Six Canonical Projects by Rem Koolhaas

Essays on the History of Ideas

Ingrid Böck

Rem Koolhaas has been part of the international avant-garde since the nineteen-seventies and has been named the Pritzker Architecture Prize for the year 2000. This book, which builds on six canonical projects, traces the discursive practice behind the design methods used by Koolhaas and his office OMA. It uncovers recurring key themes—such as wall, void, montage, trajectory, infrastructure, and shape—that have structured this design discourse over the span of Koolhaas's oeuvre. The book moves beyond the six core pieces, as well: It explores how these identified thematic design principles manifest in other works by Koolhaas as both practical re-applications and further elaborations.

In addition to Koolhaas's individual genius, these textual and material layers are accounted for shaping the very context of his work's relevance. By comparing the design principles with relevant concepts from the architectural Zeitgeist in which OMA has operated, the study moves beyond its specific subject—Rem Koolhaas—and provides novel insight into the broader history of architectural ideas.

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 "Despite the prominence and notoriety of Rem Koolhaas … there is not a single piece of scholarly writing coming close to the … length, to the intensity, or to the methodological rigor found in the manuscript by Ingrid Böck…"
Ole W. Fischer, University of Utah, Salt Lake City

"… an innovative and comprehensive analysis of all existing interpretative frameworks of the work of Rem Koolhaas."
Albena Yaneva, University of Manchester

"… an excellent exploration that could pave the way for an advanced study of … recent architectural history…"
Carsten Ruhl, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main

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6. SHAPE: CCTV, BEIJING 2002–2008

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INTRODUCTION

"Who is speaking thus?," asks Roland Barthes. The answer offered by Michel Foucault is another question, one that originates in Samuel Beckett's *Texts for Nothing*: "What does it matter who is speaking?"[1] Whereas Barthes suggests that, in the end, there is nobody speaking since the author disappears in the text, for Foucault the original question does matter, because in his opinion, the significance of the work depends largely on *who actually* is speaking.

The idea of the author is connected to the moment of individualization in the history of knowledge, when the authenticity of the relationship between a work and its originary figure first started to be valorized. As myths compensate for the death of the Greek hero by providing him with immortality, it now seems that the text has the right to murder the author, to cancel out his individual being and to confirm his absence in order to reach textual immortality. His name surpasses being a reference and becomes a description and designation, so that any change matters in its function within the discourse.

Foucault argues that the methods of modern criticism for proving a work's value for canonization and identifying a rightful author are still similar to the four principles proposed by the Church Father St. Jerome: first, any inferior work should be withdrawn from the record in order to save the stable value of the work; second, texts contradictory to the conceptual unity of other works have to be excluded; third, texts differing in stylistic consistency should be removed; fourth, to preserve historic unity, anything that describe events after the death of the author also must be rejected. The ideological function of the author figure is therefore to determine, limit, and constrict the signification of a certain work—instead of to produce meaning infinitely. This function creates constraints for a discourse that is indifferent to who is speaking, for the real questions are "what are the modes of existence of this discourse? Where has it been used, how can it circulate, and who can appropriate it for himself? [And, after all,] what difference does it make who is speaking?"[2]

Rem Koolhaas and the Office for Metropolitan Architecture, in short OMA, represent not only the architectural avant-garde as one of the most influential, honored, published, and copied architects today, Koolhaas is also one of the most controversially discussed and criticized figures—not only for his work in the Middle East, China, and Russia. On the occasion of the Pritzker Prize presented to Koolhaas in 2000 in Jerusalem, he was characterized as a combination of

[1]   Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?," in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, ed. by Josué V. Harari (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1979), 141–60, here 141; Samuel Beckett, *Texts for Nothing* (London: Calder & Boyars, 1974).
[2]   Foucault, "What is an Author?," 160.

utopian visionary and functional pragmatist with a tendency towards extraordinarily big dimensions and "a free-flowing, democratic organization of spaces and functions with an unselfconscious tributary of circulation that in the end dictates a new unprecedented architectural form."[3]

In historiography Koolhaas's work tends to be either assigned to structuralist or postmodern theory and design practice, aligned with constructivist and surrealist sensibilities, or he is presented, in the traditional manner of architectural hagiography, as an original genius without identifiable discursive connections. In addition, the cumulative character of the work creates a web of various lineages, multiplied associations, and points of reference, as he employs a series of techniques to address the irrational side of modern architecture beyond its common notions of *Sachlichkeit*, rational structures, and functionalism. However, Koolhaas's architectural practice tackles the challenging question of whether a unifying characteristic, style, and strategy—or what Foucault calls the "author function"—can be identified. Hence the basic inquiries of this research study are as follows: How can we identify conceptual ideas that recur as constant themes over an extended period of time? How can we conceptualize changes and adaptations within those motifs? What is then the function of the architect himself in the discourse and of his claim of reference and originality?

If architectural theorists agree on anything about Koolhaas, it is that his work and thinking are a tangle of contradictions or, at least, paradoxes. One group of theorists—Charles Jencks, Herbert Muschamp, Philip Johnson, Mark Wigley, and Liane Lefaivre (among others)—deal with this agglomeration of contradictions by furthering postmodern readings of Koolhaas's work. For Jencks, Koolhaas adopts a curious position between (and at the extreme ends of) strategies of differentiation, radical eclecticism, and collage, on the one hand, and the pressures for standardization and generic structures, on the other hand.[4] His view on architecture emphasizes the functional organization of the program by generating statistical diagrams (called *datascapes*) in a way similar to Le Corbusier, Hannes Meyer, or Cornelis van Eesteren at the beginning of the twentieth century, which leads to the subsequent design with the inevitability of a mathematical proof. Jencks claims that a strategy that Koolhaas adopts from Frank Gehry's *cheapskate* architecture is to use cheap means or very little money: a kind

[3]   Hyatt Foundation, "Jury Citation," The Pritzker Architecture Prize presented to Rem Koolhaas in 2000, n.d., accessed March 6, 2011, http://www.pritzkerprize.com/2000/jury.

[4]   Charles Jencks, *The New Paradigm in Architecture: The Language of Post-Modernism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 180–5.

of "Calcutta minimalism" with polyester, *béton brut*, industrial metal sheets.[5] He even compares Koolhaas's architectural thinking and performance to Andy Warhol's trading of the inevitable star system, since both figures put forth a double message of critical resistance and dazzling glamour.[6] His acquaintance for over four decades, Jencks invited Koolhaas to the 1980 Venice Biennale on post-modernism, "The Presence of the Past," and judged the competition for the new CCTV in Beijing in 2002. However, Jencks also stresses that the rhetorics of Koolhaas's iconic buildings and his involvement with political power according to his motto "Go East" cannot be accepted without heavy criticism. Though, following Koolhaas, the recent financial crisis illustrates once more the fragility of the market economy in the capitalist system—as Koolhaas claimed in his announcement of the "¥€$ Regime"—and its ending. Thus, "despite the crashes and catastrophes the neoliberal casino capitalism has been kept alive because 'there are no alternatives' (too big to fail), because 'markets have to be appeased,'" Ana Jeinic and Anselm Wagner claim in *Is There (Anti-) Neoliberal Architecture?*.[7] Hence, addressing political regimes that are prejudiced by the Western world, like China, is despite "the scale and nature of the beast" similar to looking at the "wrong" ideology of shopping and luxury brands.[8] Similar to Jencks, *New York Times* critic Herbert Muschamp associates aura and glamour with Koolhaas's projects. For instance, the Seattle Public Library shines like a "blazing chandelier" in the dark, revealing "the exceptional, the excessive, the extreme" that architecture can engender for a single building, a city, or the architect himself.[9]

Referring to another postmodern viewpoint, Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley included Koolhaas's design Building and Tower in Rotterdam in 1988—alongside projects of Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Zaha Hadid, Coop Himmelblau, Daniel Libeskind, and Bernard Tschumi—in their exhibition "Deconstructivist Architecture" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1988.[10] For Johnson and Wigley, the striking similarities of the works on display are the wrapped

[5]   Ibid., 184–5.
[6]   Charles Jencks, *Iconic Building: The Power of Enigma* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2005), 106–7.
[7]   Ana Jeinić and Anselm Wagner, eds., "Introduction," in *Is There (Anti-) Neoliberal Architecture?* (Berlin: Jovis, 2013), 6–10, here 8.
[8]   Rem Koolhaas, Reiner de Graaf, David Cunningham, and Jon Goodbun, "Propaganda Architecture: Interview," in *Radical Philosophy* 154 (March/April 2009): 35–47, accessed March 6, 2011, http://www.radicalphilosophy.com.
[9]   Herbert Muschamp, "Architecture Review: Rem Koolhaas's New York State of Mind," in *New York Times* (November 4, 1994); Herbert Muschamp, "Architecture: The Library That Puts on Fishnets and Hits the Disco," in *New York Times* (May 16, 2004), both accessed March 6, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/keyword/central-library.
[10] Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley, *Deconstructivist Architecture* (New York: Little Brown & Company, 1988).

shapes and shifted planes, which make use of the hidden master narratives and obvious dilemmas of modernism by distorting the predictability of the right angle and the purity of form.

As opposed to the formal reading of Johnson and Wigley on the basis of single architectural objects, Liane Lefaivre's phrase *dirty realism* is another approach to the work of Koolhaas.[11] The term was initially coined by Bill Buford in his introduction to a *Granta* issue titled with this term and subtitled "New Writing from America," whereas Lefaivre distinguishes the same postmodern features in contemporary architecture and urban culture.[12] For Buford, the periphery of the city is a place of visual ugliness and the grotesque, "oppressive details of modern consumerism," devoted to the strange stories of daytime television, roadside cafes, supermarkets, cheap hotels, junk food, and bingo.[13] In a similar way, Koolhaas addresses the banality of the contemporary city in his writings, such as "What Ever Happened to Urbanism?" and "The Generic City." Additionally, his "retroactive manifesto" of Manhattan in *Delirious New York* presents the metropolitan condition as a different reality, that is characterized by simultaneous, plausible worlds, instability, and indefiniteness.

In addition to the postmodern approach to Koolhaas's work, there are also those theorists—including Jeff Kipnis, Fredric Jameson, and Alejandro Zaera Polo (including the debate on critical theory versus projective practice)—who detect general themes, such as the relationship between power and freedom in architecture, that Koolhaas develops throughout his career in projects that, at first glance, appear quite different. Thereby, they point out that Koolhaas himself often equates architecture with the demonstration of power when he stresses various socio-economic responsibilities and inadequacies, hence describing the discipline as a monstrous instrument of despair and horror.[14] Planning is like a doctrine that determines certain areas and produces division, exclusion, and imprisonment. Despite this hopeless situation, planners are also free to explore the liberating capacity of architecture and to imagine how it can become a tool of change and how it can foster the emergence of unprecedented conditions. For Koolhaas, one strategy for attaining this task is the "programmatic alchemy" of Bigness, which is the extraordinary vastness of space so that the maximum difference of parts makes

[11]   Liane Lefaivre, "Dirty Realism in European Architecture Today," in *Design Book Review* 17 (Winter 1989): 17–20.
[12]   Bill Buford, "Introduction" to "Dirty Realism: New Writing from America" in *Granta* 8 (1983): 4–5.
[13]   Ibid.
[14]   Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau, *S,M,L,XL* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1995), 226–7.

possible a nuclear reaction among the single elements.[15] A case in point is the typical Manhattan skyscraper, which presents the final, definitive typology of the city. Similar to Le Corbusier's scheme of the Maison Dom-Ino, its typical plan uses a generic structural system of free-standing columns to create an uninterrupted surface on each floor and elevators to provide a spatial discontinuity between each level. The skyscraper also functions like a constructivist *social condenser* because its scheme can cope with the urban condition of instability, indeterminacy, and discontinuity as regards functional use and any future programming while keeping the illusion of architecture intact in the external shape. He describes the development of the modern city, however, in spite of its appearance of efficacy and functional performance, as a utopian endeavor within a profoundly irrational environment.

Referring to the recurring subjects in Koolhaas's work, Kipnis, Jameson, and Zaera Polo emphasize that these spatial concepts typify both the liberation *from* (ideological) constraints and the liberty *to* create new structures and social roles. In this regard, they also highlight the idea of utopian thought and social engineering as a constant theme in Koolhaas's work over several decades. Kipnis reveals that the occult yet brazen aim behind everything the Dutch master has created is the intent "to discover what real, instrumental collaboration can be effected between architecture and freedom."[16] Still, there is no universal patent for liberating architectural elements and social engineering via spatial composition, only interventions, strategies, and disestablishing techniques to engender new forms of social life. Kipnis further argues that if the event structure of the building in use is no longer congruent with the pre-written program but exceeds the initial planning, it can lead to both a richer, more diverse performance and irresponsible, harmful behavior of the users that easily escalates out of control.[17] In a similar fashion, Jameson claims that the originality of Koolhaas's work is based "on the relationship between this randomness and freedom and the presence of some rigid, inhuman, nondifferential form that enables the differentiation of what goes on around it."[18] Zaera Polo also speaks of a migration between the controlling elements of structures and programmatic needs, so that an in-between position of provisional organization, experiments, and non-planned situations is possible.[19]

[15]   Rem Koolhaas, "Bigness, or the Problem of Large," in Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 494–517, here 511.
[16]   Jeffrey Kipnis, "Recent Koolhaas," in *El Croquis* 79 (1996): 26–37, here 27.
[17]   Ibid.
[18]   Fredric Jameson, "Envelopes and Enclaves: The Space of Post-Civil Society," in *Assemblage* 17 (April 1992): 30–7, here 33.
[19]   Alejandro Zaera Polo, "The Day After: A Conversation with Rem Koolhaas," in *El Croquis* 79 (1996): 8–25, here 9.

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The central characteristic of the following accounts, in comparison to the previously discussed concepts, is the change from an object-oriented to a process-oriented reading of the architectural oeuvre. A handful of theorists, like Roberto Gargiani, Bart Lootsma, and Albena Yaneva, who worked with Koolhaas on several occasions or spent extended periods of time in the office or archive of OMA, provide rather different views in a sociological context. Their reading of Koolhaas's design concepts is embedded in a certain culture of architectural knowledge and social framework in the office. Following an updated Zeitgeist approach, Gargiani reads the theories and design proposals of Koolhaas through general intellectual tendencies, beginning with the structuralist thought of the late nineteen-sixties and ending with the post-modern und post-critical agenda at the turn of the millennium. The subtitle of his book on Koolhaas, *The Construction of Merveilles*, indicates that he wants to present his work as a chronological series of metaphorical objects that relate to surrealist sensibility and its notion of *merveilles*.[20] Similar to the ideal unity of the body that is dismantled into pieces, hollowed, and reassembled as distorted composition, as in René Magritte's 1927 painting *The Importance of Marvels* (*L'importance des merveilles*), Koolhaas's architectural concepts question the body of program, structure, and material and unite the fragmentary elements into an unprecedented whole. In this typically postmodern view, the striking contradictions in program and style are resolved or rather dissolved, like the many pieces in a bricolage that are juxtaposed with something completely different.

In a biographical (as opposed to a Zeitgeist) approach to architectural criticism or historiography, the interpretation centers on the individual's experiences and changing perspectives in order to explore design methods and strategies from a historical viewpoint. In line with such thinking, Lootsma connects Koolhaas's *SuperDutch* approach to architecture to the Dutch culture of the nineteen-sixties in general and to the situationist Constant Nieuwenhuys in particular, whom the future architect met at the age of twenty-two for an interview for the *Haagse Post* in 1966 about his work in the Dutch pavilion at the Biennale in Venice.[21] The influence of the situationists and their radical critique of capitalist modes of production, the fetishism of commodities, and the reification of everyday life—what they come to call "the spectacle"—seem to be reflected in Koolhaas's later publications like *Delirious New York* and "Junk Space," though he barely relates him-

[20]   Roberto Gargiani, *Rem Koolhaas/OMA: The Construction of Merveilles* (London: Routledge, 2008).
[21]   Bart Lootsma, *Koolhaas, Constant und die Niederländische Kultur der 60er* (Nurenberg: A. Brandhuber, 2006); Rem Koolhaas and Betty van Garrel, "De stad van de toekomst," in *Haagse Post* (August 1966): 14–5; Bart Lootsma, *SuperDutch: Neue Niederländische Architektur* (Munich: DVA, 2000).

self to this movement. For Lootsma, Constant's New Babylon presents a fundamentally new way of looking at urban space, drawing out novel ways of life from the traditionally negatively valued trope of a big city. Although Constant understands architecture as a key method to construe social relations, he rejects the typical modernist planning of the post-war reconstruction following the CIAM doctrine. Instead, he developed, over a period of twenty years, a series of drawings, paintings, maps, models, and texts about a megastructure inhabited by *homo ludens* (following the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga), which he also presented in film-like collages with street sounds to accentuate the effect of immediacy and authenticity. Another important influence on the architecture of Koolhaas is, according to Lootsma, the journalism of the group "Nul" and their objectivist way of writing about events by avoiding opinions or speculations and only presenting facts and figures without rhetoric or style (*Nul Stijl*). Hence, Koolhaas's text on Le Corbusier's visit in 1964 starts with the delay of the plane, the impatience of the audience, and a description of the protagonist: "Le Corbusier, 76, kühl und bissig im Auftreten, ein Gesicht mit hellblauen Augen, in dem sich nur die Unterlippe bewegt, macht einen verbitterten Eindruck."[22] In addition, the participation in the film group "1, 2, 3 enz." trained Koolhaas in writing screenplays (together with Rene Daalder). Obviously, any kind of writing involves a (perhaps necessarily) subjective selection of facts, and, what is more, choosing a particular topic can be a means of influencing the general discourse—a strategy that Koolhaas spectacularly deploys, introducing themes such as shopping, Lagos, or China into the discourse.

Another possible, sociological strategy of reading is exemplified by Yaneva's recent research study *The Making of a Building*. In the detached yet engaged manner of an ethnologist, she follows the planning process in Koolhaas's office over a period of more than two years, studying all the drifts, moves, in the development of the design proposal for the Whitney Museum (NEWhitney) in New York.[23] She describes vividly how the members of an architectural design team work feverishly through the nights with diagrams and models scattered around on tables, and traces the sequence of design operations and the production of intermediary objects to identify methods of gaining knowledge about the design process. The general intent is to study the office of Koolhaas in the same way as science and technology studies examine the development and production of prototypes truths. In line with this approach, she scrutinizes the activities in the

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[22] Lootsma, *Koolhaas*, 14: "Le Corbusier, 76, cool and snappy in appearance, a bright blue-eyed face, which only moves the lower lip, makes a bitter impression." (Translation I.B.).
[23] Albena Yaneva, *The Making of a Building: A Pragmatist Approach to Architecture* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009).

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office in detail—covering varied events such as the historical design inquiry; experiments with physical models and visualizations; the process of option; presentations to clients, users, and the public; their reactions and counter-strategies; and the realization and changes on the construction site. Yaneva's sociological perspective stresses both the social dynamics and the logistics of the practice in and outside the office. Instead of a single moment of invention, there is a complex process of negotiations between many different actors involved.

Yet another approach to the oeuvre of Koolhaas is the popular historiographical device of identifying precedents as a way of interpreting or explaining a new architectural concept. Koolhaas himself excels in this genre, although he simultaneously undermines its intellectual credentials in *Delirious New York*, a fictional history of Manhattan, in which the historian's cool deliberation of independent facts gives way to a coherent but paranoid conspiracy theory. What this fake history of the skyscraper—one could call it an examination of the skyscraper as mythology in the sense of Barthes—occludes is real history, including the real precursors of or influences on Koolhaas's own designs.

Still, some critics have identified one major influence looming behind Koolhaas. When Kipnis writes, "there is no other way to put it; [Rem] Koolhaas is the Le Corbusier of our times," he could be merely stressing the importance of the two leading architects.[24] However, there are also striking formal similarities between some of their designs, beginning with but not limited to the Villa dall'Ava, a postmodern collage of motifs taken from the Villa Savoye, yet with shifted planes and distorted angles.

More eclectically, William Curtis discerns a host of influences in Koolhaas's other buildings, ranging from the syntax of the Corbusian free plan to Mies van der Rohe's National Gallery in Berlin, the Schröder House by Gerrit Rietveld and other modernist icons to "the atmosphere of 'Euromarketing.'"[25] Curtis's rationale for such a synthetic method of reading is his claim that the authentic works of modern architecture represent personal, intuitive syntheses of the most enduring values of architectural art and issues pertinent to industrial civilization.[26] One of the reasons Curtis seems to prefer Le Corbusier to Koolhaas is that he finds many more references to diverse sources in the works of the functionalist master. In Le Corbusier's Parliament Building in Chandigarh (1953–61), for example, Curtis divines echoes of Tatlin's Monument to the Third International, the minaret of the Mosque of Ahmad ibn Tulun in Cairo, the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, the

[24]   Kipnis, "Recent Koolhaas," 26.
[25]   William J. R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture since 1900* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1996), 666–7.
[26]   William J. R. Curtis, "Authenticity, Abstraction and the Ancient Sense: Le Corbusier's and Louis Kahn's Ideas of Parliament," in *Perspecta* 20 (1983): 181–94, here 182.

Jantar Mantar observatory in Delhi, the Pantheon in Rome, Egyptian hypostyle halls, cooling towers that Le Corbusier saw in Ahmedabad, and, finally, the funnel-shaped chimney stack of the La Cornu farmhouse from 1909.[27] In addition to these sources, Curtis also detects the influence of the Altes Museum in Berlin, the axis between the Arc de Triomphe and the Louvre in Paris, ancient Beijing, the Basilica of Constantine in Rome, and the Pont du Gard near Nimes. Less specifically, he identifies inspiration from colonial verandas, loggias of Moghul pavilions, Hindu temple precincts, and Greek stoas, and also bull's horns and surrealist Minotaurs, cubism and Mondrian, and Le Corbusier's own Swiss Pavilion in Paris, the Unité in Marseilles, and the Governor's Palace in Chandigarh and the Open Hand.[28]

In response to this approach, Kari Jormakka therefore argues that "such an abundant and heterogeneous list of influences, second only to Borges's Chinese encyclopedia, diminishes the explanatory power of each individual source and makes the proposed synthesis into an enigma even more overwhelming than the original work to be explained."[29] Indeed, the problem with the genealogical method is that it operates with vague concepts, such as influence, precursor, and, most importantly, similarity. In some way, any two things always resemble each other, but not every resemblance or similarity counts. Hence, when interpreting architectural concepts and strategies from a historical viewpoint, the influence, precursors, and similarities matter only if they can be put into a relevant discursive context.

In any case, in the text to his exhibition "Fundamentals – Absorbing Modernity: 1914–2014" at the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2014, Koolhaas reconnects his architectural thinking (emblematic of the crucial global situation) to the evolution of generic modernity, which has been splintering into unique and specific histories under the influence of diverse political environments (and wars), cultural memory and erasure, technical inventions, and random individual trajectories.[30] Within these various transformations, he identifies a repertoire of fundamental typologies and narratives that function as a universal architectural language of modernization without proposing a grammar of these elements. For Peter Eisenman, however, the exhibition on the modern century also indicates that in 1964, after the first half of the modern century, when the key proponents like Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and Frank Lloyd Wright were all dead, Koolhaas became the new totemic figure of the second half of the

[27]   William J. R. Curtis, *Le Corbusier: Ideas and Forms* (London: Phaidon, 1986), 29–30 and 196; Curtis, *Modern Architecture*, 427–32; Curtis, "Authenticity," 185–7.
[28]   Curtis, *Le Corbusier,* 180.
[29]   Kari Jormakka, *Eyes That Do Not See* (Weimar: Universitätsverlag, 2011), 22–3.
[30]   Rem Koolhaas, *Fundamentals: 14th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia 2014* (Venice: Marsilio, 2014).

century.[31] He has become the origin of the *archistar* and has killed the other *archistars*.[32] However, the current practice signifies the end of architecture, at least the end of Koolhaas's domination over the profession. Resonating Jim Morrison's famously dark song, Eisenman accounts for Koolhaas's concept of the exhibition: "[This is] the end of my career, the end of my hegemony, the end of my mythology, the end of everything, the end of architecture."[33] For in Eisenman's view, Koolhaas's idea of the discipline relates to performance, events, and filmic narrative—in a tangible architectural space.

In summary, Koolhaas's work can be viewed from a variety of angles and backgrounds, using diverse methods and points of reference: first, in a postmodern, formal reading, the work is understood, on the one hand, as an eclectic collage of iconic elements of modern masterpieces and (hidden) narratives or, on the other hand, as a kind of "cheapskate" architecture and *dirty realism* that adopts the generic space of the typical Manhattan skyscraper. Second, in the discourse of critical ideology (the avant-garde) versus projective practice (muddied by philistinism), theorists proclaim that Koolhaas's architecture is an example of social alchemy that engenders new freedoms and an expanded event structure for the users. Third, in addition to such formal and ideological readings, the sociological approach links the individual project to the design methods and situationist culture in the office of OMA in general. Yaneva's viewpoint dismantles the design process of gaining architectural knowledge as collective teamwork among many human and non-human actors. Fourth, in contrast to studying the individual design and its genealogy in great detail, the historiographical approach to architecture focuses on relevant other projects and proponents—and even calls Koolhaas "the Le Corbusier of our times"—in order to show clear parallels between precursors of his spatial ideas and formal repertoire, and hence to reconstruct the discursive context.

However, even as a vast but by no means endless bulk of essays, articles, and other publications on and by Koolhaas and OMA have appeared over the recent decades, the shortage of scholarly research and monographic studies on the topic has only become more obvious. The theoretical frameworks and research studies scarcely examine Koolhaas's work in terms of recurring design themes and strategies,

[31]   Due to anniversary reasons (1914–2014), Eisenman lets Le Corbusier pass away one year earlier and Mies van der Rohe five years earlier: such bending of history for the sake of the punchline of the story is indeed an artifice that is not entirely unknown to Koolhaas.

[32]   Valentina Ciuffi, "Rem Koolhaas is Stating 'The End' of his Career, Says Peter Eisenman," in *de zeen magazine*, June 9, 2014, accessed December 28, 2014, http://www.dezeen.com/2014/06/09/rem-koolhaas-at-the-end-of-career-says-peter-eisenman.

[33]   Ibid.

which are re-formulated in several projects over an extended period of time. They do not emphasize the question of how such interactive development of architectural knowledge effects the individual building project.

The intent of the present study is therefore a critical in-depth examination focusing on the following key research questions: how can we understand Koolhaas's architectural production and theoretical achievements within his complex process-oriented design practice? Is there a consistency (versus ruptures) of ideas beyond some formal correspondence? What are the leading motifs in the oeuvre? What does the author function mean within this context? Which architectural elements, spatial qualities, and design strategies are transferred and reused from one project to the next? How do these features change during the process of adapting them to different programs?

The goal of this research project is to study the dynamics within the current discourse, in order to chart a new perspective on Koolhaas's architectural accomplishment. It closes the gap in the scientific processing and interpretation of the work and links the architectural knowledge of OMA with the current discourse on design science and the changing role of the architect. The purpose of this study is not to provide a biographical reconstruction of the oeuvre or an art historical account of particular design projects. Rather, it advances a new understanding of the design practice by analyzing the evolution, success, and failure of architectural ideas.

In *Content's* series of "Universal Modernization Patents" Koolhaas registers fifteen fictional patents, including a description of the team of inventors, the abstract, and the initial application of each concept: Social Condenser (Parc de la Villette), Strategy of the Void I (Melun-Sénart), Timed Erasures (La Defense), Loop Trick (Kunsthal), Strategy of the Void II (TGB), Stacked Freedoms (Karlsruhe), Inside-Out City (Jussieu), Disconnect (Cardiff Bay Opera), Everywhere and Nowhere (Bordeaux), Variable-Speed Museum (Tate), Inertness Modified (Universal HQ), Tall & Slender (Hyperbuilding), Skyscraper Loop (CCTV), Cake-Tin Architecture (TVCC), The End of the Road (CBD Beijing).[34] Typically, the term "patent" refers to the exclusive rights over a limited period of time granted to a public enclosure of any new and useful invention or discovery. This right according to national laws should prevent others from industrially applying the patent without permission. Here, the term is used because a certain design solution represents key structures and intentions beyond the specific frameworks, outlining a continuous development of concept and strategies.

In architectural design it is quite common to reuse conceptual ideas and strategies, though, in order to arrive at new solutions. Such

[34]   Rem Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content: Triumph of Realization* (Cologne: Taschen, 2004), 73–83 and 510–12.

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an architectural practice is not only efficient and useful but also contributes to evolving new concepts during the design process. This evolutionary design model employs earlier design types as a source of knowledge rather than starting from scratch with each new task. It is a method of dismantling and deconstructing the elements, less by interpreting the single positions but calling for new perspectives and applications.

The methodology of the present study is a combined strategy of case study approach and critical discourse analysis. In framing the contours of the design task, the single cases serve as examples of architectural elements or principles that have a central and recurring role in Koolhaas's thinking: Wall (Exodus, or The Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture), Void (Ville Nouvelle Melun-Sénart), Montage (Maison à Bordeaux), Trajectory (Dutch Embassy in Berlin), Infrastructure (Seattle Public Library), and Shape (China Central Television Station).

In addition to offering an interpretive historical basis, the case study methodology also identifies political events linked to the emergence of ideas and considers the implications of their premises. The emphasis is not on the individual object but on the sequence, in order to provide a context for the architectural ideas. This way, the approach connects the project to prior experience and records the design knowledge and interrelationships of themes. It intends to structure the body of information and analyzes the specific relevant details and topics of the case. Since this analysis is concerned with the individual aspects of the case, it requires different levels of specificity corresponding to the relevant data. Thus, the case studies discuss the key principles that govern the process to reconstruct the underlying narratives: why is this case selected as a relevant example to analyze the concepts and assumptions at stake, the questions raised, and the consequences of decisions in the architectural process? What are the most important identified features of the design? What are the significant generative ideas and themes? What are the lessons and applications derived from the case? How does the project represent innovative methods and innovations compared to other avant-garde proposals at that time?

Yet, this research of the history of ideas within Koolhaas's lifetime work does not only focus on the processes of underlying forces and readjustments but also on the large-scale chronological perspective that establishes this system of relations between the individual cases. Referring to Foucault's idea of the archaeology of knowledge, the study shifts from a focus on the continuities of ideas towards a focus on interruptions and transformative moments 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."[35] This view of history discovers discontinuities and ruptures rather than insisting on the existence of various kinds of progressive series that proclaim a continuous chronology of reason. Instead of reading the cases as "a sign of something else," archaeology explores how an oeuvre can be examined with different "types of rules for discursive practices," in order to figure out how disparate discourses function by their own set of strategies and rules.[36] Koolhaas's conception of the Venice exhibition "Fundamentals – Absorbing Modernity: 1914–2014" likewise focuses on a new approach towards the past and thereby rethinks the history of the idea of the modern movement within contemporary architectural practice.

Case study research uses the analysis of drawings, photographic images, physical or digital models representing the project, documents, interviews, et cetera. In addition to focusing on the visual data set, the project examination also includes the relationship to the client and his or her impact on the design (though this topic applies to each case study to a varying degree): did the client choose the architect by means of a competition, a working relationship, or was it another kind of selection? How did the architect come to grasp the interests of the client? Were the client's values and objectives compatible with the architect's values and professional practice? What are the strategies in terms of human resources, performance assessment, financial implications, and market projections?

The boundaries between the case and its contextual setting are not clearly evident and often become, for instance, in projects on an urban scale, virtually inseparable from the overlapping environmental factors. This context can identify patterns of correlation with other projects of OMA, historical precedents, and other contemporary proposals, which all address the conditions that eventually led to the particular design solution. Koolhaas's descriptive and exploratory focus is guided by the development of hypotheses within a conceptual framework. The consistency of this correlational research lies in the discussion of theoretical principles (tested from one case to the other), which are able to identify the complex dynamics, implications, and uniqueness of Koolhaas's designs. An integral part of this study is to examine how his architectural practice intertwine with the concepts and strategies proposed in his writings. Focusing on both, the theoretical work and the building practice, the intention of the combined research approach is hence to test the ideas, their conceptual development, and the significance of different applications.

In addition to the case studies, the method of critical discourse analysis allows for an in-depth investigation of how texts are a form of

[35]   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge: The Discourse on Language* (New York: Vintage, 1982), 4.
[36]   Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 138–9.

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social practice with a constitutive and disciplinary agenda. It is an appropriate and useful method for tracing the system of how the body of texts issued by Koolhaas and his office (and their production and correspondence) create recognizable discursive objects: the generic city, the typical plan, junkspace, manifest, instability, void, paranoid critical activity, deliriousness, the metropolitan, and so on. Discourse analysis demonstrates how language works to produce particular meanings and objects within power relationships. Foucault makes a clear distinction between the history of knowledge and the history of ideas, that is an archaeology as a form of discourse analysis.[37] This archaeological analysis is not concerned with the interpretation of ideas, images, and themes revealed in the discourse but with the rules and practices of the discourse itself. Though the term "discourse" is used in different disciplines with different contents, meanings, and forms of analysis, it basically endeavors to reveal the interplay of an individual text, the setting that surrounds it, and the social process in which it is produced. Statements are hence sequences of signs that implicate a system of formation, deploy a particular vocabulary, and become invested with relations of power and disciplinary control.[38] A key feature of the discursive practice is the "historical a priori," which Foucault describes as the fact that a present discourse also includes the history of the discourse. This aspect is clearly evident in Koolhaas's language and significantly contributes to his influence on architecture and beyond.

The narrative sequence of the chapters focuses on one particular design project (from the early nineteen-seventies to the present) combined with a set of theoretical ideas that form the central thesis for the design process. The chapters are arranged in a chronological order so that the role of the case studies is to demonstrate how the proposition of design concepts is used, tested, changed, and adapted in a series of versions to an individual site. The ideas constituting Koolhaas's work are viewed both in regards to the context in which they were originally proposed and their critical impact to the current discourse on architecture.

The first chapter, "Wall," is the study of Koolhaas's theoretical work as a student at the Architectural Association in London, *Exodus, or The Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture* (1972). Like his project on the Berlin Wall, it discusses, one of his pet ideas: architecture makes decisions, determines certain orders, and inevitably leads to the reduction of freedoms and options. The proposal for the Arnhem Panopticon Prison and the Nexus Housing in Fukuoka likewise apply the

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[37]   Margaret Wetherall, Stephanie Taylor, and Simeon J. Yates, *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader* (London: Sage Publications, 2001), 384.
[38]   Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 117.

strategy of walling-in and surveillance culture while claiming to provide new freedoms for the users. Similarly, Le Corbusier puts forward a decisionist position and claims that the true nature of architecture is to make choices, so that the plan should become the new authority that realizes an ideal order according to scientific principles. A discussion of examples—such as ancient city walls, the *Roma quadrata*, the Great Wall of China, the Venice Ghetto, and the Kowloon Walled City—elaborates how enclosed space can also provide specific conditions of freedom, so that the voluntarily imprisoned, in fact, dwell in an area with new options.

The second chapter, "Void," examines the 1987 urban proposal for the Ville Nouvelle Melun-Sénart in terms of Koolhaas's claim about the omnipotence and impotence of planning for the city, that is, that the ideal strategy would be a deliberate surrender to chaotic urban growth in order to take as premise the weakness of any urbanism. Other applications of this principle on the scale of single structures are the competition entries for the Zeebrugge Sea Terminal and the Très Grande Bibliothèque in Paris. Chaos und disorder are seen as essential parts of the modern metropolis, which should be abandoned by such plans as Haussmann's radical restructuring of Paris, the rigid zoning scheme for the functionalist city by CIAM, and the "watertight formula" of the Plan Voisin by Le Corbusier. Yet, the young generation of the nineteen-sixties rejected modernist schemes and instead proclaimed *zero degree* of ideology, *non-plan* strategies, and *une architecture autre*. This analysis investigates how the city is understood as complex human ecology creating the diversity and rich social mixture of everyday life.

In the third section, "Montage," various methods of structuralist and post-structuralist theory are reconsidered and used to analyze the Maison à Bordeaux (1994–98), with the Villa dall'Ava in Paris and the Kunsthal in Rotterdam as points of reference. Though the design adopts modernist armature, it decomposes and reassembles the single parts into a collage of various objects. These projects also take up the idea of the *architectural promenade* and the ritual staging of a sequence of rooms that can be associated with French architectural Hellenism, for instance, the procession to the Acropolis in Athens. In addition to the modernist fragments, the study also explores how Koolhaas's architectural concepts refer to the irrational side of modernism—which can likewise be traced in Le Corbusier's work and Salvador Dalí's idea of the paranoid critical method.

In the fourth chapter, "Trajectory," the Dutch Embassy in Berlin (1999–2003), is taken as the starting point of the discussion of Koolhaas's strategy to explore dynamism and motion in architecture by creating a spatial sequence, a kind of filmic reality that serves as narrative of historical events and layers. Similarly, the competition entries to the Très Grande Bibliothèque and the Jussieu Libraries, both

designed for Paris, provide points of reference to the events of May '68. Other architects and artists, such as Bernard Tschumi, Constant, and Guy Debord, also searched for new ways of representing the experience of movement and psychogeographical atmosphere, both in a single building and in the city. The analysis considers Koolhaas's trajectory as a form of *architecture parlante*, a means to communicate single historical features that are significant for the identity and self-conception of the urban ground.

The fifth chapter refers to the strategy of "Infrastructure" as a way to create spaces for social encounters outside of preprogrammed structures. A case in point is the Seattle Public Library (1999–2004), featuring zones of stability and instability, so that areas with fixed functions alternate with parts for a changing agenda. The infrastructural means allow for expanding the event structure of the building in use, similar to Koolhaas's theory of Bigness and the Manhattan skyscraper, in order to promote new performance. His competition entries for the Sea Terminal in Zeebrugge as well as the design for the Casa da Musica provide further examples, that largely rely on an extensive infrastructural organization of the interior wrapped in a unitized envelope. This investigation also examines how the inventions of the escalator, a diagram of continuity and circulation, and the elevator, a diagram of discontinuity and autonomous space, are closely linked to the development of new building types, including the department store and shopping centers, as well as the functioning of subway systems and factories.

In the sixth section, "Shape," the final investigation considers the new China Central Television Station (CCTV) in Beijing (2002–08), which is described as a perceptive and adaptive new species because it communicates with the urban environment. Koolhaas proclaims similar design strategies for other urban megastructures, including the Loop or Bent Skyscraper, the Cake-Tin Architecture, the Tall & Slender model, or simply the End of the Road, which is a field of low-rise structures close to the traditional urban cluster. This study's discussion of shape also involves the sensual and atmospheric qualities of a surface that contribute to the performance of the building in its surroundings. Shape is hence considered opposite to form, which is a highly articulated and idealized medium of modernity and connected to concepts of autonomy, ideology, and criticality in architectural theory and design. The present study also considers the question of whether an extended criticality of a post-vanguard architectural practice might supersede the historical avant-garde.[39]

[39]   Michael Speaks, "Design Intelligence: Part 1, Introduction," in *A+U* (December 2002): 10–8, here 12.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

> *Half a century ago, in the nineteen-sixties—that fabled era of free sex and free access to drugs—serious young radicals took aim at institutions, in particular big corporations and big government, whose size, complexity, and rigidity seemed to hold individuals in an iron grip.*[40]
> Richard Sennett

> *Well … I would leave out the 'quasi'… And the 'utopian'! [laughs] The 'idea', yes … working for a political idea, as a propagandist for the political idea.*[41]
> Rem Koolhaas

Born on November 17, 1944, in Rotterdam, Remment Lucas Koolhaas (abbreviated to Rem) spent his first eight years in the Netherlands before his family moved to Indonesia in 1952. In 1956, they returned to Amsterdam after a short stay in Brazil. His father, Anton Koolhaas (1912–92), was a novelist, screenwriter, critic, and director of the Amsterdam Academy of Film; Koolhaas's mother is Selinde Pietertje Roosenburg (born 1920). His grandfather Dirk Roosenburg worked for Hendrik Petrus Berlage before he opened his own architectural office.[42] In 1963, Koolhaas started to write articles for the weekly magazine *De Haagse Post* about artistic and cultural topics. In this capacity, he also conducted interviews, for example, with the Dutch architect and artist Constant Nieuwenhuys and the Italian filmmaker Federico Fellini. In addition to his journalist work, Koolhaas studied scriptwriting at the Film and Television Academy in Amsterdam. His interest in cinema led him to become a member of "1, 2, 3, enz," a group of filmmakers including Rene Daalder. There he was involved in producing film, writing screenplays for Russ Meyer, and also acting in several short movies, like *A Gangstergirl* in 1966, *Body and Soul* in 1967, and *The White Slave* in 1969.

From 1968 to 1973, Koolhaas studied at the Architectural Association School of Architecture (AA) in London, whose teachers at the time included architects and artists like Peter Cook, Cedric Price,

[40]   Richard Sennett, *The Culture of the New Capitalism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 1.
[41]   Rem Koolhaas et al., "Propaganda Architecture."
[42]   Gargiani, *Rem Koolhaas/OMA*, 3; Wikipedia Contributors, "Rem Koolhaas," in *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, accessed March 6, 2011, http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rem_Koolhaas; OMA, "Homepage," accessed March 6, 2011, http://www.oma.eu.

Peter Smithson, Charles Jencks, Alvin Boyarsky, and Elia Zenghelis, who would be one of the founding members of OMA. During his time at the AA, Koolhaas also carried out several theoretical investigations, which demonstrate both the school's educational focus and Koolhaas's central themes found in later works. For example, the study The Berlin Wall as Architecture (1970–72) analyzes an existing architectural object that is not only a rigorous means of separation but also embodies "the secret but true sacred symbol of Berlin."[43] Koolhaas argues that the wall forms an insurmountable barrier that, by encircling one part of the city, creates fundamentally different conditions for the inhabitants because it does not imprison them but makes them "free." Koolhaas adopted this method of interpretation in his examination of metropolitan sites when he moved to New York City as a Harkness Fellow in 1972. From 1972 to 1973, he studied at Cornell University, and was subsequently a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies (IAUS) from 1973 to 1979, at the same time that Peter Eisenman and Kenneth Frampton were program participants. During his stay in the USA he collaborated with O. M. Ungers and taught at Columbia University and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). In 1976, he also started lecturing at the AA and at Delft University.

Koolhaas's Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) was founded with Madelon Vriesendorp and Elia and Zoe Zenghelis on January 1, 1975 in London. In 1980, it expanded in collaboration with Zaha Hadid, moving its headquarters to Rotterdam and opened offices in other cities, including New York and Beijing. Choosing the name OMA signifies the group's central concept of architecture as urban configuration and not as single object. They started with a series of commissions, studies, and competition entries. Their work includes the Koepel Panopticon Prison in Arnhem (1980), the Parc de la Villette in Paris (1982), the Netherlands Dance Theater in The Hague (completed in 1987), the Très Grande Bibliothèque in Paris (1989), the Zeebrugge Sea Terminal (1989), the Nexus Housing in Fukuoka (completed in 1991), the Jussieu Libraries in Paris (1992), the Kunsthal in Rotterdam (completed in 1992), the master plan for an entire new city—Euralille with the Congrexpo in Lille (1994), the Educatorium in Utrecht (1997), the New York and San Francisco Prada Stores and Catwalks (starting in 2000), the EU Flag (2001), the extension for the Whitney Museum in New York (2001), the CCTV and TVCC in Beijing (2002–08), the Netherlands Embassy in Berlin (completed in 2003), the Public Library in Seattle (completed in 2004), the Casa da Musica in Porto (2005), and the Dee and Charles Wyly Theater in Dallas (2009), as well as projects in Kuwait, Dubai, Singapore, Mumbai, Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen Hong Kong, and Moscow.

[43]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 944.

In the last two decades the firm has spread by launching further offices in New York, Beijing, Hong Kong, and Doha, and by expanding in regards to both the content and the geographical scope of their work. In 1999, AMO was established as a research studio, or a so-called think-tank, beyond the conventional field of practice in order to apply architectural knowledge commercially for companies like Prada, Ikea, and Volkswagen. AMO also produced a study for the Hermitage in St. Petersburg and one called "The Image of Europe," which are both panoramic surveys showing the history and iconography of the subject.

In addition to running his architectural office OMA, since 1995 Koolhaas has taught as a professor in the Practice of Architecture and Urban Design at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University. As a scholar, he analyzes themes like China's Pearl River Delta in *Projects on the City I: Great Leap Forward* (2002) and the spaces, techniques, and ideologies of retail and consumption in *Projects on the City II: The Harvard Guide to Shopping* (2001).

In addition to his design practice, Koolhaas's work consists of his writings about architecture, which are a critical re-reading of the modern movement as well as the constructivists and surrealists. In his first book, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto of Manhattan* (1978), he gives an account of the functional attainments of the New World and their surrealist application in the paranoid critical method proposed by Salvador Dalí. His opus magnum, co-authored with Bruce Mau, *S,M,L,XL* (1995), is a volume of over 1,000 pages that compiles OMA's work up to that point: their numerous projects, competition entries, and realizations. It also includes a series of essays by Koolhaas that quickly became canonical texts: "Bigness, or the Problem of Large" (1994), "The Generic City" (1994), and "Typical Plan" (1993). For the book-length publication, *Content: Triumph of Realization* (2004), he took the role of editor in a move that clearly reflects the OMA–AMO conjunction of providing a basic research context to architectural practice. He did, however, contribute the essay "Junk Space" (2001) and several shorter texts co-authored with students and other collaborators. Other key publications by Koolhaas (and collaborations with other authors) are as follows: *Euralille: The Making of a New City* (1996), *Rem Koolhaas: Conversations with Students* (1996), *OMA Rem Koolhaas: Living Vivre Leben* (1998), *Mutations: Harvard Project on the City* (2000), *Projects for Prada: Part 1* (2001), *The Dutch Embassy in Berlin by OMA/Rem Koolhaas* (2004), *CCTV by OMA* (2005), *OMA in The Hague* (2006), *Project Japan: Metabolism Talks* (2011).

When presenting the Pritzker Prize to Koolhaas in 2000 in Jerusalem, the jury characterized his work as both visionary and pragmatist, intented to extraordinary dimensions, a free-flowing circulation, and

unprecedented shape.[44] His numerous international awards include the Progressive Architecture Award (for a residential house in Miami he created with Laurinda Spear) in 1974, the Antoni Gaudí Award and Olympics Award (for Euralille) in 1992, the Book Award (for *S,M,L,XL*) of the American Institute of Architects in 1997, the French Chevalier de Légion d'honneur in 2001, the Japanese Praemium Imperiale in 2003, the RIBA Gold Medal in 2004, and the Mies van der Rohe Award (for the Netherlands Embassy) in 2005. In 2008, he was invited to join the European Group of Wise. Two years later in 2010, he received the Golden Lion of the Venice Biennale of Architecture for his lifetime achievement.

In 2014, Koolhaas was curator of the Fourteenth International Architecture Exhibition of the Biennale in Venice and, for the first time, invited the national pavilions to respond to a single theme, "Fundamentals – Absorbing Modernity: 1914–2014," in order to re-visit key moments from a century of the modern movement.

[44]   Hyatt Foundation, "Jury Citation," n.p.
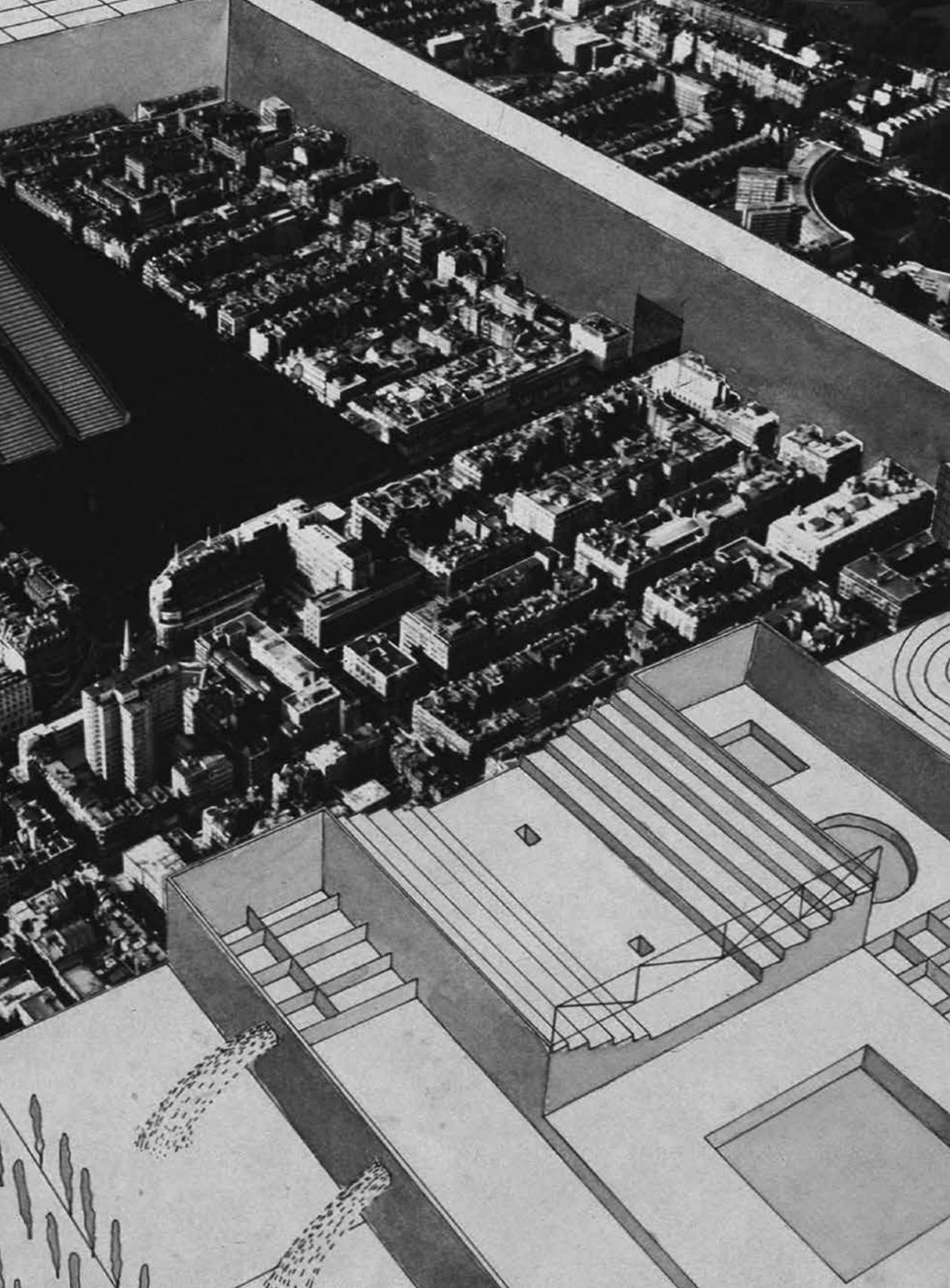
WALL:
EXODUS, OR THE VOLUNTARY PRISONERS OF ARCHITECTURE, LONDON
1972

THE WALL AS A MEANS OF DIVISION, EXCLUSION, AND DIFFERENCE

**Good Half and Bad Half of the City: Exodus, or
The Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture**

In "Typical Plan" (1993), Rem Koolhaas proclaims that "architecture is monstrous in the way in which each choice leads to the reduction of possibility."[1] Even more dramatically, he argues that, like "often before in this history of mankind, architecture was the guilty instrument of despair."[2] Planning is seen to entail the limitation of freedoms, for it imposes a particular scheme and establishes a system of order onto a given site. However, he goes on to say, "it is possible to imagine a mirror image of this terrifying architecture, a force as intense and devastating but used instead in the service of positive intentions."[3] Rethinking the idea of architecture as a means of restraint, division, and exclusion, Koolhaas investigates new ways in which planning could become a tool for initiating change, for providing freedoms, and for allowing the emergence of unpredictable, virtual events.

In his article "Recent Koolhaas," Jeff Kipnis argues that what really drives the work of Koolhaas, from writings to buildings, is one particular intent: "that aim, so brazen that almost no one but Koolhaas ever mentions it in other than occult terms, is simply this: to discover what real, instrumental collaboration can be effected between architecture and freedom."[4] Though there can be no collection of liberating techniques supported by architectural means, Kipnis claims that Koolhaas's concepts propel open-ended situations of choice and self-rule—even in such constraining, inflexible schemes as the Manhattan grid or the panoptical prison. Yet, how can planning relate to the creation of unprecedented events and new forms of social life? How do architectural decisions function as powerful means of order, division, and control? What are Koolhaas's strategies to present alternative ways of planning and decision-making?

In the 1972 project Exodus, or The Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture, Koolhaas turns the scheme for a prison into a voluntary, desired habitat by a radical mirror inversion of significance and attraction. He proclaims that "division, isolation, inequality, aggression, destruction, all the negative aspects of the Wall, could be the ingredients of a new

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[1]   Rem Koolhaas, "Typical Plan," in Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 334–53, here 344.
[2]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 5.
[3]   Ibid.
[4]   Kipnis, "Recent Koolhaas," 27.
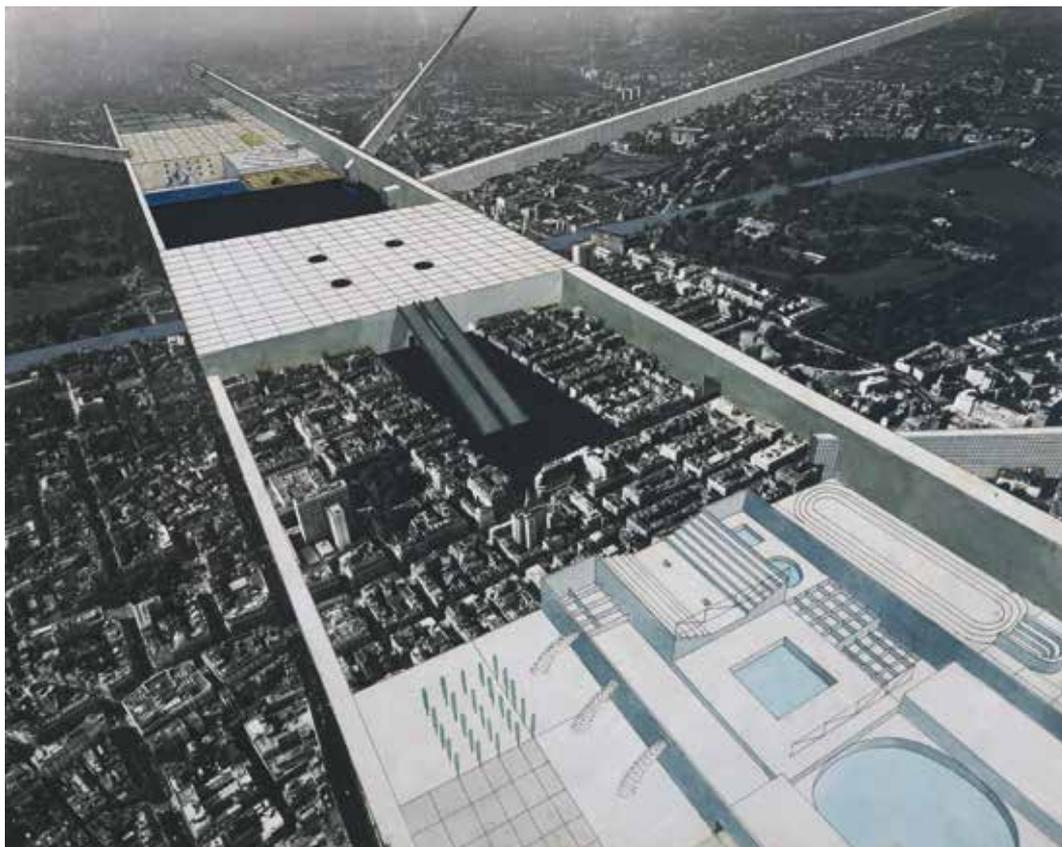
phenomenon: architectural warfare against undesirable conditions, in this case London."[5] The form of the prison, implying the notion of institutional order, control, and constraint of individual liberty, is presented as a desirable retreat from the anxiety of an isolated and therefore pointless individual existence. His architectural proposal seeks to make a case against objectionable aspects by presenting the confined space as a series of new extraordinary experiences. Exodus was, initially, Koolhaas, Madelon Vriesendorp, Elia and Zoe Zenghelis's entry for the competition The City as Meaningful Environment, organized by the Italian journal *Casabella* in 1972. In addition to a short text, that describes the various architectural elements and their functions, the project consists of a series of collages of Koolhaas's diploma project at the Architectural Association, combined with a range of items from outside the architectural field, such as images of newspapers, photographs of artworks, and pictures of amorous scenes.

The Exodus project is defined by the hermetically enclosing Walls and the intermediate Strip, cutting through the center of London from

[5]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 5.

east to west (→**1**). The tip of the Strip continuously expands into the existing urban fabric of London, even though a few of the old buildings are preserved and incorporated into the new territory. Most of the structures from the past will be destroyed and replaced by the constantly modified models of public monuments and symbols. Thus, the scheme for the monumental linear form of the Strip creates the maximum possible contrast between the new area within the Walls and the context of the city. The violation of the urban fabric through architecture produces the effect of a cynical and blunted rendition of power so that the city of London is treated as an insignificant series of private spheres, whereas the new world is projected as a meaningful environment of public spaces. Accordingly, the Walls of Exodus divide the city into a good half and a bad half, into the disparate spaces inside and outside the enclosure. Inside the Wall, the territory of the Strip presents the important, valuable part, whereas the zone outside the Strip is an underdeveloped and futile area of urban chaos.

The Exodus zone is only accessible from one door leading to the Reception Area, where the "voluntary prisoners of architecture" are received with an overwhelming welcome (→**2,→3**). During their initial training period, the "fugitives" of urban disorder and insignificance reside in a kind of environmental sluice that comprises of preserved fragments of London's old city fabric (→**4**). From here, the new inmates can ascend via a gigantic escalator to the roof of the Reception Square, where they get a first overview of the two different urban structures, the old fabric and the new order.

The area of the Strip is divided into ten programmatically diverse square blocks, such as the Ceremonial Square, the Park of the Four Elements, the Square of the Arts, the Institute of Biological Transactions,

(2) Rem Koolhaas/Elia Zenghelis/ Madelon Vriesendorp/Zoe Zenghelis, *Exodus, or The Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture: The Reception Area,* **1972, project, gelatin silver photograph, color ink, 26.7 x 36.8 cm.**
**Source: Coates,** *Narrative Architecture*
© 2015 Rem Koolhaas

the Baths, the Park of Aggression, and the Allotments (→**5,**→**6,**→**7**). In each of these public monuments, the inhabitants can encounter experimental forms of social interaction initiated by a variety of institutional settings.

Exodus's utopian strip of public monuments, offering diverse social spaces, resembles Salomon's House in Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis* (1626). An inmate describes the interior: "We have also fair and large baths, of several mixtures, for the cure of diseases, and the restoring of man's body from arefaction; and others for the confirming of it in strength of sinews, vital parts, and the very juice and substance of the body. … We have dispensatories or shops of medicines; wherein you may easily think, if we have such variety of plants, and living creatures, more than you have in Europe (for we know what you have), the simples, drugs, and ingredients of medicines, must likewise be in so much the greater variety … We have also houses of deceits of the senses, where we represent all manner of feats of juggling, false apparitions, impostures and illusions, and their fallacies."[6]

In a similar fashion, Exodus's Air quadrant in the Park of the Four Elements emits aromatic mixtures of gasses in order to stimulate hal-

[6]   Francis Bacon, "The New Atlantis" (1626), in *Ideal Commonwealths: Comprising More's Utopia, Bacon's New Atlantis, Campanella's City of the Sun, and Harrington's Oceana*, ed. by Henry Morley (New York: Colonial Press, 1901), 204–5.
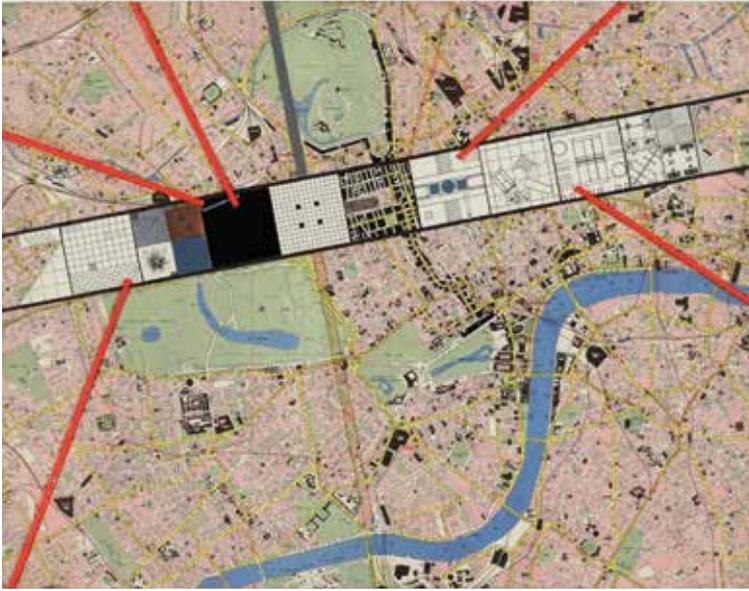
lucinogenic experiences. In this way, the inmates can program their moods by variations in dosage, evoking exhilaration, affection, devotion, depression, or whatever feelings they wish to have.

Exodus is also close to the society of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), in which the citizens use a tranquillizing drug called *soma* to release themselves from anxiety, unwanted memories, and the dullness of everyday life. In the New World state, the systematic drugging by the daily tablets ration is not just an unfettered privilege of the individual but has become a powerful political instrument of rule and control. Besides creating euphoria and an increased effectiveness
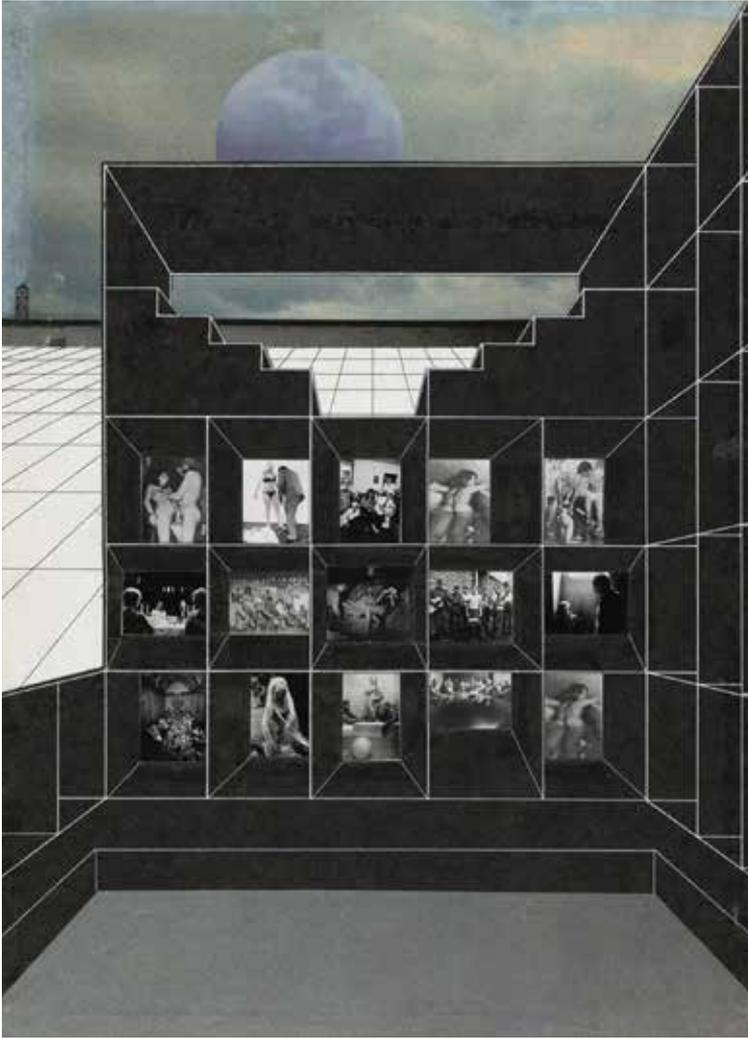
of body and mind, *soma* also heightens suggestibility through the
reduction of mental resistance to the effects of propaganda.

Twenty-six years later in *Brave New World Revisited*, Huxley sug-
gested that pharmacological research had in the meantime discovered
ever-new and better products with mind-changing effects and the
forces to use them had become more and more powerful. For Hux-
ley, the methods of chemical persuasion can both heal and enslave
because they "may help the psychiatrist in his battle against mental ill-
ness, or they may help the dictator in his battle against freedom."[7] In
any case, however, the stimulating, tranquillizing, and hallucinogenic

[7]   Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World Revisited* (New York: Harper & Row,
          1965), 76.

drugs also cause, in certain doses, addiction and malady and can ultimately ruin one's health. Those effects point to the danger of adopting the greatest happiness and efficiency as a major guiding principle for social life. The initial sense of the individual's freedom turns into the opposite, as one lives in an indolent fog of contentment—at the expense of free choice.

Another square block of Exodus is the recreational area in the Park of Aggression that accommodates the only "sport" in the New Order, namely aggression. Its main buildings are two towers with a magnetic field in between that creates an atmosphere of tension and uncertainty about the users' safety. One tower is a simple structure of forty-two sloping floors, while the other tower consists of a seemingly infinitive "spiral of introspection." Inside the first tower there are private cells surrounded by viewing galleries so that the inmates can be both actors and observers at some stage in the progress of the violent spectacle. As the inmates ascend the platforms, the first tower leans closer and closer towards the second spiraling tower. Finally, arriving at the top, the participants are pushed into a fall, which is, in fact, a slow movement all the way through the curved space of

(7) Rem Koolhaas/Elia Zenghelis/ Madelon Vriesendorp/Zoe Zenghelis, *Exodus, or The Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture: The Allotments*, 1972, project, cut-and-pasted paper, marbleized paper, and photolithographs with ink and watercolor on paper, 29.2 x 41.9 cm.
Source: McQuaid and Riley, *Envisioning Architecture*, 168
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the second tower. These activities end in excessive nocturnal feasts, performed on the previous "battlefield" of the Recreational Park.

The contradictory agendas of the Bath Square and the Allotment Square seem to be emblematic of the central problem of Koolhaas's idea of providing freedoms via architectural means. Based on a studio project at the Architectural Association for the Beaubourg (Centre Pompidou) competition, the Baths consist of cells of different sizes, provided for individuals, couples, or groups who are encouraged to test any sort of fantasies and suppressed desires brought to surface.

The Allotments, in contrast, as the private sphere of the Strip, present a scenery where the inmates have their own houses with gardens. These objects have the form of small palaces built of the most expensive materials. Yet, as the entire zone is strictly supervised, the design precludes any privacy or intimacy. While neither the Bath nor the Allotments provide spaces of retreat and seclusion, they both ensure control and surveillance by their institutional settings, despite their seemingly different programmatic conception.

Koolhaas's title Exodus explicitly refers to the Second Book of the Torah and the Old Testament, describing the departure of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the years wandering in the wilderness where Moses received the Ten Commandments and the Covenant Code. Picking up the Biblical theme of suppression and departure, Koolhaas uses architecture as the central instrument for transgression, collectivity, and freedom. From this point of view, London can be associated with Ancient Egyptian civilization, whereas the Strip, by contrast, correlates to the Promised Land, a utopian vision yet to come. Indeed, the project can be interpreted as an ironic comment on the Promised Land, given that the monumental scheme of Koolhaas's Exodus rather resembles the "house of bondage" in Egypt than a desirable place to live.

Koolhaas's project also resonates with other significant projects from the late nineteen-sixties and early seventies, such as Archigram's Control and Choice and Archizoom's No-Stop City. They also give evidence of a critical change reflecting the growing crisis, impasse, and disenchantment with the social and political conditions of modernism in the post-war period. These new spatial concepts reacted against the increasing consumerism and industrial mechanisms of planning, that reduce architecture to mere building technology stripped of a social agenda. According to the generation of architects in the sixties,

any attempt to escape the confined field and to activate the utopian potential is useful in challenging the discipline. Architecture should again function as an ideological model, by providing the conditions for revolutionary change and thereby bringing about a better society. Many architects, however, proposed dystopian worlds as an ironic, provocative critique aimed at revealing the threats, contradictions, absurdity, and even obsoleteness of architectural planning. One of the most striking imaginary worlds is Superstudio's Continuous Monument (1969–71), which bears a strong formal and theoretical resemblance to Koolhaas's Exodus project (→**8**).

Both schemes express architecture's full power by presenting visions of an inevitably oppressive, limited world created within a fully artificial trope. Both projects show a disturbing utopian vision posited against the naïve idealistic pretension of the nineteen-fifties and early sixties. As Adolfo Natalini puts it, when the globe has become a cleared, homogeneous, urbanized model with seemingly egalitarian possibilities, projects like the Continuous Monument may show the "forewarning images of the horrors that architecture has in store for us." [8]

In addition to the walled territory of Exodus, several other projects of Koolhaas's investigate the relationship between planning and freedom. It became a central concern in a number of projects and essays in *Delirious New York* (1978), such as The City of the Captive Globe (1972), a project that brings to mind the cover image of Huxley's *Brave New World Revisited* (→**9**,→**10**). Other projects where this concern surfaced again include The Story of the Pool; the theory of

(9) Rem Koolhaas/Madelon Vriesendorp, *The City of the Captive Globe,* **New York, 1972, project, watercolor, axonometric projection.**
Source: McQuaid and Riley, *Envisioning Architecture,* **168**
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[8]   Quoting Adolfo Natalini, see Martin van Schaik, ed., *Exit Utopia: Architectural Provocations 1956–1976* (Munich: Prestel, 2005), 188.
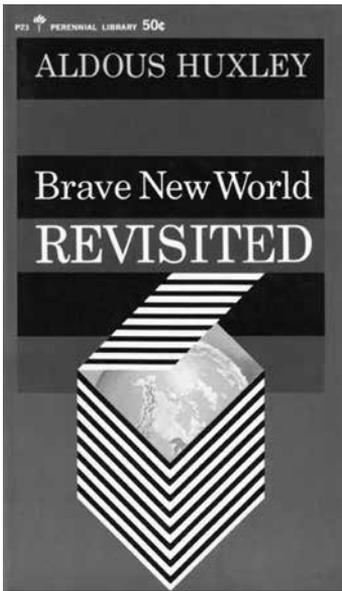
the Manhattan skyscraper; the study for the Renovation of a Panopticon Prison in Arnhem, The Netherlands; and the Nexus Housing in Fukuoka, Japan. Even though Exodus is a confounding project which stages mainly the dystopian aspects of division, segregation, order, and control, we should ask the question: how can the specific spatial properties of the Wall of Exodus promise to offer desirable options and new freedoms through architectural planning? What is the basic idea applied in this particular case?

Decision-Making and the Authority of the Plan

In using the wall as a hermetic enclosure, Exodus relates to another project of Koolhaas, The Berlin Wall as Architecture (1970–72), which was originally submitted as an analysis of an existing architectural object for a course at the AA. In both Exodus and The Berlin Wall as Architecture, the wall separates a city in two ideologically contradictory parts (→**11**,→**12**). In Exodus the territory inside the wall is at once an imprisonment and a utopian dream, and so, its inmates flee from the existing urban fabric into the new artificial paradise, even though they realize they are being kept in captivity. In Koolhaas's analysis, it is not that different from the Berlin Wall.

A notorious symbol of Cold War politics, in particular of the Iron Curtain, the Berlin Wall was part of a physical arrangement that stood between Western Europe and the Eastern Bloc. In the entry "Nach Druben" in the dictionary section of *S,M,L,XL*, Koolhaas quotes Fritz Neumeyer who describes the viewing towers of the Berlin Wall as

"Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture" – Linda 1972.

built signs that "embody the secret but true sacred symbol of Berlin."[9] For Koolhaas it was a shock to realize that "it is not East Berlin that is imprisoned, but the West, the 'open society.' In my imagination, stupidly, the wall was a simple, majestic north-south divide; a clean, philosophical demarcation; a neat, modern Wailing Wall. I now realize that it *encircles* the city, paradoxically making it 'free.'"[10] Similar to the inhabitants of the West sector of Berlin, the inmates of the strip of Exodus are considered to be voluntary prisoners, protected by the hermetically enclosed space. In this reasoning, only inside the architectural confines of the enclave may the individuals attain their own preferences of lifestyle and concepts of freedom.

Running a length of 165 kilometers, the Berlin Wall appears in various permutations, depending on whether it is a historically significant part, a more central location, or some other, more distant urban site. According to Koolhaas, the wall has become the basis of a script, because "it was impossible to imagine another recent artifact with the same signifying potency. And there was more: in spite of its apparent absence of program, the wall – in its relatively short life – had provoked and sustained an incredible number of events, behaviors, and

[9]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 944.
[10]   Ibid., 216–7.

effects."[11] Though he describes the wall as "heartbreakingly beautiful," he is also aware of the immanent cruelty of the demarcation. Its physical appearance expresses an insurmountable obstacle. Its only function is to divide a city into two areas and, thereby, make one of the parts inaccessible and consequently even more appealing.

The Berlin Wall deploys the vocabulary of the prison, from which even the attempt to escape can end tragically. *Sous le pavé, la plage* (under the pavement, the beach) was the slogan of the 1968 student revolution in Paris, defiantly insisting on the possibility of utopia, of things being differently, better. Koolhaas argues that in Berlin, by contrast, "directly behind the second wall: sand, treated like a Japanese garden. Below the sand: invisible mines."[12]

Looking at the Berlin wall as architecture, Koolhaas claims that it is inevitable to "transpose the despair, hatred, frustration it inspired to the field of architecture."[13] For him, the wall was a "graphic demonstration of the power of architecture." In his memory of the days at the AA, written in 1993, Koolhaas draws a few general conclusions from this case study: "The wall suggested that architecture's beauty was directly proportional to its horror." In other words, the aesthetic effects of architecture result from its performative powers. Moreover, "*the wall … made a total mockery of any of the emerging attempts to link* form *to* meaning[.] … I would never again believe in form as the primary vessel of meaning."[14] At least in retrospect, then, Koolhaas rejected the emerging theories of postmodernism about form and remained in the vocabulary of modernism, for the most part. Another later principle of Koolhaas's architecture was also formed at this very moment—the notion of the void: "As an object the wall was unimpressive, evolving toward a near dematerialization; but that left its power undiminished. The wall was not an object but an erasure. … It was a warning that – in architecture – absence would always win in a contest with presence."[15] At this point, Koolhaas acknowledges, "it was as if I had come eye to eye with architecture's true nature."[16] Though its physical presence is marginal, "in its 'primitive' stage the wall is *decision*, applied with absolute architectural minimalism."[17] This minimalist statement is not taken lightly but constitutes the core of Koolhaas's argument.

By claiming that architecture's true nature is decision, Koolhaas echoes the theory of Le Corbusier, an architect whose influence on

[11]   Ibid., 222.
[12]   Ibid., 220.
[13]   Ibid., 226.
[14]   Ibid., 227. Unless otherwise indicated, all quoted emphases are those
        of the respective author.
[15]   Ibid., 228.
[16]   Ibid., 225.
[17]   Ibid., 219.

Koolhaas cannot be underestimated.[18] In *The Radiant City*, Le Corbusier maintains that in modern societies there is a need for a "DECISION – To believe. The masses will always go out to meet those who have something to give."[19] Instead of "democratic stagnation," he argues that "authority must now step in, patriarchal authority, the authority of a father concerned for his children. … We have had enough of their so civilized materialism and its pretty results: unemployment, ruin, famine, despair and revolution!"[20]

In 1933, shortly after the Nazis' seizure of power (*Machtergreifung*) in Germany, Le Corbusier dedicated *The Radiant City* simply "to Authority." Tellingly, Le Corbusier ends another book, *The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning*, with the image of Louis the Fourteenth (→**13**), ordering the building of the Invalides, an image which he subtitles: "Homage to a great town planner. This despot conceived immense projects and realized them."[21]

In "No Doubt, Fictions of Technological Reason" Kari Jormakka argues that Le Corbusier's insistence on the indubitable authority of the plan can be related to the Fascist leader theory (*Führerprinzip*), not only in Germany but also in Italy.[22] Accordingly, the Fascist Decalogue of 1938 categorically states: "10. Mussolini ha sempre ragione,"

[18]   Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City* (New York: Orion Press, 1967).
[19]   Ibid., 153
[20]   Ibid., 152.
[21]   Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning* (London: Architectural Press, 1987), 302.
[22]   Kari Jormakka, "No Doubt: Fiction of Technological Reason," in *Als Ob, As If: Fiction in Architecture*, ed. by Gerd Zimmermann (Weimar: Verso, 1996), 169–206, here 167.

that is, "10. Mussolini is always right." Part of the reasoning of leader theory was taken from the German philosopher Carl Schmitt, who put forward a decisionist position, following Thomas Hobbes, when he stated that "authority, not truth, makes laws." According to Schmitt, a dictatorship that is independent of the approval of a majority would represent the people's will more effectively than any democratic principle, because the totalitarian state power could decide without discussion, compromise, and legal restraints: "hence, an arbitrary decision by an authority may serve as a source of value in a secularized world, if taken as an indisputable fact."[23]

However, Le Corbusier did not accept just any human authority, but rather an indubitable and conceptual one, arguing that "the human idol you are yearning after could not stem this tide. Only a fact can do it. A Plan."[24] In addition to Schmitt's decisionism, Le Corbusier's thinking can be related to the French movement of *planisme*, as represented by the Syndicalist review *Plans*. Most significant for this technocratic tendency was the trust in the combination of technological reason and economic planning with a central political authority. Le Corbusier proclaims: "[The new] despot is the *Plan*. The correct, realistic, exact plan. … This Plan has been drawn up well away from the frenzy in the mayor's offices or the town hall, from the cries of the electorate or the laments of society's victims. … It has not considered whether or not it could be carried out in accordance with the constitution now in force. *It is a biological creation destined for human beings and capable of realization by modern techniques*."[25]

Le Corbusier held on to this idea for several years. In 1940, for example, he wrote to his mother: "If he is sincere in his promises, Hitler could crown his life by an overwhelming creation: the reshaping of Europe. … Personally I believe the outcome could be favorable. … It would mean the end of speeches from the tribunal, of endless meetings of committees, of parliamentary eloquence and sterility."[26]

Preoccupied with the idea of the "scientific certainty" of disciplines such as physics and chemistry, Le Corbusier aspired to similar certainty in building production and urban planning and declared that "only an uncompromising functionalism could have a *raison d'etre*."[27] In fact, the Plan does not only have a right to exist. It actually exists as

[23]   Ibid., 170.
[24]   Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, 153.
[25]   Ibid., 154.
[26]   Letter to his mother dated October, 31 1940, quoted in Nicholas Fox Weber, *Le Corbusier: A Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 425. In the original: "Si le marché est sincere, Hitler peut couronner sa vie par une oeuvre grandiose: l'aménagement de l'Europe. … Personnellement je crois le jeu bien fait. … C'est la fin des discours de tribune ou de meetings, de l'éloquence et de la stérilité parlementaire." Le Corbusier, *Choix de lettres*, ed. by Jean Jenger (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2002), 272–3.
[27]   Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, 33.

soon as it is conceived or rather conceives itself: even before it is realized, "the Radiant City already exists on the paper. And when once a technological product has been designed on paper (calculations and working drawings), *it does exist.*"[28] He elaborates, "this plan is your despot: a tyrant, a tribune of the people. Without other help, it will plead its cause, reply to objections, overcome the opposition of private interest, thrust aside outworn customs, rescind outmoded regulations, and create its own authority."[29]

With regard to Le Corbusier's urbanism, Manfredo Tafuri argues that "architecture as ideology of the plan is swept away by the *reality*

[28]   Ibid., 94.
[29]   Ibid., 154.
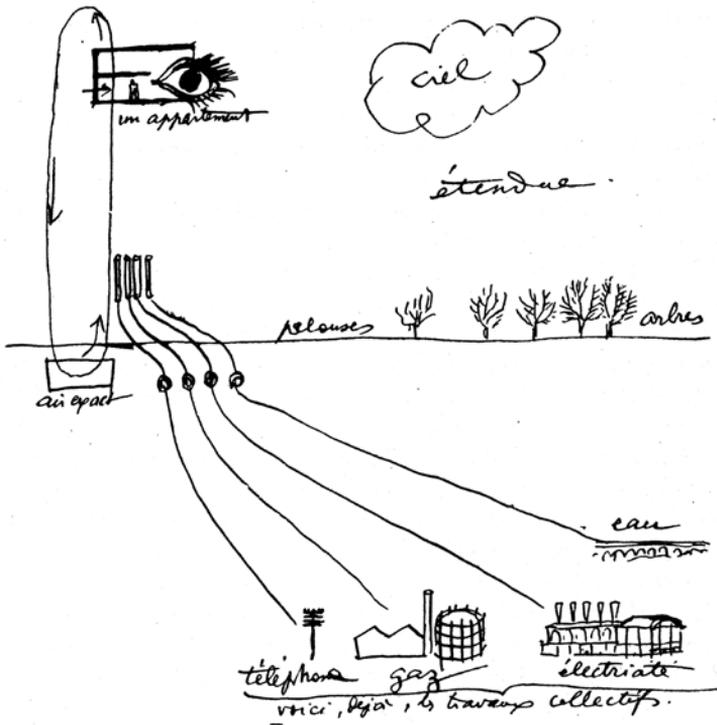
of the plan when, the level of utopia having been superseded, the plan becomes an operative mechanism."[30] Succeeding the despots of Baroque absolutism, who once were able to realize this ideal order, the new authority is the plan made by experts according to scientific principles. Abandoning the idea of a personal authority that is capable of organization and rules, Le Corbusier announced that from now on "the Plan must rule."[31] He advocated an ideal model of governance that he described as a government by *métier*, which is some form of technocratic élite leadership along with the various trade unions.[32] Following his notorious phrase "Architecture or revolution. Revolution can be avoided," he believed in the modernization of society through the provision of extensive housing areas, assembled out of industrially produced prefabricated parts, in order to avoid unstable political situations, social and economic crises, and revolution (→**14**).[33] This aim then justifies the need for authority and radical action.

[30]   Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976), 135.
[31]   Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, 7.
[32]   Kenneth Frampton, *Le Corbusier* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2001), 117.
[33]   Le Corbusier, *Towards an Architecture: Texts and Documents*, transl. by John Goodman (Los Angelos, CA: Getty Research Institute, 2007), 307.

Yet, Le Corbusier admits that the execution of such a rigorous plan would require totally new ideological conditions. Illustrating his position with an image of Manhattan's skyscrapers, he asserted that "everything here is paradox and disorder: individual liberty destroying collective liberty. Lack of discipline."[34] In the new scheme for the Radiant City, he conceived the systematic destruction of the traditional city structure, the square urban block, which ultimately implies the disappearance of the street. For Le Corbusier, it was only by such decisive means that one can aim at restituting both the collective intentions and the "liberty of the individual."[35]

Whether it be Paris in Le Corbusier's Plan Voisin, or London in Koolhaas's Exodus, the proposals are meant as a critique of the dense labyrinthine fabric of the city and the uncontrolled urban expansion at the end of the nineteenth century. Instead of suggesting democratic tools of urban growth, however, both schemes imply (latent) theocratic ideas to achieve their visions. By means of specific strategic planning, they propose a strict and inflexible set of rules, which should organize the collective sphere and the individual scope of action. These systems, though, are founded on decisions that are hardly better than arbitrary and that are superimposed at random over a historical city fabric. Only small groups of "experts" are involved in the development of the scheme and exert their authority in the decision-making process via "the plan." Yet, how can the architect achieve a reconciliation of interests between the freedom of the individual and the freedom of the community? Are the objectives of the plan compatible with the principles and values of the architectural practice? How does it happen that these decisions often become self-fulfilling prophecies, creating their own authority a posteriori?

Somatology and the Fictitious Entity of the Prison

Even if the inmates of Exodus are seen as fugitives who have escaped the oppressive city and voluntarily joined the new order, as Koolhaas's narrative would have it, the design of the Strip is obviously a prison. During his stay at Cornell University in 1972, Koolhaas might have had the opportunity to attend the lectures by Michel Foucault, who was then working on what would be published three years later as *Discipline and Punish*. When Koolhaas and his associates at OMA were commissioned with the renovation of the Koepel Panopticon Prison in Arnhem, Netherlands (1979–81), he directly negotiates the mechanisms of discipline and the "hopelessly contradictory demands

[34]   Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, 129.
[35]   Ibid., 94.

– freedom and discipline."[36] In the dictionary section of *S,M,L,XL*, Koolhaas refers several times to Foucault's thesis of the panoptical society and its principles of discipline and control, for example, when he writes, "EXCLUSION. In a society such as our own we all know the rules of exclusion. The most obvious and familiar of these concerns what is prohibited."[37] Similar to Henri Lefebvre, Foucault stresses the political nature of space, in that planning is not an innocent aesthetic endeavor but one closely linked to the maintenance and representation of power structures.

For Foucault, Jeremy Bentham's design for the Panopticon (1787/91) is the ideal architectural diagram of disciplinary power through institutional setting. In what Foucault refers to as his genealogical method, he shows how hierarchical observation—as the primary technique of control—creates a perfect system of control through surveillance. Bentham's prison consists of a ring of separated cells in which the inmates are invisible to each other but always visible to the guard situated in the central tower. However, it is not necessary that the guard always see each confined person; the point is rather that he *could* see them at any time. Moreover, panoptical vision is asymmetrical: because the windows of the watchtower have curtains, the warden can look into any cell at any time without being visible to the prisoners. Referring to the panoptical diagram, the dictionary entry in *S,M,L,XL* on "POWER" (by Foucault) reads as follows: "Bentham laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable. Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so."[38]

Given that the inmates can never know whether they are being observed, they have to act as if they are always objects of observation. In this scheme, control is therefore archived by the internal monitoring of the inmates themselves rather than by the guard. Foucault discusses visible spatial configurations of power—of which Bentham's panopticon prison is the most striking—whose mechanisms of discipline have also been applied to various other systems, especially in connection to educational and reformatory institutions, factories, and hospitals. The universal principle that enables a few supervisors to monitor a large group is based on the "all-seeing eye" placed in the center of the circle of those being supervised. The constant visibility of the central tower induces in the inmates a state of conscious and

[36]   Rem Koolhaas, "Revision," in Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 234–53, here 251.
[37]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 384.
[38]   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin Books, 1977), quoted in Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 1052.

permanent surveillance and thereby assures the automatic functioning of the disciplinary mechanism.[39]

Though the panopticon diagram clearly relies on the visibility of power, it is a much more complex mechanism that also takes into account what is not visible but only imagined. In "A Fragment on Ontology" Bentham proposes that the entities belonging to *somatology*, the science of the human body or material bodies that come under the conscious knowledge of the senses, are either real or fictitious.[40] Whereas to a real entity, one means to ascribe an existence in reality, a fictitious entity has no real existence yet bears some relation to a real entity. In short, the fictitious entity is only a consideration of a relation to a real entity. Hence, all the entities listed in Aristotle's Ten Categories (Predicaments) are fictitious with the exception of the first: Substance, Quantity, Quality, Relation, Places, Time, Situation, Possession, Action, and Passion or Suffering.

Furthermore, the entities that Bentham describes as political, fictitious entities have "for their efficient causes pleasure and pain, but principally pain, in whatsoever shape."[41] More to the point, Bentham claims that the punishment for crime is in itself evil because it reduces the happiness of the punished individual and thus the overall happiness of the community. By means of punishment, however, others are deterred from committing similar crimes that would reduce the welfare of society to an even greater extent. For this reason, the punishment is less intended for the guilty person than for others who might be tempted to commit a crime.

According to deterrent theory, punishment ought to be staged as a fictional spectacle. In *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1781) Bentham argues that "it is the idea only of the punishment (or, in other words, the *apparent* punishment) that really acts upon the mind; the punishment itself (the *real* punishment) acts not any farther than as giving rise to that idea."[42] To achieve its external objective, the internal structure is determined by fiction, such as the opposition between the real presence and the apparent omnipres-

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[39]   The principles of permanent visibility and central surveillance were not the only approaches to the problems of prison design at that time. The convicts who were felt to be of a "dangerous" character could still communicate with each other despite their separation into single cells. When Michael Faraday and Abel Blouet proposed a particular construction for the cell partition walls for the Millbank Penitentiary, London, their goal was to hamper information and to make communication impossible. David van Zanten, "Nineteenth-Century French Government Architectural Services and the Design of the Monuments of Paris," in *Art Journal* 48/1 (Spring 1989): 16–22, here 17.

[40]   Jeremy Bentham, "A Fragment on Ontology," in *The Panopticon Writings: Jeremy Bentham*, ed. by Miran Bozovic (New York and London: Verso, 1995), 115–58.

[41]   Ibid., 145.

[42]   Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1988), 193.

ence of the warden, and between the real suffering and the apparent suffering of the prisoners, that is, the notion from the outside of the appalling prison. Thus, the punishment relies more on instructing and improving the innocent and on implanting fear in his mind than on the real suffering of the criminal. Nevertheless, real punishment is the surest and most effective way of attaining the right appearance of punishment. One of Bentham's proposals for deviants is that, during common church services with non-criminal people, the convicts would have to wear dreadful masks relating to the severity of their crimes. Again, it is the power of the gaze, the comprehensive surveillance through architectural means that takes the place of physical punishment. The disciplinary methods are meant to internalize the watchful gaze and thus remove the possibility (and ultimately the desire) to do wrong.

For Foucault, the core of Bentham's idea of the panoptical prison is the soul: the preventive effect of punishment is directed at the psyche of the human being rather than at the body. Foucault claims: "The man described for us whom we are invited to free, is already himself the effection of a subjection much more profound than himself. A 'soul' inhabits him and brings him to existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy, the soul is the prison of the body."[43]

He refers to Socrates's comment in *Gorgias* "that the body (*soma*) is our tomb (*sema*), and that the part of the soul which is the seat of the desires is liable to be tossed about by words and blown up and down."[44] However, by inverting the Neoplatonic slogan *soma sema*, Foucault argues that, if the body is the prison of the soul, the soul is even more a prison because of its power over the body.

Deterministic Form and Flexibility

Though the two essential principles of the panoptical prisons—the centralized monitoring of the inmates and the solitary confinement—have not been followed in prison architecture for decades, Koolhaas's proposal for the renovation of the Arnhem Prison has to deal with Bentham's disciplinary agenda and its inherent surveillance culture. Through the use of electronic devices and new concepts of therapeutic interventions, the polarity between guards and inmates has become more and more obsolete. The guards no longer observe the prisoners from the central control post but circulate on the rings

[43]   Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 30.
[44]   Plato, *Gorgias*, ed. by Eric Dodds (Oxford: Claredon, 1959), 493a2–3.

among the inmates, who have been released from their cells. As a result of new integrative methods, the middle tower is converted into a canteen for the wardens, who are now the ones who can be observed by everyone else, wardens and prisoners alike. In addition, complementary facilities for communal activities are inserted into the area outside the main dome according to modern standards.

Although the Arnhem prison represents one of the most notorious disciplinary structures, its key device—the vast central void—proves flexible to future changes and modulation (→**15**). Koolhaas claims that "judging the built presumes a static condition; now each architecture embodies opposite conditions simultaneously: old and new, permanent and temporary, flourishing and at risk."[45] Although architectural form and program always involve the superposition of ideological principles onto the building's structure, they do not necessarily preclude future changes, even opposite functions. Therefore he proclaims that "changes in regime and ideology are more powerful than the most radical architecture – a conclusion both alarming and reassuring for the architect."[46]

The old confinements of what Foucault calls the disciplinary society, as exemplified in Bentham's panopticon, are no longer an appropriate framework. Its concepts, mainly the closed space with centralized structures, are essentially a product of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, when the model of the disciplinary society succeeded the sovereign society, in which power had been concentrated at the apex, the kings or judges. Now at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century, a new form has emerged, namely the control society. Similar to the mechanistic tools of the disciplinary society, the control society uses electronic devices, information technology, and molecular engineering and genetic manipulation.

Referring to Foucault's work, Gilles Deleuze outlines the difference between the two ideologies: "Confinements are *molds*, different moldings, while controls are a *modulation*, like a self-transmuting molding continually changing from one moment to the next, or like a sieve whose mesh varies from one point to another."[47] Deleuze suggests that as the psychological molds of the disciplinary society shape the behavior of the individual, the control society continuously modulates the state of things themselves. This idea is exemplified by the shift from the factory with the organized labor force to the more abstract corporation, in which, instead of the *mass* of workers, the individual employees are separated from each other by competi-

[45]   Rem Koolhaas, "Junk Space," in *Domus* 833 (January 2001): 33–9: reprinted in Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 162–71, here 166.
[46]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 239.
[47]   Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations 1972–1990* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 178–9.
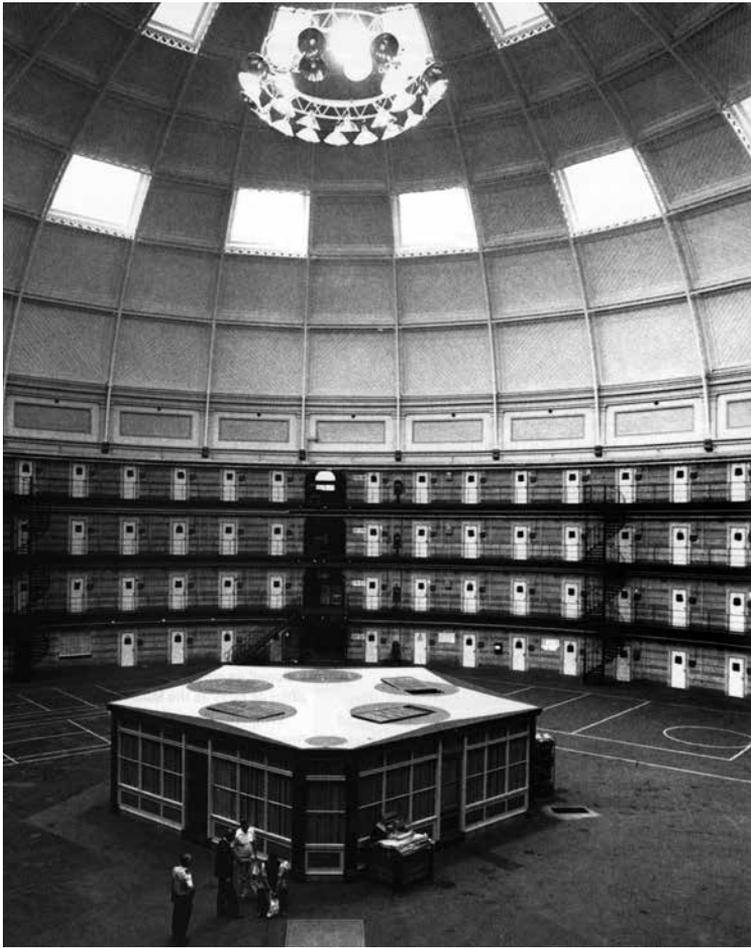
tive strategies. Introducing such means of control through modulation also leads to methods like the merit bonus, based on perpetual monitoring and judgment of wage-related variables.[48]

For Koolhaas, the main task of the revision of the prison design consists of what he calls "prospective archaeology," a concept that allows the constant modification of architectural substance according to ideological changes. The most-significant and least-recognized difference between traditional and modern buildings is "the way a hypermonumental, space-wasting building like the Arnhem panopticon proves flexible, while modern architecture is based on a deterministic coincidence between form and program."[49] New programmatic issues do not necessarily mean destroying the building itself. Rather,

[48]   Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," in *October* 59 (Winter 1992): 3–7.
[49]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 239–40.

it is the spatial excess, the superfluity of the design that enables flexibility and adjustment to unpredictable changes. For this reason, "flexibility is not the exhaustive anticipation of all possible changes. … Flexibility is the creation of margin – excess capacity that enables different and even opposite interpretations and uses." [50]

This idea of flexibility implies the precondition of spatial surplus because its programmatic freedom depends on the margins left unused. The opposite case is illustrated in the design of Hugo Häring's Gut Garkau cowshed. In contrast to Le Corbusier's obsession with Platonic geometries, Häring attempted to complete functionalist theory with his concept of *Leistungsform* or performance form. In line with this theory, he gave the cowshed an oval shape derived from the movements of cows as they would be brought into the shed to be fed. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who at this time shared an office with Häring, remained unimpressed by this attempt at optimization and suggested that if his colleague would just make the space a little bigger, one could do anything one wanted in it. [51] In a way, Mies's design for the National Gallery in Berlin may be considered a case in point.

In addition to the study for the Arnhem panoptical prison, which can be seen as the application of ideas presented in the Exodus project, Koolhaas's design for the Nexus World Housing in Fukuoka, Japan (1991) again implies the mechanism of surveillance in conjunction with spatial flexibility and excess (→**16**). Like Exodus, the Nexus Housing is enveloped by closed walls, which hermetically seal off the inside space from the urban structure outside. Its dark cyclopic walls wrap around the two central blocks, which contain a total of twenty-four houses. Formally, the envelope serves as a kind of socle that fuses the individual parts of the housing units into a more dense urban form. According to Koolhaas, this idea stemmed from the compacted fabric of the Roman city. [52]

Each of the three-storey houses within the densely packed blocks has a vertical courtyard that brings light and air. However, the courtyard, around which the individual rooms are accommodated, also functions as a panoptical diagram. Although the inhabitants can change the configuration of the spacious interior of the house with partitions and moveable screens, the courtyard as a central "tower of void" ensures permanent visibility of the interior spaces. In view of the fact that the size of each individual house exceeds that of the typical Japanese dwelling by far, flexibility and functional freedom is once more achieved through spatial excess—at the cost of economical planning. Furthermore, the Nexus project is not only an exceptionally

[50]   Ibid.
[51]   Kari Jormakka, "The Manhattan Project," in *Organizing for Change: Integrating Architectural Thinking in Other Fields*, ed. by Michael Shamiyeh (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2007), 113–40, here 118.
[52]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 86.

expensive, exclusive housing design but also a means of surveillance for its inhabitants. For the people living in it can be monitored from both inside and outside the housing block: through the glass façades of the other rooms and from the surrounding blocks that are much higher but have only small window openings.

A plan that can work for a range of diverse functions, however, does not necessarily entail that it is optimal for any particular function. It seems that flexibility is achieved at the cost of specificity and economical planning. Koolhaas acknowledges that such concepts of flexibility often exclude other essential qualities of architecture. Citing Yona Friedman's *urbanisme spatiale* (1958), he remarks on the Pompidou Centre, "In 1972, Beaubourg – Platonic Loft – had proposed spaces where 'anything' was possible. The resulting flexibility was unmasked as the imposition of a theoretical average at the expense of both character and precision – *entity* at the price of *identity*." [53]

In conclusion, the walls and molds of confinements can also function as margins, providing surplus spaces that implicate alteration and extra programming possibilities at a given site. Even if the panopticon prison is a highly effective disciplinary structure, its excess of space proves flexible for future adaptations. Following Koolhaas, the consequences for the architect are stunningly wide ranging; architecture is, in effect, independent of ideological context so that radical changes even allow for opposite functions basically within the same scheme. Likewise, the notorious plan of Exodus is flexible to change, since its

[53]   Koolhaas, "Bigness," 504–5.

ample system can easily be reorganized and adapted to various other programs. A difference of identity does not necessarily entail a different structure.

Delimiting the World and Enabling Difference

An enclosure or boundary establishing difference need not necessarily be conceived as an effective obstacle but can also function as a kind of sieve. In the Deleuzian sense, it functions as an environmental modulation with only marginal physical traces. According to Mary Douglas, the pursuit of purity is directly related to the fears held by a society that can displace its self-loathing onto an outside territory or a particular social group regarded as impure.[54] The community seeks to shut out all that appears strange, unassimilable, or undefined. For example, the approximately 1500-mile-long Great Wall of China, which was built starting about 221 BC, served more as a strategic tool to ensure unity of the empire and exclude an alien culture than as an efficient physical barrier. Yet, it was a means for shutting out distracting and illicit elements that existed in the rest of the world and that could threaten the concurrence of the community. In Franz Kafka's "The Great Wall of China" the progression of the entire work is described as a piecemeal structure: "After the junction had been made the construction of the wall was not carried on from the point. … Naturally in this way many great gaps were left, which were only filled in gradually and bit by bit. … In fact it is said that there are gaps which have never been filled in at all, an assertion, however … which cannot be verified, at least by any single man with his own eyes and judgment, on account of the extent of the structure."[55]

In Kafka's view, the creation of fragments committed to finding unity and closure does not simply fail. Rather, in the process of building, the very existence of such unity and wholeness is *a priori* uncertain. Despite the wall's ever-deferred state of completion, the presumed existence of the emperor ensures unity, which becomes most important during a process devoid of an overview.[56]

The Great Wall was built during the reign of Shih Hwang Ti, the same emperor who decreed the burning of all books—save those of the useful sciences, such as necromancy, medicine, and agriculture. In addition, all men who were in possession of books were forced to labor on the Great Wall's construction. Although the wall could not

[54]   Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 1–2.
[55]   Franz Kafka, "The Great Wall of China" (1931), in *Kafka's Metamorphosis and Other Writings*, ed. by Helmuth Kiesel (New York: Continuum), 163–74, here 163.
[56]   Ibid.

be regarded as an effective barrier nor a military success, it is in line with the principle of information exclusion, as indeed is the burning of books. This way, it serves as a means of self-restriction that makes the segregated territory compatible with the prevailing ideology.[57]

In "The Wall and the Books," Jorge Luis Borges offers a different interpretation of the idea that the same people would have seemingly paradoxically decreed both the elimination of the past—the books—and the construction of an almost infinite monument; both measures, Borges contends, are essentially "operations that secretly nullify each other."[58] By delimiting the world, the walling in and the incinerating of books may have been "magic barriers to halt death."[59] Borges continues that, although Shih Hwang Ti undertook these two acts, he assumes that a future emperor would "destroy the wall, as I have destroyed the books, and he will erase my memory and will be my shadow and my mirror and will not know it," just as Shih Hwang Ti himself is such a shadow and mirror of "Huang To, the emperor who invented writing."[60]

The wall not only functions as a division that supports the dominant ideology through the expulsion of foreign influences. It can also be a means by which a majority seeks to control the territory of an apparently threatening minority. A case in point is the situation of the resident foreigners in medieval Venice. For the right to do business in the archipelago city, immigrants (such as Germans, Dalmatians, Greeks, and Jews) lived as segregated members of society. They were obliged to reside in special buildings, to which they had to return at nightfall. For example, to ensure that the Germans could not smuggle in goods after dark and avoid paying customs, the Venetian government locked the gates of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi at dusk from outside, and guards patrolled the area around it. For economic reasons, the building became a space of permanent surveillance.

By contrast, the Jewish quarter, the Ghetto Nuovo, was found on a single island situated far from the center of the city. Connected to its surroundings with only two bridges, its building structure functioned like one wall towards the outside that created an open area in the center.[61] As the Jewish community grew over the years, the ghetto was threatened by severe overcrowding. When diseases struck the

[57]   Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall of China* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Robin Evans, *Translations from Drawing to Building* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 35–7.
[58]   Jorge Luis Borges, "The Wall and the Books," in *Other Inquisitions*, transl. by Ruth L.C. Simms (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), 1–8, here 5.
[59]   Ibid., 4.
[60]   Ibid., 5.
[61]   During the pogrom of 1636, the walled territory became a deadly trap that shut in the residents. The Venetians could easily attack the members in the confinement and set fire to the synagogues and other buildings.

lagoon, the government often connected them to the conditions and the population density of the ghetto. Yet, although the walling-in was a compulsory measure that was ordered by the dominant majority, the seclusion also provided a secure retreat from visibility. As a consequence of the spatial isolation in the ghetto, the members of the community gained bodily security and a protected place, which offered the opportunity to build synagogues and practice religion openly.

Like Exodus and the territory enclosed by the Berlin Wall, the Ghetto Nuovo presents a place of escape within architectural confines, which, in some way, also provides unexpected options for inmates. Yet, in the Exodus project, the enclosing walls and their surveillance culture are established as the main principle of freedom and collectivity for the new "meaningful environment," whereas in the Ghetto Nuovo, by means of the wall, the residents could gain an unprecedented form of social life, forestalling or, at least, reducing external control and observation. Whereas the walls of the Ghetto Nuovo are a means to provide a safe, segregated place amidst a prevailing culture of visibility, the Great Wall of China functions as an agent of establishing and maintaining the dominant ideology. Referring to Borges's interpretation of the Great Wall, the infinite Strip of Exodus, likewise, serves as strategic device, both to eliminate the insignificant past and to create an ideal unity during the building process. In addition, its confinement and self-restriction provide a social sieve against the "impure" territory outside the walled area. By delimiting the environment and excluding the chaotic "bad half of the city," Exodus affirms its identity and meaning within the "good half of the city."

Taking Place and the Sacred Nature of City Walls

Like the Great Wall of China and the Venetian Ghetto Nuovo, Exodus insists on its autonomous nature, devoid of any form of interaction with the urban context. It enforces division and inequality between the inside and outside of the Strip zone. Physical structures, ranging from simple signs to insurmountable barriers and hermetical enclosures, prevent any interference between two places. They manifest the difference between the two spaces. According to Mircea Eliade, "the enclosure, wall, or circle of stones surrounding a sacred place – these are among the most ancient of known forms of man-made sanctuary" [and serve] "the purpose of preserving profane man from the danger to which he would expose himself by entering it without due care."[62] This principle of separation and change is emphasized,

[62]   Mircea Eliade, *Pattern in Comparative Religion*, transl. by Rosemary Sheed (New York: Meridian, 1974), 370.

for instance, through the ritual importance of the threshold of houses, temples, and cities.

The notion of inside and outside space is not only essential to a single building but also to the idea of a city. The founding rites of ancient towns served to ensure that city walls were regarded as a sacred and invulnerable segregation for a new settlement: "Long before they were military erections, they were a magic defense, for they marked out from the midst of a 'chaotic' space, peopled with demons and phantoms, an enclosure, a place that was organized, made cosmic, in other words, provided with a 'centre.'" [63] The founding rituals hence make a connection to the transcendental order that does not change over time.

In *To Take Place* (1987), however, Jonathan Z. Smith argues against this universal framework characterized by rupture between the celestial and the chthonic sphere. [64] He claims that Eliade's account of the myth and its broken sacred pole refers not to the disjunction with the cosmic order but rather to the halting of remembrance. Instead of focusing on the pole's initial rupture, he emphasizes the true generative element, which is the continuity between event and memorial that signifies the presence of supernatural beings (or ancestors) in the topographical features shaped by human activity. [65] It is the "objectification in the landscape that has transformed the undifferentiated primeval space … into a multitude of historical places." [66] Contrary to Eliade, who connects the symbolism of the center primarily to political kinship and economic power, which reflect the celestial world, Smith interprets the ritual founding of places as a by-product of remembrance of past events.

The border sets up the difference between inside and outside, yet it also creates an opposition that requires justification. The quality of sacredness is then a particular condition of the precinct within. It is dangerous to approach the threshold of the sacred space unprepared or unaware of its ritual importance, whereas following the rites of entering ensures that the person will share certain qualities with the sacred. Moreover, by being admitted into the sanctuary, the ordinary or useless thing becomes meaningful and sacred.

The sacred nature of city walls is guaranteed by a complex procedure of divination, whereas its violation means sacrilege. In "The Life of Romulus," the most well-known narrative on the foundation of Rome, Plutarch emphasizes the sacred and inviolate character of the city walls by describing the cutting of the initial furrow, the

[63]   Ibid., 371.
[64]   Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Towards a Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).
[65]   Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York: Harcourt Harvest, 1987), 33.
[66]   Smith, *To Take Place*, 11.

sulcus primigenius.[67] He states that the founding of Rome is tainted by fratricide: "As Romulus was casting up a ditch, where he designed the foundation of the city wall, [Remus] turned some pieces of work into ridicule, and obstructed others, at last, as he was in contempt leaping over it, some say Romulus himself struck him, others one of his companions. He fell however."[68] Given that the Romans considered all ploughed land that is part of the city walls as a sacred place, Plutarch's account suggests that Remus committed sacrilege and was killed in return.

In antiquity the very idea of *urbs*, which means city, is associated with ploughing, as the word is etymologically connected to *urvum*, which is the curve of a ploughshare.[69] In addition, it relates to *orbis*, which is a curved object: a globe and the world. Yet, thinking of the city primarily as a tissue of buildings, streets, and public squares stands in opposition to the idea of the city as primarily a community of citizens, as expressed in Nicias's poignant words to the Athenian soldiers after the defeat at Syracuse: "You are yourselves the town, wherever you choose to settle[,] … it is men that make the city, not the walls and ships without them."[70]

Sacredness was an attribute of the city walls, but not of their gates. According to Plutarch, "where they designed to make a gate, there they took out the share, carried the plough over, and left a space; for which reason they consider the whole wall as holy, except where the gates are."[71] The ritual of raising the plough and carrying it over the place of the gates should have ensured that the plough ridge itself was not crossed. The idea of this ritual is conveyed in the Latin word *porta* for the gates, meaning "carry" (*portare*). Referring to the sacred character of city walls, Kari Jormakka notes that during the celebration of a Roman triumph, Rome is symbolically conquered, and "the city symbolically drops its defense before the hero, then rebuilds the enclosure to safely capture the good fortune within its walls."[72] The spoils that were captured from the defeated country then transmit their powers to the triumphant city.

The route of the triumph, framed by the important monuments of Rome, projected a symbolic order onto the urban fabric. Following the same principles, in the sixteenth century Pope Sixtus V. and

[67]   See Plutarch, *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, vol. 1, ed. by John Dryden, rev. by A. H. Clough (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1991).
[68]   Ibid.
[69]   Joseph M. Stowasser, *Lateinisch-deutsches Schul- und Handwörterbuch* (Vienna: Tempsky, 1910).
[70]   Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, transl. by Thomas Hobbes (London: J. M. Dent, 1910), VII, 63, 308–9.
[71]   Plutarch, *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, 35.
[72]   Kari Jormakka, *Heimlich Manoeuvres: Ritual in Architectural Form* (Weimar: Verso, 1995), 89.

Domenico Fontana inserted, by connecting the main churches into a sacred route, new streets into the old structure. The new streets enabled not only the circulation of the pilgrims along the path but also functioned as attractions and commercial elements. These interventions can also be interpreted as a means to recreate the sacredness of the city: Rome was turned from a city with sacred monuments into a sacred city as a whole.

In effect, the walls of Exodus function like ancient city walls. Setting up confines creates a difference between the area inside and outside of Exodus. The meaningful life and the promise to be part of a new powerful community justify the rigorous spatial rupture and constitute the place as sanctuary. The emphasis on the ritual entry of the "fugitives," the "environmental sluice," and the training period in the "reception square" expresses the importance of the threshold and thereby enhances the aural nature of the "walled city."

The gate of Exodus only functions in one direction, though. Like the procession of a Roman triumph that enters through a special *porta* and carries on past a sequence of monuments, the new inmates of Exodus proceed along a given set of monumental squares. In antiquity, however, the *via sacra* simply connected the ritually important sites into a symbolic unity within the heterogeneous city fabric, whereas in the Exodus project, every point inside is seen as significant and every area outside as insignificant. Although the form of Rome has been transformed, violated, and re-structured by a symbolic order, such as at the time of the Roman Empire or in the sixteenth century, the existing city scheme has by no means been destroyed as a whole. By contrast, the strip of Exodus pierces into the city by eliminating and replacing almost all of the grown urban fabric.

THE IDEAL CITY AND OTHER MODELS OF UTOPIAN LIFE

The Closed and the Open Society as Ideal Worlds

Visions for ideal settlements, like Koolhaas's Exodus, have a long tradition, stretching back to accounts on Atlantis in ancient Greece, considerations in Plato's *Republic* (around 380 BC) and the *Laws* (348 BC), passages of Aristotle's *Politics* (around 350 BC), Augustine of Hippo's *The City of God, or The Heavenly Jerusalem* (413–426), Filarete's Sforzinda (1460), Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), Tommaso Campanella's *The City of the Sun* (1623), Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis* (1627), Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's City of Chaux (1774–79), and including proposals from more recent times, like William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1891), Ebenezer Howard's *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (1902), Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City in *The Disappearing City* (1932), and Le Corbusier's *The Radiant City* (1922), among others.

According to Lewis Mumford, the ancient cities in Egypt and Mesopotamia can be seen as examples of built utopian sites and as visible evidence of something "out of this world."[73] This is not only because the city was created as a sacred place built with an intrinsic cosmic order but also because it was founded by a king or authority figure acting by divine right. For instance, the Purple Forbidden City of Beijing at the beginning of the fifteenth century is an ideal site out of this world; it is completely closed off from the environment, surrounded by a six-meter-deep ditch and a ten-meter-high wall designed at the exact geometrical center of the ancient capital.[74] Combining imperial rule with a cosmic order made the city a site protected by divine power, which ought to ensure the inviolate character of the emperor's residence and to provide him with supreme authority.[75]

Besides such formal approaches, Plato's account in *The Republic* outlines the ideal society as a rationally organized city-state close to the ideology of Sparta, but his account does not provide further information about the spatial configuration of the model site.[76] He links his discussion about justice and happiness of the individual to an

[73] Lewis Mumford, "Utopia, the City and the Machine," in *Utopias and Utopian Thought: A Timely Appraisal*, ed. by Frank Manuel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 3–24, here 13.
[74] Reginald Fleming Johnston, *Twilight in the Forbidden City* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1990); Chuimei Ho and Bennet Bronson, *Splendors of China's Forbidden City* (London: Merrell, 2004).
[75] Even the soil excavated during the construction of the ditch was piled up within the site, where it created a artificial hill.
[76] Plato, *Timaeus and Critias*, transl. by Desmond Lee (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983), Timaeus 20e–25d, Critias 108e–121c.

account of justice in the *polis*, which is a state where every person fulfills his proper social role. Plato also assumes an analogy between cities and the individual, "so the just man will not differ at all from the just city."[77] He describes two ideal cities, of which the first (or primitive) city is basically a model of an economic society, in which each person only performs the task to which he is best suited (since in Plato's days, employing slaves was taken for granted). It is noteworthy here that the ideal city-state is limited to an exact figure of family units, with the original number of 5040 hearths or households, which should be kept constant in order to ensure the ideal outline—whereas the tip of Exodus expands relentlessly and constantly increases its population thereby.

Yet, as the first city makes no provision for more than the fulfillment of appetitive attitudes, the proposal is not in harmony with Plato's view of a good human life. Claiming that it is more fit for pigs than for human beings, Glaucon responds that this city lacks tables, couches, and other things required for a symposium, which is considered a basis of civilized human life. The second city as ideal political community, which Socrates calls Kallipolis, is, in contrast, a city of philosopher-kings, guardian soldiers, and producers. One of the city's most significant features is the strict limitation on private property among the ruling classes and the abolition of private families: the idea of total collectivism is taken to "such an extent that as far as possible even what is naturally private is in a way common, so that their eyes and ears and hands seem to see and hear and act in common."[78] For Plato, only the philosophers have knowledge, and the inhabitants would accept the status of the ruling party. It cannot be doubted that Plato outlines the ideal state as an authoritarian state, since all political decisions are made by guardians that are neither elected nor removable from office by popular vote. Though Plato's text has often been related to the ideology of Sparta, the magistrates in Sparta were elected by the citizen body and were subjected to control to a certain degree. Equally, the censored education represents the totalitarian vested interest in exercising control over the values and interests of the ruled, as does the use of the "noble lie" to convince citizens of their unequal status.

In *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1945), Karl Popper attacks Plato's concept of the ideal society by arguing that although this kind of "'best state' is a kingship of the wisest and most godlike men," it is a totalitarian state, characterized by a system in which the ordinary

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[77] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, transl. by A. D. Lindsay (New York: Lowe Press, 1957), 435b.
[78] This proposal includes the fact that "marriage, the having of wives, and the procreation of children must be governed as far as possible by the old proverb: friends possess everything in common." Ibid., 423e6–424a2.

citizen has no significant part in the state power.[79] At the time of writing, he certainly had his eye on Germany, calling his account 'my war effort.' Popper emphasizes the difference between closed and open societies, a concept introduced in Henri Bergson's *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1932).[80] Although Bergson and Popper do not go into detail in specifying the two societies, for both, the restrictions of closed societies would be a cause for recurrent revolts and wars. Societies should strive to make the transition from the closed form to an open one, to one that is making progress in democracy, humanity, and diversity and in which moral principles have become more flexible and adaptable. Plato's model in *The Republic*, in contrast, proposes an authoritarian and immobile, closed society that demands the total subjection of the individual to the decisions of the ruling classes. For Popper, however, the ancient Greeks were the first to take the step from a closed society—which is attached to the authority of a chief and marked by a rigidity of customs of social life—to an open one. Starting with overpopulation in Athens, the transition to opening up dissolved the old ways of social life and promoted seafaring and the foundation of colonies overseas. Despite the change of society, however, the Greeks called all non-Greeks *barbaroi*, meaning "stammering," in contrast to what they regarded as the fine and superb qualities of their own citizens.

In this regard, Exodus can be interpreted as ironic comment on Plato's discussion and other ancient accounts of the ideal community; it turns the question around and delineates the transition from an open to a closed society, where only a few people (who are not further mentioned by Koolhaas) essentially make the decisions for the individual member.

All the same, it is interesting how Aristotle takes steps to open up the city walls as socially relevant margins and sieve. Different from Plato's ideal city, Aristotle's scheme for a *polis* proposes that the city walls should be ornamental as well as useful: "As the walls are to be divided by guard-houses … the idea will naturally occur that we should establish some of the common tables in the guard-houses."[81] Instead of removing the poor from the city, it is vital for the ideal community to provide public space for the social outsiders inside the urban area.

[79]   Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies, The Spell of Plato,* vol. 1 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1945), 39.
[80]   Ibid.; Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (Paris: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977).
[81]   Aristotle, *The Politics*, transl. by T. A. Sinclair (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1992), 1331a 19–23.

Exodus represents a utopian vision that turns away from the world as it is and fabricates an enclave of predetermined conditions. Walls and natural barriers, such as mountains, channels, oceans, or mere distance, are among the most significant features of utopian concepts. But why do these visions of an ideal society mostly avoid normal everyday life, its inspiration, disturbances, and disorder? Why do the model worlds often insist on their autonomy by strictly excluding any interference with the environment?

In his book *De Optimo Reipublicae Statu deque Nova Insula Utopia* (1516), Thomas More projected the political ideal state onto an imaginary island closed off from the presently known world.[82] Coining the term "utopia" for his new island, he provides a double meaning within the word itself, which comes from two Greek origins: good place (*eu-topos*) as well as no place (*ou-topos*). In More's vision of "the best state of a commonwealth" all men are free from poverty and live in social harmony. In the strictly planned city-state, each "town is compassed with a high and thick wall, in which there are many towers and forts; there is also a broad and deep dry ditch."[83] Such means of separation should prevent the island from contamination in order to ensure the ideal of purity: "The Utopian way of life provides not only the happiest basis for a civilized community, but also one which, in all human probability, will last for ever. There is … no danger of internal dissension, the one thing that has destroyed so many impregnable towns."[84] Utopia's fifty-four cities, each with a population of six thousand families, follow a precise geometric outline, and they are exactly alike. Its goal is to establish a controlled society that strives towards perfection. Although, to maintain the internal harmony, the ideal society must rely on meticulous regulations that demand respectable behavior in all places. To underpin this policy order in the community, the architectural scheme provides no hidden places for secret meetings and upheaval, but instead forces the inhabitants to live in full view of the other and to reveal virtually all aspects of their individual lives.

More's idea recurs in the concept of the Jesuits' Reducciones and their colonies in South America. On the basis of Claude Lévi-Strauss's account of his journeys in the Amazon basin in *Tristes Tropiques* (1955), Foucault argues that it is not only the organization of daily life in the settlements that are regulated at every turn but also the outline of the site itself.[85] The plan of the village reproduces the fundamental

[82]   Thomas More, *Utopia* (1516, reprint, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965).
[83]   Ibid.
[84]   Ibid., 131
[85]   Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (New York: Atheneum, 1974).

sign of Christianity, the cross, through the two central axes of streets crossing each other at right angles. The cabins of each family are built along these axes, whereas the church as the heart of the community is placed at the center. The Reducciones bring to mind the fact that the cross in a circle is one of the most significant ancient signs for the city. This is discussed by Leonardo Benevolo in *The History of the City* (1980),[86] where he presents examples, such as the Egyptian hieroglyph for city, dating back to the fourth millennium BC, an Assyrian relief with scenes of urban life, and the *templum of the sky* as a diagram of the Roman city.

In addition, Foucault cites the Puritan societies founded in America during the first wave of colonization as examples of utopian experiments on a real site. For such places he introduces the term "heterotopia," or "other spaces:" "their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled."[87] Since heterotopian spaces are connected to a particular location, they create a kind of counter-site to ordinary, culturally constituted spaces. This notion implies that the normal, homotopian place would not exist without the other counter-site, which in effect constitutes what is ordinary, conventional, typical in the particular context. Bentham's panoptical prison is one of his central models of heterotopia, a space of deviation and therefore a counter-site to the city that it seeks to improve. However, the prison in itself is a strict homotopia that prevents any form of otherness, except the central warden's tower, which represents the counter-site (of the other space).

Georges Bataille claims in his article "Architecture," first published in the "Critical Dictionary" section of the journal *Documents*, as follows: "Architecture is the expression of the very soul of societies, [but] in fact it is only the *ideal* soul of society, that which has the authority to command and prohibit, that is expressed in architectural compositions properly speaking. Thus great monuments are erected like dikes, opposing the logic and majesty of authority against all disturbing elements."[88]

Conceiving Exodus as utopian vision with geometric ordering, constant surveillance, preprogrammed activities, and a rigidly enclosing wall, Koolhaas creates his contemporary model of the ideal world. What provides significance to the inhabitants is the sense of collectiv-

[86]   Leonardo Benevolo, *Die Geschichte der Stadt* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1975), 41; Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town: The Antropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* (Princeton: University Press, 1976), 48.
[87]   Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces" (1967), in *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuitè* (October 1984), and in *Diacritics* 16 (Spring 1986): 22–7.
[88]   Georges Bataille, "Architecture," in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1971–1988), 171–2.

ity and unity, which is achieved by the public staging of individual life in a monumental setting. Bataille concludes his article on architecture with the passage, "the taking of the Bastille is symbolic of this state of things: it is hard to explain this crowd movement other than by the animosity of the people against the monuments that are their real masters."[89] Exodus, by contrast, proposes that the architectural planning guarantees the voluntary submission of the individuals to a given social order. Although the collective spaces are dedicated to all kinds of experimental encounters, intoxication, and erotic fantasies, nothing that is not planned can ever happen there.

Urban Vacancy and the Disappearance of Public Space

The functioning or failure of utopian concepts largely depends on the regulations of community life and public space. Exodus most effectively achieves this goal by the segregation and surveillance of its inhabitants. Yet, many other ideal plans have re-organized public life by establishing a system of order and thereby controlling the individuals. One case in point is Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's City of Chaux (1774–79), which provides a framework for the "free subject" and his daily work at a safe distance to all influences that can disturb the community. The city, designed as an industrial site that initially comprised a salt works and workers' housing, is situated in a remote setting in the forests of the Jura in France. Instead of the splendor of the baroque, Ledoux creates an assemblage of primary geometric parts—such as cubes, pyramids, spheres—next to unadorned surfaces, flat roofs, and unframed openings. He places the salt works at the core of the scheme, surrounded by a vast open space and rings of buildings; All together this express the ideals of the Enlightenment project: autonomy, individual self-determination, and self-government. For Robert Harbison, however, such a cleared scheme of autonomous elements represents "the emptiness of the sublime thoughts or the sublime vacancy of mind."[90]

Many projects for utopian town planning in the twentieth century propose, as if following Ledoux's City of Chaux, a vacant and sublime scheme. These proposals, of which Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse* (and before it the *Ville Contemporaine*) may be the most notorious, imply the wholesale clearance of the historic urban structure to make way for the new. Central to the idea that the world should be completely reconstructed anew is the concept that the existing built environment is so defiant that it can only be abandoned. Moreover, in the *Ville*

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[89]   Ibid.
[90]   Robert Harbison, *The Built, the Unbuilt and the Unbuildable* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 90.

Radieuse all movement, either of the pedestrian or the traffic, is channeled out of the streets into separate systems so that the clearance of the urban fabric also implies the disappearance of the street as public space.

Ebenezer Howard's proposal for ideal cities, by contrast, suggests a different form of opening in the existing framework. His concept for the Garden City seeks to escape the conditions of the modern metropolis by proposing the combination of the benefits of both rural and urban life. In a chapter titled "The Future of London" he further proposes that the population of London should be reduced by one-fifth because, while elsewhere the city is invading the country, in London the country must invade the city.[91] Howard's low-density pattern abandons the degree of density typical for urban life so that the dispersed schemes also rely, like Le Corbusier's concept, on an extensive system of trains and motor traffic to maintain the efficiency of the city. Yet, besides giving emphasis to railways, he did not mention any transport system or car traffic—probably because in 1898, when Howard first published the book, there were hardly any private cars in England.

Referring to such modern schemes, Jane Jacobs claims that these ideal models are in reality very anti-urban constructs, with extensive open spaces of simply "grass, grass, grass."[92] Planners have been typically preoccupied with ideal models instead of understanding and addressing real-life cities.[93] Although the urban site has become a laboratory of testing theories, of over-simplifications, of failures or unexpected successes, planners have shown little interest in understanding how existing cities work. This lack of knowledge is evident in the rigorous structure of most of the utopian visions of the twentieth century that separate different functions of daily life. By contrast, the central urban characteristic is "the need of cities for a most intricate and close-grained diversity of uses that give each other constant mutual support, both economically and socially."[94] Hence, the spatial mixture of activities, evident in Greenwich Village in New York, implies the overlap, richness, and vitality of metropolitan life. For Jacobs, the ideal city maximizes the participation of the residents since no planning can achieve the complexity of something created through thousands of unpredictable decisions and individual actions.

The clearance of historical substance, the monumental structures, and the disappearance of public space in Exodus are typical features

[91]   Ebenezer Howard, *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (1898, reprint, London: Routledge, 2003), 156.
[92]   Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities: The Failure of Town Planning* (1961, reprint, Harmondsworth: Penguin Press, 1984), 32.
[93]   Ibid.
[94]   Ibid, 23–4.

of utopian planning but in no way an apt means to come to terms with the dynamics of metropolitan life. Instead of the spatial diversity developed by individual decisions, in the Exodus project Koolhaas claims that these private spheres are irrelevant, whereas only the pre-programmed activities in the squares can endow life with new intense experiences, a sense of community, and therefore significance.

Reinventing Utopia, or Daily Life Beyond Necessity

While the idea of the "voluntary prisoners" of Exodus regards the metropolitan life of London as trivial, Koolhaas raises the question, what kind of liberty do the individuals of our society, in effect, have? Are utopian concepts still relevant in our modern times of increasing progress in terms of science, technology, economy, democracy, and quality of life?

Herbert Marcuse argues that many concepts of the twentieth century are no longer in the strict sense utopian because they can no longer be considered impossible.[95] It seems as if reality will supersede the ideal model because nowadays "utopian possibilities are inherent in the technical and technological forces of advanced capitalism and socialism."[96] By means of industrial progress, radical social changes will be feasible, now or in the short term. His point in "The End of Utopia" (1967), is that from now on, the term "utopian" should refer only to projects that definitely contradict scientifically established laws and hence can be regarded as impossible to realize. For the rational use of unprecedented conditions of progress could terminate poverty within a predictable future on a global scale, yet it would not put an end to social inequalities and exploitation of the people in our totalitarian, industrial society. For Marcuse, "'totalitarian' is not only a terroristic political coordination of society, but also a non-terroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests."[97] The industrial society uses technology for its ends of economic reason, consumption, and maintaining social control through producing false consciousness, false needs, and the "one-dimensional man."[98] Progress has become the Demiurge of the state, media, and all kinds of institutions: "self-determination, the autonomy of the individual, asserts itself in the right to race his automobile, to handle his power tools, to buy a gun, to communicate to mass audiences his opinion, no matter how ignorant or aggressive it

[95]   Herbert Marcuse, "The End of Utopia" (1967), in *Five Lectures* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), 62–82, here 63.
[96]   Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 4–5.
[97]   Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 3.
[98]   Ibid.

may be."[99] Marcuse's favorite example is the tendency to reduce the mind to brain function alone, as evidenced by brain science that considers human activity as the interference of chemicals with electricity.[100] He understands individualism beyond manipulation of needs so that "economic freedom would mean freedom from the economy – from being controlled by economic forces and relationships; freedom from the daily struggle for existence, from earning a living."[101] Hence, for Marcuse similar to Karl Marx, the realm of individual liberty begins only beyond the sphere of necessity.[102] As the inmates of Exodus are clearly beyond the sphere of economic necessity, what idea of freedom and self-determination is the basis of Koolhaas's thought? Even if the "voluntary prisoners" are conscious of their decision to join the community, are they aware that there is no way out?

In regards to the point of individual liberty, Albert Camus goes even further than Marcuse and sees economic considerations and the practice of material production as incompatible with the nature of self-determination. In *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), he understands the workman of today as an *absurd hero* and compares Sisyphus's ceaseless toil with the conditions of lives spent working at futile jobs in factories and offices. In Greek mythology, Sisyphus was lauded as one of the wisest men and yet one of the most devious, who managed to escape from the Underworld, who was sentenced to be blinded and to perpetually roll a giant boulder up a mountain to the peak only to have it roll back down to the bottom. According to Camus, "the workman of today works every day in his life at the same tasks, and this fate is no less absurd. But it is tragic only at the rare moments when it becomes conscious."[103] When Sisyphus is briefly free from his labor and descends the mountain, he is, contrary to today's workman, totally aware of the ultimate futility and absurdity of his toil so that the leap into hope would offer no real escape from the meaningless reality of our life. For Camus, Sisyphus's real torture is that he is conscious of his fate, devoid of the hope of ever succeeding in his endeavor. The absurd hero "knows himself to be the master of his days. … One must imagine Sisyphus happy."[104] Therefore, if the inmates of Exodus are seen as absurd heroes who are fully aware of the futile work of their banal life, their escape is, indeed, an act of free

[99]   Marcuse, *Essay on Liberation*, 12.
[100]   Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 13. See also Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1977).
[101]   Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 4.
[102]   For Marx, "freedom actually begins only when labor which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production." See Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3 (New York: International Publishers, 1967), 320.
[103]   Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (London: Penguin Books, 2005).
[104]   Ibid.

will. Like Sisyphus, they dismantle the ideals of our modern society when they show a preference for the world of Exodus without productive work and economic considerations.

Utopian visions of what the city might be always function as social and political criticism. According to Henri Lefebvre, "utopia has been discredited, it is necessary to rehabilitate it. Utopia is never realized and yet it is indispensable to stimulate change."[105] Even though it has been associated with unbuildable, inadequate, fantastic, or totalitarian positions, critique of the prevailing system is one of the central objectives of utopian thought. For example, Ivan Chtcheglov (under the pseudonym of Gilles Ivain) writes in his manifesto "Formulary for a New Urbanism" (1953) that the utilitarian use of technical developments is inadequate and "remained far behind the sophistication of the machines."[106] He is repulsed by the banalization of everyday life that consists mainly of "sewage systems, elevators, bathrooms, washing machines" and merely draws on the hypnotic effect of "inanimate and storyless" commodities and labor-saving devices: "Presented with the alternative of love or a garbage disposal unit, young people of all countries have chosen the garbage disposal unit."[107] Both Chtcheglov and Guy Debord argue that, instead of proposing new design schemes, people should investigate the realm of imagination and the unconsciousness to become aware of the ephemeral yet complex nature of the city and the experimental conditions of daily life.[108] They again take up utopian thought for promoting other worlds; since "we are bored in the city, there is no longer any Temple of the Sun. Between the legs of the women walking by, the Dadaists imagined a monkey wrench and the surrealists a crystal cup. That's lost."[109]

[105]   Patricia Latour and Francis Combes, *Conversation avec Henri Lefebvre* (Paris: Messidor, 1991), 18–9.
[106]   Ivan Chtcheglov (pseud. Gilles Ivain), "Formulary for a New Urbanism" (1953), in *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. by Ken Knabb (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981), 1–4, here 2.
[107]   Ibid.
[108]   Guy Debord, "The Situationists and the New Forms of Action in Politics or Art," in *Guy Debord and the Situationists International: Texts and Documents*, ed. by Tom McDonough (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 159.
[109]   Chtcheglov, "Formulary for a New Urbanism," 2.

UTOPIA ZERO DEGREE, OR FREEDOM BEYOND PLANNING

The Manhattan Skyscraper as Utopia Zero Degree

The utopian tradition continues in Koolhaas's early work. Both the Strip of Exodus and the Manhattan skyscraper are utopian sites that aim at disconnecting the new potential world from its surroundings. The scheme of Exodus, consisting of a continuous sequence of square blocks, anticipates his theory of Manhattanism and can be interpreted as a horizontal "strip skyscraper." But while the Strip is separated from the city by the hermetical enclosure of the Wall, the skyscrapers are separated from each other only by air, or nothingness, which brings about the effective barrier of disconnection. Manhattan serves as a model of a built utopia and gives rise to his theory with the skyscraper as the central typology. Yet, the skyscraper is not only seen as an ideal but also as a subversive instrument of "the ultimate unpredictability of its performance;" it has become "the great metropolitan destabilizer: it promises perpetual programmatic instability."[110] In "The Generic City" (1994), he explicitly connects the Manhattan skyscraper to utopian thinking: "The skyscraper looks as if it will be the final, definitive topology. It has swallowed everything else. It can exist anywhere: in a rice field, or downtown – it makes no difference anymore. The towers no longer stand together; they are spaced so that they don't interact. Density in isolation is the ideal."[111]

The essence of the skyscraper is its double life, which signifies the quality of spatial separation of the programmatic elements. The diagrammatic section of the skyscraper creates a scheme of discontinuity of function in two ways: both between the individual floors and between the interior and the exterior of the building (→**17**). This disconnection allows changes in the program on one floor without affecting the activities on any other floors and, what's more, without having an effect on what is revealed to the outside. For Koolhaas, the diagrammatic section of the skyscraper establishes the difference "between appearance and performance [so that it] keeps the illusion of architecture intact, while surrendering wholeheartedly to the needs of the metropolis."[112] In *Delirious New York* he interprets Manhattan, his central example of the modern metropolis, as an archipelago of independent entities consisting of 2,028 islands. This maritime model depicts the typical city blocks of the Manhattan grid floating in a sea

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[110]   Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1994), 87.
[111]   Rem Koolhaas, "The Generic City," in Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 1238–69, here 1253.
[112]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 39–40.

of traffic. Here, Koolhaas refers to Nietzsche's view of Venice as a city of "a hundred profound solitudes," which has become the "model for the men of the future."[113] After citing Nietzsche directly, he describes New York as a Venice of modern times, as an archipelago of solitudes behind the splendid appearance of its exterior solidity.[114]

This discontinuity between the exterior and the interior is interpreted as architectural *lobotomy*, whereas the disconnection of stories is called a vertical *schism*: "Through the double disconnection of *lobotomy* and *schism* – by separating exterior and interior architecture and developing the latter in small autonomous installments – such structures can devote their exterior *only* to formalism and their interiors *only* to functionalism."[115] With lobotomy, Koolhaas refers to the controversial and outdated surgical method of separating the frontal lobes from the rest of the brain, which disconnects the cognitive from the emotional processes and thus reduces mental disorders. The first testing of the architectural lobotomy is the interior Murray's Roman Gardens in 1908, where Henri Erkins created within an existing building on 42nd Street a second autonomous world by reproducing an ancient Roman villa furnished with copies and casts of original sites; he thus revealed Manhattan's potential of "retroactive utopia" by presenting a world removed from time and place.[116]

The concept of Manhattanism also relates to Koolhaas's theory of Bigness, in which he considers the specific conditions and consequences of buildings beyond a certain size. Since the volume of an object mathematically increases in cubed leaps, while its surface only in squared, there is more and more interior space of the Manhattan skyscraper with less and less surface area. Therefore, the program can no longer relate to the envelope—the *container* is disconnected from the *content*. In *S,M,L,XL's* dictionary entry "Automonument" Koolhaas quotes his own argument from *Delirious New York*: the monument "merely *is* itself and through sheer volume cannot avoid being a symbol – an empty one, available for meaning as a billboard is for advertisement."[117] He characterizes the disconnection between internal and external activity as the symptom of *automonumentality*: a structure beyond a certain critical mass or size that automatically becomes a monument, a symbol.

In comparison to Koolhaas's argument that beyond a certain size an object is significant and serves as a symbol, Roland Barthes proposes in *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies* that the Eiffel Tower is a kind of *automonument*, an autonomous zone that gets twice as

[113]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 120.
[114]   Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Morgenröthe, Nachgelassene Fragmente, Anfang 1880 bis Frühjahr 1881*, ed. by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970), 38.
[115]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 296.
[116]   Ibid., 103.
[117]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, xxviii.
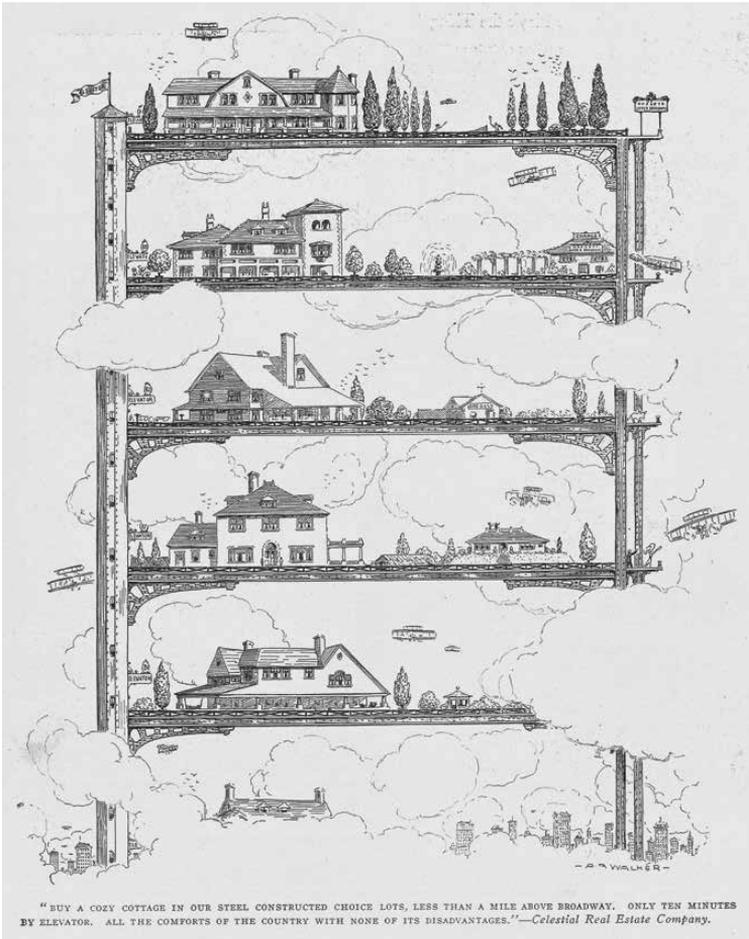
"BUY A COZY COTTAGE IN OUR STEEL CONSTRUCTED CHOICE LOTS, LESS THAN A MILE ABOVE BROADWAY. ONLY TEN MINUTES BY ELEVATOR. ALL THE COMFORTS OF THE COUNTRY WITH NONE OF ITS DISADVANTAGES."—*Celestial Real Estate Company.*

many visitors as the Louvre.[118] Although there is no seemingly more banal and blatant mythology, it has become an inevitable sign of everything that is modern, technical, vertical, a production through calculation, a rocket, a phallus, a lightning rod, a trajectory to the sky, an insect. Infinite in scope of meaning, it is a *degree zero* of monuments. The effects of such an appearance alone produce all kinds of implications. According to Barthes, a myth, referring to an overwhelming physical fact on a giant scale, necessitates justification: it cannot be seen as something without significance.

However, auto-iconization, which Koolhaas describes as *auto-monument*, is not only a symptom of extraordinarily big objects but can also occur in things of normal or small size. For instance, Ben-

[118]   Roland Barthes, *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies* (New York: Noonday Press, 1979), 9.

tham argues in his essay "Auto-Icon, or Farther Uses of the Dead to the Living" (1842, only twenty copies were printed and privately circulated at that time) that preserved corpses as auto-icons would become a pure sign and shape the behavior of people.[119] Although any notions of body are all fictitious entities, they have a strong influence on real entities. Even if all fictitious entities cannot be said to exist, they can give rise to the fiction of permanence, even the remains of deceased individuals. According to Bentham's utilitarian idea, the corpses of political and cultural leaders should benefit the living as didactic monuments on display in so-called temples of fame. Bentham himself determined in his will that he would become the first auto-icon sitting inside a glass cabinet at University College in London. Moreover, at the assemblies of the Benthamite Society the mummy of Bentham not only presides at the head of the table but also takes part in a vote as supportive to the proposal when the vote is split.

The monumental character of the virtually infinite strip of Exodus presents, like Barthes's account of the Eiffel Tower, an auto-icon since its gigantic scale in any case implies all kinds of suggestions, and hence cannot be perceived without effect. Yet, following Bentham, even such an overpowering structure like Exodus with massive impact on reality is a fictitious entity: in the first place, it is a sign and foil for all kinds of interpretations and meanings.

The City as Script and Social Condenser

In *S,M,L,XL* the dictionary entry "Fictions" states that we live in a "world ruled by fictions of every kind – mass-merchandizing, advertising, politics conducted as a branch of advertising, the instant translation of science and technology into popular imagery. … The writer's task is to invent the reality."[120] Koolhaas understands himself as the ghostwriter of Manhattan's "retroactive manifesto" of its "utopia's double life," which is the true but hidden script of the city.[121] The Downtown Athletic Club, in short DTAC (1931), beside the Empire State Building represents the idea of Manhattanism best: it is the "apotheosis of the Skyscraper as instrument of revolutionary metropolitan culture" and "incubator for adults." (→**18**) Its system of thirty-eight platforms discloses a series of thirty-eight social activities or *plots* for the individual platforms, which functions like "a Constructivist Social Condenser: a machine to generate and intensify desirable

[119]   James E. Crimmins, *Bentham's Auto-Icon and Related Writings* (Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum, 2003).
[120]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 492.
[121]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 11.

forms of human intercourse."[122] While the lower floors contain various sports facilities—such as an interior golf course and squash and handball courts—the locker room on the ninth floor gives access to the boxing-wrestling area and the adjacent oyster bar with a stunning view over the Hudson River: "*Eating oysters with boxing gloves, naked, on the nth floor* – such is the 'plot' of the 9th story, or: the *20th century in action*," Koolhaas states enthusiastically.[123] Going farther up, facilities for preventive medicine, the vast swimming pool, the restaurant, library, roof garden, and finally the bedrooms on the top fifteen floors offer spaces with increasing degrees of privacy. Reading the DTAC's program as sequence, the first twelve levels are only accessible to men, who can take part in social activities of the urban bachelors (the true metropolitan individuals) after having improved their bodily condition. However, since the programs on the different floors produce separate worlds side by side, the DTAC offers not only one script but an infinitive number of possible narratives.

In addition, Koolhaas argues in "Generic City" that the hotel, like the DTAC, ideally responds to the diversity of performance and the "definitive instability" of metropolitan life. Even further, the programmatic expansion, including shopping malls and recreation facilities, renders other building types redundant. These mutations are typologies of the "culture of congestion."[124] In the competition entry for the Parc de la Villette in Paris (1982), Koolhaas presents another transmutation of his theory of Manhattanism, which he calls "Congestion Without Matter," or a "horizontal skyscraper."[125] In *Content* Koolhaas characterizes the Parc de la Villette as "Universal Modernization Patent" for a "Social Condenser" (1982): "PROGRAMMATIC LAYERING UPON VACANT TERRAIN TO ENCOURAGE DYNAMIC COEXISTENCE OF ACTIVITIES AND TO GENERATE THROUGH THEIR INTERFERENCE UNPRECEDENTED EVENTS."[126] The park is arranged in a series of parallel bands—similar to the Strip of Exodus—and "tectonic confetti" of autonomous buildings within point grids aimed to create the maximum permeability of the programmatic elements. Instead of the disconnection of the skyscraper, the Parc de la Villette encourages spatial continuity and the circulation of the visitors.

One source for the spatial structures that function as a *social condenser* can be found in Charles Fourier's outline of ideal communities at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[127] His utopian alternative is based on 1620 individuals living in a *phalanstère*, a hotel-like build-

[122]   Ibid., 152.
[123]   Ibid., 155.
[124]   Ibid., 10.
[125]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 923.
[126]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 73.
[127]   Charles Fourier, *Design for Utopia: Selected Writings of Charles Fourier* (New York: Schocken, 1988).
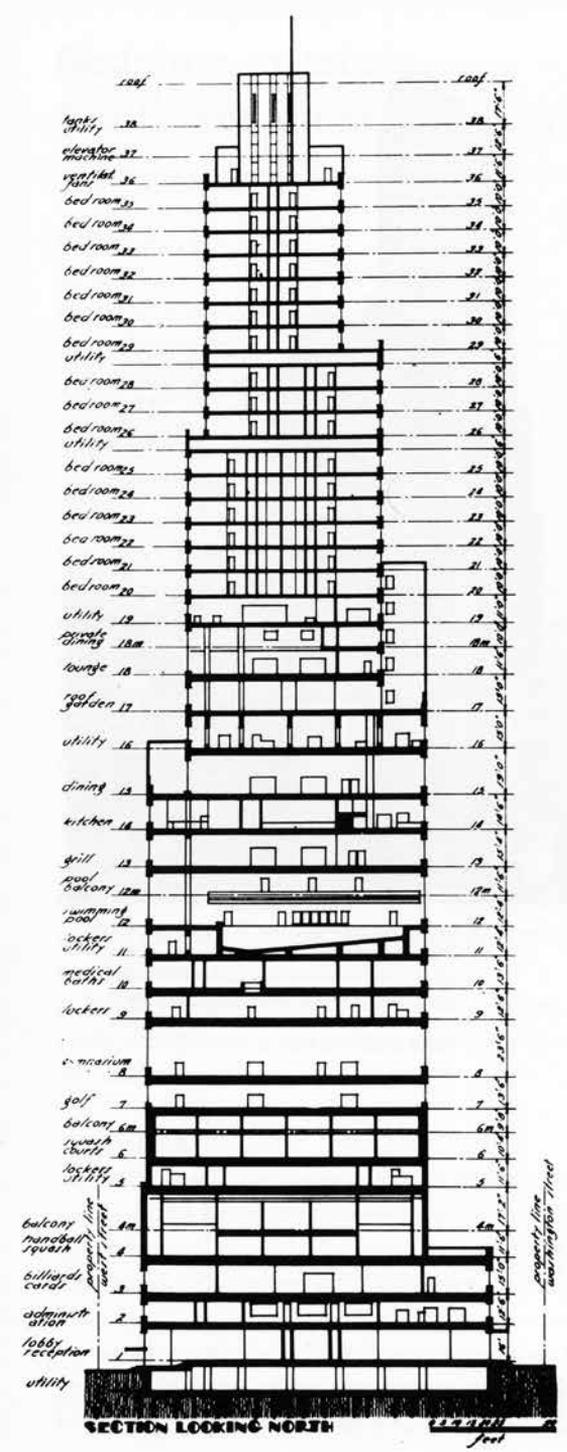
ing with communal kitchens and eating areas. In the early eighteen-forties, the American Fourierist movement took up his notion of creating social harmony by implementing the theories in isolated, co-operative communities, for instance, in the Red Bank Phalanstère near New Jersey.[128] Later, Fourier's ideas also began to spread again among artists and writers, such as André Breton in his "Ode à Charles Fourier" (1947), Roland Barthes in *Sade Fourier Loyola* (1971), and the situationists' reference to Fourier's "Avis aux civilisés relativement à la prochaine métamorphose sociale" in their text "Avis aux civilisés relativement à l'autogestion généralisée" (1969).[129]

Another source for the *social condenser* comes from the Russian constructivists, who desired to overcome the established hierarchy and its despised building types and to create socially equitable space. One of the few built cases of constructivist architecture is the "housing laboratory" for workers at the Commissariat of Finance, shortened to the Narkomfin Building, in Moscow (1928–32) by Moisei Ginzburg and Ignaty Milinis. In *Content*, Koolhaas describes in "Utopia Station" his first visit to the Narkomfin Building in 1969: "[Utopia] is the dirty secret of all architecture, even the most debased: deep down all architecture, no matter how naïve and implausible, claims to make the world a better place. Like all those touched by the Utopian, architects have been severely punished. … Without reference to Utopia, his work cannot have real value, but associated with Utopia it will almost certainly be complicit with more or less serious crimes."[130]

Architecture should become a vehicle for promoting a change of everyday life and, in this way, for molding and transforming social behavior. By the very act of living and working in a new environment, man would abandon any associations with the old hierarchical system. Areas of shared circulation points and programmatic overlappings should act as collision zones that allow members of the community to interact. In order to affect many aspects of daily life, the structure offers various facilities, such as communal kitchens, a laundry, a library, and a gymnasium. Consequently, the fifty-four model units of the original apartments had no provision for a kitchen, but many inhabitants installed a tiny kitchen block later.

Even if there are a few realized buildings, such as Fourier's phalanxes and constructivist structures, the utopian *social condenser* is less grounded in reality than in visions, declaring "nothing is impossible" in constructive and social terms. The act of imagining the un-

[128] Dolores Hayden, *Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Com-munitarian Socialism 1790–1975* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976).
[129] Raoul Vaneigem, "Avis aux civilisés relativement à l'autogestion généralisée" (Notice to the Civilized Concerning Generalized Self-Management), in *Internationale Situationniste* 12 (September 1969): 74–9, here 74.
[130] Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 393.

feasible, the deliberately impossible, in architecture became almost a norm for the constructivists. To build, for instance, Konstantin Melnikov's urban fantasies or Vladimir Tatlin's Monument to the Third International with spaces that rotate at three different speeds up and down a spiraling tower would require the most complicated plans, laborious techniques, and costly constructions—a notion that actually classifies them among the purest paper architecture ever.

Both Exodus and Parc de la Villette, designed a decade later, reflect Koolhaas's fascination with the Russian constructivist movement, which, in turn, uses paper architecture to address the implausible and unfeasible in architecture, in order to expand the boundaries of possible solutions to social questions. Yet, how do they propose freedoms beyond the established structures? How do they rewrite the script of the city?

Amplifying the Program within Structures of Control

The strip of Exodus impresses by its mere size, a design strategy that connects to Koolhaas's idea of "Bigness, or The Problem of Large" (1994), in which he claims nothing less than to be setting into motion a "nuclear reaction" through the unprecedented size of buildings alone: "its vastness exhausts architecture's compulsive need to decide and determine."[131] In this "assembly of maximum difference" the individual programmatic elements start to react with each other and to create intensity, new social events, and "regimes of freedoms."[132] In a similar fashion, on the occasion of the Pritzker Prize presented to Koolhaas in 2000, the jury characterized his work as a democratic organization of functions that in the end "dictates a new unprecedented architectural form."[133] He combines not only a visionary and pragmatist in one person but is also a talent of "extraordinary dimensions."

Referring to this idea of architecture as nuclear reaction, Jeff Kipnis questions Koolhaas's understanding of physics because "a critical mass is not just the point where radioactive matter becomes more dynamic, it is the point where its internal interactions soar beyond control." Nonetheless, Kipnis considers the image of a nuclear reaction an apt metaphor because "Koolhaas would like to amplify the event-structure of the performance complex to the point where it, too, risks spiraling out of control."[134] Here, he points to the conflict between the organization of the programmatic parts and the actual performance of the building in full use: "An event-structure is congru-

[131]   Koolhaas, "Bigness," 513.
[132]   Ibid., 511.
[133]   Hyatt Foundation, "Jury Citation," n.p.
[134]   Kipnis, "Recent Koolhaas," 27.

ent with the program when no significant events in a setting are encouraged by the architecture other than those pre-written in the program, though, of course, absolute congruence can never be achieved. An architect may reasonably strive for a congruent event-structure in a prison or a hospital, but such extreme congruence would be intolerable in a house." [135]

Therefore, intensifying the possibility of the unprecedented or unexpected would inevitably lead to all kinds of activism, including reckless and squandering operations, that could bring harm and anxiety rather than a richer scope of events. However, Kipnis also claims that although there is no *a priori* universal conception of liberty, "architecture is able, but only able, to engender provisional freedoms in a definitive situation, freedom as the experiences, as the sensations, as the effects – pleasurable, threatening, and otherwise – of undermining select patterns of regulation and authority." [136] Similarly, Alejandro Zaera Polo states, "the only possible 'freedom' is to migrate between 'structures,' to develop a mutant practice that operates on an 'eventual' rather than 'essential' basis." [137] Koolhaas's architectural work relies on a combination of elements of control—the predetermined program, structure, size—and zones of chaos. He takes the in-between position, what he calls the weakness of architecture, as his central premise; circulation nodes and functional intersections become vital points enabling non-specific events, and social activities can exceed the initial program. In a similar way, Fredric Jameson points out, "the originality of Koolhaas (as theoretician and architect alike) is that … he insists on the relationship between this randomness and freedom and the presence of some rigid, inhuman, nondifferential form that enables the differentiation of what goes on around it." [138]

In this understanding of architecture as a means of creating freedoms, space is not something static and unchangeable but a creative process of unfolding and evolving, a constant creation of new worlds. Yet, we should ask the question: what new social implications are now emerging to transform the real and transgress the established forms? Such ideas of the creative potential of architecture are, however, not new but a basic concern of the avant-garde movement. Furthermore, these concepts mainly draw on theories adopted from the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980). For instance, they take up the notions of the plane of immanence of radical experience, the smooth space, the event, the virtual, the fold,

[135]   Ibid., 30 n. 8.
[136]   Ibid., 27.
[137]   Zaera Polo, "The Day After," 9.
[138]   Fredric Jameson, "Envelopes and Enclaves," 33.

the rhizome, the diagram, and the abstract machine.[139] Basically, the concepts themselves function like an abstract machine that does not put forward a representation of the real "but rather construct[s] a real to come, a new type of reality."[140] Yet, despite the many attempts of translating these philosophical concepts into architectural form, it remains vague how they could be expressed in architecture. How does architectural space connect to virtual space and its sub-representative nature?

The Wall as a Means of Freedom Beyond Planning

Kowloon Walled City at the boundaries of Hong Kong provides an example that outstrips Koolhaas's idea of Exodus. Here the wall as means of separation and spatial difference becomes a tool that allows a liberty zone beyond planning (→**19**). Both schemes, Kowloon City and Exodus, draw on a dialectic view of the existing city; both enclaves introduce artificial and scaleless design within a deficient exterior. However, Kowloon's dense and chaotic spatial structure is quite the opposite of the giant squares of Exodus but nonetheless outperforms Koolhaas's plan. Whereas the autonomous shanty town of the Walled City provides a refuge and asylum for various people outside society, the inmates of Exodus voluntarily leave society and enter a totalitarian system of preprogrammed activity and surveillance.

   The Walled City was a political no man's land free of government interference, and its inhabitants can be regarded as the true "voluntary prisoners of architecture."[141] Throughout the ninety-nine-year lease of British rule in Hong Kong, the Walled City, which was initially a walled fortress built in the mid-nineteenth century, remained an area of *anomaly* inside the British domain and yet outside the colonial authority. Because the disagreements between the Chinese and British governments over the status of Kowloon Walled City were never settled and as the situation threatened to spiral out of control whenever authorities tried to impose their will, the territory became a kind of political vacuum free from political control. So Kowloon's continually growing community developed its autonomy within the confines of the old city's walls. And although the wall was torn down during the Second World War, the site became the perfect place for refugees, because there the illegal immigrants were free of legal regulations

[139]   Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, transl. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).
[140]   Ibid., 177.
[141]   Greg Girard and Ian Lambot, *City of Darkness: Life in Kowloon Walled City* (Berlin: Ernst & Sohn, 1993); Ryuji Miyamoto, *Kowloon Walled City* (Tokyo: Hiroshi Shimonaka, 1997).

and prosecution. Using architecture as a means of migration and free-
dom, the Walled City proved highly adaptive to future change.

The population of Kowloon continued to expand, from a few thou-
sand inhabitants in the fifties to 40,000 people in the early eighties.
The low-level houses gave way to high-rises until the entire area was
covered with a single dense structure of fourteen stories covering 2.7
hectares (the site itself measured little more than 100 x 200 meters).
Its constant dampness came from overhead pipes carrying water,
which, along with artifical lightening also contributed to its green-
ish atmosphere. As there were no automobiles in Kowloon, the only
circulation space was a warren of passages that one could traverse
without once setting foot on the ground. The roofscape was the only
escape from the density below. Without legal regulations regarding
property rights, labor, or the environment, the Walled City quickly be-
came a hotbed of untaxed and unrestricted economic activities of any
kind. Many illegal businesses flourished under conditions of exploita-
tion, so that Kowloon became synonymous with all that was dark and
threatening in society. Of course, the illegal activities could flourish in-
side the Walled City only because of the demand from outside. Even-
tually after its final demolition in 1993, the site became a public park
and the former residents were moved to public housing areas. Yet,
behind the negative image of decay and social marginalization, Kow-
loon was closest to an autonomous, self-organizing city. Despite its
chaotic structure, it also provided utopian conditions for its inmates.

Koolhaas explicitly refers to the idea of a walled city in the master plan for the Zollverein in Essen, Germany (2002), an industrial monument developed from a coal refinery in the Ruhr region.

In conclusion, the wall as a minimalist architectural means represents the principle of decision, inference, and the supposition of order onto a place. However, when Koolhaas proposes that each architectural choice inevitably leads to the reduction of possibility and liberty, it need not necessarily involve such intentions as confinement and exclusion, but can rather engender new activities beyond planning. The Berlin Wall, the Venice Ghetto, or the Kowloon Walled City make clear that, by encircling a certain area, a wall allows for specific conditions and liberty zones beyond legal order. Both title and scheme of Exodus clearly signify a prison, though even such disciplinary schemes involve, for the most part, fictitious means of power and control. But stripped of its ideological framework, space proves flexible to different and new functions beyond a deterministic correlation between form and content. Adopting the idea of the *social condenser*, Koolhaas speaks of an architectural nuclear reaction initiated by extraordinary building size and maximum program difference. By creating conceptual voids, these spaces are experiments of freedoms, even if they create temporary, unintended, accidental, involuntary, unplanned, and unforeseeable events. What if planning deliberately proposes voids as spaces liberated from architecture?
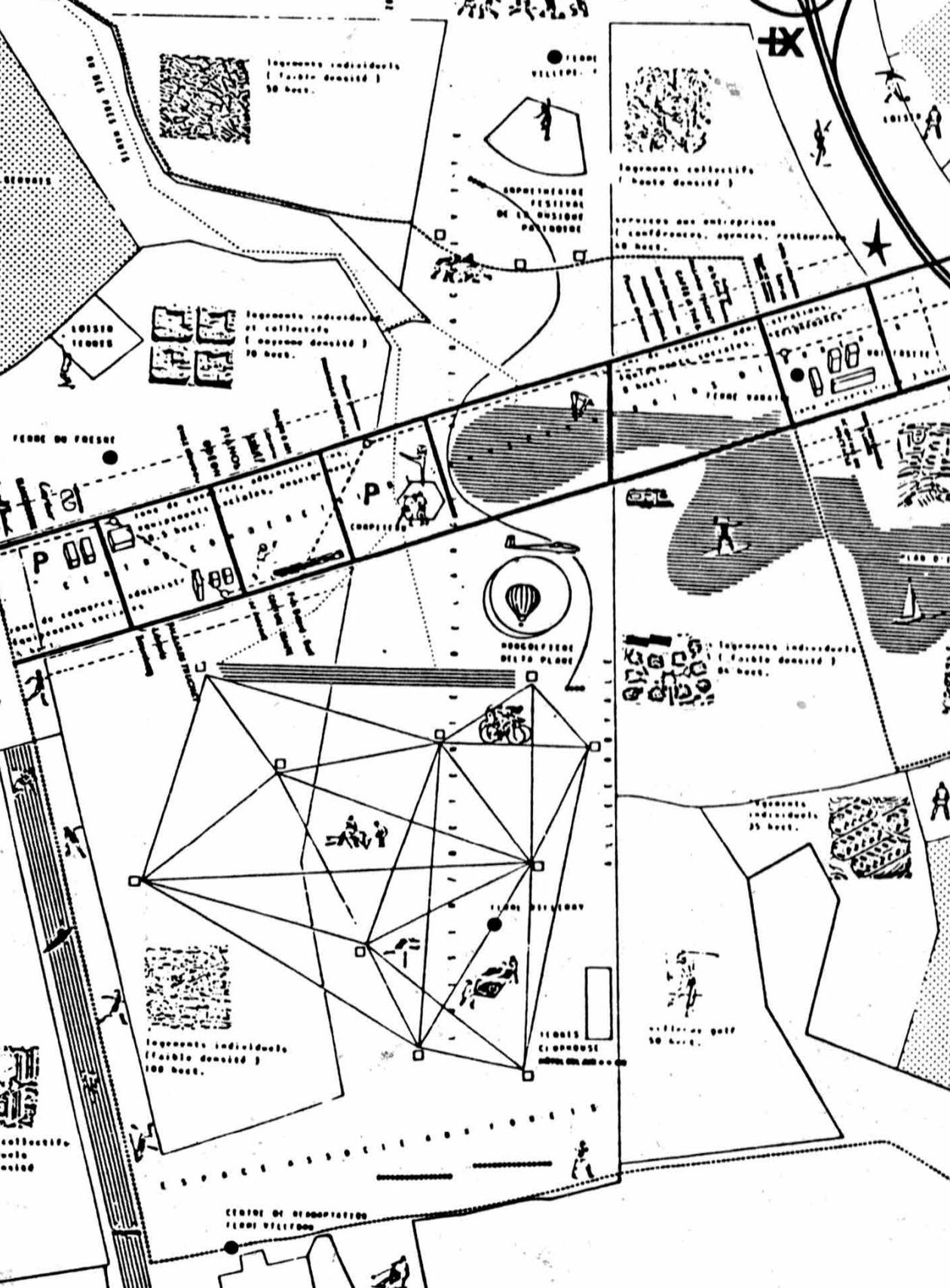
VOID:
VILLE NOUVELLE
MELUN-SÉNART, PARIS
1987

FAILED AGENCIES OF MODERN URBANISM

Planning Makes No Difference

Koolhaas's essay "Imagining Nothingness" (1985) opens with the phrase "Where there is nothing, everything is possible. Where there is architecture, nothing (else) is possible."[1] The text relates to his entry for the competition for Ville Nouvelle Melun-Sénart (1987), a new suburb of Paris, in which Koolhaas juxtaposes the chaos of the modern city and the void spaces left out of planning. Like in Exodus, or The Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture, the urban substance is seen as chaotic fabric and meaningless fragments of history. However, the concept of Melun-Sénart explores the subject of what must (or can) be determined by planning and what can (or must) be left out—either as void space or as chaotic urban growth.

In "Surrender" (1987), Koolhaas claims that "it would require a second innocence to believe, at the end of the 20th century, that the urban – the built – can be planned and mastered. Too many architects' 'visions' have bitten the dust to propose new additions to this chimerical battalion."[2] Likewise, in "What Ever Happened to Urbanism?" (1994), he refers to "the collective failure of all agencies that act on it or try to influence it – creatively, logistically, politically."[3] All definitions of what the city might be have proved unsuccessful. Since there is, under the constant growth of cities, no way of returning to the values of the traditional city, its concepts are not only irrelevant but also impossible to apply. Hence, randomness and incoherence are basically the underlying condition of architecture today. As he states in the opening lines of *S,M,L,XL*, "architecture is a hazardous mixture of omnipotence and impotence."[4] When all attempts to determine the condition of the city have been an illusion, the "most dangerous *and* most exhilarating discovery is that planning makes no difference whatsoever."[5] Order, control, determination, involvement, and participation are only illusions of a profession that is unable to accept its new position of weakness, disorder, incapability, and failure. In the plan for Melun-Sénart, his idea of the *contemporary city*, he deploys the strategy of "a deliberate surrender – tactical maneuver to reverse

[1]   Rem Koolhaas, "Imagining Nothingness," in Koolhaas and Mau,
        S,M,L,XL, 198–203, here 199.
[2]   Rem Koolhaas, "Surrender: Ville Nouvelle Melun-Sènart France Competition 1987," in Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 972–89, here 974.
[3]   Rem Koolhaas, "What Ever Happened to Urbanism?," in Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 958–71, here 961.
[4]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, xix.
[5]   Rem Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1255.

a defensive position, [that is,] to take urbanism's position of weakness as its premise."[6]

Koolhaas speaks of "chaos" to describe the state of contemporary architecture and urbanism: "And then we said, 'The rest will surrender to chaos.' We will abandon the residue … to what the French call *merde* – to the average-contemporary-everyday ugliness … the uncontrollable, almost cancerous chaotic growth of the city as a whole."[7] And in "What Ever Happened to Urbanism?" he states that "in our more permissive moments, we have surrendered to the aesthetics of chaos – 'our' chaos,"[8] for the reason that "architecture is by definition a *chaotic adventure*."[9] Instead of urbanism, there is only architecture, one building next to the other.[10] Instead of planning stable, functional configurations, there will be partial, instable interventions; transitory connections; enabling fields and potential; and intensification and diversification without a definitive form.

In a moment of Nietzschean frivolity, Koolhaas suggests that "we have to take insane risks; we have to dare to be utterly uncritical. … The certainty of failure has to be our laughing gas/oxygen; modernization our most potent drug. Since we are not responsible, we have to become irresponsible." City planning has become "a *Gay Science* – Lite Urbanism." [11] In his view, urbanists are "now specialists in phantom pain: doctors discussing the medical intricacies of an amputated limb."[12] Farther along in the text, he elaborates on the new position in urbanism: it "will not be based on the twin fantasies of order and omnipotence; it will be the staging of uncertainty."[13] In addition to built structures that define specific functions and include or exclude social activities and groups, there is also a residue as potential. By addressing spaces of instability for the unplanned and uncontrollable, he intends "to rid architecture of responsibilities it can no longer sustain and to explore this new freedom aggressively."[14]

[6]   Koolhaas, "Surrender," 974.
[7]   Ibid., 977.
[8]   Koolhaas, "What Ever Happened to Urbanism?," 969.
[9]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, p. xix.
[10]   "We were making sand castles. Now we swim in the sea that swept them away." Koolhaas, "What Ever Happened to Urbanism?," 971.
[11]   Ibid. In *The Gay Science* Friedrich Nietzsche states that "you call yourselves realists and hint that the world really is the way it appears to you. As if reality stood unveiled before you only and you yourselves were perhaps the best part of it." Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (New York: Vintage Press, 1974), 121.
[12]   Koolhaas, "What Ever Happened to Urbanism?," 963.
[13]   Ibid., 969.
[14]   Rem Koolhaas, "Strategy of the Void," in Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 602–61, here 604.

Chaos and Nothingness: Ville Nouvelle Melun-Sénart

The scheme for Melun-Sénart takes the dialectic spaces of *deliberate surrender* to the uncontrollable and the *avoidance* of left-out areas as essential elements of the design. The project consists of two parts, the Bands as a system of linear void areas, and the intermediate Islands of chaotic urban growth. As left-out spaces, the Bands are areas eliminated from the plan, and thereby protected from "contamination by the city."[15] (→**20**) They are seen as "enabling fields" and "territories with potential" for any kind of activity but kept free from architecture. Koolhaas describes this method of non-planning—as unbuilt and left out spaces—as "Strategy of the Void I."[16] In order to define which elements can be part of the Bands, the first step is to analyze the inventory of the site in relation to its future development options. This phasing isolates historic parts and the existing infrastructure of the highways and TGV railway line, as well as extraordinary features of the landscape, like the River Seine, old villages, and two forests planted for French kings. Some Bands serve to guarantee the accessibility and beauty of the site, while others connect the different elements into a continuous belt. For instance, areas along the highways and railway line save room for adding commercial zones and office parks and protect the urban quarters from noise pollution at the same time.

[15]   Koolhaas, "Surrender," 977.
[16]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 74.
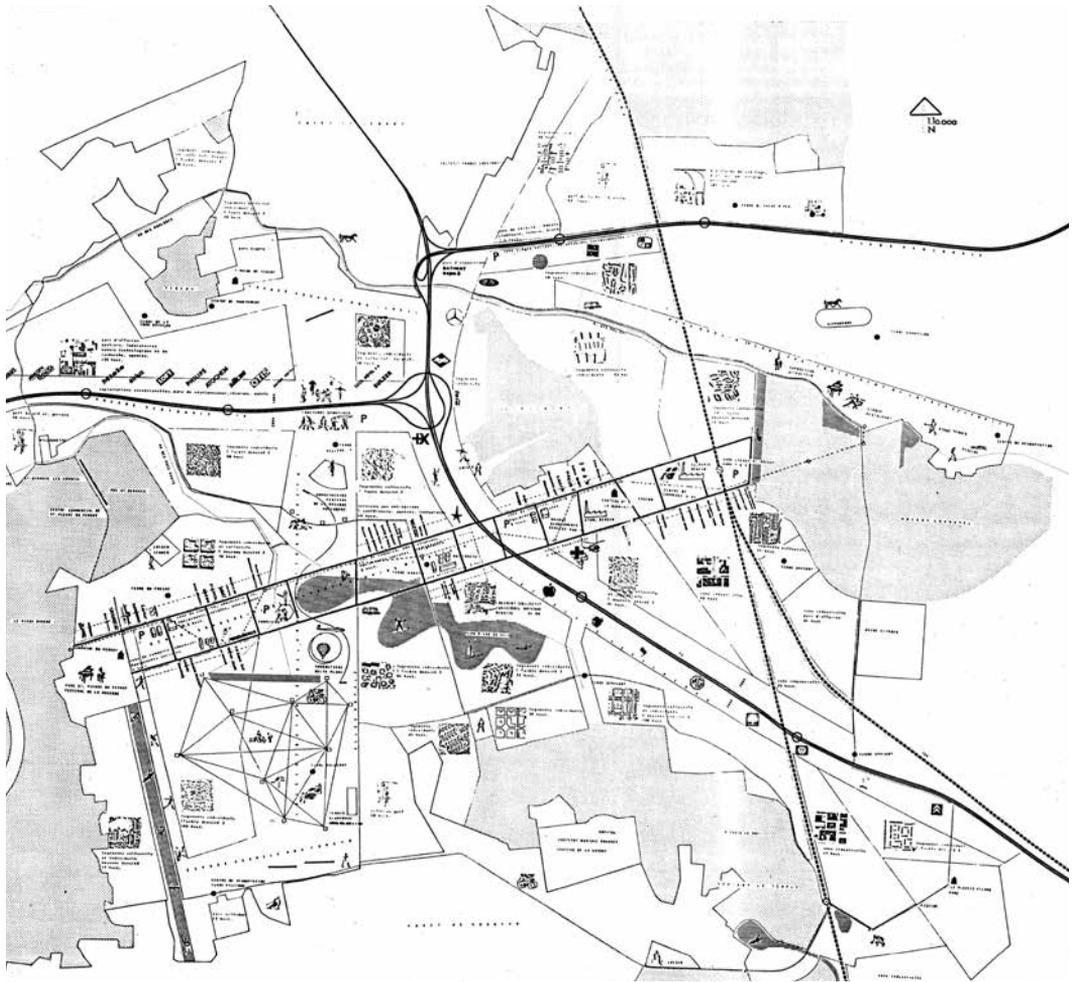
(21) Rem Koolhaas/OMA, Ville Nouvelle Melun-Sénart/France, 1987, the diagram of functions. Source: Lucan, *OMA, Rem Koolhaas*, 116–117 © 2015 OMA

Other Bands relate to existing building structures that become cores for future development, such as the campus of the new university (→**21**). Consequently, the void Bands should present attractive urban elements of "beauty, serenity, accessibility, identity."[17] This configuration of Bands creates an "almost Chinese figure" of void spaces inscribed into the layout of the plan (→**22**).[18] Following Koolhaas, the design was determined by what should not be built: "we defined very carefully what we did *not* want to do; we asked not 'where to build?' but 'where not to built? How to *abstain from architecture*?'"[19]

The counterforms to the quasi-Chinese figure are the Islands of built urban fabric. They are residues of randomly shaped and differ-

[17]   Koolhaas, "Surrender," 981.
[18]   Ibid., 977.
[19]   Ibid.

ently sized areas, each with individual qualities. The Islands should develop independently so the urban fabric is flexible; each Island only responds to specific programmatic needs according to the Bands. Yet, the shape of both the Bands and the Islands appears to be haphazard, and the diagrams of phases 0 to 2 of the development study comprise many elements that are either poorly specified or just unidentifiable (→**23**). The drawings rarely explicitly depict architectural details but remain for the most part at the largest possible scale. Likewise, the map showing the site of the Ile-de-France is represented by a blurred black-and-white copy, in which the texts can not be read (→**24**). By comparing the preserved elements with the areas for future development, it becomes clear that the actual shape of the Bands is incongruent with the counterfigure of Islands: they may have a loose fit but do not exactly relate to each other.

Although he admits that there is a distinctive fear of void and nothingness, he proclaims that the physical unbuilt and the political nonevent appear more appropriate, unsuspicious, ecological, and green than social interaction and the political event, in the sense of Henri Lefebvre's call for the revolutionary reappropriation of urban space.[20] Koolhaas states, "today, consensus builds around avoidance; our most profound adhesion is to the nonevent. The built is now fundamentally suspect."[21] This way, the Bands of left-out areas are eliminated from the plan in order to provide space for all kinds of activities beyond planning. Avoiding determination and the specificity of a program, the voids present room for unexpected, new options. Central to this idea of architectural non-planning is the concept of nothingness, along with other frequently used terms such as the unbuilt, the nonevent, avoidance, deliberate surrender—in addition to the key terms chaos and void.

In the same way, in *Content* Koolhaas presents the patent of the "Strategy of the Void I" (1987): "METHOD FOR PLANNING CITY THROUGH MANIPULATION OF THE UNBUILT AND THE LEFT OUT … given that practically all we build today is disappointing, we invest our hopes in the unbuilt as the last source of the sublime [in order] to treat the built as we formerly did nature."[22] In contrast to the void Bands, the areas of the Islands should surrender to the uncontrollable growth of the city. They accommodate "different architects, different styles, different regimes, different ideologies. … They accommodate intensity or boredom, density or sparseness" due to the specificity of programs and site.[23] The device of autonomous Islands of all kinds and with a range of functions implies the notion of what Koolhaas describes as effects of Bigness, which allow architecture to achieve

[20]   Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).
[21]   Koolhaas, "Surrender," 974.
[22]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 74.
[23]   Koolhaas, "Surrender," 983.
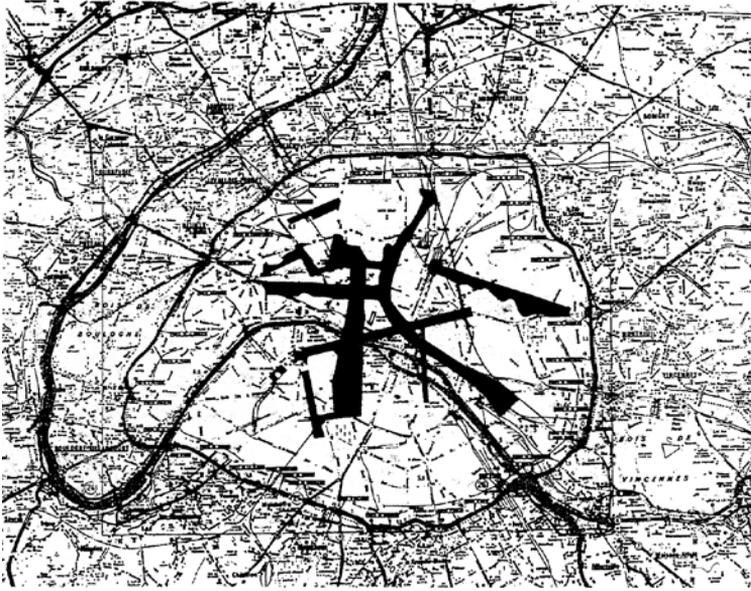
the maximum inclusion of everything: "Bigness no longer needs the city: it competes with the city; it represents the city; or better still, it *is* the city."[24] For him, the Islands and Bands as "the model of the archipelago [ensure] that each island's maximum autonomy ultimately reinforces the coherence of the whole."[25] With the concept of the city as an archipelago of Islands, Koolhaas also refers to his thesis of Manhattanism proposed in *Delirious New York*. He argues that modern metropolitan life is characterized by its "definitive instability" in terms of identity, content, and spatial program—the typical Manhattan skyscraper offers the definitive typology for these changing urban conditions. Likewise, the autonomous Islands of Melun-Sénart deliberately surrender to altering functional needs and unpredictable performances without having an effect on the other parts or on the whole configuration. Through the spatial discontinuity and autonomy between the individual parts, they keep the formal scheme of the plan intact within the stable shapes determined by the Bands. Like the skyscraper, which maintains the illusion of architecture, the Islands' unity and coherence are underpinned by the overall structure of the void figure of Bands.

What Koolhaas conceives as the "Strategy of the Void I" relates to a number of projects. For instance, the Dutch House for Two Friends (1988) is formally a courtyard house in a typical Miesian fashion with a void space at the center, that can be connected to the living area

[24]   Koolhaas, "Bigness," 515.
[25]   Koolhaas, "Surrender," 983.
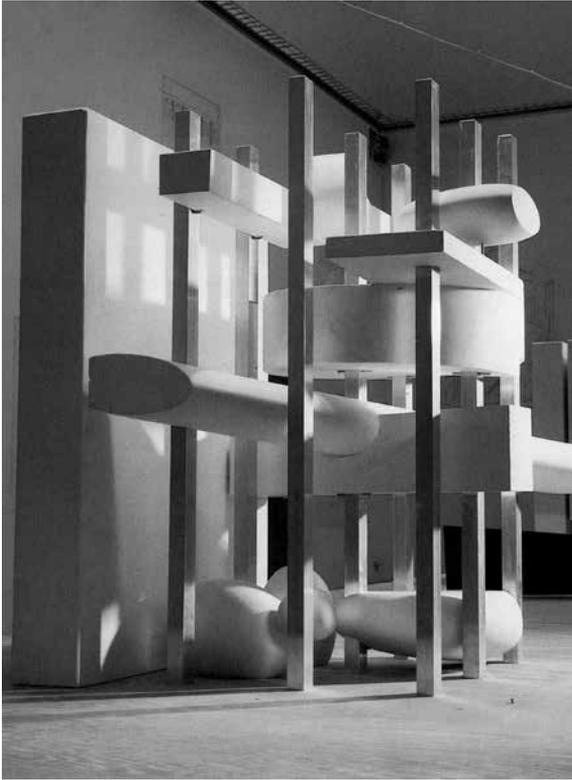
via sliding walls. Another example is the competition entry Zeebrugge Sea Terminal in Belgium (1989). According to Koolhaas's own description, its form combines a sphere and a cone in order to bring together maximum efficiency of uninterrupted flow with a vast vacant space beneath a single glass dome.[26] Likewise, the Euralille and the Lille Grand Palais in France (completed in 1994) create a "Piranesian" space that connects a complex system of infrastructure with a cavernous void space and allows daylight deep underground. Establishing dialectic structure as in Melun-Sénart also anticipates the Seattle Public Library (1999–2004), which is based on platforms of *stability* of program and the intermediate open spaces of *instability* of circulation.

Subsequent to Melun-Sénart as "Strategy of the Void I," Koolhaas terms the project for the competition for Très Grande Bibliothèque (TGB) in Paris (1989) "Strategy of the Void II" (1989): "METHOD FOR DEFINING A BUILDING THROUGH MANIPULATING ABSENCES OF BUILDING."[27] Here, the eliminated areas are arranged inside the building as huge void spaces (→**25**). Koolhaas calls the voids

[26]   Rem Koolhaas, "Working Babel," in Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 578–99, here 587.
[27]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 77.

"pebbles" or "multiple embryos, each with its own technological placenta."[28] These subtractions and absences of building appear as if they had been carved out of the solid block—as if "scooping out forms from a solid block, like ice-cream."[29] Two void tubes, containing the reading room and the auditorium, cross each other, whereas the other pebbles are conceived as independent parts (→26). The primary construction of the TGB is a solid cube of storage floors, pierced by nine elevator squares and the void pebbles. Building the model (for both working and intermediate presentation) made clear that the main issue for the construction is how to transgress the space of the voids. It was a reverse model that shows the voids floating as solid pebbles in nothingness, sustained only by the elevator cores and the frame structure. Since these void spaces are carved out, rather than built into the solid, they should be independent of the supporting structure and the exterior envelope. Yet, because the weight of the building is supported by a regular grid of columns, the void areas would not only be pierced by the elevator cores but also skewered by several vertical elements. In addition, the pillars in the lower floors would become huge elements, which make the excavation of larger spaces in the plinth for the auditorium and reading room impossible. Another option, which would not ruin the concept of the open spaces by inserting the forest of pillars, would be to make the envelope of the voids structurally strong enough, so that no further supporting structure inside is needed. Yet, this "submarine" model would require so much pyrotechnical engineering that it could not be seen as a viable alternative. However, in the TGB the void is inserted, basically, into the

(26) Rem Koolhaas/OMA, Très Grande Bibliothèque (TGB), Paris, 1987, plans of level -1, 0, 4, 5, 9, 10, 14, 15.
Source: *El Croquis* 53+79 (1998), 70
© 2015 OMA
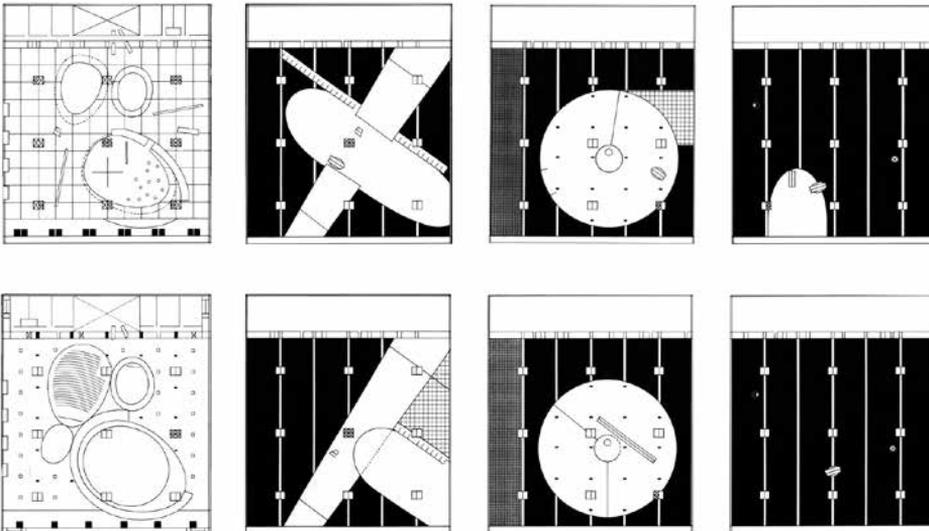
[28]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 616.
[29]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 77.

typical plan of an office structure, and provides a panoptical space of surveillance. In contrast to these "absences" of building, or "Strategy of the Void II," the Bands of Melun-Sénart, or "Strategy of the Void I," create unplanned and uncontrollable space. In "What Ever Happened to Urbanism?," Koolhaas suggests a further notion of chaos: "In the technical sense chaos is what happens when nothing happens, not something that can be engineered or embraced; it is something that infiltrates; it cannot be fabricated. The only legitimate relationship that architects can have with the subject of chaos is to take their rightful place in the army of those devoted to resist it, and fail."[30]

Derived from Greek roots, the term "chaos" literally means a vast and empty abyss, which gapes wide open and describes a primeval state of existence, similar to the Hebrew "tohu va vohu" as an empty and wide open space. For Koolhaas, chaos is what happens when nothing happens, though his notion of chaos as nothingness is diffuse and intricate, as "something that can be engineered or embraced."[31] He gives an example in *S,M,L,XL* by citing James Gleick's *Chaos*: "Tiny differences in input could quickly become overwhelming differences in output – phenomenon given the name 'sensitive dependence on initial conditions.' In weather, for example, this translates into what is only half-jokingly known as the Butterfly Effect – the notion that a butterfly stirring the air today in Peking can transform storm systems next month in New York."[32]

Additionally, in *Content* the word "Chaos" is listed under banned words, alongside others like "Big," "Zone," "Radical," "Program," "Content," and "Society," because their sense has mutated, eroded, and decayed, for "if a butterfly flaps its wings incessantly, yet a few continents away no storm follows, the question is not no much 'Does anyone hear?' as 'Must everyone keep listening?'"[33] He refers to chaotic, or non-linear dynamical systems in the fields of mathematics and physics, where an essential characteristic is the sensitivity to initial conditions. Even if the trajectory of each point in such a system seems to be random, it is deterministic and orderly in some sense. Any arbitrary small perturbation of the current conditions might lead to significantly different future behavior. Hence, the inconsistency in Koolhaas's understanding of physics is that chaos does not stand for nothingness, or when nothing happens, but rather refers to unpredictability, difference, and disorder, or what happens outside a distinct system. What Koolhaas presents as chaos would be clearly wrong in the technical sense.

[30]   Koolhaas, "What Ever Happened to Urbanism?," 969.
[31]   Ibid.
[32]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 74–6; James Gleick, *Chaos* (New York: Penguin Books, 1987).
[33]   Bill Millard, "Banned Words! Time to Chlorinate the Meme Pool," in Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 88–91, here 90.

When the Islands of the new city become a space of unpredict-ability, constant innovation and change, architecture is seen—though Koolhaas is against the fixed, predetermined nature of the built—as a potential that enables the new, as active force, and a container of Bigness.[34] This dynamical form of nothingness does not in fact contradict Koolhaas's slogan "Where there is nothing, everything is possible. Where there is architecture, nothing (else) is possible."[35] Rather, it suggests a further meaning of the second sentence, read without the word "else:" where there is architecture, nothing, in the sense of nothingness as dynamic chaos, is possible.[36]

Metropolis and Disorder, or The City Without Qualities

The drawings of the Melun-Sénart featured in Jacques Lucan's 1991 book on OMA emphasizes the function of the Bands as providing coherence to the arbitrary, uniform structures of the Islands in Melun-Sénart.[37] The Bands of left-out space define and separate the urban fabric within a larger entity. They fix the shape and size of the Islands and the distance between them. How do these empty areas function in the city context? Are they mere means of separation or do they add a surplus for the individual?

This kind of totalizing system relates to the concept of Le Corbusier's Contemporary City and the rigid zoning of the Functional City proclaimed by the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM). The plan for Melun-Sénart seems to revive the modernist position of vast open voids that isolate the built structures from each other. Yet, by contrast, the abstract open areas in modernist city planning are left-over residues—determined by the functional position of housing, industry, and other structures—not the basic ordering system as in Melun-Sénart, which is the first area to be chosen and preserved from planning.

Modern planners and artists, such as Le Corbusier and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, also used strictly functional ordering as an organizing element that responds to the formless growth of the metropolis and counteracts political disorder. Le Corbusier related his urban concepts to an incident that took place during a walk along the Champs Èlysées in Paris, when he suddenly realized that "the traffic was more furious than ever[.] … To leave your house meant that once you had crossed your threshold you were a possible sacrifice to death in the shape of

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[34]   Koolhaas, "Bigness," 516.
[35]   Koolhaas, "Imagining Nothingness," 199.
[36]   Cf. Nadja Susanne Fischthaller, *Rem Koolhaas zwischen Chaos und Utopia* (Diploma thesis, TU Vienna, 2005).
[37]   Rem Koolhaas and Jacques Lucan, eds., *OMA, Rem Koolhaas* (Zurich and Munich: Artemis & Winkler Verlag, 1991), 15.

innumerable motors."[38] Referring to a similar situation, Marinetti, in contrast, celebrated the violence of the traffic, the love of danger, and fearlessness when he called out: "we went up to the three snorting beasts, to lay amorous hands on their torrid breasts, … revived at once under the steering wheel, a guillotine blade that threatened my stomach."[39] Marinetti, like many of the Italian Futurists, rejoices in the ferocious structure of the urban scenery, even if the adventure could end up in deadly collisions and war. He is overtly enthusiastic in worshiping the frenetic acceleration of metropolitan life and the roaring race car, which is seen as more beautiful than the Nike of Samothrace. Similarly, Sant'Elia argues for the perishable and transitory and for the necessity for disruption as true renewal: "Every generation must build its own city," like a masterpiece that must be burned with the corpse of its authors.[40]

In accordance with the "new religion of speed," the Fiat Factory in Turin by Giacomo Matté-Trucco (1914–26) is the prime invention of Futurist construction.[41] The high-speed test track on the building's roof determines the entire concept of the factory, so that the steering of a car turns into a nerve-tingling experience, even at reduced speeds (→**27**). Yet, in addition to being highly dangerous, this thin track with

[38]   Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow*, 253, xxiii.
[39]   Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism" (1909), in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Umbro Apollonio (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 19–24.
[40]   Antonio Sant'Elia, "Manifesto of Futurist Architecture" (1914), in Apollonio, *Futurist Manifestos*, 160–72, here 172.
[41]   Reyner Banham, *A Concrete Atlantis: U.S. Industrial Building and European Modern Architecture 1900–1925* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 246.

sharp, banked curves at both ends is, since it is not actually a race-track, economically pointless and thus a failure at the functional level. Corresponding to the test track on the roof, the organizational concept at the Fiat Factory has to reverse the typical functional sequence of production at the factories so that the individual components are delivered to the ground floor, and the finished car emerges at the top of the building.

Expecting the advent of a new era, Marinetti proclaims: "Time and space died yesterday. We already live in the absolute, because we have created eternal, omnipresent speed."[42] Likewise, Le Corbusier calls the new time of modern urban planning "the age of speed," because only "a city made for speed is made for success."[43] (→**28**) In the sketch *Speed*, used in a lecture he gave in Buenos Aires in 1929, he draws attention to the fact that modern life has become more accelerated and dynamic through such inventions as railways, ocean liners, the telegraph, airplanes, and TSF radio.[44]

Koolhaas's notion of chaotic urban growth with exhilarating conditions for the inhabitants, relates to the technological innovations at the beginning of the twentieth century, when the big cities were losing their coherence as they expanded into the surroundings with reck-
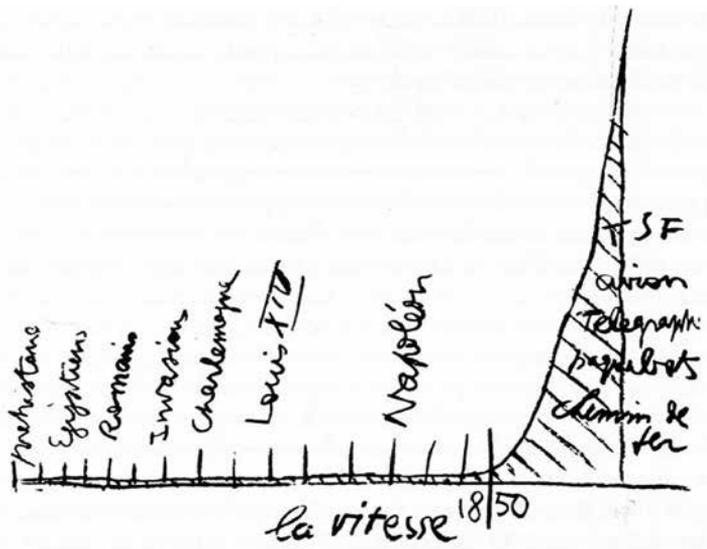
(28) Le Corbusier, *Speed*, **1929, sketch.**
Source: Le Corbusier, *Precisions*, **147**
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[42]   Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, "The New Religion-Morality of Speed," in *Let's Murder The Moonlight: Selected Writings*, transl. by R. W. Flint and Arthur A. Coppotelli (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1972), 94–6; see also Marinetti, "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism," 21.
[43]   Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow*, 179.
[44]   The sketch *Speed* by Le Corbusier stems from a lecture in Buenos Aires, on October 14, 1929; see Le Corbusier, *Precisions: On the Present State of Architecture and City Planning* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 147.

less speed. For instance, the population of Paris had grown during the nineteenth century from 500,000 to 2.5 million and New York from 60,000 to 3.4 million by the turn of the century.[45]

Georg Simmel argues in "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1903) that urban expansion and technological rationalization do not only change the physical condition but also affect social relations and mental health.[46] He examines how the individual in the modern city has to accommodate all kinds of distracting experiences that are mainly encountered as distress and shock. The alienating conditions of a sensorily overloaded daily life put the individual in a stream of weightless impressions, where one practically dissolves into the intense surroundings. Due to this process, the lived experience in the city leads to detachment, which Simmel calls a "*blasé* attitude," a fundamentally new behavior of indifference to significance and value. It is the result of the internalized money economy, where "all things float with equal specific gravity in the constantly moving stream of money."[47] Simmel characterizes the indifferent metropolitan person as a "man without qualities" conditioned by the steady onrush of changing images and nervous sensations.[48] Here, he adopts Robert Musil's expression used in *The Man Without Qualities*, where Musil describes his main character, a mathematician named Ulrich, as someone whose basic feature is indifference and ambivalence towards the outer world.[49] Koolhaas's theory in "The Generic City" (as a "city without qualities") likewise takes up the lack of any essence as the basic characteristic of the contemporary city.[50]

Despite the constantly moving stream of transportation, Le Corbusier argues in a moral undertone that the new cities like New York are through their inefficiency a great waste of time and money. After traveling from Paris to New York in October 1935, Le Corbusier's comments on the Manhattan skyscrapers were announced by the *New York Herald Tribune*: "Finds American Skyscrapers 'Much Too Small,' … Thinks They Should Be Huge and a Lot Farther Apart."[51] In *Delirious New York* Koolhaas refers to this incident and argues that Le Corbusier presents Manhattan like a police identikit, by proving its criminal features through grainy images, like "a paranoid detective who invents the victims … forges the likeness of the perpetrator and

[45]   Adna Ferrin Weber, *The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Macmillan, Columbia University, 1899).
[46]   Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1903), in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel,* ed. by Kurt H. Wolff (New York: Free Press, 1950), 409–24.
[47]   Ibid.
[48]   Ibid.
[49]   Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities* (New York: Coward-Mcann, 1953–55).
[50]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1256.
[51]   Joseph Alsop, "Finds American Skyscrapers 'Much Too Small,'" in *New York Herald Tribune (*October 22, 1935): 21.

avoids the scene of the crime."[52] In Le Corbusier's book *The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning* (1924), one of the picture captions for New York reads: "There is only confusion, chaos and upheaval. The unexpected reversal of all our ideas excites us, but beauty is concerned with quite different things; in the first place, it has *order* for its basis."[53] So the way out of the urban chaos is order, which gives functionality and beauty.

For Le Corbusier, more than being a "titanic effort of organization and discipline in the midst of a chaos," New York is a kind of "snorting monster."[54] The figure of the monster appears again when the skyscraper is described as "a man undergoing a mysterious disturbance of his organic life: the torso remains normal, but his legs become ten or twenty times too long."[55] Likewise, he characterizes cities such as Buenos Aires and Paris as "becoming-monstrous, [and as] perfectly amorphous, a primitive system of aggregation. It is no longer an organism, *it is no more than a protoplasm*."[56] Le Corbusier's usage of monster and protoplasm does not only suggest animate metaphors for the city but also implies a perverted and even immoral shape. His association of the modern urban life with protoplasm also involves the notion of living at a primitive stage. Le Corbusier further claims that the "centres of our towns are in a state of mortal sickness, their boundaries are gnawed at as though by vermin."[57] Likewise deploying a quasi-medical language, Koolhaas speaks of "amputated limbs" and "phantom pain" caused by the modern city planning.[58] In a similar moral undertone to Le Corbusier, he describes the chimerical, dangerous, exhilarating, insane experiences and the "almost cancerous chaotic growth" of our city.[59]

Subsequently, radical surgery comparable to Georges-Eugène Haussmann's massive restructuring of Paris must be applied to the urban body to stop the cancerous growth and restore health. Using such a radical metaphor, he does not deny the violent and drastic nature of the procedure but affirms its necessity for cure. To prevent both disease and upheaval, as well as to encourage capital, he is a model administrative planner who offers technical solutions for social

[52]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 253.
[53]   Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow,* 45.
[54]   Le Corbusier, *When the Cathedrals Were White: A Journey to the Country of Timid People* (London: Routledge, 1947), 40.
[55]   Ibid., 89.
[56]   Le Corbusier, *Precisions*, 210, 212.
[57]   Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow*, 96, 253.
[58]   Koolhaas, "What Ever Happened to Urbanism?," 963.
[59]   Ibid. and Koolhaas, "Surrender," 977.

problems as defined by the ruling party.[60] What is more, establishing the city as a totalizing network also functions as an effective means to preserve the authority and, if necessary, to reinstate social order. In *Towards a New Architecture*, Le Corbusier makes the alternatives clear and lets it be known on which side he stands: "Architecture or Revolution. Revolution can be avoided."[61]

Koolhaas's idea of eliminating areas from the plan of Melun-Sénart not only preserves the emptiness of the sites but also introduces a controlling element to the design. Like the Manhattan grid, they are a device for diversity by deploying the metropolitan density, which Koolhaas also calls the culture of congestion.[62] In this view, despite their artistic, Chinese-figure-like appearance, the void Bands represent a structure of consistency, stability, and order. Although the shape and site of theses areas are fixed, their functions are not predetermined by the architect but kept free from planning. They are conceived for the inhabitants as the last source of the sublime and the identity.

[60]   See Louis Chevalier, *Laboring Classes and Dangerous Classes in Paris During the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004).

[61]   Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture* (London: Architectural Press, 1946), 265.

[62]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 10.

VOID AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The Watertight Formula of the Modern City

Like Koolhaas in Melun-Sénart, Le Corbusier proposes urban voids in the 1925 Plan Voisin as a key means of contemporary city planning. When facing the threats of metropolitan chaos and submersion, he proposes spatial reconfigurations as the decisive means to prevent social conflict. He seeks a "theoretically water-tight formula" against confusion and the loss of control.[63] Referring to his slogan "Revolution can be avoided," he suggests the irrefutable method of abandoning the traditional street so that any possibility of street riots and hence revolution is eliminated.[64] Le Corbusier explicitly relates modern urbanism to military discipline, high command, and eventually warfare: "City planning is – once more – an adjunct to the science of war."[65] (→**29**)

Apart from the built structures, "everything else is either streets or open spaces. Strictly speaking the city is an immense park."[66] It is essential to the design that, although density reaches 1,200 people per acre, the new plan leave empty 95% of the ground area. The scheme shows a radical reconstruction of Paris, which destroys two square miles of the historic center north of the Seine and replaces it with eighteen immense skyscrapers. Le Corbusier's proposal cancels out the significance of the existing fabric, in favor of a unitary structure— with the skyscrapers like ready-made objects on a gigantic scale. It is a new vertical city purified from the "junk" of the old city, except for several selected historical buildings that are enshrined like secluded relics. In *Delirious New York* Koolhaas offers another, surrealist interpretation of Le Corbusier's total city scheme: "The Plan Voisin is planned, it seems, according to the early Surrealist theorem 'Le Cadavre Exquis,' … Le Corbusier draws a torso that deliberately ignores the future anatomy of the 'exquisite corpse.'"[67] In his reading, this application of urban voids, in contrast to Melun-Sénart, precludes future potential and prospective development rather than enables them.

The Plan Voisin was preceded by the Contemporary City in 1922, introduced by means of a 100-square-meter diorama at an exhibition of urbanism in the Salon d'Automne. Yet, his ideal city can be traced further back to drawings from 1914–15, when he was working on the Dom-Ino House, drawings that show a city of immense towers

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[63]   Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow*, 164.
[64]   Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, 289.
[65]   Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, 95.
[66]   Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow*, 174.
[67]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 257.

encircled by additional satellite cities.[68] Le Corbusier's later concept of the *Ville Radieuse*, which he first introduced at the CIAM III in Brussels in 1930, is an enhancement of his theories; from 1932 to 1942, he developed this into a number of site-specific adaptations, such as Geneva, Algeria, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, New York, and Chandigarh (→**30**).[69] However, the five Unités d'Habitation for Marseille (1947–52), Nantes-Rezé (1950–55), Berlin (1956–58), Brey (1959–61), and Firminy (1965–2006), and the scheme for Chandigarh (1950), the new capital for Punjab, were the only commissions that allowed him to realize his proposal.

The Plan Voisin is typically represented with photographs of the model showing an aerial view over Paris, as well as simple line illustrations and perspectives from a position high above ground. The superior position, perceiving the urban fabric from an aerial view, suggests visual-based knowledge rather than a bodily involvement and social interaction. Referring to the panoramic view from the Eiffel Tower and the possible intoxication of great heights, Le Corbusier states that "such offices will give us the feeling of 'look-outs' dominating an ordered world."[70] The ideal geometry of the new plan, in contrast to the existing jumble of the old structure, creates an environment where man can enjoy nature more perfectly and comfortably. In the continuous struggle between men and nature, the plan provides a clear and universal order amidst the contingencies of topography or culture. In "Purism" (1920), Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant argue against the accidental, fantastic forms of futurist and expressionist works of art and instead emphasize the logic of the orthogonal right angle as a sign of essential forms and scientific precision.[71] Pure geometric forms represent not only rational but also moral values, because they relate to universal ideals beyond the concrete sphere. For instance, a violin as a design that closely relates to the human body is less pure than a design more distanced from the body—such as the city.

Many projects of the modern movement promote universal standards of living for the mass of the population. The fourth meeting of the CIAM in 1933 (on a cruise ship from Marseilles headed for Athens) produced the Athens Charter, that outlines the ideal Functional City as being underpinned by the key concept of strict rational zoning according to the four functions *living*, *working*, *recreation*, and *circulation*. The main points of the doctrine are high-rise, dense residential blocks, surrounded and widely spaced apart by greenery; the strict

[68]   Robert Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977), 297 n. 2.
[69]   Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre complète, 1910–1929*, vol. 1, ed. by Willy Boesiger (Zurich: Éd. d'Architecture Artemis, 1988).
[70]   Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow*, 187.
[71]   Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant, "Le Purisme," in *L'Esprit Nouveau* 4 (1920): 369–86.

separation of the residential areas and the transportation arteries; and the preservation of historic districts and cities. Kenneth Frampton argues that such schemes emphasize the social power structure by placing the administrative buildings in the middle of the scheme, in relation to the socially exploitive nature of the workers' quarters in less favorable sites on the city margins. For Frampton, "Le Corbusier projected the *Ville Contemporaine* as an élite capitalist city of admin-istration and control, with garden cities for the workers being sited, along with industry, beyond the 'security zone' of the green belt en-compassing the city."[72]

However, the Bands of Melun-Sénart are not urban security zones that separate the individual zoned areas and quarters to preserve au-thority. Though some parts serve for recreation, transport means, or preservation and thereby ensure the city's functioning, they also save vacant areas for further development and changes. The program of the counterform Islands is not conceived as strict modern zoning, but as an area taking in the contamination and chaos of the contem-porary urban fabric. With Melun-Sénart, Koolhaas follows a concept combining the particular quality of Bands and Islands: unplanned left-out spaces and unplanned chaotic growth.

In "Eno/abling Architecture," Koolhaas presents another concept to the modernist's approach to urbanism. He discusses the particular conditions and time frame of new urban forms in the early twentieth century in comparison to the later post-war period of realization and restructuring. Therefore, he chooses three European vanguards, Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, and Walter Gropius; he weighs three

[72]   Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1980), 155.

unbuilt projects—all planned in the year 1922—against three realized buildings designed roughly thirty years later. First, Mies van der Rohe's Glass Skyscraper, presented as a transcendent high-rise with no distinct structure, is related to his Seagram Building in New York. Second, Le Corbusier's glass towers of the Plan Voisin are linked to the U.N. Building, New York. And third, Gropius's entry for the competition of the Chicago Tribune Tower is compared with the Pan Am Building, New York. For Koolhaas, in their pre-war concepts Mies, Le Corbusier, and Gropius aim at "'inventing' a form that already exists in America – the skyscraper. Mies ignores it, Le Corbusier denigrates it, Gropius emulates it."[73] What in 1922 had been a utopian and unacknowledged avant-garde work—the skyscraper—was eventually built with vigorous technical proficiency.

For Colin St. John Wilson, the modern movement itself is a largely unacknowledged and uncompleted project that, to a certain extent, resisted the CIAM's doctrinal attitude towards architecture. In *The Other Tradition of Modern Architecture*, he argues that the prevailing discourse produced a limited view of the dynamics of the avant-garde in the early twentieth century and marginalized the atypical, heterogeneous tendencies of the other modernists, such as Alvar Aalto, Hans Scharoun, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Eileen Gray, whereas figures like Hugo Häring and Johannes Itten were practically "excluded" from the historical context. In these formative years publications such as *The International Style* (1932) by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson and the nearly simultaneous Museum of Modern Art's show "Modern Architecture International Exhibition" defined the formal and conceptual positions of the emerging modern "movement."[74] The avant-garde's radical innovation was opposed by the call for discipline and methodical development as a means to establish the new movement.

However, Tafuri argues in *Architecture and Utopia*, "Chaos and order were thus sanctioned by the historical avant-garde movements as 'values,' in the proper sense of the term, of the new capitalist city. … It is order that confers significance upon chaos and transforms it into value, into 'liberty.'"[75] Koolhaas's proposal for the contemporary city of Melun-Sénart resonates with the unacknowledged call of the avant-garde for both chaos and order as vital parts of innovation and modern life. Following Tafuri, the combination of chaotic field and ordering system engenders new freedoms, which is a recurring motif in many of Koolhaas's works.

[73]   Rem Koolhaas, "Eno/abling Architecture," in *Autonomy and Ideology: Positioning an Avant-Garde in America*, ed. by Robert Somol (New York: Monacelli Press, 1997), 292–99, here 295.

[74]   Colin St. John Wilson, *The Other Tradition of Modern Architecture: The Uncompleted Project* (London: Academy Edition, 1995).

[75]   Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, 96.

Melun-Sénart takes up the modernist preoccupation with chaotic growth, but it counteracts the disorder with Bands that introduce regularity and stability by creating two strictly separated sectors. In doing so, the project uses zoning, just like Le Corbusier's Plan Voisin. But contrary to the modernist city projected onto the uniform layers of the grid, Koolhaas proposes an irregular figure of Bands to preserve certain existing natural and cultural features. However, both ideas of a *contemporary city*, the modernist's grid and Melun-Sénart's Bands, strive to connect urbanity and individual freedom by setting up an overall scheme. According to Robert Fishman, this conflict between planning and individual expression, between control and freedom is typical for the twentieth-century city. For instance, the schemes of Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier seek solutions for the free individual in the modern city built upon the values of industrial society. Such conceptualizations of people as free and rational beings draw on Enlightenment ideas, like Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative of practical reason, which states that an individual's actions are free if one can will them to become a general rule for everyone to follow. This free act can only be one of selflessness, to the exclusion of any personal interest, and achieved through rational decision. According to Fishman, the rational modern city follows this logic by imposing order as an instrument for the ideal community. Yet, the essential question for the planner remains: "In attempting to create a new urban order, must he repress precisely that complexity, diversity, and individuality which are the city's highest achievements?"[76]

Contrary to the modernist schemes, Koolhaas's proposal for Melun-Sénart includes almost nothing of the definite building structures, only the border between the two zones, the Bands and the Islands. It abandons the idea of ordered functional zoning but establishes "'liberty zones', conceptual Nevadas where all laws of architecture are suspended [and thereby] the friction between program and containment."[77] Though Koolhaas conceives of an entire city and imposes a total scheme on a large scale, he avoids totalizing its components: both Bands and Islands—void and chaos—ensure that assigning a certain hierarchy to the individual parts is impossible. Referring to examples such as the Manhattan grid, Wright's Broadacre City, Hilberseimer's Midwest, and the Berlin Wall, Koolhaas claims that areas of nothingness and liberty zones reveal "that emptiness in the metropolis is not empty, but each void can be used for programs whose insertion into the existing texture is a procrustean effort

[76]   Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century*, 18–9.
[77]   Koolhaas, "Imagining Nothingness," 201.

leading to mutilation of both activity and texture."[78] Yet, he explicitly speaks of the fear of void, non-planned spaces and the compulsion to find an architectural form: "Maybe architects' fanaticism – a myopia that has led them to believe that architecture is not only the vehicle for all that is good, but also the explanation for all that is bad – is not merely a professional deformation but a response to the horror of architecture's opposite, an instinctive recoil from the void, a fear of *nothingness*."[79]

The entry for the competition of La Défense in Paris (1991) represents a different version of void in the way of preservation versus erasure. The project concerns the extension of a district along the existing axis that begins at the Louvre, continues via the Arc de Triomphe, and arrives at the Grande Arche in La Défense. In the text "Tabula Rasa Revisited" in *S,M,L,XL*, Koolhaas affirms one undeniable virtue of the place: "Its presence has saved Paris, each 'eyesore' realized *there* has prevented an invasion of the center."[80] At that time, the area was already configured with buildings, including a future TGV station and a cemetery, as well as with "plankton – the typical accumulation of undeniably inferior buildings built between the fifties and the nineties that forms the index of 20th-century architecture."[81] It is worth noting that Koolhaas does not mention the nineteenth-century memorial to the Paris Commune of 1871 close to the metro station at the Grande Arche.

Koolhaas's competition proposal breaks the taboo of radical erasure, as if "underneath the thinning crust of our civilization a hidden tabula rasa lies in waiting."[82] (→**31**) It is described as the initial application of the patent for "Timed Erasures" (1991) and operates with the concept of eroding almost all the existing city within several decades: "METHOD OF PROSPECTIVE PRESERVATION BASED ON PREDICTED LIFESPANS OF URBAN FABRIC."[83] Although he relates his proposal to Le Corbusier's Plan Voisin, with its "incredible eloquence" of scraping everything away at once, he considers this idea of eliminating the historic city as somehow too drastic (→**32**). Instead, La Défense draws on a steady renewal according to the "perpetual cycle of construction, deconstruction, reconstruction that has been suspended out of fear of our own inferiority."[84]

It seems as if Koolhaas is well aware of the radical effects of the void, the "instinctive recoil from the void, a fear of *nothingness*" so that a gradual erasure would be a more moderate application of the

[78]   Ibid., 202.
[79]   Ibid., 200.
[80]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 1092.
[81]   Ibid., 1096.
[82]   Ibid., 1132.
[83]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 75.
[84]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 1103, 1132.

(31) Rem Koolhaas/OMA, "The process of erasure could be spread over time in a surreptitious way – an invisible reality. We could gradually scrape …," La Defense, Paris, 1991, photograph. Source: Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 1108–1109 © 2015 OMA

(32) "A new city to replace the old," Le Corbusier, Plan Voisin of Paris, 1925, model, photograph. Source: Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, 135 © 2015 VBK Wien

concept of *tabula rasa*.[85] Central to the proposal is the idea that the largest part of the existing urban structure can be considered provisional architecture, without a right to be treated as worth the effort of preserving. In contrast to the buildings of ancient cultures, such as those of the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and Incas, all buildings constructed after 1950 would inherently have predicted lifespans. No more than a few buildings can be seen as having a specific value for the site, whereas most of the substance, including many historic buildings, is mediocre and declared as worthless and removable tex-

[85]   Koolhaas, "Imagining Nothingness," 200.

ture. Hence, within a period no longer than thirty years, almost all the buildings would have reached the end of their life-span so that vast amounts of central urban locations would become available for new visions. This concept refers to the initial program of the district of La Défense being a strategic reserve that saves the historic center of Paris from an invasion of office space. The notion of predictable expiration dates therefore enables the "rebirth of the city" in line with the enhancement of what the urban form can be.[86] Only highly significant or large-scale buildings are preserved, because these "containers of Bigness will be landmarks in a post-architectural landscape. [They are] inflexible, immutable, definitive, forever there, generated through superhuman effort. Bigness surrenders the field to after-architecture."[87]

In La Défense the urban substance is nothing more than a temporary occupation; the tabula rasa provides just a "new beginning for generations to come."[88] To grant the most virtual structure for future developments, Koolhaas projects the Manhattan grid onto the site as an underlying pattern with the potential for all kinds of new programs (→**33**,→**34**). In addition to the grid as continuous system, a mixed texture with different typologies provides several grades of density. Tafuri describes the gridiron by referring to American cities, where "absolute liberty is granted to the single architectural fragment, but this fragment is situated in a context that it does not condition formally: the secondary elements of the city are given maximum articulation, while the laws governing the whole are rigidly maintained."[89] In La Défense the conceptual nature of the grid framework seems ideal for initiating the progressive transformation of the accidental assemblage of existing fabric into a new consistent urban form. It can absorb all elements that should be preserved, so that they survive as fragments and singularities but are enclosed in a coherent system. The new scheme would also gradually dissolve the predominant axis of the Grand Axe, which at that time represented the main source of identity for La Défense; it would but ultimately become just one of the orthogonal coordinates.

The Grid as Field of Projection

With Columbus's discovery, America became the New World and a laboratory for a new social order. The process of colonization opened up the possibility of founding cities on the basis of architectural ideals rather than reproducing European models. For the immigrants, the new continent was a virgin land and, to use Michel Foucault's idea,

[86]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 75.
[87]   Rem Koolhaas, "Bigness," 516.
[88]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 1103.
[89]   Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, 38.
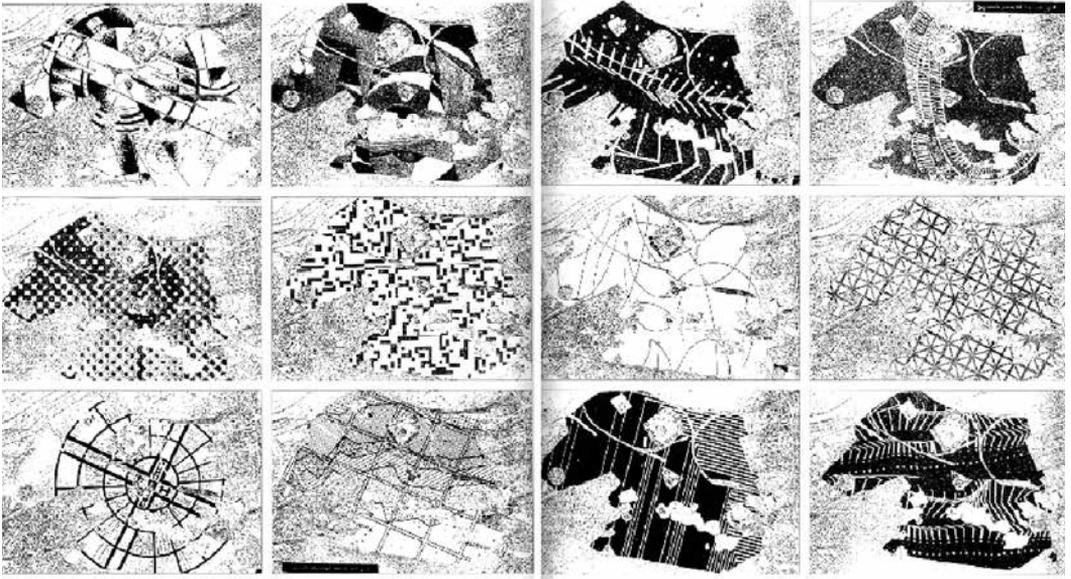
(33) Rem Koolhaas/OMA, La
Defense, Paris, 1991, a series of
studies of an urban plan.
Source: Koolhaas and Mau,
S,M,L,XL, 1118
© 2015 OMA
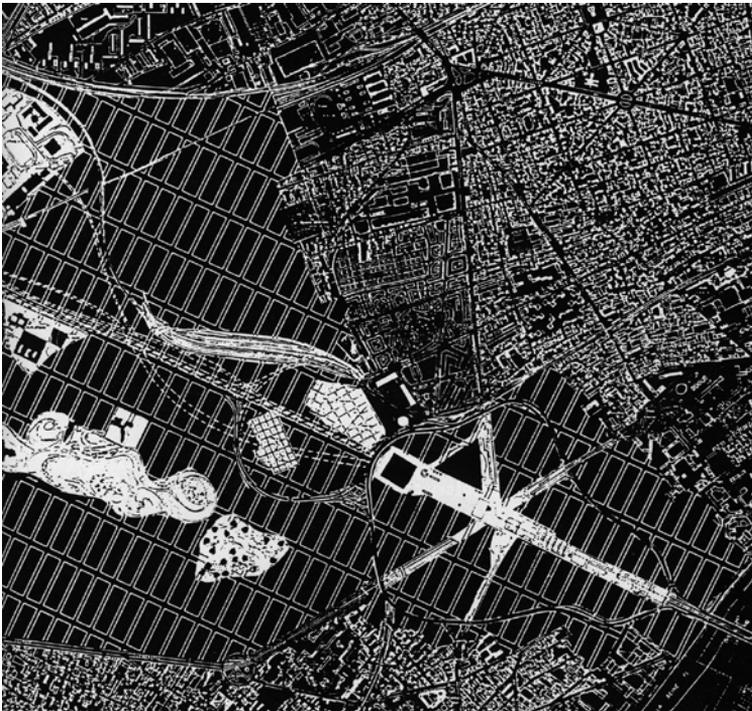
(34) Rem Koolhaas/OMA, La
Defense, Paris, 1991, the projection
of the grid onto the site.
Source: Koolhaas and Mau,
S,M,L,XL, 1124
© 2015 OMA

the other place where utopia becomes reality. As early as 1573 in the Laws of the Indies, the grid plan was used as the architectural basis of the New World. However, in 1765 the patchwork of different grids was abandoned and Thomas Jefferson proposed to divide the entire land into sections based on the one-mile Continental Grid.[90] The colossal gridiron corresponded with the ideology of the Founding Fathers that called for equal conditions for each citizen. But since the spatial order neither related to the topography nor the program, it promoted land speculation and economic competition.

The gridding of America represents a field of projection that bears far more potential as city mutation, however. Following Koolhaas, the grid in its urban form enables the invention of a new typology because "the skyscraper city will take this gridded city as a point of departure and propose a strategy for the section."[91] In *S,M,L,XL's* dictionary entry "Grid," Koolhaas quotes a passage from his own book *Delirious New York*: "The *Grid* – or any other subdivision of the metropolitan territory into maximum increments of control – describes an archipelago of 'Cities within Cities.' The more each 'island' celebrates different values, the more the unity of the archipelago as system is reinforced. Because 'change' is contained on the component 'islands,' such a system will never have to be revised."[92]

In contrast to the centralized growth of the traditional European city, the grid of the American city enables both fluid circulation and infinite possible extension, which forms an option that is metaphorically expressed in the term "skyscraper." Since the new city planned as a gridded scheme will never need radical erasures, the skyscraper therefore is the "definitive typology" of the new world, and "the great metropolitan destabilizer: it promises perpetual programmatic instability" but at the same time ensures the "ultimate unpredictability" of the city's performance.[93]

In "Typical Plan" (1993) and "The Generic City" (1994), Koolhaas argues that *instability* and *indeterminacy* are the true core of modern metropolitan life. The typical plan is comparable to the generic city because both concepts lack specificity and identity. Since planning is based on choices that lead to the reduction of possibility, it thereby preempts the future, "Typical Plan – by making *no* choices – postpones it, keeps it open forever."[94] The same seems to be true when he considers the urban scale: "The Generic City is the apotheosis of the multiple-choice concept: all boxes crossed, an anthology of *all* the

[90]   John Reps, *The Making of Urban America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).
[91]   Mario Gandelsonas, *X-Urbanism: Architecture and The American City* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 52.
[92]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 592–3.
[93]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York,* 87.
[94]   Koolhaas, "Typical Plan," 344.

options."[95] Essential to this thesis on the final death of planning is the unpredictability of what will flourish and what is doomed to perish, simply because in the multiple-choice concept, it is not possible to trace the effects back to a definitive cause. Nevertheless, in "Junk Space" (2001), Koolhaas observes, "the built … product of modernization is not modern architecture but Junkspace. … Modernization had a rational program: to share the blessing of science, universally. Junkspace is its apotheosis, or meltdown."[96]

Le Corbusier's question of "Architecture or revolution?" has been, for Colin Rowe, already answered in 1776 when "in the United States the revolution was assumed to have already occurred"; modernist rationality and functionality, namely, were seen as a "suitable veneer for the corporate activities of 'enlightened' capitalism."[97] In the face of the economic structure of production and consumption, all engagement with socio-political objectives would only reveal their complete inadequacy.

[95]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1253.
[96]   Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 162
[97]   Colin Rowe, "Introduction," in *Five Architects: Eisenman, Graves, Gwathmey, Hejduk, Meier*, ed. by Peter Eisenman, Michael Graves, Charles Gwathmey, John Hejduk, and Richard Meier (New York: Museum of Modern Art and Oxford University Press, 1975), 3–8, here 4.

VOID AS ENVIRONMENT OF CONTROL AND CHOICE

Infrastructure and Kit-of-Parts Architecture

Many other architects and artists besides Koolhaas, with his urban visions of Exodus, or The Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture and Melun-Sénart, took architecture as a metaphor for liberty in promoting maximum choice and unprecedented architectural form. Protagonists like Archigram, Cedric Price, Superstudio, Yona Friedman, and Archizoom, among others, explore the idea of an experimental (often dystopian) environment. When one rejects the solutions of modern urbanism, what other qualities of space does the new generation address? What needs to be determined by the architect and what can be open to variable, spontaneous interventions by the users? How do they articulate the relationship between individual and social space? How can architecture promote participation of the users?

In the nineteen-fifties, the younger generation was increasingly suspicious of the prevailing discourse of functional city planning. At CIAM's ninth meeting in 1954, near Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation in Marseilles, architects (such as Alison and Peter Smithson) openly criticized the formula of the Athens Charter. Rejecting the principles of functional zoning, they argue for a city that is sensitive to factors such as the local community and everyday social life.[98] Abandoning the total scheme of modernist planning, architecture now has to be an agent for generating new social space through the participation of the user. In *Architecture: Action and Plan* (1969), Peter Cook argues that "the second revolution involved freedom of the individual interpreted by freedom of space, freedom of the building itself from the ground, or from conventional structure."[99] A case in point is the project Control and Choice (1966–67) by Archigram (consisting of Warren Chalk, Peter Cook, Dennis Crompton, David Greene, Ron Herron, and Michael Webb), which proposes an urban concept of varying features and extent. According to Cook, "the determination of your environment need no longer be left in the hands of the designer. … You turn the switches and choose the conditions to sustain you at that point in time. The 'building' is reduced to the role of carcass – or less."[100] Joining up spaces and freeing partitions, Archigram does not propose an ideal form but an environment with flexible spatial configuration and functions to call attention to individuality, interaction, and choice. Introducing pop aesthetics, with references to the consumer lifestyle,

[98]   Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998).
[99]   Peter Cook, *Architecture: Action and Plan* (London: Studio Vista, 1969), 92.
[100] Peter Cook, "Control and Choice," in Peter Cook, ed., *Archigram* (London: Studio Vista, 1972), 68.

advertising, film, and science fiction, they respond to the impact of the new media in the world of the fifties and sixties. This new generation of planners often used graphics and collages to present the atmosphere of the city by means of dazzling, fractured images.

Archigram also put forward ideas for roaming spaces of high-tech infrastructure similar to a global fun fair, such as Walking Cities moving from one place to the other. Peter Cook's Plug-in City (1964) proposed crane-mounted living pods that can be plugged in wherever the users wish. Most notably is the community space in the center, which provides a national communication and information network for further events and entertainment. In the projects for the Instant City (1969–70), Ron Herron, Peter Cook, and Dennis Crompton explored the mobile environment, where all resources for the traveling city are transported in airships that only land temporarily.

Opening up architecture to new technologies, Archigram embraces not only megastructures but also small-scale kit-of-parts architecture for provisional constructions. David Greene's Living Pod (1966) is inspired by the Lunar Modules developed by NASA for moon landing and provides a portable, prefabricated shelter as a form of nomadic architecture. His idea refers to Richard Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion House of 1927, which is based on a structural system of standardized, prefabricated elements. This approach seeks to connect efficiency with participation and individual lifestyle. However, instead of flexibility and variation, such kit-of-parts systems inevitably imply a high degree of control and predictability in the design. In contrast, Koolhaas's concept of Melun-Sénart avoids such forms of control by defining no individual components but only the boundaries between the Islands and the Bands. Both the form and function of buildings themselves are seen as temporary and individual structures, though.

Another example of a provisional laboratory environment is Cedric Price's Fun Palace (1961–67), which consists of an unenclosed steel-frame structure with moveable walls and floors, and hanging auditoriums. It further includes a range of mechanical service devices, such as warm-air curtains and fog barriers, so that the participatory elements expand the user's control of the physical environment.[101] His "laboratory of fun" is designed as a space of stimulation, involvement, and participation instead of passive entertainment. More important than the technologically controlled space is the responsive environment, that allows for a variety of atmospheric moods. Another project is Archizoom's No-Stop City (1969), with its uniform structure interspersed with simple functional units and spatial figurations (→**35**). Here, the matrix becomes the city itself, implying freedom of movement via a system of undifferentiated, infinitely extended structures, endowed

[101]   Reyner Banham, "People's Palace," in *New Statesman* (August 7, 1964), 191–2, here 191.
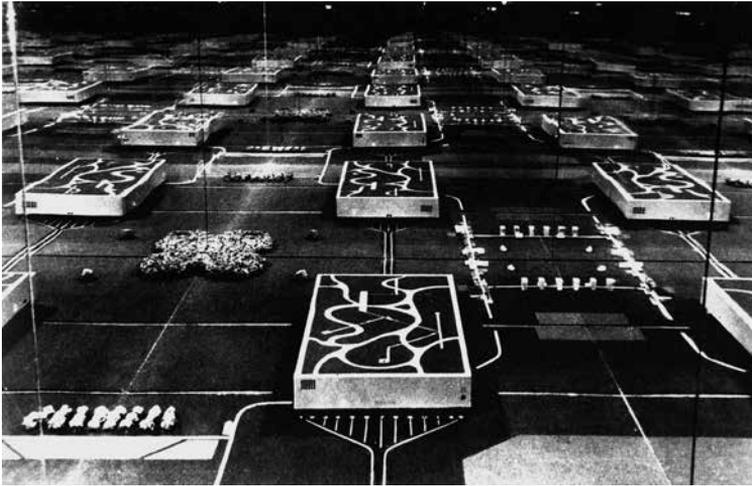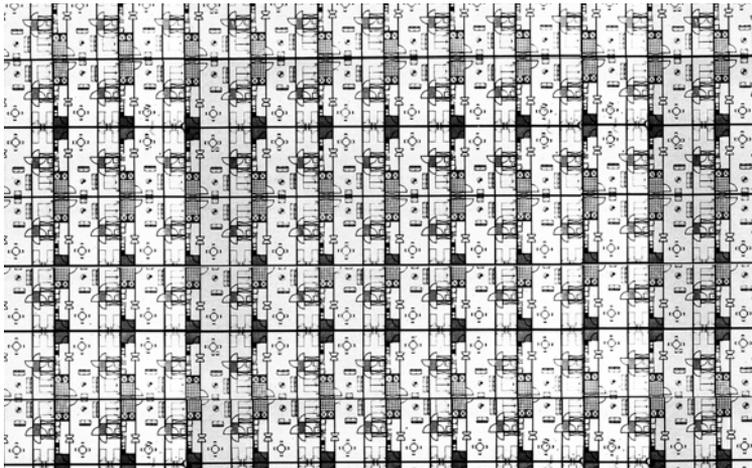
with total permeability and accessibility. The plan expands until there is no space left outside the system. In the scheme of No-Stop City, there is no other reality and no pre-existing context (→**36**).

In a similar way, the Continuous Monument (1969) (→**8**) by the Italy-based group Superstudio presents a vision of total urbanization. Formally resembling Koolhaas's project Exodus, or The Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture (→**1**), its globe-traversing surfaces, walls, and volumes create a uniform environment that penetrates both the natural and built world anywhere. New cities can easily be produced by an accumulation of the basic components, the white cubes. For instance, one of the series of collages and storyboards shows Manhattan engulfed by a single giant structure, in which only a few historic skyscrapers are preserved in memory of a past era of individual planning. Stretching across the earth's surface, the endless framework of a black-on-white grid provides a neutral plane like an empty stage.

Freed from fixed dwellings, the inhabitants are nomads who can plug in at any point on the almost featureless landscape. The Continuous Monument takes the rational, egalitarian system of modernism as a starting point; yet, by exaggerating it and excluding any other forms, it also produces a space of surveillance and uniformity.

Rather than generating purely objective spaces of the typical plan, of which, as Koolhaas states, the "only function is to let its occupants *exist*," they provided responsive environments for promoting spontaneity and open-ended situations.[102] Many projects of the new generation of architects at that period subverted the dominant modernist methodology and conceived of structures with moveable partitions, crane-like constructions, infrastructure, and communication networks. Other architects, such as Archizoom and Superstudio, conceived mere negative, absurd visions that reveal the ambiguity, repulsion, and horrors that architecture has in the offering. However, Koolhaas's project of Melun-Sénart neither proposes a technologically advanced infrastructure nor basic components of a "kit-of-parts architecture." It also does not resort to the system that "will never have to be revised," the urban grid.[103] Instead, the scheme intends to confer order upon chaos and thus to give meaning and value to it, as Tafuri characterizes the conceptual position of the avant-garde. [104]

Experiments of the Non-Plan and the Unhouse

When Koolhaas declares in "Imagining Nothingness" that architectural planning's simultaneous omnipotence and impotence have lead to a position of weakness, incapability, even failure, which has become the new premise, this view had already been anticipated by theoretical concepts and projects before. Rejecting functionalist urban planning, Reyner Banham, Cedric Price, Peter Hall, and Paul Barker—as contributors to a special project run by the journal *New Society* titled "Non-Plan: An Experiment in Freedom" (1969)—called for the creative powers of unplanned processes initiated by "non-plan oases."[105] They claimed that, since modernist urbanism lacks diversity, its goals should be freedom of choice and chance, easy movement and circulation, and an extensive communication system. The idea of *non-plan* was basically taken from Banham's discussion of urban sprawl in Los Angeles. Sprawl is commonly misperceived as a negative concept, an unintended spillover of dispersed and poorly planned sites. In *The*

[102]   Koolhaas, "Typical Plan," 337–8.
[103]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 592.
[104]   Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, 96.
[105]   Reyner Banham, Cedric Price, Peter Hall, and Paul Barker, "Non-Plan: An Experiment in Freedom," in *New Society* (March 20, 1969): 435–43, here 436.
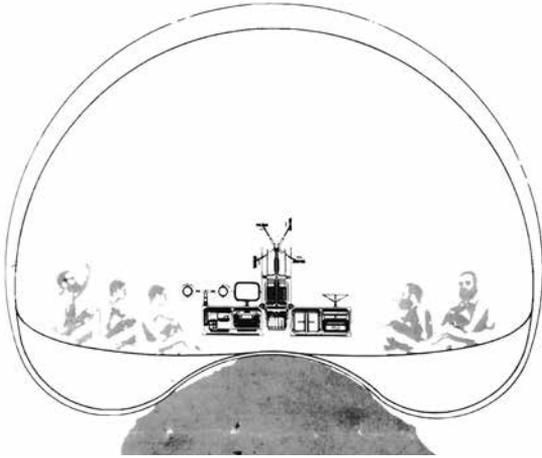
Exploding Metropolis (1958), for instance, increasing sprawl is seen as unnatural and uneconomic space, simply a mess.[106] Instead of vertically dense concentrations of buildings, sprawling areas are mainly horizontally oriented landscapes detached from the urban core—the city proper. As a consequence of rapid urbanization, the city has become a diffuse metropolitan tissue with fragmented spread, since it is not completely filled with building patterns but also contains vacant in-between lots, wastelands, and economic residues—urban voids. In *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (1971), Banham re-evaluates those qualities that are listed as Los Angeles's key failings, such as the ubiquitous sprawling signscape of the roadside architecture and the incoherent system of freeways, boulevards, and parking lots.[107] Yet, the idea of a city is "so rooted in the language of cultured discourse that to say 'Cities should be compact' is to commit a tautology – we cannot conceive of a diffuse city, and have invented other words, such as *conurbation, subtopia*, to underline our inability to conceive it."[108] But the freedom of movement made possible through the system of freeways and grid plan of the suburbs is the prime attribute of Los Angeles and its *conurbative* society.

In the earlier article "The City as Scrambled Egg" (1959), Banham refers to the situationist psychogeography and the technique of drifting (*dérive*) for investigating how emotional aspects relate to our mapping of the city. In the same article, he takes up Le Corbusier's notion that the medieval city resembles an egg as a whole, which

[106]   William H. Whyte Jr. et al., eds., *The Exploding Metropolis* (New York: Doubleday, 1958).
[107]   Reyner Banham, *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (New York: Harper, 1971).
[108]   Reyner Banham, *A Critic Writes: Selected Essays by Reyner Banham*, ed. by Mary Banham, Sutherland Lyall, Cedric Price, and Paul Barker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 61.

has a densely packed core surrounded by the city-wall shell: the contemporary city, by contrast, is like a scrambled egg that is cracked, so that the yolk spreads across the landscape.[109] Los Angeles, although being a scrambled egg, can also be considered as the closest vision to date and a kind of blueprint of a *non-plan* city. Koolhaas's proposal for Melun-Sénart can be interpreted as a draft of the *non-plan*, which rethinks both the urban sprawl as complex tissue and the residual voids in between as vital parts of the design.

Banham applies his idea to urban as well as small-scale architecture. Referring to the temporary environments of nomadic tribes, he argues in "A Home Is Not a House" (1965) that "the space around a campfire has many unique qualities which architecture cannot hope to equal, above all, its freedom and variability."[110] His Environmental Bubble (the bubble itself is the work of Francois Dallegret) is a "set-up standard-of-living package," is a transparent plastic dome inflated by air-conditioning, in which the interior provides reference to the campfire with "well-aged protein turning in an infra-red glow in the rotisserie."[111] (→**37**) With this notion of the *unhouse*, Banham suggests that with the rise of modern architecture, the mechanical devices have reached a stage where they determine the total layout. In *The Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment* (1969), he contrasts the controlled modernist environment with the controllable, or responsive environment by looking at the implications of mechanical services and their possible architectural value for the design.[112] Whereas the controlled space has only a limited range of environmental choices, the controllable space provides more fully the background conditions for what he describes as an "interdeterminate participatory open-ended situation."[113]

Close to Banham's plastic dome, Archigram's projects—such as David Greene's Living Pod, Michael Webb's Cushicle (both 1966), and Webb's wearable house Suitaloon (1967)—propose a nomadic environment as capsule homes (→**38**). Inflatables represent the possibility of *une architecture autre*, a term from "The New Brutalism" (1955), which Banham derives from Michel Tapié's *Un art autre* and which Banham connects to raw, seemingly unfinished, anti-formal aesthetics.[114]

[109]   Reyner Banham, "The City as Scrambled Egg," see Nigel Whiteley, *Reyner Banham: Historian of the Immediate Future* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).
[110]   Reyner Banham, "A Home Is Not a House," in *Art in America* (April 1965): 70–9, here 79.
[111]   Ibid., 75.
[112]   Reyner Banham, *The Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment* (London: The Architectural Press, 1973).
[113]   Reyner Banham, "Softer Hardware," in *Ark* (Summer 1969), 2–11, here 11.
[114]   Reyner Banham, "The New Brutalism," in *Architectural Review* (December 1955), 354–61, here 356; Michel Tapié, *Un art autre* (Paris: Gabriel Giraud et Fils, 1952).

When the Italian UFO Group deployed inflatables to block the traffic in Florence in 1968, the inflatables directly took part in political action and were seen as the basis for true architectural innovation. It was the year of widespread youth insurgency, starting with the events in May in Paris—which, according to Koolhaas, led to the development of a new social life of individuals "correctly traumatized by selected cataclysms."[115]

The City as Social Work of Art

Still, the idea of the city as a generator of new events and territories with potential that would emerge from densely crowded parts was not exactly new in the nineteen-nineties, when Koolhaas presented Melun-Sénart and wrote his essay "Bigness, or The Problem of Large." Already in the sixties and seventies, authors like Richard Sennett, Jane Jacobs, and Lewis Mumford had advocated for the city as "the product of thousands of minds and thousands of individual decisions," or what Claude Lévi-Strauss describes as a "social work of art."[116] Is Koolhaas's proposal of Melun-Sénart an application of sociological approaches to the city? Is it a translation of these theories into architectural practice?

Central to the design of Melun-Sénart is the idea of disorder and chaos. To experience difference, friction, and conflict with the surrounding milieu is clearly against the idea of city planning that strives for order and control. However, in *The Uses of Disorder* (1970), Sennett calls for face-to-face encounters, even if they involve social conflicts and disorder, which are inevitable in any society.[117] For him, "encouraging unzoned urban places, no longer centrally controlled, would thus promote visual and functional disorder in the city. My belief is that this disorder is *better* than dead, predetermined planning, which restricts effective social exploration."[118]

These social approaches share a focus on small-scale interventions instead of universal all-over solutions. Publications such as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1963) or Ian McHarg's *Design with Nature* (1969) suggest an ecological understanding of and responsibility for the urban fabric in addition to an understanding of social aspects.[119] But what is it that makes an urban neighborhood a community and complex human ecology instead of a mere dormitory?

[115]   Koolhaas, "Bigness," 505.
[116]   Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century*, 18
[117]   Richard Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity and City Life* (London: Penguin Press, 1971).
[118]   Ibid., 142.
[119]   Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1962); Ian McHarg, *Design with Nature* (New York: Natural History Press, 1969).

In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), Jane Jacobs strictly rejects totalizing schemes, even if they are, like Ebenezer Howard's garden cities, "really very nice towns if you were docile and had no plans of your own and did not mind spending your life among others with no plans of their own. As in all Utopias, the right to have plans of any significance belonged only to the planners in charge."[120] Jacobs likewise discards Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse* and its inhuman scale, rigid separation of functions, and vast void spaces that make close-knit diversity impossible. For instance, the Pruitt-Igoe Towers in St. Louis, a modernist development and symbol for the union between welfare Unités and high-rise renewal projects, began in 1954 as a promising new way but soon turned into a site of inadequate city maintenance, low-wage jobs, and high crime, so that in 1972 city authorities decided to destroy most of the Pruitt-Igoe Towers.

(38) Michael Webb, *Suitaloon*, 1967, photographs.
Source: Sadler, *Archigram*, 184
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[120]   Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 27.

Mumford argues in "Yesterday's City of Tomorrow" (1962), that Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse* puts forth a nineteenth-century ideology with its worship of centralized power, technology, and science.[121] The ideal scheme of the contemporary city just revives the pernicious practices of bygone times and regimes. Focusing on social spaces rather than physical structure, Mumford describes the urban fabric as a theater of interaction, since users alone define what a city could be. He also rejects the idea of Bigness, as associated with Koolhaas's manifesto of Bigness, because social behavior is directly influenced by parameters such as sizes and density, that either encourage or repress activity. Wherever people meet in large numbers—be it tenements, contests, or fairs—such enlargement and exaggeration inevitably lead, for Mumford, to the demoralized and trivial, which in turn undermines real urban life.

Similar to Koolhaas's theory of Bigness, Mumford's metaphor of the "container" describes the city as an accumulator of both goods and influential ideas. Inside the container, a variety of diverse elements are densely packed together, a condition that could lead as if under pressure to an "urban implosion." Mumford describes this transformative reaction of the individual parts in terms of physics: "As with a gas, the very pressure of the molecules within that limited space produced more social collision and interactions within a generation than would have occurred in many centuries if still isolated in their native habitats, without boundaries."[122] In a similar fashion, Koolhaas speaks of the "programmatic alchemy" of Bigness, since the individual parts begin to react with each other "like plutonium rods that, more or less immersed, dampen or promote nuclear reaction."[123]

With his project for Melun-Sénart, Koolhaas seeks to escape the problem that planning a new city cannot equally create interwoven complexity and individuality and inevitably implies the simplification of functions and needs. He proposes a new scheme for Melun-Sénart by determining almost nothing; its liberty zones present no concrete architectural form but only the separation between the two functional spaces. Beyond this demarcation, he makes no further comment on how these areas can respond to living social patterns. This way, the conceptual voids point to the dilemma that the more urban visions become elaborated in a plan, the more detached they are from actual social complexity.

[121]   Lewis Mumford, "Yesterday's City of Tomorrow," in *Architectural Record* 132 (November 1962): 139–44.
[122]   Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1961), 34.
[123]   Koolhaas, "Bigness," 512.

THE ARMATURE OF GENERICITY

Koolhaas refers to the events of May 1968 in Paris as "a strange amalgamation of very reactionary, almost Luddite, tendencies: against civilization, against artificiality, against the system. … It was the impact of '68 that made the difference. It was the beginning: you sensed that any architecture was fragile."[124] Against the background of ongoing changes, the upheaval can be seen as a culminating point of disillusionment with the political and social conditions in the contemporary city. In a more radical manner, Adolfo Natalini holds to negative premises and proclaims: "We must reject architecture; if architecture and town planning [are] merely the formalization of the present unjust social divisions, then we must reject town planning and its cities, … design must disappear. Architecture is one of the superstructures of power. We can live without architecture."[125]

Architecture may readily abandon the position of realistic proposals and turn to the ideology of chaos and "the sublimation of disorder."[126] Withdrawal from the system is seen as an apt response to the impasse of the prevailing system. Melun-Sénart rethinks the modernist approach to city planning as ideological superstructure and offers an unrealistic, indefinite scheme of void spaces and chaotic tissue as an alternative. Though, is this negation of planning more than a subversive means against modernist ideology? What is the new role of the architect in the process?

Although many architects reject the prevailing system of urban planning by presenting utopian designs, critics, like Tafuri, consider most experimental projects of the sixties and seventies pure paper architecture and meaningless mystifications with no concern for the social reality of the city. He dismisses both the modernist ideology of the functionalist plan as well as the naïve belief in technology and progress. Both positions make architecture the efficient agent of capitalist "planification" and, indeed, complicit with the reification of the commodity system that had fully arrived in post-war consumer culture. Such projects cannot serve as "operative criticism," which aims at the reengagement and reassessment of the discipline, because

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[124]   Rem Koolhaas, "Spot Check: A Conversation between Rem Koolhaas and Sarah Whiting," in *Assemblage* 40 (December 1999): 36–55, here 41.

[125]   Adolfo Natalini, "Inventory, Catalogue, Systems of Flux … A Statement," lecture given at the AA School of Architecture in London (March 3, 1971), in *Superstudio: Life Without Objects*, ed. by Peter Lang (Milano: Skira, 2003), 164–8, here 168.

[126]   Ibid., 136.

the autonomy of architecture is closely connected to its social and political functions.

In his article "L'Architecture dans le Boudoir: The Language of Criticism and the Criticism of Language" (1974), Tafuri claims that the observer of modern architecture "is forced to reduce to degree zero every ideology, every dream of social function, every utopian residue."[127] With the title, he refers to Marquis de Sade's "Philosophie dans le Boudoir" (1795), as well as to René Magritte's painting *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir* (1947), which shows only an animated dress and a pair of shoes in an estranged space. While the analogy between buildings and dressing a human body is traditional, the image also implies the notion of architecture as an ideological corpse.[128]

Next to Tafuri's article "L'Architecture dans le Boudoir," in the same edition of *Oppositions* 3, Koolhaas opposes Tafuri's notion of modern architecture as an empty residue of former values and interprets Magritte's painting with the dress and shoes by comparing it to the image of the skyscraper dresses at the architect's costume ball in 1931. This costume ball was titled "Fête Moderne", and Manhattan's architects were disguised as the skyscraper they had built: "becoming their own Skyscrapers, they will perform a 'Skyline of New York' ballet"[129] (→**39**).

Following Koolhaas, both scenes, the animated dress in Magritte's painting and the skyscraper ballet at the costume ball, show the true nature of architecture, that is, disguise. Instead of Tafuri's notion of architecture as empty residue, Koolhaas argues that the outside envelope veils the true program inside. Yet, although the Manhattan architects seem to avoid female company, there was among the forty-four men one woman in disguise, Miss Edna Cowan as the Basin Girl, carrying a basin and two taps like an "extension of her belly."[130] According to him, "an apparition straight from the men's subconscious, she stands there on the stage to symbolize the entrails of architecture, or, more precisely: she stands for the continuing embarrassment caused by the biological functions of the human body that have proved resistant to lofty aspirations and technological sublimation."[131] The concept of architecture as animated but empty residue is the result of the "deprofessionalization" of the discipline.[132] The architect's decline as an ideologist is coupled with the decline of the architect's professional status. Thus, Tafuri attacks the position of architecture rendered

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[127]   Manfredo Tafuri, "L' Architecture dans le Boudoir: The Language of Criticism and the Criticism of Language," in *Oppositions* 3 (1974), reprinted in *Architecture Theory since 1968,* ed. by K. Michael Hays (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 148–73, here 148.
[128]   Ibid., 38.
[129]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 127.
[130]   Ibid., 130.
[131]   Ibid.
[132]   Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, 176.

as a pure economic factor stripped of its political and social contents. The crisis of the ideological function of architecture is tied to the "the pitiless self-exploration of its own objective commercialization."[133] He links modern city planning to Karl Mannheim's "mystified version of the functioning and reality of utopia."[134] In *Ideology and Utopia* (1929), Mannheim argues that both ideology and utopia are forms of reality-transcendence and closely related to the emergence of modernity.[135]

Tafuri emphasizes the utter uselessness of counter-ideologies against the overpowering myth of history. In *Theories and History of Architecture* (1976),[136] he discusses Roland Barthes's notion of history proposed in *Mythologies* (1957): by means of myths "the bourgeoisie transforms the reality of the world into an image of the world, History into Nature."[137] Myth is depoliticized speech; it makes things innocent and gives them a kind of natural justification. Barthes writes further "ideologically all that is not bourgeois is obliged to *borrow* from the bourgeoisie. Bourgeois ideology can therefore spread over everything and in so doing lose its name without risk."[138] For this reason, Tafuri argues for—instead of a specific class aesthetic in art or architecture—an operative class criticism that demystifies both architectural history and contemporary production.[139] It is useless to

[133]   Ibid., 181.
[134]   Ibid., 52.
[135]   Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (London: Routledge, 1952).
[136]   Manfredo Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980); Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1972).
[137]   Barthes, *Mythologies*, 141.
[138]   Ibid., 139.
[139]   Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture*.

search for architectural alternatives only within the discipline itself because "reflection on architecture, inasmuch as it is a criticism of the concrete 'realized' ideology of architecture itself, cannot but go beyond this and arrive at a specifically political dimension."[140] Rather, class criticism is understood as a mission of class service "to do away with impotent and ineffectual myths, which so often serve as illusions that permit the survival of anachronistic 'hopes in design.'"[141]

Referring to Tafuri, Michael Hays argues that modernism is a development in which "the avant-garde's visions of utopia come to be recognized as an idealization of capitalism, a transfiguration of the latter's rationality into the rationality of autonomous form – architecture's 'plan,' its ideology."[142] This idea is based on Victor Shklovsky's defense of absolute autonomy in art, particularly in literature, because only such a position renders the design unsuitable for any propagandistic purpose.[143] Shklovsky's notion of *ostranenie*, or "making the familiar strange," denotes a distortion of the established code, which enables new configurations both in artistic and social terms.

Melun-Sénart is a utopian project that uses the void spaces as the dominant theme of modern city planning in a metaphorical and polemical way, showing planning as the empty residue of an ideological corpse. In this way, it refers to the crisis of the functions of architecture for social change. But instead of a deprofessionalization of the discipline, Koolhaas defines the new role of the architect beyond ideological (and counter-ideological) thinking. In Melun-Sénart he addresses the avant-garde vision of autonomy and critical resistance against established codes. There is an essential difference, however, between avant-garde art and architecture. As architecture operates in the real space of the city, it is able to go beyond the position of art as mere representation of the modern condition. In modernist urbanism "indeterminacy itself is given specific form, and offered as the only determinateness possible for the city as a whole."[144] Only architecture can innovate and reprogram the city as a "social machine."[145]

[140]   Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, 182.
[141]   Ibid.
[142]   K. Michael Hays, "Introduction" to Manfredo Tafuri's "Toward a Critique of Architectural Ideology," in Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968*, 2.
[143]   Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, 64.
[144]   Ibid., 169.
[145]   "Indeed the avant-garde was dedicated to an ideology of permanent and programmed innovation." Ibid., 156.

In response to the apparently mutual irritation between Tafuri and the new generation, Tafuri argues that "the formal terrorism of Eisenman, the polysemia of Graves, the rigorism of Meier, … the ingenuous aphorisms of Robert Stern, the 'jokes' of Koolhaas, do they actually not represent broad trends that wind through the panorama of the architectural work of the last decade?"[146] In "L'Architecture dans le Boudoir" he likewise speaks of the "cynical play" of Koolhaas.[147] Even further, architects such as Superstudio go so far as to call him the enemy. Answering such attacks with equal brazenness, Koolhaas states in 1978: "Tafuri and his supporters hate architecture. They declare architecture dead. For them, architecture is a series of corpses in the morgue, … by and large, however, it is all impossible, anyhow. Except, for some inexplicable reason, Aldo Rossi."[148]

Here, Koolhaas alludes to the cover image of Tafuri's *Architecture and Utopia* when it was published in English in 1976, which was Aldo Rossi's *L'architecture assassinée* (1975), showing an assemblage of borrowed architectural fragments both historical and modern (→**40**). His formal compositions, which are not based on real sites, reduce natural features and images of cities to mere empty signs. In his collage *Analogous City* (1976), the city becomes a collage of frozen morphological types that are subject to changing meanings. Rossi's analogous architecture and its concept of autonomous types is a neo-rationalist return to Enlightenment typological forms.[149] What is the difference between Melun-Sénart and the concepts of Rossi and Peter Eisenman? What is the relationship between individual elements and structuring system in Koolhaas's plan?

When in 1753, Marc-Antoine Laugier claimed that the city should be planned like a park, he rejected the baroque ideas of city planning, which represented the economic structure of the *ancien régime*. There was a system of formal building types that became part of the new bourgeois city, "where is yet order and a sort of confusion."[150] The types serve as a model, whereas a certain degree of specificity and diversity is given to the repeated objects. Laugier's idea led to Jean-Charles Delafosse's notion of *l'architecture parlante*, or "narra-

[146]   Manfredo Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), 300.
[147]   Ibid., 278–9.
[148]   Lang, *Superstudio*, 56; Hans van Dijk, "Rem Koolhaas Interview," in *Wonen TA/BK* (November 1978): 17–20, here 18.
[149]   Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982).
[150]   Marc-Antoine Laugier, *Essai sur l'Architecture* (Paris, n.p., 1753), 258–65, quoted in Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, 4; Laugier, *Essai sur l'Architecture*, 224.

tive architecture," according to which the character of the architectural elements should symbolically express the function of the building.[151] Following Tafuri, Giovanni Battista Piranesi's interpretation of the Campo Marzio (1762) is a revealing example of the Enlightenment dialectic on architecture and city planning: "The historically developed language of building types is affirmed here as a superior principle of order, but … the obsessive reiteration of the inventions reduces the whole organism to a sort of gigantic 'useless machine.' Rationalism would seem thus to reveal its own irrationality."[152]

Piranesi conveys within the order and regularity of the parts a certain idea of chaos and irregularity, so that the Campo Marzio lacks structure and control over the individual elements. The typological forms eventually dissolve into an assemblage of fragments devoid of their autonomy and significance. However, in contrast with Piranesi's drawings, Koolhaas's plan of Melun-Sénart takes the lack of control

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[151]   Edward Robert de Zurko, *Origins of Functionalist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), 161.
[152]   Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Campo Marzio dell'antica Roma 1761–1762*, quoted in Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, 15.

over the individual parts as central premise: the position of weakness in urbanism is converted into a deliberate surrender to chaos and contamination by the city.

Whereas Koolhaas addresses the irrationality of the rationalist concept of Enlightenment via the design for Melun-Sénart, Eisenman focuses on the same issue via a theoretical ground. In "The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End" (1984), Eisenman rejects the Enlightenment aspiration of a typological source of design as a mere "fiction of reason."[153] In the Renaissance, the origins of ideal form were sought in cosmological sources and anthropomorphic geometry, like the Vitruvian man, in order to provide a composition of harmony and a divine order of single parts. This Renaissance belief in an ideal origin of the world also implies an ideal end or goal, such as finding a specific form. Contrary to the Renaissance principle, the idea of Enlightenment considers architecture the product of reason and the final form as the result of the rational design process. This idea that the origin of ideal form lies in reason leads to the cataloging of type forms, the end is the typical composition. Eisenman argues: "What both the Renaissance and the modern relied on as the basis of truth was found to require, in essence, faith. Analysis was a form of simulation; knowledge was a new religion. Similarly, it can be seen that architecture never embodied reason; it could only state the desire to do so; there is no architectural image of reason."[154]

Following Eisenman, both origins of the design processes, either a divine order or reason—such as function and type—imply that the value of architecture relies on a fictional source outside the discipline. Instead of looking to an ideal form or composition, Koolhaas proclaims that the contemporary city functions just because the Islands of Melun-Sénart surrender to an uncontrollable chaotic growth. This way, the city is the product of constant adaptation to changing functional needs and not the outcome of an (ideological) design process.

The Operating System of the *Roma Quadrata*

Another urban approach of Koolhaas's beyond the design of Melun-Sénart is his theory of *genericity*, which is a term he coined to define the matrix for the generic city. In the unpublished third volume of the Harvard Design School project on *What Used to be the City* and in the subsequent paper "How to Build a City: Roman Operating System,"

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[153]   Peter Eisenman, "The End of the Classic: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End," in Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968*, 522–39, here 526.
[154]   Eisenman, "The End of the Classic," 527.

Koolhaas's students conceive of the Roman city plan as a series of interacting elements and explore the siting and function of its public architecture.[155] This Roman Operating System (R/OS) creates an easily recognizable visual pattern, which not only serves the aim to assert imperial authority but also functions as an efficient network for social activities. It is not a design for one particular city but a scheme evident in all cities. Yet, the R/OS is both universal and individual because it allows for local adaptation, generating a "200% city because these customizing operations allow you to make your 100% generic city 100% specific."[156] The four basic principles of R/OS are as follows: standard equipment, general operating principles, running of the program, and proliferating the genericity. First, the standardization of the equipment defines building types and monuments (*basilica*, *capitolium*, *templa*, *theatrum*, *thermae*, *arcus*, and *columna*), planning strategies (*cardo* and *decumanus* and *forum*), and infrastructural devices (*aquae ductus*, *limites*, and *viae*). Second, in accordance with the operating principles, the organization of the urban elements is based on a matrix that serves socially and politically determined objectives. Third, running the program includes changing relationships between the standardized parts. And fourth, the proliferation of the R/OS implies modifying the generic armature to local conditions of topography, climate, and culture.

These standards enable the systematic spreading of the *genericity* scheme, which functions as a prototype for a globalized strategy. The global method of the R/OS can be seen as a game, like chess, where the grid structure produced by *cardo* and *decumanus* is interpreted as the chessboard and the building types as the game's shiftable pawns. It is a system of movement in all directions to spread the cities across the imperial territory and define junctions and relay points. This idea of motion is also evident in the Peutinger Table, which describes every part of routes that connect the Roman cities through movement between successive junctions. It is disproportionately long, measuring 6.82 x 0.34 meters, contains about 6,000 names and 550 sitings, and extends its network of routes from Britain to Ceylon up to the margins of the Roman world.

The Roman city was mapped out in a single stroke, repeating complex rituals when and wherever the conquering army had gained territory. With the device of the grid, it imposes a new geometric order that stands out of time and subsequently operates as if "nothing" were there before. Though it is not made explicit by the text, Varro

[155]   Amale Andraos, et al., "How to Build a City: Roman Operating System," in Rem Koolhaas, Sanford Kwinter, Stefano Boeri, and Multiplicity, *Mutations: Harvard Project on the City* (Bordeaux, France: ACTAR, 2000), 10–8, here 11.
[156]   Ibid., 18.
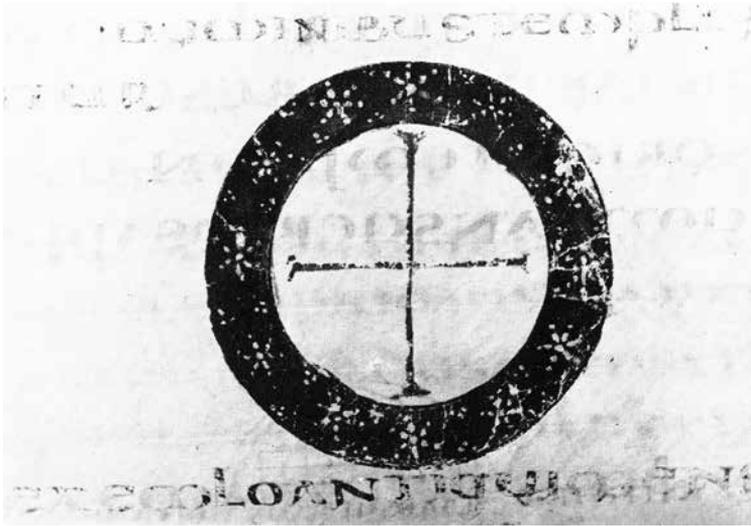
associates the exact outline of the symbolic order with the *templum of the sky* that is circular and quartered (→**41**).[157] Though the dividing lines of the *templum* were synonymous with the cardinal points of the city, the scheme of *Roma quadrata* with *cardo* and *decumanus*, there is no historic evidence suggesting that the shape of the first Rome was square. However, if the term *quadrata*, in the first place meaning "rectangular," is read as *quadripartite*, it describes the four divisions of an area. In this view, early Rome was a *quadrata* in another sense: it was "squared." The meaning of *Roma quadrata* is no guide to the shape of early Rome, nor does it directly refer to the way the *pomoerium* is drawn, but it confirms that its prime streets *cardo* and *decumanus* crossed at right angles: *Roma quadrata* described an orthogonal diagram that divided the urban territory into a grid of streets that crossed each other at right angles.

According to Koolhaas's "favorite enemy" Le Corbusier, Roman architecture was "a sign expressing a precise concept. One of the forms taken by the character: CONSCIOUS STRENGTH."[158] In addition to the example of the forum, he characterizes the amphitheater and aqueducts as buildings typical of Roman architecture: "vast in its unity, overwhelming in its simplicity."[159] (→**42**) Le Corbusier is equally interested in the principles of organizing a city, which enabled the Romans to found cities all over Europe. The creation of an urban armature was one of the most important tools for the systematicity of Roman imperialism. Therefore, the individual buildings are both functional entities in themselves and part of a conceptual framework that

[157]   Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, 45.
[158]   Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, 185.
[159]   Ibid., 186.

THE PYRAMID OF CESTIUS, 12 B.C.

THE COLOSSEUM, A.D. 80

THE ARCH OF CONSTANTINE, A.D. 12

the Memorial to Victor-Emmanuel I in the centre of the city between the Capitol and the Forum . . . a work of forty years, something bigger than anything else, and in white marble !

Without doubt everything is too huddled together in Rome.

I

ANCIENT ROME

Rome's business was to conquer the world and govern it. Strategy, recruiting, legislation : the spirit of order. In order to manage a large business house, it is essential to adopt some fundamental, simple and unexceptionable principles. The

varied widely in configuration, number of parts, size, and degree of complexity. Yet, the armature was sufficiently consistent to ensure a recognizably Roman *genericity*. The armature was essentially composed of public buildings, streets, and squares—an architecture of passage like the Peutinger Table diagram. Thus the organization of the single components was not based on an ideal configuration but rather on movement, intersections, and assembly.

Though Koolhaas does not plan Melun-Sénart as an urban armature in the way of a *genericity* so that the system of types forms a conceptual framework, he conceives of the city as symbolic pattern by inscribing a unique figure of Bands onto the city fabric. Yet, he avoids any kind of zoning of the Islands in between, instead promoting complexity and diversity within these "quarters." It is noteworthy that, like in the Roman city, the organizing scheme of the Bands is also based on the means of movement and the junctions between the different systems (highways, TGV line, the River Seine, green belts). Since Koolhaas does not define individual building types or function attributions, Melun-Sénart does not form a recognizable pattern in the way of an individual operating system but proposes a 100% site-specific diagram with 100% generic components.

Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter describe an alternative model to imperial urbanism and overall design, and argue that "the physics and politics of Rome provide perhaps the most graphic example of collusive fields and *interstitial debris*."[160] Rowe and Koetter's *Collage City* (1978) puts forward a more contextual urbanism, that again focuses on the relationships between type and context.[161] They contrast the open space of the traditional city with Le Corbusier's "city in the park" that placed the buildings in unstructured void space. Rowe and Koetter's main thesis is that modern city planning *inverts* the relation of building to open space in comparison to the city's pre-modern European public space. This turn has generated isolated buildings, divided neighborhoods, and urban wastelands devoid of quality for social vitality. Rowe and Koetter therefore promote a collage method of fragmentary independent elements that allows for democratic pluralism and coexistence in a composite plan. They adopted the tool of the figure-ground plan from Gian Battista Nolli's Map of Rome (1748), in which the public spaces—including the enclosed public space, such as the Pantheon, the colonnades in St. Peter's Square, churches, and palaces—are represented as open civic spaces in the same way as streets and squares. In contrast, the private buildings are shaded as if they form a dark, inaccessible block. Instead of an aerial viewpoint that shows buildings on a void background, the Nolli map essentially changes the relationship between built and void space. Public space, outside and inside a building alike, becomes an available and usable void figure, surrounded by solid blocks. Yet, this notion of public space as presented in Nolli's Map of Rome is contrary to the modern concepts of free-standing objects and uncontained void space. Rowe and Koetter's strategy of collage avoids finality by dealing with fragments that allow for change and difference without having to refute the scheme *in toto*. In a similar way as the Roman urban armature does, their contextual urbanism investigates the relationship between ideal type (a central idea in modernism) and the existing context. They take up the idea of *bricolage*, a term borrowed from Claude Lévi-Strauss's *The Savage Mind* (1969), to describe an unsystematic tinkering that avoids totalizing concepts, which is first and foremost a political reaction to the total design approach of modernism. [162]

[160]   Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, "Collage City," in *Architectural Review* 158 (August 1975): 66–90, reprinted in *Theorizing a New Agenda: An Anthology of Architecture Theory 1965–1995*, ed. by Kate Nesbitt (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 266–93, here 285.
[161]   Rowe and Koetter, "Collage City."
[162]   Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 17–8; see also "Collision City and the Politics of 'Bricolage,'" in Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, *Collage City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978).

The concept of chaos and void in Koolhaas's plan for Melun-Sénart provides a new position of urbanism that includes space for unpredictable events. Although forming a total urban scheme, it can be considered a mirror image of Le Corbusier's contemporary city, which proposes isolated structure set in an extensive open space without defining the spatial context between built and void areas on a concrete architectural level. However, such a general presentation of Melun-Sénart is hardly more than abstract speculation about options. As it deals only with the large scale of an almost regional plan, it ignores the shape of the buildings and blocks in relation to the surrounding context for creating social entities. Because of its typical aerial view, either in the form of modernist geometric patterns or the quasi-Chinese figure of Melun-Sénart, this position lacks the possibility for conceiving of the city as a complex, dynamic system and a social work of art.

In *Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation,* Charles Jencks and Nathan Silver offer the strategy of *bricolage* as a means to a democratic city in which the architect can use the urban "ugliness" and "contaminations" as available elements for a new environment.[163] Since the essential characteristic of *bricolage* is that parts are used in other ways than those for which they have been intended, the *bricoleur* agenda seeks new significations in the debris of abandoned constructions. Whereas the architect typically imagines his project and defines the ends of his design, the *bricoleur* planner first considers the tools and leftovers available and how they can be recycled to become part of his concept.

Koolhaas adopts this politics of *bricolage* as an alternative vision to modernist urbanism and its doctrine of functional and rational planning. He addresses the technique of improvisation and the creativity of the users themselves: everything can be turned into something else, and the ends of the former endeavor become the means of the new context. Like the idea of "collage city," Koolhaas's project of Melun-Sénart is free of unchangeable definiteness but embraces flexible disordered entities, which are assembled into a whole. The plan of Melun-Sénart is more than a metaphor for a utopian city; instead, it is an effective application of *bricolage*.

[163]   Charles Jencks and Nathan Silver *Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1972).

MONTAGE:
MAISON À BORDEAUX, FRANCE
1994–1998

DISMANTLING MODERNIST FRAGMENTS

The Armature of Modernism: The Maison à Bordeaux

In "Bigness, or The Problem of Large" (1995), Koolhaas claims that new architectural form essentially relies on "the programmatic hybridizations/proximities/frictions/overlaps/super-positions that are possible in Bigness – in fact, the entire apparatus of montage invented at the beginning of the century to organize relationships between independent parts."[1] Such a model of *programmatic alchemy* should create conditions of unprecedented spatial and social forms.[2] With the Maison à Bordeaux in France (1994–98), Koolhaas uses the technique of montage as central design strategy, operating for the most part with the armature of modernism both in formal and programmatic terms and assembling the individual decomposed or inverted parts and functions into a new unity.

The Maison is essentially three houses placed in a stack: the half-buried floor for the service activities at the bottom; the floating floor for the bedrooms with additional rooms at the top; and the barely visible, transparent living floor in between (→**43**). These three considerably different units are designed as independent parts assembled on top of each other. The lowest service floor accommodates a series of caverns that are partly carved out of a hill, comprising functions such as the kitchen, the television room, and the wine cellar. From there, a passage leads into the open to a subterranean terrace and the carport, shaped according to the turning radius of the car.

Like the lowest level, the top floor is again a dark cavernous space shaped like a monolithic concrete box. Its form is kept as compact as possible by perforating the volume only with a few openings. Although this level accommodates the individual rooms and baths for the family members, only small circular windows give a glimpse of the outdoors (→**45**). In contrast to these two areas, the intermediate floor gives an uninterrupted view over the city of Bordeaux and the valley of the River Garonne. Though the top floor floats above like a heavy box, the middle level is an open, transparent space where the interior seems to merge with the nature outside. The level is divided into the glazed space of the living room and the outdoor area of the canopied terrace (→**46**).

The sliding floor-to-ceiling glass wall allows for unhindered movement between the two zones inside and outside. In order to preserve the transparency and unhindered views on the intermediate floor, the

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[1]   Koolhaas, "Bigness," 506–7.
[2]   Ibid., 512.

planta nivel inferior
lower level plan

planta nivel intermedio
intermediate level plan

planta nivel superior
upper level plan
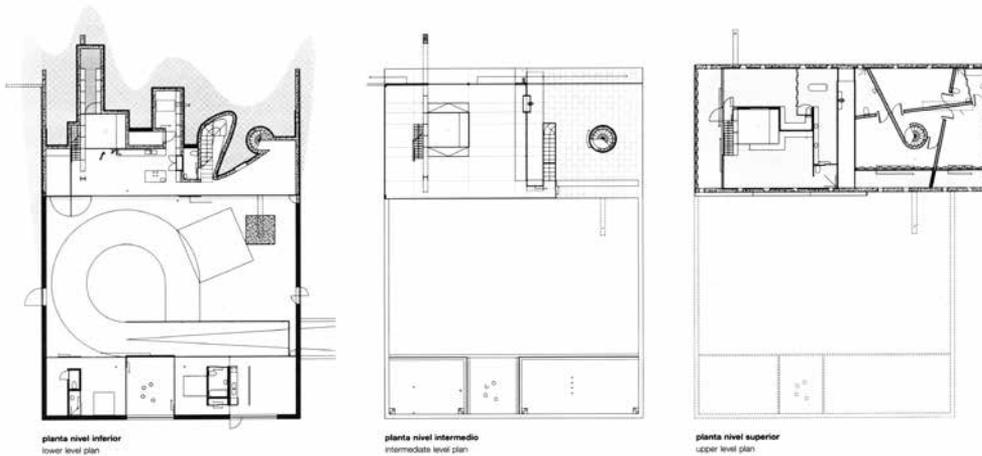
weighty concrete box on top rests only on three asymmetrically positioned legs. The largest of the three columns, which additionally includes the circular staircase of the house, is made of a stainless steel cylinder with a highly polished finish so that it practically disappears into the surroundings. As the placement of the three supports is to a large extent off-center, the static of the primary supporting structure needs an additional counterweight to gain equilibrium. Therefore, a huge steel girder spans over the building, suspending a cable from the cantilevered side of the girder as a link to the counterweight on the other side (→**44**). Thus the supporting structure placed on the outside of the house acts as an agent of a fragile, allegedly unstable static equilibrium.

An essential feature of the villa design is the use of infrastructural means to promote fluent vertical circulation via the mobile elevator platform. According to the request of the clients of the house, the new residence should liberate the handicapped husband from the "prison" that the family's old house in the medieval city of Bordeaux had become. According to Koolhaas, in the new house "a machine was its heart" because the main element of movement is an elevator the size of 3 x 3.5 meters supported by a hydraulic piston (→**47**).[3] Its mobile platform the size of a room changes the floor-plan whenever it locks into one of the three levels. Moving up and down a room provides the ideal device of vertical continuity for the handicapped inhabitant. Yet, the genesis of the elevator-as-room refers to a principle used already for a long time in The Netherlands for freight transport by water. To pass under the low bridges of the numerous canals, the

[3]   Rem Koolhaas, *OMA Rem Koolhaas: Living Vivre Leben*, ed. by Michael Jacques (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1998), 62.

cabins of the barges were placed on mobile platforms that could drop
down behind the freight, allowing the ship to carry a maximum load.

With the different positions of the elevator room, the relationship
between the individual architectural elements changes as well. Kool-
haas designed the mobile platform as a vertical office with an open
interface to the individual areas: on the ground level it becomes part
of the kitchen; on the intermediate level it creates an additional work-
ing place, and it links with the master bedroom on the upper level.
As the elevator room is fixed in place on a certain floor and becomes
an extended function of the surface, its shaft is a gaping void on the
two other floors. One side of the shaft is furnished with bookshelves
made of semi-transparent polycarbonate, stretching from the ground
floor up to the top of the house and unifying the three levels. The ap-
pliance of the elevator, offering the option of mobility to the husband,
is a central functional means similar to a prosthetic extension of the
human body and has become, like the wheelchair, an indispensable
part of daily life.

In effect, the parts of the Maison à Bordeaux are an assembly of
the armature of modernism, which mainly draws on the work of Le
Corbusier and, in particular, on the design of Le Corbusier's Villa Sa-
voye in Poissy near Paris (1929–31) (→**48**,→**49**). Both villas articulate
flowing vertical circulation as central theme of the plan via a continu-
ous ramp in the Villa Savoye, on the one hand, and the elevator plat-
form in the Bordeaux house, on the other hand. The Maison, similar
to the Villa Savoye, provides an additional floor outside the building:
the Maison through a courtyard with adjoining underground rooms,
the Villa Savoye through a roof garden. Another key element of both
designs is the primary construction. The load-carrying system of the
Maison à Bordeaux appears to reverse the modernist principle of a

rational method of construction; instead it deploys an intricate and palpable surreal scheme of the supporting structure. The Villa Savoye, by contrast, is based on the geometric configuration of the Maison Dom-Ino, a prototype of a frame structure that provides simple standardized elements for industrial production.

The name "Dom-Ino" can be interpreted as a play on words relating to a system of assembly analogous to a domino game—the scheme also resembles a domino piece marked with six spots. For Le Corbusier, the Dom-Ino diagram comprises pieces of equipment that resemble the combination of dominos in play, allowing a variety of possible groupings of the free-standing columns. Additionally, the structural method of collage is evident in the production of the house itself, when he calls for a combination of high-grade skills with unskilled labor.

Architectural Promenade and Sequential Perception

In the Maison à Bordeaux Koolhaas carefully drafts the observer's pathway in the circulatory system by designing, like Le Corbusier, an *architectural promenade*, that unfolds as the user gradually advances through the building. This sequence of images creates a continuous change of environment, and thereby produces a fluid space as the beholder progresses. It is hence a narrative device that explores and leads through the architectural events. However, what is the difference between Le Corbusier's use of the *architectural promenade* and Koolhaas's application? How do the two pathways function in the building?

Like in Koolhaas's Maison à Bordeaux, in the Villa Savoye vertical continuity is just as much a basic organizing principle, equally so in the design of the Maison La Roche-Jeanneret in Paris (1923–24), where Le Corbusier also used a traversing pathway, providing altering lookout points and finally coming to an end at a small indoor balcony above the main entrance (→**50**). Referring to both houses, he speaks of an *architectural promenade* via stairs and ramps that turns a sequence of spaces into a spatial continuity. In the design for the Villa Meyer (1925), Le Corbusier likewise uses a system of ramps running as a trajectory through the building. He relates this approach to the lesson of Arab architecture that "understands what it means to walk on one's feet since it is through walking and shifting one's position that one sees the architectural order unfold." [4]

Le Corbusier and Henry Van de Velde, among other theorists, draw on the role of ancient Greek architecture to advance a new un-

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[4]   Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre complète*, *1929–1934*, vol. 2, ed. by Willy
        Boesiger (Zurich: Éd. d'Architecture Artemis, 1988), 24.
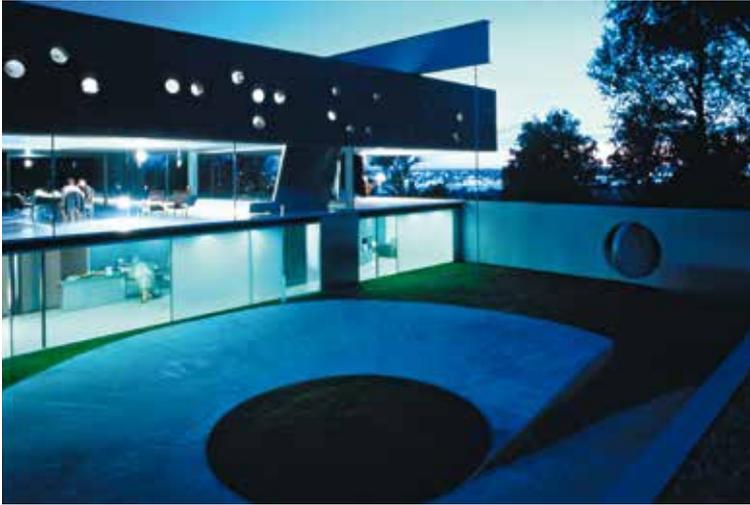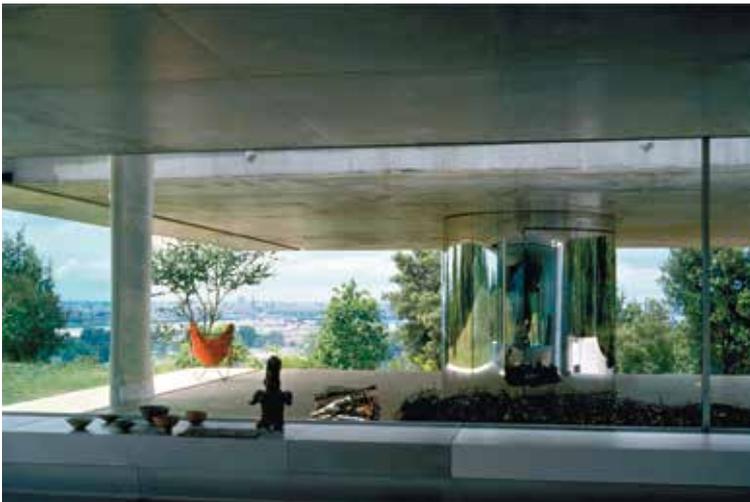
derstanding of its key principles. In *Vom neuen Stil* (1907), Van de Velde points to the formal similarity between modern and Greek aesthetics and compares, for example, the typology of the theater with the achievements of the new technical engineering.[5] According to Richard Etlin, Le Corbusier's Parisian villas of the nineteen-twenties as well as his book *Vers une architecture* (1923) are profoundly rooted in the nineteenth-century tradition associated with French architectural Hellenism, a tradition that Le Corbusier adopted from the theories

[5]   Henry van de Velde, *Vom neuen Stil* (Leipzig: Insel, 1907).

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of Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc and Auguste Choisy.[6] Viollet-le-Duc's reading of the sites of Greek temples, such as the buildings of the Acropolis at Athens, emphasizes the perceptual aspects for beholders, which create a sense of a sequential approach, a ritual staging or *mise-en-scène* (→**51**).[7] In his *Histoire de l'architecture* (1899), Choisy studies the archeological remains of the Parthenon and investigates unstudied deviations from classical regularity—in addition to those that are already known, namely the curving of the columns (*entasis*) and closer spacing of the end columns.[8] For example, Choisy draws attention to the slight curvature of the stylobate and the inclination of the columns and walls inwards. In Choisy's interpretation,
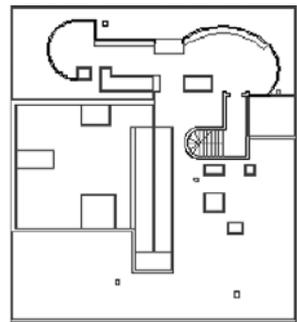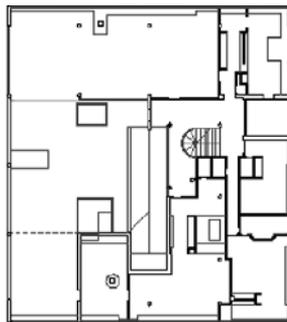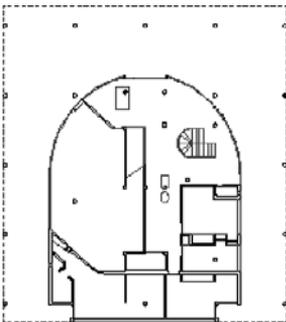
[6]   Richard A. Etlin, "Le Corbuiser, Choisy, and French Hellenism: The Search for a New Architecture," in *The Art Bulletin* 69/2 (June 1987): 264–78.
[7]   Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Entretiens sur l'architecture* (Paris: Q. Morel et cie, 1863–72).
[8]   Auguste Choisy, *Histoire de l'architecture* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1899).

the siting of the temples of the Acropolis never addressed an overall
aesthetic configuration but is, instead, based on the shifting of axes.
In order to create diverse and impressive views, the sacred precinct
is not ordered on axis with the entry but as a sequence of shifted
paths, that produce an effect of successive views in different angular
perspectives along the procession. When approaching the temples
during the ceremonial proceeding, the beholders pass a series of pic-
turesque scenes, each one with a different ritual significance.

For Le Corbusier, just like for Choisy, the idea of an *architectural
promenade* forms a central principle for spatial organization in ancient
architecture. For example, in the Maison La Roche-Jeanneret, the se-
quential movement of the beholder interweaves single elements and

brings about an "architectural spectacle" that "offers itself consecutively to the view; one follows an itinerary and the views develop with great variety."[9] In 1911, when Le Corbusier visited the Acropolis for the first time, he combined his own perceptual analysis with Choisy's drawings published in *Histoire de l'architecture* to illustrate his idea of the performative properties of the set of buildings. In the chapter "Architecture: Pure Creation of the Mind" in *Vers une architecture* he describes his account of the journey as lessons in Greek architecture.[10]

However, it is noteworthy that for Le Corbusier, both the Acropolis and the automobile are not only means of an *architectural promenade* but also the final product of an evolutionary process. In the chapter "Eyes Which Do not See: Automobiles" he goes beyond referring to the French Hellenic tradition and presents the Parthenon as a unique aesthetic icon, relating the emergence and development of the automobile to the evolution and steady progress towards perfection of the Doric temple, progress that, after one hundred years, culminated in the Parthenon. "Every sacrifice, every cleansing had already been performed. The moment was reached when nothing more might be taken away, when nothing would be left but these closely-knit and violent elements."[11] He continues that as a result, "the Parthenon is a product of selection applied to an established standard [of attaining perfection], achieving all that is most pure, most clarified, most economical."[12]

Although sequential perception via *architectural promenade* is a key design concept in many projects, Le Corbusier does not consider the ramp part of his Five Points of A New Architecture, which are the *pilotis*, the *roof garden*, the *free plan*, the *long windows*, and the *free façade*. Remarkably in *Precisions* (1930), he sets up the dogma of seven points for the modern house but also does not mention the continuity of vertical movement via the ramp; instead, he preferences the *independent skeleton*, such as the Dom-Ino diagram, and the *interior equipped with casiers* in his plan.[13] Yet, Le Corbusier does address the idea of the ramp, however, he splits the trajectory of the ramp into single sections, of which only the starting point at the *pilotis* and the landing on the *roof garden* are considered vital points that are autonomous elements of a modernist armature; the in-between parts somehow remain neglected. The *pilotis*, being the starting point of the pathway, function as circulation zone and raise the building so that it appears to be floating. The square grid of columns is no longer only the supporting structure but is also deployed as a design element that

[9]   Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre complète*, vol. 1, 24.
[10]   Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, 206.
[11]   Ibid.
[12]   Ibid., 133, 206.
[13]   Le Corbusier, *Precisions*, 123.
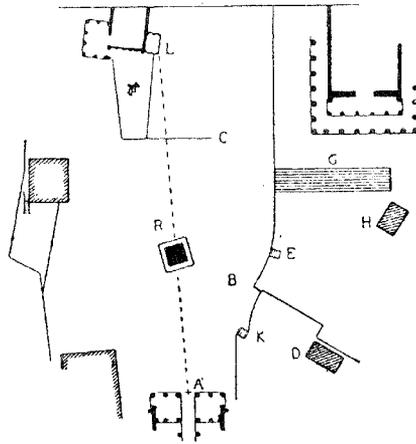
carries "the immeasurable weight of the house above the ground, up in the air. The view of the house is delimited, without any connection with the ground."[14] As Jacques Sbriglio points out, on three sides of the Villa Savoye, the *pilotis* form a *portico* of five columns (*pentastyle*)—though a *portico* usually does not have a house above it.[15] The closing stage of the pathway is the *roof garden* on the second level, which is, in fact, one of the two terraces of the Villa Savoye. Terraces hold significance for Le Corbusier, because he claims that "it is impossible to have good views when standing in the grass. Besides, grass is unhealthy, damp."[16]

Following Richard Etlin, the trajectory through the building connects to the theme of driving in a car—by ritually continuing the sliding motion of automobile travel from Paris to the house in Poissy via

(51) *The Acropolis,* drawing, in Auguste Choisy, *Histoire de l'architecture* (1899). Reproduced in Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture,* 43

[14]   Ibid., 56.
[15]   Jacques Sbriglio, *Le Corbuiser: La Villa Savoye* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1999), 49.
[16]   Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre complète*, vol. 2, 24.

the ramp.[17] Etlin supports his view by arguing that, in addition to the free space formed by the *pilotis* that makes room for the arrival of a car, even the shape of the ramp is determined by the turning radius of the car. He further points out that the opening of the unglazed window on the roof garden again corresponds to the automobile theme by mimicking the view through the windshield of a car (→**52**, →**53**).

According to Alan Colquhoun, Le Corbusier uses elements of historical architecture, such as Andrea Palladio's Villa Rotunda, but pursues a "strategy of inversion that enables him to reinterpret classical paradigms in such a way as to open them towards the ready assimilation of industrial and vernacular elements."[18] The *pilotis* reverse the classic podium; the *roof garden* replaces the pitched roof with an open-air room and compensates for the green part consumed by the building. The *free plan* abandons the principle of load-bearing walls by replacing them with free configurations of functionally determined spaces; the *long window* contradicts the classical window aedicule and allows for an unencumbered view of the surrounding, and, finally, the *free façade* replaces traditional windows with freely arranged openings in the non-supporting walls.

Like Le Corbusier in his design of the Villa Savoye, Koolhaas resorts in the Maison à Bordeaux to a well-known architectural armature. He reorganizes and reinterprets classical elements of architecture and combines them with his own ideas about a contemporary dwelling. Yet, he uses them in a rather surrealist manner; instead of

[17]   Richard A. Etlin, "A Paradoxical Avant-Garde: Le Corbusier's Villas in the 1920s," in *The Architectural Review* 1079 (January 1987): 21–32.
[18]   Alan Colquhoun, *Essays in Architectural Criticism: Modern Architecture and Historical Change* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985).
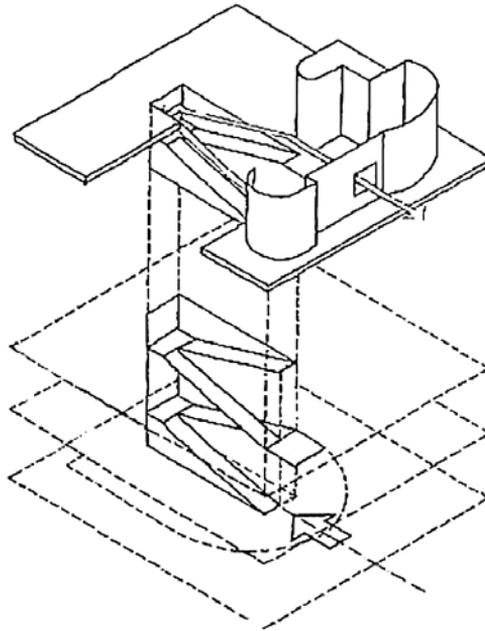
the *pilotis* promoting the *free plan*, the primary structure of the Maison à Bordeaux consists of three asymmetrical columns. In place of the *long windows* and *free façade*, Koolhaas uses circular openings that pierce through the hovering volume. Instead of *roof gardens* as additional outdoor rooms on the first and second floor of the Villa Savoye, the Maison à Bordeaux offers a subterranean terrace but again refers to the automobile theme by inscribing the turning radius of the car into its design.

Dismantlement and Disappearance

According to Koolhaas in "Bigness, or The Problem of Large," *hybridizations*, *proximities*, *frictions*, *overlaps*, and *superpositions* challenge the "contemporary doctrines that question the possibility of the Whole and the Real as viable categories and resign themselves to architecture's supposedly inevitable disassembly and dissolution."[19] Even though Koolhaas associates himself with the events in Paris involving the generation of May '68—which he characterizes as "supremely intelligent, well informed, correctly traumatized by selected cataclysms, frank in its borrowing from other disciplines"—he dis-

[19]   Koolhaas, "Bigness," 503–4.

agrees with this avant-garde in the long run.[20] As preempted categories, "paradoxically, the Whole and the Real ceased to exist as possible enterprises for the architect [for this generation, who was] incapable, finally, of exploiting dramatic social and economic events."[21]

What comes as natural condition in the New World, namely the Manhattan skyscraper as a model of a built *social condenser*, is in Europe an idea beyond the point of realization—like the floating megastructures of Yona Friedman's *urbanisme spatiale*. Even if the unacknowledged potential of any function is achieved, like in the Beaubourg project in 1972, "its sheer demonstrativeness precluded the genuine neutrality realized without effort in the American skyscraper."[22] This avant-garde is characterized by a "systematic insensitivity to the particular – that it proposed two major defense lines: dismantlement and disappearance."[23] It no longer regards the Whole and the Real, but dismantlement and disappearance are feasible key strategies for "the one architecture that engineers the unpredictable."[24] On the one hand, the method of dismantlement decomposes the program into "incompatible fractals of uniqueness, each a pretext for further disintegration of the whole: a paroxysm of fragmentation that turns the particular into a *system*."[25]

In such an assembly of maximum differences, the elements then start to react with each other "like plutonium rods that, more or less immersed, dampen or promote nuclear reaction."[26] Koolhaas typically refers to the Lille Congrexpo, or Grand Palais, in France (completed in 1994), as an example of the production of maximum difference between single parts and characterizes it in *S,M,L,XL* as a case of the "Organization of Appearances."[27] On the other hand, the strategy of disappearance does not use disassembly for the subsequent reorganization of the Whole into a new entity but aims at simulation, virtuality, and nonexistence of the Real.

In the early nineteen-sixties, the literary group Oulipo also resorted to surrealist strategies to dismantle and dissolve conventional mode of reasoning and to produce new patterns and structures in language. Oulipo stands for "Ouvroir de littérature potentielle," which translates as "workshop of potential literature," and included members such as Raymond Queneau, Georges Perec, and Italo Calvino. They made use of constraints as writing techniques and sources of inspiration, like

[20]   Ibid., 505.
[21]   Ibid., 508–9.
[22]   Ibid., 505.
[23]   Ibid.
[24]   Ibid., 511.
[25]   Ibid., 506.
[26]   Ibid., 512.
[27]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 765.

lipograms as well as operations based on mathematical problems.[28] For instance, the lipogram technique excludes one or several letters from the text, such as Perec's *A Void* that avoids the letter E.[29] Another method is called N + 7, or N + 11, which indicates that every noun in a given text should be replaced with a noun that follows seven or eleven entries later in a certain dictionary.

The semiotic and structuralist studies during the nineteen-sixties led to different kinds of linguistic analyses that were applied in diverse fields. In architecture and urban planning they offered a promising source for rethinking the premises of the design process. For instance, Christopher Alexander's *Notes on the Synthesis of Form* (1964) explores the idea of deconstructing the functional principles of architectural form.[30] In his concept of decomposition—which precedes Koolhaas's idea of dismantlement—Alexander defines diagrams as *patterns* that show a new organization and order in response to function. These patterns visualize the driving forces that underlie the synthesis of form, which functions like a magnetic field, where the visual patterns are only the material manifestation of the direction and strength of certain invisible influences. For instance, Alexander refers to the stroboscopic photograph of the milk drop splash as a diagram or pattern of impact. Le Corbusier's proposal for the *Ville Radieuse* is hence a diagram of the combination between the condition of high density and the need for air and sun. Alexander develops the notion of the *constructive diagram*: for instance, the stream of traffic at a crowded intersection can be read as constructive diagram. This diagram represents the number of vehicles passing each line of the street map by the breadth of the line, so that its actual form shows the form the intersection has to take and directly corresponds to its functional requirements.

This kind of linguistic approach promotes universalizing design methods and seeks to clarify the competence of architecture as a form of language. Koolhaas's idea of dismantlement, where "the particular turns into a system" can be read as a structuralist notion, however, which does not necessarily imply that this system functions like a language in the sense in which Alexander uses the term in *A Pattern Language* (1977). Decomposed, generally valid patterns are a kind of natural language that translates social forms into spatial forms. In this view, the production of space is understood as an evolutionary process based on patterns comparable to genetic codes.[31] He argues

[28]   Harry Mathews and Alastair Brotchie, *Oulipo compendium* (London: Atlas, 1998).
[29]   Georges Perec, *A Void* (London: Harvill, 1995).
[30]   Christopher Alexander, *Notes on the Synthesis of Form* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).
[31]   Christopher Alexander, Sara Ishikawa, and Murray Silverstein, *A Pattern Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

that this pattern language introduces a democratic system into the design process, so that architectural planning is, to a certain extent, freed from the control of the architect. Similarly to Alexander's model, in *The Social Logic of Space* (1984), Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson describe built space as a pattern language, that makes the relationship between social activity and physical space evident.[32]

Yet, Alexander's design method of decomposition resolves functional problems by finding patterns and diagrams through observing requirements, but it inevitably overlooks the specific condition and can be inconsistent with the context. This can be seen, for example, in the case of the descriptions of a Doric temple, of which the most important aspect was the *syngraphai*, meaning specifications.[33] Instead of drawings, the *syngraphai* define the basic principles by written texts, including specific measurements and technical information. The role of the architect was then to specify certain details according to fixed *paradeigmas*, which were full-scale models for ornamental details. But, as the composition of the temple provides only a general design of the *syngraphai* with a more or less fixed size in relation to the columns and the *paradeigmas* serve as ornaments, inconsistencies and unsolvable problems occur, such as the Doric corner conflict. An often-used solution was to allow smaller spacing for the final column, in order to center the triglyph above the corresponding column and thus make the design appear more harmonious.

In addition to Alexander's notion of decomposition that emphasizes the functional principles, Peter Eisenman also uses the method of decomposition in the late nineteen-sixties and early seventies to analyze the formal aspects of architecture. His concept of decomposition abandons the classical definition of architecture, starting from a simple type form that defines a *point zero* and attaining complex formal structures via composition and transformation. For Koolhaas, in contrast, the method of dismantlement is not a generative tool in order to rethink the design process and to transform the individual components of "the Whole and the Real." Yet, his strategy of *hybridizations, proximities, frictions, overlaps,* and *superpositions,* while it dissolves the conventional form of interpreting architecture, does not create, like Eisenman's view, a new compositional unity (as product of the process).

Drawing an analogy between architecture and the structures of language, Eisenman adopts Noam Chomsky's notion of *transformational grammar*, which was one of the most influential theories in lin-

[32]   Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson, *The Social Logic of Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

[33]   For instance, a *syngraphe* is found in the Shrine of Apollo at Didyma close to Miletus. Joseph Rykwert, *The Dancing Column* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 215, 227.

guistics at that time. In line with Chomsky's distinction between *deep level* and *surface level* in language, Eisenman speaks of the deep, syntactic aspects of architecture, which are recognized only conceptually. By this he means the relationships between the elements and surface aspects, such as shape, color, or texture. For example, in the designs of House X, Eisenman used simple geometric transformations to create units and combination of units that are "linguistic universals" reflecting "innate ideas" and thereby representing the independence and self-referentiality of architecture.[34] According to Mario Gandelsonas, Eisenman's "law of development is formal and should be independent of any functional interpretation."[35] Yet, what kind of syntactic level can be assigned to form, given that a sign system such as architectural elements allows for countless readings of the single parts linked together into a unity? Hence Chomsky points out *transformational grammar* is beyond the reach of a sign system with no grammar—like architecture. Eisenman later abandoned the concept of decomposition as a way to create architecture and instead pursued the syntactical *deconstruction*, as proposed by Jacques Derrida. In projects such as the Wexner Center at Ohio State University (1985) and Romeo and Juliet for Verona (1985), he introduces a principle outside of architecture to provide syntax for the design. For example, in the project Romeo and Juliet, he combines the text of Shakespeare's drama with the city map of Verona, using operations of *scaling* to produce new architectural forms based on aleatory principles.

Koolhaas's concepts of dismantlement and disappearance can also be connected to Virilio's *The Aesthetics of Disappearance* (1991), in which he describes the displacements and erasures generated by digital technologies, namely television, and the resulting change in the "logistics of perception."[36] The instability of things, spaces, and images in digital media has a striking effect on how we interact with events in real space and real time. Virilio coins the term "picnolepsy"—associating it with a form of epilepsy—to describe ruptures of consciousness and other cognitive states that temporarily hinder our sensory receptors. The picnoleptic events that trigger a perceptual digital disruption in an analogical surrounding ultimately result in an absence or disappearance from one's body. This kind of vanishing implies not only a disturbance in our awareness of reality but also in our relationships with other people. Virilio's notion of disappearance reso-

[34]   Noam Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965).

[35]   Mario Gandelsonas, "From Structure to Subject: The Formation of an Architectural Language," in *Oppositions Reader*, ed. by K. Michael Hays (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 200–24, here 206.

[36]   Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991).

nates in Koolhaas's questioning of "the possibility of the Whole and the Real as viable categories" that leads to the physical dissolution of both space and awareness of the beholder.[37] As disappearance implies the virtuality and even vanishing of real space, bodily perception is not taken as a self-evident objective of architecture. Rather, Koolhaas's projects, such as the Maison à Bordeaux, undertake the task of staging the movement and the displacement in real space by means of reinterpreting the *architectural promenade*.

Jorge Luis Borges's imaginary author Pierre Menard who intended not "to compose another *Quixote* – which is easy – but *the Quixote itself*" pursues a different kind of dismantlement.[38] The short story "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote" (1939) is written as a literary review about the imaginary twentieth-century French writer Menard; he does not simply translate Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* but instead engrosses himself so meticulously in the original sixteenth-century Spanish work, "an undertaking which was exceedingly complex," that he in fact re-authors it. Borges's literary reviewer supposes that, although both texts are identical, line for line, Menard's *Don Quixote* is significantly richer in allusion, more subtle and ambiguous, because it includes the entire history between 1602 and 1918. Borges's short story anticipates the notion of the reader as author proposed by Roland Barthes: "Every text, being itself an intertext of another text, belongs to the intertextual, which must not be confused with a text's origins: to search for the 'sources of' and 'influence upon' is to satisfy the myth of filiation."[39] If every text or sign, however, constitutes an infinite amount of references to any other thing, and every reference is equally valid, then all texts and signs become semantically impossible to differentiate: they are the same and interchangeable.

Following Barthes, we have also witnessed "the death of the architect" as draftsman of utopian visions for a new modern society. Yet, sociology has discovered the idea of users as critical authority; they re-read the work and suggest their own reading alongside the intentions of the architect. The strategy of the *architectural promenade*, which Koolhaas used in the Maison à Bordeaux as the central design theme, invokes new models of "opening the work" to various readings. "The birth of the beholder" stresses the creativity of individuals and their right to their own "script." By creating a collage of modern fragments stripped of their historical context, Koolhaas also addresses the modernist notion of originality and its tabula-rasa approach. The Maison à Bordeaux, in effect, overcomes the "myth of

[37]   Koolhaas, "Bigness," 503–4.
[38]   Jorge Luis Borges, "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote" (1939), in
         Collected Fictions, transl. by Andrew Hurley (New York: Viking, 1998),
         88–95.
[39]   Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1977),
         156–7.

filiation," referring to the existing meanings, sources, and interpretations of architecture, as well as to the established codes of behavior and function of the user.

Between Modernist and Surrealist Ideas

Similar to the Maison à Bordeaux, Koolhaas's Villa dall'Ava in Paris (completed in 1991) makes reference to the modernist armature and the design elements that Le Corbusier used in the Villa Savoye. Situated on a hill sloping towards the city center, the villa's ground floor is basically a glass house that contains the living and dining areas with an adjacent service zone (→**54**,→**55**). On the first floor, the apartments for the couple and their child are located in two independent
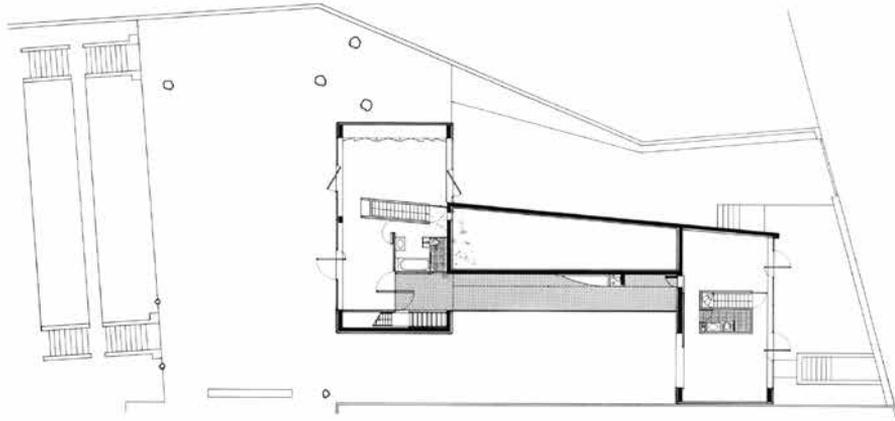
Planta alta / Upper floor plan
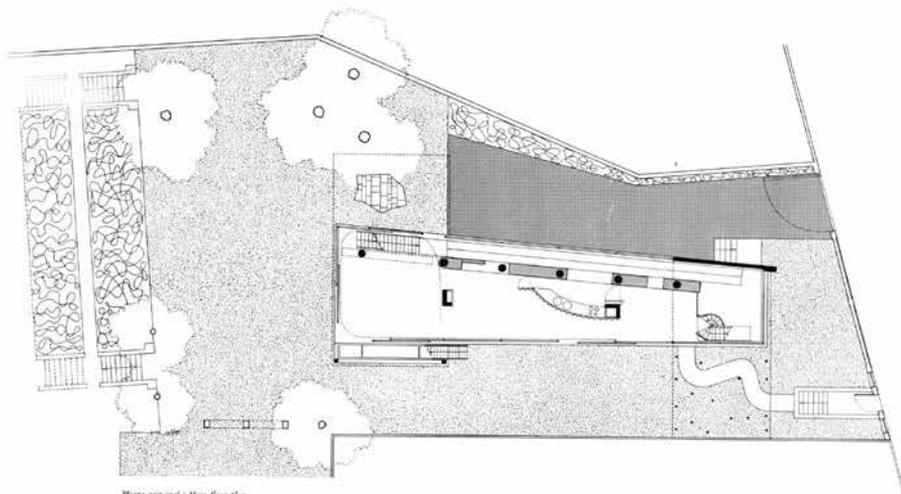
Planta principal / Main floor plan
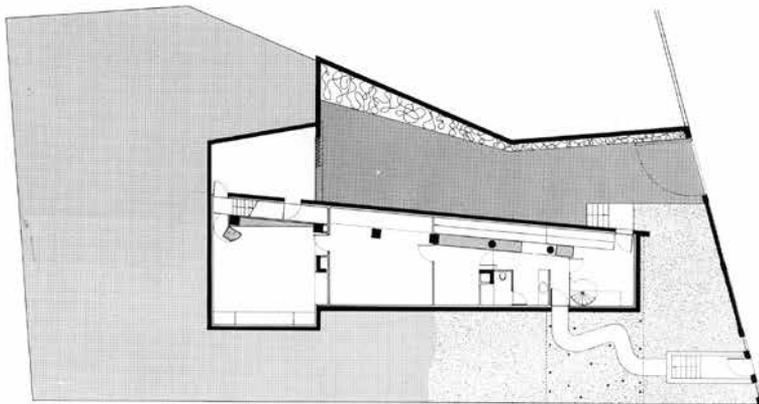
Planta de acceso / Access floor plan

volumes; these are boxes shifted in opposite directions to take advantage of the site's shape (→**56**,→**57**). One of the boxes facing the street hovers on an irregular grid of inclined columns that appear as a kind of exotic bamboo forest; the other box is orientated towards the garden.

The two volumes are connected at roof level by a lap swimming pool that is axially oriented towards the Eiffel Tower (→**58**). Similarly, the pool in the Bordeaux house refers to Koolhaas's theme of the Story of the Pool, but there it is not situated on the roof but in the garden (→**59,**→**60**). For Koolhaas, the theme of the pool symbolizes
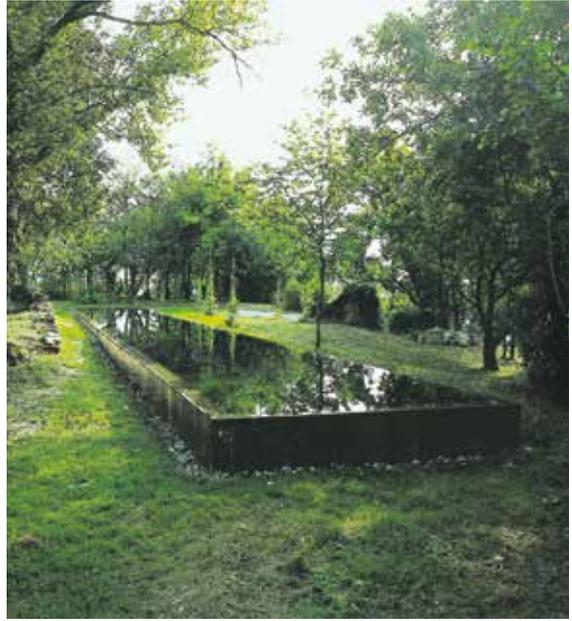
"an enclave of purity in contaminated surroundings."[40] Due to the independence of the first floor, the Villa dall'Ava comprises three different means for vertical circulation that lead to the individual areas of dwelling: ramp and straight and spiral staircases.

The Villa dall'Ava can also be read as following Le Corbusier's five points of modern architecture, with its horizontal volume floating on *pilotis*, the *long windows*, the *free plan*, and *free façade*, and the *roof*

[40]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 307.

garden as an additional floor. Additionally, the villa deploys infrastructural means for circulation as a central theme of the design. However, when Koolhaas presents the Villa dall'Ava in *S,M,L,XL*, he does not emphasize the modernist ideas in the configuration of the building, but rather resorts to a surrealist sensibility that shows unfamiliar, uncanny views of the building. For example, on one occasion a man—probably Koolhaas himself—paces in the entrance of the house leading a giraffe, a recurring fetish animal for Salvador Dalí, among other surrealist artists (→**61**). Koolhaas uses a montage technique, combining photographs of the Villa dall'Ava with other images, like Jan Vermeer's painting *A Young Woman Standing at the Virginal* (→**62**). According to the essay "Big Vermeer" in Koolhaas's book *Content*, Vermeer turns "the everyday into a Low Countries sublime; a world

(62) Rem Koolhaas/OMA, Villa dall'Ava, Paris, completed 1991, garden view with Jan Vermeer's painting, *A Young Woman Standing at the Virginal*, photomontage.
Source: Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 142–143
© 2015 OMA
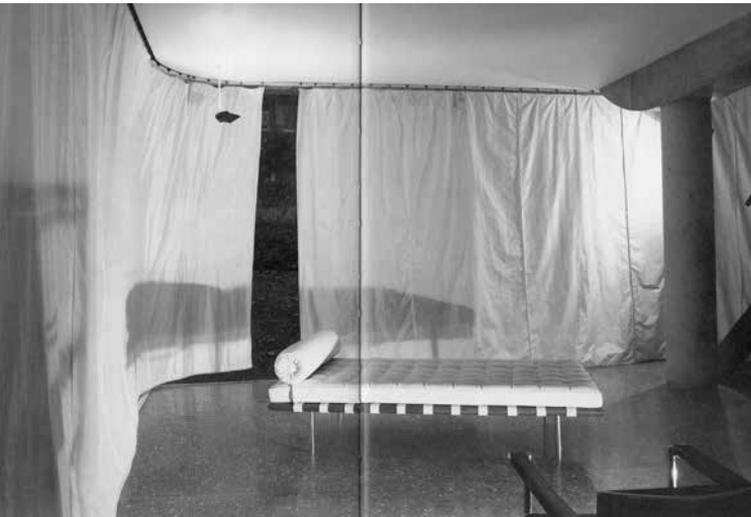
(63) Rem Koolhaas/OMA, Villa dall'Ava, Paris, completed 1991, the living room with Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Daybed, photograph.
Source: Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 158–159
© 2015 OMA

with nothing to hide," like the reality TV series *Big Brother* three centuries later, which is named for the all-seeing ruler in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.[41] A further image presents a strange scene in the living room, in which the only piece of furniture is Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Daybed, while a narrow gap in the curtains provides a nighttime view into the garden (→**63**).

Another picture of the exterior of the Villa dall'Ava in *S,M,L,XL* shows a bird's-eye view, in which the volume of the house is a graphic void carved out of the image, an idea that connects to Japanese censorship through disappearance. The device of void shapes refers to the four techniques of Japanese censorship for pornography, which maintains the Japanese taboo of showing pubic hair and explicit body

[41]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 294.

parts: excision, cover, burnout, and digitization.[42] While excision and cover eclipse the censored areas as a whole, the other two techniques, burnout and digitization, substitute the body parts with circles of light ("a miniature bouncing sun") or digitally gridded zones. Only the residual of the censored areas gives an idea of some identifiable parts. However, the censorship pulls the attention of the beholder to the "forbidden" areas in the image and turns the censored body parts into points of heightened speculation, having a larger impact on the spectator's imagination than if they had not been censored.

Two images of the Villa dall'Ava in *S,M,L,XL* correspond to iconic photographs of Le Corbusier's buildings. First, an image shows the night view of the roof garden of the Villa dall'Ava with the illuminated outline of the Eiffel Tower in the distance (→**64)**—alluding to the photograph of the upper floor of the Villa Beistegui that also captures a paradigmatic emblem of Paris, the Arc de Triomphe (→**65**). Second, another image referring to Le Corbusier is a grainy photograph of the ground floor construction site (→**66**), which is comparable to the photographs of the Villa Savoye in a state of decay taken by René Burri in 1959 (→**67**). This range of representative techniques for the Villa dall'Ava and allusions to architectural history points to a multiplicity of viewpoints ostensibly inherent in the design concept. Koolhaas uses

(65) Le Corbusier, Villa Beistegui, Paris, 1930–31, the rooftop, photograph.
Source: fondationlecorbusier.fr/ corbuweb
© 2015 VBK Wien

[42]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 104.

the technique of a collage-like application of (iconic) images, which
is a strategy associated with the beginnings of modernism (such as
Bauhaus, constructivism, among others): it expands the surface plane
of the painting by introducing fragments of external media and as-
sembling them into the collage. In his essay collection *Heavenly Man-
sions* (1963), John Summerson connects Le Corbusier's architectural
work to the collage nature of works by Picasso, Braque, and Léger; all
those compositions exhibit the same sense of ruthless distortion and
dismemberment of the individual parts. Although the Villa Savoye is
often referred to as a condensation of modern sensibility, purification,
and logic, Summerson rejects this point of view as too narrow. De-
spite the emphasis on functional efficiency and geometrical precision,
he interprets Le Corbusier's architecture as a borrowing of fragments
and a reconfiguration of torn pieces into a new unity. Pointing out Le
Corbusier's reverse logic, or "witty nonsense," Summerson imagines

a conversation in which "we suggest that 'a building is in principle, four walls with windows for light and air' and he [Le Corbusier] replies that 'on the contrary, a building may just as well be four windows, with walls for privacy and shade.'"[43]

In *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, Robert Venturi makes a similar argument about the contradictory design elements of modern architecture. The "Villa Savoye is simple outside yet complex inside, [or] the Villa Savoye exemplifies crowded intricacies within a rigid frame."[44] Equally, in Le Corbusier's reasoning, the house may not be in the garden but the garden in the house, and the future town may be in the park and not the park in the town.

Transgression and the Accursed Share in Architecture

Bernard Tschumi's *Advertisements for Architecture* (1976–79) show buildings as sites of transgression, crime, or decay. For instance, in reference to the Villa Savoye (→**68**,→**69**), he writes, "sensuality has been known to overcome even the most rational of buildings. Architecture is the ultimate erotic act. Carry it to excess and it will reveal both the traces of reason and the sensual experience of space."[45]

Although Le Corbusier's work is usually connected to rational and functional premises, and he does not directly partake in surrealism, there are irrational elements in his work. In "Machine et Mémoire, the City in the Work of Le Corbusier" Manfredo Tafuri relates Le Corbusier's designs to multiple readings that also include a surrealist sensibility.[46] He constructs the architectural concepts around the struggle between the universal values represented by nature and the rational values represented by technology.[47] A case in point is the Beistegui apartment in Paris (1930–31) for Carlos de Beistegui who was a collector of surrealist art. Tafuri interprets the first floor of the house—which originally had no electric lightning, the only lighting was provided by candles—as an interplay between the natural and technological Parisian landmarks. The rooftop is conceived as a room; but with a floor of grass that opens to the sky, its view opens to the "natural" environment of the city, such as the Arc de Triomphe (→**65**). Following Tafuri, the opposition between nature and machine can be reconciled only symbolically, however.

[43]   John Summerson, *Heavenly Mansions and Other Essays on Architecture* (New York: Norton, 1963), 190–1.
[44]   Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art Press, 1966), 23, 72.
[45]   Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture in/of Motion* (Rotterdam: NAi Publisher, 1997), 107.
[46]   Manfredo Tafuri, "Machine et Mémoire, the City in the Work of Le Corbusier," in *Le Corbusier*, ed. by H. Allen Brooks (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 203–18.
[47]   Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*.

In reference to Le Corbusier, Sigfried Giedion suggests in *Time, Space and Architecture* (1952) that "the synthesis between the rational-geometric and the mystic-organic principle runs through all the late work of Le Corbusier."[48] As examples, Giedion cites the chapel at Ronchamp and the roof elements of the Villa Savoye, which can be interpreted as surrealist props: the rooftop window opens neither to an interior nor exterior, and the chimney appears to be a column that supports no load. But contrary to Tafuri's later reading, Giedion interprets Le Corbusier's effort to reconcile the rational and the irrational realms as an alchemical transformation of opposite principles, a vital operation to make modernism complete. A further example of the duality in Le Corbusier's architectural thinking is the rooftop of the Unité d'Habitation in Marseille (1947–52). The space is segregated from the city by a 1.6-meter-high wall, in a manner somewhat like a sacred precinct; it contains an artificial topography of objects, such as a theater, swimming pool, and sculptural ventilation shafts. Some of John Hejduk's so-called masque projects from the seventies and eighties refer to this roof garden of Le Corbusier's Unité as a design source.[49] They operate with the strategy of surrealist displacement to reconcile the mythical and the tangible realm.

One source for Le Corbusier's ideas of space was his reading of Georges Bataille's *The Accursed Share* (1949), given to him as a present by the author in its first printing. He discusses the theory of the ritual of potlatch as the gift of rivalry among Native Americans. It is not only a tribal feast at which presents are given and received but also an excessive "throwing away of possessions to enhance one's prestige or establish one's position."[50] In this sense, potlatch is a way of acquiring power by recklessly squandering and, in some cases, actually destroying vital resources. His view largely draws on Marcel Mauss's account outlined in *The Gift, the Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (1949).[51] For Bataille, however, the ritual of potlatch saves the material things from mere utility, and thus restores the sacredness of the world through a transgressive experience of senseless destruction.[52] After accumulation, there is always a need for expenditure liberated of utilitarian purpose.[53] Bataille subverts the conventional model of utility and consumption by the potlatch ritual

[48]   Sigfried Giedion, *Time, Space and Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), lv.
[49]   John Hejduk, ed., *Mask of Medusa* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985).
[50]   Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (New York: Norton, 1990), 6.
[51]   Georges Bataille, *La Part Maudite* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1949); Mauss, *The Gift*.
[52]   Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share* (New York: Zone Books, 1988) quoted in Louise Tythacott, *Surrealism and the Exotic* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 215–6.
[53]   Cf. Georges Bataille, "Extinct America" (1928), in *October* 36 (Spring 1986): 3–9.
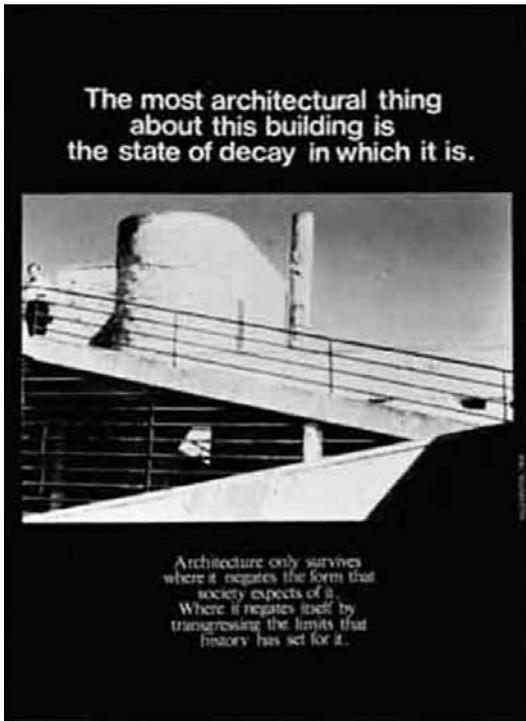
that involves the sacrifice of the superfluous as "accursed share." It is either spent, knowingly without gain—as in the arts, eroticism, sumptuary monuments, and spectacles—or, if repressed, it inevitably leads to a catastrophic outpouring in war.[54]

Le Corbusier's interest in the theory of expenditure—giving without receiving goods in return while gaining rank and prestige via the act of potlatching—is not only apparent in the numerous emphases and remarks in his copy of *The Accursed Share* given to him by Bataille, but also in the way he portrays himself self-deprecatingly. Just as Bataille relates the capacity for giving in the sense of reckless squandering to the acquisition of power, Le Corbusier describes himself as a *tragic hero* who gives with no return, understanding his work as a gift to humanity.[55]

(68) Bernard Tschumi, *Advertisements for Architecture*: *"The most architectural thing about this building is the state of decay in which it is,"* 1976–79
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(69) Bernard Tschumi, *Advertisements for Architecture*: *" To really appreciate architecture, you may even need to commit a murder,"* 1976–79
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[54]   George Bataille, "The Notion of Expenditure" (1949), in Allan Stoekl, ed., *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings 1927–1939* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 116–29, here 118.
[55]   Cf. Nadir Lahiji, "'… The Gift of Time:' Le Corbusier Reading Bataille," in *Surrealism and Architecture*, ed. by Thomas Mical (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 119–39.

THE RATIONAL AND IRRATIONAL SIDE OF ARCHITECTURE

Architecture as Paranoid Critical Activity

Modern architecture's bias towards rationality, functionality, and efficiency demands that the building's form has to follow particular programs, and that the void between the prefabricated walls is inhabited by the objectified body of the modular human. According to Hannes Meyer, high modernism is synonymous with an equalizing objectivity because buildings, like "all things in this world, are a product of the formula: (function times economy)."[56] His design for the Co-op-interior (1924) with standardized furnishings proposes a scientific—that is, sociological-biological—foundation for dwelling, which negates the individuality of space. Yet, Koolhaas's Maison à Bordeaux connects the rational and functional program of modernism with a surrealist sensibility, which allows for differing interpretations of his work. Like drafting a collage, he integrates irrational elements and themes into the design process, in order to expand the principle of rational and economic planning and to amplify the *event-structure* of the building's performance in full use. In addition, he deploys surrealist representation techniques, for instance, in the images of the Villa dall'Ava, which give the impression of a strange and uncanny composition.

In effect, Koolhaas advocates the essential "otherworldliness" of architecture: for "architecture = the imposition on the world of structures it never asked for and that existed previously only as a cloud of conjectures in the minds of their creators. Architecture is *inevitably* a form of PC [Paranoid Critical] activity."[57] In the chapter "Europeans: Biuer! Dalí and Le Corbusier Conquer New York" in *Delirious New York*, Koolhaas describes the advent of Salvador Dalí and Le Corbusier in New York in the thirties as if the two figures personify the two sides of the European avant-garde, the surrealist and the modernist movement. Koolhaas argues that both proponents use similar surrealist techniques, like the PC activity, and seeks to reveal the other, irrational face of Le Corbusier.

Dalí's texts entitled *Oui: The Paranoid-Critical Revolution* (1971) are of central importance for Koolhaas's claims. In 1929, Dalí began to pay attention to the mechanism of paranoiac phenomena as an experimental method for exploiting unconscious imaginative power.

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[56]   Hannes Meyer, "Building" (1928), in *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-Century Architecture*, ed. by Ulrich Conrads (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984), 117–20, here 117.
[57]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 246.

To "Conquest of the Irrational," he investigates the "Paranoid Critical Method" (PCM) that operates with the stimulation of paranoid delirium, causing the individual to surrender to a chain of associations.[58] The conjunction of the two words *paranoia* and *criticism* is significant because PCM implies not only intuition but also a highly systematic approach to its processes.[59] PCM is, in contrast to the unconscious exercises of dreams and automatism, a voluntary and active method of using the content of the unconscious mind. In the nineteenth century paranoia was defined as a condition in which the subject perceives unrelated events, which are meaningless to an outside person, as parts of a coherent and meaningful system. All kinds of interpretive associations appear to have a causal interconnection to the central, obsessive idea. Contradictory experiences are not considered errors but are straightforwardly worked into the PC construction. Each event is interpreted by the afflicted person in such a way that it reinforces the initial paranoiac thesis. Koolhaas points out: Just as in a magnetic field metal molecules align themselves to exert a collective, cumulative pull, so, through unstoppable, systematic and *in themselves strictly rational* associations, the paranoiac turns the whole world into a magnet field of facts, all pointing in the same direction. … Paranoia is a shock of recognition that never ends.[60]

PCM works like a reverse form of the reinforcement therapy called *Token Economy*, which is based on the assumption that the systematic stimulation of normality and sanity can turn into reality.[61] The healthy person performs the characteristics of paranoiac delirium, or, as Koolhaas points out, "Dalí proposes a *tourism* of sanity into the realm of paranoia."[62] To prove the paranoiac, unprovable speculations, "the critical part of the method consists of the fabrication of objectifying 'souvenirs' of the paranoid tourism, of concrete evidence that brings the 'discoveries' of those excursions back to the rest of mankind."[63] PCM is an operation of creating a coherent system of interpretation "so that a 'false' fact takes its unlawful place among the 'real' facts."[64]

Dalí's paintings of multiplied figuration largely draw on the paranoid capacity of the beholder to associate and permit obsessive ideas and to behold various contradictory, mutually exclusive images at

[58]   Salvador Dalí, *Oui: The Paranoid-Critical Revolution, Writings 1927–1933* (Boston: Exact Change, 1998).
[59]   Salvador Dalí, "L' Âne pourri," in *Surrealisme au service de la Révolution* 1 (July 1930): 9–12.
[60]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 238.
[61]   Ibid., 237.
[62]   Ibid.
[63]   Ibid., 238.
[64]   Ibid., 241.

once.[65] In this way, blurring or a greater distance reduces the mass of details of the individual parts to reveal the "real" hidden content. Dalí links the unstable appearance of the external world to a particular state of mind. The "Dalían gaze" that discloses the beauty in everyday life arises from the mind's eye rather than from the senses alone. By differentiating between the eye as an organ that functions and the gaze, which is the primordial or "savage" comprehension of the world, Jacques Lacan proposes the notion of the split subject, which marks the fundamental alienation of the modern period. The eye is physiological vision only, while the gaze is located in the world. The gaze deranges our understanding, because it is "pulsatile, dazzling and spread out," and shifts the viewer from a focal sight to a vacant stare.[66] Only human individuals "know how to play with the mask as that beyond which there is the gaze," while the primordial function of the image screen is the "taming of the gaze."[67]

Throughout the nineteen-sixties and seventies, surrealist art was for the most part marginalized because of its impropriety and involvement with entertainment and consumerism, or it was merely seen as kitsch.[68] According to Hal Foster, "surrealism was considered a deviant art movement improperly visual and impertinently literary, relatively inattentive to the imperatives of form and mostly indifferent to the laws of genre, a paradoxical avant-garde concerned with infantile states and outmoded forms, not properly modernist at all."[69] André Breton's anagrammatic nickname for Salvador Dalí was Avida Dollars, which roughly translates as "eager for dollars," describing his disapproval of Dalí's greed for fame and financial success. For Breton, Dalí's art had become too commercialized, not only because of his advertisements, close relationship to pop art, and design of department store windows but because he also collaborated with Walt Disney on the short cartoon *Destino* released posthumously in 2003. The end of the seventies signaled a renewed interest in surrealism in architecture, however. For example, in 1978 an issue of *Architectural Design* was devoted to the theme of surrealism and architecture, discussing

[65]   For instance, his drawing illustrating Comte de Lautréamont's poetic work *Les Chants de Maldoror* represents six simultaneous images without any deformation of the figurations: a lion's head, a general's head, death's head, an athlete's torso, a bust of a shepherdress, and a horse. Patrick Waldberg, *Surrealism* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1965), 92.
[66]   Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* (New York: Norton, 1981), 107.
[67]   Ibid., 76.
[68]   In "Surrealism and Painting" (1956), Clement Greenberg considers primarily the painterly aspects of the surrealist movement. Clement Greenberg, *The Collected Essays and Criticism: Affirmations and Refusals 1950–1956*, ed. by John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
[69]   Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), xii–xiii.

works by Antoni Gaudi and Frederick Kiesler, as well as other contemporary examples.

Koolhaas's fascination with Dalí and surrealist ideas can also be seen as a form of juvenile camp taste. Susan Sontag describes camp taste in her essay "Notes on 'Camp'" (1964) as a sensibility that relies on extravagance, exaggeration, irony, mannerism, playfulness, and theatricality rather than on content.[70] In her list of its fifty-eight characteristics she writes, "the whole point of Camp is to dethrone the serious. Camp is playful, anti-serious. More precisely, Camp involves a new, more complex relation to 'the serious.' One can be serious about the frivolous, frivolous about the serious" (no. 41). Camp taste has a close relationship to either kitsch or bad art, although nowadays it is almost entirely associated with the exaggeration of sexual characteristics. The term derives from the Latin root *campus* meaning farm or field—proposing a relation to the somewhat stereotyped behavior of rural folks. As the French informal word *camper*, which means to pose in an exaggerated fashion, the term describes a set of mannerist gestures, speech, or postures. According to Sontag, nowadays subversiveness and shocking excess are key elements of camp, for it places persons and objects within quotation marks. When pure camp is unaware of itself as camp, it amounts to kitsch that loses its aspect of parody and takes itself too seriously.

Since the end of the seventies, the term surrealism has been discussed in relation to architecture not primarily as an aesthetic that is irrational, ambiguous, and contradictory, but as a way to expand the discourse of modern architecture. In addition to Koolhaas's interest in Dalí, the surrealist influence can be traced in the work of several architects: Peter Eisenman with his methods of automatisms; John Hejduk, who popularized the Villa Malaparte on the Isle of Capri (1937–40); Bernard Tschumi who used, like Koolhaas, surrealism and cinema in his work.

Maritime Analogy

Koolhaas compares Dalí's paranoid critical method of making unprovable conjectures tangible with the process of solidification of reinforced concrete: "First, the conjectural structure of shuttering is erected – the negative of the initial thesis. … Then a mouse-gray liquid is poured into the speculative counterforms to give them permanent life on earth, an undeniable reality, especially after the signs of the initial madness – the shuttering – have been removed, leaving only

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[70]   Susan Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp'," in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject: A Reader*, ed. by Fabio Cleto (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 53–65.

the fingerprints of the wood's grain. Infinitely malleable at first, then suddenly hard as rock, … it is the architect's plastic."[71]

From his point of view, Le Corbusier's work is the result of PC activity, and his "favorite method of objectification – of making his structures *critical* – is reinforced concrete."[72] For example, the Floating Asylum for the Parisian Salvation Army, a barge offering accommodation for 160 clochards, is interpreted ironically as "an object that establishes all these metaphors on a literal plane. … Bums are the ideal clients of modern architecture: in perpetual need of shelter and hygiene, real lovers of sun and the great outdoors, indifferent to architectural doctrine and to formal layout."[73] Le Corbusier's concrete boat is evidence of the general crisis of the modern movement. Koolhaas makes modern architecture a literal phenomenon of the PC method and brings up Noah's Ark as one of the first examples of paranoid critical constructions: "What Noah needed was reinforced concrete. What Modern Architecture needs is a flood."[74] In this view, Koolhaas's allegorical Story of the Pool in *Delirious New York*, like the Floating Asylum, establishes a metaphor on a literal plane.

Both Koolhaas and Le Corbusier deploy images of oceanology to explain the conditions to which architecture is subjected. The metaphor of the ship correlates to what Charles Jencks characterizes as Le Corbusier's "tragic view of the human condition struggling in a hostile universe."[75] For Koolhaas, the daily "struggle" of the handicapped client in the "hostile universe," who can no longer live in his house in the medieval city, becomes the central premise of the design of the Maison à Bordeaux. Both structures, the Maison à Bordeaux and the Villa dall'Ava, bring the crisis of modern architecture onto a literal plane: they float like arks in a sea of either natural beauty or urban tissue. Additionally, like an ironic comment on the issue, both houses have swimming pools, one in the garden in Bordeaux, the other on the rooftop in Paris.

Moreover, Koolhaas represents the theories of the skyscraper using maritime analogies: Manhattan becomes an archipelago of 2,028 islands floating in a sea of traffic.[76] Another example is a depiction on a postcard with a tower like a metropolitan lighthouse that communicates through light signals with imaginary marines at the sea: "It is also an airship mooring mast and thus resolves Manhattan's paradoxical status as a city of landlocked lighthouses."[77]

[71]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 249.
[72]   Ibid., 246.
[73]   Ibid., 249.
[74]   Ibid.
[75]   Charles Jencks, *Le Corbusier and the Tragic View of Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 35–6.
[76]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 123.
[77]   Ibid., 143.

According to Gert Kähler, the maritime analogy refers to the new technological development of the steamship as mobile machine and what Le Corbusier called the new spirit of construction. Correspondingly, an advertisement associates the new steamship *Normandie* with the New World represented by the skyline of New York's skyscrapers (→**70**).[78] In addition, the ship itself presents a symbol connected to transformative processes and segregated community in a sea of foes. He links modern ocean liners with modern housing and points to the formal similarity between the Villa Savoye and the elevation of the ship *Aquitania* in *The Radiant City,* with the caption "a floating apartment house."[79] (→**71**) The cross-section of the Unité in Marseilles provides another example that formally resembles the multi-story steamship, including the Unité's *roof garden* and the *pilotis* elevating the building off the ground, which implies that it is a structure not fixed to its location.[80] Furthermore, the maritime aesthetic in the Unité continues in several design details, such as the series of dwelling units that are (like cabins) assembled along an exterior promenade, the elaboration of the rails, the round window, and the *long window*, as well as the white structure contrasting with the natural surroundings. Other examples of marine concepts and detailing

[78]   Terry Coleman, *The Liners: A History of the North Atlantic Crossing* (London: Allen Lane, 1976).
[79]   Gert Kähler, *Architektur als Symbolverfall: Das Dampfermotiv in der Baukunst* (Braunschweig: Vieweg & Sohn, 1981), 46; Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, 118.
[80]   Kähler, *Architektur als Symbolverfall*, 121; Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, 118.
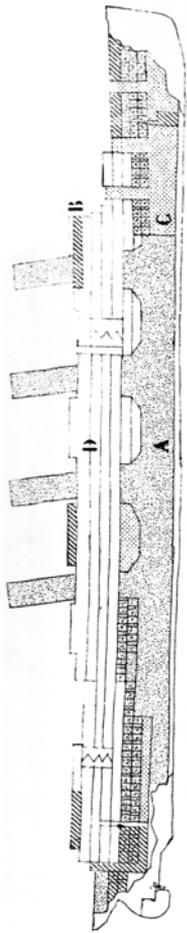
Cross-section of an ocean liner. Inside this floating city where all ought to be confusion and chaos, everything functions, on the contrary, with amazing discipline. The four main services (A. engineers; B. crew; C. stores; D. catering) are all separately located. Why should a city apartment house not attempt to provide us with the same comfort as a ship?
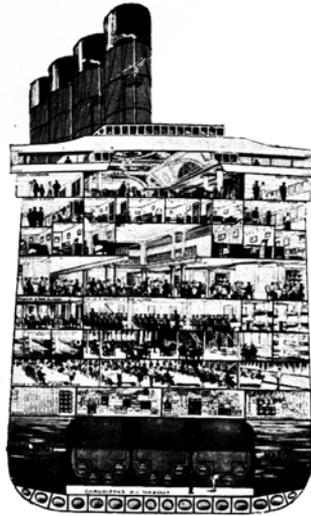
Cross-section of a "floating apartment house"

are the rail on the rooftop of Alvar Aalto's Villa Mairea in Noormarkku (1937–39) and the design of Eileen Gray's House E. 1027 (1926–29), which uses sailcloth and safety rings on the terrace.

Hans Sedlmayr offers in *Art in Crisis: The Lost Center* another reading of the maritime metaphor: such advanced technological objects like ships (for him, architectural monuments) point to the deeper processes of social, cultural (and religious) transformation.[81] Thus they testify to the new relationship between man and the innovative forces in the struggle to supersede nature. However, he claims that since the arts have "lost the center" (God) and gained new aesthetic autonomy and formalism of modernity, they inevitably lead into disaster (the World Wars).

[81]   Hans Sedlmayr, *Art in Crisis: The Lost Center* (1957, reprint, New Brunswick: Transaction, 2006).

In *The Principle of Hope*, Ernst Bloch also uses the metaphor of the ship venturing beyond the known world, which was, in antiquity, beyond the Pillars of Hercules (the entrance to the Strait of Gibraltar).[82] He also rethinks the relationship between nature (and man) and technological means, calling for an alliance between the agencies. A case in point is the development of the ship design, which is linked to both navigational skills and the mathematical skills needed to calculate latitudes.

Focusing on the object of the ship itself, Foucault cites the ship as a model of *heterotopia* in his lecture "Of Other Spaces," given to a group of architects in 1967: "If we think, after all, that the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea, … you will understand why the boat has not only been for our civilization, from the sixteenth century until the present, the great instrument of economic development (I have not been speaking of that today), but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination. The ship is the heterotopia par excellence. In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates."[83]

Though utopia is a fundamentally unreal place, Foucault argues that in every civilization there are utopian sites that are nevertheless real. He claims in *Madness and Civilization* (1961) that the ship is a space that kept its difference, such as the Ship of Fools outlines the madman's liminal position: "If he cannot and must not have another *prison* than the *threshold* itself, he is kept at the point of passage."[84] Although free to voyage across Europe, the presence of the madman is that of a marginal figure that exists only on the verge in a state of migration.

Un Cadavre Exquis

The scheme of the Maison à Bordeaux can also be read as surrealist collage of fragments that are assembled in a kind of collection of modern motifs. Similarly, in *S,M,L,XL*, Koolhaas describes one of his first architectural realizations, the Netherlands Dance Theater in The Hague, completed in 1987, as a *cadavre exquis* building.[85] It is an assembly of different parts, which originate in earlier projects, put together into a new unity. Like in Koolhaas's theory of Manhattan-

[82]   Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope 1938–1947,* vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 1024.
[83]   Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 27.
[84]   Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Random House, 1965), 11.
[85]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 305.

ism, architecture is interpreted as a model of dismantled pieces and separate spaces—as if released from the subconscious of the city. He emphasizes the discontinuity of program from one part to the next so that a multiplicity of different functions are covered, and in fact revealed, by the exterior shape.

For Koolhaas, modern architecture is literally a paranoid critical activity reinforced by calculations and structures in order to bring together the rational and the irrational (or unconscious) side of the human mind. Likewise, arguing against the modernist alienation of art from life, Breton's *Second Surrealist Manifesto* (1930) seeks to reconcile the world "of reality and dream, of reason and madness, of objectivity and subjectivity, of perception and representation, of past and future, of the collective sense and individual love: even of life and death."[86] In "Surrealist Situation of the Object" (1935), Breton speaks of a slippage between form and content and emphasizes the role of estrangement in our common notion of the world.[87] Surrealist concepts are based on belief in the superiority of the unconscious and the omnipotence of dream logic to escape the cage of determinism.

Surrealist sensibility experiments with the collage game *cadavre exquis*, which allows the artist to reveal the *other* by suppressing mechanisms of control and judgment.[88] In the *cadavre exquis* game a group of people produce a drawing or sentence by using a folded paper that conceals the prior parts of the work. Its name comes from the first sentence produced this way in 1925: "The-exquisite-corpse-will-drink-new-wine."[89] The author is reduced to an instrument that records the hidden imagination and interpretations to produce uninterrupted successions of latencies of reality.[90] Producing irrational, ambiguous experiences lies at the heart of surrealist work, "characterized by images of searching and finding, of veiling and revealing, of presence and absence, of threshold and passages, in a surrealized universe in which there were no clear boundaries or fixed identities."[91] The boundaries between real and imagery, reason and unreason become blurred; this act erases the notion of the subject and generates a multiplicity of identities.

The ambiguous, fragmentary rooms and outdoor spaces of surrealist paintings question the stability that people expect from the

[86] André Breton, "Limits Not Frontiers of Surrealism" (1935), in *What Is Surrealism?* ed. by Franklin Rosemont (New York: Pathfinder, 1978), 155–6, here 155.
[87] Andre Breton, "Surrealist Situation of the Object" (1935), in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, transl. by R. Seaver and H. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1972), 205–78, here 259.
[88] Frampton, *Le Corbusier*, 65.
[89] Waldberg, *Surrealism*, 94.
[90] Andre Breton, "Crisis of the Object," in *Surrealism and Painting*, transl. by Simon Watson Taylor (London: MacDonald, 1972), 275–80.
[91] Jennifer Mundy, ed., *Surrealism: Desire Unbound* (London: Tate, 2001), 13.

built environment. A case in point is *The Human Condition* (1933) by René Magritte with the landscape outside the window reproduced as painting, showing the same scene as seen from standing inside that window. Its theme of an interior-exterior space confuses the literal and the illusionary space of the picture plane. The surrealists have little more than contempt for the rational and functional approach of modern architects, although Breton also observes certain surrealist tendencies in modern architecture and its "concrete irrationality." He recognizes, for example, in the work of Le Corbusier traces of "the Marvelous," such as the wavy wall of the Swiss Pavilion of the Cité Universitaire in Paris (1930–32).

Koolhaas's idea of "junkspace" and its "concrete irrationality" does not only imply the surrealist *un cadavre exquis* but can also be read as "merzed" spaces of modernity. Kurt Schwitters's so-called *Merzbau* (1923–37) at his residence on Waldhausenstrasse in Hannover is a cavernous space of found objects. The term *merz*, which is similar to the French word *merde*, meaning litter or junk, came from a fragment of the text "Commerz und Privatbank" in his painting *Merzbild* (1919).[92] He also used the term for a magazine *Merz*, published between 1923 and 1932. The grottoes of the *Merzbau* continued to grow and change their content since they were constantly "merzed" with new items so that former stages were hidden under the surface and only recorded on photographs.[93]

Metaphoric Planning and the Skyscraper Diagram

The New World would be the ideal place for paranoid critical activities. When the surrealists arrived in New York they found "a land without myth," without icons and symbols that would give meaning to the city in the way they knew from Europe, especially from Paris.[94] Instead, all kinds of historic elements spread through the expanse of the Old World are now reproduced in a single country. Koolhaas describes that after landing in the New World "Dalí's first discovery is that in Manhattan Surrealism is invisible" because his first surrealist project, the baking of a "fifteen-meter loaf of bread"—in fact only 2.5 meters long, which was as large as the ship's baker could make—and which he conspicuously carried with him, was not in the least noticed by the

[92]   Susanne Meyer-Büser and Karin Orchard, eds., *In the Beginning was Merz: From Kurt Schwitters to the Present Day* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2000).
[93]   Rosemarie Haag Bletter, "Kurt Schwitters's Unfinished Rooms," in *Progressive Architecture* 9 (1977): 97–9; Dorothea Dietrich, "The Fragment Reframed: Kurt Schwitter's Merz-Column," in *Assemblage* 14 (1991): 82–92.
[94]   Martica Swain, *Surrealism in Exile and the Beginning of the New York School* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

interviewing reporters. It became "just another false fact among the multitudes."[95]

Another case in point is Dalí's painting *The Discovery of America by Christopher Columbus* (1959), showing Columbus as one of the most prominent figures of the PC method, who attempts to prove his two conjectures, one correct—the world is round—and one wrong—by sailing westward he would reach India. Dalí's painting captures the moment before Columbus sets foot on the New World calling the natives "Indians," and thereby turning his PC thesis into "fact." For Koolhaas, a further example to demonstrate PC activity is Jollain's map of New York from 1672, since its bird's-eye view of New Amsterdam is purely fictional. Jollain depicts Manhattan as a typically walled city of the European mother civilization including buildings with gable roofs, a church, a market place, a prison, a hospital, and even a canal. Colonization as such can be considered a PC activity, the projection and transplantation of cultural structures onto a new site. Since Jollain's map represents Manhattan as a paranoid critical project, it forms a precedent for Koolhaas's own thesis of Manhattanism and the idea of *metaphoric planning*. Koolhaas's first book *Delirious New York, A Retroactive Manifesto* (1978) formulates the unacknowledged utopian doctrine of Manhattan's architectural production.[96]

In addition to the PCM, Koolhaas also refers to Dalí's reading of hidden desires to reveal New York's true nature beyond the surface of economy and efficiency (→**72**). Like Dalí, he points beyond the manifest religious subject of Jean-François Millet's well-known painting to the erotic content in the *Angélus*.

Instead of two figures saying prayers, it expresses the desire and fear of the proponents: the benign peasant woman only waits for the right moment to attack the praying man who welcomes her embrace. The two bags in the wheelbarrow and the pitchfork stuck in the earth are a reflection of this longing.[97] Dalí writes: "Each evening the skyscrapers of New York assume the anthropomorphic shapes of multiple gigantic Millet's Angéluses … motionless, and ready to perform the sexual act and to devour one another … It is the sanguinary desire [that] illuminates them and makes all the central heating and the central poetry circulate within their ferruginous bone structure."[98]

Koolhaas presents the development of Manhattan between 1890 and 1940 by connecting unrelated episodes in a coherent storyline

[95]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 261. Dalí was captivated by what Marcel Duchamp had called "[t]he shop window proof of the existence of the outside world" in 1913.
[96]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*.
[97]   Albert Dickson, ed., *Art and Literature: Jensen's Gradiva, Leonardo da Vinci and Other Works* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985), 143–231.
[98]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 265.

of selected buildings, such as Rockefeller Center, Radio City Music Hall, the Empire State Building, and the Downtown Athletic Club. He blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction, historical fragments and new items to provide an alternative model of reality that is able to suspend the difference between irreconcilable principles. Though Koolhaas calls the Manhattan skyscraper diagram the "ultimative typology," later, in the essay "Bigness, or The Problem of Large," he describes what it cannot contain and perhaps accidentally lists "too weak" twice: "Not all architecture, not all program, not all events will be swallowed by Bigness. There are many 'needs' too unfocused, too weak, too unrespectable, too defiant, too secret, too subversive, too weak, too 'nothing' to be part of the constellations of Bigness."[99] His theory of Bigness, formulated in five theorems like Le Corbusier's five points, is already inscribed in *Delirious New York* because three of the five theorems are directly connected to Manhattanism: the elevator, the distance between core and envelope (lobotomy), and the break with the urban context. However, the other two principles, the theorem that a building "beyond a certain critical mass … can no longer be controlled,"[100] and the thesis that "through size alone, such buildings enter an amoral domain,"[101] actually connect to surrealist sensibility.

Following Koolhaas, Le Corbusier presented the skyscraper diagram as an entirely new typology, although it had already existed in New York like a species living under the ideal conditions of its natural environment—the Manhattan Grid. Le Corbusier's Cartesian skyscraper is the Siamese twin of the Manhattan skyscraper, which is the true reason—for a PC activist like Le Corbusier—to propose the

(72) Salvador Dalí, *New York?*, sketch. "*Each evening the skyscrapers of New York assume the anthropomorphic shapes of multiple gigantic Millet's Angéluses.*"
Source: Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 264

[99]   Koolhaas, "Bigness," 515–6.
[100] Ibid., 499.
[101] Ibid., 501–2.

radical erasure of Manhattan's existing structure. Only the removal of all former evidence would ensure that his anti-Manhattan model could take the place of the preceding type. Similarly, the Plan Voisin is placed at the heart of Paris after the elimination of the grown city structure: a place "where all traces of history have been scraped away to be replaced by 'jungle': the so-called *mobilization of the ground*, from which even the Louvre barely escapes."[102]

When Le Corbusier arrived with the Plan Voisin in New York, he once more failed to realize his proposal. Koolhaas cites what sounds like a paranoid self-description of Le Corbusier: in "times of danger, the chief must be where others aren't. He must always find the hole, as in traffic where there are no red or green lights!"[103] In quoting Le Corbusier's description in *The Radiant City*, he presents Le Corbusier as a paranoid-critical detective, Manhattan as the scene of the crime, and metaphorical lice as the victims: "[The pedestrian] moves anxiously near the bottom of the skyscraper, louse at the foot of the tower. The louse hoists himself up in the tower; it is night in the tower oppressed by the other towers: sadness, depression … But on top of those skyscrapers taller than the others, the louse becomes radiant. He sees the ocean and boats; he is above the other lice."[104]

Le Corbusier abandons all typical features of metropolitan life, like the grid, density, and congestion as completely outdated vestiges. However, in this new form of urbanism, the widely spaced towers are 220 meters high and 400 meters apart from each other, sustained by elevated highways. The new high-rises are spaced out beyond any distinctive public space. Significantly, the Cartesian skyscraper is encased in glass. This way, Le Corbusier not only refuses what Koolhaas describes as the "culture of congestion" but also the architectural "lobotomy," which is the principle of spatial discontinuity between inside program and outside envelope. By ruthlessly stripping the skyscraper of its cladding, the Cartesian skyscraper is left "undressed" in glass and forced to expose the interior to the public space. For Koolhaas, the Cartesian skyscraper is a boring and rather banal design, creating via the decongestion of the city and the transparency of its interior "a complete cultural void." After the disappearance of the essential conditions of Manhattanism, the typology of the skyscraper preempts both social life and public space.

[102]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 259.
[103]   Ibid., 246.
[104]   Ibid., 251; quotation from Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, 133.

MONTAGE AND FILMIC REALITY

The Metropolis as Manifesto of Modern Life

Claiming to be Manhattan's ghostwriter, Koolhaas formulates his book *Delirious New York* as an explicit thesis on the hidden "poetic efficiency" of the city.[105] He mythologizes the past, rewrites history, and presents New York's architecture as a consistent model of the until-then unformulated manifesto of the twentieth-century metropolis. Manhattan is "a mountain range of evidence without manifestos" in contrast to the European modern movement, which produced many manifestos but only a few buildings.[106] What are for Koolhaas the key features of the metropolis? Why is it for Koolhaas a manifesto of modern life? *Delirious New York* includes a series of paintings by Madelon Vriesendorp called *The Secret Life of Buildings* (1972–76), in which the modern metropolis is interpreted as animated forms, social relationships, chance encounters, and situations of seduction between architectural elements. Drawing an analogy between architecture and the human body, Koolhaas claims that "the poetry of New York is that of a giant many-piped organ of red ivory – it does not scrape the sky, it resounds in it with the compass of the systole and diastole of the visceral canticle of elementary biology."[107]

For instance, the painting *Flagrant Délit* shows the Empire State and the Chrysler Building like lovers lying on a bed, while a jealous third represented by Rockefeller Center enters the room and sheds light on them (→**73**). Another painting entitled *Freud Unlimited* shows a floating bed in the shape of Manhattan with tangles of infrastructure that represent the repressed, unconscious elements of the city (→**74**). In *Dream of Liberty*, the Statue of Liberty emerges from the scattered Chrysler Building in a field of architectural fragments, which may be an analogy for both freedom *from* history and the freedom *born amidst* the disassembled elements of history.

Referring in a similar way to the notion of the unconscious, Sigfried Giedion argues in *Building in France, Building in Iron, Building in Ferroconcrete* (1928) that "in the 19th century, construction plays the role of the subconscious. Outwardly, construction still boasts the old pathos; underneath, concealed behind facades, the basis of our present existence is taking shape."[108] Walter Benjamin comments in his *Arcades Project* on this passage by Giedion that "wouldn't it be

[105]   Ibid., 11.
[106]   Ibid., 9.
[107]   Ibid., 263.
[108]   Sigfried Giedion, *Building in France: Building in Iron, Building in Ferroconcrete* (Santa Monica: Getty Center, 1995), 3.

better to say 'the role of bodily processes' – around which 'artistic' architectures gather like dreams around the framework of physiological processes?"[109] For both Giedion and Benjamin, the new industrial constructions and structural engineering come to the surface to be exposed and thereby cease to be "unconscious" and hidden but are now unveiled and visible. The modern engineer and his rational thinking bring about an awareness of forces that were concealed up until that time. For Koolhaas, however, the typology of the skyscraper again masks both—the structural forces of the building and the subconscious imaginings of the users. This discontinuity of space and program that enables a multitude of identities is the essential quality of the modern metropolis.

In the opening lines of *Delirious New York*, Koolhaas refers to Giambattista Vico's *Principles of a New Science* (1759) in which Vico conceives of history as a mythological investigation and philosophy as primarily concerned with "poetic metaphysics."[110] By creating analogies, symbols, and myths, poets were the first to shape people's notion of the world. For Vico, "the first science to be learned should be mythology or the interpretation of fables."[111] According to medieval theories, words have more than one sense and can be used for showing how the different parts of scripture correspond to each another. In interpreting the Bible, writers such as St. Thomas Aquinas propose

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[109]   Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Belknap, 1999), 90.
[110]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 9.
[111]   Giambattista Vico, *The New Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), 33.
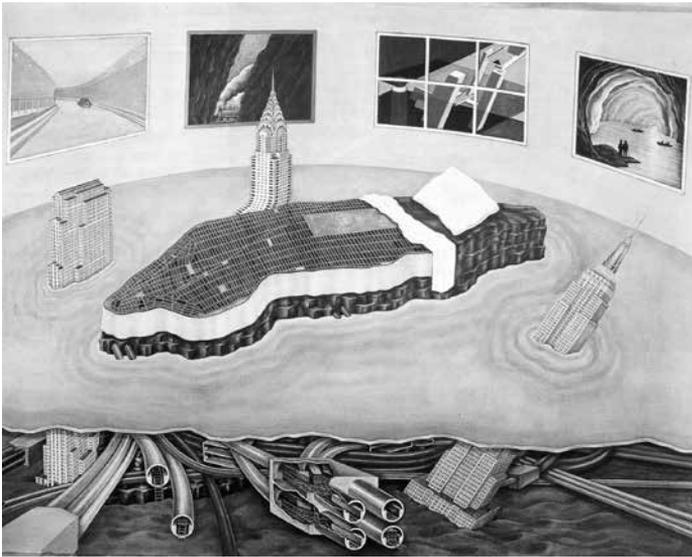
four categories of understanding: literal, allegorical or typological, tropological, and anagogical or eschatological meaning of a story.[112] Hence the four interpretations are *Littera gesta docet, Quid credas allegoria, Moralia quid agas, Quo tendas angogia.*[113]

Koolhaas's interest in Vico can also be seen as influenced by James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939), which begins with the end of a sentence written by Vico and ends with the beginning of the same sentence, suggesting an endless cycle of reading. It opens with the line "Riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs" and closes with "A way a lone a last a loved a long the."[114] Joyce alludes with the words commodius vicus again to Vico, and, by turning the book into one great circle, refers to Vico's cyclical theory of social change in history. Civilization rises from chaos,

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[112]   Isabel Rivers, *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979), 153–4; O. B. Hardison et al., eds., *Medieval Literary Criticism: Translations and Interpretations* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1974), 145–8.

[113]   "The literal meaning teaches about deeds, allegory what you should believe, tropology what you should do, anagogy to what end" (trans. I.B.). The Temple of Jerusalem built by Solomon is in an allegorical reading for the body of the Lord as his church, indicated in the lines "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19) and "For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (1 Corinthians 3:17). Tropologically, it addresses the faithful man expressed in the line "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells within you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16). In the anagogical meaning the temple signifies the heavenly house of the loyal man, corresponding to the line "Blessed are they that dwell in Your house; they will be still praising You" (Psalm 84:4).

[114]   James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Faber & Faber, 1964).

develops through phases to the highest point but then declines and falls back to chaos. His writings do not propose progress but rather predict that our modern civilization is on the verge of demise.

Besides the influence of Joyce's work and Vico's view of history as "poetic metaphysics," *Delirious New York* is also a reflection of Michel Foucault's critique of the underlying conditions of discourse in human sciences proposed in *The Order of Things* (1966).[115] In the opening chapter of the book he discusses the painting *Las Meninas* by Diego Velázquez (1656) and its different readings of revelation and disappearance since there is, in the dispersion of different elements, a central void. Foucault claims that what constitutes the bases for knowledge changes from one period of history to another in comparatively instant moves.[116]

In the subtitle of *Delirious New York,* Koolhaas proclaims it to be nothing less than *A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan.* The expression "retroactive" describes events and objects that can be registered only after the initial occurrence when effects later on enable a further decoding and evaluation. The notion of deferred action is similarly characterized by an experience that is revised at a later date when it reappears as a different event endowed with new meaning.[117]

The second code word of the title, manifesto, refers to a form that was uttered in past times by authorities of central powers, such as church, state, or monarch, to declare their dominant position. Yet, this significance no longer holds sway in the twentieth century; art manifestos issued by the artists of futurism, Dada, and surrealism became a key tool for the avant-garde movement and established a kind of anti-tradition, which denoted a condition of weakness and crisis in society instead of a position of dominance. Instead of the political manifesto (such as the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* [1848] by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels), oppositional manifestos by artists function paradoxically, because, while referring to a superior position of authority, they point to its dangers and call for resistance against its mechanisms. For Koolhaas, the real twentieth-century manifesto is the metropolitan city and the invention of the skyscraper typology.

[115]   Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970).
[116]   Similarly, Roland Barthes prefers literary forms that transgress the conceptual boundaries of the category, such as poetry metaphors and analogies as "mythical" form of language, transforming the "reality of the world into an image of the world." Roland Barthes, "Writers, Intellectuals, Teachers," in *Image, Music, Text,* 201; see also Barthes, *Mythologies*, 141.
[117]   Roland Barthes, "Lessons in Writing," in *Image, Music, Text*, 171.

The language used in *Delirious New York* (1978) like in *S,M,L,XL* (1995) and *Content* (2004) is a highly individual form consisting of aphorisms, fictive dialogues, commentaries, prescriptions, critiques, and metaphors. Koolhaas explains his attitude towards writing: "We live in a world ruled by fictions of every kind – mass-merchandising, advertising, politics conducted as a branch of advertising, the instant translation of science and technology into popular imagery … We live inside an enormous novel. The fiction is already there. The writer's task is to invent the reality." [118]

And in *S,M,L,XL's* dictionary entry "Borrower," taken from Norman Carrell's book *Bach the Borrower*, he argues that "Bach was a great borrower. Not only did he derive creative stimulus from the works of such famous composers as Vivaldi and Corelli, but minor figures like Dieupart also provide him with useful ideas." [119] In the same way, Koolhaas freely paraphrases other authors, including Dalí and Mies van der Rohe. For instance, in "The House That Made Mies" he connects his own genealogy to Mies's only commission in Holland, the unbuilt Kröller-Müller House.[120] He describes the episode in a similar way as Dalí records "true" and "false" childhood memories in his autobiography *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí* (1942).

In the same way as Dalí connected the seemingly incompatible conditions of paranoia and criticality, Koolhaas pairs mutually exclusive terms, such as *voluntary prisoners, definitive instability*, and also *retroactive manifesto*. Dialecticism and the excessive use of opposites are characteristic elements of his style of writing. He even transfers meaning from one extreme position to the other, for instance, when he describes the site of the Amsterdam Bijlmermeer housing project (1986) as the *Las Vegas of the Welfare State*. Another typical method is to use everyday words but to give them a different connotation that suggests a changed meaning: *life/style, reality/TV, world/music, museum/store, food/court, health/care, waiting/lounge*.[121] For Koolhaas, the book "*Content* documents a 'split' … the maximum stretch between two opposite forces, realization and speculation, performed by OMA and AMO. Because the relationship is fluid and unstable, it is presented as a magazine – a freeze frame of one particular moment." [122] In "Junk Space" he even speaks of a lack of identity

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[118]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 492.
[119]   Ibid., 70; Norman Carrell, *Bach the Borrower* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1967).
[120]   Ibid., 62–3.
[121]   Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 167.
[122]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 20. AMO's work expands beyond buildings, collaborating with Bruce Mau and Sanford Kwinter, and branching out to Microsoft, Hans Ulrich Obrist's video company, or the Harvard Graduate School of Design research programs.

that leads to the emergence of a language governed by accent, jargon, and the outsourcing or multitasking of meaning: "Through the retrofitting of language, there are too few plausible words left; our most creative hypothesis will never be formulated, discoveries will remain unmade, concepts unlaunched, philosophies muffles, nuances miscarried."[123] Even so, he deploys expressions such as "restore, rearrange, reassemble, revamp, renovate, revise, recover, redesign, return – to the Parthenon marbles – redo, respect, rent: verbs that start with *re*- produce Junkspace."[124]

It is as if Koolhaas's method of organizing the text and image parts of his books should create a magnetic field—like Dalí's PC method. He uses all kind of visual media, such as drawings, paintings, collages, photography, and filmic storyboards that associate his work with iconic buildings and images of the modern movement, most notably those from the work of Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, and Sigfried Giedion.[125] His method constructs an interpretive framework and point of reference in the lineage of modernism. However, this appropriation implies the calculated rewriting and reinterpretation of historic parts, even to the extent of decontextualizing und manipulating the ideas of the modern movement. In any case, Koolhaas's books and their technique of assemblage recall the technique used by Le Corbusier in his books.

For Manfredo Tafuri, the work of Le Corbusier from 1919 to 1938 is characterized by the complex, interwoven structure of text and architectural images, suggesting many possible levels of reading.[126] He refers to Walter Benjamin, who introduces the analogy between magician and surgeon, in order to illustrate the effects of the new means of reproduction on the spectator: "The magician maintains the natural distance between the patient and himself; though he reduces it very slightly by the laying on of hands, he greatly increases it by virtue of his authority. The surgeon does exactly the reverse; he greatly diminishes the distance between himself and the patient by penetrating into the patient's body."[127]

Both Le Corbusier and Koolhaas use in their books assemblages of a variety of literary forms next to large-scale, fragmented, or min-

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[123]   Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 169.
[124]   Ibid., 167.
[125]   "Images" by Jean Baudrillard: "Images have become our true sex objects, the object of our desire … not only for sexual desire, but in the desire for knowledge and its equivalent materialized in 'information,' the desire for fantasy and its equivalent materialized in the Disneylands of the world." Jean Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication* (New York: Semiotext(e)/Autonomedia, 1988), quoted in Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 787.
[126]   Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture*, 88.
[127]   Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936) in *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 217–52.

iaturized images, like an excess of "impure" material that is more or less related to architecture. They organize individual parts into a unity by *hybridizations/proximities/frictions/overlaps/superpositions* and "the entire apparatus of *montage*."[128]

S,M,L,XL also features its own dictionary running through the entire volume, compiled probably by the editor of the volume, Jennifer Sigler. This type of alphabetical transmission of information uses the textual authority of a reference system that implies the institutional order of knowledge and truth. For Foucault, the dictionary and the encyclopedia are the key paradigms of the Age of Enlightenment and its general *taxomania* of knowledge. In the opening of *The Order of Things*, he describes a classification in a "certain Chinese encyclopedia" entitled "Celestial Empire of Benevolent Knowledge" that proposes an *other* order of things. The account of the Chinese encyclopedia is, in fact, drawn from Jorge Luis Borges's short story "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins" which divides the animals into: "(a) belonging to the emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) et cetera, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies."[129] Foucault claims that the magic characteristic running through Borges's thought not only exposes the limitation of our system but also shows the very impossibility of even thinking this order of things.

Many writers and artists have mistrusted the scientific approach of unveiling the "truth." Instead, they fuse rational principles with poetry producing absurd, fragmentary, arbitrary, and comic subjects. Yet, exploiting the dictionary of *Petit Larousse* as a resource of captions, phrases, or enigmatic titles was an artistic technique of surrealists and Dadaists. André Breton and Paul Éluard's *Abridged Dictionary of Surrealism* (1938) and the "Critical Dictionary" by George Bataille and Michel Leiris, published in *Documents* (1929/30), are well-known examples. Bataille's dictionary gambles as a whole with the very use of its form in contrast to its value as an operation of slippage, shocked surprise, and disgust of the single categories.[130] Examples of its entries include Camel, Man, Dust, Reptiles, Shellfish, or Formless. Bataille claims: "'Formless' is not only an adjective having a given meaning, but a term that serves to bring things down in the world, generally requiring that each thing have its form. What it designates has no rights in any sense and gets itself squashed everywhere, like a spider or an earthworm. In fact, for academic men to be happy, the universe would have to take shape. All of philosophy has no other

[128]   Koolhaas, "Bigness," 512, 506–7.
[129]   Foucault, *The Order of Things*, xv.
[130]   Georges Bataille, *Manet* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983), 76–7.

goal: it is a matter of giving a frock coat to what is, a mathematical frock coat. On the other hand, affirming that the universe resembles nothing and is only formless amounts to saying that the universe is something like a spider or spit."[131]

Bataille assesses the contrast between the utilitarian nature of form equated with content and the performative force of the form-less. It does not resemble anything, and this is unbearable to reason, makes no sense, and, hence, has no rights. The force of the formless proposes that "to break up the subject and re-establish it on a different basis is not to neglect the subject; so it is in a sacrifice, which takes liberties with the victim and even kills it, but cannot be said to neglect it."[132]

Only that which has an operational existence, like base matter or obscene words that derive their force from the very act of delivery, transcends the logic of the idea, as it is nothing of worth in itself. Instead of dismissing the formless because of its impurity and waste, Bataille speaks of a moral devastation resulting from our ideal notion of matter.[133] This tendency of the individual disappearing in a "disproportionate superiority" is described by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer as the self-destruction of the Enlightenment and the threat to social freedom that this entails.[134] In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, they argue that while magic is an attempt to imitate nature preconceptually, myth firstly seeks to separate the self from amorphous nature and secondly names, classifies, and thus subordinates nature under human control. This turn to the "blindly objective and natural" is intensified by the birth of scientific rationalism and empiricism.[135] When nature is no longer seen as possessing secret powers, the reification and total domination of nature and then other people becomes possible.[136] The rationalistic spirit that Horkheimer and Adorno attack can certainly be detected in most modernist architects. For example, Le Corbusier, a contemporary of Bataille, described the city as "the grip of man on nature. It is a human operation directed against nature."[137] In a Pythagorean manner, Le Corbusier considered man essentially a geometric animal, creating pure geometry when allowed to express himself freely. Thus he interprets culture as opposed to nature as "an

[131]   Stoekl, *Visions of Excess*, 31.
[132]   Bataille, *Manet*, 95.
[133]   Bataille, "The Notion of Expenditure," 118.
[134]   Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Verso, 1979), xiii.
[135]   Ibid., xvi.
[136]   The Enlightenment project of separating or purifying the self from any traces of amorphous nature necessarily leads to a dissolution of the abstracted self, a condition characteristic of totalitarian society. Adorno and Horkheimer argue that in its final stage these tendencies of the Enlightenment led to German fascism, culminating in the Holocaust. Ibid.
[137]   Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow*, xxi, l.

orthogonal state of mind."[138] Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye provides a case in point, symbolizing "the most rational of buildings" both for its pure geometry and functionalism. Following Tschumi, there is yet another trait beyond rationality, the sensuality of the villa in decay, since "this metaphorical rot is where architecture lies."[139]

Koolhaas's idiosyncratic writing style and his resort to various literary forms, such as myth, fiction, and dictionary, revise the rationality of modern architecture. In a postmodern manner, his approach understands historical forms and rules not as "absolute" canon but combines and contrasts them with new concepts so that they become "relative" parts among others. Instead of harmonious composition and integration, the postmodern paradigm refers to fragmentation, contradiction, and ambiguity according to the new pluralist society.

Post-Structuralist Theory, or The Whole, Real, There

In the appendix of *Delirious New York* Koolhaas conceived "A Fictional Conclusion" that appears to restore the social, cultural, and symbolic values of modernism. In the Story of the Pool, a project dating from 1977, which Koolhaas situates in Moscow in the year 1923, a constructivist floating pool provides "an enclave of purity in contaminated surroundings."[140] It is a truly *dialectic* room devoted to the physical exercise, artificial sunbathing, and social activities of the swimming, near-naked architect-lifeguards.[141] One day the swimmers discover the method of *auto-propulsion,* because the regular synchronized activity of swimming together in formation in one direction involuntarily moves the pool in the opposite direction.[142] With the changing political situation in the early thirties, a device such as the pool and its idea of collective endeavor for locomotion becomes subversive. Furthermore, the pool's iceberg-like quality, despite its almost invisible physical appearance, is seen in opposition to the new political ideology.[143] So the group of architect-lifeguards decides to escape, using architecture as a vehicle to freedom, to the only logical destination, the USA, or more specifically New York.

Paradoxically, the floating pool can move in one direction only when the architect-lifeguards face the opposite, as if they are only able to move towards the future by looking to the past. It is as if "they had to swim away from where they wanted to go, toward what

[138]   Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme* (Paris: Les Éditions Crés et Cie, 1925), 19, 22, 35: "La culture est un état d'esprit orthogonal."
[139]   Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 75–6.
[140]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 307.
[141]   Ibid.
[142]   Ibid.
[143]   Ibid.

they wanted to get away from."[144] Driven by the motivation of acting together, the synchronic swimmers represent a form of *automatic pilot,* because there is not one but many captains in command. Upon arriving at their goal four decades later, the architects of New York are quite uneasy and troubled about the constructivists' presence. At that time they are all against modernism and criticize the pool for its simplicity and blandness of historical reference. Nonetheless, they award their Russian colleagues a medal with the inscription: "THERE IS NO EASY WAY FROM THE EARTH TO THE STARS."[145] The Story of the Pool closes with the Russians continuing their journey to freedom. They overlook an obstacle in the East River, and the pool accidentally collides with the raft of the Medusa executed in plastic, which is sliced by the pool's steel raft and sinks in the East River with all its passengers on it.

Besides the Story of the Pool, the fictional conclusion comprises early OMA projects: Exodus, The City of the Captive Globe, Hotel Sphinx, New Welfare Island, and Welfare Palace Hotel. The Strip in Exodus separates the city of London through a hermetically enclosing wall that should become a means of a new collective life in the chaotic urban fabric. Like in Exodus, The City of the Captive Globe shows a utopian world within strict boundaries. It represents an incubator of the new world in timeless pregnancy implanted into the strictly identical sites of the Manhattan grid. It should become "the capital of Ego, where science, art, poetry and forms of madness compete under ideal conditions to invent, destroy and restore the world of phenomenal Reality."[146]

The Story of the Pool as dialectic space is a typical example of Koolhaas's historical references to modernism (in this case the constructivist movement) and reflects his architectural approach at the time when he wrote *Delirious New York*. When Koolhaas undertook his architecture studies in the sixties and early seventies, modernism was heavily criticized in the architectural discourse in a climate of contradiction with the authorities of the profession. At that time there were also many publications on the modern movement and figures, such as Sigfried Giedion, Philip Johnson, Nikolaus Pevsner, and Reyner Banham. Yet, the hegemony of modern architecture was questioned, its claims of functionalism, objectivity, and that which can be addressed by the umbrella term *Sachlichkeit*. In was an atmosphere in which opposition towards modernism was growing, its achievements and social aims were seen as aesthetically and cultural impoverished, and the new generation of architects wished to take the discourse in a different direction.

[144]   Ibid., 308.
[145]   Ibid., 310.
[146]   Ibid., 294.

One of the fields that architects employed to address the perceived inadequacies of the modern movement was structuralism. This approach considers composition a work of montage (which also uses texts and graphic and pictorial elements) so that the disruptions and juxtapositions demonstrate the instability of interpretation. Derived from the linguistic studies of Ferdinand de Saussure, the introduction of language into architectural design and theory influenced the young generation of planners in the early seventies. Structuralist criticism understands the meaning of a text as a product of the reader alone that provides an additional meaning to the work since the commentary has to be considered itself a piece of literature, not giving prime significance to the text but establishing an equal status to it. This way, the critic initiates a dialogue with the author and other critics. In *Theories and History of Architecture* (1968), Tafuri adopts Barthes's position in architectural discourse, proposing a new interpretive method that he terms "operative criticism."[147]

In 1965, Alison and Peter Smithson came up with the notion of "the heroic period of modern architecture" chronologically showing work from 1910 to 1934.[148] Since modernism was identified with mass housing after World War II, they argued for a new emphasis on the sociological aspects of architecture and the existing urban context. For Charles Jencks, the "failure" of modernism is symbolized by the iconic photograph of the demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe housing block in St. Louis, USA, which in his book *The Language of Postmodern Architecture* (1977) is given the caption "Modern Architecture died in St. Louis, Missouri on 15 July, 1972, at 3:32 p.m."[149] The Pruitt-Igoe housing blocks, designed by Minoru Yamasaki, who was also the architect of the World Trade Center, became a symbol of the union between welfare Unités and high-rise urban renewal projects.

Structuralist and post-structuralist ways of thinking became a vital part of Koolhaas's design strategies, and he explicitly mentions the influence of French theory on his writing: "Our amalgamated wisdom can be easily caricatured: according to Derrida we cannot be *Whole*, according to Baudrillard we cannot be *Real*, according to Virilio we cannot be *There*. 'Exiled to the Virtual World': plot for a horror movie."[150] For Derrida, a sign has no single predetermined meaning, because once the logic of the sign is destroyed, the text becomes a game open to plural meanings and manipulations of any reading. For instance, in the absence of an absolute signified, Derrida's book *Glas* (1974) challenges the notion of the traditional book by bringing

[147]   Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture*.
[148]   Alison and Peter Smithson, "The Heroic Period of Modern Architecture," in *Architectural Design* 12 (1965): 590–639.
[149]   Charles Jencks, *The Language of Postmodern Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1977), 9.
[150]   Koolhaas, "What Ever Happened to Urbanism?," 967.

a so-called bipolar eye into play.[151] Each page of the book is separated into two columns, on the left side the philosophy of Friedrich Hegel (mind) and on the right side the writing of Jean Genêt (body). The columns are not only interrupted by citations invading the simple order, but type style and size vary as well. Though *Glas* looks to a certain extent like a traditional book, it "raises the spectre of texts so tangled, contaminated, displaced, deceptive that the idea of a single or original author fades."[152] In his essay in *Glassery*, Gregory L. Ulmer terms Derrida's book a work of collage and montage. The strategy of collage and montage never entirely suppresses the otherness of the parts reunited in a momentary composition, but instead it selects certain elements from given works and integrates them into a whole. Collage, as "the single most revolutionary formal innovation in artistic representation to occur in our century," is a key device used by modern artists who incorporate objects or borrowed fragments into their paintings while maintaining the illusionistic reproduction of traditional realism.[153] Both visually and conceptually, Derrida's *Glas* is close to the miscellaneous form of Koolhaas's books, from *Delirious New York* to *Content*. Derrida claims that to deconstruct the very concept of a text or sign does not deny or abandon the original source of reference but extends the notion of what is real.

Koolhaas's project for the 1980 Venice Biennale "The Presence of the Past" uses the history of the modern movement—such as projects by Ivan Leonidov, Konstantin Melnikov, Mies van der Rohe, Raymond Hood, and Frank Lloyd Wright—but suggests the revision of so-called functional planning by adding elements of Manhattanism "based on the givens of density, technology and definitive social instability."[154] Beyond the values of the modernist doctrine, this review seeks to "create a condition where newness will be rare, invention unusual, imagination shocking, interpretation subversive, and modernity once more exotic."[155] For instance, referring to the search for the minimum dimensioning for accommodating the functions of modern life, Koolhaas expands the program to include the maximum difference of the present city.

Another project from the eighties that works with the collage of historic references is the contribution to the exhibition "Deconstructivist Architecture" at MoMA in New York (1988). It is a hybrid between a solid slab and a glass tower—or between a constructivist

[151]   Jacques Derrida, *Glas* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1986).
[152]   Geoffrey Hartmann, *Criticism in the Wilderness: The Study of Literature Today* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 213.
[153]   See Gregory L. Ulmer, "The Object of Post-Criticism," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. by Hal Foster (New York: The New Press, 1998), 83–110, here 94.
[154]   Rem Koolhaas and Elia Zenghelis, *The Presence of the Past* (London: Academy Editions, 1980), 214–6.
[155]   Ibid.

observation tower and a modernist apartment house. The exhibition, curated by Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley, thematized the subversion of the forms of modernism. In addition to OMA's projects, it featured works by Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Zaha Hadid, Coop Himmelblau, Daniel Libeskind, and Bernard Tschumi. Likewise, the Dance Theater in The Hague (1980–87) is designed as collage, or *cadavre exquis,* because the project is also divided into individual sections following different principles.

Montage and Creative History

Before Koolhaas joined the AA School of Architecture in 1968, he studied scriptwriting in Amsterdam and became a member of the filmmaker group "1 2, 3 enz." This early experience in writing for film, co-authoring screenplays with Rene Daalder, seems to have had a fundamental impact on his architectural work. Film is a primary model for the compositional method of collage and montage, producing a sequence of events from a series of concrete images. Therefore film and its mode of representation can outline how Derrida's notion of deconstructive method functions. In the essay "Cinema-Graphia: Eisenstein, Derrida, and the Sign of Cinema" Laura R. Oswald discusses montage using the example of Sergei Eisenstein: "Montage is an idea that arises from the collision of independent shots."[156] It frees cinema from the question of origins and its emphasis on mimesis, bringing about a more complex understanding of the place. As Benjamin argues in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936), the emerging reproductive technologies instigate a new mode of perception, which becomes most clear in the new medium of film, which creates in effect the inseparability of medium and mode of perception.[157] The concentration on the techniques of the medium opens up attention and "contemplative immersion" to the object.[158] It is this condition of perception that causes the "decay of the aura," which is defined as the authenticity or the authority of the object, its "unique phenomenon of a distance, however close [the object] may be."[159] In the fragmentary text "The Significance of Beautiful Semblance" Benjamin argues that the quintessence of the ancient aesthetic is "its veil, which is nothing other than the aura, the

[156]   Laura R. Oswald, "Cinema-Graphia: Eisenstein, Derrida, and the Sign of Cinema," in *Deconstruction and the Visual Arts: Art, Media, Architecture*, ed. by Peter Brunette and David Wills (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 248–63, here 255.
[157]   See Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 223.
[158]   Ibid., 222.
[159]   Ibid., 223.

beautiful appears [*scheint*]."[160] The new modes of production and perception necessarily involve transitoriness and reproducibility entailing a universal equality of things.[161]

Koolhaas's text "The Generic City" expresses a similar aural reality by evoking a vivid market scene with a screaming, gesticulating crowd of people, animals, priests, and children in a typical Hollywood movie about the Bible. Yet, he concludes with the reversal of the film so that the people go backward, and the center empties until the figures finally leave the picture frame: "Silence is now reinforced by emptiness: the image shows empty stalls, some debris that was trampled underfoot. Relief … it's over. That is the story of the city. The city is no longer. We can leave the theater now."[162] He argues that we perceive the modern city like a reversed movie devoid of its original coherence. For him, the city has become a generic site characterized by its emptiness and decay of aura, as if the montage of film-shots has been deconstructed, the storyline dissolved; only the "empty stalls" and the "debris" (of historical fragments) bear traces of the bygone world.

According to the structuralist understanding of the medium (of either architecture or film) the single elements and fragments only exist in relation to each other, and they derive their meaning from the context. In *Film Technique and Film Acting*, Vsevolod Pudovkin describes this method of montage as the composition method specially adapted to film art, for it allows the film director to join the material together in a new, unexpected order to create different meanings.[163] With Lev Kuleshov, Pudovkin did an experiment: by taking several existing static close-ups of the famous Russian actor Ivan Mozzhukhin—in which the actor does not express any particular feeling—and joining them in three different combinations, he engenders fundamentally different implications. First, the close-up is joined to shots showing a plate of soup; second, the face is followed by a shot of a coffin with a dead woman, and, third, a little girl playing with her toy bear. When Pudovkin presented the three combinations to an audience, the quiet, emotionless face was interpreted in relation to the filmic context: in the first sequence the audience interpreted the same face as pensive over the forgotten soup, in the second film as miserable, and in the third series as light and happy.

[160]   Walter Benjamin, "The Significance of Beautiful Semblance" (1936), in *Selected Writings*, vol. 3, 1935–1938 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 137–8. Benjamin quotes from his essay "Goethe's Elective Affinities" (1924–1925), in *Selected Writings*, vol. 1, 1913–1926 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 297–360, here 351.
[161]   Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 223.
[162]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1264.
[163]   Vsevolod I. Pudovkin, *Film Technique and Film Acting* (New York: Grove Press, 1970), 166–7.

By the junction of separate pieces in a creative order, the director builds a filmic reality conditioned only by the elements selected, their duration, and sequence. One shot can be recorded even at different places separated by a great distance and afterwards united into one filmic space. Kuleshov demonstrates this creative geography with a further experiment: while a young man near the G.U.M. building walks from left to right, a woman near Gogol's monument walks from right to left, they shake hands near the Bolshoi Theatre, followed by a shot that shows the White House with a flight of steps, and finally both ascend the steps of St. Saviour's Cathedral. Here montage creates a new filmic space and time in contrast to theatrical productions.

The concept of montage in Koolhaas's architecture is essentially borrowed from filmmaking practices. Koolhaas's probably most direct use of the methods of writing for film is his installation for the 1986 Milan Triennale titled "Less is More."[164] He conceives of a storyboard about the Barcelona Pavilion by arranging a sequence of film stills accompanied by text passages. In addition, the skill to write screenplays requires the ability to conceive of new angles in a narrative and have multiple responses to a situation. Equally, Koolhaas's project team searches for new angles and a great number of designs that are chosen for further elaboration. Scriptwriting is equally developing ideas in a sequential process. Moreover, for Koolhaas, the actual production of a film can also be compared to the construction of a building, starting from a preliminary outline for the project, involving many actors and different stages of development and finally leading to the built form. However, in *Delirious New York* Koolhaas argues: "While the Empire State Building is being planned, the European avant-garde is experimenting with automatic writing, a surrender to the *process* of writing unhindered by the author's critical apparatus. The Empire State Building is a form of *automatic architecture*, a sensuous surrender by its collective makers – from the accountant to the plumber – to the *process* of building."[165]

Here, the construction of the Empire State Building relates to the notion of a ready-made work of art produced by anonymous contractors rather than to the compositional method of montage. For Koolhaas, this surrealist technique represents the climax of subconscious Manhattan.[166]

In the exhibition "Fundamentals – Absorbing Modernity: 1914–2014" at the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2014, Koolhaas, as curator, again reconsiders the repertoire of generic modernist elements and narratives: he represents them by filmic and performative means, rather than designs or buildings.

[164]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 47.
[165]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 138–9.
[166]   Ibid., 138.

The design for the Maison à Bordeaux deploys the apparatus of montage similarly to how a director constructs a filmic reality out of individual elements to develop the narrative. In *Content* it is the patent for "Everywhere and Nowhere" (1994): "SYSTEM FOR TRANSFORMING A TRANSPORTATION DEVICE INTO A ROOM TO CREATE A CHANGEABLE HOUSE."[167] In his storyboard, Koolhaas mainly draws on iconic modernist references and principles and reorganizes these parts within a new context. A case in point is the classical narrative device of the *architectural promenade*, which creates varied sequences of spatial events. Using the method of montage, that is, what he calls the systematic *hybridizations*, *proximities*, *frictions*, *overlaps*, and *superpositions*, Koolhaas reinterprets the armature of modernism and thereby produces a creative history—analogous to creative geography in filmmaking—in the discourse of his projects. The Dutch Embassy in Berlin (1999–2003) is another application of creating a filmic reality, which presents, corresponding to an *architectural promenade*, the historical events of the city as continuous narrative.

[167]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 81.

TRAJECTORY: DUTCH EMBASSY, BERLIN 1999–2003

THE TRAJECTORY AS LIVED EXPERIENCE OF THE BODY

The Wall and the Cube: The Dutch Embassy in Berlin

In "Psychogeography of a Cube," Francois Chaslin describes the trajectory in the Dutch Embassy in Berlin (1999–2003) as an organism that has its own physiognomy, its own movements and intentions.[1] Koolhaas uses the tool of a continuous pathway that traverses the structure starting at the bottom, rises up through stairways and ramps from story to story, and finally ends on the roof terrace of the cube(→**75**,→**76**). Surrounded by regular office accommodation, the path winds itself along a zigzag trajectory over 200 meters, as a surrealist space in its own right with the other functional rooms wrapped around. The path does not start inside the building but in the outdoor narrow void between the two structures on the yard, the cube, and the wall. The space in between, partly deployed as an access ramp for automobiles and at the same time the main entrance to the embassy, is created as a continuous shifting surface. The enfolding of the itinerary is further emphasized by the slightly skewed edges of the cube, as if the straight volume is already affected and slightly bent by motion. The curving trajectory is already articulated when it enters the volume of the cube.

The embassy actually consists of two separate parts that give the impression of the traditional Berlin style of enclosed cluster as determined by city planning. The design of the embassy bypasses this rule in various ways, combining a block structure in the form of an L-shaped wall and a separate part in the form of a cube: the attached building connects to the surrounding sites, while the cube is a free-

(75) Rem Koolhaas/Ellen van Loon/OMA, Dutch Embassy, Berlin, 1999–2003, the model of the cube with the curving trajectory, photograph.
Source: Gargiani, *Rem Koolhaas/ OMA*, 264
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(76) Rem Koolhaas/Ellen van Loon/OMA, Dutch Embassy, Berlin, 1999–2003, the inverse model of the trajectory, photograph.
Source: Gargiani, *Rem Koolhaas/ OMA*, 264
© 2015 OMA
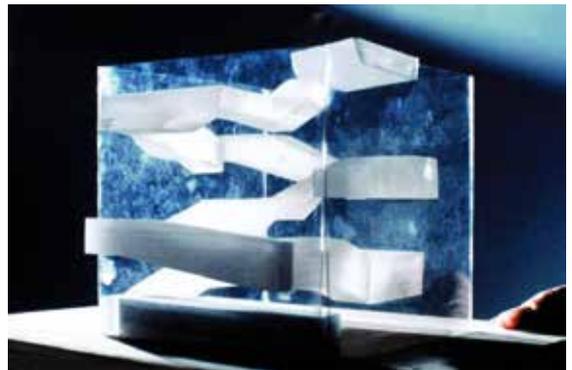
[1]   François Chaslin, "Psychogeography of a Cube: The Dutch Embassy in Berlin," in *The Dutch Embassy in Berlin by OMA/Rem Koolhaas*, ed. by Rem Koolhaas and François Chaslin (Rotterdam: NAI, 2004), 26–42, here 39.

Sixth Floor

Eight Floor

Legend

Visitors' movement

Visitors + Employees' movement

Employees' movement

▲ Different level

● Destiantion

Ground Floor

Second Floor

Fourth Floor
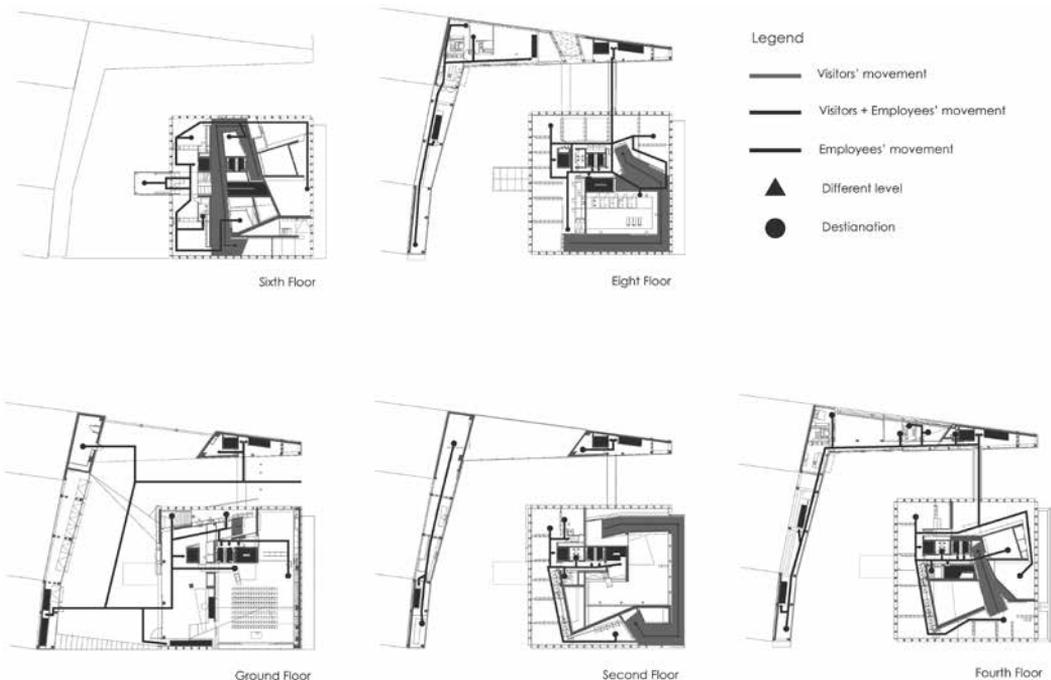
standing glass element measuring 27 x 27 x 27 meters. Positioned up against the neighboring buildings, the L-shape functions as an enclosing wall that isolates and disengages the office space housed in the cube(→**77**). Yet, the separation into two volumes does not go down to ground level; both structures rest on a pedestal to fulfill the planning rule of an enclosed block structure, but, at the same time, they provide a sloping access area(→**81**,→**84**). The main entrance in the space between the wall and the cube is located on the first floor as a kind of *piano nobile*, as if to further isolate the embassy from the surrounding city. All that remains of the city authority's demand for a cluster is the connecting pedestal, which makes the free-standing cube even more independent of the surrounding cityscape. There is a strong contrast between the form of the cube and the complexity and erratic exploration of the interior space (→**78**,**79**,**80**).
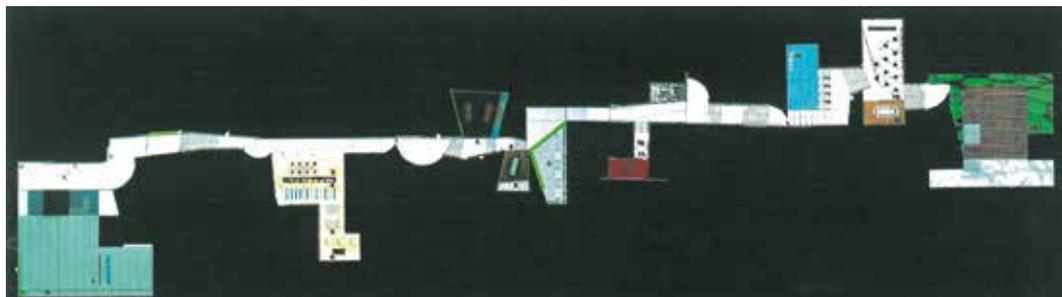
Along the itinerary a variety of spatial patterns unfolds so that the beholder only receives an unclear idea of the structure when going through the sequence of floors, ramps, staircases, inserted glass, and mirror boxes (→**85,**→**86,**→**87**). The ceiling height of the 200-meter-long trajectory varies from 2.15 to around 6 meters; the colors range from lime green, pale pink, yellow, orange, and red to dark gray and blue. The surfaces change from a matte aluminum to dark tropical wood, from glass flooring to travertine cladding, from translucent resin plates to a dark-green mirrored ramps.

On its path through the cubic structure, the trajectory captures different views of Berlin, which underscore significant elements of the architecture of Germany's capital. According to Koolhaas, the diversity of viewpoints along the erratic path relates to the political and historical context, serving like windows or images to understand Berlin better.[2] The trajectory passes the consulate section as the most public office on the ground floor in an open gallery towards the urban space around the Klosterstrasse (→**82**). One floor up, a window measuring 8 x 10 meters opens towards the banks of the Spree River (→**83**). After following the south façade, the ascending path traverses the core of the cube (→**88,**→**89**) and proceeds towards a view of the Sputnik, the sphere of the 365-meter-high television tower.

The tower construction on the edge of Alexanderplatz and more than 700 meters away from the embassy is a kind of monumental sign of the communist era in Berlin: a viewing tunnel that is a distorted square opening of over five meters in height is cut into the north wing of the L-shaped section of the embassy to provide a precise

[2]   Chaslin, "Psychogeography of a Cube," 27.
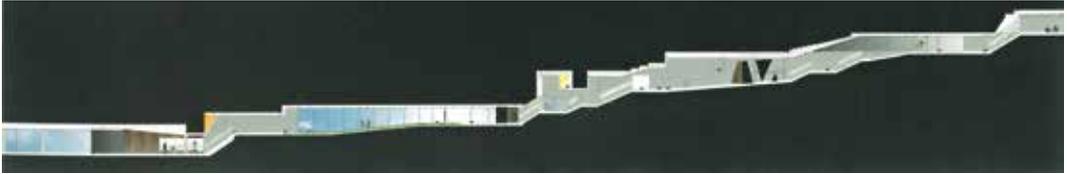
sight-line to the Sputnik(→**90,**→**91**). Further stages in the itinerary are the internet space and the multi-purpose room with a fourteen-meter-high bay window equipped with a curtain bearing botanical motifs. The path also passes by a meeting room housed in a semi-opaque dark gray "sky box" that overhangs the cubic outline at the eighth level, providing a view over the quays and towers of the Fishermen's Island. It continues with two flights of transparent glazed staircases that reveal the internal functions like a showcase attached to the south façade, then passes the amphitheater, the fitness club, the canteen, and reaches its last landing on the *roof terrace* with a panoramic view over the heterogeneous cityscape.

The motion inside the cube is barely traceable from the outside. The façade construction consists of a raster of glass coffers from floor to ceiling, which gives a neutral appearance that barely reveals the ramps, staircases, and height-differentiated spaces. Only the individual "showcases" positioned on the façades and the dark overhanging box above the entrance break through the cubic form. But

these elements remain individual fragments of the curving topology. In contrast, the L-shaped building is enveloped in a semi-transparent structure of perforated aluminum plates that reveal both the supporting elements and the internal organization of five apartments connected by four gangways to the cubic building.

Le Corbusier writes in *Precisions* (1930) that in the Villa Savoye "visitors turn around and around inside, wondering what is happening, not really understanding what they can see and feel. They cannot relate anything here to what is commonly regarded as a 'house.'"[3] Like in other projects, such as the Ville Nouvelle Melun-Sénart and the Maison à Bordeaux, Koolhaas takes up one of Le Corbusier's ideas— "architecture is circulation"—to mean motion is an essential property of space.[4] By way of a continuous trajectory in the Maison La Roche-Jeanneret and the Villa Savoye, Le Corbusier turns the architectural elements into a spatial sequence because by ascending the levels of the building via the ramp one perceives the unfolding of space: "There is a veritable *architectural promenade*, constantly offering varied, unexpected, sometimes surprising aspects. It is interesting to achieve such diversity when one has accepted, from a construc-

[3]   Le Corbusier, *Precisions*, 126.
[4]   Ibid., 47.

tion perspective, a completely rigid grid of columns and beams."[5] He maintains that "the axis is perhaps the first human manifestation; it is the means of every human act. The toddling child moves along an axis, the man striving in the tempest of life traces for himself an axis."[6] Le Corbusier continues that "arrangement is the grading of axes, and so it is the grading of aims, the classification of intentions."[7]

[5]   Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre complète*, vol. 2, 24.
[6]   Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, 205.
[7]   Ibid.

The Pliable Surface as Inside-Out City

The device of an *architectural promenade* as a curving topology that traverses the structure is a frequently used design strategy of Koolhaas. It is an essential element, for instance, in the cross-section of the Dutch House for Two Friends (1988) and in the circulatory system of the Kunsthal Rotterdam (1987–92). Likewise, the extension of the Los Angeles County Museum of Arts (LACMA) in 2001 proposes the "almost Utopian condition" of a single narrative, as if all drifting parts of the continents are put together again.[8]

Another example of trajectory is the entry for the competition for the two Jussieu university campus libraries in Paris (1993), which was, after the Très Grande Bibliothèque in Paris (TGB) in 1989, Koolhaas's second library project (→**92**,→**93**).[9] Yet in contrast to the TGB, the Jussieu library uses an entirely different spatial concept: instead of void bubbles as social areas, the Jussieu scheme provides a continuous "surface as pliable, a social magic carpet; we fold it to generate density, then form a 'stacking' of platforms; minimal enclosure makes it a building – the culmination of the Jussieu network."[10] Within the typical structural grid, Koolhaas generates an area of heightened concentration and density, "a vertical intensified landscape."[11] Instead of the usual stacking of floors, the social space for communication is generated by manipulating the floors in cross-section and turning them into a continuous, seemingly infinite trajectory.

[8]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 126–33.
[9]   Ibid., 79; Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 1305.
[10]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 1310.
[11]   Ibid., 1316.
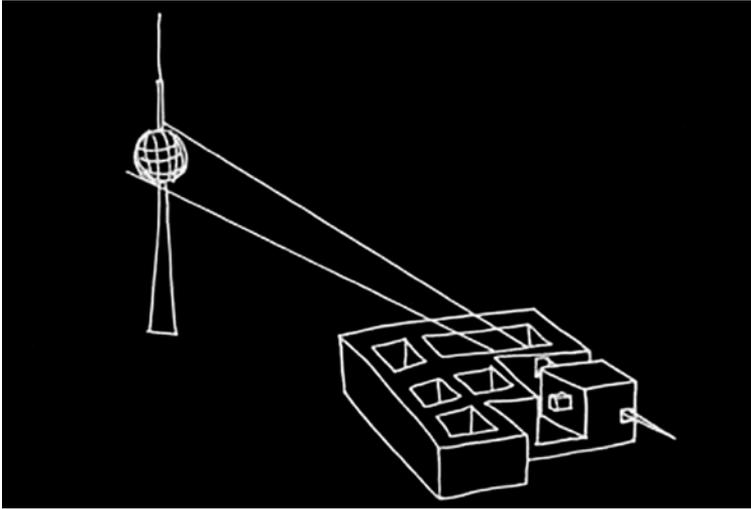
Large parts of the floors are not horizontal but sloping, allowing access to other levels. In *S,M,L,XL* Koolhaas suggests that creating the continuous surface is as simple as folding a sheet of paper, any additional cutting of the paper or the employment of further sheets generates ever-more complex spatial structures (→**94**,→**95**).[12] The section shows that the trajectory of the continually changing floors and ceilings is similar to the section of the Dutch Embassy. Both graphics display the ascending and descending floor levels in relation to the different heights—which are partly caused by its own curving—and express the endless variety of ramps, staircases, narrowings, out-

[12]   Ibid., 1310–1.

looks, and voids. Linking the programmatic elements of the library to a single sequence is central to the idea of folding the individual planes. According to Koolhaas, "all the planes are connected by a single trajectory, a warped interior boulevard that exposes and relates all programmatic elements. The visitor becomes a Baudelairean *flâneur*, inspecting and being seduced by a world of books and information – by the urban scenario."[13]

In *Content's* collection of "Universal Modernization Patents," the concept for Jussieu is described as the patent for the "Inside-out City" (1993): "FOLDING OF 'STREET' TO GENERATE VERTICAL INTERIOR BOULEVARD THAT EXPOSES AND RELATES ALL PROGRAMS IN A SINGLE SEQUENCE."[14] The continuous surface of planes and intersecting floors is interspersed with functional urban elements, such as plazas, parks, monumental staircases, cafés, shops, elevators, escalators, and short circuits that equally support movement and circulation similar to public space outside.[15] Koolhaas refers to the events of May '68 in Paris, when the French government put an end to the construction of the university campus before completion, and the subsequent social deficit that has since emerged. He argues that the design of the Jussieu university libraries should further social encounters to become "communal instead of autarchic," a position that is fundamental for the life of the campus.[16]

Another "Universal Modernization Patent" that abandons the notion of separated levels and uses a continuous surface instead is the "Loop-Trick" (1987) initially applied to the Kunsthal in Rotterdam:
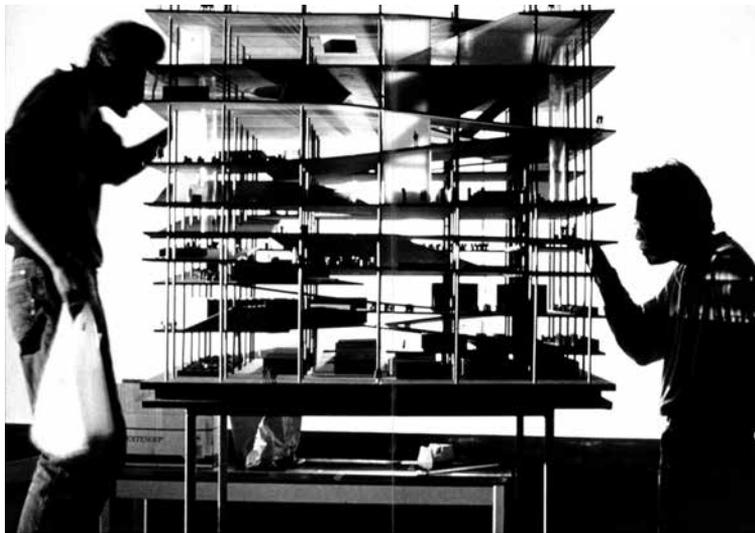
[13]   Ibid., 1320–1.
[14]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 79.
[15]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 1326.
[16]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 79.

planta primera, cota +44.40 / first floor plan, level +44.50

sección planta primera y sección comprimida / first floor section and condensed section

entreplanta nivel Jussieu, cota +39.90
mezzanine, level Jussieu (+39.90)

sección entreplanta y sección comprimida / mezzanine section and condensed section

planta baja, nivel Saint-Bernard, cota +36.50
ground floor, level Saint-Bernard (+36.50)

NIVEAU SAINT BERNARD

sección planta baja y sección comprimida / ground floor section and condensed section

"SYSTEM OF INTERSECTING RAMPS THAT DESTROY THE STATUS OF THE INDIVIDUAL FLOOR."[17] The concept for temporary installations, an auditorium, and a service area is based on a double circuit of two ramps, running parallel but reversed (→**96**,→**97**). They provide a generous circulation area emphasizing the main entrance, which is the point where the two ramps cross. The Kunsthal also refers to site-specific features via a public passageway that connects to the garden on the one side and the main road on the other side. According to Jeff Kipnis, the Kunsthal is a synthesis of modernist models, especially Mies van der Rohe's National Gallery in Berlin.[18] Koolhaas uses the trajectory in the Kunsthal in the same way as Mies sets up the sequence of the program as a means to stress the difference between the city and the space for art. The National Gallery starts with arriving on an empty platform that elevates the visitor from the profane daily life to the realm of art. Subsequently, the pathway enters the empty container made of glass and steel, descends into the underground gallery, and finally exits to the sunken sculpture garden. The visitor passes from standing in traffic, moving through the gallery, to the final almost otherworldly retreat at the end of the journey. Yet, "at Kunsthal art is a major performer, but one among many, in the profane, animating theater of the city, not the last, beleaguered embodiment of the sacred," argues Kipnis.[19] The sequence of the Kunsthal begins, in contrast, in a park, spirals up ramps towards the galleries, where all the while the visitor can look into the galleries and lecture halls through glass walls. Instead of distancing the works of art from the surroundings, Koolhaas contrasts the area of art with the service space by showing both spaces at once. Here in reverse, the ending of the trajectory is not an otherworldly hideaway but a steel-grate platform floating above the traffic.

The third design strategy that refers to circulation in a building is the patent for the "Variable-Speed Museum" (1995) initially applied to

(94) Rem Koolhaas/OMA, Jussieu Libraries, Paris, 1993, cutting and folding of sheets of paper to generate the spatial structures. Source: Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL,* 1310 © 2015 OMA

(95) Rem Koolhaas/OMA, Jussieu Libraries, Paris, 1993, cutting and folding of sheets of paper to generate the spatial structures. Source: Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL,* 1310 © 2015 OMA

[17]   Ibid., 76.
[18]   Kipnis, "Recent Koolhaas," 28.
[19]   Ibid.

the competition entry for the Tate Gallery in London: "USE OF ME-CHANICAL TRANSPORT TO MULTIPLY, DIVERSIFY, AND INDIVIDU-ALIZE MOVEMENT THROUGH A MUSEUM BUILDING."[20] In order to avoid the traditional way of leading the visitor through the exhibition, Koolhaas suggests a less "dictatorial" approach by using a range of different means, such as ramps, escalators, elevators, bridges, and stairs. However, he admits that, though seeking to preclude the great gesture of such a institutional setting, the design of the museum seems to be overtly demonstrative as a kind of high-tech spider-web with 66,000 volts—since it actually is the conversion of an electric power station on a mud bank into an art space.[21]

When Le Corbusier interpreted architecture essentially as circulation, the idea was not entirely new. As early as 1615, Vincenzo Scamozzi characterized "the stairs as the most necessary in buildings, like the veins and arteries in the human body; because just as these serve naturally to administer the blood to every part of the body, so do the principal stairs and the secret stairs reach to the most intimate parts of the building."[22] The architectural term "circulation" is directly borrowed from the circulatory system of the blood in the human body, and it was first applied by Sir William Harvey in *De motu cordis* in 1628.[23] Describing the main physiological components of the cardiovascular motion, he argues that the human blood system operates like a kind of machinery. Harvey's discovery challenged the idea of body heat: in antiquity the difference between men and women was thought to come from different degrees of innate heat, considering male bodies hotter than female bodies, which should make the blood flow through the body. Harvey's notion of circulation within the body

[20]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 82.
[21]   Cf. OMA, "Tate Modern, UK, London, 1994," accessed June 2, 2011, http://www.oma.eu/projects/1994/tate-modern.
[22]   Vincenzo Scamozzi, *L'Idea della Architettura Universale* (Venice, n.p., 1615), 312, quoted in Adrian Forty, *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 89.
[23]   Sir William Harvey, "The Movement of the Heart and Blood in Animals" (1635), in *The Circulation of the Blood and Other Writings*, transl. by Kenneth Franklin (London: Dent, 1963), 1–112.
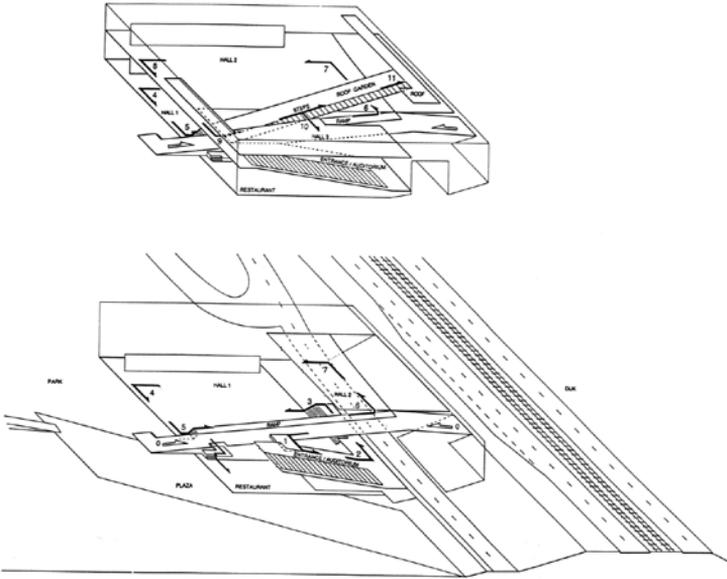
also led to new ideas about goods and money, which were thought to function like freely circulating blood. Analogously, the understanding of architecture as flow within or around a building suggests that the movements of the individuals are like the pulsating arteries. The physiological metaphor can also be applied to the mechanical supporting systems, such as heating and ventilation, although these service circuits remain largely invisible to the user.

However, instead of free circulation through the structure, Koolhaas proposes in the Dutch Embassy a more "dictatorial" scheme, which does not allow for different trajectories but only a single route in the *architectural promenade*. Though it functions as inside-out architecture, capturing views of several monuments of Berlin, the space does not provide a "social magic carpet" of "interior boulevards" (as he promises in "Inside-out City"). Anyway, if only for security reasons, the program of an open space of social encounter would be intolerable in an embassy.

In addition to the movement of the user and the service circuits, Le Corbusier compares the idea of circulation to the movement of the car through the Villa Savoye. He argues: "The car leads right up to the door of the house – indeed, the measurements of the dwelling are based on the minimum turning circle of a car. The car slips beneath the pilotis, turns around the service zone, arrives in the middle, at the entrance of the vestibule, enters the garage and continues on its way for the return journey."[24]

[24]   Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre complète*, vol. 2, 24.

Following Richard Etlin, this sequencing ritually creates a narrative, that is, the drive from Paris to the suburb of Poissy.[25] Likewise, Koolhaas's design of the Dutch Embassy proposes a narrative composed of a sequence of architectural elements, which are not inside the building but dispersed all over the city. But whereas Le Corbusier's plan of the Villa Savoye extends the geographical scope of the narrative by symbolically reconstructing the itinerary from the center of Paris to Poissy, Koolhaas amplifies both the physical and the temporal scope by including the reference to historical events into the script.

The Car as Modernist Sign of Motion and Lived Experience

Koolhaas's strategy of the curving trajectory of the Dutch Embassy is not exactly new as an artistic device to exploit the filmic potential of a historical site. In "Montage and Architecture" (circa 1937), Sergei Eisenstein, who was also trained as an architect, argues that architectural space has a fundamental shared characteristic with cinematic montage, namely the decomposition and recomposition of many shots into a sequence of moving objects.[26] The film spectator follows an imaginary path passing through multiple sites and times. To demonstrate his notion of the cinematic itinerary that parallels the architectural path, Eisenstein turns to the Acropolis in Athens in reference to Auguste Choisy's trajectory. Like Choisy's analysis, Eisenstein's diagrams of the site use the successive positions of perspective views, perceived when walking along the ritual path.

In addition to referring to the trajectory as the modernist theme of motion with the Acropolis, Le Corbusier connects the car to the Parthenon: both are the "two products of selection in different fields, one of which has reached its climax and the other is evolving. That ennobles the automobile … then it remains to use the motorcar as a challenge to our houses and our great buildings."[27] He arranges photographs of contemporary automobiles next to the Parthenon and his own works.[28] In order to achieve higher levels of perfection, the construction methods employed in the automobile industry and their underlying concept of standardization and mass production involve "exhausting every practical and reasonable possibility, and extracting from them a recognized type conformable to its function, with a maximum output and a minimum use of means."[29]

[25]   Richard Etlin, "Le Corbuiser, Choisy, and French Hellenism."
[26]   Sergei Eisenstein, "Montage and Architecture" (1937–1940), in *Selected Works: Towards a Theory of Montage*, vol. 2, ed. by Michael Glenny and Richard Taylor (London: British Film Institute, 1994), 58–81.
[27]   Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, 140.
[28]   Ibid.
[29]   Ibid., 108.

As the car is an inherent theme in modernism, Le Corbusier makes it an explicit component in a large number of his architectural projects and urban planning. The curved façade of the Villa Favre-Jacot in Le Locle, Switzerland (1912), an early work, is designed according to the measurement of the car.[30] With the Plan Voisin (1925), sponsored by the automobile manufacturer Gabriel Voisin, Le Corbusier creates a design concept that unites the new demands of the car and its road network in the city. In other urban projects, including Chandigarh and Bogota, he develops the "7Vs" as seven main types of circulation to organize the flow of the pedestrians and the cars. He also coins a neologism for building elements relating to the automobile, such as the *autoport* in the Unité d'Habitation in Marseilles.

Le Corbusier's fascination with the car does not only imply the notion of motion and speed but extends—in a utopian sense—to the ideas of dislocation and placelessness. Referring to the Citrohan House designed in 1920–22, which is a word game with the name of the French automobile manufacturer André Citroën, Le Corbusier frequently addresses cars and other modern objects, like ships and airplanes. For example, he proclaims that "a house is like a motor-car, conceived and carried out like an omnibus or ship's cabin."[31] On the urban scale he presents the contemporary city as model of a residential cell that can be transposed to any site wherever need-ed.[32] Likewise, he proclaims that the design of the Villa Savoye could be reproduced anywhere other than at the original site in Poissy, for example, in the Argentine countryside, where "twenty will rise from the high grass of an orchard, where cows continue to graze."[33] This type represents the ideal villa that offers the appropriate solution to all kind of climate conditions, site outlines, and dwelling forms. "One will build on the Mediterranean Sea in the same way as one will build in the North. The same construction principle prevails on the North Pole as in the Sahara, as soon as the benefits of standardization will be recognized."[34] This modernist idea of dislocation (implied in Le Cor-busier's notion of movement) can also be connected to the extrater-ritorial status of an embassy as one of its key characteristics and func-tions. The territory is considered inviolable as it is the resident mission

[30]   Deborah Gans, *The Le Corbusier Guide* (New York: Princeton Architec-tural Press, 1987).
[31]   Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, 240.
[32]   Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre complète*, vol. 1, 43.
[33]   Le Corbusier, *Precisions*, 139.
[34]   "Man wird am Mittelmeer bauen, genau so wie man im Norden bauen wird. Das gleiche Konstruktionsprinzip herrscht am Nordpol wie in der Sahara, wenn man den Nutzen der Normung erkannt hat." (transl. by I.B.). Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, *Ihr Gesamtes Werk 1910–1929*, ed. by Oscar Stonorow and Willy Boesiger (Zurich: Verlag Dr. H. Girsberger & Cie, 1930), 43; see also Le Corbusier, *Precisions*, 64, 108; Le Corbusier, *L'art décoratif d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Les Éditions Arthaud, 1980), 72–9; Le Corbusier, *Une maison, un palais* (Paris: Les Èditions Crés et Cie, 1927); Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, 345.

of a particular state in another country and hence can be understood as "transposed" place.

Psychogeographic Mapping of the City

Notions of the subject in space refer to phenomenological concepts coined by Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty that regard kinesthesis as a determining factor for spatial perception.[35] In *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962), Merleau-Ponty argues against the modernist model of space and describes a contingent nature, indeterminacy, and contradictory notions as essential parts of perception: "I know myself only insofar as I am inherent in time and in the world, that is, I know myself only in my ambiguity."[36] Though the objects of imagination are inexhaustible and transcend our human consciousness, and although the contents of experience are constantly changing with bodily movement, we conceive things in terms of constancy in relation to the lived body. Only in perception am I certain of things and hence certain of my existence because I perform acts of perceiving in a spatio-temporal totality. For Merleau-Ponty, the body and the lived experience of this body deny the distance of subject from object and mind from body.[37] Hence, "inside and outside are inseparable. The world is wholly inside and I am wholly outside myself."[38] Merleau-Ponty describes the intertwining of the embodied subject and object: "[This inseparability] does not mean that there was a fusion or coinciding of me with it: on the contrary, this occurs because a sort of dehiscence opens my body in two, and because between my body looked at and my body looking, my body touched and my body touching, there is overlapping or encroachment, so that we may say that the things pass into us, as well as we into the things."[39]

Koolhaas's key design strategy for the Dutch Embassy represents the experience of movement both in the building and in the city. In addition to cinematic sequencing of the narrative, many artists and architects—such as Guy Debord, Constant Nieuwenhuys, Kevin Lynch, and Bernard Tschumi—search for experimental notation systems like diagrams and collages to illustrate what Merleau-Ponty describes as the lived experience of the body in space (**→98**,**→99**).

[35]   The "kinaesthetic" sensations of one's own body are part of the visual field, which he terms the "oculormotor field." Edmund Husserl, *Thing and Space: Lectures of 1907* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997).
[36]   Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge, 1962), 345, 61.
[37]   Ibid.
[38]   Ibid., 407.
[39]   Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 123.

Debord's map of Paris, *The Naked City* (1959), which soon became an iconic image of the early years of the Situationist International movement (in short SI), is composed of nineteen cut-out sections of Paris that are printed in black but linked by directional arrows in red.[40] The observer can easily make out existing historical parts and symbols of the city, such as parts of the Gare de Lyon or the Jardin du Luxembourg. Each segment stands for a distinct psychogeographical atmosphere, while the arrows illuminate the spontaneous directions in which the individual moves that disregard the convenient connections normally governing his behavior.[41]

Debord's split plan describes the process of fragmentation of urban space and its consequences on the social body (→**100**). The paths are incoherent with the familiar directives and serve to subvert the structure of habitual patterns of daily life. The user can experience the changing atmospheres in the different parts of the city, on "the path of least resistance – wholly unrelated to the unevenness of the terrain – to be followed by the casual stroller, the character, attractive or repellant, of certain places."[42]

The Naked City is subtitled an "illustration of the hypothesis of psychogeographical turning points" (*plaque tournante*), a term that usually stands for a circular revolving platform for the turning of locomotives. The analogy between the subject and a locomotive takes up the situationists' notion of restricted individual freedom because the movement of the subject, like the course of the locomotive, is fixed within strict predetermined boundaries. The situationist map of *The Naked City* refers to *The Map of the Land of Tenderness* (*Carte du Pays de Tendre*) that was designed some three hundred years earlier, in 1653, by Madeleine de Scudéry as a game of diversion.[43] The *Carte* does not function as an ordinary map; instead the geographical features of the landscape correspond to an itinerary of emotions (in a love affair). Since there is no fixed and unambiguous way of reading it, both the *Carte du Pays de Tendre* and *The Naked City* make the user choose one direction among many possibilities, in the course of the attachment and in the course of the urban environment. The title for the psychogeographic map is appropriated from the American film noir *The Naked City* (1948). In the Manhattan detective story, the complex structure of the city becomes an obstacle for the main

[40]   Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City*; see also Peter Wollen, "The Situationist International," in *New Left Review* 174 (1989): 67–95, here 87.
[41]   Asger Jorn, "Quatrième experience du MIBI," in *Documents relatifs à la fondation de l'Internationale situationniste 1948–1957*, ed. by Gérard Berreby (Paris: Editions Allia, 1985), 535.
[42]   Guy Debord, "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography," in Knabb, *Situationist International Anthology*, 5–8, here 5.
[43]   Madeleine de Scudéry, *Clélie*, vol. 1 (Paris: Augustin Courbé, 1654); see also Claude Filteau, "Le Pays de Tendre: l'enjeu d'une carte," in *Littérature* 36 (1979): 37–60.
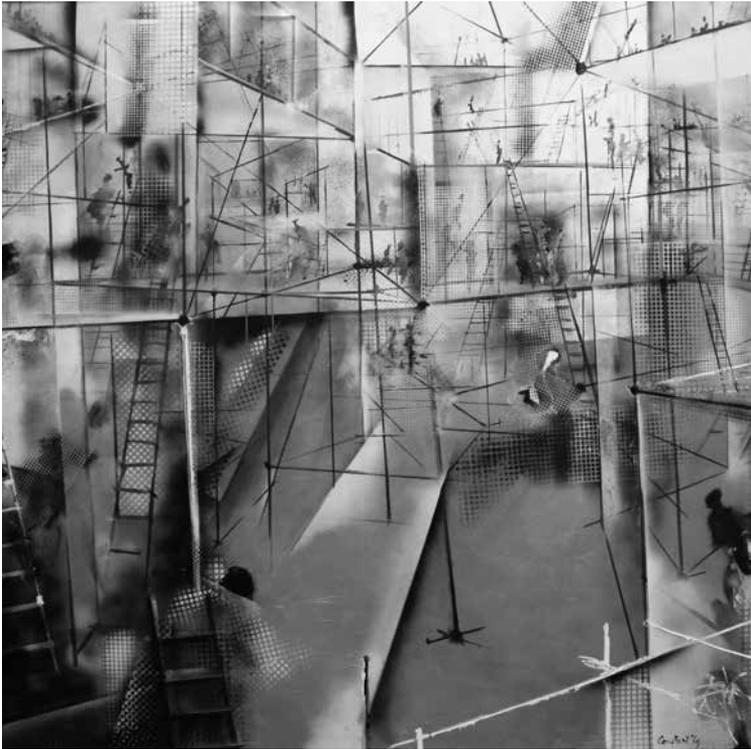
characters to overcome, but at the same time it provides "tiny clues as important as certain obscure physical symptoms are to the trained eye of a doctor."[44] Despite their different nature, both the *Carte du Pays de Tendre* and the film *The Naked City* treat the streets and land-marks as symbols that use tiny clues to lay bare—hence the term naked—the social body of space as an infinite sum of possibilities.

Rather than presenting the city from the traditional bird's-eye view, the situationists abandon the false timelessness of the ordinary city.[45] The successive nature of the city as theater can only be experi-enced as a passage in time so that *dérive* (drifting) and *détournement* (turnabout) become their primary strategy to promote experimental behaviors of inhabiting the everyday realm.[46] The small groups of two or three people, as Debord suggests, consciously embrace chance encounter, since "the real game – the grand game – begins where descriptions cease, being mere passwords granting access to an

[44]   Parker Tyler, *The Three Faces of the Film: The Art, the Dream, the Cult* (South Brunswick: A.S. Barnes, 1967): 97.
[45]   Gérard Berreby, ed., *Documents relatifs à la fondation de l'Internationale situationniste 1948–1957* (Paris: Editions Allia, 1985), 176.
[46]   Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference* (London: Routledge, 1988), 67.
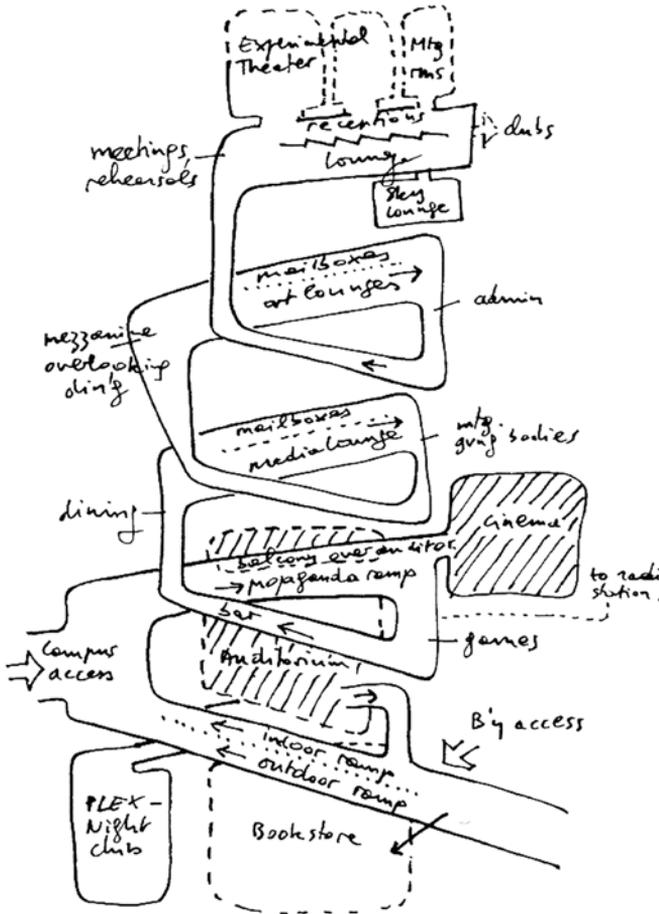
initiation to take place on different terrain."[47] Following the idea of
chance encounters in the *dérive*, a surrealist friend of Debord wan-
ders through the Harz region in Germany using a map of London.[48] In
the mood of a juvenile thirst for adventure, Ivan Chtcheglov declares
that "we drifted for three or four months; that's the extreme limit,
the critical point. It's a miracle it didn't kill us."[49] According to Simon
Sadler in *The Situationist City*, the *dérive* also has its roots in military
tactics, where drifting is defined as a calculated action determined by
the absence of a proper locus, a "reconnaissance for the day the city
would be seized for real."[50]

[47]   Tom McDonough, ed., *Guy Debord and The Situationist International:
         Texts and Documents* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 302.
[48]   Sadler, *The Situationist City*, 78.
[49]   Ivan Chtcheglov, "Lettres de loin," in *Internationale situationniste* 9
         (August 1964): 38–40, quoted in Sadler, *The Situationist City*, 81.
[50]   Sadler, *The Situationist City*, 81.
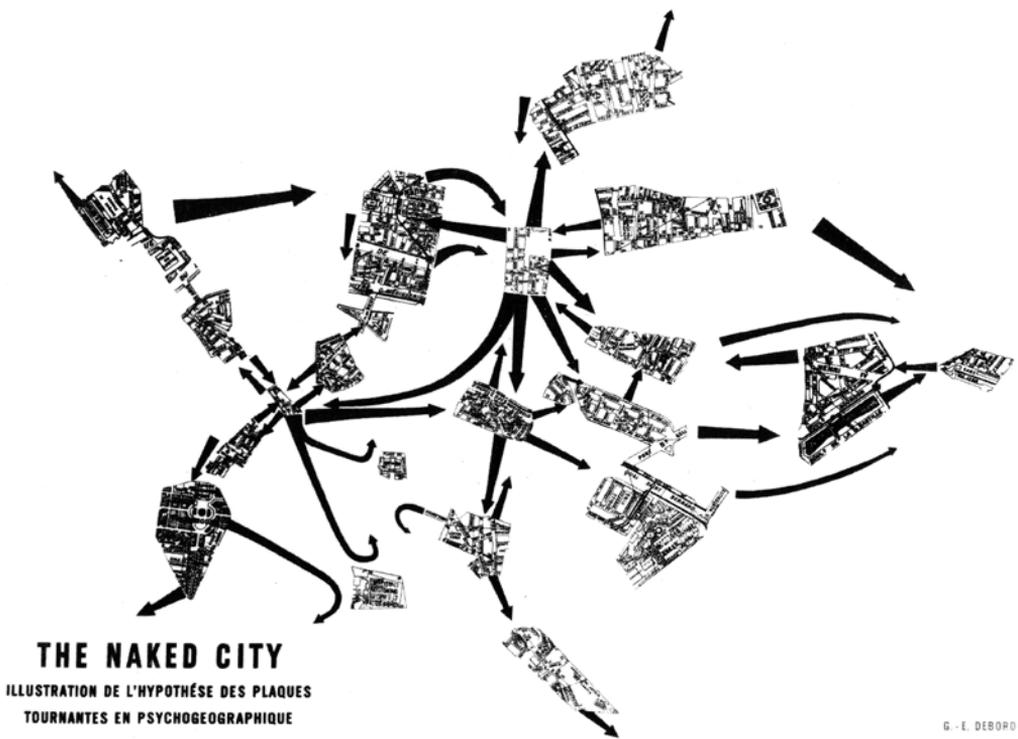
THE NAKED CITY
ILLUSTRATION DE L'HYPOTHÉSE DES PLAQUES
TOURNANTES EN PSYCHOGEOGRAPHIQUE

G.-E. DEBORD

In the Dutch Embassy, Koolhaas's idea of selecting particular historical symbols functions analogously to the situationist method of mapping the city. The itinerary captures the psychogeographical atmosphere of the monuments, which often signify "turning points," and in doing so, it expresses the changing history of political thought in Berlin. This way, it illustrates the repeated redefinitions of the urban identity and the individual that (literally and symbolically) moves in it and re-experiences it. Just as *The Naked City* reveals the hidden agenda of the landmarks, the trajectory exposes the "naked" socio-historical body of the city.

Any differences that are produced by political space are encoded in the space of a normal city map in the visible-readable realm of what Henri Lefebvre calls "abstract space."[51] As Lefebvre points out, the direct, socially lived space has moved away into the mentally conceived, abstract space, which is dominated by the free space of the commodity.[52] The increasing number of railways, boulevards, and other means of transport pierce the city space and diminish the social space of the chance encounter. Hence, despite the fact that the situ-

[51]   Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 355.
[52]   Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black & Red, 1977), 1.

ationists consider movement a fundamental strategy for their practices, they argue that the multiplication of all kinds of transportation eventually makes the street disappear. Consequently, they proposed including houses with constantly open doors and opening the roofs of Paris to allow wandering via connecting footbridges or emergency stairs. In another model, the entirety of the ground level is left to the circulation of communal transportation, whereas the communication space of everyday life ascends one floor. This elevation effect, which places circulation below on a ground floor, should necessarily preserve the floor above for social interaction and more individualized circulation. In another solution, the situationists also propose aerial means of transport like private helicopters. In any case, the practice of *dérive* claims to reappropriate the social space of the city, which has become an evacuated public realm.[53]

Architecture as Event, Transcript, and *Folie*

Several of Koolhaas's and Tschumi's projects represent similar exercises in psychogeographic space, for instance, the entries for the competition of the Parc de la Villette in Paris, as well as Tschumi's Manhattan Transcripts and the Le Fresnoy Art Center in Tourcoing. Their emphasis on the bodily experience of space encourages the notion of architecture as *event*, as activity and sensory, kinesthetic process. According to Tschumi in *Architecture and Disjunction* (1966), "the very heterogeneity of the definition of architecture – space, action, and movement – makes it into that event, that place of shock, or that place of the invention of ourselves."[54] He considers cinematographic techniques essentially architectural ones because they deal with the relationship between the program (which he terms events), architectural space, and movement: "how an 'in-between' space is activated by the motion of bodies in that space … how architecture is about identifying, and ultimately, releasing potentialities hidden in a site, a program, or their social context."[55] Yet, what is the difference between understanding architecture as event and our contemporary entertainment culture? What political and social agenda does the notion of architecture as action and intervention imply otherwise?

In his screenplay series Manhattan Transcripts (1978–82), he uses photographic images that are, in fact, fragments of existing films, such as Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, James Whale's *Frankenstein*, and Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane* (→**101**). Referring to themes like a murder in Central Park or the simulation of amusement on 42nd Street,

[53]   Berreby, *Documents*, 176.
[54]   Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 258.
[55]   Tschumi, *Architecture in/of Motion*, 21.

the diagrams show sequences of horizontal bands as an architectural metaphor for the city's potential.

The idea of relating cinematography to space as invoked in the Manhattan Transcripts returns in Tschumi's project for the Parc de la Villette, Paris (1982–98). Covering an area of around twenty-five hectares on the site of the former slaughterhouse, the design superimposes three independent systems that layer points, lines, and surfaces. The autonomous layers comprise a "series of ambiguous intersections between systems … in which the status of the ideal forms and traditional composition is challenged. Ideas of purity, perfection, and order, become sources of impurity, imperfection, and disorder."[56] Each crossing point of the first layer of points is marked by a *folie* in the form of a cubicle measuring 10 x 10 x 10 meters.[57] Yet none of the *folies* in the park is identical. The red-colored cubicles formally evoke the revolutionary aesthetic of Russian constructivism, but, because they leave behind any functional requirements, they can be used for any activity, such as a café, exhibition space, or store. These *folies*, like the traditional ones, appeal to vanity and entertainment so that the combination with constructivist aesthetics is rather an additional diversion than a critical stance. The buildings of the slaughterhouses of La Villette themselves are transformed into a science museum, called the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie. Dennis Hollier juxtaposes the unseemliness and ugliness of butchering with the cleanliness, purification, and beauty of the museum by referring to Georges Bataille's articles "Slaughterhouse," "Architecture," and "Museum" in the *Documents* dictionary: "A museum is like the lungs of a great city: the crowd floods into the museum every Sunday like blood and it leaves purified and fresh."[58] Yet, at La Villette the grounds of the slaughterhouses are turned into green space, an enclave of workers' holiday pleasure and amusement; this likewise makes room for an educational park of science and industry for the Parisian workers, where "for lack of an animal they kill time."[59]

In the same competition for the La Villette Park, which Tschumi won, Koolhaas put forward a proposal for a cluster of autonomous objects dispersed like "tectonic confetti" onto layers of six different point grids and serial strips. [60] The designs of both Tschumi and

[56]   Geoffrey Broadbent and Jorge Glusberg, *Deconstruction: A Student Guide* (London: Academia, 1991), 17.
[57]   Cf. Jacques Derrida, "Point de folie: Maintenant l'architecture," in Bernard Tschumi, *La Case Vide: La Villette 1985* (London: Architectural Association, 1986), 4–19.
[58]   Dennis Hollier, *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987); Georges Bataille, "Architecture," "Abattoir," "Musée," in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 171–2, 205, 239–40, here 239.
[59]   Hollier, *Against Architecture*, xv.
[60]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 923–5; Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 73.

Koolhaas can be read as applications of the Situationist techniques of *dérive* and *détournement*. Koolhaas describes the parallel bands as a strategy that provides the maximum amount of borders between the strips, which should ensure interference and circulation between the programmatic components. The program is atomized in a number of small-scale confetti buildings distributed across the area, such as playground units, kiosks, and refreshment bars. The concept of a "horizontal skyscraper" for La Villette, like the typical Manhattan skyscraper, is a *social condenser*, that is, a machine to initiate and intensify social events via the architectural setting. But whereas the Manhattan skyscraper is a diagram of spatial discontinuity and separation via lobotomy and schism, the La Villette plan promotes continuity, involvement, and coexistence.

The technique of imposing autonomous gridded layers onto a given site draws from Peter Eisenman's project for the Cannaregio Town Square, a housing competition for a site in Venice in 1978. However, the method deployed by Tschumi introduces an ordering principle that is unconnected to a site-specific impact. Eisenman's idea of layers found in the process of *fractal scaling* is an architectural appropriation of fractal geometry, formalized by Benoit Mandelbrot in the late nineteen-seventies.[61] *Scaling* involves the three concepts of discontinuity, recursivity, and self-similarity in order to produce a deliberately scale-less object, which could be generated wherever and at whatever size.[62] And so, in the Cannaregio Town Square, Eisenman does not relate to the historic urban fabric but to a fictitious site generated by continuing the grid of Le Corbusier's unbuilt Venice Hospital plan. In a next step, he carves voids out of the grid of Le Corbusier's hospital and leaves *absence* instead. Then he sets out a series of identical, self-referential objects, which are a mixture of *scalings* of his earlier project House 11a onto the square. The object of the size of a regular house is filled with additional scaled versions of itself. What Eisenman understands as a kind of archeological excavation does not discover real objects but draws on an invented past to generate traces in that place.

Tschumi's Le Fresnoy Art Center in Tourcoing, France (1992–98) deploys a curving-and-folding mechanism similar to Koolhaas's pathway in the Dutch Embassy and provides another example of a psychogeographical space of events and movement (→**102**,→**103**). Instead of demolishing the existing buildings, which were in poor condition, the design covers the old structures with a large new roof creating

[61]   Benoit Mandelbrot, *Fractals: Form, Chance and Dimension* (San Francisco: Freeman, 1977).
[62]   Peter Eisenman, *Moving Arrows, Eros and Other Errors* (London: Architectural Association, 1986); Aaron Betsky, *Violated Perfection: Architecture and the Fragmentation of the Modern* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990).
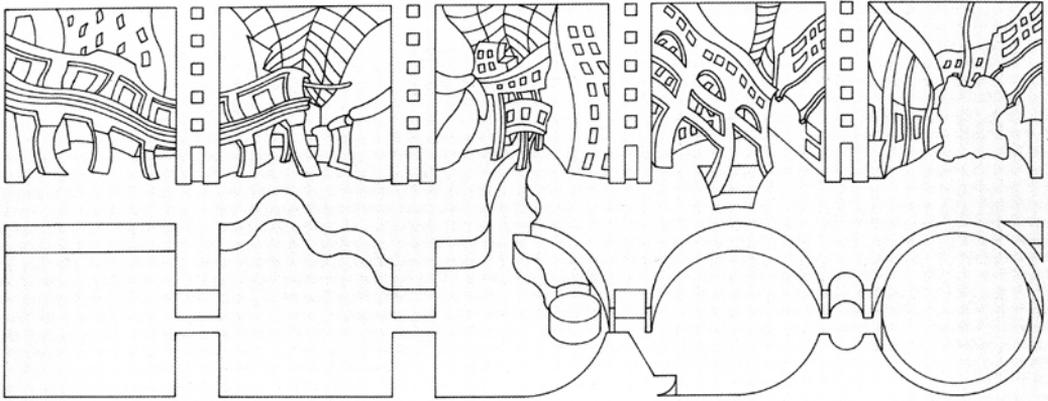
an in-between space under the umbrella-like structure. This zone can be used for both the circulation of the visitors and the technical duct-work. In reference to the old Fresnoy leisure complex as a place of spectacle, Tschumi classifies the space between the new roof and the old tiled roofs below as a circulatory space, consisting of a system of ramps and staircases finished with an ultramarine coating. Additionally, the large roof unites the disparate elements in a kind of cross-programming, which brings to mind Koolhaas's theory of Bigness and its programmatic alchemy.[63] Tschumi himself refers to two collages by Mies van der Rohe, from 1942 and 1953, which also present a large structure as a frame for staging events. The new program for the art center consists of a school, a film studio, performance halls, laboratories, offices, and a restaurant. Nearly all of the existing structures, which date from the nineteen-twenties, including a cinema and facilities for dancing and horse riding, are renovated and connected to the sequence of spaces sheltered inside the vaulted hall.

Like the trajectory in the Dutch Embassy in Berlin, the in-between space of Le Fresnoy expands the event-structure of performance, promoting social activities that exceed the initial, pre-written program. However, any unexpected agenda could lead to all sorts of activism including damage and harmful situations. What richer scope of performance and non-specific events could be engendered other than mere entertainment?

Although an understanding of architecture as event, transcript, layer, and folie claims to reveal the potential and social context of

[63]   Bernard Tschumi, *Le Fresnoy: Architecture In /Between* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1999), 39; Koolhaas, "Bigness," 512.
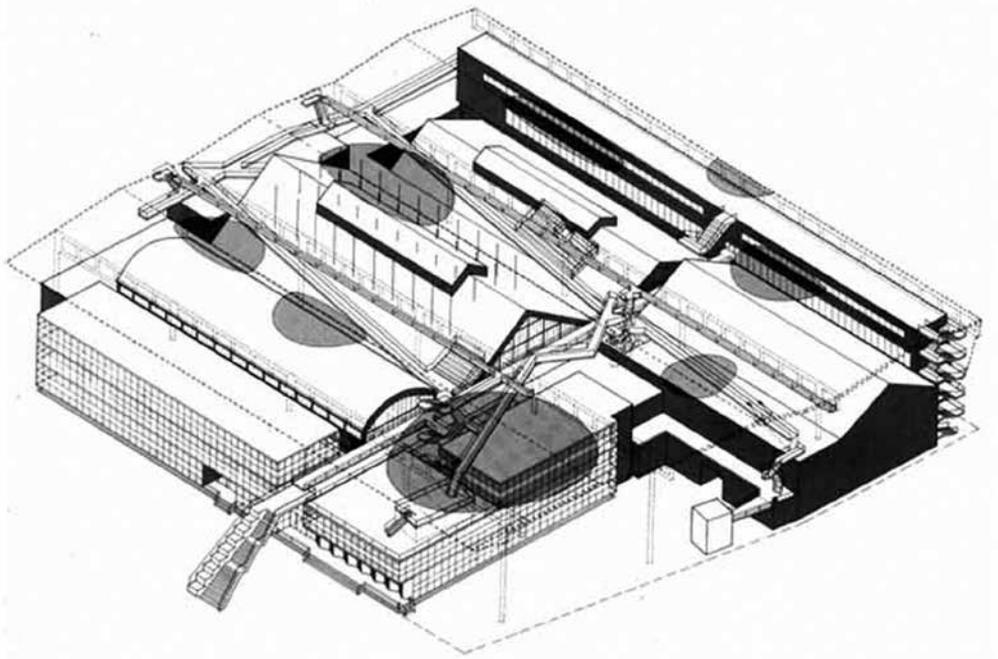
a place, several of Koolhaas's, Tschumi's, and Eisenman's projects are more so metaphorical comments and aleatory design techniques than concrete solutions to an urban site. By contrast, the scheme of the Dutch Embassy offers a concrete proposal of a narrative that does not involve a fictive cluster but that interprets the existing city as a layer of events and reference points.

(102) Bernard Tschumi, Le Fresnoy Art Center, 1992–98, axonometric projection, drawing.
Source: Tschumi, *Le Fresnoy*
© Bernard Tschumi Architects

(103) Bernard Tschumi, Le Fresnoy Art Center, 1992–98, the view of the in-between space between the existing structures and the new steel roof canopy, photograph.
Source: Tschumi, *Le Fresnoy*
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IDENTITY AND AURA, OR THE TRAJECTORY AS HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Historical Aura as Source of Identity

Koolhaas's 200-meter trajectory in the Dutch Embassy, capturing a series of historically significant elements of the city, is intended as a means to "understand Berlin better." [64] For Chaslin, today Berlin "can only signify its own absence as a nation, as an entity, its humiliating dispersion into discordant fragments." [65] The cityscape offers a heterogeneous pattern of residuals and gaps coexisting in the same environment but remaining alien to each other. Everywhere in the urban environment, one is confronted with "its lugubrious past, its trauma … in its ruins, its voids, its incompletion, in its physical scars." [66] Though most nations chose the area around the Tiergarten or the Pariser Platz as the ideal site for their diplomatic representatives, the Netherlands decided to install their new embassy along the Spree, upriver from the Fischerinsel. The former embassy was housed in a building that had been demolished in the thirties to make room for the chancellory building of the National Socialist regime. In Koolhaas's summation, "the richness of Berlin resides in the breathtaking sequence of its successive incarnations: neoclassical city, early metropolis, Nazi capital, modernist test bed, war victim, Lazarus, Cold War hero, etc." [67] Even though the traces of Nazism have almost disappeared in the cityscape, the massive destruction during World War II is clearly still legible. The partition of the city after the war (1949–89) precluded the urban reconstruction of those areas that were destroyed by the bombardments during the final battles in 1945.

Yet, the historical urban fabric was devastated and erased not only by the war itself but also by the ideology of political systems in the decades after the war. [68] As a visual sign of political separation, the Wall divided the city into East Berlin and West Berlin for twenty-eight years, from August 13, 1961 to November 9, 1989. For Koolhaas, the identity of Berlin is associated with "the pressure of shame" and "the obligation to remember, combined with surprising amnesia (where

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[64]   Chaslin, "Psychogeography of a Cube," 28.
[65]   Ibid.
[66]   Ibid., 27.
[67]   Rem Koolhaas, "The Terrifying Beauty of the Twentieth Century," in Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 204–11, here 207.
[68]   Similar to Prince Charles's rejection of modernism in his Mansion House speech, Ernst Jünger claims that "our city centers have been more severely damaged by architects than by bombs. The worst a bomb can do is to damage a building's substance and raze it to the ground, but the architect destroys its essence from the ground upwards," when replacing it with a completely different structure. Chaslin, "Psychogeography of a Cube," 29.

did the wall go?)."[69] The Internationale Bauausstellung (IBA) in 1987 was one attempt by West Berlin's city planning to instigate a coherent city structure. When Berlin again became the capital of reunified Germany in January 2000, this was also a moment of reinventing Berlin as *Großstadt*.

Koolhaas compares Berlin to Rotterdam in terms of history and identity, since "both [are] historical centers; both [were] fertile grounds for their own specific modernities between the wars; both [were] destroyed by the World War II; like Cain and Abel, one good and the other bad."[70] Although Berlin and Rotterdam were rebuilt, their voided centers that were destroyed by Allied bombing are still evident. In the case of Rotterdam, the city center as a *terrain vague* of post-war urban strategies "was replaced by an artificial heart that is empty at the core."[71] But the architects "were blind to the mysterious qualities of this alleged void, especially to its unlimited freedom, [so that it became] another wind-tunnel test executed at the scale of an entire population."[72]

According to Koolhaas, the sources for the identity of a city are mainly in the past and in context with the historical substance. In "The Terrifying Beauty of the Twentieth Century" in *S,M,L,XL*, he argues that "if there is a method in this work, it is a method of systematic *idealization* – a systematic overestimation of what exists."[73] The title of the essay might be read as an allusion to a line in Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Fall of the House of Usher" of 1839: "It was, indeed, a tempestuous yet sternly beautiful night, and one wildly singular in its terror and its beauty."[74]

Every city has a quarter where some historical fragments are preserved, where identity is a kind of mantra. In "The Generic City," Koolhaas argues that "identity is like a mousetrap in which more and more mice have to share the original bait, and which, on closer inspection, may have been empty for centuries."[75] He describes the inflationary value of identity in merely economic terms, claiming that the individual part becomes too small when it must be shared by too many participants. In sharing the historical deposits, identity would simply lose out to the constantly increasing population.

Even more important than the expansion of participants is that the substance itself diminishes, as "this thinning is exacerbated by the constantly increasing mass of tourists, an avalanche that, in a

[69]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 361.
[70]   Koolhaas, "The Terrifying Beauty of the Twentieth Century," 206.
[71]   Ibid.
[72]   Ibid., 207.
[73]   Ibid., 208.
[74]   Edgar Allan Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839), in *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982), 231–45, here 242.
[75]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1248.

perpetual quest for 'character,' grinds successful identities down to meaningless dust."[76] In addition, "pedestrianization – intended to preserve – merely channels the flow of those doomed to destroy the object of their intended reverence with their feet."[77] But when Koolhaas imagines that the identity of a site could be ground down like a staircase made of stone, he looks only at the visual surface of the material used, ignoring any sociological aspect of identity.

However, in "Junkspace," he concludes that "history corrupts, absolute history corrupts absolutely."[78] The site named "Lipservice – also called Afterthought, Too Late, 42nd Street, simply the Village, or even Underground – is an elaborate mythic operation: it celebrates the past as only the recently conceived can. It is a machine."[79] It is as if "history returns not as farce here, but as *service*."[80] The residuals of history are restored, turned into hotels and entertainment facilities that present the past as a kind of service while performing the degrading conditions of "slavery, tyranny, disease, poverty, colony."[81] Most interesting and popular are the sites associated with former excess, misconduct, and sin. Once inhabited by prostitutes, transvestites, and artists, now tourists are fascinated by the unique historic aura. Koolhaas connects the idea of identity and *aura* to places where the history is preserved but changed. The difficulty with resurrecting the historic fragments, then, is that these sites represent inauthentic decoration for tourist destinations instead of the true conditions of the past.

Although Koolhaas speaks of the "systematic idealization" of the existing city fabric so that identity functions like a "mantra" and "mousetrap," he uses these fragments of history as starting point in the design process. Since he claims that to the mass of tourists, history is both a corrupt system and a service facility, how does the Dutch Embassy communicate the identity of the site in a different way? Which architectural elements and tools are used to rethink the relationship between identity and aura?

Koolhaas's understanding clearly differs from Walter Benjamin's idea of uniqueness, authenticity, authority, and distance that withers through mass production. In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936), Benjamin describes the source of power of an artwork as its special *aura*, its "unique manifestation of a distance, however near it may be."[82] But the need of the modern masses to

[76]   Ibid.
[77]   Ibid., 1253.
[78]   Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 167.
[79]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1256.
[80]   Ibid., 1257.
[81]   Ibid.
[82]   Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 222.

take possession of the object in the form of a copy causes the peeling away of the shell and, finally, the destruction of aura. He links the notion of an original that implies the unique physical identity of a traditional artwork to his concept of authenticity. Similarly, Erwin Panofsky stresses the irreproducibility of authenticity when he observes that what a copy "can never convey, and quite sensibly does not in the least wish to convey, is that unanalyzable 'experience of authenticity,' which is a quite irreplaceable ingredient … of the aesthetic act that is consummated before the original."[83] Even the physical changes that the work has endured, such as patina and weathering, are considered essential parts for the experience of authenticity.

The value of the authentic work of art has its origins in magical thinking followed by ritual and religious operations. These beginnings in cultic practice are essential for the aural mode of existence, and this *cult value* has survived as a kind of secularized ritual into the modern era in the cult of art for its own sake. Nowadays the work of art is hidden behind its own veil of the past and is resistant to a present *use value*.[84] The effect of reproduction is to take off this veil of tradition to render it usable in the present. Yet, Benjamin sees the new reproductive technology primarily in its destructive, erosive effect on art and culture. Unlike Benjamin, Carl Einstein understands reproduction as a means for preventing a radical change in tradition. He claims that reproduction, like any form of repetition, generates the illusion of the immortality of things because it provides the objects with a semblance of stability and durability.[85] In a more general sense than Benjamin, Einstein claims that the new technology is a negative factor for generating socially transformative potential, and he considered it synonymous with imitation, tautology, and idiotic reproduction.

To illustrate the decline of aura, Benjamin does not choose an artwork in a traditional medium of art but early portrait photographs because in the fleeting expression of a human face, the aura beckons from early photographs for the last time.[86] The technical limitations of the new, primitive photographs contribute to producing the aural effect of capturing passing moments. But paradoxically, he credits the very same medium of replication for the decay of aura. The concept of aura is then no longer located in a physical thing but becomes a matter of human perception; its focus shifts from the material object to the subjectivity of memory. Marcel Proust distinguishes between the *mémoire volontaire* as a conscious and willed act of remembrance,

[83] Erwin Panofsky, "Original und Faksimilereproduktion", in *Deutschsprachige Aufsätze*, vol. 2, ed. by Karen Michels and Martin Warnke (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998), 1078–90, here 1080–1.
[84] Walter Benjamin, "Goethe's Elective Affinities," in *Selected Writings*, vol. 1.
[85] Carl Einstein, *Werke*, vol. 3, 1929–1940 (Berlin: Fannei & Walz, 1996), 165.
[86] Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 226.

which can easily be evoked by photographs and other clearly identifiable means of recollection, and the *mémoire involontaire* as a spontaneous recollection. For Benjamin, this kind of unwilled memory corresponds to the notion of aura.

The erosion of aura through mass media liberates art from its ritualistic bases and reduces the distance between the individual human body and the medium. The mechanical methods of reproduction are not simply a means of miniaturization, but the reduction in size helps the beholders to "obtain the degree of power over the works without which they could not experience enjoyment."[87] Benjamin remarks how much easier it is to behold works of art, especially sculpture and even architecture, in a photograph than in reality. However, we do not behold the original piece of most works of art we know, but rather see reproductions, either as copies, prints, or photographs of the authentic work. The reproduction of the work of art does not necessarily imply the erosion of the aura; it can also entail the enhancement of authenticity and identity, since the original work might be represented more accurately and in more detail in reproduction than if one could behold it where it is.

When Koolhaas claims that increasing tourism makes the identity of historic substance—and ultimately the things themselves—disappear, he understands the experience of aura and identity as a process of consumption in which "more and more mice have to share the original bait."[88] But increasing the amount of "participants" and the frequency of events, as occurs in reproduction, can also enhance the authority and aura of a work. For instance, one can behold images of Michelangelo's David (1501–04) instead of traveling to Italy to look at the authentic sculpture in the original setting in front of the Florentine Palazzo Vecchio on Piazza della Signora. But since the statue itself is over five meters high and stands on a pedestal, the pictures probably show the sculpture in greater detail including the imperfections in the Carrara marble and the inaccurate proportions of the larger upper body and the head in relation to the lower body. Furthermore, the reproduction also increases the value and uniqueness of the original David and enhances the aura of Michelangelo and Florence likewise. Today one can only see a copy standing in the original site on Piazza della Signora, though, since the original sculpture was moved in 1873 to the Accademia di Belle Arti in order to protect it from weathering and damage.

In effect, Koolhaas's design of the Dutch Embassy addresses the *cult value* of the (more or less significant) historical substance, and

[87]   Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol. 2, ed. by Marcus Bullock and Michael Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 348.
[88]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1248.

it thus transfigures the structures of long vistas into a kind of aural mode of presence. Notably, the itinerary only connects visually to the iconic buildings, instead of touching the substance and "grinding it to meaningless dust." Corresponding to Benjamin's notion of the erosive effect of reproduction, the strategy of creating only a single trajectory through a whole building, which develops a unique sequence of viewpoints, further enhances the impact of the measure. Likewise, the contrast between the cube and the complex trajectory with its variety of architectural elements underscores the historical narrative and the lived experience of the beholder.

Displacement, Appropriation, and Erasure of Identity

Referring to monuments like the Acropolis and the Parthenon, Koolhaas claims that our reality is consumed through the increasing frequency of tourism, which inevitably leads to a Reality Shortage: "as the big toe of a saint's statue gradually disappears under the onslaught of his devotees' kisses, so the Big Toe of reality dissolves slowly but inexorably under perpetual exposure to the continuous kiss of mankind. The higher the density of civilization – the more metropolitan it is – the higher the frequency of the Kiss, the faster the process of consumption of the reality of nature and artifacts."[89]

To illustrate his suggestion, he points out that "through the twenties, as Manhattan is 'removing stone by stone the Alhambra, the Kremlin and the Louvre' to 'build them anew on the banks of the Hudson,' Le Corbusier dismantles New York, smuggles it back to Europe, makes it unrecognizable and stores it for future reconstruction."[90] This notion can be read as an allusion to The Cloisters, which are an extension of the Metropolitan Museum in northern Manhattan's Fort Tryon Park overlooking the Hudson River.[91] The building is, in fact, a collage of a variety of disassembled, authentic elements from five medieval French cloisters, which were reconstructed and incorporated by Charles Collens into a new museum, founded in 1938. To give the impression of the original site in rural France and to ensure the view would be untainted, John Rockefeller, Jr., financed 66.5 acres of a public park north of the museum.

The Chicago Tribune Tower by John Howells and Raymond Hood (1922–25) provides another example of dislocating architectural frag-

[89]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 241.
[90]   Ibid., 257.
[91]   James Rorimer, *The Cloisters: The Building and the Collection of Medieval Art in Fort Tryon Park* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1939); Peter Barnet and Nancy Wu, *The Cloisters: Medieval Art and Architecture* (New York: Yale University Press, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006).

ments from historic sites and assembling them in the New World. The neo-Gothic tower was the winning entry for an international competition, which received more than 260 entries by architects such as Eliel Saarinen, Walter Gropius, Bruno Taut, and Adolf Loos.[92] Howells and Hood's design features more than 130 stones and bricks brought from historical sites, such as the Parthenon, the Great Pyramid of Giza, the Alhambra, the Taj Mahal, the Great Wall of China, the Berlin Wall, and, more recently, a rock from the moon and a piece of steel recovered from the World Trade Center. These pieces, collected by correspondents from their original sites all over world, are supposed to serve as a symbol for the authenticity of the news collected by the journalists.

In contrast, the Hearst Castle, commissioned by the newspaper businessman William Randolph Hearst in San Simeon, California in the late nineteen-twenties and thirties, is modeled after diverse architectural styles from historic sites but was formed mainly without using authentic elements.[93] Instead of dismantling and transferring original pieces from original sites around the world, Julia Morgan's design uses copies of certain ancient buildings to create a new complex of buildings. Charles Moore's Piazza d'Italia in New Orleans (1977–78) provides another form of making use of historical architectural themes that represent a symbolic dislocation or what Charles Jencks describes as a case of postmodern radical eclecticism.[94] Since the piazza should give identity to the local Italian community, Moore addresses the historic rhetoric and the explicit content of Italianness: the fountain is composed of a raised contour plan of the typical boot form of Italy. The surrounding circular façade structures represent the five classical Orders, yet their colonnades differ wildly from the proportions of the historical forms.

Dislocating pagan monuments, disassembling, and reconstructing them on a new distant site is a method of appropriation, which can, however, also imply the reversal of the initial meaning of the objects. When Pope Sixtus V. relocated Caligula's obelisk at Piazza San Pietro and Augustus's obelisk at Piazza del Popolo from 1585 to 1590, he intended to "extirpate the idols exalted by pagans, such as pyramids, obelisks, and columns."[95] In 37 AD the obelisk in St. Peter's Square

[92]   Stanley Tigerman and Stuart Cohen, *Chicago Tribune Tower Competition* (New York: Rizzoli, 1981); Katherine Solomonson and Richard Etlin, *The Chicago Tribune Tower Competition: Skyscraper Design and Cultural Change in the 1920s* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[93]   Victoria Garagliano, *Hearst Castle: The Biography of a Country House* (New York: Harry Abrams, 2000); Virginia Wadsworth, *Julia Morgan: Architect of Dream* (Minneapolis: Lerner, 1990).
[94]   Jencks, *The Language of Post-modern Architecture*, 146.
[95]   Peter Tompkins, *The Magic of Obelisks* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 21, 23, 45; Hans Duerr, *Dreamtime: Concerning the Boundary between Wilderness and Civilization*, transl. by Felicitas Goodman (London: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 71, 284 n. 1, quoted in Jormakka, *Heimlich Maneuvres*, 97–8.

was brought to Rome by Caligula to outshine Augustus and stood on its site on the wall of the Circus Gai et Neronis. When the obelisk was removed and re-erected directly in the center of the square before St. Peter's basilica, an endeavor that lasted from April 30 to May 17, 1586, it had to be "exorcised": the ancient metal ball as a sign of imperial Rome was replaced by the Christian cross. The re-erection of both obelisks aimed to erase the memory of the original places so that they were raised "as the spoils of war won from paganism by triumphant religion."[96] Currently, only eight of the twenty-eight known original Egyptian obelisks are currently in Egypt, the others having been relocated in different parts of the world.

A further project of Sixtus V. with Domenico Fontana was to replan the Colosseum in Rome so that the grounds impregnated with the blood of martyrs would become a silk farm and spinning factory that also would include housing for the workers. At that time the amphitheater was already in a ruinous state and extensively stripped of stone, which had been removed and reused elsewhere. As the Colosseum was assumed to be the center of the world, it was essential to transform it into a sacred monument to Christianity: its oval shape was laid at the center of the figure of a cross so that the extended axis connects the four major basilicas of Rome by lines – San Giovanni in Laterano and St. Peter's in the Vatican, on the one hand, and San Paolo fuori le Mura and Santa Maria Maggiore, on the other hand. Kari Jormakka argues that "the strategic placement of the basilicas could be interpreted as a reconstruction of *Roma quatrata*, so that the city gates at the *cardo* and the *decumanus* are in fact gates to heaven."[97]

Instead of an act of appropriation, the Roman law of *damnatio memoriae*, however, was an even more radical form of establishing power by eliminating the original meaning. By decree of the Senate, the erasure of remembrance was to disgrace certain individuals, and it was carried out in the most literal way possible. The names and figures of that person were removed from all public records, such as monuments, coins, images, and statues; this was completed by re-working the objects or leaving obvious gaps in them. It was intended to cancel every trace of the person, as if he had never existed.[98]

A similar practice of condemnation of memory has also occurred in other societies. For instance, in the eighteenth Egyptian dynasty (1550–1292 BC), Thutmose III mutilated the memory of his stepmother Hatshepsut.[99] Any engravings and statuaries depicting her in the

[96]   Jormakka, *Heimlich Maneuvres*.
[97]   Ibid., 94.
[98]   Furthermore, Maxentius's head was separated from the corpse, affixed to a pike in order to let it parade through the streets of Rome.
[99]   Donald Redford, *History and Chronology of the 18th Dynasty of Egypt: Seven Studies* (Toronto: University Press, 1967); Joyce Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut: The Female Pharaoh* (London: Penguin Books, 1998).

full Pharaoh regalia were damaged, whereas the representations of her as a queen were left untouched. The official history was rewritten, excluding her from regency during the period between Thutmose II and Thutmose III. The deliberate elimination of her name and memory as a Pharaoh also entailed the appropriation of Hatshepsut's Mortuary Temple at Deir-el-Bahri by her successor.

Koolhaas's method of the trajectory of the Dutch Embassy can also be interpreted as an appropriation of disassembled authentic elements, stripped of their actual urban context. Similar to the Bands of the Ville Nouvelle Melun-Sénart, Koolhaas projects a figure of vistas onto the city, which transforms single points into a consistent unity. Although the fragments are not dislocated from the historic site, they are adopted and united by a sequence of viewpoints to become part of a (new) narrative of the Berlin's history.

Projecting National Identity, or The Typical and the Unique

The design of embassies is a key example of national projection through architecture. At their best, embassies help to frame a consistent identity of the nation based on a variety of political, social, and cultural factors. As symbols of the aspiration and values of the people, they contribute in founding and affirming that image abroad. This architecture of diplomacy can reflect both the unique features of the nation's diplomatic mission and the particular situation of its site in the foreign country. In effect, it transmits an image that can set a tone of openness and commitment with the host city, or that can be a demonstration of a self-contained, impenetrable bunker, according to safety regulations (in difficult situations). How can architecture establish and reaffirm a nation's self-conceptualization? Which images do the different buildings project? What is Koolhaas's understanding of the national identities of the Netherlands and Germany?

A common strategy of "national architecture" is to represent the country's unique features and typical landscapes. A case in point is the Finnish Embassy in New Delhi, India, by Raili and Reima Pietilä. It was the winning entry for a competition dating back to 1961, but finally completed in 1986; the architects call it Snow Speaks on the Mountains.[100] The form of the building can also be read in terms of displacement, transposing major national features to an entirely different surrounding. According to the architects, the irregular geometry

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[100]   Raili Pietilä and Reima Pietilä, "'Snow speaks on mountain:' Finnish
              Embassy, New Delhi, India," in *Space & Society / Spazio e Società* 42
              (1988): 6–8; Roger Connah, *Writing Architecture: Fantômas, Frag-
              ments, Fiction, An Architectural Journey Through the 20th Century*
              (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).

of the roof form should bring to mind the unique shapes of lakes in Finland, whereas another interpretation suggests that the irregular roof eaves look like snow-drifts, which are typical in Nordic latitudes. Similarly, Alvar Aalto claims that his work is inspired by the Finnish landscape, such as his Finnish Pavilion for the 1939 World's Fair in New York, in which he actually featured a large aerial image of the typical island landscape.[101] Aalto's perspective drawings for the original competition of the pavilion do not support these readings, though, but rather the idea that the outline of the wavy wall more resembles flags blowing in the wind, which at that time was a preferred image on leftist political placards.[102] Even so, the wooden wall can also be seen as a reference to the Finnish forest industry, which is not only a major economic force but also an important client for large commissions.

In contrast, Peter Behrens's concept for the Imperial German Embassy in St. Petersburg (1911–12) negotiates with the quest for national identity in an entirely different manner, by deploying a monumental classicizing design that should underscore the power of the established patronage of the German state. Behrens used historical paradigms and symbolism, like the Doric order, but counteracted the prototype by reducing the capital and elongating the shaft of the columns. The columns are framed in a wall forming a monolithic whole, which simulates a tectonic structure.

Behrens's industrial buildings also embraced monumental forms, such as his commissions for the AEG Small Motors Factory (1910–13).[103] The factory has a street-oriented façade displaying a colonnade that is—like in his embassy in St. Petersburg—not superimposed upon the wall but rather revealed in the same plane. In addition to the AEG motor factory, Karl Friedrich Schinkel's Altes Museum in Berlin (1923–30) can also be seen as another source for Behrens's St. Petersburg German Embassy. The front of the museum is composed of a monumental colonnade in the Ionic order and set into a frame. The row of columns provides a covered walkway modeled after the Greek Stoa in Athens, and it originally showed paintings by Schinkel. Another example of a colonnade framed in a wall is the Hadrianeum on the Campus Martius in Rome, built in 145. The temple is now in-

[101]   Paul David Pearson, *Alvar Aalto and the International Style* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1989), 180; Richard Weston, "Between Nature and Culture: Reflections on the Villa Mairea," in *Alvar Aalto: Towards a Human Modernism*, ed. by Winfried Nerdinger (Munich: Prestel, 1999), 61–76, here 64; see also Richard Weston, *Alvar Aalto* (London: Phaidon, 1995).

[102]   For example, the Soviet Pavilion at the same 1939 World's Fair presented a painting by Juri Pimenov showing a parade of athletes holding red flags up to the sky. Irina Antonowa and Jörn Merkert, *Berlin-Moskau 1900–1950* (Munich: Prestel, 1995).

[103]   Tilmann Buddensieg, *Industriekultur: Peter Behrens und die AEG 1907–1914* (Berlin: Mann, 1979); cf. Fritz Hoeber, *Peter Behrens* (Munich: Müller & Rentsch, 1913).

corporated into several buildings as part of the enclosed cluster so that only one wall of the temple survived in the original form, facing the Piazza di Pietra (literally the "square of stones"). [104]

Following Edmund Schüler's statement that "the need of the time was subordination," Behrens's monumental form represents an *architecture parlante* because the concept of the building is not something that develops from function but rather that expresses functions by symbolic forms and association to ideas. [105] Behrens himself elaborates: *"Monumental art* is the highest and proper expression of the culture of a time. … Monumental art naturally finds its expression at that point that stands for the people supreme, that captures it most deeply, from which it is move. … An art that one can not caress and clasp to his breast, that forces one to one's knees, that makes us quiver, overwhelms us emotionally by its greatness." [106]

However, Koolhaas's design of the Dutch Embassy presents a new understanding of national architecture, which neither selects any typical and unique characteristics of the country in order to affirm the identity via physical features nor applies a monumental vocabulary in order to establish a symbolic sign of submission. Rather, Koolhaas's intention in the design of the embassy is to "understand Berlin better." Whereas Rotterdam became a *terrain vague* of modernist urbanism, Berlin was carved by the ideologies of the political systems that divided the city into two zones. Within this reading, the trajectory of the Dutch Embassy displays views of Berlin as a symbol of the reunified Germany, instead of featuring typical images of the Dutch national identity. The embassy projects an image of cultural openness and smooth engagement, which is also emphasized by the architectural elements, such as the sequential arrival, the trajectory, and reference to significant points in the host capital.

The Dioscuri Motif, or Standardization and Individuality

The sculpture of two nude males guiding two horses placed above the center of the façade of the German Embassy in St. Petersburg is a version of the Dioscuri motif, the mortal Castor and the immor-

[104]   Samuel Ball Platner and Thomas Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), 250.
[105]   Edmund Schüler, "Peter Behrens," in *Die Kunst im Deutschen Reich* 4, B *Die Baukunst* (April 1940): 65.
[106]   Peter Behrens, "Was ist monumentale Kunst?" (1908), in *Architekturtheorie 20. Jahrhundert: Positionen, Programme, Manifeste*, ed. by Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani et al. (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2004), 48–9.

tal Pollux (→**104**,→**105**).[107] The Dioscuri are also featured in the 1914 Deutsche Werkbund exhibition in Cologne, both in the advertisement and in Behrens's Festhalle, where the monumental group is set above the main portal.[108] The Cologne exhibition is the most extensive endeavor to demonstrate the range of achievements of the Deutsche Werkbund; its main theme is standardization and individuality (*Typisierung* and *Individualität*) with the main figures Hermann Muthesius and Henry van de Velde, who lead an intensely polarized debate on the subject.[109] Behrens's poster for the Werkbund exhibition features a similar classical motif in the shape of a modern Prometheus holding the torch astride the horse of industrial society (→**106**,→**107**).[110]

The mythological theme first appears in Schinkel's Altes Museum, where statues of the twins as a representation of Prussian statehood are placed above the portal but spaced out, flanking the central sector.[111] Kenneth Frampton claims: "While in the Schinkel version (based on the antique *Horse-Tamers*) the heavenly twins Castor and Pollux are barely able to hold their spirited charges in check, in Behrens' group (based on the *Dioscuri* at the Capitol) these rampant beasts become pacified at the hands of *Übermenschen* who, like the horses, are frontalized and stare impassively ahead."[112]

(104) Peter Behrens, Imperial German Embassy, St. Petersburg, 1911–12, the view towards the main facade, photograph. Source: www.commons.wikimedia.org

(105) The Dioscuri at the Piazza Quirinale on the Capitoline Hill, Rome, photograph. Source: www.commons.wikimedia.org

[107]   Karl Kerenyi, *The Heroes of the Greeks* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1959), 105–12; Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 212–3; Homer, *Iliad* in *Homeri Opera*, ed. by David B. Monro and Thomas W. Allen, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1917–1920), 3.236-44; Homer, *Odyssey* in ibid., 11.298.
[108]   Stanford Anderson, *Peter Behrens and a New Architecture for the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 213–4.
[109]   Julius Posener, *Anfänge des Funktionalismus: Von Arts and Crafts zum Deutschen Werkbund* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1964), 199–204.
[110]   Anderson, *Peter Behrens and a New Architecture for the Twentieth Century*, 214.
[111]   John Zukowsky, ed., *Karl Friedrich Schinkel 1781–1841: The Drama of Architecture* (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1994).
[112]   Frampton, *Le Corbusier*, 200–1.

Frampton connects Behrens's sculptural group to that of Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret in their 1927 entry to the competition for the Palace of the League of Nations in Geneva.[113] They similarly deploy a variation of the Dioscuri theme in a monumental sculpture poised over the Secretary General's pavilion in the axis of the assembly hall. But here the sculpture consists only of one man and one horse (surrounded by a lion and an eagle). Frampton argues that "partially returning to the theme – a reference surely to his brief ap-

[113]   Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre complète*, vol. 1, 160–73.

prenticeship with Behrens – Le Corbusier isolates one of the *Dioscuri* and brings both horse and man back to life."[114] Le Corbusier's short apprenticeship in Behrens's office lasted five months during a period in 1910–11; he worked alongside Mies van de Rohe who worked for Behrens from October 1908 to January 1912 and Walter Gropius who worked there from 1907 (or 1908) to March 1910.[115] For Frampton, the sculptural group of the League of Nations headquarter also symbolizes Le Corbusier's fascination with the dual nature of mankind as half human and half divine being.[116]

In any case, Behrens's embassy building in St. Petersburg has been turned into an Intourist office, and the sculpture of the Dioscuri has been replaced by a company emblem. Nearby is the Riding Academy (1804–07) designed by Giacomo Quarenghi, a neo-Palladian architect who established classicism in Imperial Russia. Similar to Behrens's German Embassy, Quarenghi's cavalry school also features a monumental porticus and two sculptures of the Dioscuri, though they are set on both sides of the monumental flight of steps, similar to the Dioscuri at the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana in Rome. Both Behrens's and Quarenghi's designs of classicizing monuments establish a new identity by means of architecture.

[114]   Frampton, *Le Corbusier*, 201.
[115]   Anderson, *Peter Behrens and a New Architecture for the Twentieth Century*, 166.
[116]   Jean Petit, *Le Corbusier Lui-même* (Geneva: Rousseau, 1970), 22–3; J. P. Robert, "Pseudonymes," in *Le Corbusier: une encyclopédie*, ed. by Jacques Lucan (Paris: Spadem, 1987), 316–7.

JUNKSPACE AS THE END OF THE TYPICAL AND THE GENERIC

The Typical and the Generic

Koolhaas's proposal for the Dutch Embassy questions the very notion of identity and character, and outlines a different interpretation of national architecture. He projects a layer of typical historical signs of the city, by staging them as events both in history and in the itinerary within the building. The constantly changing spatial means and surprise moments achieve the uniqueness and complexity of the curving trajectory.

Similarly, in "Junk Space" he argues that, instead of stable configurations, "successive transformations mock the word 'plan.' There is *zero loyalty* – and *zero tolerance* – towards configuration, no 'original' condition; architecture has turned into a time-lapse sequence to reveal a 'permanent evolution.'"[117] By coining the term *zero-degree architecture*, Koolhaas alludes to Roland Barthes concept of *zero-degree writing*, which defines writing as a compromise between freedom and a memory.[118] Barthes proposes zero-degree writing as a kind of writing without rhetoric. He claims that even if the writer makes the most self-conscious and determined attempts at writing freely with a neutral voice, automatic reflexes replace the free choice of words. The author thereby gradually becomes a prisoner and imitator of the words of others as well as of his own words. Zero-degree architecture represents "the plan without qualities" because it has, like the male protagonist in Robert Musil's novel *The Man Without Qualities*, no unique qualities.[119] Equally, Koolhaas's expression of "the generic city" means "the city without (unique) qualities." Though connected to twentieth-century European literature, the plan without qualities is a typical American invention. Referring to a dualism between Europe and America, the typical plan is the essence of the New World. It represents "the discovery and subsequent mastery of a *new architecture* (often proclaimed but never realized at the scale of the Typical Plan)."[120] Hence, he formulates a theory that negotiates with the conceptual qualities of the unplanned, claiming that "it is zero-degree architecture, architecture stripped of all traces of uniqueness and specificity. It belongs to the New World."[121] Beside the two references to America, the term zero-degree implies the notion of America as the

[117]   Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 167. Emphasis added by I.B.
[118]   Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero and Elements of Semiology* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984), 55.
[119]   Koolhaas, "Typical Plan," 336.
[120]   Ibid.
[121]   Ibid., 335.

world of unlimited opportunities. In contrast to the Old World with its historic substance, the New World does not rely on architectural history and "the hysterical fetishization of the atypical plan."[122]

The layout of the typical plan enables the emergence of the skyscraper and the seemingly unlimited multiplication of a given site in combination with the utilitarian exploitation of the supporting system and the infrastructural devices. The distance between the skin and the core, the depth of the building and its contact with the surroundings, is no longer a criterion for the value and attraction of spaces. In terms of construction, the typical and the generic work with the repetition of a simple structural module in the form of a column grid, façade modules, prefabricated partitions, furniture, and air-conditioning.[123] The new perimeters are the rationality, neutrality, and efficiency of the system applied to a given site. The actual shape of the site does not matter any more because the gridded structure can easily be imposed onto any atypical, irregular shape. So the typical plan is ideal for any site, giving orthogonality and program even to the most disadvantaged sites. But what is more, the "Typical Plan is a segment of unacknowledged utopia, the promise of a post-architectural future," because it allows future changes in function and programs.[124]

In a broader sense, he observes a general process of homogenization, in which the individual parts of a system reduce their difference in favor of an increasing similarity with each other. His concepts for the "typical plan" and the "generic city," which are the essence of the modern life, lack identity, determinacy, and stability. Since any future prosperity is essentially unpredictable, the true reasons behind planning—egalitarianism, efficiency, aesthetics, capital—remain obscure. By contrast, the "Typical Plan – by making *no* choices – postpones it, keeps it open forever."[125] Likewise, the generic city tackles "the multiple-choice concept: all boxes crossed, an anthology of *all* the options."[126] The typical and the generic create a system of simple elements that can be used in unlimited multiplication and adaptations: "the Generic City is fractal, an endless repetition of the same simple structural module; it is possible to reconstruct it from its smallest entity, a desktop computer, maybe even a diskette."[127] But the more repetitive, neutral, and unspecific the structure becomes, the less the qualities of the individual buildings can be noticed: "As the module becomes smaller and smaller, its status becomes that of a crypto-pixel. With enormous difficulty – budget, argument, negotiation, deformation – irregularity and uniqueness are constructed from identical ele-

[122]   Ibid.
[123]   Le Corbusier, *Precisions*, 210, 212.
[124]   Koolhaas, "Typical Plan," 336.
[125]   Ibid., 344.
[126]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1253.
[127]   Ibid., 1251.

ments. Instead of trying to wrest order from chaos, the picturesque now is wrested from the homogenized, the singular liberated from the standardized."[128]

Within this view, architecture of the generic city is conceived "no longer through the application of principle but through the *systematic* application of the unprincipled."[129]

Deprogramming the plan generates the most radical type: the Manhattan skyscraper will be the final, definitive typology because "it has swallowed everything else. It can exist anywhere: in a rice field, or downtown – it makes no difference anymore. The towers no longer stand together; they are spaced so that they don't interact. Density in isolation is the ideal."[130] Maintaining a maximum of programmatic freedom, the building no longer has a unique character but rather a universal quality. A conceptual leap for the emergence of new typologies is similar to the conditions of Bigness; the typical plan marks a significant milestone because it primarily operates with the absence of content and identity.

The typical and generic are characterized by the unplanned, the left out, emptiness, and erasure—a concept that undermines the notion of uniqueness and specificity of architecture. In "Imagining Nothingness," Koolhaas insists that only through a revolutionary process of erasure and establishment of liberty zones where all laws of architecture are suspended will the friction between program and containment be suspended.[131]

Koolhaas refers to Atlanta and Lagos as typical examples of the generic city. Since the early nineteen-seventies, when Koolhaas visited Atlanta for the first time, it has developed into a booming city with the headquarters of corporations such as CNN, Coca-Cola, and Delta Airlines. Producing vast new configurations of potential, "Atlanta is a creative experiment, but it is not intellectual or critical; it has taken place without argument. It represents current conditions without any imposition of program, manifesto, ideology."[132] It seems as if the generic city has a certain geographic affinity to the exotic and tropical, and, consequently, there is a large proportion of generic cities in Asia. Although the flourishing greenery of the landscape appears as a main part of the visual identity of the generic city, it is just the residual that holds the single structural modules together. Inclined to a warm tropical climate, it can provide only stability in meteorological terms, in contrast to the instability of its building structure.

[128]   Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 164.
[129]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1261.
[130]   Ibid., 1253.
[131]   Koolhaas, "Imagining Nothingness," 201.
[132]   Rem Koolhaas, "Atlanta," in Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 828–58, here 850.

The opposite principle of the generic city is an agglomeration of Cities of Exacerbated Difference (COED), such as the Pearl River Delta (PRD) with Hong Kong, Macao, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Dongguan, which do not yet form a single city.[133] Instead of a system of generic structural modules in unlimited repetition, "every city in the PRD defines itself in terms of difference from the other cities. At the same time we know that they are destined to form a single urban organism."[134] This highly competitive system is based on the greatest possible difference between the individual parts. It requires a permanent strategic readjustment to maintain the complementary conditions. Koolhaas concludes that "the moment they blur and the identities become similar, the model will lose its vitality and the strategic way in which it operates in the world."[135] Though, such a characteristic is again a condition of Bigness: "Instead of enforcing coexistence, Bigness depends on regimes of freedoms, the assembly of maximum difference … a promiscuous proliferation of events in a single container. It develops strategies to organize both their independence and interdependence within a larger entity in a symbiosis that exacerbates rather than compromises specificity."[136]

Further significant aspects of the typical and the generic are the elasticity and flexibility of its infrastructure. Though calculated for specific conditions, it can be adjusted to unpredictable, future demands. It is actually the non-specificity, indeterminacy, and neutrality of the building that record "performance, event, flow, change, accumulation, deduction, disappearance, mutation, fluctuation, failure, oscillation, deformation."[137] In this way, these buildings create the neutral *background* for *any* activities: "The ambition of Typical Plan is to create new territories for the smooth unfolding of new processes, in this case, ideal accommodation for business."[138] The program for business spaces is the most formless and abstract because "business makes no demands."[139] The typical plan generates the utilitarian conditions of pure objectivity, where "its only function is to let its occupants *exist*."[140] Yet, it is particularly the office space that comprises a rather dense and highly determined program, not only according to

[133] Rem Koolhaas, Sanford Kwinter, Stefano Boeri, and Multiplicity, *Mutations: Harvard Project on the City* (Bordeaux, France: ACTAR, 2000), 280–335.
[134] Ibid., 334.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Koolhaas, "Bigness," 511.
[137] Koolhaas, "Typical Plan," 341.
[138] Ibid., 337.
[139] Ibid. However, the ideal unfolding of business depends on the *exclusion* of all the aspects that relate to the corporeal functions of the human inhabitants. These *impure zones* are thus, as if by a vanishing act, arranged in austere miniature configurations, housing the pantries, toilets, and service areas of the office spaces.
[140] Ibid.

the individual business profile of the company but even more so in line with a number of legal requirements.

For example, Koolhaas describes his project for the competition for the City Hall in The Hague (1986) as "Indeterminate Specificity," providing a scheme for a typical plan on twenty-four floors.[141] The uniform appearance of the façades hides, according to the mechanism of *automonumentality* and *lobotomy*, the flexible inside for continuous changes in program and functions. Although the typical plan is an American invention that may occur in American cities naturally, the design of the Morgan Bank in Amsterdam (1985), in contrast, makes the typical plan more European with the "typical European 50/50 split" between typical/atypical scheme.[142] Basically, it is a negative corner formed by two massive walls, a cornered void that marks out both the Berlage Plaza and the entrance to the abstract office surfaces. Its form connects to the urban context, whereas the interior organization retains a purely utilitarian objectivity.

Junkspace as *Dérive*

Each trajectory in Junkspace is unique, unpredictable, yet arbitrary and directionless. For Koolhaas, these endless, compulsory flows are *dérives*: "Only a perverse modernist choreography can explain the twists and turns, ascents and descents, sudden reversals that comprise the typical path from check-in (misleading name) to apron of the average contemporary airport. Because we never reconstruct or question the absurdity of these enforced dérives, we meekly submit to grotesque journeys past perfume, asylum seeker, building site, underwear, oysters, pornography, cell phone – incredible adventures for the brain, the eye, the nose, the tongue, the womb, the testicles."[143]

The typical and generic schemes producing a functional system of structural modules are clearly inventions of modernism: "[The] product of modernization is not modern architecture but Junkspace. Junkspace is what remains after modernization has run its course or, more precisely, what coagulates while modernization is in progress, its fallout. Modernization had a rational program: to share the blessing of science, universally. Junkspace is its apotheosis, or meltdown."[144]

In such spaces the achievements and inventions of modernism, like hot-air curtains, escalators, elevators, air conditioning, fire shutters, or sprinklers, are employed to produce a continuous but erratic

[141]   Rem Koolhaas, "Indeterminate Specificity," in Koolhaas and Mau,
         S,M,L,XL, 544–96, here 545–7.
[142]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 350–1.
[143]   Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 166.
[144]   Ibid., 162.

trajectory. Junkspace is the "product of the encounter between escalator and air conditioning" in a ceaseless, seemingly infinite space."[145]

Although the typical plan is a space conceived for enabling almost anything by determining almost nothing, most offices mutate, after a certain time, into the smallest ecologies through the assemblage of individual items of identity: "if space-junk is the human debris that litters the universe, junk-space is the residue mankind leaves on the planet."[146] Junkspace is also a place of personal debris, as if "Nietzsche lost out to Sociology 101."[147] The generic city is also a *Merz city* just on a larger scale (even if this comparison is not quite fair to Kurt Schwitters's spatial collage *Merzbau*). Koolhaas continues, "the formerly straight is coiled into ever more complex configurations. Only a perverse modernist choreography can explain the twists and turns, ascents and descents, sudden reversals that comprise the typical path."[148]

The generic city is only the temporary product of "the collision or confluence of two migrations," an unstable foundation of "people on the move, poised to move on."[149] Referring to migration and movement, Koolhaas considers hotels, in addition to business premises, the quintessential generic programs because they became the ideal accommodation for the true metropolitan. The transitory condition is also evident in the provisional materials used. "Verbs unknown and unthinkable in architectural history – clamp, stick, fold, dump, glue, shoot, double, fuse – have become indispensable."[150] He speaks of "a new illiteracy, a new blindness, [so that] only the blind, reading its fault lines with their fingertips, will ever understand Junkspace's histories."[151] Through the extensive use of silicone, the buildings are conceived of as a collage of rather different materials, "glued glass to stone to steel to concrete in a space-age impurity." Significantly, "the joint is no longer a problem, an intellectual issue."[152]

Junkspace engenders disorientation, disarray, and disordered movement in the circulation area to blur the boundaries of the building. The predominance of mirrors, mainly used as glass façades, suggests both multiplication and evaporation of the built. Junkspace is systematically organized into a labyrinthine system of irregular, unthinkable geometry in which the individual is supposed to spend time in aimless itineraries. It is decorated with transparent membranes, sparkling surfaces, all kinds of iconographic signs, emblems of

[145]   Ibid.
[146]   Ibid.
[147]   Koolhaas, "Typical Plan," 346.
[148]   Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 166.
[149]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1252.
[150]   Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 164.
[151]   Ibid; Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1254.
[152]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1261.

franchises, videos on LEDs, and undecipherable codes. Instead of a planned sequence, junkspace is based on cunning because "the more erratic the path, eccentric the loops, hidden the blueprint, the more efficient the exposure, inevitable the transaction."[153] Though unpredictable and random, the paths are "subjected to the most dictatorial scripts [and] the most harshly engineered plotline" of entertainment, consumption, and commercial exchange.[154] They promote "fascism minus dictator."[155] Junkspace hence functions as sealed regimes, concentrations of shopping, gambling, movies, culture, holidays, and transportation, from subway to airspace.

Koolhaas also mentions asylum seekers, a notion which at first seems cynical but certainly has in this regard a kernel of truth. Airports often resemble a kind of refugee camp—as many travelers except businessmen cannot afford the airport hotels and thus sleep in the lounges. It is also well known that homeless people go to airports and railroad stations to stay in the warm and sheltered spaces for a while. Additionally, the airport is, like the hotel, a space of provisional accommodation and a utopian site. Since the airport has become more and more unrelated to a specific city, it not only abandons dependence on the existing structure of the site, but it also replaces both the traditional and the generic city. It has become an autonomous element, a "hermetic system from which there is no escape – except to another airport."[156] It assembles both the *hyper-local* and *hyper-global*, giving "a first concentrated blast of the local identity (sometimes it is also the last)," on the one hand, while depending on the reliability of connections to other airports, the in-transit condition, on the other hand.[157] "Continuity is the essence of Junkspace" so that the infrastructural means join the separated kinds of functional elements and programs together into an intricate organization along a seamless surface. [158]

The pathway of the Dutch Embassy reflects the key features of what Koolhaas characterizes as Junkspace (or "what remains after modernization") after the post-war development of Berlin. Its unique, unpredictable choreography seems to blur the (extraterritorial) boundaries between the interior space (of the Netherlands) and the city environment (of Berlin). Although the trajectory is projected as *dérive*, it is "subjected to the most dictatorial scripts," which aim for the more or less willing submission of the beholder to the compulsory twists and turns of the structure.

[153]   Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 181.
[154]   Ibid., 168.
[155]   Ibid., 166.
[156]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1252.
[157]   Ibid., 1251.
[158]   Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 162.

Derived from the Latin root *genus*, which means race or kind, the term *generic* has, in fact, two divergent meanings. First, the generic signifies the essential general core—the *genus*—of a group, in contrast to the unique properties of an individual or thing. This rank in classification describes a group's common attributes, but the larger and more generic the group is, for instance, the class "being," the fewer attributes it can take in and the less can be determined about its manifold types. This essentialist or typological concept goes back to Aristotle's theory of *species* as a fixed set of natural kinds that find their existence in particular individuals. The species or type is a perfect, paradigmatic example of kinds with common, immutable essences, which refer to the various potentials of the types. Inherent to Aristotle's view is the idea that species are unchangeable and eternal entities. Any variations among the individuals within a discrete species are regarded as accidents and imperfections because only the essence is significant. Following the typological species concept, each individual, thing, or event grows within this specific pattern towards self-realization and maturity as a specimen of its type. This notion of causality refers to the intended function, goal, or final cause generated by the built-in species model in full development.

Second, the generic is also a term for products that do not have a brand name registered as a trademark, for instance, generic drugs that can only be identified by their chemical name. These generic products are often sold as store products or own brands and usually priced below the brand products, even if the generics are manufactured by the same company as the brands and are not of a lesser quality. The packaging of the generic product line has often plain white labels with no brand name or picture on it, only the ingredients, information required for preparation or ingestion, and the UPC code. Often, as in the case of drugs, the generic version can only be manufactured when the patent for the brand product expires. Hence, the generics are often of equal quality and competitively priced as a discount name because research and marketing costs do not have to be included in the price. In line with the economic argument, the consumers of unbranded items care more about price and quality than brand loyalty.

In "The Generic City" Koolhaas contrasts the idea of a site's identity rooted in historical substance with the idea of the *generic* site based on the tabula rasa without any historically relevant context. He argues that "instead of specific memories, the associations the Generic City mobilizes are general memories, memories of memories: if not all memories at the same time, then at least an abstract, token memory … generic memories."[159] Koolhaas conveys the identity of

[159]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1257.

several European cities: Paris can only grow into its own caricature, a hyper-Paris, whereas London continuously becomes less London-like, less determined and fixed.[160] In contrast, "sometimes an old, singular city, like Barcelona, by oversimplifying its identity, turns Generic. It becomes transparent, like a logo. The reverse never happens … at least not yet."[161] Then again in *Mutations* (2000), he subsumes the notion of the "Uncertain States of Europe" (USE) as the "individual or specialized … temporal thickening of local structures"[162] A European city is a highly "original *dispositif*" continuously producing new individual patterns by means of "osmosis, eruption, intensification, expansion, clearing, pulsation."[163]

But he also points out the disadvantages of a well-determined fixed identity, because "the stronger [the] identity, the more it imprisons, the more it resists expansion, interpretation, renewal, contradiction. Identity becomes like a lighthouse – fixed, over-determined: it can change its position or the pattern it emits only at the cost of destabilizing navigation."[164] By referring to the image of the lighthouse, Koolhaas once again returns to an idea from *Delirious New York*. He characterizes the Manhattan skyscrapers as landlocked lighthouses and the Empire State Building as a mooring mast for airships.[165] Both analogies respond to the instability and irrational side of modern life in the city, as if the typical scheme of the skyscraper brings into the core of Manhattan the artificiality of Coney Island, the City of the Fantastic.

Koolhaas also applies the notion of the lighthouse and its surrounding objects to the center of a city and its relationship to the periphery. In historic cities the periphery is subjected to the power of the center, whereas "the generic city is the city liberated from the captivity of centre, from the straightjacket of identity."[166] But instead of this captivity, the generic city does not maintain the distinction between core and periphery; simply because it has no history, its identity can be produced and reproduced on demand. Drawing on Mies van der Rohe's comment on inventing new styles, Koolhaas states that "it can produce a new identity every Monday morning."[167]

His design for the European Flag (2001) is a proposal for a generic framework for the diversity of national identities; it suggests the *barcode* as a new symbol for a united Europe (→**108**). Each member is represented by vertical strips in the specific national colors and according to geographic position from west to east. The scheme im-

[160]   Ibid., 1248.
[161]   Ibid., 1249.
[162]   Koolhaas, et al., *Mutations*, 340.
[163]   Ibid.
[164]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1248.
[165]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 143.
[166]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1249.
[167]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 1250.
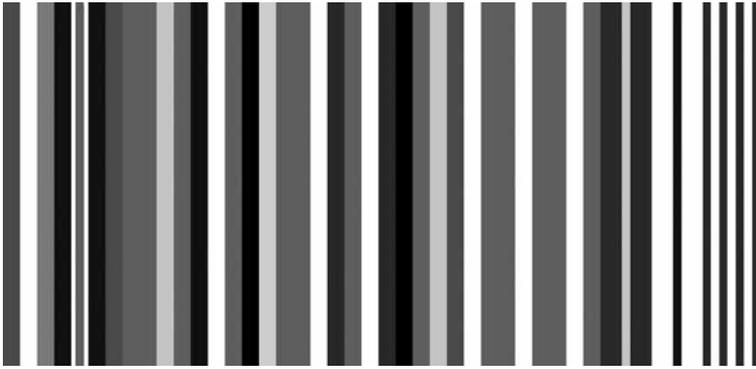
plies the possibility of extending the flag whenever new members join the EU so that they can be accommodated as additional strips of the code. Significantly, the method for preserving the character of the individual member also clearly displays the impact of every new member; this act changes the common identity and appearance of the overall image. The flag is here not a fixed diagram but allows for change without abandoning the specific identity of the barcode. Although the concept embraces the richness of Europe, as reflected in the multitude of languages, Koolhaas also speaks of a kind of *Eurobabel*: the "obligatory use of 11, soon 23 languages, expressing the 'diverse' nature of the EU ad nauseam."[168] In similar negative terms, he and Reinier de Graaf point to Europe's iconographic deficit and visual non-entity.[169] They term the new image of identity "€-conography," representing the powerful economic force of Europe that has up to 500 million inhabitants.

In the project for Prada fashion house and its expansion via flagship stores in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco (2000–04), Koolhaas dealt with the economic force of a highly defined brand seeking an innovative, experimental renewal of its aura. In this project, he proposes two strategies, deploying the *typical* store to communicate the familiar and stable features of the brand and, additionally, the *unique* store as an epicenter for its new face. The uniqueness of the epicenter stores "becomes a device that renews the brand by counteracting and destabilizing any received notion of what Prada is, does, or will become [and that] positively charges the larger mass of typical stores."[170] In a similar way he argues in "Junk Space" that the identity and uniqueness of the "old aura is transfused with new luster to spawn sudden commercial viability: Barcelona amalgamated

[168]   Rem Koolhaas and Reinier de Graaf, "€-conography" in Koolhaas, AMOMA et al.,*Content*, 376–89, here 380.
[169]   Ibid., 381.
[170]   Rem Koolhaas, Jens Hommert, and Michael Kubo, ed., *Projects for Prada: Part 1* (Milano: Fondazione Prada, 2001), 5.

with the Olympics, Bilbao with Guggenheim, 42nd with Disney. God is dead, the author is dead, history is dead, only the architect is left standing."[171] Koolhaas's projects for Prada are examples that contradict his concept of the typical and the generic as strategies providing the maximum of potential, future directions, and unpredictable events. The instability of identity is central to his thesis of the typical; identity is a system that makes no choices and thereby keeps open any possibility. The design for Prada introduces elements such as a runway, a display lift, a triptych of displays, mirror walls, and a peep show of several channels. The most significant of all those elements is the stage called the "shoe theater," which is also the space for public performances. The application of *wallpapers* as changing elements maintains constant invention without transforming the substance. The design tools that were previously identified with the brand, so-called generic Prada store elements, namely the green walls and the glass display cases, are recycled and used in new mutations.

The New York Prada epicenter in Soho, the renovation of which cost $40 million, took over the premises of the Guggenheim extension. Although he critically evaluates the fusing of identities, like Bilbao with Guggenheim or Barcelona with the Olympics, he argues in the book *Projects for Prada* (2001) for *co-branding*. Such a union produces new species of Bigness, such as Prada with Guggeneheim, Nokia and the Metropolitan Transit Authority. It seems that Koolhaas once again draws on his theory of Bigness that embraces the maximum range of options, including the provision of a public space for activities other than shopping, such as hosting non-commercial typologies: cultural events and wasted space without any specific functional purpose.

According to Koolhaas, the use of two different kinds of stores, the typical store and the unique epicenter, should eliminate the imprisoning effect of a fixed brand identity: "common is smooth, unique is rough. … Typical is smooth, invention is rough."[172] The brand conveys *luxury*; it is not shopping but *attention, intelligence, rough*, and *waste*, and the unique store functions as a means for generating *aura, mystery, surprise, innovation*, and *multiple identities*. Indeed, luxury is *stability*, since "massive change makes stability exciting. In order to incorporate stability into a system of continuous innovation (fashion), adopt a model of dynamic equilibrium, maximizing both dimensions to realize paradoxical ambitions. The more stable the brand, the more you change."[173]

Mixing art with business by deploying branding strategies and self-promotion is, like in the cases of Salvador Dalí and Andy Warhol, not entirely alien to artists. For Warhol, "making money is art and working

[171]   Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 168.
[172]   Koolhaas et al., *Projects for Prada*, 60–4.
[173]   Ibid., 66.

is art and good business is the best art."[174] Even further, in "Earning Trust" (2001), Koolhaas connects the regime of economy (the major currencies of the world, the Yen, the Euro, and the Dollar) to the provision of freedom, proclaiming: "On the one hand, it is a regime that sets our parameters, and those parameters are fairly immutable. But on the other hand, it is also a regime that gives us an almost unbelievable amount of freedom to establish our own trajectories within it."[175] Here, Koolhaas describes the global condition of the neo-liberal world economy and its effects on the architectural practice: "Under neoliberalism, architecture lost its role as the decisive and fundamental articulation of a society."[176] He assigns a new limited role to the architect as someone who works in "an unstable ideological environment. What is true today can be completely wrong in five years, and in twenty-five years it's most certainly wrong."[177]

In a similar fashion, Walter Gropius, director of the Bauhaus in Weimar, declared that the architects and designers of the school would need commissions, even if the manifestos had to be modified and revised for potential clients.[178] He identified a leadership role for the architect in social change, defining the architect as social seer who gives form to the transformative processes of modernization. For instance, in 1920, Gropius claimed that timber would be the material of the future, a statement that can be traced to his acquaintance with a local saw owner, Karl Sommerfeld, who commissioned a house made of teak planks that were taken from an old boat. Yet, only a few years later Gropius revised his declaration, after he learned that the craftsmen of the state of Thuringia would not support Bauhaus due to competitive reasons. Hence, he sought to win the backing of industry and, instead of the earlier expressionist style, now made a case for the simplicity of prefabricated building materials, such as steel, glass, and concrete. Similarly, Reyner Banham claims that the use of large glazed walls corresponds to a donation of plate glass given to the Bauhaus.[179]

[174]   Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again* (Florida: Harcour, 1975), 92.
[175]   Rem Koolhaas, "Earning Trust," leture at the D&AD SuperHumanism Conference, London 2001, quoted in Grace Quiroga, *From A to B and Back Again: An OMA Concordance* (Diploma thesis, TU Vienna, 2007), 220.
[176]   Philipp Oehmke and Tobias Rapp, "We're Building Assembly-Line Cities and Buildings," in *Der Spiegel*, December 12, 2011, accessed May 6, 2012, http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/interview-with-star-architect-rem-koolhaas-we-re-building-assembly-line-cities-and-buildings-a-803798.html.
[177]   Ibid.
[178]   Marcel Franciscono, *Walter Gropius and the Creation of the Bauhaus in Weimar* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 40–2.
[179]   Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981), 288.

In the design for the new Dutch Embassy, however, Koolhaas does not use a generic plan such as a typical office structure but a highly individual form that functions as a kind of *dérive* of the city. Likewise, he does not consider the building typical architecture of diplomacy but a structure that focuses on the specificity of both the host city and the "foreign" country of the mission. He also refers to a recurring theme in theoretical discourse by presenting a new conception of types and typologies in architecture. Why is the scheme of the Dutch Embassy for Koolhaas the appropriate typology of the site? What is the new role of typology in context with the city pattern?

The growth of industrial processes of mass production at the beginning of the twentieth century establishes a new understanding of the idea of type. This condition transfers the focus of types from formal compositions to functional methods: modern, functional architecture is understood to provide unique solutions to specific problems in a precise context. That functional principle leads to a new understanding of prototypes and standardized elements. Following the functional doctrine of the modern movement, form is seen as basically the result of scientific methods and analysis that focus on human needs. Calling for scientifically determined factors that automatically generate the design, Hannes Meyer as director at the Bauhaus in Dessau in 1928 maintains that any physical object follows the formula "function times economy." He determines twelve basic functions: 1. sex life, 2. sleeping, 3. keeping pets, 4. gardening, 5. care of the body, 6. weather protection, 7. domestic hygiene, 8. car maintenance, 9. cooking, 10. heating, 11. solar exposure, and 12. service.[180]

In this way, the individual is not only thought of as a rational and autonomous being but, what is more, all individuals are regarded as alike. Just like Meyer, Le Corbusier argues that "all the people have the same needs at the same hours, every day, all their life through. Our needs are ordinary, regular, always the same; yes, always the same."[181] Embracing both the individual building and the new image of the city, these new types are exemplified in Le Corbusier's Dom-Ino scheme, the *Ville Radieuse*, and the Unité d'Habitation; their industrially produced and systematic structures allow for infinite repetition anywhere. The Unité experiment is a large-scale application of the generic framework for the production of dwelling units, using the system to create a variety of types with its own autonomous structure.

In the nineteen-sixties several architects and theorists sought to revive the model of typology as both a design method and as an in-

[180]   Hannes Meyer, *Bauen und Gesellschaft: Schriften, Briefe, Projekte* (Dresden: VEB Verlag der Kunst, 1980), 48.
[181]   Le Corbusier, *Precisions*, 107–8.

strument for cultural memory and signification. Adopting the notion of ideal types, Giulio Carlo Argan's essay "On the Typology of Architecture" (1963) argues that type is a common structural root form that is not a fixed entity but rather a vague, indefinite scheme open to infinite variation in the final form of individual buildings.[182] Typical forms of the past, however fragmented and dismembered of their political implications, are taken to compose new spatial forms with recently invested social meanings. In his essay "The Third Typology" (1977), Anthony Vidler extends the theoretical ideas about autonomous and analogous architecture put forward by Aldo Rossi, such as the project for the City Hall of Trieste (1974), which is understood to refer to an eighteenth-century prison. For Vidler, "the dialectic is clear as a fable: the society that understands the reference to prison will still have need of the reminder, while at the very point that the image finally loses all meaning, the society will either have become entirely prison, or, perhaps, its opposite."[183]

In his article "Typology and Design Method" (1967), Alan Colquhoun claims that the modern movement abandons typology as a logical and consistent system of signification in favor of innovation and transformation of past solutions.[184] Modernists put forward the freedom of expression, imagination, and intuitive working, which is strongly influenced by expressionist theory, such as Wassily Kandinsky's *Point and Line to Plane*.[185] Likewise, modern forms are borrowed from other disciplines like ship design and civil engineering. Colquhoun refers to Le Corbusier's design of the Chapel at Ronchamp, which is not based on typology and the adoption of modules, and yet a "harmony exists between the objects one is dealing with." The chapel is "an affair of plastic events [that] are not regulated by scholastic or academic formulae; they are free and innumerable."[186] But types are also a technique to recover the cultural signification by which our spatial environment and social organization are coded because they are to a certain extent independent of the objective facts of rapidly changing context.

In postmodern theory, typology again becomes a central concept in the sense of something not fixed but vague and indefinite by which change happens. According to Rafael Moneo in his essay "On Typology" (1978), "the type can thus be thought of as the *frame within*

[182]   Giulio Carlo Argan, "On the Typology of Architecture" (1963), reprinted in Nesbitt, *Theorizing a New Agenda*, 240–6.
[183]   Anthony Vidler, "The Third Typology," in Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968*, 288–94, here 293; Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*.
[184]   Alan Colquhoun, "Typology and Design Method," in *Arena* 83 (June 1967) and *Perspecta* 12 (1969), reprinted in Nesbitt, *Theorizing a New Agenda*, 248–57.
[185]   Wassily Kandinsky, *Point and Line to Plane*, (1926, reprint, New York: Dover, 1979).
[186]   Alan Colquhoun, "Typology and Design Method," 253.

which change operates, a necessary term to the continuing dialectic required by history."[187] Although any attempt to restore the traditional typological notion has failed, to understand the subject of type is to rethink the nature of the architecture today. For Moneo, "the architectural object can no longer be considered as a single, isolated event because it is bound by the world that surrounds it as well as by its history. It extends its life to other objects by virtue of its specific architectural condition, thereby establishing a chain of related events in which it is possible to find common formal structures."[188]

With the design of the Dutch Embassy, Koolhaas follows, on the one hand, the modernist paradigm of functionality by solving a specific design task in a unique urban context. On the other hand, he also redefines the idea of typology as a design tool to communicate the memory of that site as he refers to typical historical forms, however fragmented and dispersed they are, and incorporates them as significant features of the composition. Therefore, the site functions as a frame "to the continuing dialectic required by history": by referring to objects invested with political meanings, the building of the embassy itself becomes an urban sign in a chain of events yet to come. Instead of understanding the building as single object, Koolhaas interprets it as one part within a wider frame of signification.

The Trajectory as Diagram of Performance

In contrast to Koolhaas's new interpretation of the idea of typology, many architects, such as the former OMA architect Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos, dismiss typology as an outdated, disagreeable, and deficient model. In their book *Move* (1999), they speak of the *back-to-zero effect* and argue for the hybrid as fusion of disparate elements in "a denationalized, genetically manipulated state of disauthenticity."[189] Since its original features are blurred beyond recognizability, the iconic image of hybridization is the so-called *Manimal*, a computer-generated mutation combining a lion, a snake, and a human face. Though derived from ambiguous and indeterminate characteristics, the *Manimal* is open to different possible identities or imaginations. This way Berkel and Bos argue for a new *inclusive type* of organizational structure uniting all elements in one system.[190] For instance, their UN Studio's project for the International Building Exhibi-

[187]   Rafael Moneo, "On Typology," in *Oppositions* 13 (Summer 1978):
        23–45, here 27.
[188]   Ibid., 44.
[189]   Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos, *Move*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam: UN Studio
        & Goose Press, 1999), 79.
[190]   Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos, *Move*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: UN Studio
        & Goose Press, 1999), 221–5.

tion (IBA) in Berlin Karow-Teichberg (1997) proposes housing types by using a "layered matrix" of individual parameters so that the systematics of specific parts generates a variety of typologies, constituting the three main models of Single and Twin units and a denser Babel block. According to Berkel and Bos, this system promotes efficiency because it can not only embrace any existing past parts but also take in future changes.

To keep a system flexible and changeable can also mean that it has to offer the most neutral solution to a particular problem, which need not be the optimal, let alone the most appropriate, solution. In *Folds, Bodies and Blobs* (1998), Greg Lynn argues that Koolhaas's Jussieu university libraries make use of the principles of the typical plan as proposed by Le Corbusier in his Dom-Ino types but with "urban, political, structural, programmatic, and spatial effects."[191] In the Dom-Ino model only the intersections between the plates, walls, and columns are fixed, "the spaces between those contours can only be described with probability."[192] The structure offers a flexibility and adaptability of space and program that allow the random plan and section of the library. Again, the typical and generic are the multiple-choice concept keeping all the options open.[193] That it is a system apt for infinite multiplication enables a maximum of freedom for the unknown because the "Typical Plan – by making *no* choices – postpones it, keeps it open forever."[194] It thereby a structural system independent of the spatial and programmatic organization, functioning, and the future changes to the building. Koolhaas connects flexible to typical, even putting both terms on the same level. But what is the difference between flexible and typical?

The concept might best be explained with the example of Johann Caspar Lavater's transformative study *Frog to Apollo* (1803), which refers to the evolutionary differences between types by showing a gradual morphological mutation from the amphibium to the ideal man (→**109**).[195] In architecture, however, once the design is decided, even if it is the result of a gradual evolution towards the ideal plan, it becomes one of many possibilities, which are more or less functional, rational, flexible, and adaptable. Additionally, even if a generic form is chosen, it is fixed and determined, and will still follow Aristotle's notion of the most beautiful because it is close to the essence. Hence the individual space is characterized by its distinctiveness and peculiarities, like the individual human face, even if it is Apollo-like with the most beautiful (and perfect) features. Thus the move from typical to

[191]   Greg Lynn, "Blobs (or Why Tectonics is Square and Typology is Groovy)" in *Any* 14 (May 1996): 58–61.
[192]   Ibid.
[193]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1253.
[194]   Koolhaas, "Typical Plan," 344.
[195]   Johann Caspar Lavater, *Physionomische Fragmente*, ed. by Friedrich Märker (Munich: Heimeran, 1949).
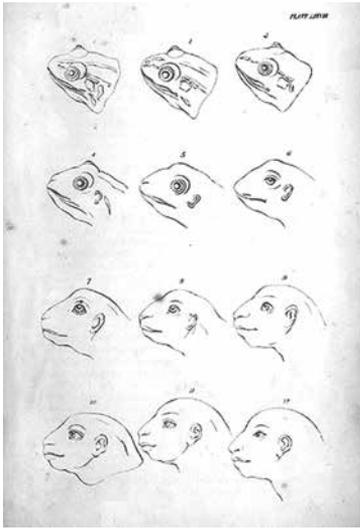
flexible is a major conceptual error because, once the plan is decided, the form itself is no longer flexible. It is not provisional but permanent.

What, then, can be a frame concept for flexibility and changeability? The nineteen-sixties and seventies brought many studies focusing on the provision of a basic infrastructure with a kit-of-parts architecture, such as moveable dividing walls as tools for open, transformable spaces. The notion of flexibility seems to embrace a set of aspects, such as the ability to change partitions, multiple uses of spaces without structural adjustments, and the extendibility of the system. Other projects use a system of open-frame girders that define a generic space in which many activities and programs take place without intervening in the architectural components. All technical facilities, heating, and air-conditioning are housed in the immense servant shed, in the space between the structures, which allows for the creation of a well-tempered environment. Thereby the structural system is entirely disconnected and independent from the content and the spatial configuration. Referring to the economic argument, these projects essentially suggest a basic infrastructure that consists of quickly constructed, cheap industrial structures.

Other proposals of that time involve scattering large generic assemblies across existing cities and the landscape. They include Constant Nieuwenhuys' New Babylon, Yona Friedman's *urbanisme spatiale*, and Akira Shibuya's Metabolist urban structures. In "Bigness" Koolhaas refers to the all-embracing, all-enabling urban megastructures as exemplary, "like a metallic blanket of clouds, promising unlimited but unfocused potential renewal of 'everything,' but [it] never

lands, never confronts, never claims its rightful place."[196] Similarly, Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano's Centre Pompidou (1972–77), which Koolhaas calls the "Beaubourg – Platonic Loft," is seen as a model of flexibility producing "a theoretical average at the expense of both character and precision – *entity* at the price of *identity*."[197] Primarily concerned with leaving the interior volume unobstructed, it moves both structure and services outside to the skin. Its façades present the revealed skeleton with the escalator enclosed in transparent tubes and exposed mechanical ducts. Despite considering the Centre Pompidou a mere demonstration of the qualities of the typical plan, Koolhaas sees its generic space as a means to freedom. His project for the Seattle Public Library provides an example of how architecture can create a frame concept for the infrastructural means, but, in contrast to the Centre Pompidou, it does so inside the skin of the building, leaving unobstructed open spaces that promote both motion and social encounters.

[196]   Koolhaas, "Bigness," 504.
[197]   Ibid., 505.

INFRASTRUCTURE:
PUBLIC LIBRARY, SEATTLE
1999–2004

EXPANDING THE PROGRAM OF SEMI-PUBLIC SPACE

In "Junk Space," Koolhaas claims that because the public realm "costs money, [it] is no longer free[;] conditioned space inevitably becomes conditional space; sooner or later all conditional space turns into Junkspace."[1] The notion of the public realm is connected to an interior space that essentially depends on infrastructural devices, such as air conditioning, escalators, and elevators. This condition leads to an increased "erosion of the Public Domain – replaced by increasingly sophisticated and entertaining forms of the Private … by accumulations of quasi-public substance that, while suggesting an open invite, actually make you pay."[2] With the concept of the Seattle Public Library (1999–2004), Koolhaas uses strategies for creating public space and promoting circulation and social encounter inside the building. He claims that "at the moment when the electronic revolution seems about to melt all that is solid – to eliminate all necessity for concentration and physical embodiment – it seems absurd to imagine the ultimate library."[3] Now the book has to compete with the "explosive multiplication of information media" and new technologies that provide an unprecedented ubiquity based on uncontrollable accessibility to the user.[4] The institution of the traditional library should no longer be defined as a free information store but as a vital public place of encounter in the city. And yet, "the library stands exposed as outdated and moralistic at the moment that it has become the last repository of the free and the public."[5]

As a first step in the design of the building, Koolhaas rethinks the programmatic issue of the public library. This approach is to comb through the original program "reshuffling" and reorganizing the different areas according to similar functions (→**110**).[6] He produces a set of diagrams of programmatic requirements that ultimately consolidates nine areas dedicated to and equipped for certain purposes with specific size and structure. Instead of flexible, multifunctional spaces, the scheme involves spatial compartments defined for a more specific performance within a tailored flexibility. He thus arrives at the diagrammatic section of the library, consisting of five units of *stability* and *regularity*, on the one hand, and four intermediate areas of *insta-*

[1]   Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 162.
[2]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 139–40.
[3]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 606.
[4]   Michael Kubo and Ramon Prat, *Seattle Public Library: OMA/LMN*
        (Barcelona: Actar, 2005), 10.
[5]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 139–40.
[6]   Ibid., 140–1.
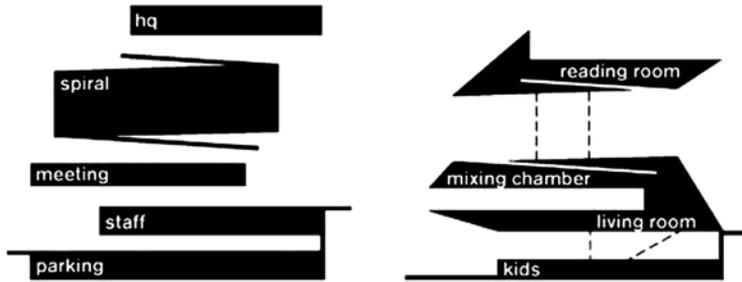
bility and *irregularity*, on the other (→**112**). The five regular compartments are dedicated to the headquarters on top, the book spiral, the meeting level, the staff floor, and the parking at the bottom.

The four irregular interfaces between the stable units function as reading rooms on top of the books spiral, the mixing chamber on the bottom of the spiral, which is also connected by airspace to the living room, and, finally, an area for children and teens next to the entrance. Merging the attraction of the book and other media with social activities, the spaces *in between* should provide *trading floors* for inspiration, work, interaction, stimulation, and play (→**111**).

The Seattle Public Library, as Koolhaas's third project for a new library, combines the strategies of the two previous concepts for the Très Grande Bibliothèque (TGB) in Paris (1989) and the Jussieu Cam-

Fourth Avenue plan

Staff level plan
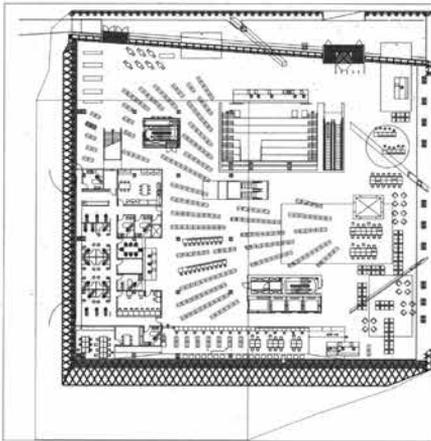
Living Room plan
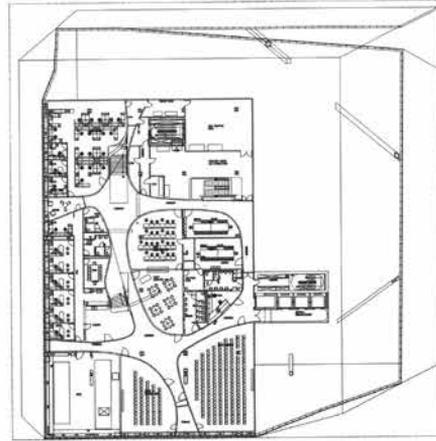
Meeting level plan
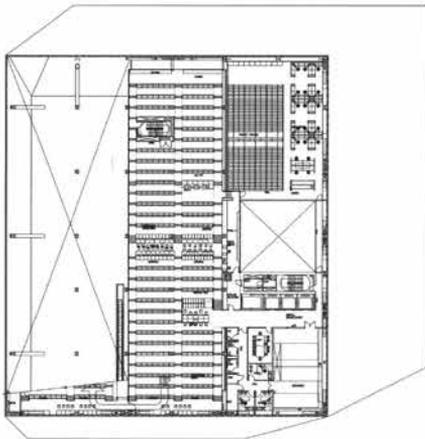
Books Spiral plan (level 6)
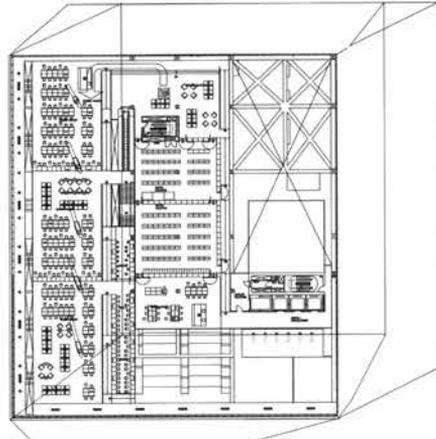
Reading Room plan

pus Libraries, from four years later, also in Paris. They are entries for competitions, proposing for the TGB a scheme of areas of instability and stability and for the Jussieu libraries a system of spatial continuity and circulation. In *Content's* "Universal Modernization Patent Office" the ideas for the two libraries are collected as initial applications ready for future inspiration. First, the TGB represents the "Strategy of the Void II" that projects social areas—such as reading rooms, an atrium, and an auditorium—as *irregular* elements inserted into the *regular* structure of the typical plan. These void zones are *absences* of building carved out of the volume and conceived as autonomous spaces independent from each other and from the envelope.[7] Second, the strategy of the Jussieu libraries is presented as an "Inside-Out City," a folding of the traditional street into a vertical interior boulevard.[8] Similarly to the design for the Dutch Embassy in Berlin, the Jussieu libraries deploy a curving trajectory that turns the whole structure based on the conventional grid into a continuous surface like a "pliable, a social magic carpet."[9] The intersecting planes are furnished with customary elements of the urban realm outside, like cafés and shops.

In "Recent Koolhaas" (1996), Jeff Kipnis argues that the event-structure of the Jussieu libraries draws upon a concept which, by way of the infrastructural setting, exceeds the initial programming of the public library in order to generate conditions for non-specific events: "reductive *disestablishment* provides the crucial stratagem in each of Koolhaas's recent projects, the intellectual *modus operandi* by which the architect begins to transform the design into an instrument of freedom."[10] Kipnis compares the concourse of the continuous surfaces at Jussieu with Le Corbusier's Dom-Ino diagram because its structure projects extendable, free-plan plates for an undifferentiated space. He argues that Koolhaas uses this prototype for social housing, supporting an egalitarian political ideal by mass production, and combines its generic form with the ramping structure of the common parking garage, while the functional elements are like kiosks on a street. Still, "though Koolhaas' architectural notion of freedom never strays far from the realm of politics, its emphasis on experience and its preference for demonstrable instrumental effect over abstract ideality situates it as much in the realm of erotics."[11] Kipnis argues that his revisiting of Corbusian themes is less organized by function than by the fantasies of the voyeur. For this single-surface system, where visitors can gaze secretly at each other, "shatters the ideal horizon line of Domino [sic] and folds the fragments back into the space as an

[7]   Ibid., 77.
[8]   Ibid., 79.
[9]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 1310–1.
[10]   Kipnis, "Recent Koolhaas," 30.
[11]   Ibid., 29.

eroticized web of partial-horizons."[12] By using infrastructural devices, the event-structure goes beyond the functions of the library not only in institutional but also in moral terms, given that "a 'Quiet, Please' sign would seem merely comic as one searched in vain for a proper place to hang it."[13]

The notion of event-structure and its incongruity with planning pinpoints the tension between the organizing of programmatic needs and the performance of the building in full use. Architectural concepts of program are conventionally judged when the building is empty. That preference for empty architecture, undistracted and denuded of activity, corresponds to what Kipnis calls the Garden Principle. By contrast, after abandoning the pre-scripted activities, "the disestablishing mechanisms of the *infrastructural tenet* are a profound threat to the discipline of Architecture as we know it."[14] The strategy of the infrastructuralists is therefore to maximize the level of the event-structure of architecture. In this way, Kipnis's idea of event-structure is comparable to Koolhaas's theory of Bigness, for both aspire to set up the point where internal interactions soar beyond control.[15]

The Diagrammatic Section: The Seattle Public Library

Instead of the non-determined spaces of a *uniform flexibility* that allows for all kind of changes in size, equipment, and structure of the collection, Koolhaas proposes a "compartmentalized flexibility" for the Seattle library. He does not deploy the multiple-choice concept of the typical plan, although he proclaims that planning, specificity, and determinacy reduce future possibility, whereas the instability and indeterminacy of the simple gridded structure keep all options open.[16] But using the typical plan would allow the unpredictably growing collection to encroach on the areas dedicated to collective activity so that the spacious reading rooms would inevitably shrink in the future after the steady addition of bookcases. By contrast, the idea of separating the volume into five *stable* units and four *unstable* units in between uses the diagram of the reorganized functional spaces. For Koolhaas, the attraction of the library as a public social space is the key difference between the library as a public institution and other media resources. What he calls compartmentalized flexibility is therefore based on spatial separation between the stable areas of the collection and office rooms and the unstable zones of interaction such as reading rooms, information points, and the children's space.

[12]   Ibid., 30.
[13]   Ibid.
[14]   Ibid., 37.
[15]   Ibid., 27.
[16]   Koolhaas, "Typical Plan," 344.

Section
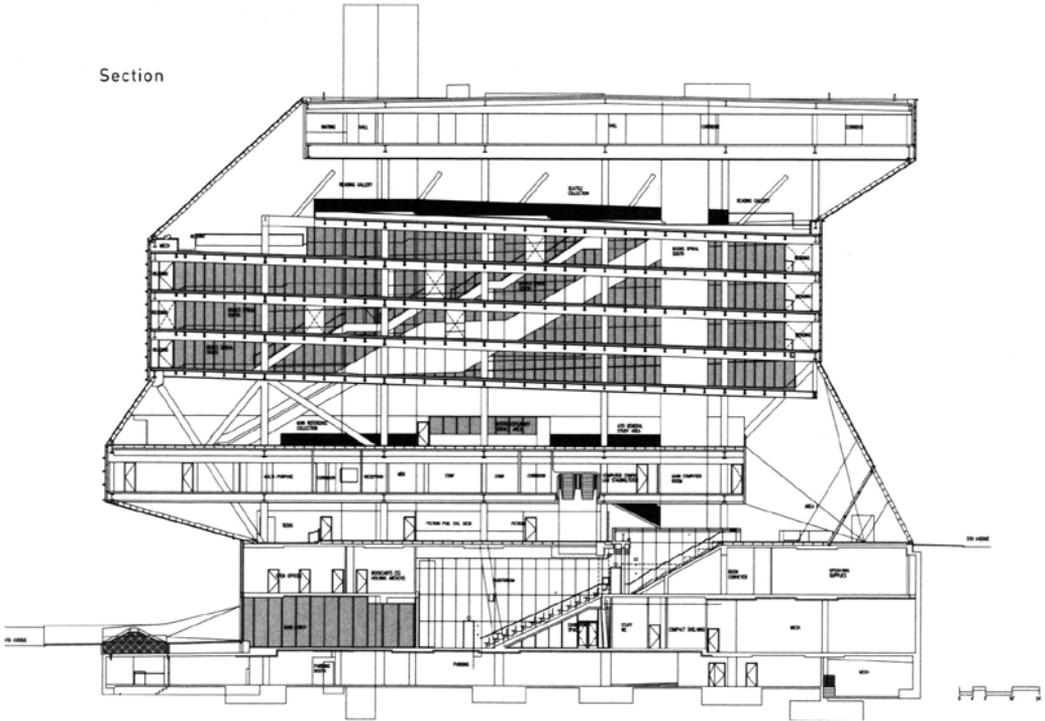
The core of the stable platforms is the so-called book spiral, a continuous ramp gentle enough for wheelchairs and book carts, which winds around through four floors at a gradual slope of two degrees from levels six to nine (→**113**). This strategy is a further element drawn from the previous TGB concept. For Koolhaas, the structure of the continuous spiral is intended to overcome the influences of the classification system's logic and its legibility guaranteed by proximity. Historically, library design reached a situation where "architecture's limitations were therefore imposed onto the organization of the collection," which was now to be hindered.[17] A ribbon running from 000 to 999 guides the collection of books arranged on each side of the sloping ramp, though the system can grow to 1.5 million books without having to add new shelves or dissociate books from their categories in unrelated departments. The four levels of the book spiral also comprise a series of rooms dedicated to specialized functions, such as a collection of maps, a writer's room, a soundproof music rehearsal rooms, and a performing art space.

On top of the book spiral, the reading room is arranged as an unstable zone in a series of terraces, which are oriented northward in order to avoid glare. Providing a 360-degree view of the urban envi-

[17]   Kubo and Prat, *Seattle Public Library*, 120.

ronment, it is the highest point in the building accessible to the public. Only the two floors of the headquarters, including administrative offices and meeting rooms, are placed as a stable unit adjacent to the reading room on top of the book spiral. Beneath the book spiral, the so-called mixing chamber forms a second unstable unit, also known as the "trading floor for information" and "cumulative human and technological intelligence."[18] The mixing chamber is not only the knowledge base for general information but also offers interdisciplinary assistance and competent assistance for efficient in-depth research. The service area is equipped with 132 computer workstations and a dumbwaiter for quickly delivering books and other material from

[18]   Ibid., 38.
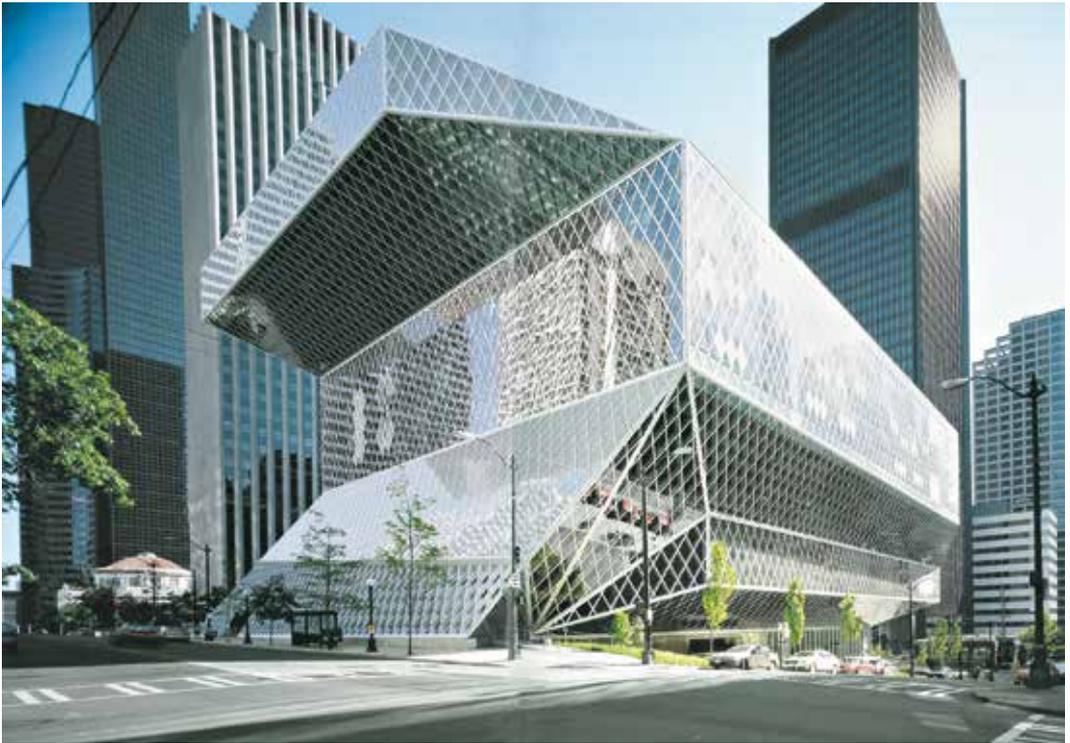
the book spiral. Billboard-sized screens, the so-called information flow, display the latest books arriving in the library, event information, member chat messages, and international news. The librarians are no longer tied to a service desk but roam freely through the mixing chamber, where a particular system of foot haloes illuminates the floor beneath the librarians in order for people to locate them. In addition, all librarians are connected through wireless devices throughout the whole building so that they can immediately consult with colleagues and answer questions on the spot by eliminating the typical process of traveling from one area to another.

Both unstable areas, the mixing chamber and the reading room four floors above, are interlinked by an escalator which is also connected to the middle level of the book spiral, creating a shortcut to the full runs of the ramped floors (→**114**). The device of the escalator provides not only a physical but also a visual linkage to the windows of the reading room. In order to make the circulation system immediately visible from as many areas as possible, both escalators and elevators are color coded in bright green. Additionally, the mixing chamber connects to the so-called living room on level three with its atrium space stretching over three levels.

The living room as the third unstable unit is a generous social space that is immediately accessible from the Fifth Avenue entrance,

(116) Rem Koolhaas/Joshua Ramus/OMA, Seattle Public Library, 1999–2004, the urban context, photograph.
Source: El Croquis 134/135 (2007), 74–75

providing, according to Koolhaas, the "major (and perhaps the only) free public space in downtown Seattle."[19] (→**115, →116**) Escalators lead up to the mixing chamber and the book spiral and down to the children and teens' platform, the auditorium, and the entrance on Fourth Avenue. The living room not only represents an area to sit, read, and browse the collection but also functions as a central meeting place that encourages people from the neighborhoods surrounding the library to enter, simply to sightsee, but also as a place to meet other people, snack, and rest. The space includes the café and the shop, as well as outlets to plug in laptop computers and shelves with periodicals and newspapers and recent library acquisitions. In the teen center, next to the atrium, the users—sitting below one of the two sound domes—can listen to loud music without disturbing the surrounding areas. Between the atrium and the mixing chamber is the level that houses various meeting spaces inside a set of curved forms. The ceiling, walls, and floor have a glossy red surface; a porthole from the escalator leading up from the atrium offers a brief visual connection to this area.

On the level below the atrium—where the main entrance from Fourth and Fifth Avenue is also situated—the fourth unstable zone is located, equipped as a children's area, auditorium, and language center. The expandable auditorium can be used for events such as lectures and performances independent of library opening hours. The

[19]   Ibid., 93.

auditorium can also be connected to the atrium via an openable wall. The staff platform between the living room and the children's space is an area where all the behind-the-scenes life of the daily library activities takes place: the book receiving, sorting, and shipping, as well as technical collection services.

However, instead of stacking the *regular* and *irregular* platforms upon each other like a typical high rise building, they are shifted to respond to specific external conditions. This staggered construction has to deal with the enormous massing of the floating platforms, lateral forces, and seismic integrity. In order to reconcile the structural grids of the different levels but to provide a gravity load path that minimally intrudes into the social areas, scattered slanted columns carry the loads of the platforms down to the level of the parking garage. A completely column-free scheme of the inter-platform areas would have turned the platforms into a forest of steel columns and the envelope of the library into an exterior skeleton. So this solution provides a supporting structure with minimal inter-platform columns and intra-platform trusses. Furthermore, the concept maintains a thin exterior skin consisting of sloping surfaces that are primarily used to

carry lateral forces (→**117**,→**118**). For this purpose, a sixty-degree grid of steel sections spans between platforms in order to resist wind and seismic forces. This primary supporting system is covered with a copper-framed glazing that encases the exterior shape of the building like a single allover structure. For those façades that receive direct sunlight, a metal mesh glass is used for reducing heat gain and glare while retaining the continuous surface of the whole shape.

The shifted scheme provides south-eastwards views from the headquarters and westwards views from the book spiral to Elliott Bay. Additionally, the shifted scheme regulates the different quantities of daylight provided for the spaces in between; for instance, the setting back of the meeting platform generates a shady daylight space in this zone. In addition to being sensitive to conditions of daylight and urban context, Koolhaas's diagram also generates an iconic shape for the section diagram, which is also used as a graphic logo integrated in many kinds of information material, as well as in the elevator and the library homepage.[20]

Stable and Unstable Zones, or The Event-Structure of Semi-Public Space

Michel Foucault proclaims that libraries and museums are heterotopias because they present utopian, unreal conditions in real sites. Whereas in the seventeenth century a library reflected the individual choice and taste of its owner, its institutionalization in the nineteenth century fundamentally changed that condition. Museums and libraries perform a complete break with the common notions of time by presenting different slices in time simultaneously. Foucault further argues: "The idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity."[21]

In a similar sense, the project for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) is described by Koolhaas as a heterotopic site, offering an "almost Utopian condition where the history of the arts can be told as a single and simultaneous narrative."[22] This kind of museum, which allows for cross-circulation between significant historic events and interpretations, is a laboratory of time.

[20]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 139–40.
[21]   Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 22–7.
[22]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 126.

Following Foucault, a central principle of heterotopic sites is that they are not freely accessible like a public place. To gain permission to enter the secluded space, one has to pass a certain ritual. Close to Foucault's notion, Joshua Ramus, the principal designer of the project, opens his essay on the Seattle library with the statement that "the library represents, maybe with the prison, the last of the uncontested moral universes. The moral goodness of the library is intimately connected to the conceptual value of the book: the library is its fortress, librarians are its guardians."[23] Yet, despite representing an unreal, segregated space, Koolhaas's design intends to overcome the separation between the world of daily life and the utopian site through introducing socially shared spaces in the *unstable* or *irregular* elements. The diagram of the section expands the program of the library to make it an attractive public space that includes a variety of additional activities, such as readers advisory, information service, discussion groups, adult education, art exhibitions, and bibliotherapy. Such rooms have become standard features of modern day libraries; but instead of trying very hard to get "customers," it would be more radical to go to those places where the customers normally like to spend their time: real bazaars (shopping centers). However, this way the libraries are becoming malls like other building typologies, such as universities, hospitals, and, more famously, airports.

Although the Seattle Library is strictly speaking not a public space, but a semi-public one like the shopping mall, Koolhaas's notion of *stable* and *unstable* zones recalls Richard Sennett's *The Uses of Disorder*, in which he juxtaposes a purified community and city life with the archaic system of urban disorder.[24] Sennett's ideas of urbanity have many similarities to Henri Lefebvre's view of the event and its political implications for urban space, by seeing it as a forum for discourse, exchange, and the confrontation of difference.[25] He argues that the idea of community and association with a social group in which the members believe to share something with each other creates emotional cohesion and social interaction when "men came to feel a part of each other's lives by virtue of functional tasks performed in common."[26] Referring to Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Sennett defines a new kind of Puritan ethic in the myth of community purity and of a unified identity that entails the feeling of difference towards individuals outside group boundaries.[27] The experiential frame of a youth belonging to the purified community

[23]   Ibid., 138–9.
[24]   Richard Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder*.
[25]   Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, vol. 1 (London: Verso, 1991); Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*.
[26]   Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder*, 31.
[27]   Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905, reprint, London: Routledge: 2001).

is thus kept under control so that new and unexpected experiences, disordered confrontations, and the perception of "otherness" around them are greatly diminished and repressed.

In contrast, the diversity of life in New York is the result of a lack of control in maintaining a coherent social life and the myths of a purified community. However, Sennett disagrees with Jane Jacobs's view that the vitality of small-scale, close relationships between urban neighbors could be restored. He even undermines her claim that dense ethnic inner cities are traditionally stable places, where neighbors get to know each other through common association over years. He argues that, demographically, there has always been a lot of movement from one place to the other so that some factual base other than population stability is responsible for close relationships between neighbors. Sennett opts for a more complex, diverse, and conflicting model with a multiplicity of social contact points that ultimately do not allow for a coherent community vision.

Although there is a fear of the unknown and uncontrolled, leading to repression and exclusion of otherness, Sennett claims that a disorganized, chaotic urban fabric would promote a social change through real interaction. Instead of providing for its adults a homogeneous, tranquil, and *stable* order, a more uncontrolled environment incorporates a kind of creative anarchy that involves intense disruptive experiences, tensions, and *unstable* conditions in everyday life. Yet, the situation does not lead to chaos but to a kind of equilibrium, a functioning yet disordered city that encourages adults to respond in spontaneous and unpredictable ways, an interactive form of urbanity that he considers a precondition for sociability. For Sennett, when conflicts and tensions are allowed in the urban public sphere, the disordered city reinforces permeability and participation across established lines of communities, implying a greater sensitivity of group members to people unlike themselves. However, Sennett's notion of urbanity—the diversity, difference, and instability of the city—rather than furthering interest and exchange can also lead to what Georg Simmel characterizes as the *blasé* attitude, a feeling of indifference towards the constant and overwhelming stimulation of instable metropolitan life.[28] Even so, Koolhaas takes up Sennett's theory of unstable urban space as a model for social interaction to engender new events.

However, Kipnis's understanding of the event-structure goes beyond Koolhaas's concept of expanding the program but rather implies "all the social activities and chance events, desirable or not, that an architectural setting stages and conditions. These include, but are not limited to, the expressed activities of the program."[29] Within

[28]   Georg Simmel, *Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben* (Dresden: Petermann, 1903).
[29]   Kipnis, "Recent Koolhaas," 30 n. 8.

this reasoning, sliding down the escalators with a skateboard could also be considered an event of reductive disestablishment staged by the structural setting of the library. In a similar way to how Koolhaas understands Bigness as the one architecture that creates the new and unpredictable, Kipnis argues: "In political terms, intensifying the event-structure amounts to unaligned activism, to a profligate operation that does not selectively enfranchise so much as it diminishes restriction. When achieved, it muffles a badgering program and distracts the visitor with frissons of danger and excitement as it magnifies the possibility of the unexpected. It should, in principle, stage a richer range of all events – including none."[30]

Kipnis points out that similarly in shopping malls and busy city streets, a high level of incongruity occurs between the program and the event-structure because these areas committed to shopping and circulation far exceed the program, creating public urban spaces of social life.

[30]   Ibid., 31.

INFRASTRUCTURE DIAGRAMS OF CIRCULATION

The Dialectic between Needle and Globe Structure

The Seattle Library provides a vast interior space that should function against the increasing erosion of public space in our contemporary cities. Koolhaas even describes the library as a "last repository" of public space as free space, since the air-conditioned space is, in effect, sooner or later a conditional space that makes the user pay. His concept of a "compartmentalized flexibility," with functionally clearly defined units and open spaces in between, creates a void space enveloped by a single structure. However, his programmatic approach decisively depends on the extensive use of technological infrastructure in order to generate a spacious, yet air-conditioned, semi-public sphere.

The idea of the building as a buoyant sphere that is equipped with many kinds of infrastructural means relates to Koolhaas's theory of Bigness as well as his account of the "needle" and the "globe." In *Delirious New York* he connects the emergence of the Manhattan skyscraper to the fusion of these two opposite structures and traces its development in the three New York World's Fairs of 1853, 1939, and 1964, since each fair was dominated by needle and globe buildings. According to Koolhaas, "the needle is the thinnest, least voluminous structure to mark a location within the Grid. It combines maximum physical impact with a negligible consumption of ground. It is, essentially, a building without an interior."[31] In contrast to the needle, "the globe is, mathematically, the form that encloses the maximum interior volume with the least external skin. It has a promiscuous capacity to absorb objects, people, iconographies, symbolisms."[32] Hence, Manhattanism is "a dialectic between these two forms, with the needle wanting to become a globe and the globe trying, from time to time, to turn into a needle."[33] His design for The City of the Captive Globe in *Delirious New York* can also be understood as another version of the theme of needle and globe.

The needle structure at the first New York World's Fair in 1853 was a 350-foot-high tower built of an iron-braced timber construction called the Latting Observatory; the complementary globe structure was the Crystal Palace. The observatory was equipped with a steam elevator and telescopes and was announced in the fair's official guidebook as the "World's First Skyscraper except for the Tower of

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[31]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 27.
[32]   Ibid.
[33]   Ibid.
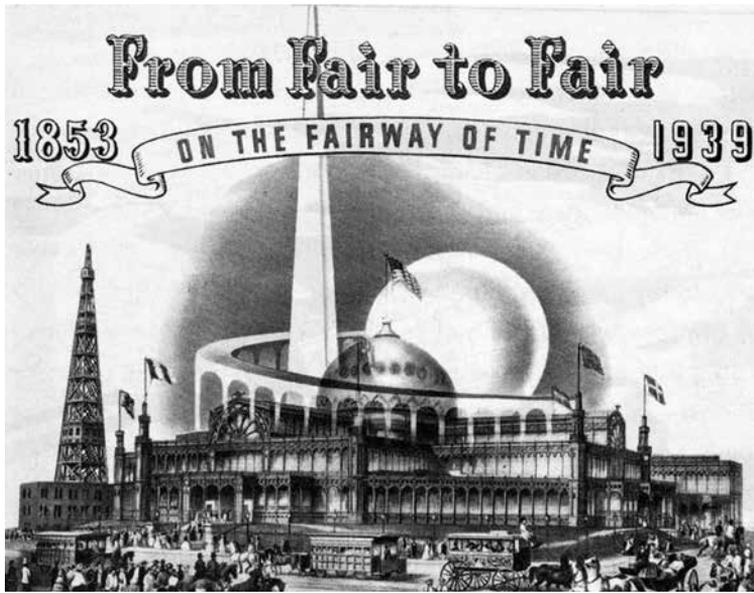
Babel."[34] At New York's second World's Fair in 1939 both elements appear again as the Trylon Tower and Perisphere Globe with a diameter of 200 feet. A promotional image of the 1939 fair shows the two new constructions in the foreground, while the Crystal Palace and the Latting Observatory reappear as a double image in the background (→**119**). Whereas the Trylon is, in fact, an empty space, the Perisphere houses the exhibition "Democracy," designed by Wallace Harrison, which the visitor could behold from two circular balconies. Koolhaas argues that, like Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse*, the vision of a future city is a single 100-story skyscraper standing in a park-like area: a *garden city of tomorrow*, where the tower is not set in an urban grid but in a meadow (→**120**,→**121**).[35]

At the third World's Fair in 1964, the globe reappears as the Unisphere, that looked, in Koolhaas's words, "like charred pork chops." 120 feet in diameter, the structure consists only of an open grid of latitudes and longitudes that carry the shields of the land masses (→**122**).[36] In contrast to the first two spheres, this globe is an inaccessible and ghostlike sculpture with no evident interior space.[37] For Koolhaas, the dialectic between the two forms, as expressed in the typology of the skyscraper, is anticipated by Samuel Friede's 700-foot-high Globe Tower project, 1906 (→**123**). It is a colossal sphere also claiming to be a tower: the globe as the needle. This cross-fertilization

[34]   Frank Monaghan, *Official Guidebook: New York World's Fair* (New York: Exposition Publications, 1939).
[35]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 283–4.
[36]   Ibid., 290–1.
[37]   Ibid.

creates a hybrid that combines the attractions of both, the needle's calling for attention and the sphere's receptivity. Advertised as the greatest amusement enterprise in the whole world for more than 50,000 people at a time, it was to rest on a gigantic steel socle similar to that of the Eiffel Tower.[38] Several elevators penetrate the exterior shape to connect to the transport system underground, which comprises not only a parking garage and a subway station but also a sea connection with a pier for boats. Notably, the Globe project was to be located on Coney Island, which was New York's amusement park,

[38]   Ibid., 71.

a synthetic city with an illusory night skyline created by thousands of electric lights.[39] For Koolhaas, Coney Island represents the other fantastical side of Manhattan; he also calls it the "Metropolis of the Irrational" and "embryonic Manhattan."[40] However, in the end after two completed socles and preliminary work on the steel construction, it was clear by 1908 that it would be impossible to realize the ambitious project.

Koolhaas's entry for the competition in 1988 for the Sea Terminal in Zeebrugge, Belgium, adopts the principle of Manhattanism in terms of maximizing the urban site through reproduction (→**124**). Both programmatically and formally, the form of the terminal is derived from the Globe Tower projects by combining a sphere with a cone—or a buoy with a lighthouse.[41] As an alternative to the tunnel under the English Channel, it provides a gigantic interior space that is busy with multilevel interchanges of numerous means of transport (→**125**,→**126**). Koolhaas describes the project as a hopeful sign for "Europe's new ambition: its different tribes – the users of the terminal – embarking on a unified future."[42]

The building is a kind of "sorting machine" that has to organize a steady flow of traffic to and from the ferries, the bus station, the pedestrian access, and the parking garage.[43] In addition to sorting the traffic flow, the terminal's program accommodates offices, a ho-

[39]   Ibid., 30.
[40]   Ibid., 63, 28.
[41]   Koolhaas points out that the form of the shape is derived from the head of a mannequin that was in the office at the time of the competition. Thomas Fisher, "Rem Koolhaas and the Office of Metropolitan Architecture Explore the Arbitrariness of Form in These Three Recent Projects," quoted in Quiroga, *From A to B and Back Again*, 222.
[42]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 581.
[43]   Koolhaas, "Working Babel," 587.
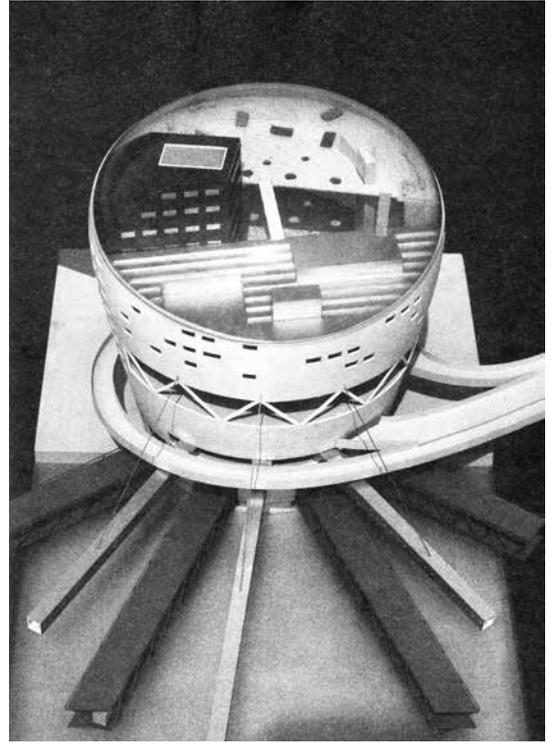
tel, services, an amphitheater, and a casino. Similar to the vast open space in the Seattle library, the various functions of the sea terminal are arranged beneath a gigantic glass surface covering the building.

Koolhaas used Pieter Bruegel's painting *Tower of Babel* upside-down as a frontispiece to the project, calling the sea terminal Working Babel.[44] He reasons that, while the first proposal for the structural system by engineers Ove Arup represents a construction that would be a spectacle, the second construction technique would project "imperceptible progress [so that] the workers would visibly age during the course of construction; children would become adults as the building remained stubbornly unfinished."[45] The buoyant form of the Zeebrugge Sea Terminal is one of Koolhaas's projects that represents what Robert Somol best describes as the principle of shape.[46]

Somol constructs an opposition between the essential, abstract qualities of *form* and the contingent, atmospheric, and performative properties of *shape*. In addition to the Seattle Library and the Zeebrugge Sea Terminal, the Casa da Musica in Porto (1999–2005)

[44]   Ibid., 579.
[45]   Ibid., 601.
[46]   Robert Somol, "12 Reasons to Get Back into Shape," in Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 86–7.

(125) Rem Koolhaas/Joshua Ramus/OMA, Seattle Public Library, 1999–2004, the multi-storey reception zone, photograph. Source: Kubo and Prat, *Seattle Public Library*, 12
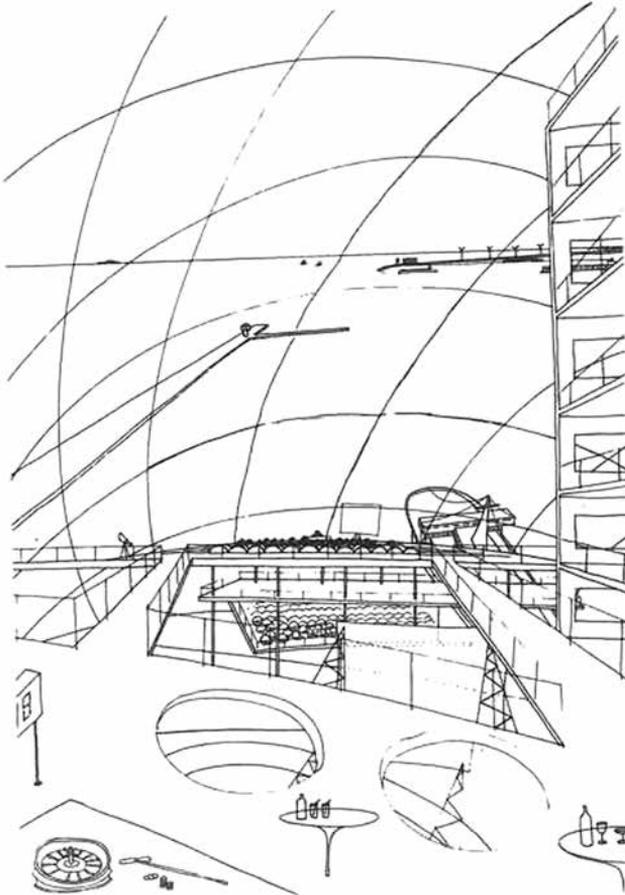
(126) Rem Koolhaas/OMA, Zeebrugge Sea Terminal, 1988, the interior space, drawing. Source: Lucan, *OMA, Rem Koolhaas*, 130 © 2015 OMA
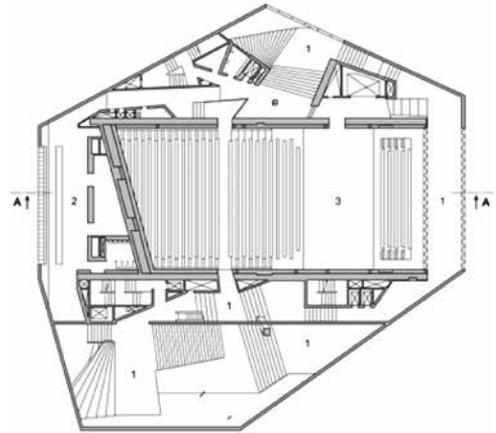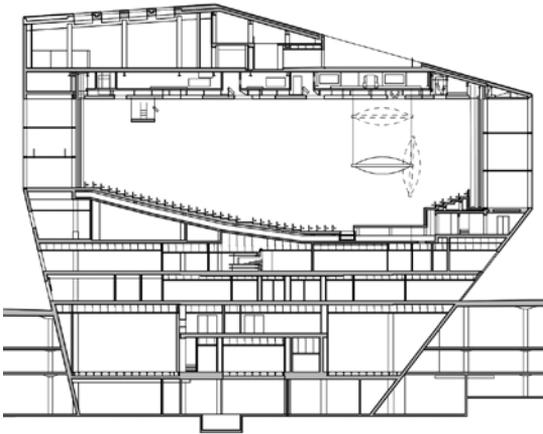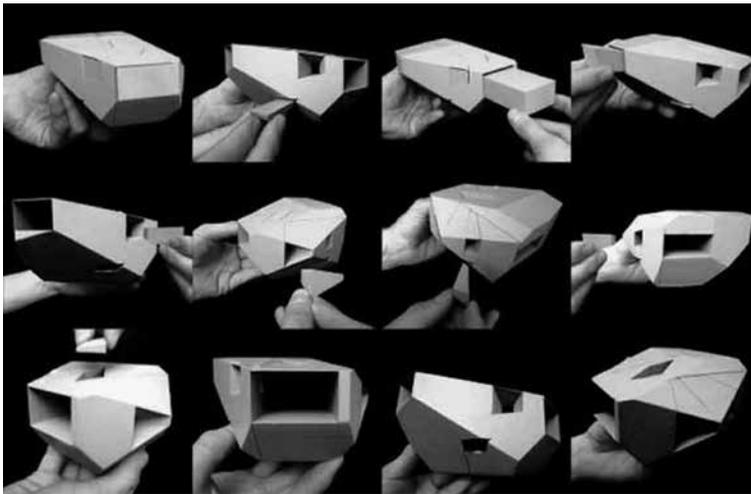
(→**127**,→**128**) and the project for the extension of the Whitney Museum in New York (2001) are further examples of an architectural form that functions as a container for all kinds of programmatic demands (→**129**,→**130**).

The Elevator as a Diagram of Discontinuity

Koolhaas conceives of a parallel development between Manhattan's prototypical architecture and the imagery-filled world of Coney Island. The skyscraper diagram manifests Manhattan's irrational potential in *camouflage.* It represents an expedient of a contrived and provisional sphere similar to the world of Coney Island. In the tradition of fantastical technology: the paraphernalia of illusion that have just
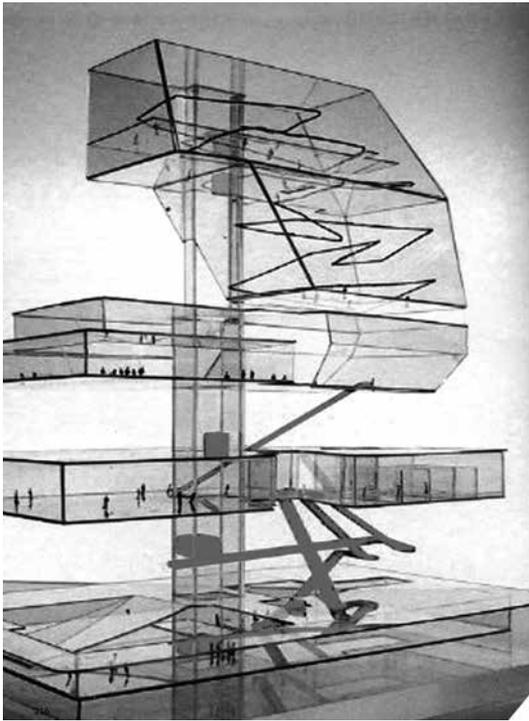
subverted Coney Island's nature into an artificial paradise—electricity, air-conditioning, tubes, telegraphs, tracks, and elevators—reappear in Manhattan as paraphernalia of efficiency to convert raw space into office suites. Suppressing their irrational potential, they now become merely the agents of banal changes such as improving illumination levels, temperature, humidity, communications, et cetera.[47]

Within this reasoning, New York's third World's Fair in 1939 revealed the idea of Manhattanism all too clearly, as if abruptly out in broad daylight.[48] The pavilion of Consolidated Edison, Manhattan's electricity generator, refers to the theme of Manhattan as the "City of Light," a title that Koolhaas interprets as an allusion to both the fantastical industry of Luna Park—which operated on Coney Island from 1903 to 1944 (and its original name was "Place Without Shadows"). The pavilion cancels out the principles of discontinuity and autonomy by forcing the grid into a curve built from cardboard. The single, continuous surface of the chart with a dense crowd in front of an image of skyscrapers, however, can only be a simulacrum of Culture of Congestion: the "City of Light" only represents Manhattanism's "Postmortem."[49]

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[47]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 87.
[48]   Ibid., 282–3.
[49]   Ibid., 283.

In the *S,M,L,XL* dictionary entry "Automonument," Koolhaas claims: "beyond a certain critical mass each structure becomes a monument, or at least raises that expectation through its size alone, even if the sum or the nature of the individual activities it accommodates does not deserve a monumental expression. … It merely *is* itself and through sheer volume cannot avoid being a symbol – an empty one, available for meaning as a bill-board is for advertisement."[50] He argues that the Globe Tower project already contains the essence of the Manhattan skyscraper, because Friede's hybrid between a tower and a sphere ruthlessly subdivides the interior into single floors. Thus it "can reproduce that part of the world it occupies 5,000 times" via levels that are both independent of each other and independent of the exterior envelope.[51]

Accordingly, the skyscraper is understood as a mutation that derives its specific potential from three architectural devices. A sketch

[50]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, xxviii, xxxii.
[51]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 75.

from 1909 refers to the first strategy, "The Reproduction of the World:" "The Skyscraper as utopian device for the production of un- limited numbers of virgin sites on a single metropolitan location," by showing the section of the skyscraper as a stack of floors, and each of the plates accommodates the discrete privacy of a single country house with an adjoining garden.[52] Although this diagram shows only the stacking of floors through the skeleton of steel frames, it illus- trates its disconnectedness since the elevator gives equal access to all floors.

The second strategy, "The Annexation of the Tower," refers to the typical needle-like shape of the skyscraper.[53] But height alone does not make the difference between a building and a tower. Using the image of the Metropolitan Life Building of 1893, Koolhaas interprets how "Building becomes Tower, landlocked lighthouse, ostensibly flashing its beams out to sea, but in fact luring the metropolitan au- dience to itself."[54] Following this maritime metaphor, Manhattan is understood as an archipelago, its buildings as solitary islands drifting in a sea of circulation and interchange.

The third principle, "The Block Alone," focuses on the specific condition of the Manhattan grid.[55] In 1811, the simple imposition of twelve avenues from North to South and 155 streets from East to West generated "a matrix that captures, at the same time, all re- maining territory and all future activity on the island." Henceforth, the number and size of the block is fixed: 13 x 156 = 2,028 blocks.[56] The purely conceptual nature of the grid is not only indifferent to the existing topology, but also indifferent and speculative concerning any programmatic concern on the site: "The land it divides, unoccupied; the population it describes, conjectural; the buildings it locates, phan- toms; the activities it frames, nonexistent."[57] In his entry for the com- petition for La Defense in Paris (1991), Koolhaas takes up the device of the grid as a means to avoid a predetermined and stable urban identity. Because "underneath the thinning crust of our civilization a hidden tabula rasa lies in waiting," the grid is, for Koolhaas, the ge- neric plan for any future programs.[58]

The grid system ensures that, while the area of the interior allows for unrestrained competition between the blocks, these schemes are always confined to the size of the grid. With rivers on either side, "Manhattan has no choice but the skyward extrusion of the Grid it- self; only the Skyscraper offers … a *frontier in the sky*."[59] Hence, the

[52]   Ibid., 82–3.
[53]   Ibid., 91.
[54]   Ibid., 94.
[55]   Ibid.
[56]   Ibid., 18.
[57]   Ibid., 19.
[58]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 1132.
[59]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 87.

single block remains the largest possible unit that can be controlled through architecture so that the city becomes a montage of various autonomous entities. As the metropolis is characterized by changing conditions, the method of the grid imposes a structure of maximum control.

Koolhaas claims that the elevator is the essential technological infrastructure that enables the emergence and success of the Manhattan skyscraper. He emphasizes that when Elisha Otis presented the elevator to the public at the first New York World's Fair in 1853, he gave a spectacular performance.[60] At highest level Otis cut the cable that had pulled up the platform but "nothing happened," because the invisible safety catches prevented any failure: "Otis introduces an invention in urban theatricality: the anticlimax as denouement, the non-event as triumph."[61] For Koolhaas, this incident characterizes the essence of both the metropolis and its typology of the skyscraper, which is, in contrast to its exterior solidity, "the great metropolitan destabilizer: it promises perpetual programmatic instability. The subversiveness of the Skyscraper's true nature – the ultimate unpredictability of its performance – is inadmissible to its own makers."[62]

With the design of the Seattle Library, Koolhaas again refers to his theory of Manhattanism as a model that can embrace all kinds of programmatic demands and changes. Yet, instead of using the typology of the skyscraper as a diagram of spatial discontinuity, he develops a scheme of regular units floating in a vast void space. In between these compartments are spacious areas (as social *trading floors* of information) covered by an extensive glass shape. Similar to the globe buildings of the New York World's Fairs, the form of the library (even though it is not spherical but prismatic) engenders an atmospheric volume, which functions like a buoy in a "sea of traffic." In order to promote circulation and an expanded event-structure within this void, the infrastructural settings, such as the escalators, elevators, and the ramp of the book spiral, are a key part of the program.

When Koolhaas curated the Fourteenth International Architecture Exhibition of the Biennale in Venice in 2014, he proposed, for the first time in its history, a single theme for the national presentations of the pavilions: "Fundamentals – Absorbing Modernity: 1914–2014."[63] He once more focuses on infrastructural means, like elevator and escalator, as "elements of architecture" (which is also the title of one part of the exhibition) since they have not yet been adequately incorporated into the ideology, theory, and practice of architecture. For Koolhaas, the most tangible way to represent these individual components is

[60]   Ibid., 24–5.
[61]   Ibid., 27.
[62]   Ibid., 87.
[63]   Rem Koolhaas, *Fundamentals*.

as a movie that occupies the central pavilion exhibition and aims to modernize the core of our architectural perception: because the digital revolution implies the risk of loosing sight of the single elements (such as the floor, the wall, the ceiling, the door, the window, the corridor, the fireplace, the toilet, the stair, the escalator, the elevator, and the ramp), Koolhaas suggests a microscopic look at architecture to reassess the richness of our architectural heritage.[64] Therefore, Koolhaas and students of Harvard's Graduate School of Design (Keller Easterling, Manfredo Di Robilant, Jiren Feng, Tom Avermaete, Giulia Foscari, Alejandro Zaera Polo, Stephan Trüby, and Sebastien Marot) compiled a fifteen-part encyclopedia catalog that illustrates the global history, or at least exemplary moments, of each element. For instance, they contrast the Renaissance dome ceiling, which is richly ornamented with symbolical paintings, and the suspended ceiling that conceals the modern machinery behind its generic grid.[65]

The Escalator as a Diagram of Continuity and Circulation

The inventions of the escalator and the elevator are closely linked to the development of the department store, where masses of consumers are lifted to the space of consumerism.[66] These devices are a mechanism to draw the traffic from the public urban environment of the street into the interior space of the building. They proved to be the most important means for generating circulation within the whole interior of a building because only the smoothness and effectiveness of connecting different areas enable a maximum of distribution.

However, the escalator and the elevator function in rather opposite ways and profoundly change the programmatic issue of architecture. The escalator, on the one hand, generates a fluid transition between the individual levels of a building and blurs and even eliminates the difference between separate planes. The elevator, on the other hand, changes the logic of the interior space and is the diagram of vertical discontinuity, rendering the individual floors of a building independent from each other, both in terms of location and program.

In the *Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping* (2001), Srdjan Jovanović Weiss and Sze Tsung Leong trace the invention and evolution of the escalator back to its beginnings in 1895.[67] After installing escalators in department stores, like Harrod's in London, Bloomingdale's

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[64]   Ibid.
[65]   Rem Koolhaas, Keller Easterling, and James Westcott, *Elements of Architecture: A Series of 15 Books Accompanying the exhibition Elements of Architecture at the 2014 Venice Architetcure Biennale.*
[66]   Chuihua Judy Chung, Jeffrey Inaba and Sze Tsung Leong, eds., *Project on the City: Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping* (Cologne: Taschen, 2001), 341.
[67]   Ibid., 340.

in New York, and Bon Marché in Paris, the "moving staircase" (*Fahrtreppe*) soon became the device of choice for effortless transportation of consumers to goods. The efficient movement of the immobile customer by means of a new mechanical system is a more significant factor for shopping than any other architectural element or equipment. According to the motto "maximum circulation equals maximum sales volume," the grand staircase, formerly one of the most noticeable features of the department store, was replaced by a wide system of escalators.[68] In addition, the mechanical tie is also a visual connection between the individual floors for free, unobstructed views into the different compartments. Hence, the ideal shopping structure is a combination of the escalator and the generic structural system of Le Corbusier's Maison Dom-Ino: "Maison Domino + Otis = Shopping"[69]

This new prototype introduced the multi-story department store with uninterrupted shopping surfaces. According to the formula, "maximum circulation = maximum sales volume," the ubiquitous escalator ensures spatial continuity and effortless mobility.[70] Such department stores create a spatial experience of a transition from one compartment to the next without any incoherent zone and non-consumer activities, which are now concealed within trusses that become inhabitable floors. Moreover, escalators speed up traffic and provide an even traffic flow without waiting or crowding. They induce casual shoppers to move upwards, increase impulse buying, and afford an unobstructed view of merchandise that would not have been noticed otherwise.[71]

Besides the commercial success of the escalator for shopping purposes, it was also discovered to speed the transportation of workers. A case in point is the Worsted Wood Mill (1905) in Lawrence, Massachusetts that installed escalators to reduce the time between the workers' shifts. Likewise, the first underground railway stations in London and New York were equipped with escalators for more rapid and fluent transportation through the subway networks. As Weiss and Leong put it, "the escalator is also immensely successful because of its ideological flexibility, serving consumers and proletariats with equal effectiveness."[72] The first escalators in the new Soviet subway system were installed between 1931 and 1935 and soon became a public symbol of an ideology emphasizing proletarian efficiency. Compared with the Western type, the Soviet escalator ran at almost twice the speed, which should be proof of both its high technical quality and the proficient organization of the stream of workers.

[68]   Ibid., 348.
[69]   Ibid., 351.
[70]   Koolhaas et al., *Mutations*, 138.
[71]   Chung, *Project on the City*, 346.
[72]   Ibid., 344.

Although the escalator has remained unchanged since its first application in department stores, it is a typical element of post-war prosperity. In the nineteen-fifties a new building typology of increasing interior spaces—the shopping mall—emerged and created ideal yet entirely artificial conditions. The exterior public space becomes blurred with the urbanized interior volume because the escalator makes a smooth transition from street level to the shopping area inside the buildings. The infrastructure hence introduces a new way of experiencing the urban space by turning previously disconnected areas into a continuum. A case in point is Victor Gruen's Midtown Plaza in Chicago (1959), the so-called "slab-and-base model," with a horizontally expanded shopping base and a vertical slab of an office tower. Both structures are the result of the infrastructure used: the escalator produces an interiorized, continuous surface of shopping, while the elevator enables the high-rise tower above.

The new typology of the shopping mall becomes a means for redefining public space since all functions that are normally associated with the city center can be accommodated in the mall.[73] Referring to the community life of the ancient Greek agora and the medieval market place, Gruen argues that "by affording opportunities for social life and recreation in a protected pedestrian environment, by incorporating civic and educational facilities, shopping centers can fill an existing void."[74] Since there is more and more leisure time for the individual, so the argument goes, it should be spent as shopping time in malls, which also offer diverse opportunities for social and recreational activities.

Gruen's conviction is that the urban planning of the mall with its unity and regularity represents an antidote to the chaos of the city. In contrast, Sanford Kwinter describes the shopping experience in a mall as the *Gruen transfer*, a condition "when a shopper's purposive behavior and directed, coherent bodily movements break down under the barrage of excessive, narrow spectrum stimulation and continual interruption of attention."[75] Jon Jerde's designs for entertainment-shopping center hybrids can be seen as the revenge against the *Gruen transfer*, since the spatial experience there—accordingly, the *Jerde transfer*—involves bodily dislocation over visual.[76]

Koolhaas organizes the Seattle Library like a department store or shopping mall because the library makes use of a composite system of escalators, elevators, staircases, and ramps to ensure a maximum of circulation and unobstructed views between individual floors. In ad-

[73]   Victor Gruen and Larry Smith, *Shopping Towns USA: The Planning of Shopping Centers* (New York: Reinhold, 1960), 11.
[74]   Ibid., 24.
[75]   Sanford Kwinter, "Virtual City, or The Wiring and Waning of the World," in *Assemblage* 29 (April 1996): 86–101, here 96.
[76]   Chung, *Project on the City*, 405.

dition, it generates an effortless transition from the entrance area to the lounges at various levels. This way, Koolhaas seeks to encourage a pleasant stay and social activities in this semi-public zone.

Shopping and the Public Sphere

Koolhaas opens the book *Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping* with the statement "shopping is arguably the last remaining form of public activity … shopping has infiltrated, colonized, and even replaced, almost every aspect of urban life."[77] The mechanisms of shopping malls shape not only commercial areas but also invade the public sphere, like airports, churches, museums, hospitals, and schools: even "Military = Shopping."[78] In a similar fashion, in the *S,M,L,XL* dictionary entry for "Shopping," he proposes, "an activity that consists of predictable yet indeterminate activities, where, as in the cinema, what we go to see, what we experience over and over again, is our own desire."[79] To put it more explicitly, "the city used to be the great sexual hunting ground. The Generic City is like a dating agency: efficiently matches supply and demand."[80]

The radical changes in the urban conditions closely relate to the impact of shopping and capitalism on the city: "By linking into existing infrastructures, such as pedestrian routes, road systems, or subway stations, or by mechanically inducing movement through devices such as the escalator or the moving sidewalk, shopping has managed to profoundly influence the way movement through cities is experienced."[81] Proposing shopping to be the only public activity and proposing that there is no other, he continues that "the voracity by which shopping pursues the public has, in effect, made it one of the principal – if only – modes by which we experience the city."[82] The disappearance of the public space that does not surrender to the conditions of shopping leads instead of public life to "Public Space™: what remains of the city once the unpredictable has been removed."[83] His position regarding the public sphere is even more extreme when he states in "Junk Space:" "the curse of public space: latent fascism safely smothered in signage, stools, sympathy."[84] He even describes the mechanisms as a fascist and dictatorial policy: "Intended for the interior, Junkspace can easily engulf a whole city. First, it escapes from its containers – semantic orchids that needed hothouse protec-

[77]   Ibid., 1.
[78]   Ibid.
[79]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 1134.
[80]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1264.
[81]   Koolhaas et al., *Mutations*, 140.
[82]   Chung, *Project on the City*, 1.
[83]   Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 168.
[84]   Ibid., 167.

tion emerging with surprising robustness – then the outdoors itself is converted: the street is paved more luxuriously, shelters proliferate carrying increasingly dictatorial messages, traffic is calmed, crime eliminated."[85]

The characteristics of Public Space™ are also connected to the generic city because, while the traditional city was business, circulation, and interference, "the serenity of the Generic City is achieved by the evacuation of the public realm, as in an emergency fire drill."[86] The generic city organizes the public domain through an elaborated infrastructure system of highways separating the pedestrians so that "the street is dead. That discovery has coincided with frantic attempts at its resuscitation. Public art is everywhere – as if two deaths make a life."[87] In "Atlanta" in *S,M,L,XL* Koolhaas argues that the entrance floor of the skyscraper has become a kind of *ersatz* downtown "with atriums as their private mini-centers, buildings no longer depend on specific locations. They can be anywhere."[88] Originally bringing light and air into the center of a building, the transformation of the atrium achieves the exact opposite, which is to create a void and transparent space of artificiality that allows the users to avoid the outside at all.

Within this view, the "downtown becomes an accumulation of voided panopticons inviting their own voluntary prisoners: the center as a prison system."[89] Yet, "identity centralizes; it insists on an essence, a point."[90] In reference to Manhattan's infrastructure, "the persistence of the present concentric obsession makes us *all* bridge-and-tunnel people, second-class citizens in our own civilization, disenfranchised by the dumb coincidence of our collective exile from the center."[91] The periphery depends on the center as the core of significance and value, maintaining this concentric condition by converting its realm into public space characterized by pedestrianization, the restoration of historic buildings, and expensive shopping facilities. But with the growth of the city and the increasing distance between core and fringe, the sphere of influence becomes both expanded and diluted. So a cluster of autonomous downtowns emerges, undermining the city center and thereby accelerating the demise of the city's downtown. Therefore "the generic city is the city liberated from the captivity of the center, from the straitjacket of identity."[92] It has no historic core and expanding fringes but rather consists of equally important, unrelated sites anywhere. In the end, however, "in a world where every-

[85]   Ibid., 169.
[86]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1250–1.
[87]   Ibid., 1253.
[88]   Koolhaas, "Atlanta," 843.
[89]   Ibid., 841.
[90]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1249.
[91]   Ibid.
[92]   Ibid, 1249–50.

thing is shopping … – what is luxury? Luxury is NOT shopping. In a real estate context where every square meter counts, the ultimate luxury is *wasted* space. Space that is not 'productive' – not shopping – affords contemplation, privacy, mobility, and luxury."[93]

In this sense, Koolhaas's idea of the public space of the Seattle Library can be interpreted as liberation from the dictatorial script of shopping that has overwhelmed the urban area. Referring to his notion of luxury as non-productive (waste) space, the library provides a place of movement and contemplation, social encounter and privacy, semi-public yet air-conditioned indoor space.

[93]   Koolhaas et al., *Projects for Prada,* n.p.

TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

The Technological Sublime as Social Event

Creating an artificial climate makes the interior become entirely independent from the exterior conditions so that the building expands unlimitedly. Koolhaas presumes:

"Air conditioning – invisible medium, therefore unnoticed – has truly revolutionized architecture. Air conditioning has launched the endless building. If architecture separates buildings, air conditioning unites them. … A single shopping center now is the work of space planners, repairmen and fixers, like in the Middle Ages; air conditioning sustains our cathedrals."[94]

And equally, in "Typical Plan," Koolhaas maintains that "air conditioning, which is the *sine qua non* of Typical Plan, imposes a regime of sharing (air) that defines invisible communities, homogeneous segments of an airborne collective aligned in more powerful wholes like the iron molecules that form a magnetic field."[95]

In a similar way as Koolhaas does, Le Corbusier links the architectural revolution to new building techniques when he argues that "reinforced concrete automatically endows us with the ribbon window."[96] In *Building in France* (1928), Sigfried Giedion claims that during the early years of modernism the relationship between architecture and engineering underwent a fundamental change of how material links to structural possibilities. He thereby links the lineage of modern architecture to the work of French engineers and the new forms in the nineteenth century, tracing its interest in industrial structures to the originality of structural engineering in buildings like bridges, railway stations, exhibition halls, and department stores.[97]

In his work known as *The Arcades Project*, which he began in 1927 and worked on until his departure from Paris in 1940, Walter Benjamin referred more than twenty times to Giedion's book.[98] He regards himself as pursuing a similar purpose: he links the ideas of modernity to the nineteenth century (with Paris as the Capital of the Nineteenth Century) and the social space of the Parisian arcades, their particular language, fashion, and atmosphere. Referring to the potential of the new technologies, Benjamin argues: "With iron, an artificial building material appeared for the first time in the history of architecture[.]…

[94]   Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 162.
[95]   Koolhaas, "Typical Plan," 339.
[96]   Le Corbusier, *Une maison, un palais*, 100; see also Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture*, 47.
[97]   Giedion, *Building in France*.
[98]   Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*.

Simultaneously the architectonic areas in which glass was employed were extended. But the social conditions for its increased utilization as a building material only came into being a hundred years later. In Scheerbart's 'Glasarchitektur' (1914) it still appeared in the context of a Utopia."[99]

With reference to the Pont Transbordeur at Marseilles, 1905, which is the illustration for the cover of *Building in France*, Giedion explains that "a mobile ferry suspended by cables from the footbridge high above the water connects traffic on the two sides of the harbor. This structure is not to be taken as a 'machine.' It cannot be excluded from the urban image, whose fantastic crowning it denotes."[100] Since most of the pictures in the book are photographs taken by Giedion himself and not from books and magazines, many of them show the buildings still under construction, such as Mies van der Rohe's Weissenhof apartments (1927).[101] Following Giedion's understanding that "in the 19th century, construction plays the role of the subconscious," modern constructions bring to the surface what was concealed.[102] Yet, the finishing coat of Mies's Weissenhof apartments and Le Corbusier's Villa Stein again hides the actual building's structure behind white render.

Modern structural engineering and functionalist ideology claim a leading role in giving form to society. Walter Gropius understands the functionalist planner as the "Apollo of the democracy" and the architect as "society's seer and mentor."[103] Following the reasoning of technocratic determinism, Le Corbusier applies scientific principles to both planning and building production. However, as early as in the first half of the nineteenth century, Henri Comte de Saint-Simon proposed that the "government of men" should be substituted with a "government of things."[104] After World War I and the economic crisis in the nineteen-twenties, Frederick Winslow Taylor's *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911) became an influential source for reformists such as Redressement Français who believed in a wide application of

[99]   Walter Benjamin, "Paris: Capital of the 19th Century" (1935), in *The Arcades Project*; see also Frampton, *Modern Architecture*, 29.
[100]   Giedion, *Building in France*, 90, fig.1.
[101]   Ibid., 131.
[102]   Ibid., 3.
[103]   Hans M. Wingler, ed., *Walter Gropius: Apollo in der Demokratie. Neue Bauhausbücher* (Mainz and Berlin: Florian Kupferberg, 1967); Walter Gropius, "The Curse of Conformity," in *Adventures of the Mind*, ed. by Richard Thruelsen and John Kohler (London: Victor Gollancz, 1960), 263–74, here 274.
[104]   Claude Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de Saint-Simon, *Du système industriel* (1821, reprint, Düsseldorf: Wirtschaft und Finanzen, 1998).

this policy to housing.[105] Like Taylor, they advocated the planned economical development for social justice, which would lead to the just division and distribution of labor, goods, and urban space.

Along these technocratic lines for modernization, Le Corbusier believes in a hierarchical form of government headed by experts, showing the technocratic elite at the top and at the bottom an inter-union (*inter-métier*) council and the trade unions (*métiers*).[106] He was also a contributing editor to the syndicalist magazine *Plans*, in which he first published material that would later be part of his book *La Ville Radieuse*.[107]

However, David F. Noble argues in *The Religion of Technology* (1997), that our expectations of the field of modern, scientific technology with its rigid rationality grounded in confidence in the latest technological advances are rooted in ancient, religious imaginations.[108] Although since the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, secular society and science have been disconnected from religious authority, which is seen as based on blind faith and fallacy, the modern belief in the pursuit of technological progress is, for Noble, nothing else than a reassertion of an allegedly opposing religious ideology. There is no basic conflict between the premises of science and religion or between evolutionary stages in the pursuit of knowledge. Instead, the technological enterprise is essentially similar to religion "in that it evokes religious emotions of omnipotence, devotion, and awe, or that it has become a new (secular) religion in and of itself, with its own clerical caste, arcane rituals, and articles of faith."[109]

To Noble, modern technology and religion remain compound, as they always have been. For instance, a space program with extraterrestrial exploration is permeated by religious themes; or, with an equally inspired compulsion of divine endeavor, genetic engineering revels in the possibilities of creating new, perfect beings. Noble further maintains that "stirred by the apocalyptic visions of just such an elite brotherhood of pious wise men, the scientific virtuosi … imagined themselves the blessed new saviors of mankind."[110] Such views pursue the underlying premise of restoring the original but lost divinity of man and of rediscovering paradise, "however much each fails

[105]   Frederick Winslow Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911, reprint, Mineola and New York: Dover, 1998); Mary McLeod, "Architecture or Revolution: Taylorism, Technocracy and Social Change," in *Art Journal* (Summer 1983): 132–47; Mary McLeod, *Urbanism and Utopia, Le Corbusier From Regionalism to Vichy* (PhD thesis, Princeton University, 1985), 68.
[106]   Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City.*
[107]   "Invite à l'action" was to be a chapter in Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City.*
[108]   David F. Noble, *The Religion of Technology: The Divinity of Man and the Spirit of Invention* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997).
[109]   Ibid., 5.
[110]   Ibid., 205–6.

to deliver on its promise."[111] The followers of the religion of technology and the myth of the machine have devoted their endeavors to maintaining established power and wealth, to serving military ends, surveillance, and authority. Yet, salvation by the means of technology is not directed at meeting basic human and social needs.

When Christopher Columbus—as if he were the New Adam of the New World—landed in America, he insisted that he regained the terrestrial paradise, in fact, identifying it as the Garden of Eden and the Orinoco River as one of its four rivers. Likewise, Koolhaas connects Columbus's scientific efforts to transcendent experiences. In *Delirious New York* he refers to Salvador Dalí's idea of Columbus as one of the most outstanding proponents of his paranoid critical method for the "Conquest of the Irrational."[112]

Similarly to Noble's notion of the religion of technology, David E. Nye maintains in *American Technological Sublime* (1994) that the common enchantment with technology and, in particular, with the impressive objects of engineering belongs to the realm of the sublime.[113] This enthusiasm embraces not only industrial sublimes, such as railroads, bridges, skyscrapers, factories, and dams, but also the atomic bomb and the first manned flight to the moon. Due to the increasingly desacralized human environment, the technological sublime reinvests the world with transcendent power, intensity, astonishment, and magnificence—but also with terror, threatening imaginaries, and unknown occurrences. Referring to early travelers' descriptions of the American colonies, Howard Jones states that "the New World was filled with monsters animal and monsters human; it was a region of terrifying natural forces, of gigantic catastrophes, of unbearable heat and cold."[114] America's spectacular buildings of public life, such as the Golden Gate Bridge, the Statue of Liberty, and the skyscrapers of New York, Boston, and Chicago outstrip merely rational approaches, engendering enthusiasm for new technology and the cohesion of social groups.

In this view, the staging of technological means can serve as social event and thereby strengthen the sense of community and identity of place. In the Seattle Library, Koolhaas designs both an impressive primary construction system and infrastructural means that use advanced structural engineering technology. In addition, it provides a reshuffled functional organization of social areas, which correspond to the diagrammatic section. The library can be read as a counter-

[111]   Ibid., 6.
[112]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 238; Dalí, *Oui: The Paranoid-Critical Revolution.*
[113]   David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).
[114]   Howard Mumford Jones, *O Strange New World* (New York: Viking, 1967), 70; see Nye, *American Technological Sublime*, 2.

example of Benjamin's notion of the artificiality of an innovative technology so that the social and atmospheric conditions could become visible even one hundred years later. Here, the implications of infrastructural means on the relationship between the individual and the public provided the key approach to the design task.

Infrastructural Techno-Utopias

Throughout the early nineteen-sixties architects created neutral technological frameworks that were simply a supporting structure and a service infrastructure without preprogrammed activities within. Their visions used the field of optimized technology, often as unrealizable and subversive projections of a utopian condition. In *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (first published in 1960), Reyner Banham investigates the new forms clothed in infrastructural frames that challenge the traditional position of the architect as an expert at the top of a hierarchical system in which the majority of users were at the bottom.[115] When Peter Cook calls for a fit environment in which the built is reduced to only providing an envelope, he pursues the ideal of individuality and the involvement and participation of users without prearranged spatial partitions.[116] Making use of advanced modern technology, Le Corbusier's Pavillon des Temps Nouveaux in Paris (1937) is an early example of the construction of free-standing steel girders held in place by suspended wire cables, which overall creates a spacious tent.

What is vital and more important than a technologically controlled environment is the experience facilitated by a responsive structure, such as Banham's well-tempered environment, which examines the pro-infrastructural design of modernism by understanding it as a model of the environmental management employed.[117] Cedric Price's Inter-Action Centre of Kentish Town near London (1971–76 but demolished in 2003) was a building that put the essential ideas of the Fun Palace into practice. It was a high-tech infrastructural enclosure with an open framework in which walls of modular, pre-fabricated parts could be arranged, moved, dismantled, and reassembled as required according to need. Like a number of other significant avant-garde projects from that time, Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano's design for the Centre George Pompidou in Paris (1972–78) was directly influenced by Price's use of infrastructure in the Fun Palace design.

These ideas also refer to Buckminster Fuller's kit-house concept in 1927, which he explores in the Dymaxion House, a word coined from

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[115]   Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*.
[116]   Cook, "Control and Choice," 68.
[117]   Banham, *The Architecture of the Well-tempered Environment*.

DYnamic MAXimum tensION.[118] Operating with structural systems that are formed from standardized, prefabricated elements, "kit architecture" emphasizes not only optimization, efficiency, and economics but also the freedom of individual people. Besides the Dymaxion house, another example of a structural framework is Fuller's project for a giant Geodesic Dome (1962), which covers the entire area of midtown Manhattan. Due to the lightweight material and the large air mass in the envelope, the dome appears to float on air. This project refers to the principles Fuller promoted: "spaceship earth" and "ephemeralization," which are environmental concerns ahead of their time regarding sustainability and recyclable resources.[119]

The experimental architecture of the nineteen-sixties and seventies overthrew the modernist principle of what Robert Stern refers to as "formal composition, functional fit, and constructional logic" by opening up the discipline to the realm of artificiality, consumer imagery, pop art, and science fiction aesthetics.[120] Yet, critical positions such as that of Manfredo Tafuri in the essay "The Ashes of Jefferson" speak of a technocratic idealism, claiming that this submission to the present totalizing, technologically advanced conditions of production and consumption would strip the emergent experimental lineage of social and political efficacy.[121]

Infrastructural means, such as the elevator, escalator, and air conditioning, produce a new kind of architecture with an unprecedented richness, multiplicity, and programmatic diversity. Koolhaas's model of Bigness likewise expands the options of performance, not only by technical means but also by a new organization of programmatic needs and a maximum difference of spatial elements.

The strategy of providing the infrastructural setting, exceeding the initial program, and introducing contradictory parts should engender space for anything: when the building is in use, it is a model of "programmatic *alchemy*"[122] that "engineers the unpredictable."[123] The vastness of the Grand Palais in Lille (started in 1990) functions as a direct application of the theory of Bigness—though he does not explicitly refer to it as such (→**131**). Accordingly, "Bigness = urbanism vs. architecture."[124] Bigness can exist anywhere so that the context

[118]   Richard Buckminster Fuller and Robert Marks, *The Dymaxion World of Buckminster Fuller* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1973).
[119]   Richard Buckminster Fuller, *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969); Richard Buckminster Fuller, Jerome Agel, and Quentin Fiore, *I Seem to Be a Verb* (New York: Bantam Books, 1970).
[120]   Robert Stern, "Gray Architecture as Post-Modernism: or, Up and Down from Orthodoxy," in Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968*, 242–5, here 243.
[121]   Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*.
[122]   Koolhaas, "Bigness," 512.
[123]   Ibid., 511.
[124]   Ibid., 515.

of the city becomes irrelevant and negligible because "Bigness no longer needs the city: it competes with the city; it represents the city; it preempts the city; or better still, it *is* the city."[125] However, the performance of the site does not, in fact, produce the alchemist's dream of transmuting something not very valuable into gold, but rather it represents a vast vacant space apart from daily life.

Public Space as "Air-Conditioning Project"

Since infrastructure makes vast interior spaces possible, such as a roofed sports stadium, shopping centers, airports, and office buildings, the envelope creates a separated sphere with its own climatic conditions disconnected from the weather outside. Likewise, Junkspace "exploits any invention that enables expansion, [and] deploys the infrastructure of seamlessness: escalator, air conditioning, sprinkler, fire-shutter, hot-air curtain."[126] Air conditioning enables the endless building, organizes infinite interiors, and as an "invisible medium, therefore unnoticed – has truly revolutionized architecture."[127] The building becomes a vast artificial bubble, an autonomous sphere forming a new social organization, for "Junkspace is sealed, held together not by structure, but by skin, like a bubble."[128] According to Peter Sloterdijk, "what we need today is an 'air-conditioning project' for large social entities."[129] The atmospheric can be regarded as a direct application of Sloterdijk's theory of *Foams* (2004), which after *Bubbles* (1998) and *Worlds, Globes, Empires* (1999), is the third volume of his *Spheres* trilogy.[130] With the foam metaphor Sloterdijk presents an idea about how individuals create spatial spheres of different sizes that can float over and across each other, combining to form a smooth three-dimensional configuration.

His basic assumption in *Bubbles* is that the initial states, or *molecules*, of human spatiality are non-geometrical and even non-physical forms that originate in conditions of human life before birth, mostly in the variety of typical fetal positions. This first housing that we experience as a bipolar form, or *dyad*, lays the foundations for our later notions of spatiality. It is not the *in-dividual* of a single being but rather the experience as spatial pair, as two-part wholeness, that shapes our elementary concept of *microspheres*. In the mutually inhabited spac-

[125]   Ibid., 514–5.
[126]   Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 162.
[127]   Ibid.
[128]   Ibid.
[129]   Bettina Funcke, "Against Gravity: Bettina Funcke talks with Peter Sloterdijk," in *Book Forum* (February/March 2005), accessed June 2, 2011, http://www.bookforum.com/archive/feb_05/funcke.html.
[130]   Peter Sloterdijk, *Sphären*, 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998, 1999, 2004).
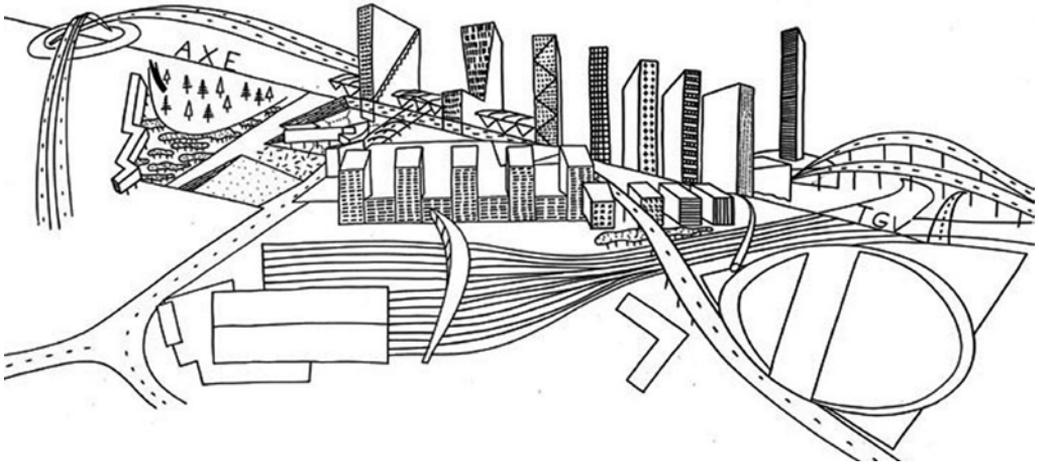
es of these bubbles we find the separated partners of the initial bi-polar unit, the mutilated half of an originally round being, by projecting the lost part onto resonating others to reach the primal wholeness. Sloterdijk uses the term *Mit* (*With*) to describe the state that becomes the starting point of substituting the vacant space of the lost original companion. The small bubbles between individuals form interfacial, intersubjective spheres of intimacy and resonance, which overcome the subjective, monocentric orientation. The *macrospheres* in *Worlds, Globes, Empires*, in contrast, provide an idea of spatiality beyond the close relationship of individual partners, a large sphere that can be extended to millions of individuals. Regarding these ideas' broader political implications, Sloterdijk argues that these empire spheres pursue the need for monocentric form with a hard encasement to include a community on a greater scale. Overcoming the prehistoric interfacial spheres of the bubbles, the attempts to create macrospherical formations rely on the strict geometry of perfect roundness, which for the early Greek philosophers signified the highest form of being. Merging with totalitarianism, this theory produces a geometricized world with the geometric representation of the Earth by maps and even a geometricized God himself. It is essential to the system proposed in *Bubbles*, therefore, that its elements do not create a macrosphere with a single center but rather unfold as a multifocal entity.

The polyspherical structure of foam engenders spaces of coexistence with a pluralistic orientation. Like Koolhaas's reference to the archipelago as a metaphor for the metropolis, the theory of foams suggests the idea of independent islands that do not control or overwhelm each other. Instead, the spatial multiplicity refers to two basic conditions of the individual human being, namely connection and isolation. Like physical foam consisting of diverse bubbles that confine and deform each other, the notion of social foam suggests a

system of multiple chambers that, though coming into contact with one other, do not communicate and interact. Sloterdijk draws on the architectural example of modern mass housing to illustrate the effect of connected isolation. These apartments separate a large group of individuals into monospherical elements that are assembled and forced into a multifocal form. Although the small entities or bubbles touch one another and even modify others, similar to physical foams bubbles, they maintain a large degree of autonomy, segregation, and privacy. The opposite structure is the sports stadium, which joins and unites people into a collectivity.

New infrastructural features that vary the atmospheric conditions as the "extended meteorology" reframe the social implications of architecture, like in the design of the Seattle Library. Koolhaas aims at projecting an air-conditioned, yet "unconditional" public space. Referring to the "Universal Modernization Patent" of the "Inside-out City," the design offers "vertical interior boulevards" that should function like "a social magic carpet" furnished with customary elements of the city. According to Koolhaas, it reprograms the library and promotes a richer event-structure via programmatic diversity and infrastructural means. However, Kipnis questions this claim of architecture as "an instrument of freedom" and argues that the event-structure should be congruent with the program; otherwise the non-specific events can easily "soar beyond control."

Yet, Koolhaas seems to be aware of the contradictory demands of amplifying the performance of a building in full use and the risks of that endeavor when he claims in "Typical Plan" that air conditioning "imposes a regime of sharing (air) that defines invisible communities, homogeneous segments of an airborne collective aligned in more powerful wholes like the iron molecules that form a magnetic field."[131] Sloterdijk expands this notion of spatial bubbles to the joined isolation of the modern masses as foam bubbles. However, with the project for the CCTV (2002–08), Koolhaas proposes nothing less than to join and (symbolically) embrace the entire population of China by architectural means. [132]

[131]   Koolhaas, "Typical Plan," 339.
[132]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 489.
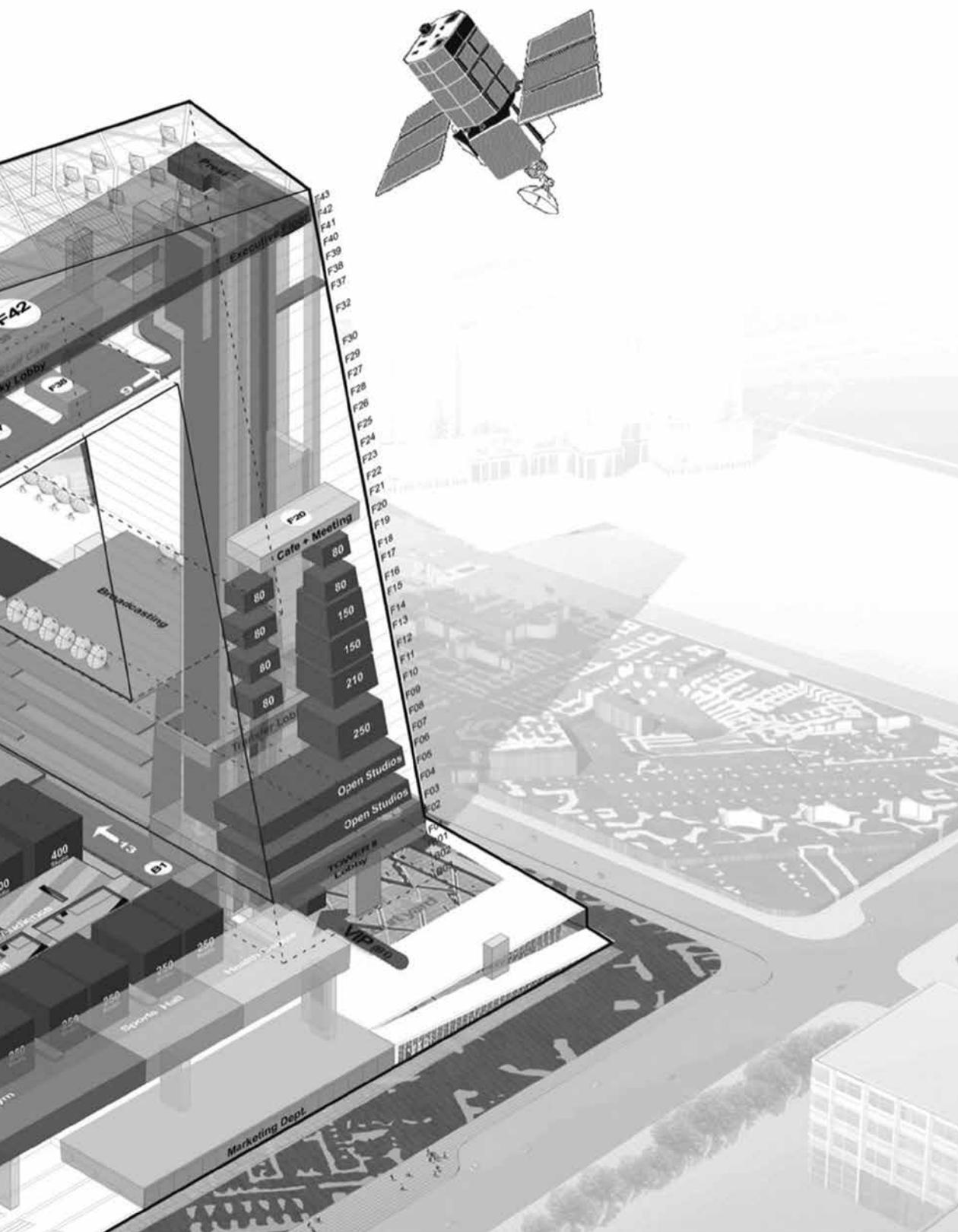
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Executive Dept.

F42

Sky Lobby

Cafe + Meeting

F20

Broadcasting

Transfer Lob

Open Studios

Open Studios

TOWER B Lobby

VIP

Marketing Dept.

Sports Hall

B1

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150
210
250

400
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SHAPE:
CCTV, BEIJING
2002–2008

THE OUTDATED TYPOLOGY OF THE SKYSCRAPER

An Adaptive Species: The CCTV Building in Beijing

In *Content* (2004), Koolhaas characterizes the current transformation in China both in political and economic terms as "perhaps the greatest gamble in the history of mankind, it is a gamble that no one can afford (China) to lose."[1] However, this modernization of the Asian urban space must take place "without the intellectual infrastructure to rethink the project of modernity … changing the world without a blueprint."[2] The site of his designs for the new China Central Television Station (CCTV) and the Television Cultural Center (TVCC) (2002–08) is located in Beijing's new Central Business District (CBD). This area, which was scheduled to be completed for the Olympic Games in 2008, represents a new quarter that will eventually have around 300 skyscrapers. According to Koolhaas, "a new icon is formed … not the predictable 2-dimensional tower 'soaring' skyward, but a truly 3-dimensional experience, a canopy that symbolically embraces the entire population … an instant icon that proclaims a new phase in Chinese confidence."[3]

Instead of being one more high-rise among many others, the shape of the CCTV building is a cornered loop created by six approximately rectangular elements that deviate by a few degrees. The blocks consist of two main towers that are interconnected at their

(132) Rem Koolhaas/Ole Scheeren/OMA, China Central Television Station (CCTV), Beijing, 2002–08, the diagram of functions. Source: Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 486-487
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[1]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 450.
[2]   Ibid., 453.
[3]   Ibid., 489.
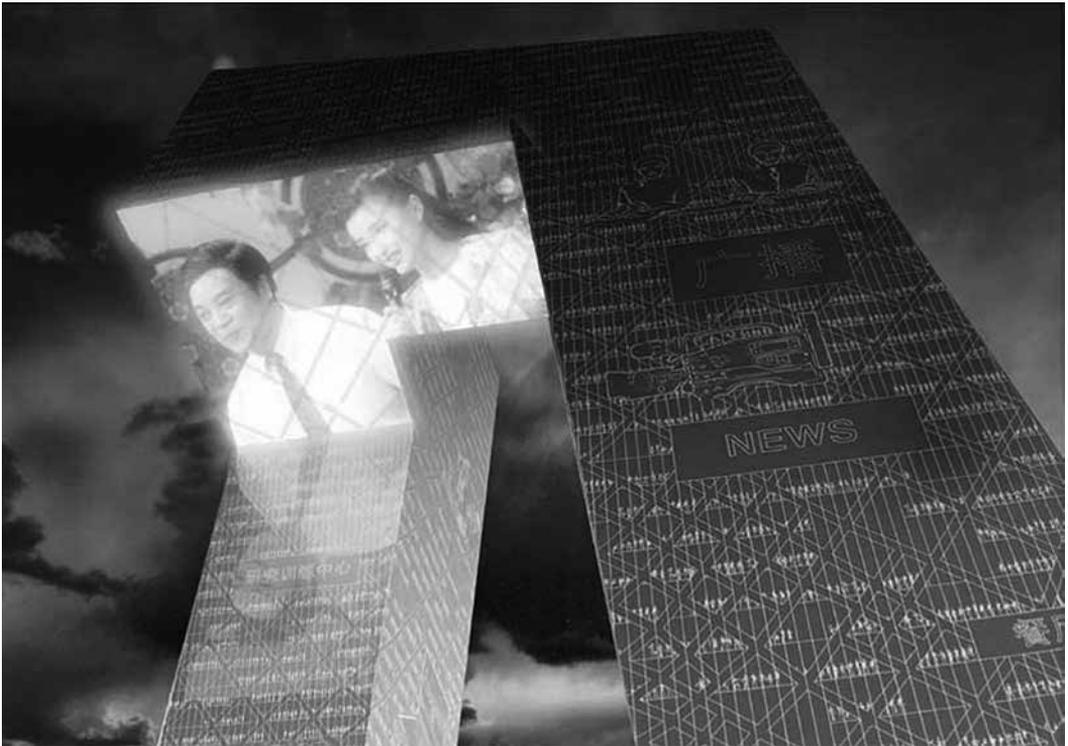
bases by a common platform and again joined at the top via a cantilevered L-shaped overhang (→**132**,→**133**). The structure is an irregular rhomboid hollowed out at its core. Instead of distributing the individual programmatic parts to different buildings, Koolhaas accommodates them as a collective in a single construction. This scheme should not only demonstrate the organization as a coherent whole but also promote solidarity and collaboration among the users by interconnecting their activities. In the common bases, the two lobbies of the towers, the production studios as well as a series of secondary facilities are situated on nine floors partly underground. The two towers rising from this platform have different programmatic requirements: the first tower connected to the studios houses program production and broadcasting; the second tower adjacent to the TVCC is dedicated to research as well as public services, education, and events. As a third part of the building, the cantilevered element that connects the two towers accommodates the management, a sky studio, and public areas, such as the restaurant and viewing lounge. In this way, certain parts of CCTV are open to public visitors, offering a panoramic view of a predetermined pathway through the loop of the building.

The primary structure is shown on the outside surface of the construction. The irregular framework of the surface layer displays the disproportionate loads caused by the cantilevered overhang and the

two inwardly leaning towers. At points of great stress the triangulated grid is doubled, even tripled, whereas redundant elements are eliminated (→**134**, →**135**). As William Millard points out in "East Anatomy: Dissecting the Iconic Exosymbiont," this shape represents the idea of interlocking and interdependence because four of the six blocks could only maintain their structural stability as a whole and would be unstable in separation. He characterizes the building as an "exceptionally perceptive and adaptive organism" because its construction is "a visible rigid exoskeleton, an adaptation borrowed from the arthropod phylum, that strengthens structural resistance to either the acute or the chronic form of collapse."[4]

Millard continues with this medical examination of the building's surface structure that is like "epithelial layers" because the skin of the built organism functions analogously to the skin of natural organisms in terms of protecting the internal organs, thermal and moisture regulation, and sexual attraction. According to another reading by the architectural theorist Xiao Mo, CCTV is a building of "genital worship"; this reading is based on several images in *Content* that reveal Koolhaas's sexual suggestions of the structure.[5] However, Koolhaas denies that there is a hidden meaning with an explicit pornographic content. In any case, for Millard, the CCTV organism represents a new species because all the major functions of a media organization operating at the national scale are accommodated within a single shape like organs covered by skin. He further states that one of the CCTV building's most significant characteristics is its ability to respond to the

(134) Rem Koolhaas/Ole Scheeren/OMA, China Central Television Station (CCTV), Beijing, 2002–08, animation.
Source: www.kultur-online.net/node/1782
© 2015 OMA

[4]   Ibid., 490.
[5]   Grace Quiroga, "Pants on Fire?," in *Architecture in the Age of Empire, Die Architektur der neuen Weltordnung: 11th International Bauhaus Colloquium*, ed. by Kristian Faschingeder et al. (Weimar: Bauhaus University, 2011), 378–93, here 383; Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 542.

surrounding environment; for example, the laminated glass-mesh skin that displays news images is interpreted as an adaptation to the urban environment.

New Typologies of the City

In *Delirious New York* Koolhaas discusses the Manhattan skyscraper and "the fire of Manhattanism inside the iceberg of Modernism."[6] Within the confines of the gridded block, a new urban strategy emerges, an artificial world. However, in *Content,* he claims that since its invention the skyscraper has become a less interesting, mediocre, and even corrupted and discredited form because "the promise it once held – an organization of excessive difference, the installation of surprise as a guiding principle – has been negated by repetitive banality. The intensification of density it initially delivered has been replaced by carefully-spaced isolation."[7] Thus, he fundamentally questions the typology of the free-standing or autarkic tower, not only because of its ubiquitous and banal presence but also as a generator of urban density and circulation. Referring to the model of the city as an archipelago of thematized spaces, it finally leads to "spatial apartheid, a universal archipelago of 'scripted spaces' separated by hard boundaries and strict checkpoints. An event about monocultures."[8] If the skyscraper as ultimate typology of the city has become an outdated model, what are the key characteristics of the "new adaptive species" of the city? How do they interact with the environment and with the existing typological forms? What social implications do the new configurations suggest?

Currently, the skyscraper is scattered around the world, however. Cities such as Hanoi, Seoul, Shanghai, and Beijing have undergone dramatic transformations in city scale. Due to unprecedented expansion, these Asian cities have to deal with both the preservation of traditional structures and the conception of the new Central Business District. As definitive typology, the skyscraper seems to be exhausted by its pervasive application that excludes all other possibilities. Assuming that more than 300 new skyscrapers are planned, this assembly of free-standing towers—once a symbol of business and the metropolitan life—can only demonstrate architectural mediocrity. The skyscraper has just become a kind of requisite for rapidly developing countries and the economy of emerging markets. In recent years, the idea of the skyscraper has been merely reduced to an arms race for the world's tallest building.

[6]   Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 171.
[7]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 473.
[8]   Ibid., 31.

DEM & CAPACITY
RATIOS

1.660
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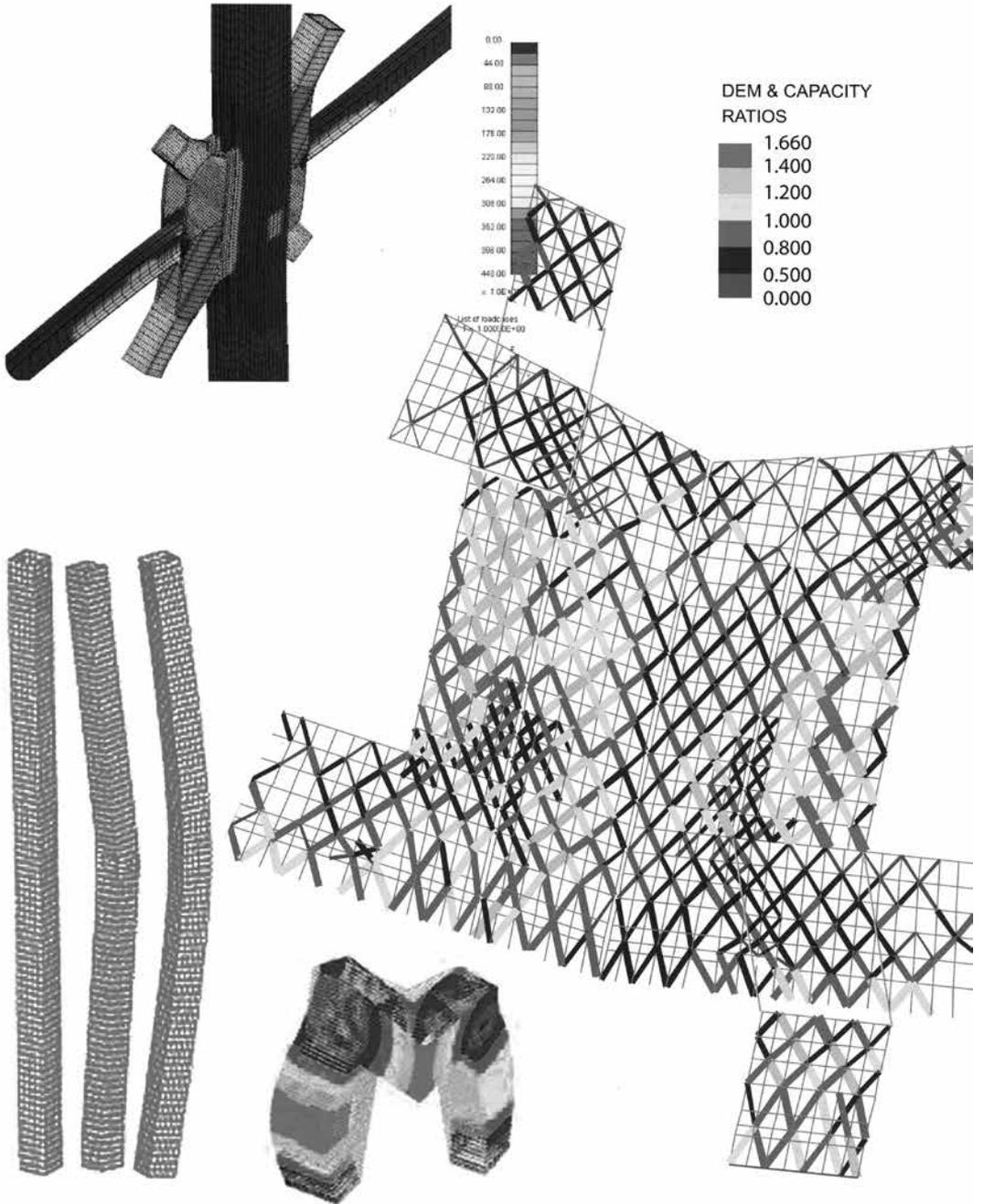
Referring to the city as a space for uncontrollable development, Koolhaas speaks of urban uncertainty and the illusion of anticipating future needs. Therefore, "strategies that accommodate – even exploit – uncertainties must be devised."[9] As the isolated cores of the typical skyscraper limit the potential of urban life and direct social interchange, he suggests four new types of configurations that he calls the "Universal Modernization Patents." The CCTV and the TVCC buildings represent the two realized applications of the "Universal Modernization Patents:" first, the "Skyscraper Loop," also called "Bent Skyscraper" (2002): "METHOD OF AVOIDING THE ISOLATION OF THE TRADITIONAL HIGH RISE BY TURNING FOUR SEGMENTS INTO A LOOP"; second, the "Cake-Tin Architecture" (2002): "ACCOMODATION OF THE RESIDUALS OF A DOMINANT PROGRAM IN A NOUVELLE CUISINE MOLD."[10] (→**136**) These concepts mainly focus on the shape of the building and its interference with the urban surroundings. Whereas the "Skyscraper Loop" also relies on the circulation and infrastructural aspects, the "Cake-Tin Architecture" merely provides any arbitrary mold for the complex program.

Another application of the patents for new configurations of highrise buildings is the concentrated Hyperbuilding for Bangkok. The patent for "Tall & Slender" (1996) is conceived as a self-contained metropolis within a single building: "ARRANGEMENT OF MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE TOWERS TO REACH NEW HEIGHTS WITHOUT WIDE BASE."[11] To accommodate a population of 120,000 residents, the building consists of a collection of towers, intermediate horizontal plates, and diagonal elements (→**137**). The individual slim parts of the configuration structurally support each other and create ever-taller towers.[12] At the same time, this scheme avoids the dark cores that occur in buildings with a single monolith mass. A system of vertical and horizontal connections provides fluid circulation inside the whole arrangement. Another example of hyperbuilding is the concept of the Togok Towers in Seoul. Again, the construction scheme operates with a composite stability of members locked together by structural braces at critical points. Through this device, a super high-rise building with stunningly slender towers emerges.

The patent for "The End of the Road" (2003) is presented as a further option to the exhausted, outdated typology of the skyscraper: "ACTIVATION OF THE Central Business District ARCHETYPE BY EITHER CONCENTRATING OR DIFFUSING THE CORES OVER A SINGLE URBAN CARPET."[13] In contrast to the hypertowers, this type is a diffusion of low-rise structures with a variety of programmatic issues

[9]   Ibid., 431.
[10]   Ibid., 511–2.
[11]   Ibid., 510.
[12]   Ibid.
[13]   Ibid., 513.
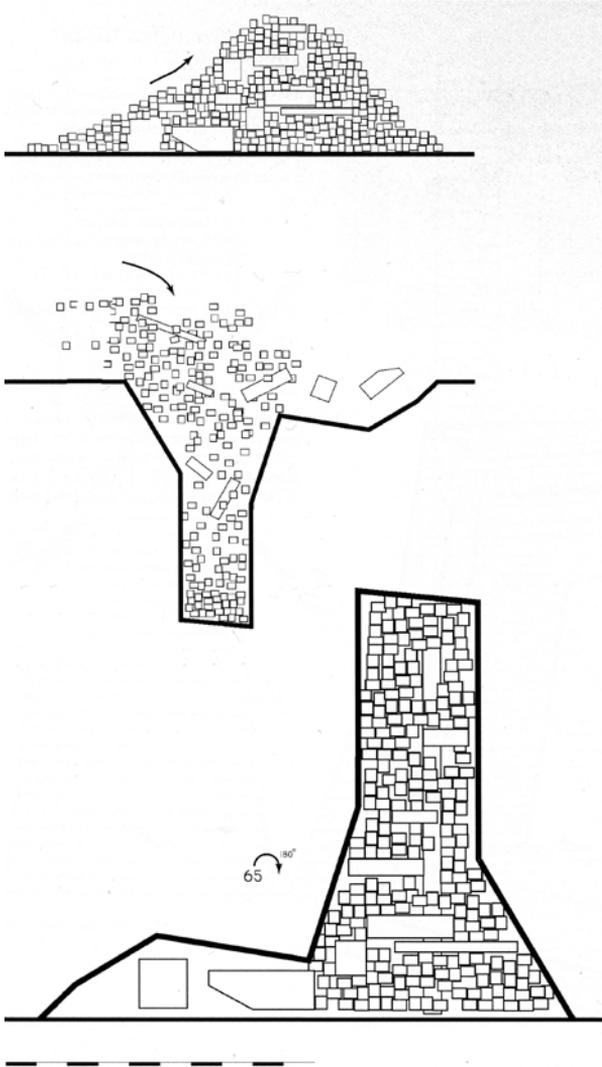
over an expanded urban area. Koolhaas abandons the typical gridiron of streets by substituting it with an area of dispersed cores that refer to traditional clusters of Chinese courtyards, the *hutongs*. These patterns are basic forms of the urban fabric, which Beijing has initiated to preserve via a conservation plan for the historic substance of the Old City.

With the patents for new urban structures, Koolhaas basically refers to innovative high-rise buildings (except the traditional low pattern termed "The End of the Road") that can even generate composite super-high schemes. However, the high-rise structure as metaphor of urbanity was given a cruel jolt when on September 11, 2001 two

Boeing 767s, their tanks full of high-octane fuel, crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center. This act of terrorism was a spectacle of devastation that had only been previously seen in movies. The WTC collapsed into twisted, charred ruins, and five buildings around them were completely ruined. The towers of the World Trade Center (built 1966–72) were briefly the tallest buildings in the world until they were superseded by the Sears Tower in Chicago in 1974. The main concern of their architect, Minoru Yamasaki, was to conceive the buildings as one object separated from their changing surroundings. Twenty years earlier, a cartoon showed the two towers in an S-shape cloud, making them look like the two bars of the $ sign. The gibe turns them into an emblem of financial world domination, a monument to the triumph of capitalism.

In the post-9/11 era, commentators state that the destruction of the WTC inflicted a wound on the apparently invincible system more severe than the destructive impact on the urban fabric. On the one hand, the twin towers were a symbol of New York, and their obliteration changed the skyline of the city irrevocably. But on the other hand, the damage to the ideology of the New World is far worse. In addition to being a powerful symbol of economic strength, the World Trade Center represented a symbol of utopian ventures as well as imperialism, both military and cultural.

For Koolhaas, it is evident that neo-liberalism and its "unstable ideological environment" have changed the conditions of architectural

practice and the responsibilities of the planer. Consequently, what are the effects of neo-liberal urbanization? How can architects decline to serve systems of power and the planning structures that assert the values of power?

Shape as Content and Container

In Bill Millard's article "Banned Words!," one entry (along with "Big," "Community," "Mass," "Program," and "Society") "Content" states: "If a building or building-idea or book has content, conveys content, disseminates content, then it is a container: in other words, it is close to nothing."[14] In "12 Reasons to Get Back into Shape," in the same volume, Robert E. Somol argues that shape avoids the opposition between content and form.[15] He refers to the recent projects by Koolhaas, particularly the CCTV building, and the specific qualities of their shapes. Somol defines twelve attributes of shape: illicit, easy, expandable, graphic, adaptable, fit, empty, arbitrary, intensive, buoyant, projective, and cool. He sets up the concept of *shape* as oppositional to that of *form*. Whereas form claims to be essential, abstract, and immaterial, shape is contingent and situational. It operates with the calculated vagueness of the atmospheric in the surface area. Shape relies on the immediacy of the sensual experience. Created "by the seduction of contour, shape has a requisite degree of slack."[16] Somol also mentions the idea of the *formless*, which has been presented as an alternative to the form. Shape, as opposed to form, is not involved, however, with the qualities of the formless.

For Somol, shape is contrary to the architectural properties of form and mass as they appear, for example, in the work of Frank Gehry. On the one hand, this notion of form is concerned with increasingly elaborate geometry and leads to the rhetorical excess of architectural object-sculptures. On the other hand, mass is an expressive means related to the spectacle that serves as a signature and derives its value from the author. Shape has become a great taboo, an "expletive of professional denigration," because shape has been commodified and hence anyone may claim a special competence in its field. In addition, shape is projective because it "is experienced more like a visitation from an alternative world."[17] With shape, the inconsistency between the independent interior and the exterior wrap appears natural. Shape exposes its hollowness like leftover packing material after the object has been taken away. Somol presents shape

[14]   Millard, "Banned Words," 91.
[15]   Somol, "12 Reasons to Get Back into Shape," 86–7.
[16]   Ibid.
[17]   Ibid.

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as a residue: "the twisted knot of CCTV [by Rem Koolhaas] operates as a minimalist frame for a monumental void … where that which is missing receives the greatest attention."[18] The shape of the CCTV building thereby *reframes* the city: "The OMA shape projects don't only operate with the graphic immediacy of logos, generating a new identity, but they are also holes in the skyline that reframe the city. One doesn't look *at* them so much as through them or from them. To radically paraphrase Carl Andre, a shape is a hole in a thing it is not."[19] In contrast to the abstract and immaterial realm of form, shape as covering surface for volumes basically depends on the material world, that is, the immediacy of sensual experience, such as the presence of large-scale objects. Yet, "*shape must float*": Shape has the effect of entropy on architecture, because it cools down the discipline. Similar to mere size, or as Koolhaas calls it Bigness, the vagueness of shape has mainly performative properties.[20]

In his 2004 essay "Architecture and Content: Who is afraid of the Form-Object?" Pier Vittorio Aureli refers to Somol's concept: "the superficiality of Shape is nothing but the solidification of excess content, metaphors, meanings, and symbols without sense; a solidification for which the architectural form is often literally a mold. Shapes can be interpreted as hieroglyphics; incomprehensible, yet their stubbornly figurative and symbolic character wants to be deciphered."[21] Reappropriating Michel Fried's term *objecthood*, Aureli argues that the shaped architecture—such as projects by Koolhaas, Herzog & de Meuron, Diller + Scofidio, or MVRDV—is concerned with its *contenthood*. Form and its content have the value of a commodity, as Piero Sraffa describes, that is not determined by the factors of production, redistribution, and consumption but by the economic process of supply and demand. In this circular system the certain properties of the produced things are not surplus or automatic by-products but rather represent an abstract system itself. In Sraffa's economic theory, the productive circle is based not on the material properties of the thing but on the performative qualities of the commodity so that the form of the commodity is understood as a material necessity for the circular process without any further meaning or content in itself.

[18]   Ibid.
[19]   Ibid.
[20]   Ibid.
[21]   Pier Vittorio Aureli, "Architecture and Content: Who's Afraid of the Form-Object?," in *Log* (Fall 2004): 29–36, here 29–30.

NEO-LIBERAL CONDITIONS OF ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE

Plasticity, or The Dialectic between Form and Shape

Following Aureli's notion of the commodification of architecture, the rhetoric of opposite codes is most stunningly applied in the case of the CCTV building: it may suggest a moon gate of a traditional Chinese garden, a bracket structure, a lattice window, a spider's web, interlocking Ls, a pet, a donut, a hand signal, and an empty TV screen. Any of those interpretations refers to the spatial perception and hence the ambiguity and indeterminacy of the three-dimensional object. For Sylvia Lavin, shape produces "a multivalent sensibility in which the clarity of view at the core of the Enlightenment project gives way to the density of experience."[22] It invokes plasticity in architecture, which leads to a "radical reorientation in the notion of architectural space. Rather than an empty abstraction, the plastic diagram of space describes a gradual differentiation of material densities ranging from the invisibility of a gas, to a translucent liquid, to a solid form."[23] (→**138**) For example, Diller+Scofidio's Blur Building on Lake Neuchatel in Switzerland (2002) works with the plasticity of a solidifying atmosphere and provides the visitors with a kind of opacity of space. The plasticity of reinforced concrete largely contributed to the success of modern architecture and demonstrates the essence and greatest potential of the material. In addition to the rationality of the framework of the Dom-Ino structure, concrete enables flowing curves that have a more gestural, even expressive, organic quality with a strong emphasis on the texture of the new shapes.

Plasticity is derived not only from the use of materials that allow for new structures but is also intimately connected with synthetic materials that lack the conventional, hierarchical connotations of traditional materials. The new forms respond to the inventiveness made possible by new technologies and material techniques. Plasticizing is closely related to the generative opportunities of plastic material in architectural form. For example, molded fiberglass enriched by luminosity gives the design a radical indeterminacy as to the material used. Glass, as one of the most important materials of the modern movement, is often understood to represent the qualities of truth and lightness. Plastic, in contrast, is unable to establish any relationship between material and truth, whether truth *to* material or truth *of* ma-

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[22]   Sylvia Lavin, "Plasticity at Work," in *Mood River*, ed. by Jeffrey Kipnis and Annetta Massie (Columbus, OH: Wexner Center for the Arts, 2002), 74–81, here 80.

[23]   Ibid.

terial. But there is another difference between the modernist materials, like glass, steel, and concrete, and the artificiality of plastic: it is a synthetic liquid material and requires a molding process in the production of its smooth, jointless, textureless surface. The term itself is derived from the Greek *plassein*, which means to mold and describes the particular fluidity of its process of manufacture. Yet, long before plastic played a major role in architecture, Frank Lloyd Wright proclaimed in his essay about the nature of materials that plastic is "peculiarly modern" [because of its] "true aesthetic of genuine structural reality."[24] During the nineteen-sixties an intense interest in the new material, both in art and in architecture, entailed the use of techniques of plasticity. For instance, Michael Webb's Cushicle is a mobile home consisting of a plastic inflatable suit designed to be carried by a man on his back. It is a shell to "house" the equipment for a domestic program that can be unfolded in various configurations. The choice of the material is necessitated by the fact that this kind of plasticity can only be achieved by a molded plastic shell that creates modular units and self-contained environments.[25]

In present-day life, there is an excess of plastic, since practically everyone is nearly always in contact with some form of it: in someone's body as a reconstructed knee or breast implants, in clothes, or in the room furnishings. However, plastic seems to be a material without a nature to which essential characteristics can be assigned. It lacks essence and immutable qualities and hence its identity is somewhat undeterminable. Although plastic is now virtually everywhere, it is marked as a product of commodification and waste. Referring to the pervasive use of plastic material within the human body, which provides "3 to 5 million individual upgrades" and the "intromission of a new species into its self-made Junksphere," Koolhaas suggests, "the cosmetic is the new cosmic…"[26]

Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting link the new plasticity of form to the neo-liberal conditions of architectural practice. In the essay "Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism" (2002), they discuss the possible move away from critical architectural practice towards projective practice, using Peter Eisenman's highly articulate *forms* against Koolhaas's diagrammatic and non-specific *shapes*.[27] One of the central problems of form is its inherent ambiguity because it refers to *idea* and *essence*, on the one hand, and

[24] Frank Lloyd Wright, "In the Nature of Materials: A Philosophy" (1942), in *Architecture Culture 1943–68*, ed. by Joan Ockman (New York: Rizzoli, 1993), 31–41, here 35.
[25] Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 280.
[26] Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 171.
[27] Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting, "Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism," in *Perspecta* 33: *Mining Autonomy* (July 2002), 72–7, here 75.

to *shape*, on the other hand. According to Eisenman's point of view, form is a conceptual quality of things as they are known to the mind, while Koolhaas suggests form as a perceptual quality known by the senses in real space.[28] Furthermore, a key aspect of their argument is that both architects represent two different orientations towards the discipline, the first as autonomy and process and the latter as force and effect.

Somol and Whiting argue that Eisenman and K. Michael Hays adopt an indexical reading of architecture since the index combines the material trace of the architectural object with signification. For instance, in Hays's description of Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion as well as in Eisenman's interpretation of Le Corbusier's Maison Dom-Ino, the material object serves as a physically driven sign. In order to demonstrate self-referentiality, Eisenman and Hays have to deploy a series of reproductions because the architectural objects are missing: Eisenman redraws axonometrics of the Dom-Ino scheme, Hays describes historical photographs of the demolished Barcelona Pavilion. In "Aspects of Modernism: Maison Dom-Ino and the Self-Referential Sign" (1979), Eisenman refers to the attitude of the modern movement toward the autonomy of an abstract system within

(138) Diller+Scofidio, Blur Building, Lake Neuchatel, 2002, rendering. Source: Diller and Scofidio, *Blur* **© 2015 Diller+Scofidio**

[28]   The concept of form in antiquity was proposed by Plato in the Dialogue of *Timaeus*. He distinguishes between the eternal "idea" and the "thing" apparent to the senses. While forms are objects of thought but not of sight, things are bound to surface and objects of sight but not of reasoning. See Plato, *Timaeus and Critias*, 52.

preexisting cultural values.[29] For example, in literature there was a move away from narrative to non-narrative forms that led to a new relationship between subject and object.

Comparing Le Corbusier to Renaissance thinking, Colin Rowe also interprets the Dom-Ino prototype as a variation of "historical change mirrored in unchanging modes of representation. 'Modern' in Rowe's context seems merely to indicate the new style of supposed abstraction and the symbology of the machine."[30] For Eisenman, however, Le Corbusier's scheme is a self-referential sign. It analyses the "minimal conditions for any architecture."[31] Architecture cannot be reduced to mere geometry, which is a substantial part of the building, but instead the geometrical ordering of the Dom-Ino house is a deliberate architectural sign. "Thus, in cases where a simple geometry exists as a basic diagram, the 'architecture' seems to be reduced to the decorative grafting of some aesthetic skin or the insertion of a particular use into the given geometry."[32]

For Eisenman, the diagram of the Dom-Ino house has a specific configuration of elements, although another ordering would provide the same functional and structural requirements. He interprets Le Corbusier's location of the columns as a significant redundancy because they reinforce the geometric relationship between the two different sides of the rectangular plan. The marking through "the sign must overcome use and extrinsic significance to be admitted as architecture."[33] Architecture is understood as both substance and intention: "the sign is a record of an intervention – an event and an act which goes beyond the presence of elements, which are merely necessary conditions."[34]

In turn, Somol and Whiting argue that, in contrast to Eisenman's critical-indexical reading, Koolhaas's deployment of the frame structure is diagrammatic and projective. In *Delirious New York* Koolhaas presents the section of the typical Manhattan skyscraper as architecture for instigating unprecedented events and behaviors. The diagrammatic section of the skyscraper becomes an instrument of projecting a multiplicity of virtual worlds onto a single metropolitan site. According to Somol and Whiting, Koolhaas uses the frame structure as the diagram of "force and effect" for producing new events: "The diagram is a tool of the virtual to the same degree that the index is the trace of the real."[35] Koolhaas's proposals of new high-rise

[29]   Somol and Whiting, "Notes around the Doppler Effect," 75.
[30]   Peter Eisenman, "Aspects of Modernism: Maison Dom-ino and the Self-Referential Sign," in Hays, *Oppositions Reader*, 189–98, here 189–90.
[31]   Ibid., 191.
[32]   Ibid., 193.
[33]   Ibid., 196.
[34]   Ibid., 197–8.
[35]   Somol and Whiting, "Notes around the Doppler Effect," 74–6.

buildings are no typical skyscrapers, though, but instead plastic icons and automonuments that can adapt to many different meanings and programs—a case in point is the shape of CCTV. The projective qualities of shape should set into motion the emergence of new engagements, alternative realities, and the virtual in architecture.

Post-Criticality

Somol and Whiting challenge the notion of a criticality in architecture by providing an alternative position that they characterize as projective.[36] They challenge the avant-gardist position that architecture is an autonomous discipline and that this autonomy of the arts is the precondition for engagement. The dominant paradigm of criticality mainly understands autonomy as enabling critique and signification, whereas projective practice uses architecture as projection and performativity. While criticality is linked to the indexical, the dialectic, and "hot representation," the projective relates to the diagrammatic, the atmospheric, and "cool performance."[37] Though they argue against the oppositional policy of critical dialectics, they outline the binary model *critical* versus *projective* practice by constructing contrasts: Eisenman and Koolhaas, difficult and easy, autonomy and instrumentality, representation and performativity, signification and pragmatics, index and diagram, dialectic and atmosphere, hot media and cool media.

In describing the shift from critical to projective practice, Somol and Whiting also refer to the distinction between hot and cool media as first proposed by Marshall McLuhan in *Understanding Media* (1964). On the one hand, film, radio, or a photograph is a hot medium because it is filled with data and is hence high-definition. On the other hand, cool media, such as television, the telephone, or a cartoon, is low-definition and only provides a small amount of precise information so that much has to be filled in by the audience. So both hot and cool media have completely different effects on the user. McLuhan proposes that "hot media are, therefore, low in participation, and cool media are high in participation or completion by the audience."[38]

In describing the effect of the virtual in projective practice, Somol and Whiting introduce a scientific metaphor, the so-called Doppler Effect.[39] Rather than focusing on the oppositional method of dialectics, the Doppler analogy in architecture should explain the multiple contingencies of the discipline. It shifts the understanding of architecture's

[36]   Ibid.
[37]   Ibid.
[38]   Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 39.
[39]   Somol and Whiting, "Notes around the Doppler Effect," 75.

field as autonomous to rethinking the discipline as performance and practice. Projective practice is not only engaging with architecture's inherent topics, such as materials, program, and technologies but also overlaps with politics, economics, and theory. However, although the Doppler effect is perceivable and measurable, its analogy in architecture is vague and inexact as it is not clear which terms should be related to each other.

Although they embrace capitalist conditions, Somol and Whiting emphasize that "this projective program does not necessarily entail a capitulation to market forces, but actually respects or reorganizes multiple economies, ecologies, information systems, and social groups."[40] The projective practice is conceived as a model in which the architect is finally freed from many responsibilities to the program, ideology, society, or technological resources since the former critical position has exhausted architectural practice by inhibiting design creativity and by excluding any interdisciplinary approach.

On the occasion of a conference of the Canadian Centre for Architecture organized by *ANY* magazine in 1994, Koolhaas challenged the position of criticality and autonomy in architecture: "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."[41] According to Koolhaas, it is through Bigness that architecture loses its autonomy and that "it becomes [an] instrument of other forces, it *depends*."[42] Its extraordinary size demands that one give up control and surrender to technological, political, and economic conditions or any other forces beyond the reach of the architect: "Maybe some of our most interesting engagements are uncritical, empathic 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."[43] Under the Regime of ¥€$ and the large-scale economy there is no outside of global-driven capitalism.

Accordingly, in another statement in *S,M,L,XL*, although referring to the renovation project of the panopticon prison at Arnhem, Koolhaas argues that "changes in regime and ideology are more powerful than the most radical architecture."[44] There, it is the space-consuming plan of the panoptical principle, once for centralized monitoring, that now provides the flexibility for future programs. Ideological changes can turn even such a rigid spatial organization as the panopti-

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[40]   Ibid., 77.
[41]   See George Baird, "'Criticality' and Its Discontents," in *Harvard Design Magazine* 16 (Winter/Spring 2002): 136–49, here 137; see also *The Canadian Architect Magazine* 39 (August 1994): 10.
[42]   Koolhaas, "Bigness," 513.
[43]   See Baird, *"'Criticality' and Its Discontents,"* 10.
[44]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 239.

con prison into an architecture with a fundamentally different agenda. Hence, there are new tasks for the architect in our data-driven, mass-produced media society, like reorganizing a large corporate identity such as Koolhaas's venture with Prada. The architect is just one of a train of identity providers for a targeted group of consumers. Architects can also reinvent themselves as the conscious collector and manipulator of statistical data in order to ground their projects in analysis and the rational realm of data. For instance, AMO, the antithesis to Koolhaas's firm OMA, was initially tied to his professorship at Harvard University and involved in independent research but is now a multinational consultancy, mainly photographing and collecting information and statistics about global phenomena.

In the essay "'Criticality' and Its Discontents" (2002), George Baird, like Koolhaas, criticizes the notion of criticality as an outdated and irrelevant concept that only inhibits design creativity.[45] Yet, if they do not aim for architecture's capacity for social transformation, new forms of projective practice run the risk of representing only another formal category, just as several other architectural styles have done previously. Without the supporting body of a projective theory, "this new architecture will devolve to the 'merely' pragmatic, and to the 'merely' decorative, with astonishing speed."[46] It seems as if criticality constrains professional efficacy in a way. In this discourse of post-criticality (or at least an extended criticality) the advocates of the projective position make reference to Koolhaas, who is seen to perform a bridging role between the efficacious business practices and an avant-garde architecture. However, for Baird, Koolhaas's critical engagement amounts to nothing more than attacking Andres Duany for his approval of the new project of Manhattan's 42nd Street, for Duany should have spoken out against the Disneyfication of the urban realm to preserve the existing street culture beyond any market-driven efficacy. This event concerning 42nd Street recalls the destruction of the historic residential districts of Beijing; Koolhaas disapproved the proceedings of the Chinese authorities but also failed to prevent their demolition.

The CCTV and the TVCC buildings are part of the monumental modernization campaign that made an investment of $ 40 billion in the capital city for the Olympics in 2008. The Chinese government was astonishingly successful in asking Western architects for collaboration, such as Herzog & de Meuron for the Olympic Stadium, Schuermann Architects for the Laoshan Velodrome, PTW for the National Swimming Center, SOM for the World Trade Center, and Steven Holl for the Linked Hybrid building. However, as it is the same repressive one-party regime that shot thousands of civilians in 1989, Ian Buruma

[45]   Baird, "'Criticality' and Its Discontents".
[46]   Ibid.

makes a distinction between Koolhaas's project and the other proposals because CCTV is something else; it is "the voice of the party, the centre of state propaganda."[47] He even compares the ambitious plans for authoritarian governments with building for General Pinochet or Saddam Hussein. Eventually, with the global economic crisis, the erection of the propaganda buildings also came to a halt since there are now 100 million square feet of vacant office spaces.

Originality and the Avant-Garde

In contrast to the collaboration of many other architects with authoritarian ideology, Eisenman and Hays (following Tafuri and, before him, Georg Lukács and Theodor Adorno) are among the prominent figures that succeed in embodying resistance to and criticality against the late-capitalist consumer society. They are accompanied by additional figures, such as Fredric Jameson and Rosalind Krauss, and, in more recent times, the design practice of Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio. Hays quotes Adorno: "Art remains alive only through its social power to resist society. … What it contributes to society is not some communication with the same but rather something more mediate – resistance. Resistance reproduces social development in aesthetic terms without directly imitating it."[48]

As a built example, he refers to Mies's Seagram Building, which might be the paramount example of critical resistance, and Tafuri's interpretation of its glass surface, where abstraction becomes a neutral mirror of the urban chaos around timeless purity.[49] Even Mies's preceding projects, the two designs of Glass Skyscrapers for Berlin (1922), demonstrate architecture's ability for resistance because of the autonomy and the materiality of the refractive glass surface within the repetitive steel structural elements: "Abstraction – the pure sound of the Sirens, the organizing absent presence – is the maximal limit of the avant-garde."[50] Through abstraction, architecture acquires a means of resistance to escape the reification, to refuse to be a mere thing among others. Koolhaas also links the position of resistance to the urban, for "the city will always be the screen on which the avant-

[47] Ian Buruma, "Don't be Fooled – China is Not Squeaky Clean," in *The Guardian* (July 30, 2002), accessed May 6, 2012, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/jul/30/china.features11.

[48] Theodor W. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), 335–6; see also K. Michael Hays, "Abstraction's Appearance (Seagram Building)," in *Autonomy and Ideology: Positioning an Avant-Garde in America*, ed. by Robert Somol (New York: Monacelli Press, 1997), 277–91, here 278.

[49] Manfredo Tafuri and Franscesco Dal Co, *Modern Architecture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1979), 342; see also Hays, "Abstraction's Appearance (Seagram Building)," 285.

[50] Ibid., 291.

garde projects its ambitions, against which the avant-garde prepares its (usually futile) stratagems of substitution."[51] The European avant-garde in 1922 experimented with the skyscraper typology that already existed in America as an "unacknowledged, invisible utopia, a section of 'pure' avant-garde."[52]

Although the elision of avant-garde with autonomy and originality is common sense, the idea of originality is a modernist myth, particularly in the case of the avant-garde.[53] The origins of the French term avant-garde have specifically military associations of an advance guard or front guard of soldiers in a military maneuver or expedition. In contrast to the modernist values of authenticity, medium specificity, autonomy, and originality—which Walter Benjamin held in suspicion—the historical avant-garde projects instead involved themselves with new technological means of reproduction, multimedia, and between-media practices, events, and collective modes of reception (for example, an extraordinary fascination with film), as well as the attempt to collapse the disjunction between life and art.

In *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1974), Peter Bürger argues that the avant-garde critique challenges bourgeois art and the autonomous institutions of art.[54] The autonomy of art, proclaimed as an ideal in Enlightenment aesthetics by the end of the eighteenth century, turned into the central subject of art during the following century. This kind of autonomy in bourgeois art occurred in the form of a withdrawal from the world and consequently came under attack by what Bürger refers to as the historical avant-garde, the artistic movements such as constructivism, futurism, Dada, and surrealism. The ready-mades and collages challenge the principles of an autonomous art, attacking audience, institution, and market alike. Resonating with Marx's remark in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852) that all great historic events repeat themselves, first as tragedy, then as farce, Bürger claims that while the historic avant-garde failed heroically, the attempts of the neo-avant-garde are opportunistic, cynical, and at best farcical—and must fail again. With artists like Duchamp and Yves Klein provocation was soon turned into bourgeois spectacle, an avant-garde scandal, the transgressive act into the institutional event. This way, the historical avant-garde failed to destroy the traditional categories and did not become socially significant.

Hays's essay "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form" (1985) situates architecture in "the critical position between being a

[51]   Rem Koolhaas, "Eno/abling Architecture," 294.
[52]   Ibid., 299.
[53]   Rosalind Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985).
[54]   Peter Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974).

cultural product and a discrete autonomous discipline."[55] It seems as if criticality requires the condition of *betweeness*: for example, Clement Greenberg's opposition between kitsch and avant-garde, Michael Fried's art and objecthood, Manfredo Tafuri's capitalist development and design, or Colin Rowe's literal and phenomenal.

A more radical stance is Michael Speaks's claim that architects should abandon the issue of resistance and instead adopt contemporary business management practices. Projective practice not only challenges the notion of criticality but also attempts to develop utopian concepts, just as it was a matter of concern for the modern movement.[56] In "Design Intelligence" (2002), he argues that in the contemporary critical discourse "visionary ideas have given way to the 'chatter' of intelligence."[57] Instead of this perpetual definition of the professional identity, he argues for a "post-vanguard" architectural practice, defined as "design intelligence." According to this particular usage of the term "intelligence," an allusion to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), he opts for an Open Source Intelligence (called OSINT by the CIA) that collects from other disciplines whatever appears to be useful. Thus architectural practices become "adaptable to almost any circumstance almost anywhere."[58] When the shape of CCTV is characterized as a "new species" and "exceptionally perceptive and adaptive organism," these designations can also imply an ideological framework and its effect on architectural production. Are architects opportunistic if they choose to agree to collaborations with regressive governments? Can architecture claim a critical and autonomous position if the planners consent to the current business practice of a neo-liberal globalized economy?

As a star architect, Koolhaas is commissioned when the client seeks a signature building or an icon. In globalized building production, the authority of a famous architect can sometimes help to push through an unpopular project or one that is not entirely in line with community regulations. In such cases, however, politicians usually like to emphasize that the proposed solution, sanctioned by the name of the star designer, has been derived from the specificities of the particular situation with great precision, as opposed to being merely an application of a type or a universal patent.

The public performance of the architect (and the office as well) has become a central feature of the superstar system, as "the idolatry of the market has drastically changed our legitimacy and status even though our status has never been higher … it is really unbelievable

[55]   Somol and Whiting, "Notes around the Doppler Effect," 74–5; see also K. Michael Hays, "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form," in *Perspecta* 21 (1984): 14–29, here 27.
[56]   See Roger Riewe, ed., *Space Condition* (Wien: Springer, 2005), 19.
[57]   Michael Speaks, "Design Intelligence," 12.
[58]   Ibid., 16.

what the market demands now. It demands recognition, it demands difference and it demands iconographic qualities."[59] The architect of promise does not only create a new type of iconic building—by amplifying the specific brief as well as the discipline as a whole—but also negotiates global media to promote his or her reputation and commissions. The successful designer has become a market label comparable to the brands he seeks to immortalize. Referring to the CCTV building, this strategy also works for reinvesting and reinventing old power with new trappings, although the involvement of the avant-garde architect with political authority has always been the rule.

[59]   Charles Jencks, *The Story of Post-Modernism: Five Decades of the Ironic, Iconic and Critical in Architecture* (Chichester: Wiley, 2011), 227.

CONCLUSION

At the outset of the present study, the question was formulated whether the work of OMA should be read with the figure of Rem Koolhaas as a unifying condition, what Foucault calls the author function. The application of the concept of author to the production of buildings is particularly problematic in that large building projects, from Gothic cathedrals to contemporary skyscrapers, have always been collective enterprises. Instead of one intention animating the entire project—as one might imagine to be the case in music, literature, or painting—architectural and urbanistic decisions reflect a multitude of limitations (legal, financial, logistical, topographical) and a compromise of various interests (client, users, authorities, architects, engineers, consultants). Large architecture offices, such as the OMA, are even more collective in nature than smaller ones.

Instead of seeing himself as the original genius whose touch imparts an aura to designs, Koolhaas defines his role in the office as "a lamination, a bonding between layers."[1] The design process in the office is organized rather like an architectural school, where the students (the team members) first collect datascapes and statistical diagrams about the specific design brief, the program, and the context, and then they go on to develop a large variety of design studies. The project designers present their ideas to a "jury" made of Koolhaas, other office members, and guest critics, who reviews proposals, assesses the potential, and chooses those that should be worked out further. This architectural practice makes use of the existing knowledge and archival material of models and drafts, no matter for what purpose they were previously used. What may appear as a bricolage or mixture of elements, fragments from the field of art and architectural history, works rather like a laboratory for processing knowledge.

Despite the collective production method and the need for an avant-garde practice to adjust its operations to issues that are promoted in the discourse, the previous chapters have demonstrated a remarkable degree of consistency in OMA's work. Certain ideas that may have been originally formulated in Koolhaas's early design projects or in *Delirious New York* keep coming back, adjusted for new sites and briefs. A case in point is the Casa da Musica in Porto, a "recycled" design that was originally planned as a private house for a Dutch family in Berlin next to Koolhaas's embassy.[2] As there were only two weeks left for a competition entry for a concert hall in Porto and the process with the first client had slowed to a standstill, undoing his initial agreement, the design for the family house was sim-

[1]   Arthur Lubow, "Rem Koolhaas Builds," in *The New York Times Magazine*, (July 9, 2000).
[2]   Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*, 302.

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ply enlarged to become the entry for the Casa da Musica. Here, one concept tailored for a specific client is reused for an entirely different purpose, which for Koolhaas reflects the unstable condition between form and function, as well as the "naked opportunism" of architectural practice.[3]

Given this way of working, it is not very surprising that Koolhaas and OMA list their best ideas in a section of the book *Content* titled "Patent Office." This section is part of Koolhaas's attempt to reposition the architectural profession relative to other disciplines. He often complains that architects do not receive the recognition they deserve. In *Supercritical*, he points out: "Although we provide icons of today's market economy, we are the only artistic discipline that doesn't really benefit from it. Movie stars make astronomical amounts of money, and we have art stars and sports superstars, but by comparison architects remain on a stubbornly horizontal line of income, with only a few like Foster or Gehry attaining a modest stratosphere of fame or money. Compared to other incomes, their levels of fame or money are of course laughable, so we have to change architecture."[4]

The concepts collected in the "Office" of a total of fifteen "Universal Modernization Patents" will hardly make anyone a superstar in the sense of Hollywood, but they can be seen as making a claim for professional innovation that should be officially acknowledged. Although each "patent" includes a brief description, it is striking that these really are not patent applications. There are a few architects who have had success in defining patents. For instance, Richard Buckminster Fuller sought and received patents for his engineering inventions, such as the Dymaxion Map Patent in 1947 and the Building Construction Patent for the structure of his geodesic dome in 1954.[5] Many of Buckminster Fuller's patents have never gone into production for their original purpose and expired; other patents were assigned to different users. Whereas some inventions may be thought of as utopian paper architecture, such as the Submarisle Patent, other patents are sometimes close to standard items, like Buckminster Fuller's watercraft similar to outrigger canoes that have existed since recorded history. Compared to Buckminster Fuller's patents, Koolhaas's proposed patents are more appropriately described as diagrams or design concepts. They are neither sufficiently described to make them unique, so that one could conceivably decide whether someone else would be violating the patent rights, nor is their novelty and value explicitly defined.

[3]   Ibid.
[4]   Peter Eisenman, Rem Koolhaas and Brett Steele, *Supercritical: Architecture Words* One (London: AA Publications, 2010), 12.
[5]   Richard Buckminster Fuller, *Nine Chains to the Moon: An Adventure Story of Thought* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1938).

Engineering patents need to demonstrate clearly defined pragmatic benefits for the concept. In artistic discourses, the value is radically relational, derived from the positioning of the work in a larger discourse or, to put it differently, from the restructuring of that discourse. In distilling his favorite parts in the form of patents, Koolhaas suggests, on the one hand, that the ideas are universally applicable and, on the other, that he is not trying to reinvent architecture every Monday morning, as the Romantic ideology of genius would have it.

The notion that architectural concepts are universally valid was commonplace in functionalist theory. In his Cartesian moments, Le Corbusier was hoping to arrive at general solutions that could be repeated in any situation and location: "I have avoided all special cases, and all that may be accidental, and I have assumed an ideal site to begin with" and again: "the plans are rational and lyrical monuments situated in the midst of contingencies. The contingencies are the environment: regions, races, cultures, topographies, climates."[6] Once a complex problematic phenomenon has been thus reduced, it is often possible to devise a simple solution in the same terms. In *Vers une architecture*, Le Corbusier defines a house as shelter against cold, heat, rain, burglars, and other trespassers; the solution to such a well-defined problem is the Maison Citrohan. Moreover, the solution applies universally, as Le Corbusier reasoned, proposing "one single building for all nations and climates" and foreseeing the disappearance of regionalism.[7] It is of course not surprising to learn that the solution is ideal everywhere on the globe, given the way regions, cultures, and climates were bracketed as irrelevant contingencies right from the beginning.

Koolhaas follows a similar tactic of universality and iterability. However, this anti-Romantic attitude could be seen as contradicting one of the premises of Koolhaas's fame as a star architect. This tension between the patent office and the position of the avant-garde architect relates to the flagship syndrome—where the typical repetition of a brand identity collides with the reinvention of the brand via the specific site. On the one hand, Koolhaas claims that "the stronger

[6]   Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme*, 158: "J'ai fui les cas d'espèces: j'ai éloigné tous les accidents; je me suis donné un terrain ideal"; Le Corbusier, *La ville radieuse* (Boulogne: Éditions de l'Architecture d'aujourd'hui, 1935). 1: "Les plans sont le monument rationnel et lyrique dressé au centre des contingences. Les contingences sont le milieu: régions, races, cultures, topographies, climats."
[7]   Le Corbusier, *Précisions*, 64; Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme*, 219. Arguing for flat roofs, Le Corbusier once described the disastrous behavior of the pitched roof on his cinema at La-Chaux-de-Fonds. The difficulties can be avoided if the flat roof is used, Le Corbusier claims, and concludes: "If this is the only solution to extreme cases, we can be sure it is the solution-type for all cases." As quoted in Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, 260. A solution adequate for all extreme cases would violate the principle of economy in any particular case.

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[the] identity, the more it imprisons, the more it resists expansion, interpretation, renewal, contradiction."[8] He argues that the ideas of identity, specificity, and uniqueness have become unstable entities in modern life. Thus, the more neutral, repetitive, and standardized the single elements are, the better they can adapt to changing functions and individual conditions "no longer through the application of principle but through the *systematic* application of the unprincipled."[9] Only such zero-degree architecture, including the typical (plan) and the generic (city), can provide the potential for the permanent evolution, differentiation, and freedoms of the "post-architectural" future. Instead of the fetishization of the atypical, Koolhaas speaks of an unacknowledged utopia of modernity that offers surroundings for any activities.[10] The message is contradictory as architecture is both impotent and yet able to empower unlimited options. However, only the unique site can abandon the imprisoning effect of the typical item, as brand or architecture, and bring back aura, mystery, surprise, and newness. For Koolhaas, the collaboration with Prada and the Chinese Television (as well as the Guggenheim and the Hermitage) offered the opportunity to reinvent a historic identity and gave the corporations or institutions iconic buildings or "epicenters" that brought in strangeness, rawness, and a peculiar materiality to destabilize the brand image. Such inconsistency and rupture are an essential part of the strategy of both design and inventor—for enhancing his aura in the discourse.

The contradictions (or paradoxes) in Koolhaas's concepts are striking: it is the indifferent repetition of the Manhattan grid that creates the autonomy and multiple identities of each block; a wall defines a zone of liberty; both non-planning and unplanned urban growth are unavoidable so that the architect can only draw the limit between them; simple geometry for flexible performance is paired with monumentality; plastic materials connect to glass, wood to layers of gold; shopping malls are the last public spheres, but they are defined by air-conditioning.

These shifting meanings resonate with the *S,M,L,XL* dictionary entry "Copyright," in which Gregory Ulmer refers to Sherrie Levine's radical questioning of reference and originality in her work "appropriate to the age of mechanical reproduction in which 'copyright' now means the right to copy anything, a mimicry or repetition which is originary, producing differences (just as in allegory anything may

[8]   Koolhaas, "The Generic City," 1248.
[9]   Ibid, 1261. "Instead of a superstructure, this space is subsystem only, without superstructure, orphaned particles in search of framework or pattern." Koolhaas, "Junk Space," 164.
[10]   Koolhaas, "Typical Plan," 336.

mean anything else)."[11] Levine's work is also exemplary for Rosalind Krauss's argument against the modernist myth of originality, in which the avant-garde artists revolt against the tradition and the "cemeteries" that museums and institutions of the arts have become in order to start from zero—a literal origin without ancestors.[12] This self-creation typical for the avant-garde of the early twentieth century, free from impurities of history, is conceived as continual renewal and reinvention, following Kazimir Malevich's notion "only he is alive who rejects his convictions of yesterday."[13]

Yet, their actual practice is actually based on repetition, recurring themes, so that, for example, in the work of Auguste Rodin the question of the original even becomes pointless (not only because of his consent for replication after his death). *The Three Shades*, part of *The Gates of Hell*, consists of three identical figures from the same mold but assembled to form a composition that, for Rilke, appears to be a group of different figures: "Now, nothing in the myth of Rodin as the prodigious form giver prepares us for the reality of these arrangements of multiple clones. For the form giver is the maker of originals, exultant in his own originality."[14] Like the absolute stasis of the grid (tabula rasa) with its anti-referential and non-narrative character, the avant-garde artist follows a self-imposed code (silence, exile, and cunning) that ensures his autonomy and so the paired terms originality/repetition mutually sustain each other. This concept of art lacks inflection, center, and hierarchy but functions as a mesh against intrusions. This kind of concept "facilitated this sense of being born into the newly evacuated space of an aesthetic purity and freedom."[15]

A different kind of repetition has recently become increasingly common even in flagship architecture. Jean Nouvel's new concert hall in Copenhagen is a case in point: the forty-five-meter-tall blue cube glowing at night stands out in a sharp difference to its office surroundings, whereas the interior concert hall is fashioned after the model of Hans Scharoun's Berlin Philharmonie with a cascade of balconies and wood panels on the wall. Yet, for Nouvel, the building is not a bleak copy or repetition but "a discrete [sic] homage" to Scharoun.[16] It is

[11]   Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 252.
[12]   Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde, 157*.
[13]   Kazimir Malevich, see ibid.
[14]   Krauss, ibid., 68.
[15]   Ibid.
[16]   "Jean Nouvel's Copenhagen Concert Hall," in *Architecture or Revolution*, accessed June 4, 2011, http://www.architectureorrevolution. blogspot.com/2010/01/jean-nouvel-copenhagen-concert-hall.html. Insisting that his design is full of surprises and every detail is a invention, Nouvel speaks of an architectural lesson that should not be forgotten and suggests that the building is a homage to Theodor Lauritzen and Hans Scharoun: "C'est un monde de contrastes, de surprises … Leçon retenue d'une certaine architecture qu'il ne faut pas oublier, hommages discrets à Messieurs Theodor Lauritzen et Hans Scharoun."

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an homage only in the sense that "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery," to quote Charles Caleb Colton's definition.[17]

Even if Peter Eisenman sees Koolhaas as the origin of and totemic figure for an *archistar* who has wiped out the other *archistars*, it appears that the star system in contemporary architecture does not seem to require originality in any particularly demanding sense.[18] Not only did Nouvel take something from Scharoun to design the concert hall in Copenhagen but he also sometimes quotes himself. Thus the tower he built in Doha, Qatar resembles the slightly earlier design built in Barcelona. One should not think that Nouvel is an exception among Pritzker Prize recipients or other star architects. The way Frank Gehry has defined and keeps restating his own particular brand is not essentially different.

While uniqueness or originality is no longer an absolute requirement of artistic creativity, the concept of the author has not lost its attraction. Even after his celebrated declaration that the author as institution, paternity, and biographical person is dead, Roland Barthes never stopped inquiring about the author. Instead, he suggests that the pleasure of the work also includes the figure of the author and his return, because "in the text, in a way, I desire the author: I need his figure … as he needs mine."[19]

The name of the author establishes a certain status by creating a system of authentication, rejection, and mutual explication of positions. The author function—as ownership of a work and appropriation of a discourse—truly started within the context of becoming a matter of transgression and punishment. The value and meaning of every work vitally depends on the sovereignty of its authorship and, to a minor extent, on the date and circumstance of its making. At the same time, after indicating the source of information, the discourse is concerned with analyzing recurring themes and their variation in different contexts. Hence, the author function is not only the connection between an individual and certain work but is rather a complex construction of intentions, ideas, and design strategies, which are exposed in various devices (writings, verbal statements, drawings, sketches) and characterized by a variety of fictional egos (in contrast to the actual creator). Yet, the name to which a work can be attributed restricts and narrows the meaning given to a subject in the discourse.

To understand the transition from the modern to the postmodern era, one has to consider the Enlightenment project and the modern mind it launched. Characteristic of this modern edifice is the idea of a scientific framework to unlock nature's secrets in order to control its

[17]   "IMITATION is the sincerest of flattery." Charles Caleb Colton, *Lacon: or, Many Things in Few Words* (New York: E. Kearny, 1836), ccxvii.
[18]   Ciuffi, "Rem Koolhaas is Stating 'The End' of his Career."
[19]   Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1975), 27.

forces, to exercise power, and to master nature for the benefit of humankind. The human being is understood as an autonomous, rational subject whose goal is to induce moral progress and the general good of society by developing the objectifying sciences, reorganizing social relations in a non-oppressive system, and guaranteeing everyone the right to decent living conditions. The basis of this modern perspective is the assumption that knowledge is not only rational and certain but also objective and accessible to the human mind, giving the person the status of an unconditioned observing specialist.

Post-Enlightenment thinkers have sought to dismantle modernism and challenge the equation of knowledge with progress and social advancement. Instead of the modern assumption of an objective truth that is inherently good, postmodern theory emphasizes the relational, historically and culturally conditioned nature of meaning; to paraphrase Michel Foucault, knowledge and every interpretation of reality are always an assertion of power. This kind of abandonment of the ideals of modernity implies a different idea of knowledge, including its production and distribution. According to Jean-François Lyotard what is at stake are not the latest developments in the sciences but rather the way that knowledge is used and valued: it is produced in order to be consumed or sold—for the purpose of exchange but without any use value.[20] Just as any resource, knowledge has become a commodity signifying a position in a power structure: multinational corporations fund research and then, with the help of patent legislation, claim the rights to the knowledge in order to put it to use for exchange.

The notion of knowledge as a commodity, or knowledge as a strategic device to achieve certain goals, features prominently in theories of post-critical practice in architecture. Michael Speaks famously speaks of design intelligence and stresses that the word "intelligence" should not be understood in an abstract sense but rather like it is used in the name of CIA or Central Intelligence Agency. Speaks goes on to elaborate in more detail: "Rem Koolhaas and a number of others have begun to forge practices that are not driven by the desire for either universal truths, postulated by the modernists, or repressed truths, uncovered by the critical postmodernists, but instead strive for actionable truths that can be used to intervene in and transform the city and the world[.] … Post-critical practices collapse the distinction between abstract theory (ideals/ideology) and practice, preferring to treat research as a form of design and design as a form of research that increases the practical intelligence of each office and of the architectural profession as a whole."[21]

[20]   Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained: Correspondence 1982–1985* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 8.
[21]   Michael Speaks, Wu Ming, and Chia Shi Chee, "Ideals, Ideology, Intelligence in China and the West," in *Time + Architecture* 5 (September 2006): 63–5.

In theorizing this new design thinking, Speaks distinguishes between "problem solving, which answers without questioning the problem, and therefore adds nothing new, and innovation, which interrogates and reforms the problem and adds value by creating new knowledge and new products not anticipated in the problem."[22] To make this idea concrete, he refers to Peter Rice's book, *An Engineer Imagines* (1994).[23] Engineering problems, Rice suggests, are shaped by objective parameters so that each problem has only one solution. Engineering innovations result from the engineer's shaping and reshaping the problem until finally the right problem emerges. The lesson Speaks draws from Rice's book is that design drives innovation rather than the other way around.

If this is correct, then originality also becomes an effect of design rather than one of its attributes or goals. Originality and the author function should then be redefined on the basis of an established design practice, such as OMA or even AMO. The shaping of this kind of notion of originality may be Koolhaas's most significant contribution to architecture.

[22]   Michael Speaks, "New Values of New Design," in Thomas Ballhausen, ed., *Umbau* 25*: Architektur im Ausverkauf Architecture for Sale* (2010): 150–7.
[23]   Peter Rice, *An Engineer Imagines* (London: Ellipsis, 1998).

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