to temporal and spatial laws. But the architectural rationale has also attempted to engage this fragmentary logic. Two examples are Bernard Tschumi's *The Manhattan Transcripts* and Enric Miralles' photocollages. The former challenged disciplinary boundaries, while the latter focused on time and space. Tschumi studied the notions of event, movement, and space "to introduce the order of experience, the order of time—movements, intervals, sequences—for all inevitably intervene in the reading of the city."[111] It aspired to deviate from traditional modes of architectural representation such as plans, sections, and elevations. But the proposed drawings could not entirely deviate from the architectural aspiration of urban order in the first half of the twentieth century. Tschumi subjected

the representation of movements, intervals, and sequences to the order of a grid. But this visual organization was also transposed to the highly structured space in the design of Parc de la Villette. The grid of red steel structures (follies) that articulate the interaction of cultural and leisure activities attests to the intentions of an architectural rationale that tends to fit the programmatic instability of the city within the monotonous dialogue between form and function. Tschumi arguably subordinated the unpredictability of the urban condition to the structure (rationale) of architecture, whereas Miralles' photocollages proposed an epistemological approach regarding the design method that conforms to the autonomous character of an ungovernable urban condition.

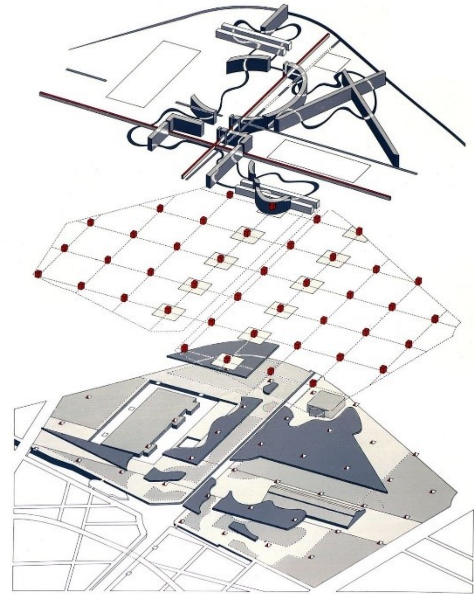


Figure 5.50. A diagram of Parc de la Villete, Paris, Bernard Tschumi, 1982-1998.

(© Bernard Tschumi Architects)

Figure 5.51. Photo collage, Enric Miralles.

(Fundació Enric Miralles / © Miralles Tagliabue EMBT)

Miralles' photocollages rebelled against the restricted medium of paintings (frame), films (screen), or architectural drawings (sheet of paper). Their main content is the *action of space* rather than *action in space*. They despised the traditional representation of perspectives to conform to the cubist logic as "a simultaneous croquis, like multiple and different visions of the same moment."[112] This mode of representation permeated the design process and paralleled Simmel's interpretation of the fragmentary character of life necessary to analyze and intervene in the urban condition:

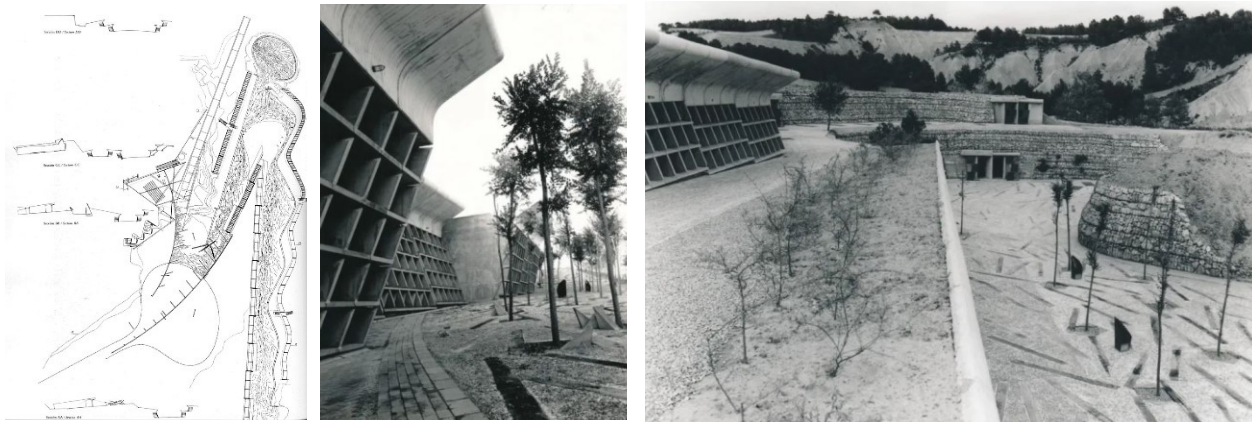
> The collage is a document that fixes a thought in a place, but it fixes it in a vague, deformed and deformable way; it fixes a reality to work with it. A project is always made of those moments, of those diverse moments, of diverse fragments that are sometimes contradictory. These collages, like a puzzle, form the representation of a space in an action that, in any case, repeats the task of projecting. They are like a surprise that continually opens a new definition of limits and contours.[113]

Figure 5.52. Photo collage, Utrecht Town Hall, Enric Miralles and Benedetta Tagliabue, 2000.

(Fundació Enric Miralles)

The action of space redefines the perception of disciplinary and representational limits because multiple approaches represented by multiple fragments define the perceived limitations of the medium. Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao was part of a complex urban strategy, but its architectural character conformed to the limitations and benefits of its technique. Its horizon was software. However, Miralles' projects—the Scottish Parliament Building, Igualada Cemetery (with Carme Pinos), and the Santa Caterina Market—resulted from the manipulation and distortion of the available technique. The photograph experiments of the British artist David Hockney

complied more with Miralles' rebellion against the nature of methods than Tschumi's paradoxical reinforcement of a gridded order to tame the urban condition with architectural rationale.



Figures 5.53, 5.54 and 5.55. Igualada Cemetery, Enric Miralles and Carme Pinos, 1985-1994. (Left) Plan; (Center, Right) perspectives. (Frances L. Loeb Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Design / © Miralles Tagliabue EMBT

Hockney argued that the life of a photograph differed from the life of a drawing and a painting. A photograph represents a frozen instant, while a drawing and a painting represent several hours that exceed the few minutes that the spectator looks at them. Hockney used Rembrandt as an example. He scrutinized his face for hours and hours; only this accumulation of time and a persistent effort made the painting possible. But a photograph is a frozen moment, a hundredth of a second. Thus, if we look at a photograph even for few seconds, we will look at it more time than the camera did. For Hockney, this difference is visible in the photograph, in the technique, in the medium.[114] In the 1970s, he initially manipulated the method of presenting multiple viewpoints in a single work by using composite Polaroids. The result was a gridded work. But unlike the single viewpoint of the film-like diagrams of Eisenman's houses or Tschumi's *The Manhattan Transcripts*, Hockney's grid of Polaroids reveal a more accurate experience of seeing the world collectively: "I quickly discovered that I didn't have to match things up at all. In fact, I

couldn't possibly match them, and it wasn't necessary. The joiners were much closer to the way we actually look at things, closer to the truth of the experience."[115]

Figure 5.56. Still Life Blue Guitar, David Hockney, 1982.

(David Hockney Foundation)

Figure 5.57. Nicholas Wilder Studying Picasso, David Hockney, Los Angeles, 1982.

(David Hockney Foundation)

Eisenman and Tschumi used "I" (the first person) as an observer, while Hockney and Miralles used "we" (its plural form) to represent a collective experience of the world. But the composite Polaroids turned into photocollages over time, using a Pentax 110 that eliminated the

Figure 5.58. Robert Littman Floating in My Pool, David Hockney, 1982.

(David Hockney Foundation)

white borders of the photos. The new works depicted urban and natural landscapes replacing the intimate scenes of the first works. The lack of Polaroid's characteristic white grid prolonged the photocollages' creation process. Hockney produced notes and diagrams based on his memory while waiting for the printed photos to order the composition. The Grand Canyon photo collage is an example of his attempt to transpose the lived experience of the landscape into a two-dimensional work. Like the historical memory of Rossi's typological studies, "memory became part of the process" as a mediator between the methods, the techniques, and the themes of artistic production.[116] Like a drawing, according to Hockney,

> The camera is a medium. . . It's neither an art, a technique, a craft, nor a hobby—it's a tool. It's an extraordinary drawing tool. It's as if I, like most ordinary photographers, had previously been taking part in some long-established culture in which pencils were only used for making dots—there's an obvious sense of liberation that comes when you realize that you can make lines![117]

Figure 5.59. The Grand Canyon Looking North II, Collage No. 2, David Hockney, 1982-1986.

(David Hockney Foundation)

Art is not an innocuous language; it is an analytical language that questions the arrogance of "the expert," Dogmatism, lifeless conceptualism, and the "objectivity" of science. Photography, cinema, and any artistic expression are not mere communicational devices that reflect and even denounce the generosity and deficiencies of life. Their respective techniques represent

Figure 5.60. Frame from "In the Mood for Love," Wong Kar-wai, 2001.

(Block 2 Distribution/Block 2 Pictures Inc/Paradis Films/Jet Tone Films
© 2020 Block 2 Pictures Inc.
© 2019 Jet Tone Contents Inc)

opportunities to intervene in the contents of empirical reality through the distortion of means and methods. The Kuleshov effect, described by Alfred Hitchcock as "pure cinematics," intervenes in reality to manipulate the gentleness or lustfulness of an old man that observes a young woman based on the "political" choice that defines the frames sequence. Thus, cinema is not a means to revolutionize reality, but cinema itself is the revolution of reality. The sociopolitical sensitivity of Surrealism, Dadaism, and Neorealism in Europe; the frankness and irreverence of Margaret Bourke-White, Robert Frank, Andy Warhol, and Gordon Matta-Clark in the United States; the hopeless reality depicted by Luis Buñuel, Alejandro González Iñárritu, Guillermo del Toro, Kátia Lund, and Fernando Meirelles in Latin America; and the sensuality of movements and atmospheres captured by Akira Kurosawa and Wong Kar-Wai in Asia are paradigmatic of the ambitious cinema that is not satisfied with representing reality but aspires to present a distorted reality to revolutionize our conceptions and preconceptions of the human condition.

Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, 1958
René Burri

(Magnum Photos
© René Burri)

5.5. Autonomy and the Twenty-First Century

> "We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time."

T. S. Eliot's words suggest our return, with new eyes, to the time when *autonomen Architektur* was retroactively formulated to evaluate the relevance of autonomy as a design method today. The cultural and historical heritage of the Kantian "autonomy of the will" was reduced to a disciplinary obsession or simply omitted within design as the twentieth century matured. But the scope of autonomy transcends the narcissism of disciplines, individuals, collectivities, and political ideologies entrenched within the illusion of purity or moral superiority to the detriment of the most fundamental political dimension that permeates our daily social coexistence. Autonomy is a sociological, psychological, philosophical, political, aesthetic, economic, and design issue. The disciplinary interpretation of autonomy is relevant within design today. It asks rhetorically: What is design? What is the role of design within society? The correspondence between the self-governing condition of disciplinary knowledge and autonomy is a means to produce knowledge. Thus, it must not be promoted as a goal that exacerbates the coercive impulse of disciplines to tame and own "docile bodies," as Michel Foucault argued. In the twenty-first century, disciplinary research must paradoxically promote an epistemological struggle that scrutinizes the validity of disciplinary knowledge within society through a self-critique. This self-critique must deviate from self-affirmation to build on Kant's critique of reason by reason. The interpretations of autonomy as disciplinary and as a design method do not exclude each other today. Their alliance promotes a projective theory based on the empirical evidence found in the political dimension of our daily

social coexistence. It counters the lifeless conceptualism of a disciplinary narcissism indifferent to the social, economic, political, racial, gender, and climate crises that define and constantly redefine the urban and the human condition. Early cherry blossoms and burning skies in dark orange, among other phenomena, are disturbing but often beautiful, or rather sublime, remainders of an ongoing climate crisis.

Figure 5.61. Inokashira Park in Tokyo, March 30, 2021.

(AFP-JIJI/The Japan Times)

"Japan sees earliest cherry blossoms on record as climate warms."

—The Japan Times

Figure 5.62. San Francisco skyline. A view from Treasure Island with the skies "burning" in orange due to multiple wildfires affecting California and Oregon. September 9, 2020.

(Photo by Jessica Christian/The San Francisco Chronicle/Getty Images)

Any critical reflection requires some distance from the object of critique to evaluate it. The passage of time guarantees the historical distance necessary to study the progression of architectural autonomy during the last century and the cultural conditions that influenced its formulation. The introduction of autonomy into architecture evolved from a cultural concern derived from the political turmoil of the interwar period to a disciplinary or formal reduction precipitated by the social unrest of the second half of the twentieth century. The historical distance allows for the reevaluation of autonomy within architecture and its use as a productive synthesis between individual and collective aspirations. This distance and fusion enable architectural autonomy to tackle the challenges of urbanization that the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated.

Emil Kaufmann's formulation of *autonomen Architektur* advocated the value of impurity in an era when purity was racially promoted to denigrate "the others." It took a lot of courage for a Jewish scholar to contradict a nationalist ideology in 1933. This was the same year Nazism rose to power, and Kaufmann published *Von Ledoux Bis Le Corbusier: Ursprung Und Entwicklung Der Autonomen Architektur* (From Ledoux to Le Corbusier: Origin and Development of Autonomous Architecture). His reference to Paul Klopfer's *Von Palladio Bis Schinkel: Eine Charakteristik der Baukunst des Klassizismus* (From Palladio to Schinkel: A Characteristic of the Architecture of Classicism), published in 1911, demanded the same importance given to Karl Friedrich Schinkel's German Neoclassicism for the French architecture of the Enlightenment and the Revolution.[118]

Klopfer focused on the lineage that linked Renaissance tradition and German Neoclassicism. At the same time, Kaufmann presented Modern architecture as a historical "continuation" that linked the sociopolitical concerns of Ledoux and Le Corbusier rather than a "break" with the past. Thus, Ledoux's architecture represented the transition from the heteronomy of the Renaissance-Baroque system to the autonomous development of the parts that constitute an architectural whole. The Saltworks of Chaux, according to Kaufmann, exemplify the change. The first project (1771) conformed to the Renaissance coherence of a whole; its courtyard scheme was symmetrical. But the second project (1774) organized an autonomous set of masses in a semi-circle; the formal character of the autonomous units corresponded to their functional sovereignty rejecting their subordination to the laws of a coherent whole. The transition was organic and gradual. It resulted in profound cultural changes in which formal transformations can only be identified as symptoms. Kaufmann argued that the emerging pavilion-like architectural system of the second project of the Saltworks of Chaux paralleled the construction of the modern

consciousness of the individual (*Individualbewusstseins*) that was cause and consequence of the cultural transformations of Western culture during the eighteenth century. It represented an emerging "architecture of isolation" (*isolierneden Architektur*).[119] An impulsive interpretation of a Kaufmannian isolated architecture resulted in the conceptual detachment that identified culture, society, capitalism, urbanization, and other disciplines as enemies. But the complex cultural substance of the Kantian "autonomy of the will," inherent to Kaufmann's *autonomen Architektur*, entails the productive and unsolvable tension between the starry heavens (the external world) and the moral law (the inner world of the individual). Thus, Kaufmann's introduction of autonomy into architecture has a self-evident dimension that exposes the social character of the disciplinary concerns within design. This social character suggests the scrutiny of what we are as individuals, designers, members of society, or cultural heirs. Thus, a disciplinary exploration committed to the production of knowledge must build on (disciplinary, racial, cultural) impurity rather than a dangerous purity.

The history of knowledge is the history of humanity; its consolidation relies on correspondences and interdependencies rather than the *ideology of morality* or the *morality of ideology* that tends toward isolation. The Latin American experience has taught us that the coalescence of Aztec, Mayan, or Inca heritage and a Spanish or Portuguese culture enriched "an aggregate of traditions, races, beliefs, and cultures proceeding from the four cardinal points."[120] The Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa describes the cultural greatness of his country as follows: "If we investigate only a little, we discover that Peru, like the Aleph of Borges, is a small format of the entire world. What an extraordinary privilege for a country not to have an identity because it has all of them!"[121] The liberal enthusiasm would celebrate Vargas Llosa's pluralism. At the

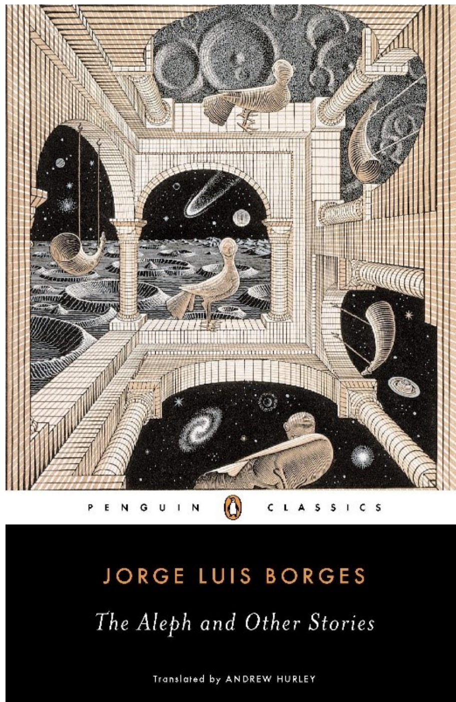


Figure 5.63. A cover of an English version of Jorge Luis Borges's The Aleph, which begins evoking Hamlet: "O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a King of infinite space."

(© Penguin Group/ Penguin Classics)

same time, ideological blindness would embrace the homogenizing reduction of the entire world to the Peruvian context, of course, for the sake of collectivity.

On the other hand, as a culturally sensitive design method, autonomy advocates the search for (individual and collective) identities, not as a goal but as a means to advance an epistemological search. The autonomous search for an individual, collective or disciplinary identity is relational. It operates outwards (agonistically) rather than inwards (antagonistically). The productive tension between the individual and the collectivity, urbanism and society, and design and urbanization, constantly redefines our identities based on a "constitutive outside," as Chantal Mouffe explains. The more design (the individual) engages with the urban condition (the collective), the more design needs to scrutinize the validity of its own premises to tackle everchanging urbanization.[122]

Autonomy re-emerges as a culturally sensitive design index when individuals and collectivities face existential crises. Kaufmann's *autonomen Architektur* was sensitive to the sociopolitical paranoia that eventually led to World War II. In comparison, the second impulse of architectural autonomy responded to the crisis of inherited knowledge during the second half of the twentieth century. The autonomy of architecture failed to tackle the postwar urban transformations throughout the world as much as the remnants of the Modern movement. The functional character of the latter overtook sociopolitical concerns and limited its sensitivity to the

needs of the era: a restrictive functional order fell short of an evolving human order. The demise of the Modern movement fragmented the design sensitivity toward the urban condition. The aesthetic concerns of Team X and the biological metaphors of Japanese Metabolism derived directly from an agonizing functional Modernism. A revision of Modern architecture and critique of modernity was theoretically and practically undertaken throughout the world. In Italy and the United States, this critical project eventually led to the return to the discipline as a response to the technoscientific and quantitative approaches that increasingly permeated architecture amid the social unrest of the 1960s and 1970s. This dissertation studied the correspondences and differences between Aldo Rossi's and Peter Eisenman's work. Their conceptions of architectural autonomy were antipodal despite both coincided with the return to the discipline. Rossi elevated the engagement with the cultural values of other disciplines as a precondition to achieve the autonomy of architecture, that is, the redefinition of disciplinary parameters to counter the means-ends logic of professionalism and the degradation of the modern city. Rossi built on Kaufmann's idea that the continuity of the sociopolitical program of Modern architecture originated in the eighteenth century, while Eisenman's architecture dismissed historical continuity and urban concerns. Rossi's political concerns were not restricted to his political affiliation to the Communist party. His political sensitivity operated as a cultural critique that exposed the social, economic, and political responsibilities of design regarding urban development.

On the other hand, Eisenman's interest in the internal history of architecture was paradigmatic of an apolitical attitude that disregarded the sociopolitical heritage of the European chapter of Modern architecture. This exclusionary redefinition of the disciplinary parameters of architecture overlooked the cultural implications of the rise of mass culture, the invention of the transistor (1947), the outbreak of the Cuban Revolution (1959), the space race during the Cold

War (1959), the pill to control human birth (1959), the strength of the Feminist movement, the Civil Rights act (1964), the Vietnam War (1954-1975), or the oil crisis (1973). Eisenman's disciplinary approach opposed the alienating conditions of modern societies. But his purely "objective" architectural system detached from the external world; it became obedient to these alienating forces by reducing culture to prejudices and mere subjectivism.

The exclusionary, if not exclusive, approach that belligerently distinguished between architecture and "the other" survived the turn of the century. Pier Vittorio Aureli's antagonistic architecture assumed that disciplinary concerns necessarily derive into an alienating conceptualization devoid of the political dimension of "the idea" of the city. His overemphasis on the interactions inherent to political theory excluded philosophy due to its difficulty and, in his opinion, it is boring. His interest in *The Project of Autonomy* was politically motivated exclusively. Thus, he dismissed the aesthetic, sociological, psychological, and philosophical questions derived from the initial formulation of *autonomen Architektur.* The constitutive parameters of architecture operated internally within "the will to objectivity" of Eisenman's architectural system, while the political character of Aureli's conception of architectural form is relational. But it is antagonistic enough to identify urbanization and capitalism as "the other" as enemies. Thus, the relational premises that define Aureli's idea of architecture resolve themselves internally, that is, against *what architecture is not*. The fact that radical antagonisms still permeate our social, economic, political interactions until today does not prevent the identification of antagonistic exacerbations as anachronic. The rise of nationalism within party politics throughout the world has been a cause and consequence of racial, gender, environmental, social, economic, and political tensions. These tensions demand a new democratic consensus at the individual, collective, and disciplinary levels based on respect rather than exclusion or an ideologically exacerbated antagonism.[123]

Antagonism is inherent to the daily political interactions that permeate social coexistence. But it can be mediated by agonism rather than exacerbated by recognizing “others” as friends or enemies. The political progression of autonomy within architecture is heterogeneous. The initial formulation of *autonomen Architektur*, in the first half of the twentieth century, assimilated the political changes that have influenced Western societies since the eighteenth century as part of the development of design. The second impulse of architectural autonomy polarized design choices into political and apolitical approaches that oscillated between the repressed militancy of a cultural critique and the explicit apathy of illusory objectivity during the second half of the century. In the twenty-first century, the redefinition of architectural autonomy relied on the anachronic antagonism of political theory to the detriment of the search for a new agonistic coexistence at an urban/human level and the philosophical genesis of autonomy. In contrast to the exacerbation of “certainties” that differentiate between “the one” and “the other,” this dissertation advocates the epistemological exploration of new methods, knowledge, contents, and contexts that cannot be promoted or defended *a priori* because their legibility simply escapes traditional disciplinary standards.

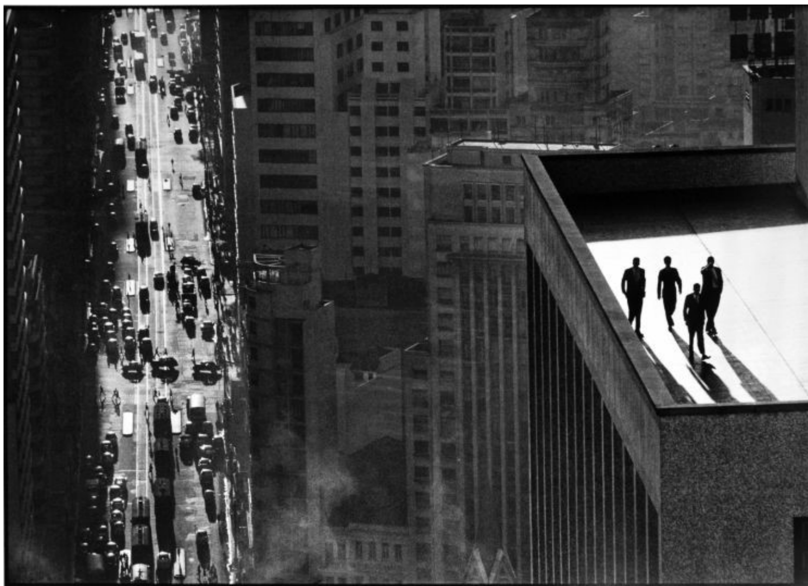


Figure 5.64. Photo by René Burri, São Paulo, Brazil,1960.

(Tate Modern
Presented by Pierre Brahm 2015
© Estate of René Burri / DACS 2021)

Our limited knowledge of the starry heavens, the universe, does not imply the non-existence of atmospheric, biological, or geological conditions of the Moon or Mars that will eventually be discovered and known. The reality of the universe exceeds the limited capacity of our senses and reason, as well as the universal truths of our disciplinary and empirical knowledge. The enigmatic urban condition parallels the mystery of the universe as it encourages our engagement with the abyss of the individual or disciplinary knowledge. The exploration of the urban condition eventually reveals unknown disciplinary premises that operate beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. The curiosity of inter-disciplinary research differs from the comfort of interdisciplinary collaboration, which relies on the coalescence of diverse disciplines toward a common goal without questioning the validity of disciplinary premises within a social realm. The urgency of the answer eclipses the consideration of self-criticism through the reevaluation of design premises. This dissertation proposes an inter-disciplinary exploration that operates in the unexplored space where traditional disciplines do not govern: the abyss of the urban and human condition.

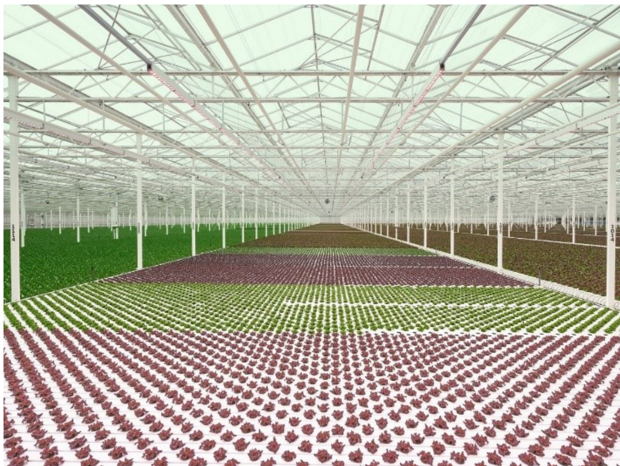


Figure 5.65. Photo by Luca Locatelli, "The Future of Farming," 2020.

(© Luca Locatelli, Italy)

Design answers must, in turn, question the design premises that motivated them in the first place. The universality of disciplinary knowledge discriminates the relativity of discrete scenarios; thus, disciplinary truths are valid everywhere at any time. But the universality of disciplinary truths collapses when our inability to fully comprehend the mysteries of the universe calls for the reevaluation of disciplinary premises to engage with the

abyss of urbanization. Rossi's and Eisenman's architectural autonomy relied on the immanent parameters of the discipline. But how can we productively engage with an ever-changing urban condition through the universality of disciplinary knowledge? How can we tackle ever-changing urbanization through timeless and universal disciplinary premises?

The twenty-first-century city and countryside differ from their twentieth-century counterparts. Electric cars differ from Henry Ford's innovations. An increasingly digitalized farming differs from the agricultural production of the industrial heyday. Once upon a time, information was a means to profit. Today, information is reduced to data, which is exploited for a profit. Thus, new cultural challenges demand the production of new knowledge. This new knowledge includes the paradoxical architectural legibility of the favelas, the emerging *città diffusa* (diffuse city), the disturbing heritage of the industrial city, the racial tensions and migration crises derived from the new impulse of nationalism within international politics, the centralization of urban services, the overaccumulation of capital, the fallacious correspondence between technological development and human progress, the pathetic overemphasis on the "objectivity" of science over the "subjectivity" of art, the contempt for aesthetic judgments supposedly devoid of cultural substance, the futile battle of rationality (architectural form) against irrationality (the ungovernable urban condition), the stubborn antagonistic relationship between nature and urban development, and the architectural paranoia that dissociate disciplinary concerns from society.

Autonomy becomes a design reflection on culture when conceived as a design method sensitive to the world of phenomena. The post-Kaufmann architectural autonomy analyzed cultural conditions to redefine the parameters of the discipline amid the social unrest of the second half of the twentieth century. Its analytical point of departure was culture and history, but its goal was the discipline of architecture. In contrast, the alliance between urbanism and autonomy aspires to be a

design reflection on culture and is paradoxically based on disciplinary concerns that are constantly questioned by a relentless urban and human condition. It presents the question: How can it avoid falling into historicism or coercive disciplinary frameworks? As mentioned, autonomy is an aesthetic, economic, sociological, philosophical, political, and psychological issue. It is also an overarching human issue and a design method, sensitive but not subservient to cultural phenomena. Culture is at once autonomy's raw material and its object of criticism. In this way, design is not an end; it is an approach, a form of knowledge, and a way to engage with the life of empirical reality.

Who am I? Who are we? The post-Kaufmann architectural autonomy responded to these questions by redefining the architectural parameters based on the certainty of purity (Dogma) rather than the impurity inherent to curiosity. Its goal, its horizon, is the discipline even though the philosophical genesis of autonomy is a human issue. Who am I as a designer, as an individual, as a member of a collectivity? The most radical interpretations of postwar architectural autonomy ended up condemning disciplinary concerns to isolation and cultural irrelevance at the turn of the century. The "critical" and somewhat alienating approach of design—based on an impulsive interpretation of autonomy—has failed to provide an alternative to the pressing social and cultural concerns derived from an emerging informational economy that calls into question our individual and collective identities as well as our dogmatic knowledge. The more we learn and the more we confirm the limited capacity of our senses and reason, the more we need to question our inherited knowledge and beliefs. The alliance between urbanism and autonomy advocates transitioning from interdisciplinary interventions of convenience to a more critical and theoretical framework of new values, knowledge, methods, contents, contexts, experiences, and aesthetics.

Notes

[1] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, Kindle Edition, 2015), 3.
[2] OED Online, "interdisciplinary, adj," March 2021, Oxford University Press, accessed March 31, 2021, https://www-oed-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/Entry/97720?redirectedFrom=interdisciplinary
[3] Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana, 1977), 155.
[4] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture, Information Age Series*, Volume I (United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Wiley, Kindle Edition, 2010).
[5] Interview with Guillermo del Toro, Sitges Film Festival, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQfyk0CjJ5Y&t=155s
[6] Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, Press Release on the poverty exacerbated by the pandemic (Pandemia provoca aumento en los niveles de pobreza sin precedentes en las últimas décadas e impacta fuertemente en la desigualdad y el empleo): https://www.cepal.org/es/comunicados/pandemia-provoca-aumento-niveles-pobreza-sin-precedentes-ultimas-decadas-impacta
[7] In 1886, Friedrich Nietzsche wrote a statement that perfectly describes our contemporary critique of the morality of the critical monopoly that has kidnapped design: "In Europe these days, moral sentiment is just as refined, late, multiple, sensitive, and subtle as the 'science of morals' (which belongs with it) is young, neophyte, clumsy, and crude.... Precisely because moral philosophers had only a crude knowledge of moral facta, selected arbitrarily and abbreviated at random – for instance, as the morality of their surroundings, their class, their church, their Zeitgeist, their climate and region, – precisely because they were poorly informed (and not particularly eager to learn more) about peoples, ages, and histories, they completely missed out on the genuine problems involved in morality, problems that only emerge from a comparison of many different moralities." See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Cambridge Texts in the *History of Philosophy* (United Kingdon, New York: Cambridge University Press, Kindle Edition, 2002), Location 1939-1953.
[8] Rem Koolhaas, "Whatever Happened to Urbanism?" *Design Quarterly*, no. 164, Sprawl (Spring, 1995), 28.
[9] An autonomous urbanism is sensitivity to what Manuel Castells called "informationalism," a new mode of development that led to a new social structure since the last decades of the twentieth century. A mode of development represents the technological processes that operate through labor to produce surplus. The surplus of the agrarian mode "results from quantitative increases of labor and natural resources (particularly land) in the production process, as well as from the natural endowment of these resources." The industrial mode introduces new energy sources to the production process and decentralizes "the use of energy throughout the production and circulation processes." The informational mode uses "the technology of knowledge generation, information processing, and symbol communication" as sources of productivity. Castells argues that knowledge and information are common to all modes of development but the informational mode appropriated "knowledge itself as the main source of productivity." The shift from tangible (books, buildings, cars) to intangible (software, ideas) assets challenges traditional notions of form, function, or place through notions of speed, space, or intensity. See Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture*, Information Age Series, Volume I (United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Wiley, Kindle Edition, 2010), 16.
[10]See the documentary "A Year With John Cage - How To Get Out Of The Cage (2012)" by Frank Scheffer. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UaNGeuDuXl4&t=678s Accessed on March 29, 2021.
[11] Michelangelo Antonioni, Marga. Cottino-Jones, Carlo Di Carlo, and Giorgio. Tinazzi, The Architecture of Vision: Writings and Interviews on Cinema (New York; St. Paul, MN: Marsilio Publishers, 1996), 192.
[12] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols,* Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (New York: Cambridge University Press, Kindle Edition, 2005), 166.
[13] Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization* (New York: Random House, Vintage Books Edition, Kindle Edition, 1988), 273.
[14] Ibid., 273.
[15] Manfredo Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture*, 1st US ed., Icon Editions (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 5.
[16] Ibid., 7.
[17] Denise Scott Brown, "Urban Design at Fifty: A Personal View," in Alex Krieger and William S. Saunders, *Urban Design* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 82.
[18] David Crane's idea of "the city of a thousand designers" also appealed to Scott Brown. This formulation conveys the inclusion of the urban designer within a democratic hierarchy of decisions that, consciously or unconsciously, impact the urban condition.
[19] In 1980, Scott Brown refused to call herself an urban designer or architect-planner to accept her twofold condition as architect and planner: "Architecture is the window through which I view my world, personal and professional. The span between architecture and planning—and then some—is the range of concerns that I bring to my work. Urban design is a type of design I do or am involved in. This is not a question of scale but of approach." See Ibid., 76.
[20] Ibid., 84.
[21] This idea is embodied by Rem Koolhaas's description of his work: "OMA is an international practice operating within the traditional boundaries of architecture and urbanism. AMO, a research and design studio, applies architectural thinking to domains beyond." OMA's description does not even mention urban design, but AMO's method conforms to the way urban design operates as a cultural, contextual, often populist, architectural redemption from the indifference of a detached interpretation of architectural autonomy. See OMA Office for Metropolitan Architecture, https://oma.eu/office
[22] "Interview with Aldo Rossi," *Process Architecture, Venice: It's Real and Imaginary Place*, no. 75 (1989), 9.
[23] Ludwig Hilberseimer, *The New Regional Pattern: Industries and Gardens, Workshops and Farms*, Legal Classics Library (Chicago: Paul Theobald, 1949), 120.
[24] Hilberseimer, *The New City*, 56.
[25] This implied that an invisible force is inherent in form: "In a state of nature, the form exists because of the function, and this something behind the form is neither more nor less than a manifestation...of the infinite create spirit.... It sounds mysterious and profound; in reality, it means only that which is seeking or finding, its form." See Hilberseimer, *Contemporary Architecture*, 95.
[26] Ibid., 95.
[27] Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Disappearing City* (New York: W.F. Payson, 1932), 16.
[28] Ibid., 16.
[29] Ibid., 17.

[30] Hilberseimer, The New City, 166.
[31] Ibid., 149.
[32] Ibid., 20-23.
[33] Ibid., 22.
[34] Ibid., 28.
[35] Le Corbusier, and International Congresses for Modern Architecture, The Athens Charter (New York, Grossman Publishers, 1973), 95.
[36] Le Corbusier: "Because we have misunderstood the rules, the fields have become empty, the cities have been filled beyond all reason, industrial concentrations have taken place haphazardly, workers' dwellings have become slums. No provision has been made for safeguarding man. The result is almost uniformly catastrophic in every country. It is the bitter fruit of a hundred years of undirected machinism." See Ibid, 105.
[37] It was not a coincidence that Mies van der Rohe used St. Augustine's definition of order to describe the rationalism of Hilberseimer's urban work: "The disposition of equal and unequal things, attributing to each its place." See Ludwig Hilberseimer, *The New City: Principles of Planning* (Chicago: Paul Theobald, 1944), XV.
[38] Quoted by Fritz Neumeyer, "Mies as Self-Educator," in *Achilles*, Rolf, Kevin Harrington, Charlotte Myhrum, Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe, and Illinois Institute of Technology. Mies Van Der Rohe - Architect as Educator: June 6 through July 12, 1986: Catalogue for the Exhibition (Chicago: Mies Van Der Rohe Centennial Project, Illinois Institute of Technology, 1986), 29.
[39] Ibid., 28.
[40] Hilberseimer, Ludwig., Richard Anderson, and Pier Vittorio Aureli, *Metropolisarchitecture and Selected Essays*, Columbia University GSAPP, Sourcebooks; 2 (New York: GSAPP Books, 2012), 112.
[41] Ibid., 112.
[42] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (United Kingdom: Penguin Classics, Penguin Books Ltd, Kindle Edition, 2003), 14.
[43] Ibid., 14.
[44] Hilberseimer, *Metropolisarchitecture*, Introduction (An end to speculation).
[45] The urban dimension of Hilberseimer's autonomy perhaps reached its apotheosis in *The New City* when a metaphysical approach based on aesthetic values allied with functional and utilitarian concerns to propose a sophisticated cultural critique. The book begins with Walt Whitman's "Where the Great City Stands" to introduce an autonomy that paradoxically emerged from our cultural successes and failures to defend its own internal authority: "Where no monuments exist to heroes but in the common words and deeds,
Where thrift is in its place, and prudence is in its place,
Where the men and women think lightly of the laws,
Where the slave ceases, and the master of slaves ceases,
Where the populace rise at once against the never-ending audacity of elected persons,
Where fierce men and women pour forth as the sea to the whistle of death pours its sweeping and unript waves,
Where outside authority enters always after the precedence of inside authority…" See Hilberseimer, *The New City.*
[46] Le Corbusier, "Sixth Lecture 'A man = a dwelling, Dwellings = a city,'" Le Corbusier and Tim Benton, *Precisions on the Present State of Architecture and City Planning* (Zurich, Switzerland: Park Books, 2015).
[47] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, expanded edition (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 2.
[48] Mouffe considered that power relations are inherent to any social order. Consequently, any political consensus that suppresses exclusion in its search of a harmonious society cannot be attained: "the emancipatory ideal cannot be formulated in terms of a realization of any form of 'communism.'" See Chantal Mouffe, Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically (London, Brooklyn: Verso Book, Kindle Edition, 2013), Location 44.
[49] Ibid., Location 13.
[50] Mouffe builds on a "constitute outside" proposed by Henry Staten and derived from Jacques Derrida's notions of "difference." Ibid., 4.
[51] The sociologist Manuel Castells defines the conditions that govern the actual informational systems of development as follows: "In a world of global flows of wealth, power, and images, the search for identity, collective or individual, ascribed or constructed, becomes the fundamental source of social meaning." See Ibid., 4-6. And Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, 3.
[52] Mouffe, *Agonistics,* 9.
[53] Ibid., 9.
[54] Gustave Flaubert quoted by Jacques Derrida, Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge Classics, 1978), 1.
[55] It advanced "a knowledge of architecture in exclusively quantitative terms, eliminating the qualitative question from the debate on the contemporary city, as it inevitably implies the limits of building and the urban layout as a visible form of a metropolitan reality that instead requires a completely different theoretical approach." See Andrea Branzi, "No-Stop City," in *Weak and Diffuse Modernity: The World of Projects at the Beginning of the 21st Century* (Milano: Skira, 2006), 70.
[56] Ibid., 71.
[57] Ibid., 78.
[58] Paz, El Laberinto de la Soledad, 222.
[59] Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* (U.S.A.: The Monacelli Press, Digital Edition (Kindle), 2014), Location 3465.
[60] Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically* (London, Brooklyn: Verso Book, Kindle Edition, 2013), 3.
[61] Koolhaas, Delirious New York, Location 3473.
[62] Branzi, *Weak and Diffuse Modernity*, 9.
[63] Ibid., 140.
[64] Paola Viganò, Christian Arnsperger, Martina Barcelloni, Elena Cogato-Lanza, and Chiara Cavalieri, "Rethinking Urban Form: Switzerland as a "Horizontal Metropolis," *Urban Planning* 2, no. 1 (2017), 89.
[65] Branzi investigated "the vast and deep consequences produced by information technologies and the weak logics they create" at the beginning of this century. See Branzi, *Weak and Diffuse Modernity*, 15.
[66] Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture, Writing Architecture* (London, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, Kindle Edition, 2011) Location 26.
[67] Ibid., Location 42.
[68] Ibid., 51-60.
[69] Ibid., 65-68.
[70] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, expanded edition (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 2.

[71] Octavio Paz, Interview by Joaquin Soler Serrano, 1977. https://www.rtve.es/alacarta/videos/a-fondo/octavio-paz-fondo-1977/1349841/
[72] Mouffe, Agonistics, 7-9.
[73] Emil Kaufmann, *Architecture in the Age of Reason; Baroque and Postbaroque in England, Italy, and France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), 95.
[74] Rudolf Wittkower, "Piranesi's Creed," in Studies in the Italian Baroque, Collected Essays of Rudolf Wittkower (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), 236-246.
[75] Kaufmann, *Architecture in the Age of Reason*, 106.
[76] Ibid., 106.
[77] Ibid., 107.
[78] Ibid., 105.
[79] Manfredo Tafuri, Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1976), 18.
[80] Ibid., 18.
[81] Wittkower, "Piranesi's Creed," 236.
[82] Ibid., 244.
[83] Ibid., 242.
[84] Ibid., 244.
[85] Manfredo Tafuri, Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1976), 15.
[86] Ibid., 16.
[87] Quoted by Stanley Allen, "Piranesi's 'Campo Marzio': An Experimental Design," *Assemblage*, No. 10 (Dec., 1989), 72.
[88] Ibid., 75.
[89] Ibid., 75.
[90] Ibid., 72.
[91] Wittkower, "Piranesi's Creed," 246.
[92] Aureli, The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture, Location 804.
[93] Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, 14.
[94] Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, Preface.
[95] The metropolis itself, for Tafuri, was "the place of absolute alienation," thus, the urban condition became a major concern for the avant-garde. See Ibid., 1.
[96] Sergei M. Eisenstein, "Piranesi, or the Fluidity of Forms" in Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, 67.
[97] Ibid., 75-76.
[98] Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, 3.
[99] Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*, Location 1045.
[100] Karissa Rosenfield, "Venice Biennale 2012: The Piranesi Variations/ Peter Eisenman," *Arch Daily* (August 31, 2012). http://www.archdaily.com/268507/venice-biennale-2012-the-piranesi-variations-peter-eisenman/
[101] Scenographia Campi Martii, as Aureli argues, presents "the destruction of modern Rome as a precondition for a new Rome, designed through the restoration of its ancient form." On the other hand, Ichnographia Campi Martii is a faithful topographical reconstruction informed by the ruins of the Roman Imperial past. See Aureli, The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture, Location 824.
[102] Ibid., 1007.
[103] See Kaufmann, *Architecture in the Age of Reason,* 107. And Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture,* Location 1039-1064.
[104] See Wittkower, "Piranesi's Creed," 240. And Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture,* Location 1053.
[105] Octavio Paz, *El Laberinto de la Soledad* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 2004), 231.
[106] Tafuri, Architecture and Utopia, 14.
[107] Georg Simmel, "The Fragmentary Character of Life," *Theory, Culture & Society* 29, no. 7-8 (2012), 237-48.
[108] Ibid., 238.
[109] Ibid., 242.
[110] Simmel: "Our life oscillates constantly between these worlds as so many different levels or layers of existence, assimilating first something from one of these worlds, then something else from another, and sometimes hovering undecided between one world and another." See Ibid., 246.
[111] Bernard Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts*, New ed. (London; New York, N.Y.: Academy Editions; St. Martin's Press, 1994), XXIII.
[112] Enric Miralles, *Enric Miralles. Obras y proyectos* (Madrid: Ed. Electa, 1996), 173.
[113] Enric Miralles: "El collage es un documento que fija un pensamiento en un lugar, pero lo fija de manera vaga, deformada y deformable; fija una realidad para poder trabajar con ella. Un proyecto siempre está hecho de esos momentos, de esos momentos diversos, de diversos fragmentos a veces contradictorios. Estos collages, a la manera de un puzzle, forman la representación de un espacio en una acción que, en cualquier caso, repite el trabajo mismo de proyectar. Son como una sorpresa que abre continuamente una nueva definición de los límites y de los contornos." See Ibid., 173. [Translated by the author]
[114] David Hockney (Interview), "What David Hockney's Brilliant Collages Reveal About Photos," Smithsonian Channel. https://thedavidhockneyfoundation.org/chronology/1982
[115] David Hockney Foundation. Accessed December 22nd, 2020. https://thedavidhockneyfoundation.org/chronology/1982
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Anthony Vidler, "The Ledoux Effect: Emil Kaufmann and the Claims of Kantian Autonomy," *Perspecta* 33 (2002), 16–29.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Mario Vargas Llosa (The Nobel Prize in Literature 2010) – Nobel Lecture "In Praise of Reading and Fiction," December 7, 2010. https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2010/vargas_llosa/25162-mario-vargas-llosa-nobel-lecture-2010/ (accessed April 2, 2021).
[121] Ibid.
[122] A Brazilian song titled "Infinito Particular (Particular Infinite)" perfectly describes this seeming contradiction: "Eis o melhor e o pior de mim […] Só não se perca ao entrar, No meu infinito particular.... É só mistério, não tem segredo (It is the best and the worse of me… Just don't get lost when you enter, In my particular infinite…It is just mystery, there is no secret)." "Infinito Particular" by Tribalistas (Arnaldo Antunes, Marisa Monte and Carlinhos Brown).
[123] It is relevant to mention the recently published *Critique of Architecture* formulated by Douglas Spencer, whose defense of the critical project against the post-critical discourse could not ignore Aureli's political position. It is a compendium of "Essays on Theory, Autonomy, and Political

Economy," as the second part of its title attests. Spencer's "Critique of the Project of Autonomy," which is part of the second section of the book, is relevant for the content of this dissertation. The author described efficiently Aureli's detachment from the complexity of the urban condition disguised as *asceticism* and *architectural archipelago*. On the other hand, Spencer included himself in the list of architects, historians, and critics that succumbed to the impulsive interpretation of autonomy within architecture, describing it as "The Politics of Depoliticization." See Douglas Spencer, *Critique of Architecture: Essays on Theory, Autonomy, and Political Economy*, Bauwelt Fundamente 168 (Gütersloh: Basel: Bauverlag; Birkhäuser, 2021).

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Conclusion

A Systemic Autonomy

This dissertation offers a critical framework for design to engage contemporary urbanization. When design intervenes upon urbanization, it normally relies on interdisciplinary approaches. The urgency of the answer precipitates the unreflective alliance between different disciplines, but any epistemological reflection is dismissed. The disciplinary reduction of architectural autonomy departed from cultural and historical concerns as the twentieth century matured. Thus, the critical character of autonomy acquired a negative connotation within design at the turn of the century. Designers were called to be "irresponsible" when dealing with the urban condition because we were not responsible. The post-critical attitude dismissed the reliance of traditional critiques on resentment, resistance, and antagonism, in favor of mere pragmatism. Both the critical and the post-critical discourses turned criticism into a monopoly that excluded alternative critical frameworks from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In contrast to the aesthetic blindness of dogmatic critiques and their Eurocentric and North American approaches, this dissertation puts forward the aesthetic dimension of urbanization as an analytical index used to scrutinize its effects on the intimacy of our daily lives regardless of our social, racial, or cultural context.

The progression of aesthetics evolved from its constitution as a special cultural realm derived from philosophy in the eighteenth century, the departure of art from society in the nineteenth century, and the attempt of the avant-garde movements to restore the link between art and society in the twentieth century. The critique of art within art based on stylistic successions turned into the critique of art's role within society. Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain*, a urinal, called into question the nature of the artwork based on the social, economic, and political conditions of artistic production. The aesthetic sensibility of this critical method assessed the validity of art

within society rather than stylistic successions within art. The critique of the aesthetic dimension of urbanization, through cinematic language, assesses the validity of design to intervene upon contemporary social, economic, and political challenges.

Cinema's capacity to depict the transformations of the human and urban conditions is superior to architecture. Urban design has traditionally considered the architect as the orchestrator of urban interventions, while the communicational and analytical capacity of cinema challenges the central position occupied by the architect during the design process. The architect becomes one more agent operating within a collective urban intervention. The relentless urbanization is polyhedric; it has many faces. If design aspires to tackle the environmental, racial, social, economic, or political challenges that urbanization represents, it must be sensitive to the contents and methods of other disciplines such as art, biology, economy, sociology, philosophy, or political theory, among others. But the collaboration between design and other cultural realms must represent an epistemological struggle rather than a populistic short-term solution. It must be a creative self-critique that produces new knowledge by revising disciplinary and professional premises that collide with each other. This epistemological search must rely on the uncertainty that produces new knowledge rather than the certainty of dogmatism or fundamentalism.

Autonomy implies the productive tension between the individual and the world, human consciousness and the universe, disciplinary knowledge and empirical reality, and design and culture. This dissertation advocates "autonomy" as a design method rather than a cultural method. It does not conceive autonomy as cultural homogenization based on the supposed omnipotence of rationality. In contrast to the unrepressed impotence of the rationality of architecture to control the urban condition, which manifests as mere formalism, autonomous urbanism is interested in the paradoxical irrationality of rationality. Intervening the urban condition differs from controlling the

urban condition. Design interventions propose alternative scenarios through a critical eye, in this case, the aesthetic proficiency of the artist's eye. The most radical and impulsive interpretation of architectural autonomy led to disciplinary detachment. This detachment was antagonistic to modernity's alienating conditions in a way that its critique of culture, capitalism, and urbanization became paradoxically obedient. The *autonomy of architecture* became the *alienation of architecture.* The philosophical roots of "the autonomy of the will" that attest to its critical and engaging nature faded into oblivion. Autonomous urbanism engages social, economic, political, and historical conditions with the aspiration to master urbanization despite the impossibility of the task. Design cannot control the urban condition, but "the autonomy of the will" confers the ethical responsibility to decide the (methodological, disciplinary, and professional) terms of any urban intervention. The post-critical discourse argues that we can be "irresponsible" because we are not responsible. In contrast, this dissertation argues that our actions and ideas are accountable not only to design but also to society.

The rationality of architecture distinguishes *what architecture is* from *what architecture is not* through the antagonism inherent to the disciplinary reduction of autonomy. It relied on the certainty of *what architecture was/is/will be*. In contrast, the *agonism* of autonomous urbanism performs the critique of a supposedly omnipotent reason. It relies on the certainty of uncertainty to formulate questions and suggest the existence of potential answers. This dissertation questions the false dichotomies that have prevailed within architectural criticism since the second half of the twentieth century: thinking and feeling, rationality and irrationality, design versus non-design, disciplinary premises and empirical knowledge, architecture and urbanization, and "the political" and aesthetics. It counters the aesthetic blindness of dogmatic critique that reduces the aesthetic dimension of reality to mere appearance and isolates as much as the alienating conditions of

modern life that it vehemently attacks. The alliance between *Urbanism* and *Autonomy* argues that the political negotiations that operate within the human and urban conditions—from the family to society—can be resolved through the respect provided by agonism rather than the resentment of an ideologically exacerbated antagonism. Thus, it rejects *restrictive* (inwards) identities and advocates a *relational* (outwards) search for (individual, collective, and disciplinary) identities based on the relationships that constitute our social coexistence. The exploration of the external world leads to the investigation of the human condition, our inner selves, and the redefinition of the disciplinary and professional premises of design that engage with the ever-changing challenges of urbanization.

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Frances L. Loeb Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Design 139494/olvsurrogate570058

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Museum of Modern Art New York
Gift of The Howard Gilman Foundation
© Eredi Aldo Rossi / Fondazione Aldo Rossi

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San Rocco Housing Competition, Aldo Rossi and Giorgio Grassi, Monza, 1966
Aldo Rossi fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
© Eredi Aldo Rossi / Fondazione Aldo Rossi

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The Italian countryside, 1950.
Photo by Federico Patellani
Federico Patellani Fund/Museo Fotografia Contemporanea

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Peter Eisenman fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
© CCA

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Model for *House II*, Peter Eisenman, Hardwick, Vermont, 1969-1970
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© Ezra Stoller/Esto (Seagram)
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House I, Peter Eisenman, Princeton, New Jersey, 1967-1968.
Eisenman Architects
Reprinted in *Five Architects*

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Reprinted in *Five Architects*

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Gwathmey Residence and Studio, Charles Gwathmey, 1966.
Gwathmey Siegel Kaufman Architects
Reprinted in *Five Architects*

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Elevation for *Bernstein House*, John Hejduk, 1968.
John Hejduk fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
© CCA
Reprinted in *Five Architects*

4.7. (205)
Smith House, Richard Meier, 1965-1967
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Reprinted in *Five Architects*

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Photo by US Air Force/The LIFE Picture Collection via Getty Images

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From *The works of Jeremy Bentham* vol. IV, 172-3

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Reprinted in *Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*
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Mouton & Co., N.V., Publishers, The Hague

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Diagrams from Peter Eisenman's *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, 1963.
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Peter Eisenman Architects
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Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal

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Axonometric and model for *Fin d'Ou T Hou S*, Peter Eisenman, 1983.
Peter Eisenman fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
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Drawings of Casa del Fascio from Peter Eisenman's *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, 1963.
Lars Müller, Baden, Switzerland

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Photo by Joel Meyerowitz
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of James Danziger
© Joel Meyerowitz, courtesy Howard Greenberg Gallery

4.26. (224)
Favela Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro, 2019
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Peter Eisenman Architects
Peter Eisenman fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
© CCA

4.28. (236)
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Photo M. Bellot/Musée du Louvre
RMN-Grand Palais

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Aerial photomaps of Venice, 1982. Plates 5-8, 18-21, 32-35, 45-48 from *Venezia Forma Urbis* (Venice: Marsilio Editori, 1985)
CCA Library/Reprinted in *Cities of Artificial Excavations: The work of Peter Eisenman*, 1978-1988

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A map of Venice showing Cannaregio West and the Train Station, Giambattista Garlato and Paolo Ripamonto Carpano, 1847. Plate 1 from Venezia e le sue lagune (Venice: Nell'L R. Privil. Stab. Antonelli, 1847, vol. I.)
CCA Library/Reprinted in *Cities of Artificial Excavations: The work of Peter Eisenman*, 1978-1988

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Sections of three houses, Cannaregio, Venice, 1978
Eisenman Architects

4.32. (240)
Axonometric of Eisenman's intervention and Le Corbusier's hospital, Cannaregio, Venice, 1978.
Peter Eisenman Architects
Peter Eisenman fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
© CCA
Reference number: DR1991:0017:093

4.33. (241)
Eisenman's sketch of the site plan with a deformed grid, Cannaregio, Venice, 1978.
Peter Eisenman fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal, CCA
Reference number: DR1991:0017:001

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The Rise of the Berlin Wall. (Left) This fence separated friends and families at the end of World War II when Berlin was divided into four zones. France, Great Britain, and Americans worked together as the Soviets increasingly worked in isolation, 1953. (Right) A daughter, at the West side of the wall, talks to her mother who stayed at the East side, 1961.
Ralph Crane and Stan Wayman / Time Life Pictures / Getty
Object name: 802474
Editorial #: 50536476
Object name: 859061
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4.36 and 4.37. (243)
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Archiv Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin 1987 and CCA DR1991:0018:478:1/ Reprinted in *Cities of Artificial Excavations: The work of Peter Eisenman*, 1978-1988

4.38. (244)
Site plans with axonometric projections, IBA project by Peter Eisenman, 1980-1985.

Peter Eisenman fonds
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IBA Social Housing, Peter Eisenman, Berlin, 1980-1985.
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A world map by Martin Waldseemüller, 1507. The term "America" appears on the lower leftmost panel and Amerigo Vespucci, the explorer who put forward that the discovered land was part of a new continent, is represented on the top panel of the third column.
Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington, D.C. 20540-4650 USA dcu
Call Number/Physical Location: G3200 1507 .W3
Library of Congress Control Number: 2003626426

4.43. (247)
Design development drawings for Moving Arrows, Eros, and Other Errors, Romeo + Juliet, Peter Eisenman, 1985.
Peter Eisenman fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/
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© CCA
Reference number: DR1994:0148:143

4.44. (248)
Axonometic for Moving Arrows, Eros, and Other Errors, Romeo + Juliet, Peter Eisenman, 1985.
Peter Eisenman fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
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4.45. (248)
Model for University Art Museum of the California State University at Long Beach, Peter Eisenman, 1986.
Eisenman Architects

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Site plan for University Art Museum of the California State University at Long Beach, Peter Eisenman, 1986.
Peter Eisenman fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
© CCA
Reference number: DR1987:0859:001

4.47. (249)
Sketch plan that merged the Cannaregio and La Villette sites, Peter Eisenman, 1985-1986.
Peter Eisenman fonds
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal
Reference number: DR1991:0019:050

4.48. (250)
Model for La Villette, Peter Eisenman, 1987.
Eisenman Architects

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House VI, Peter Eisenman, Cornwall, Connecticut, 1972-1975
Peter Eisenman Architects

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Las Vegas Studio: Images from the Archive of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown edited by Hilar Stadler and Martino Stierli. Chicago University Press, 2009

4.50. (262)
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Postcard by P. Sanders, Reprinted in Rem Koolhaas's *Delirious New York*/The Monacelli Press

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Reprinted in Rem Koolhaas's *Delirious New York*/The Monacelli Press

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Museum of Modern Art New York

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Reprinted in Sigfried Giedion's *Building in France, building in iron, building in ferro-concrete/*Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities

4.58, 4.59, 4.60, and 4.61. (266)
Parc de la Villette, Bernard Tschumi, 1985
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Splitting, Gordon Matta-Clark, 1974.
Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture
© Succession of Gordon Matta-Clark and Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark.
Reprint made by the Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark from Matta-Clark negatives.
Original photograph in the collection of San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Museum of Modern Art New York, Art Institute Chicago
Acquired through the generosity of Walter J. Brownstone and The Family of Man Fund
© 2021 Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

4.65. (270)
House IV, Peter Eisenman, Falls Village, Connecticut, 1971.
Eisenman Architects

Chapter 5
The Agonism of Autonomy

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The Shape of Water, Guillermo del Toro, 2017
© 2017 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation/Fox Search Light Pictures

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(276)
Babel, Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2006
© 2006 Paramount Vantage, a division of Paramount Pictures/Anonymous Content/Zeta Film/Central Films

5.1. (281)
Guillermo del Toro on the set of *The Shape of Water* with Doug Jones as Amphibian Man and Sally Hawkins as Elisa Esposito.
BBC
© 2017 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation/Fox Search Light Pictures

5.2. (281)
A frame from *The Shape of Water*, Guillermo del Toro, 2017.
© 2017 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation/Fox Search Light Pictures

5.3 and 5.4. (282)
Erasing the Border (*Borrando la Frontera*), Ana Teresa Fernández, 2012.
Credit: Ana Teresa Fernández

5.5. (283)
Young boys fly kites in the Providencia favela, Rio de Janeiro.
Photo by João Pina/The New York Times

5.6. (284)
Photo by Margaret Bourke-White, The Louisville Flood, 1937, printed c. 1970.
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of Sean Callahan
© Estate of Margaret Bourke-White / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY

5.7. (285)
The effects of Hurricane Teddy within a rental beach house in Avon, North Carolina. (September 22, 2020)
© Daniel Pullen 2020

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(286)
Canal Street, New Orleans, Robert Frank, 1955, printed ca. 1977
The Met Museum
Purchase, Anonymous Gifts, 1986
© 2005 Robert Frank

5.8. (288)
The Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke, Richard Dadd, 1855–64
© Tate Modern/CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 (Unported)
Presented by Siegfried Sassoon in memory of his friend and fellow officer Julian Dadd, a great-nephew of the artist, and of his two brothers who gave their lives in the First World War 1963

5.9. (289)
Frame from the film *The Great Dictator*, Charles Chaplin, 1940.
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Robie House, Frank Lloyd Wright, Chicago, 1906.
Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

5.11. (293)
Broadacre City, Frank Lloyd Wright, 1934-1935.
Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation/Reprinted in B. Pfeiffer, *Frank Lloyd Wright 1943–1959: The Complete Works* [Vol. 3], edited by Peter Gössel, published by Taschen, 2009.

5.12. (294)
Settlement Units Density Studies, Aerial Perspective, Ludwig Karl Hilberseimer, c. 1943.
Art Institute of Chicago
Gift of George E. Danforth

5.13. (294)
Settlement Unit, Ludwig Karl Hilberseimer, 1944.
Art Institute of Chicago
Chicago Collections
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From The New City, Chicago: Paul Theobald, 1944, p. 106, ill. 80

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Analytical and functional-based grid presented at CIAM VII in Bergamo, 1949.
Harvard University Library Repository

5.18. (297)
A page from Vers une architecture, Le Corbusier, 1923.
Harvard University Library Repository
Getty Research Institute

5.19. (298)
Museum for a Small City project (Interior perspective), Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1941-1943.
Museum of Modern Art, New York
Mies van der Rohe Archive, gift of the architect
© 2021 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

5.20. (300)
Highrise City (Hochhausstadt): Perspective View: North-South Street, Ludwig Karl Hilberseimer, 1924.
Art Institute of Chicago
Gift of George E. Danforth

5.21. (300)
Berlin Development Project, Friedrichstadt District, Office and Commercial Buildings, Berlin, Germany, Perspective View, Ludwig Karl Hilberseimer, 1927-1928.
Art Institute of Chicago
Gift of George E. Danforth

5.22. (304)
Charleston, South Carolina, Robert Frank, 1955, printed ca. 1977.
The Met Museum
Purchase, Anonymous Gifts, 1986

© 2005 Robert Frank

5.23. (305)
M. Lamar, Lyle Ashton Harris, 1993
Lyle Ashton Harris/ Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of the artist and Miyoung Lee and Neil Simpkins
© artist or artist's estate

5.3. Urbanism: The Dissolution of Form

(306)
"Ma Jolie," Pablo Picasso, Paris, winter 1911-12
Museum of Modern Art, New York
Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest (by exchange)
© 2021 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

5.24. (308)
Residential Park, No-Stop City project (Plan), Archizoom, 1969
Museum of Modern Art New York
Gift of The Howard Gilman Foundation

5.25. (309)
No-Stop City, Archizoom, 1969
Archizoom Associati/Andrea Branzi

5.26. (309)
Untitled, Mark Rothko, 1969
Museum of Modern Art New York
Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc.
© 2021 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

5.27. (310)
The City of the Captive Globe, Rem Koolhaas and Zoe Zenghelis, 1972.
Museum of Modern Art New York
Gift of The Howard Gilman Foundation
Reprinted in Rem Koolhaas's *Delirious New York*/The Monacelli Press

5.28. (311)
Agronica — Weak Urbanization, Andrea Branzi, Dante Donegani, Antonio Petrillo, Claudia Raimomdo, and Tamar Ben David, 1995.
Andrea Branzi/ Centre Pompidou, Paris

5.29. (313)
Stop City, Dogma (Pier Vittorio Aureli and Martino Tattara), 2007-2008
Dogma

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Carceri d'Invenzione, Giovanni Battista Piranesi, 1760
Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg/ARTSTOR
Berlin State Museums (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)
Object: SSG 257-1
Accession Number: 72.254
bpk / Volker-H. Schneider
Photo by Volker-H. Schneider

5.31. (318)

Carceri d'Invenzione — The Pier with Chains, Giovanni Battista Piranesi, 1761
Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University/ARTSTOR
Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University, Gift of George W. Davison (B.A. Wesleyan 1892), before 1953 (1973.D1.38.16)
ID Number: ORID0006935

5.32. (319)
From Della Magnificenza e d'Architettura de' Romani (On the Grandeur and the Architecture of the Romans by Gio. Battista Piranesi, Fellow of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of London), 1761.
The MET Museum, New York
Rogers Fund, transferred from the Library
Accession Number: 41.71.1.7

5.33. (320)
From Parere sull'architettura, Giovanni Battista Piranesi, 1765.
Colección Banco Santander

5.34. (321)
Rendition of Leonardo Bufalini's map of Rome (1551) by Giovanni Battista Nolli, 1748.
North Carolina State University Libraries
Accession Number: 89135
Reprinted in Aureli, Pier Vittorio. The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture. Writing Architecture. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011

5.35. (322)
From Diverse Maniere d'adornare i cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizi desunte dall'architettura Egizia, Etrusca, e Greca con un Ragionamento Apologetico in defesa dell'Architettura Egizia, e Toscana, opera del Cavaliere Giambattista Piranesi Architetto (Diverse Ways of ornamenting chimneypieces and all other parts of houses taken from Egyptian, Etruscan, and Grecian architecture with an Apologia in defense of the Egyptian and Tuscan architecture, the work of Cavaliere Giambattista Piranesi), 1769
The MET Museum, New York
Rogers Fund, transferred from the Library

5.36. (323)
Scenographia Campi Martii, from II Campo Marzio dell'antica Roma, Giovanni Battista Piranesi, 1762.
Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum
Museum purchase through gift of Eleanor and Sarah Hewitt
Reprinted in Aureli, Pier Vittorio. The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture. Writing Architecture. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011

5.37. (323)
Ichnographiam Campi Martii Antiquae Urbis (Ichnographia of the Campus Martius of the Ancient City) Giovanni Battista Piranesi, 1757
Yale University Art Gallery
The Arthur Ross Collection/2012.159.14

5.38. (324)
Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma, Giovanni Battista Piranesi
Smithsonian Design Museum/Cooper Hewitt Collection
The John Jay Ide Collection/1977-52-77

5.39 and 5.40. (326)
(Left) Dark prison with a courtyard for the punishment of criminals… (Carcere oscura con Antenna pel suplizio dè malfatori…), Giovanni Battista Piranesi, ca. 1750. (Right) Diagram of Piranesi's Carcere oscura by Sergei M. Eisenstein, ca. 1947.
The MET Museum, New York

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1937
Diagram reprinted in Stanley Allen and G. B. Piranesi, “Piranesi's "Campo Marzio": An Experimental Design,” Assemblage, No. 10 (Dec., 1989): 70-109.

5.41. (327)
Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, Pablo Picasso, Paris, June-July 1907.
Museum of Modern Art New York
Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest (by exchange)
© 2021 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

5.42. (328)
A rendering of A Field of Diagrams, Peter Eisenman, 2012.
Eisenman Architects

5.43, 5.44, and 5.45. (328)
A Field of Walls, Project on Giovanni Battista Piranesi's Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma, Research project, Dogma, 2012.
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5.46. (329)
The meeting of the Via Appia and the Via Ardeatina viewed at the second milestone outside the Porta Capena, from Volume II of the “Antichità Romane,” Giovanni Battista Piranesi, first issued in 1756.
The British Museum/1908,0616.43

5.47. (330)
Carceri d’Invenzione — The man on the rack, Giovanni Battista Piranesi.
Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University, Gift of George W. Davison (B.A. Wesleyan 1892), before 1953 (1973.D1.38.2)
ARTSTOR
ID Number: ORID0006922

5.4. Space, Time, Form

(332)
Unfinished Painting in Finished Photographs(s), David Hockney, April 2nd 1982
David Hockney Foundation

5.48. (334)
Città and Frammenti urbano a NewYork (City and Urban Fragments in New York), Aldo Rossi, 1977
© Eredi Aldo Rossi / Fondazione Aldo Rossi

5.49. (335)
A plate from *The Manhattan Transcripts*, Bernard Tschumi, 1981.
© Bernard Tschumi Architects

5.50. (336)
A diagram of *Parc de la Villete*, Paris, Bernard Tschumi, 1982-1998.
© Bernard Tschumi Architects

5.51. (336)
Photo collage, Enric Miralles.
Fundació Enric Miralles
© Miralles Tagliabue EMBT

5.52. (337)
Photo collage, Utrecht Town Hall, Enric Miralles and Benedetta Tagliabue, 2000.

Fundació Enric Miralles
© Miralles Tagliabue EMBT

5.53, 5.54 and 5.55. (338)
Igualada Cemetery, Enric Miralles and Carme Pinos, 1985-1994. (Left) Plan; (Center, Right) perspectives.
Frances L. Loeb Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Design 130199
Image ID: olvsurrogate292713
© Miralles Tagliabue EMBT

5.56. (339)
Still Life Blue Guitar, David Hockney, 1982.
David Hockney Foundation

5.57. (339)
Nicholas Wilder Studying Picasso, David Hockney, Los Angeles, 1982.
David Hockney Foundation

5.58. (339)
Robert Littman Floating in My Pool, David Hockney, 1982.
David Hockney Foundation

5.59. (340)
The Grand Canyon Looking North II, Collage No. 2, David Hockney, 1982-1986.
David Hockney Foundation

5.60. (341)
Frame from *In the Mood for Love*, Wong Kar-wai, 2001.
Block 2 Distribution/Block 2 Pictures Inc/Paradis Films/Jet Tone Films
© 2020 Block 2 Pictures Inc.
© 2019 Jet Tone Contents Inc.

5.5. Autonomy and the Twenty-First Century

(342)
Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, 1958
Photo by René Burri
Magnum Photos
© René Burri

5.61. (344)
Inokashira Park in Tokyo, March 30, 2021.
AFP-JIJI/The Japan Times

5.62. (345)
San Francisco skyline. A view from Treasure Island with the skies “burning” in orange due to multiple wildfires affecting California and Oregon. September 9, 2020.
Photo by Jessica Christian/The San Francisco Chronicle/Getty Images

5.63. (348)
A cover of an English version of Jorge Luis Borges’s *The Aleph*, which begins evoking Hamlet: “O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a King of infinite space.”
© Penguin Group/ Penguin Classics

5.64. (351)
Photo by René Burri, São Paulo, Brazil,1960.
Tate Modern

Presented by Pierre Brahm 2015
© Estate of René Burri / DACS 2021

5.65. (352)
Photo by Luca Locatelli, "The Future of Farming," 2020.
© Luca Locatelli, Italy.

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