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K. Michael Hays, 2010

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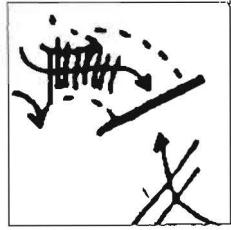
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ARCHITECTURE'S DESIRE

READING THE LATE AVANT-GARDE

K. MICHAEL HAYS

2010



DESIRE

I write here about architecture's status as a domain of cultural representation. I am not primarily concerned with architecture as the art of building *per se*; nor do I consider it as a profession. Rather, I examine architecture as a way of negotiating the real, by which I mean intervening in the realm of symbols and signifying processes at the limit of the social order itself—that is, **architecture as a specific kind of socially symbolic production whose primary task is the construction of concepts and subject positions rather than the making of things.** It is thus an architectural impulse or attitude that I seek to characterize, and a certain kind of attention is needed to detect it: specialized theoretical techniques and methods must be brought to bear on this subject. Nevertheless, I hope to suggest too that the architectural impulse is part of daily social life and its wide-ranging practices. **Architecture comprises a set of operations that organize formal representations of the real (although I will have to complicate that formulation), and hence, rather than merely being invested with an ideology by its creators or users, it is ideological in its own right**—an imaginary “solution” to a real social situation and contradiction (as Louis Althusser's take on Jacques Lacan puts it); that is what is meant by its “autonomy.”¹ Understood in this way, architecture's effects—the range of conceptual and practical possibilities it both enables and limits—as well as the irreducible affects it presents are a precious index of the historical and social situation itself. I am concerned here with the effects and affects as well as the facts of architecture.

If ontology is the theory of objects and their relations—a structure within which being itself may be given some organization—then, I believe, art (generally) and architecture (especially) can and do operate ontologically. Architecture is fundamentally an inquiry into what is, what might be, and how the latter can happen. Architecture is one way of attaining the verb "to be." But my problem is not philosophical; rather, it is historical—that is, I want to investigate a moment in history when certain ways of practicing architecture still had philosophical aspirations. The expanded decade of the 1970s (which I will take to include roughly the years between 1966 and 1983) saw a search for the most basic units of architecture and their combinatory logics. Aldo Rossi's singular typological fragments; Peter Eisenman's frames, planes, and grids; John Hejduk's wall and its nomadic adventures; and Bernard Tschumi's cinegrammatic segments, which frame and trigger the architectural impulse itself—all were understood as fundamental architectural entities and events that could not be reduced or translated into other modes of experience or knowledge. This self-consciousness also aimed for an awareness of architecture's position in society and history itself (philosophical thinking always turns historical when pushed to its limits); thus ideological-representational engagements of architecture with the expanding consumer society of the 1970s were probed, and various strategies of distortion, resistance, and reappropriation were devised. The very nature of subject-object constructions and relations and of the subject's relation to its other was opened to a scrutiny as intense as any philosophical inquiry. And architecture reached a limit condition in which its objects were no longer construed as mere elements and assemblages of building, however complicated or sophisticated, but rather as a representational system—a way of perceiving and constructing identities and differences.²

Such ontological ambitions were recognized even at the time; they are implicit in the widespread and recurrent analogies between architecture and the ultimate system of self-consciousness that is language. Indeed, another way of characterizing the period in question would be to call it "Architecture in the Age of Discourse," a designation that has the advantage of aligning architecture with other disciplines that similarly turned to language in their own respective self-examinations. As Jacques Derrida put it, "This moment was that in which language invaded the universal problematic; that in which, in the absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse—provided we can agree on this word—that is to say, when everything became a system where the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences."³

Judgments about the meaning and value of the discursive turn, however, were not all positive. "The return to language is a proof of failure," Manfredo Tafuri declares, and though his position is more ambivalent than this assertion would indicate, he never wavers from his argument that, by the 1970s, what remains of modernity is only a spectral sense of our existence, in which we wrestle with the barely perceptible and unsolid echoes of an architectural past that cannot be recovered and a future that will not arrive. The advanced architecture of the 1970s must therefore remain a "salvage operation" in which "the elements of the modern architectural tradition are all at once reduced to enigmatic fragments—to mute signals of a language whose code has been lost—shoved away haphazardly in the desert of history.⁴

Tafuri's analysis finds architecture in a double bind. To the extent that architecture can function in a capitalist society, it inevitably reproduces the structure of that society in its own immanent logics and forms. When architecture resists, capitalism withdraws it from service—takes it off-line—so that demonstra-

tions by architects of the critical distance of their practice from degraded life become redundant and trivialized in advance. This transmutation of the cold, all-encompassing blueprint of a mode of production into the pure formalization of aesthetic technique is architecture's destiny, its "plan." And having identified that, Tafuri asserts the intolerable but inescapable conditions of possibility for contemporary architecture: to collapse into the very system that condemns architecture to pure means-end instrumentality, or to retreat into hypnotic solitude, recognizing that there is no longer a need for architecture at all. Thus "'the disenchanted avant-garde,' completely absorbed in exploring from the comfort of its charming *boudoirs* the profundities of the philosophy of the unexpected, writes down, over and over again, its own reactions under the influence of drugs prudently administered."⁵

The "over-and-over-again" indictment of the postwar avant-garde—the empty, numbing repetition of forms left over from the presumed-authentic historical avant-garde—became something of a leftist critical trope after Peter Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (German, 1974; English, 1984). Bürger's derogatory term *neo-avant-garde* therefore suggests itself as an appropriate appellation for the work I am interested in here. Certainly the repetition of the formal elements and operations of Le Corbusier, de Stijl, and constructivism is the most immediately apparent characteristic of the experiments of Eisenman, Hejduk, and Tschumi, if not Rossi, whom one might nevertheless think of as a neo-Enlightenment-avant-gardiste. Bürger's categorization seems inescapable: "The neo-avant-garde institutionalizes the *avant-garde as art* and thus negates genuinely avant-gardiste intentions. This is true independently of the consciousness artists have of their activity, a consciousness that may perfectly well be avant-gardiste. . . . Neo-avant-gardiste art is autonomous art in the full sense of the term, which means that it negates the avant-gardiste intention of returning art to the praxis of life."⁶

The *neo-ness* of this work is made all the more compelling in the specific medium of architecture by the fact that not only Tafuri but also the more conservative Colin Rowe came to all but the same conclusion earlier and independently of Bürger. According to Rowe, if the historical avant-garde shared common ideological roots with Marxism, it also shared a Marxist philosophical ambition to interfuse form and word—variously articulated as expression and content, system and concept, practice and theory, building and politics, or (in Bürger's terms) art and life. That the fusion ultimately failed may be attributed to a shift in the terms in which the experience of modernity itself had to be conceived in postwar architecture—a shift from modernity fully developed as the essential desired goal of architecture to modernity as architecture's limiting condition. In his introduction to *Five Architects*, Rowe asserts what seems to be the only possible choice for the advanced architecture of the time: adhere to the forms, the "*physique-flesh*" of the avant-garde, and relegate the "*morale-word*" to incantation. For if the latter has been reduced to "a constellation of escapist myths," the *physique* still "possess[es] an eloquence and a flexibility which continues now to be as overwhelming as it was then." The measure of architecture lies no longer in the efficacy with which it prefigures a new and better world but rather in its achievement within the contingent conditions of the modern, of meeting the demands of the flesh, as it were, of elevating form as its own language without reference to external sentiments, rationales, or indeed social visions: "The great merit of what follows lies in the fact that its authors are not enormously self-deluded as to the immediate possibility of any violent or sudden architectural or social mutation." The plastic and spatial inventions of cubism and constructivism, of Giuseppe Terragni, Adolf Loos, Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier, remain the standard specific to the ideologically indifferent medium of architecture itself. The architects of the postwar avant-garde are "belligerently second hand."

Scamozzi to modernism's Palladio, a series of simulacra. Yet it is only through the acceptance of that standard and the repetition of just those simulacra that architects' aspirations can be intelligible.⁷

This is the story, then, on which Tafuri and Rowe agree: In a first moment, the revolutionary avant-gardes of the early twentieth century surgically probe the modern city itself—the sociopsychological metropolis of Georg Simmel, Georg Lukács, and Walter Benjamin—in order to identify the patterns of its essential characteristics, which can then be converted into artistic form; in Tafuri's words:

To use that experience as the foundation for visual codes and codes of action borrowed from already established characteristics of the capitalist metropolis—rapidity of change and organization, simultaneity of communications, accelerated rhythms of use, eclecticism—to reduce the structure of artistic experience to the status of pure object (an obvious metaphor for the object-commodity), to involve the public, as a unified whole, in a declaredly interclass and therefore antibourgeois ideology: such are the tasks taken on, as a whole, by the avant-gardes of the twentieth century.⁸

In a second moment, a dimension of achieved autonomy of form allows architecture to stand against the very social order with which it is complicit, yet the same complicity racks architecture into an agonistic position—combative, striving to produce effects that are of the system yet against it. But the language of forms thus discovered—simple geometrical volumes, serialized points and lines, diagonal vectors, planes in vertical layers and horizontal stacks, frames and grids—takes on an absolute autonomy with the result that, in a final moment, the architectural neo-avant-

garde can peel the language off from the real, repeating the same already reified forms but transforming them into a self-enclosed, totally structured system of signs. The repetition of the neo-avant-garde is that "of someone who is aware that he is committing a desperate action whose only justification lies in itself. The words of their vocabulary, gathered from the lunar wasteland remaining after the sudden conflagration of their grand illusions, lie precariously on that slanting surface that separates the world of reality from the solipsism that completely encloses the domain of language."⁹ In this view, in the architecture of the age of discourse we witness the "freeing of architectural discourse from all contact with the real."¹⁰

The lack of a social need for architecture; architecture's total loss of the real: there is plenty of evidence in the works and writings of the architects in question to support Tafuri's conclusion. But a brief excursus will suggest a more dialectical position than either Tafuri or Rowe allow. Rossi and Eisenman, for example, are explicitly and especially sensitive to the effects of reification, but their work is not just a victim of its effects; they critically inscribe these effects. In Rossi's typological thinking, the relentless fragmentation, atomization, and depletion of the architectural elements seem to follow precisely the process that Lukács called reification (*Verdinglichung*). And yet typology (very like the realism recommended by Lukács), involves the power to think generally, to take up the fragments and organize them into groups and to recognize processes, tendencies, and qualities where reification yields only lifeless quantities. What is more, for Lukács the form of experience that most concretely represents the force of reification is crisis—that point where, as in Tafuri's analysis, the mnemonic function of architecture is just about to fail, where the memory banks have become so compartmentalized and arid that they will hold nothing other than the most bleached-out material. At this stage, the cognitive vocation of architecture is to reflect or

to cause reflection on the processes behind such crisis: crisis is modulated into critique.

We can begin to restore the social and historical meaning of type making—and indeed of the larger project under consideration that typology helps inaugurate—by positing it as an abstraction from a specific historical moment, a crisis, even a moment of trauma. For the very conditions on which the typology project depends—namely, the continuing tradition of the European city as documented in Rossi's *L'architettura della città* (1966)—had, by the time of this theorization, already disappeared as a contemporaneous object of experience, giving way to the city of information, advertisement, and consumption. By 1971 Denise Scott Brown (just to give one example) had proposed that the communication across space of the social values of groups had superseded the more conventional sorts of need for architecture. "Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Levittown, the swinging singles on the Westheimer Strip, golf resorts, boating communities, Co-op City, the residential backgrounds to soap operas, TV commercials and mass mag ads, billboards, and Route 66 are sources for a changing architectural sensibility," writes Scott Brown. "In fact, space is not the most important constituent of suburban form. Communication across space is more important, and it requires a symbolic and a time element in its descriptive systems."¹¹

We need not rehearse the ways in which mass media changed the very nature of the experience of public space during this time, except to recall that advertising media joined with the extensive development of buildings on the outskirts of the city and the new distribution of services to suburban commercial zones, making it more difficult to control the quality of urban space through traditional tectonic and typological means. Message reception challenged the tactile experience of objects, and voice, as it were, became *tenant lieu* of the full body; information now structured space and prepared it for experience. Scott Brown, Robert Venturi,

and others seized on the new perceptual conventions adequate for comprehension within this new system. The perception of architectural surfaces began to overtake the experience of urban space in the traditional sense. Image consumption began to replace object production, and the sheer heterogeneity of images exploded any single, stable typology of the city. Public meaning was now to be found in the signs and perceptual habits forged in a pluralist, consumerist, suburban culture. Consequently a split was felt to have opened up between the European tectonic-typological tradition and the everyday world of the American popular environment, a split that was fundamental to theoretical debates of the 1970s.

The point, however, is that none of this was missed by Rossi. For while Rossi's typological obsessions seem to be a way of constantly confirming the determinate presence of the traditional European city—refracting its historical logic of form through a neo-Enlightenment lens in contingent, contradictory, and quasi-surreal ways—their peculiar mnemonic function also makes it possible to see in them a new beauty in precisely that which is vanishing. The originality of Rossi's work may well be its capacity to convey, alternately with melancholy or unblinking disenchantment, that the traditional European city—which in some sense means architecture itself—is forever lost, and that the architectural avant-garde has reached an end. Tafuri insisted as much in a direct response to what Massimo Scolari, speaking of Rossi and the Tendenza, considered a refounding of the discipline: "The thread of Ariadne with which Rossi weaves his typological research does not lead to the 'reestablishment of the discipline,' but rather to its dissolution, thereby confirming in *extremis* the tragic recognition of Georg Simmel and György Lukács: 'a form that preserves and is open to life, does not occur.' In his search for the Being of architecture, Rossi discovers that only the 'limit' of Being there is expressible."¹²

While the work of Rossi and the Tendenza and that of Scott Brown and Venturi make up two more or less divergent problematics, the fact that they are similar even in their differences was recognized in the theoretical literature of the mid to late 1970s. Mario Gandelsonas's dialectical negation of the differences between the "neorationalism" of Rossi and the "neorealism" of Scott Brown and Venturi with his category of "neofunctionalism" is only the first example of a widespread theoretical attempt to resolve the **contradictory aspirations of an architectural representation of the sociocultural moment together with an architectural autonomy in the face of the same.**¹³ What has not been noticed is the fact that Peter Eisenman's "postfunctionalism," formulated in his 1976 editorial response to Gandelsonas and developed in the decade after in his "cities of artificial excavation," is a simultaneous absorption and displacement of the same two problematics (neorationalism and neorealism)—a double negation or neutralization of Gandelsonas's neofunctionalism. But the counterdialectic that Eisenman twists out of this scheme is the position that the autonomy project must be extended because the heterogeneity of the consumerist, mediatic city has now collapsed under its own weight, producing not difference but sameness. **For Eisenman, architecture does not so much aspire to autonomy, as with Rossi, as it is forced into it by the very system it seeks to represent.** The price of autonomy is a reduction in and a specialization of form, which becomes cut off from other social concerns even as, in its very isolation and aridness, it becomes perfectly adequate for, representative of, and homologous with the society that sponsors it. What Venturi and Scott Brown present as the discovery of happily possible, practical futures, Eisenman recognizes as nothing more than a misprojection of our own baleful historical moment and subjective situation.

The interpretations of Tafuri and Rowe encode the premise that the postwar "disenchanted" avant-garde symbolizes the torsions,

contradictions, and closures of a certain historical and social moment. This view does not sufficiently recognize, however, the more dialectical fact that this architecture—in its very objectivity and autonomy—has already internalized that with which the critics intend to confront it: that is, architecture has already incorporated the annulment of its own necessity (both its functional and representational vocations) and consequently *re coded* the object as the symbolic realization of just that situation. This architecture is a reflection on the foundations and limits of architecture itself. I shall therefore adopt a different terminology and refer to the architecture and the ethos of this group as the *late avant-garde*, with all the connotations this contradictory locution entails: of intransigence and survival beyond what should have ended; of a moment in a larger trajectory beyond which one cannot go; of technique accumulated to the point of bleak ruminations; of productive negativity. In the late phase, the architectural symbolic begins to close in on itself, to regard itself as a vast accumulation of signifiers rather than as the never-concluded, positive production of meaning. The late avant-garde's introjection of loss and absence means not that the architectural object is empty, lacking, freed of contact with the real—as Tafuri and Rowe have it—but rather that the object renders its pathological content directly; it is the very form in which a certain lack assumes existence, the form necessary to imagine a radical lack in the real itself.

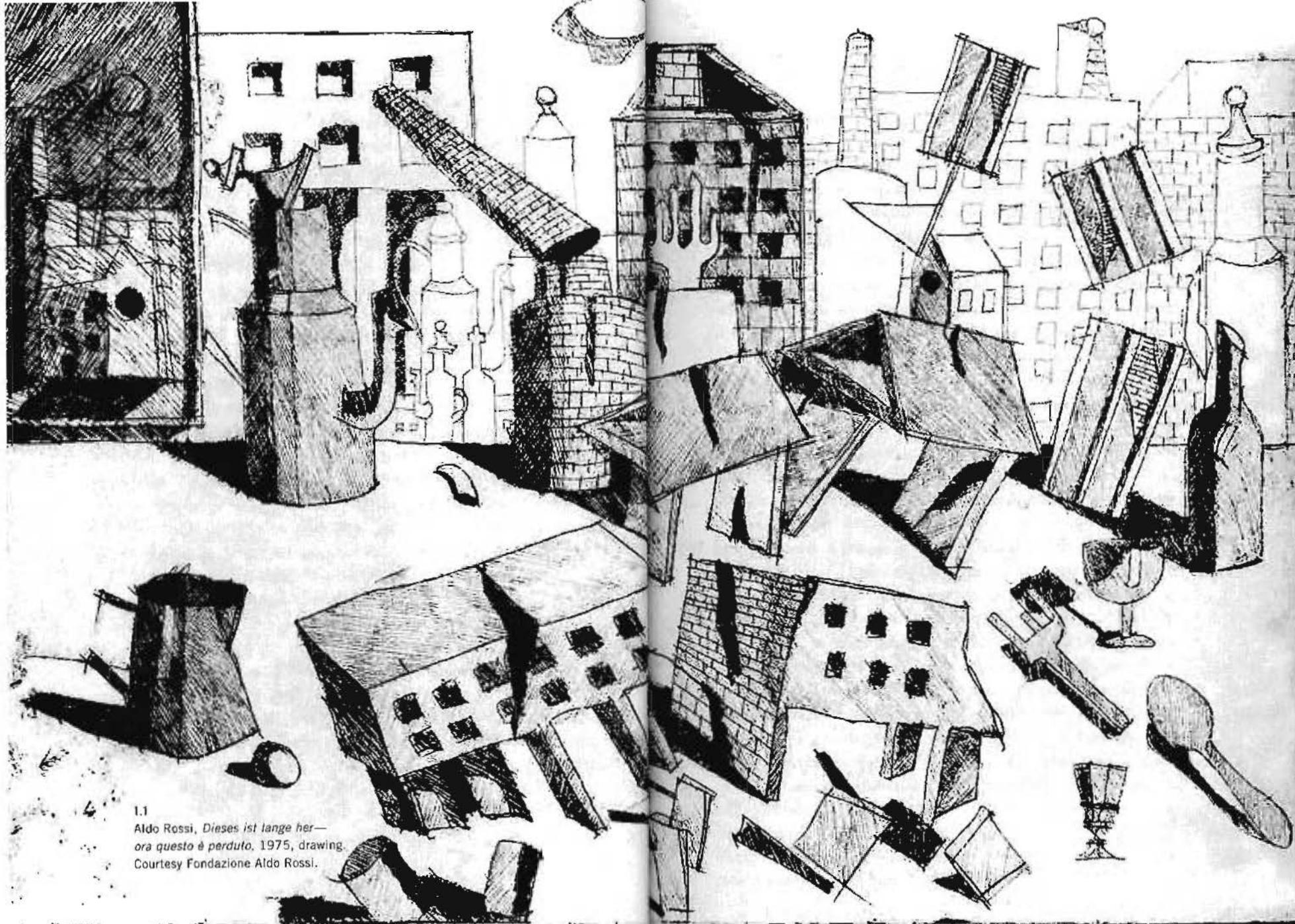
The term *late avant-garde* has the advantage of association with Fredric Jameson's *late modern*, by which he intends an extreme reflexivity within the modern itself rather than a replay of **modernism**—that is, a condition in which the ideology (understood as a positive and necessary framework for practice) of modernism has been theorized and identified in terms of artistic autonomy, "a return to art about art, and art about the creation of art." Unlike the fully commercialized postmodernism, the late architectural avant-garde keeps its namesake's commitment to

rigorous formal analysis, making the material of architecture stand against consumerism. But unlike the historical avant-garde, it self-consciously closes in on its own limits rather than opens outward; its original site is one of the trauma of having arrived too late. After all, when everything has been accounted for, how do you account for what remains? The late avant-garde "can never take place in any first time, but is always second when it first happens."¹⁴ The term also recalls Theodor Adorno's concept of "late style" and Edward Said's elaboration of it. Said sees lateness as an unresolved contradiction involving "a nonharmonious, nonserene tension, and above all, a sort of deliberately unproductive productiveness going *against*." It is made possible at certain moments in modern history "when the artist who is fully in command of his medium nevertheless abandons communication with the established social order of which he is a part and achieves a contradictory, alienated relationship with it. His late works constitute a form of exile."¹⁵

Against the received view of Tafuri and Rowe, the examination of the late avant-garde undertaken in the following chapters shows a different relation between architecture and the real, of architecture's representation of the real. **It will become evident that the received view of Tafuri and Rowe is not so much incorrect as it is not correct enough.** For the real is not so easily dealt with as the received view implies—it is not just *there* before some material symbolic practice makes it manifest. Architecture's imperative is to grasp something absent, to trace or demarcate a condition that is there only latently. In short, my thesis is that having long since been deprived of its immediate use value, architecture in the 1970s found itself challenged as a mode of cultural representation by more commercially lubricated media. Feeling the force of changed historical conditions and a developed consumer society, the most advanced architecture of the 1970s retracted the frame of identity between the architectural object and the sociomaterial ground (on this, so far, all are in accord). This retraction is a

form of pragmatic negation that follows the historical avant-garde's strategies of resistance—a variant demanded by a new situation, but one that produces an impasse, since resistance seems no longer to bring change (and this is where Tafuri leaves it). At this point, however, the most advanced architecture forces a transduction upward, as it were, to a higher plane of abstraction—a transition from the outward-directed negativity of the historical avant-garde (which produced an architectural object that, through certain demystifying operations, strived to resist or disrupt the very situation that brought it into being) to a second-order negativity, an architecture reflecting on Architecture (whose object consequently becomes internally split, as we will see). The architectural object as such is disenfranchised (though not necessarily destroyed), annulled as an immediate thing and reconceived as a mediating material and process. **The object-in-itself becomes an object-different-from-itself, a signifier directed toward the very disciplinary codes and conventions that authorize all architectural objects—it becomes Symbolic in Lacan's sense.** The object becomes a medium for a Real that it does not simply reproduce, but necessarily both reveals and conceals, manifests and represses.

A certain pattern emerges. What in the received view appears as the conditions of impossibility for an architectural system—a historical and social situation in which there is no need for architecture as a cultural representation or, rather, in which its representational domain has no access to any reality beyond it—in fact establishes the conditions for new and different architectural functions. For as soon as architecture's need is articulated as *symbolic*—as soon as the architectural object is presented anew, repeated as *symbolized*—an inquiry is launched into architecture's possibilities rather than its actualities: Where does architecture come from, and what authorizes its existence as architecture—beyond the particular constitutions already in place? This is the query of the late avant-garde. To which in response they



1.1

Aldo Rossi, *Dieses ist lange her — ora questo è perduto*, 1975, drawing.
Courtesy Fondazione Aldo Rossi.

Dieses ist lange her / Ora questo è perduto

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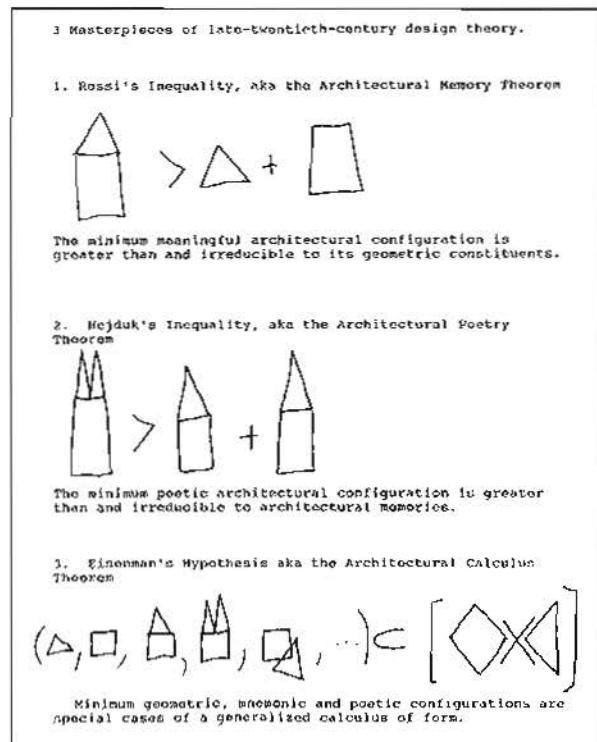
offer not architecture itself but evidence that it exists, as Adorno might say.¹⁶ But the pattern of the response is Lacanian. An empirical need reorganized in a medium of the Symbolic is what Lacan distinguishes as a demand, which directs its signifiers to an Other (originally the Mother, or language itself, but here something exterior to architecture, something beyond its grasp, which I characterize in the chapters that follow) that is experienced as intervening in (granting, denying, limiting) the satisfaction of the need. When need is reorganized as demand, the immediate, actual object of need is sublated (Lacan uses the Hegelian nomenclature of *Aufhebung*) only to reappear in mediated form—as the avatar of a dimension transcendent to the immediate object (the dimension of the Mother's love, in the original instance; a horizon at the limit of architecture in the present instance, architecture's essential but absent structure) and the process-object through which that dimension finds expression.¹⁷

We are in the matrix of desire (we have been all along). In the Lacanian system, desire is "the force of cohesion which holds the elements of pure singularity together in a coherent set," where "the elements of pure singularity" are understood as nothing less than the most basic signifying units of the unconscious.¹⁸ Which is to say that desire is the machine that runs the entire psychic system. Desire is the constant production, connection, and reconnection of signifiers, of architectural quanta, of the pulsating flows of pure interpretation; this is why Lacan so insistently identifies desire and metonymy. What I suggest here and in the chapters that follow is that architectural desire is materialized in the objects of the late avant-garde—the symbolic desire constituted by architecture's "big Other," its laws and language, its original oneness; desire as the architectural unconscious; desire as the pursuit of architecture's original object forever lost (the Tabernacle in the desert, the Vitruvian tree house, the primitive hut).¹⁹ Hence the obsessive search in this work for architecture's fundamental codes and principles, all the time knowing full well

there can be none, that outside the architectural Symbolic is the radical nothingness of the architectural Real. Hence too the tumbling into the abyss as desire seeks its object: for desire desires itself in its object. It determines itself by negating its object, then becomes the object abolished through its own self-appropriation. Lacan's formula is, "Desire is the desire for desire, the desire of the Other."²⁰ And we can feel the full significance of the advent of desire at this particular moment in architecture's history by recognizing that architectural desire arises as a kind of absolute alterity exactly when the possibility of architecture's nonexistence is glimpsed on the horizon. In other words, the question of how architecture exceeds itself is the other side of imagining architecture's end. Thus the late avant-garde is the form architecture assumes when it is threatened with its own dissolution.

The marks of desire are various. They include the reduced, single volumes and fragments that populate Rossi's ghost-lit cityscapes and Hejduk's carnivalesque villages, and the even more minimal el-cubes of Eisenman and cinegrams of Tschumi—all bits and pieces from the architectural Symbolic understood as analogues of the social text (which by the 1970s had seen its possibilities similarly reduced and minimized). And the repetitions of these same forms are desire looking for its object and constantly missing the mark ("this is not that"), an insatiable quest best understood, as we will see, on the model of an architectural death drive. These architects address the matter explicitly: Eisenman, whose "end of the end" seeks to abolish history to fulfill itself; Rossi, with his allegorical drawing of striving *Dieses ist lange her / Ora questo è perduto* (this is long gone: architecture survives because the time of its fulfillment has passed);²¹ Hejduk, with his wall event, "which . . . might also be considered the moment of death";²² and Tschumi, whose Manhattan Transcripts are an entire screenplay of death and desire. Through desire, architecture is rendered eccentric to itself. And there are moments when an architectural experience produces that conception of eccentricity—moments of becoming,

affects, encounters that are nonrepresentational modes of thought; moments when a sensation just barely precedes its concept and we glimpse very basic, primitive architectural ideas, axioms for future architectures. Encounter and event are particularly operative in the work of Hejduk and Tschumi (Tschumi coined the term *event-space* in architecture), but all of these architects find ways to dislocate architectural experience, opening it up to the



1.2
Jeffrey Kipnis, *3 Masterpieces of Late-Twentieth-Century Design Theory*, 1990.

fact that all perception is partial and ideological. Their work has been called "critical" in recognition of this characteristic. Yet I believe that the concept of desire more adequately signals their corollary attempt to escape the ideological closures of the situation through the portals of the libidinal and the collective; "critical" implies perhaps a too cerebral asceticism of specialized elites, though that too is correct as far as it goes. Moreover, I am insisting that the work under investigation here does more than extend the compulsory critical negativity of the historical avant-garde. In a theoretical sense, an architecture that, by internalizing critical negativity, posits itself as eccentric to itself is even more radical.

The complete absorption of structuralist tenets into architecture had by the 1970s made it possible to think architectural form as the effect of relations of difference among elements that themselves had no substantive meaning—Ferdinand de Saussure's "difference without positive terms." The late avant-garde, on the other hand, is the exact inversion of that formulation: it presents a singular architecture different from itself—an architecture that, in order to install itself as architecture, must already be marked, traced, transgressed, and divided from itself by memories of a past (Rossi and Hejduk are explicit about this) and anticipations of a future continuing identity (as Eisenman and Tschumi differently insist). I will follow Derrida in using the term *spacing* to refer to this tearing of the singularity from itself, this internalized differing. Therefore, the metonymy of architecture's desire is: *analogy, repetition, encounter, spacing*. Each component will be developed in the readings of architecture that follow.

But for now, we are finally in a position to situate the representational range of late avant-garde architecture from the spatial Imaginary to the codes and laws of the Symbolic in the larger nonrepresentational field of the Real. And it should be made clear now that my understanding of the Real follows the readings of Lacan by scholars like Fredric Jameson and Slavoj Žižek and is

best summarized by Jameson's famous pronouncement that the Real "is simply History itself."²³ It is interesting in the present context to remind ourselves that it was Jameson's confrontation with the negative thought of Tafuri that virtually forced the production of Jameson's correlate to the Real-as-History, which is the imaginary projection he calls cognitive mapping. The imperative to think totality is one on which Tafuri and Jameson agree (and dealing with the Real must always involve a totalizing propensity). Yet for Jameson, architecture still has the important social function of articulating material forces that would otherwise remain ungraspable and linking the local, phenomenological, and subject-centered experiences of space to the developing subject-producing structures of capitalism itself. And right where Tafuri sees the fading away of class ("there can never be an aesthetics, art or architecture of class"),²⁴ Jameson finds the residue of what used to be called class consciousness—a mapping of one's social place—but of a paradoxical kind, premised on the representation of the "properly unrepresentable" global structure in each of the local, experiential moments that are themselves the effects of that structure. Cognitive mapping is fundamentally a development of Althusser's radical rewriting of ideology as "a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence," itself, of course, a reading of Lacan's Imaginary-Symbolic-Real triad. Cognitive mapping is, on one side, a kind of collective "mirror stage" in which the affective immediacies of identity are in dialectical play with the alienating closures and misrecognitions that are the byproducts of any representation at all. But at the same time, the map is also a trace-trait of the social Symbolic, a "social symbolic act" with potential to break out from its ideological prison. Beyond that, at the limit of the Symbolic order, is the Real—"History itself"—which supports the social even as it remains obdurately unavailable and unsymbolizable. "Conceived in this sense," Jameson writes,

*History is what hurts, it is what refuses desire and sets inexorable limits to individual as well as collective praxis, which its "ruses" turn into grisly and ironic reversals of their overt intention. But this History can be apprehended only through its effects, and never directly as some reified force. This is indeed the ultimate sense in which History as ground and untranscendable horizon needs no particular theoretical justification: we may be sure that its alienating necessities will not forget us, however much we might prefer to ignore them.*²⁵

Jameson's History—"absent cause," "unrepresentable" and "unsymbolizable," the "untranscendable horizon," "Necessity"—is always in place but only as an undifferentiated and ultimately intractable outside (Lacan defines the Real as "that which resists symbolization absolutely"): the vanishing point of the Symbolic and Imaginary alike, the end of the line toward which their plays of presence and absence, signifiers and images incline. The late architectural avant-garde is, in the end (at the end), a reckoning with this Real.

Jameson's "History is what hurts" passage was published in 1981. It is interesting to ponder whether it is analytical or symptomatic of its time. In any case, History is what hurt architecture at precisely this same moment, as the practico-inert began to turn back on and against the accumulate practices of architecture. And the sense one has when scanning the fractured landscape of the late avant-garde, of a failure that is alternately inevitable and deliberate, and a finality that is dreaded but enjoyed—these are explainable only as effects of History's contradictions.²⁶ The architecture of the late avant-garde performs the impossibility of architecture's full realization; it stages an architectural project that for historical reasons must be undertaken but ultimately is brought to failure by a dynamic integral to the project itself. Such are the workings of architecture's desire.²⁷

of type is, then, an assertion of the *image* of architecture as its symbolic identification fully generalized the importential in a structured field; to understand the nature of a question that cannot be no longer be considered as bounded by the world that extends life to other objects condition, thereby establishing it is possible to find common

formal structures.

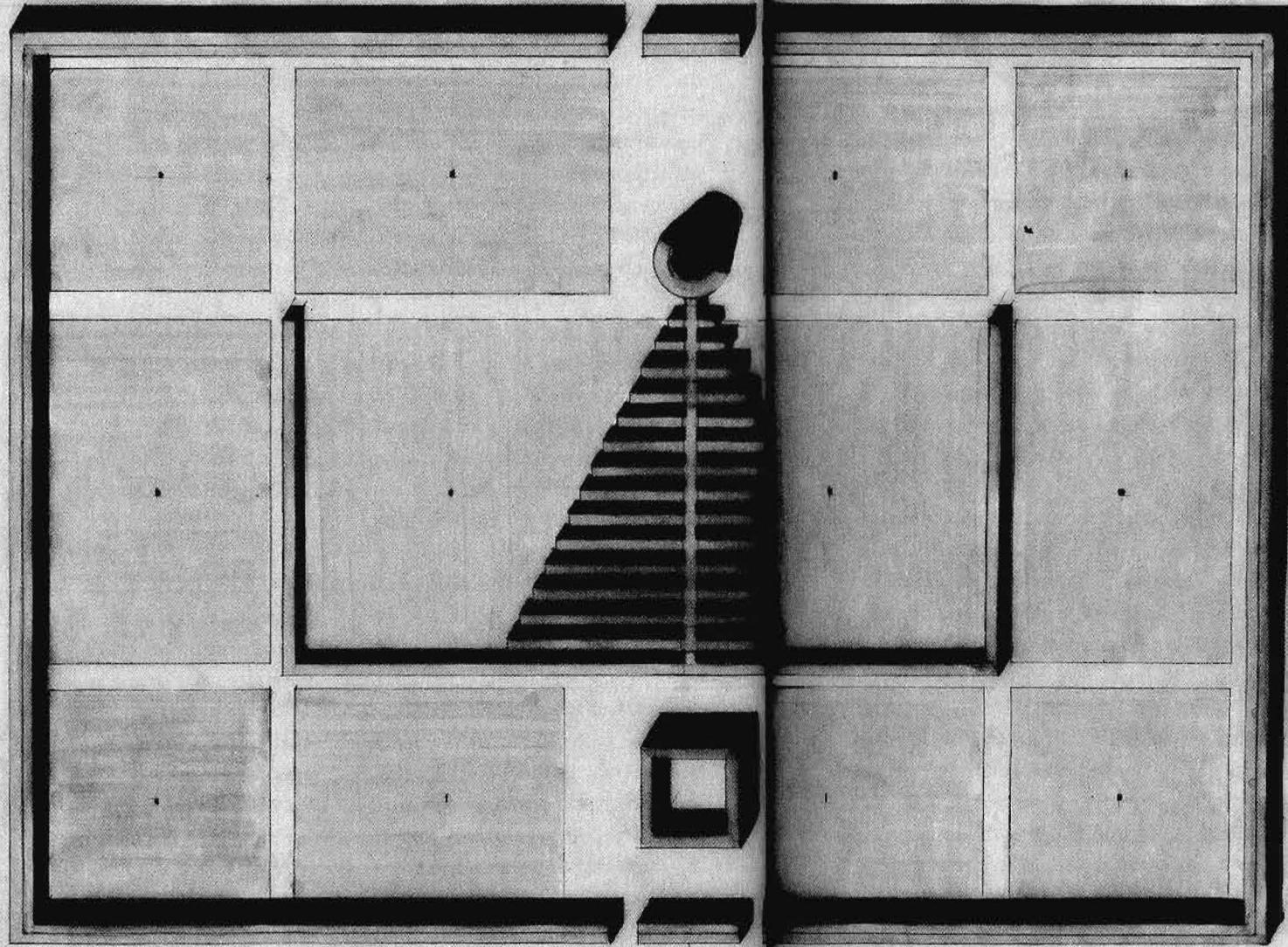
Moneo and other commentators of the period rightly place the work of Aldo Rossi at the center of this structuralization of architecture. Structuralist influences, especially of Lévi-Strauss, saturate Rossi's 1966 *The Architecture of the City*; the elemental purity and formal logic of his work—its power as appearance, image, even illusion—are its most immediately apparent qualities. Rossi himself wrote that "the points specified by Ferdinand de Saussure for the development of linguistics can be translated into a program for the development of urban science."⁸ What has not been sufficiently understood is how Rossi's writings, drawings, and projects depart from and transform basic structuralist insights, refracting them through his intellectual formation in Marx and Freud, reorganizing them through his readings of Lukács and Adorno, and folding that mixture through his idiosyncratic poetics, rendering his work considerably more complex than standard structuralist-semiotic accounts can afford.

For one thing, those accounts assumed a conceptual distinction between the affirmative construction of meaning on the one hand and a grimly instrumentalist functionalism on the other, a

functionalism that, if not altogether meaningless, was uncommunicative and downright unsociable. Rossi's more dialectical understanding of architecture's system, however, allowed the recognition that new architectural events, experiences, and meanings are constituted not only in the reaffirmation of preexisting cultural codes but also by the specific ways that codes can be negated—spontaneously, by the ongoing effects of reification; programmatically, by changing performative and perceptual conventions and possibilities; or by design, through the ideological practice of the architect. His recognition of the multiple modes of negativity together with his inquiry into architecture's Imaginary and Symbolic orders makes Rossi a foundational figure for a theorization of the late avant-garde.⁹

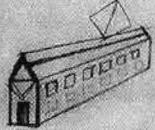
Equally important is Rossi's specific conceptualization of architecture's structure. According to the standard account, architectural structure pertains essentially to the organization of architectural signifiers among themselves. An architectural type, then, as I have said, is a kind of mediator imposed between a substratum of codes, categories, customs, and conventions and the actual instance of design practice, a mediator through whose operation an architectural form comes into being as a structured material entity. While this account in all its different forms tends to presuppose some kind of social and historical reality beyond the typological operator, which serves as the type's most distant referent (not to say as a base for its superstructure), Rossi makes the more particular claim that the social and the historical are always already within the structure itself, that structure is both form and matter, that human history produces structure, and structure yields the social. In *The Architecture of the City*, he stages this as a kind of diachronic and synchronic unification:

In this book we have made use of the historical method from two different points of view. In the first, the city was



2.1

Aldo Rossi and Gianni Braghieri, Cemetery of San Cataldo, Modena, 1971, plan. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. "The analogy with death is possible only when dealing with the finished object, with the end of all things."

PR
71

160
34°
820
800
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seen as a material artifact, a man-made object built over time and retaining the traces of time. . . . Cities become historical texts. . . . The second point of view sees history as the study of the actual formation and structure of urban artifacts. It is complementary to the first and directly concerns not only the real structure of the city but also the idea that the city is a synthesis of a series of values. Thus it concerns the collective imagination. . . . The idea of history as the structure of urban artifacts is affirmed by the continuities that exist in the deepest layers of urban structure, where certain fundamental characteristics that are common to the entire urban dynamic can be seen.¹⁰

The architecture of the city is the crucible of the social Imaginary, a highly differentiated condition that operates on different planes or levels of reality—among them is the structured plane of its own system of signification (what others call its deep structure, *langue*, or generative grammar), which gives architecture its autonomy; a plane of historical, material manifestations in physical form (something like an archive of all past architectural events); and a plane activated with a kind of organizing force or potential, an architecture-galvanic surface ("We can utilize the reference points of the existing city, placing them on a vast, illuminated surface; and thereby let architecture participate, little by little, in the creation of new events")¹¹ that keeps the whole thing in motion. But there are others too. At different places in *The Architecture of the City* Rossi isolates these various planes—in sections entitled "Monuments and the Theory of Permanences," "The Dynamic of Urban Elements," "Processes of Transformation," "Urban Ecology and Psychology," "The Collective Memory," "The City as Field of Application of Various Forces"; there are more. Typology here becomes not just a third term so much as a mobile mechanism of

production and analysis that can move through all of these levels. And the ideal sum of all the planes, or laminates—that unthinkable conflation—is what Rossi calls the "City," which I capitalize here to signal its singular, almost mythical, status. For the City is architecture's big Other—the order of the architectural-social Symbolic itself operating behind the typological Imaginary.¹²

A city, of course, is a sociomaterial object that we can experience and study directly, the most concrete of realities that architecture deals with. But for Rossi the City is an invisible and absent abstraction, an autonomous and presuppositional structure, a network of pure virtuality that nevertheless produces not only form but also moods, atmospheres, and affections. In his *Scientific Autobiography*, Rossi refers to the City as the very possibility of joining images, "a circle" of relationships "that is never closed," "the unlimited contamination of things, of correspondences"; the City is a desiring production of correspondences and connections whose quarry is anamorphosis and shadow.¹³ The City is the object of architecture's desire prior to any predication, which nevertheless enables and constrains every possible architectural creation and can be known through its architectural effects. While the City cannot be deduced from any single example of architecture, and every possible analogue of the City is necessarily partial and often contradictory, there is nevertheless no architecture that is not determined and legitimated by the City, which is the very structure of architecture's tradition. For Rossi the City is something very like an architectural unconscious—the Other as both embodiment of the social substance and the site of the unconscious. In this regard it is interesting to recall Lacan's famous quip, "The best image to sum up the unconscious is Baltimore in the early morning."¹⁴ But with this it is important to add that Rossi, like Lacan, insists that this unconscious is precisely not subjective, not something with any individual psychic makeup. Rather, the

architectural unconscious is outside and collective, in the domain and material of signification itself.

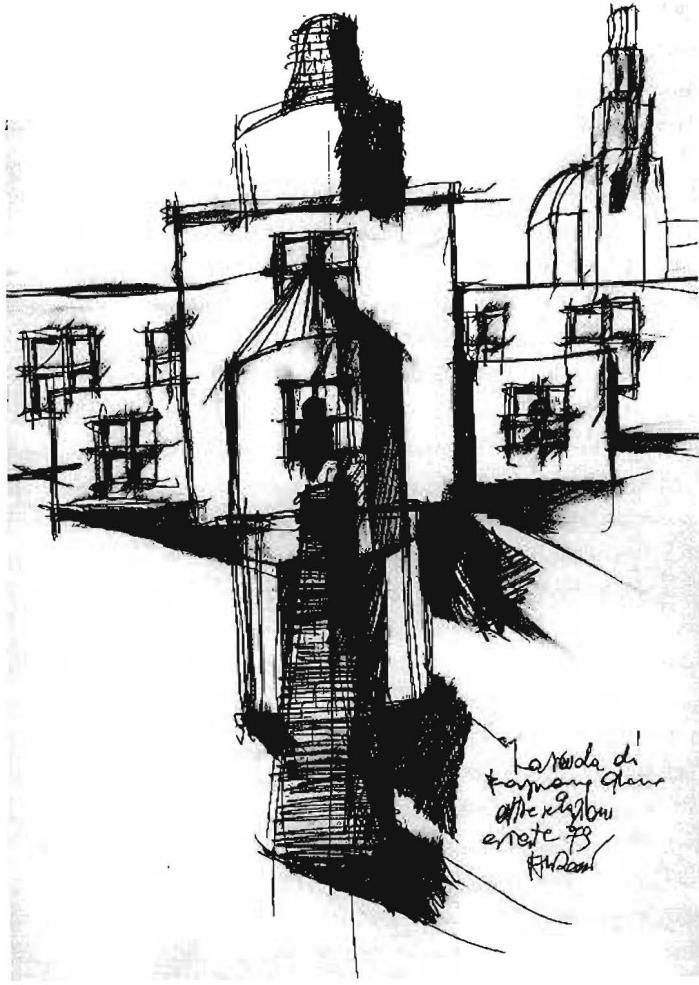
We can learn more about the concept of the City by isolating two related but different kinds of time operating in Rossi's peculiar theory of typology, two different temporal logics. First is the analysis of variance in what might be called the phenomenon of typological repetition and persistence. Herein lies the importance of Rossi's notion of "permanences," which tries to account for the persistence of certain spatial patterns in the urban fabric as material "signs of the past" as well as the persistence of a city's basic plan over vast periods of time and changes in use, even when monuments or sectors of a city are destroyed just to be rebuilt exactly as they were. The examples in *The Architecture of the City* are many, but Rossi dwells particularly on the large and complex Palazzo della Ragione in Padua and how it has successfully accommodated and encouraged different functions since the fifteenth century. Another case is the Roman amphitheater at Nimes, which was transformed first into a fortress and then a small city of two thousand, with four gates and two churches inside its original walls. Both are examples of "propelling permanences," catalytic elements of the city whose powerful forms remain stable but whose functional variability contribute to the evolving process of urbanization and the production of new architectural experiences. There may also be "pathological permanences"—the Alhambra in Granada is Rossi's example—that function only as isolated, unalterable obstructions in the city, restricting rather than propelling programmatic differentiation.¹⁵

The correlate of typological persistence is another kind of chronicity that may be called the anteriority of typology, a logic of preclusion and process, of coming before. With this terminology I mean to capture the sense of mimetic folding and refolding of preexisting forms in Rossi's often-cited but exceedingly elliptical

illustration of the "analogous city," which describes the originary site of architecture's symbolization:

To illustrate this concept I gave the example of Canaletto's fantasy view of Venice, a capriccio in which Palladio's projects for the Ponte di Rialto, the Basilica of Vicenza, and the Palazzo Chiericati are set next to each other and described as if the painter were rendering an urban scene he had actually observed. These three Palladian monuments, none of which are actually in Venice (one is a project; the other two are in Vicenza), nevertheless constitute an analogous Venice formed of specific elements associated with the history of both architecture and the city. The geographical transposition of the monuments within the painting constitutes a city that we recognize, even though it is a place of purely architectural references. This example enabled me to demonstrate how a logical-formal operation could be translated into a design method and then into a hypothesis for a theory of architectural design in which the elements were preestablished and formally defined, but where the significance that sprung forth at the end of the operation was the authentic, unforeseen, and original meaning of the work.¹⁶

There is an epistemological claim made in this formulation insofar as the analogue is at once a means of analysis, a method of design, and a necessary prior condition for practice. Indeed, as a means of knowing, Rossi's concept of analogy has a remarkable closeness to Lévi-Strauss's *pensée sauvage*. For Lévi-Strauss's complex and multimodal mind also responds to its situation on many levels simultaneously and "builds mental structures which facilitate an understanding of the world in as much as they resemble it. In this sense savage thought can be defined as



2.2

Aldo Rossi, *La scuola di Fagnano Olona*.

Altre relazioni, 1979, sketch.

Courtesy Fondazione Aldo Rossi.

analogical thought.¹⁷ Analogical thought sorts the world into a series of structured oppositions and then proposes that each set of oppositions is analogically related to other sets insofar as their differences resemble one another. In Rossi's project for the Modena cemetery (1971), for example, the difference between the individual tomb and the cemetery as a whole is the same as the difference between a house and a city, whereas the conic communal grave and the cubic die that is the sanctuary for the war dead are similarly analogous to the monuments and permanences of a city: homologies between systems of difference, isomorphic diagrams.¹⁸ Dimensions are of no importance in analogical thought since the order of the City is cognitively embedded in all architectural types of any scale. Rossi speaks of Diocletian's Palace at Split, Croatia, as an example: "Split discovered in its own typological form an entire city, and thus the building came to refer analogically to the form of a city. This example is evidence that a single building can be designed by analogy to the city."¹⁹ Exactly the same analogy is present in Rossi's own designs, such as the elementary school at Fagnano Olona (1972–1976)—itself a small city with hallway-streets, piazza, public rotunda, and monumental steps—and even his drawings of "domestic landscapes," which organize cigarette packs, tea pots, and furniture like urban fragments.²⁰

In this epistemological claim, the anteriority of typology is entirely consistent with the structuralist attempt to work out a theory of models constructed on the analogy with language, and with the presupposition that all thought must be conducted through and within the limits of an objective field in which every element occupies a preordained place. In a sense, the anteriority of types is a fundamentally Kantian conception (as is much of structuralism's underpinning). For if architecture is structured like conceptual-objective thought itself and is an activity whose content is determinately social and socially use-

ful, it is precisely because architectural types mimic conceptual processes and social content at the level of form. Or, to put it in an even more Kantian way, the logic of types is autonomous in the sense that it provides the form for conceptual thought and social experience rather than being determined by them. Types "facilitate an understanding of the world in as much as they resemble it" (Lévi-Strauss). It is through this kind of thinking that we can understand, for example, Rossi's fascination with Adolf Loos's aphorism, "If we find a mound six feet long and three feet wide in the forest, formed into a pyramid, shaped by a shovel, we become serious and something in us says, 'someone lies buried here.' That is architecture."²¹ The particular architectural image of the mound—the analogue—produces the affect of reverence. Rossi concludes, "The mound six feet long and three feet wide is an extremely intense and pure architecture precisely because it is identifiable in the artifact. It is only in the history of architecture that a separation between the original element and its various forms occurred. From this separation, which the ancient world seemingly resolved forever, derives the universally acknowledged character of permanence of those first forms."²²

But if there is an elective affinity between the language of type and the social world, there is also an opacity, an unbridgeable gap revealed in type's analogical work. Think of the different sameness of the cube in Rossi's Cuneo, Modena, and Teatro del Mondo projects, or the repetitive walls of Modena's ossuaries, the same type as the wall of apartments in the Gallaratese. Think of the way these figures open to a singularity and a difference that cannot be subsumed within the rule of representation. Rossi recounts an exchange between Freud and Carl Jung, in which the latter explains that "'logical' thought is what is expressed in words directed to the outside world in the form of discourse. 'Analogical' thought is sensed yet unreal, imagined yet silent: it is not a discourse but rather a mediation on theses of the past, an interior monologue.

Logical thought is 'thinking in words.' Analogical thought is archaic, unexpressed, and practically inexpressible in words."²³ A type, logical and analogical at the same time, perpetually excludes what it seeks to possess, which is its own identity as conferred by the City. *That is its desire*. This alone explains why Rossi's work, in all its dismaying aesthetic impoverishment, compels commentators to declare that it produces memories. Rossi himself insists as much in his elaboration on the above quotation: "I believe I have found in this definition [of analogy] a different sense of history conceived not simply as fact but rather as a series of things, of affective objects to be used by the memory or in design."²⁴ The radical lack at the heart of desire is scanned as "memory" by the mind habituated to language.

Rossi's concept of analogy also makes an ontological claim: architecture can come only from architecture. A type is cataphoric and anaphoric, pointing backward and forward at the same time. But typology's schematization cannot gather up all that is the City; the system of types may claim to be the epistemological infrastructure but not the ontological ground of architecture. What is anterior to all typology, then, is simply the dialectical fact that architecture constitutes itself in relation to what is not architecture. For its autonomy, in other words, architecture requires something heteronomous. According to Rossi, that something is the social itself. Of course, all of architecture emerges from a historical and social context, but Rossi's formulation is more particular. Consider *The Architecture of the City*'s concluding paragraph, in which the City's order is given a biographical-biological characterization as an apparatus that regulates identifications and relations with other subjects and objects and then remains as a record: "Perhaps the laws of the city are exactly like those that regulate the life and destiny of individual men. Every biography has its own interest, even though it is circumscribed by birth and death. Certainly the architecture of the city, the human thing par-

excellence, is the physical sign of this biography, beyond the meanings and feelings with which we recognize it.”²⁵ Rossi makes a similar point elsewhere: “Architecture is the most important of the arts and sciences, because its cycle is natural like the cycle of man, but it is what remains of man.”²⁶

The City contains social relations within its structure, but unconsciously, so to speak (the unconscious is the “discourse of the Other”), while at the same time positing an ideal regulatory set of relationships that exceeds any origin. And typological practice takes as its privileged object just the social, economic, and psychological forms that organize urban life at all of its levels and against which individual architectural proposals take place and become comprehensible. The type is thus a doubled thing. The City is a palimpsest of the marks left by the events of human history, a “biographical” diagram. The City’s facts, layers of the palimpsest, are cognitive forms revealed in artifacts, constituting what Rossi calls the “individualità del fatto urbano”—the singularity of the urban event—by which he signals not just a physical thing and its formal logic but also any city’s existential life. Thus typology is, first, a record, a trace, a presentation of those marks of events that allows them to be most fully experienced and comprehended, rendering thinkable situations otherwise given only in affective terms. And the City can be thought of as the medium or matrix in which particular types are suspended and vehiculated. Second, it is the instrument—the “apparatus,” Rossi calls it—that analyzes and operates on this medium and material of any city’s history.

Such an argument presupposes that the architectural artifact is conceived as a structure and that this structure is revealed and can be recognized in the artifact itself. As a constant, this principle, which we can call the typical element, or simply the type, is to be found in all architec-

*tural artifacts. It is also then a cultural element and as such can be investigated in different architectural artifacts: typology becomes in this way the analytical moment of architecture, and it becomes readily identifiable at the level of urban artifacts.*²⁷

If we now take the epistemological and ontological claims together, we can further understand typology as nothing less than a study of superstructures, understood as involving mental processes as well as cultural products. And if we ask again about the operations by which such ideational and cultural materials might be linked up with sociomaterial reality, then an architectural type reveals itself as an intermediary object between thought and reality, “a structure that is revealed and made knowledgeable through the fact itself.”²⁸ As immanent analysis of City, the logic of types is dedicated to a full engagement with reality’s tones, textures, and rhythms, as much as its formal elements and syntaxes. As representational apparatus, an architectural type transmits the contours and movements of an otherwise remote and inexpressible historical reality and presents them for analysis. Formal rigor is maintained and extended into the social and back again, or better, architectural form exists as cognitive object and process in a social constellation. But it is important to insist here that, different from substantive theories of meaning or structure, Rossi’s type requires a certain kind of circular and negative thinking: a type does not symbolize; nor does it convey a positive “meaning.” Rather, a type appears as symbolized, which is to say that it appears as an analogy and a presentation of a determining Symbolic order that is itself unrepresentable and forever out of reach.

“Only a form closed and concluded [*chiusa e conchiusa*], *l’opera definita*, is the concrete measure of the dimension that surrounds it,”²⁹ Rossi claims. He is most likely responding in the passage to

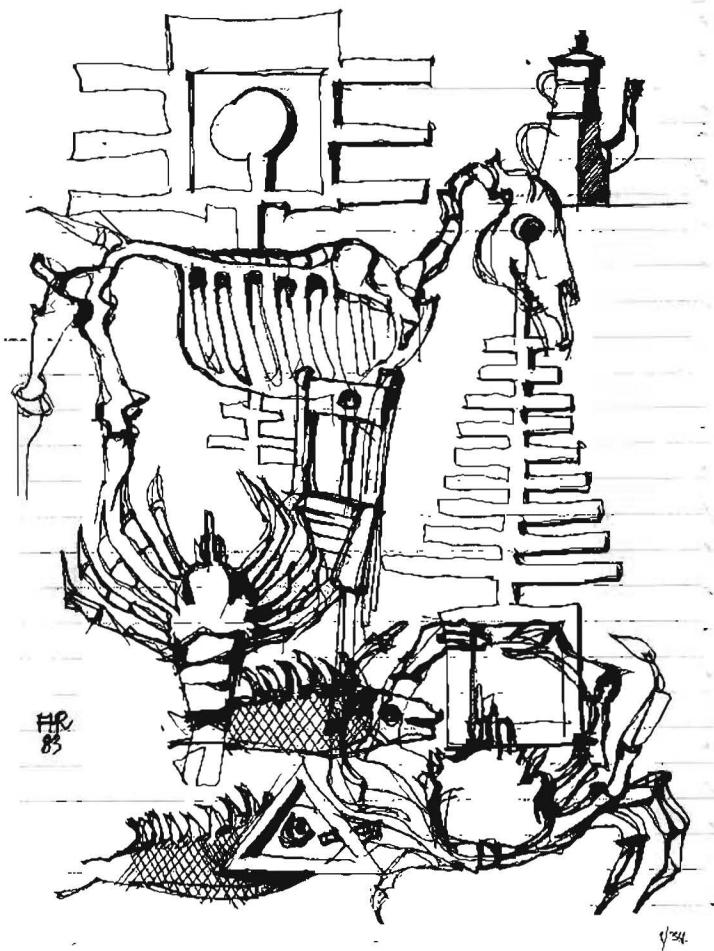
Umberto Eco's *Opera aperta* (1962) and its metaphorical use in urban design, but he might as well have been thinking of Adorno, who elaborates a similar point in his famous 1957 essay "On Lyric Poetry and Society," in which he admonishes that interpretation "may not focus directly on the so-called social perspective or the social interests of the works or their authors. Instead, it must discover how the entirety of a society, conceived as an internally contradictory unity, is manifested in the work of art. . . . Nothing that is not in works of art or aesthetic theory themselves, not part of their own form, can legitimate a determination [*Entscheidung!*] of what their substance, that which has entered into their poetry, represents in social terms."³⁰ For Rossi, it seems that what was an external line of impingement between superstructural and ideational phenomena such as architecture and the material substance of the base becomes in the City an internal distinction, perhaps like Adorno's microanalysis; for the City carries within itself both superstructure and infrastructure, both culture and history, both process and raw material. In his foundational study of Rossi, Moneo put this succinctly in terms of the autonomy of architecture in the city: "Through the idea of autonomy, necessary to the understanding of the form of the city, architecture becomes a category of reality."³¹

Our discussion of the anteriority of type as a temporal logic now turns back on and complicates the corollary phenomenon of typological persistence. For the enabling, organizing, architecturally identifying force of the City is anterior to and determinate of all architecture—the necessary condition and prelude to all practice—and the objects and events produced out of the City's conditions of possibility trace the latent or repressed reality of this Symbolic order, reoriginating its forms in new situations wrested free from the City's necessity. But the objects and events, the types, thus produced then return their forms (cognitive structures that mimic the social) to the City's matrix and persist in

surroundings utterly alien to them—analogue of a single, unfinished architectural narrative, a great collective story whose end, for Rossi, is as impossible to achieve as its process is necessary to perform: hence his relentless repetition and substitution of types. "Now it seems to me that everything has already been seen: when I design I repeat, and in the observation of things there is also the observation of memory. I design my projects with a discrete sense of affection for each one but I reduce them to things that surround me: country houses, smoke stacks, monuments and objects, as if everything arose from and was founded in time: in this beginnings and endings are confounded."³²

Critics of Rossi have often detected in his ceaseless repetitions of images a nostalgia for a lost ideal order or perhaps even a mourning for that loss.³³ What is more, the defining characteristics of his projects—extreme ambiguities of scale; juxtapositions of incomensurable objects seemingly forced by the architect into some silent, secret dialogue; the sense of separateness and fixity radiated by the elemental objects in metaphysical cityscapes, lit by a light that seems to consume all substance—all these should be read as results of the radical unavailability of the City's Symbolic order to the individual types that desire to possess it. The types persist, torn from themselves, because of this lack; desire itself persists because of this lack.

The phenomenon of persistence must therefore be read as an ambiguous or paradoxical logic—not just of enduring after a beginning (a physical form being newly occupied and experienced beyond its original usefulness and contextual integrity) but also of persisting after an end, the survival of form beyond what should have been its point of exhaustion. Think of the library rotunda of the elementary school at Fagnano Olona and especially of the black-and-white photographs that are always its privileged presentation. To become a library, the rotunda must negate its origins as baptistery or theater. But Rossi rejects these



2.3
Aldo Rossi, untitled, 1983, sketch.
Courtesy Fondazione Aldo Rossi.
The plans in the sketch are of the
school at Fagnano Olona and the
cemetery at Modena.

handed-down meanings with a formal reduction and negation so radical that it appears not simply to transform the rotunda type from one use to another but to elevate meaninglessness itself in place of meaning, and absence and lack in place of presence. Moneo comments on the resultant formal-temporal confusion of the school: "Do not the schoolchildren of Fagnano Olona look like the inhabitants of a world not their own? The children inhabit a time that already alludes more to what will become their own past than to the present arrested by the photograph."³⁴

In Rossi's highly reflexive relation to the crisis of meaning announced by Baird, Jencks, and others, meaning inheres in the negation of meaning and the negation of meaning takes shape as a fragmentation and evacuation of form, leaving persistent images that Rossi's critics have found haunted, silent, nonidentical, and disturbing. Many have tried to assuage this atmospheric untimelessness with references to the *oneiric realism* of De Chirico and the *neue Sachlichkeit*. Others have pointed out that, rather than merely picking out formal similarities that existed antecedently, Rossi's constructions in fact create anew and sometimes even confuse the very typological analogies on which they claim to depend. Alan Colquhoun once remarked that Fagnano Olona was not based on anything in architecture's formal history but had rather constituted "a pure type that has not yet entered the history of which it is a model."³⁵ And Anthony Vidler invites us, somewhat ominously, to consider another example, Rossi's Trieste City Hall project, in light of associated implications characteristic of its type, which is that of a late-eighteenth-century prison: "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 the image finally loses all meaning, the society will either have become entirely prison, or, perhaps, its opposite."³⁶ In every case, even in these brief comments, there hovers over the work a dreadful sense of an architecture out of time—remain-

ing, lingering, living on after its legitimacy and rightfulness have passed. Wilhelm Worringer long ago associated abstraction with "an immense spiritual dread of space."³⁷ Rossi's work is figural on the other side of abstraction and induces a dread that seems to extend not only to space but also to time.

No one has grasped the radical anachronicity of Rossi's work better than Peter Eisenman. In an essay entitled "The House of the Dead as the City of Survival," Eisenman weaves a historicist-psychoanalytic interpretation of a suite of drawings by Rossi that Eisenman refers to as *Città Analoga*. He first gives a concise summation of the analogue's relation to history—"In one sense, the analogue uses history, that is, what is existing, to order what will be new. At the same time it is ahistorical in that it cuts off the formative stages of the process. In its denial of historical generation it replicates the present condition of history (without its history)"—and then anchors the historicity of the ahistorical, if you will, precisely in the historical moment of the 1970s.

Rossi's "rationalism" conjoins the post-1945 condition of man. And to characterize his images as "neo-classical" or "rationalist" in the traditional sense is to ignore this conjunction. For their special rationality, which consists in the combination of logic—the conscious—with the analogic—the shadow—is not necessarily to be found in their conscious imagery. Rossi's conscious images exist only as a key to their shadow imagery. It is their intrinsic, often unconscious content which confronts the more problematic and perhaps fundamental reality of the extrinsic cultural condition today.³⁸

In articulating the constitutive absence (the shadow, the unconscious) of the City, Eisenman is characteristically mining the Hegelian insight that each artwork is symbol and sole inhabitant

of a world that is nonetheless implied by the very achieved singularity of the artwork's existence. Hence the alienation of work like Rossi's. For the artwork is the dislocated, displaced, and singular example of a world that cannot otherwise bring itself into existence more completely and must remain largely absent and incomplete. Rossi maintains the world-constructing desire of the modern avant-garde, but he is condemned by *this* world—by posthistory—to repeat the same analogically rather than to follow modernism's frequently twinned impulse of utopian future countergesture. The new cannot appear as such in Rossi's work; it can appear only as an unrepresentable negative totality, the comprehension of which must take the form of Adorno's micrological analysis of architectural fragments and ruins.³⁹

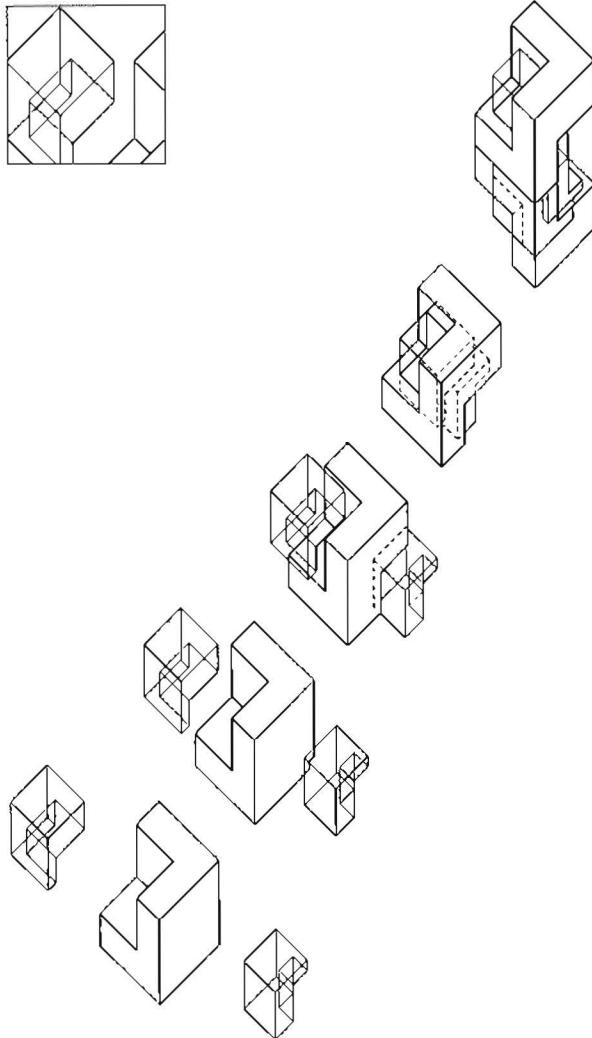
Eisenman indeed comes very close also to Adorno's post-Holocaust art thesis—that after Auschwitz there can be no before Auschwitz. Our encounter with art is on the ground of a trauma and an impasse so extreme that it leaves no space for meaningful resolution. The conviction of Eisenman's writing, which defies paraphrase, warrants quoting at length:

The events of 1945, the full comprehension of the meaning of the Holocaust and atomic destruction, have changed the bases on which life can be lived. For man faced with a choice between imminent or eventual mass death, heroism, whether individual or collective, is untenable: only survival remains possible. The problem is now of choosing between an anachronistic continuance of hope and an acceptance of the bare conditions of survival. And when the hero can be only a survivor, there is no choice. The condition of man which formerly contained this alternative has ended, and the continuous "narrative" of the progress of Western civilization has been broken.⁴⁰

According to Eisenman, the end is already behind us and architecture is always already surviving its own death, a testimony to its own anachronicity. As a survivor, architecture is condemned to afterlife and aftermath, implying both the post-finitum as well as the fatal repetition compulsion (which we consider shortly). Perhaps Eisenman's concluding paragraph is not too hyperbolic. Rossi's "is an architecture which confronts the reality of the present. His drawings offer 'nothing new' precisely because anything new which can be offered is, in the present condition, nothing. They simply ask, however anxiously, for the existence of a choice between life as survival, and death."⁴¹ Had Eisenman known Adorno's famous formulation of the logic of living on after the end, he surely would have appropriated it for architecture: "Philosophy, which once seemed obsolete, lives on because the moment to realize it was missed."⁴²

Eisenman's reading of Rossi's analogous architecture brings us to the brink where the architectural Imaginary is disrupted by an intrusion of the Real. For when architecture's symbolic efficiency is in doubt, when the stability of its Other is undermined, the Imaginary itself starts to collapse. And yet at this brink we are also able to ask the question. What then is architecture's Real? and to answer with one powerful word: History. For the City, architecture's symbolic mandate, its necessity, is not some content but rather the inexorable form of human events, the outcome of a vast human process. The City is the architectural form taken by historical necessity. And while form grants architecture a certain freedom, History enforces its reinscription in the fated repetition of the same. Whence come the numerous negations that every critic of Rossi has stumbled on: ruins, abandonments, destructions, dissolutions, an entire canon of negativity, the importance of which will be, above all, not a declaration of architecture's end but of the kernel of History installed at its core. So it is not the case that the anteriority of type is a beginning that has the endur-

ance of types as its end but rather that both have been shifted from states to processes that operate together as modes of delay. Architecture has no end because it is a permanent movement through time—a persistent differential. Architecture uses its difference and its autonomy to manage the heteronomous historical and social forces that inhere in architecture as a social product but in a way that allows the repressed social forms of the material to be known and experienced. If such a process leads to necessary failure, then that is in no way the result of technical inadequacy. Rather, it comes from the structural impossibility of succeeding in the task thus faced—a truth to the historical demands of the material—a task that must nevertheless be undertaken.



REPETITION

Peter Eisenman begins his introduction to the 1982 English translation of Aldo Rossi's *The Architecture of the City* with an excerpt from Jacques Derrida's *Writing and Difference*: "The relief and design of structures appears more clearly when content, which is the living energy of meaning, is neutralized, somewhat like the architecture of an uninhabited or deserted city, reduced to its skeleton by some catastrophe of nature or art. A city no longer inhabited, not simply left behind, but haunted by meaning and culture, this state of being haunted, which keeps the city from returning to nature."¹ The passage facilitates a shift of Rossi's theory of the city toward poststructuralism and psychoanalysis (do we not hear echoes in the quotation of *Civilization and Its Discontents*?) and gives Eisenman a way to assimilate Rossi's aphoristic mention of skeletons and fractures to his own rhetoric of the unhappy consciousness that is powerfully terminal, at times even apocalyptic.² For Eisenman, the skeleton is an object identical to its structure, a system consistent with itself rather than corresponding to some remote referent. It nevertheless has a determinate history; indeed, it is "at once a structure and a ruin, a record of events and a record of time," an object-become-simulacrum-of-process. It is self-reflexive, "for it is also an object that can be used to study its own structure," a structure of individual elements within a generalized framework.³ But it is divided within itself insofar as it can determine itself (each of its elements) only through the differential relations enabled by that structure, which are the

structure's effects. Eisenman is particularly taken with this osteological machinery of relational elements and structuring grid—uninhabited, haunted by its own history, constituted in difference rather than identity. It is because in his brooding over Rossi's idea of City, he has uncovered something of his own.

More than any contemporary architect, Eisenman has sought a space for architecture outside the traditional parameters of the sensual and the built, the phenomenological and the practical. In projects and writings between 1966 and 1985, he sought nothing less than architecture's *Ursprung*—the primordial flow of signification he variously referred to as architecture's "deep structure," "autonomy," and "interiority"—which he found both irreducible and aporetic. Near the end of that search Eisenman posed the question this way:

What can be the model for architecture when the essence of what was effective in the classical model—the presumed rational value of structures, representations, methodologies of origins and ends, and deductive processes—has been shown to be a simulation? It is not possible to answer such a question with an alternative model. But a series of characteristics can be proposed that typify this aporia, this loss in our capacity to conceptualize a new model for architecture. These characteristics . . . arise from that which can not be; they form a structure of absences.⁴

Eisenman is thinking here of a series of projects he called the "cities of artificial excavation," experiments undertaken from 1978 to 1988 that enact a kind of Derridean archi-writing, in which the very possibility of producing architectural meaning through the tracing, grafting, and scaling of geometric deep structures of specific sites—Venice, Berlin, Paris, Long Beach—

also decenters and unravels the certainty of that meaning, requiring the supplementation of authors and authorities from Le Corbusier to Shakespeare to the sites' own histories; supplementation, indeed, backward and forward to infinity, although the past is not recoverable and the coming of the future has been pitilessly stalled.⁵ "Architecture in the present is seen as a process of inventing an artificial past and a futureless present. It remembers a no-longer future."⁶ The cities of artificial excavation thus lead inexorably beyond the end of the line of architecture, to "the end of the end."

I shall be concerned here with that end and its logic, and with the architectural drawing as its iteration. I discuss what may properly be called conceptual architecture—one that secks through an aesthetic withdrawal to replace the built object with a diagram of its formative procedures, investigating, exposing, and repeating the most basic disciplinary conventions and techniques of architectural practice while at the same time liquidating the last vestiges of sensual architectural experience. I shall be concerned, in particular, with the 1978 project for the Cannaregio district of Venice, the first of the cities of artificial excavation. My intention is to query not only the conceptual workings of this architecture but also its historicity—how it is a conscious reflection on a particular cultural moment—and to develop an etiology of self-reflexive formalism that can identify the historical illness of which, I will claim, Eisenman's architecture (along with others of the late avant-garde) is an elaborate symptom. The illness, not to make a mystery of it, is *reification*: a kind of epistemic anomie that results from the systematic fragmentation, quantification, and depletion of every realm of subjective experience, but understood here also as an effect in the architectural material itself. In Eisenman's cities of artificial excavation, the contours of that

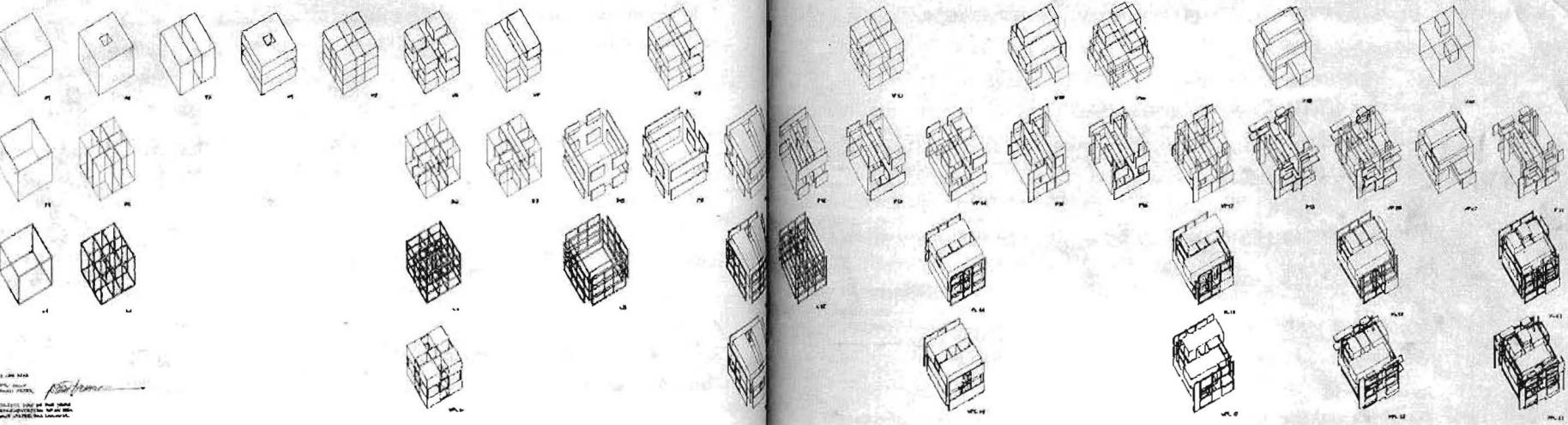
historical condition remain legible after all other meanings have been hollowed out.

Eisenman affirmed early on that if ever there were to be a cure, it would be a resolutely formal one. Before 1978 his work was concerned almost exclusively with isolating and elaborating the architectural elements and operations that would ensure the autonomy and self-reflexivity of the architectural object, which would verify and purify itself in resistance to all encircling determinants of architectural form. One such determinant is physical construction. Eisenman's notion of "cardboard" architecture unloads the physical object of all traditional senses of building with stable materials. Another is the building's actual use. Eisenman's postfunctionalism shifts our engagement with form from utilization to a consideration of architectural elements as the material support of signals or notations for a conceptual state of the object. A final determinant is all the contextual, narrative, or associational potentials of built form. Eisenman's emphasis on the syntactic over the semantic dimension of form proposes on behalf of the architect and the viewer a "competence," or knowledge of the discipline—understood as an internalized system of architectural principles and underlying rules of combination—and stresses the deep, conceptual structures from which various architectures can be generated over the sensual, surface characteristics of any built instance.⁷ Eisenman's early work thus incorporates two standard structuralist principles: the bracketing off of the physical and historical context and, with that, the bracketing off of the subject in favor of a notion of an intersubjective structure of architectural signification that, like language, predates any individual and is much less his or her product than he or she is the effect of it.

We have been taught to think of this as "mere" formalism. But in House I through House VI (1969–1972), Eisenman follows the

modernist strategies of distancing, defamiliarization, and deployment of an alienation effect (from Bertolt Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt*) to reorient our apprehension of architectural form away from standard perceptual conventions. In a traditional representational architecture whose form has its referent in, say, the human body, traditional or indigenous constructions, or some preformed classical system of meaning, our attention as viewers is drawn not to the act of representing—not to how the particular object has been conceived and constructed, from what kind of position and with what end in view—but simply to what is already there, the referent that stands before and external to the architectural sign. Any traditional or conventional form is likely to have more authority, to engage our assent more readily, than a form that tries to expose the complex matrix of disciplinary procedures and institutional apparatuses through which the object is actually constructed. Part of the power of such a representational architecture lies in its suppression of its procedures of production, of how it got to be what it is. Strategies of defamiliarization and estrangement, by contrast, attempt to make the processes of the object's production and the mechanisms of its representation part of its content. The object does not attempt to pass itself off as unquestionable, but rather to lay bare the devices of its own formation so that the viewer will be encouraged to reflect critically on the particular, partial ways in which it is constituted, the particular ways it takes its place.

Eisenman situates his work in a line descending from modernist defamiliarization practices, producing in the early houses a state of estrangement that corresponds to the absolute divorce of form from all reference to materiality, use, and association. In an explanation of House III, significantly entitled "To Adolf Loos & Bertolt Brecht," Eisenman confirms his Loosian sense of *Raumgefühl* and Brechtian understanding of the *Verfremdungseffekt*:



3.1

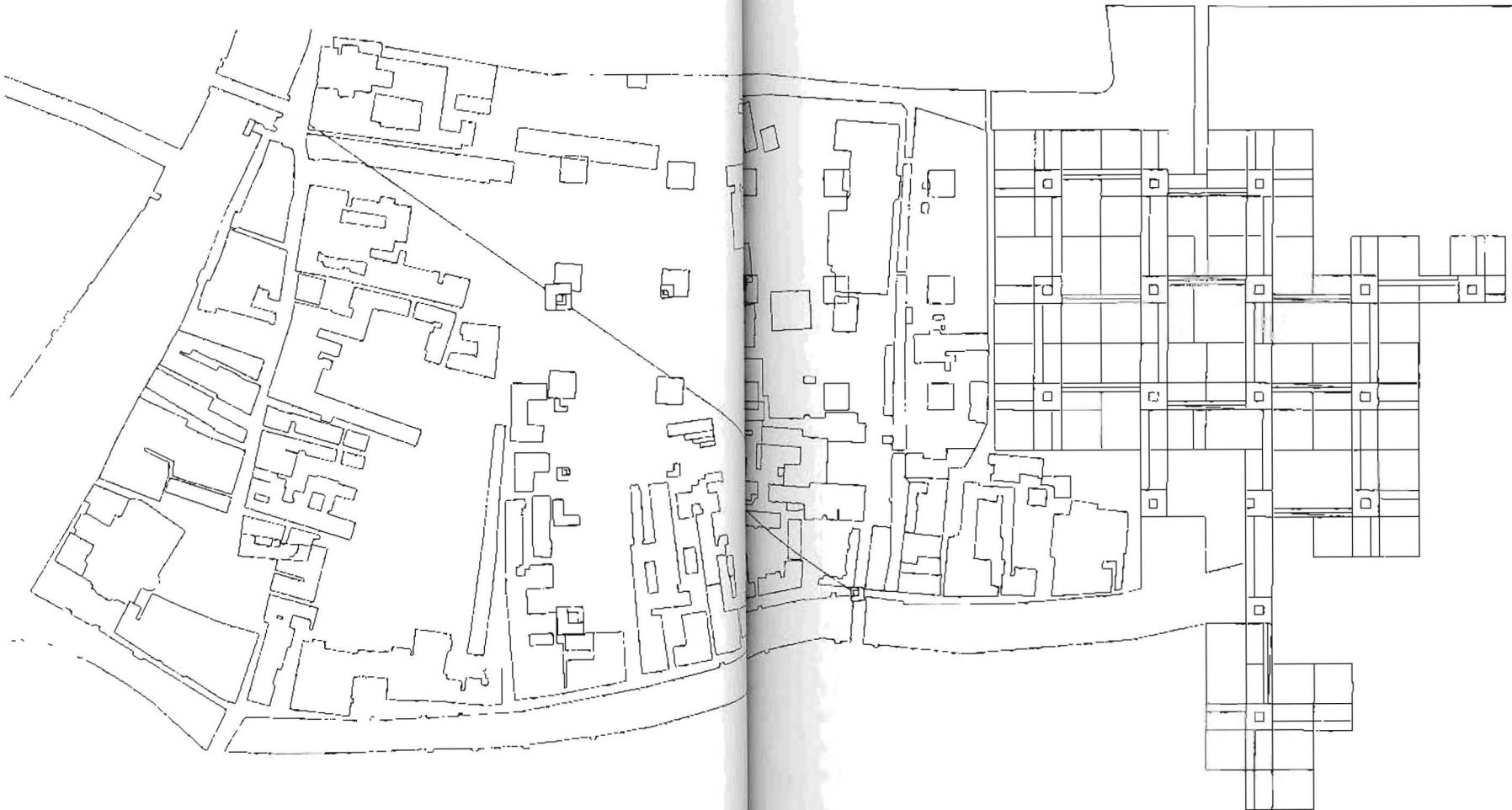
Peter Eisenman, House IV transformation study, multiple axonometrics, 1975.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

While the architectural system may be complete, the environment "house" is almost a void. And quite unintentionally—like the audience of the film—the owner has been alienated from his environment. In this sense, when the owner first enters "his house" he is an intruder; he must begin to regain possession—to occupy a foreign container. In the process of taking possession the owner begins to destroy, albeit in a positive sense, the initial unity and completeness of the architectural structure. . . . By acting in response to a given structure, the owner is now almost working against this pattern. By working to come to terms with this structure, design is not decoration but rather becomes a process of inquiry into one's own latent capacity to understand any man-made space.⁹

This passage emphasizes the identification of an independent conceptual notational system distanced both from any external referent and from any determinable individual viewer. The object and its elements—the cube in its particular emblematic status, the fundamental units of plane, volume, and frame and their mutual interactions—are foregrounded as an architectural writing, one that is *scriptible* in Barthes's sense (he also follows Brecht here) of not only revealing and insisting on its own constructedness but also inviting, requiring even, a reciprocal productive activity of the reader or viewer.¹⁰ Now, in recognizing that the architectural object adequately names that which propels the activity of viewing, reading, and rescripting—propels, that is, any possible viewer's recognition and repetition of disciplinarily structured modes of interpretation—we have broached a notion of performativity, understood in the sense that the object-as- performative-production constitutes that which in the object-as-representation always escapes us. Thus, "working to come to terms with this structure"—the reading and rewriting or rearchitecting of the

performative production—means trying to make sense not only of the formal object but also of the perceptual conventions and disciplinary institutions that it activates and, in activating, *repeats*. Conformity to these conventions and institutions is precipitated, it must be underscored, by the architectural object itself in its structured reiterability. Thus is the object moved to a reflexivity of a second order.

In the Cannaregio project, we witness a similar second-order shift that begins the cities of artificial excavation and establishes the theme that henceforth characterizes Eisenman's work: the movement from structure to site to text, or, better, from the structuralization of the object to the textualization of site.¹¹ This movement is a consequence of the alienation effects mentioned above and the performativity or scriptability of the object, taking these to their conclusion in a self-critique of the fundamental techniques and procedures of the discipline of architecture that the early works had attempted to isolate and codify, but now with a sense that History itself has radically changed the conditions of possibility for any effectiveness of critique. After the end of the end, architecture's iterability loops in on itself, redoubling to produce a temporality in which architectural objects are dislocated and internally split—an intrinsic condition of the late avant-garde, which Eisenman called architecture's presentness: "More than any other term, [presentness] combines both the idea of time in presence, of the experience of space in the present, while at the same time its suffix -ness causes a distance between the object as presence, which is a given in architecture, and the quality of that presence as time, which may be something other than mere presence."¹² What is left for an architecture that would trace that "structure of absences," that would "remember a no-longer future," is then nothing but a totality of infinite deferral. All of which will leave us in an uncompromising place indeed, one in which any positive or substantive construal of the archi-



3.2

Peter Eisenman, project for Cannaregio, 1978, plan.
Courtesy of the architect. "Upon close examination
these objects reveal that they contain nothing—they
are solid, lifeless blocks which seem to have been
formerly attached to the context. . . They leave
a trace, mark the absence of their former presence;
their presence is nothing but an absence."

tect's own negative method is refused (any effort to represent a "better" past or future, for example), but which at the same time also refuses to cancel the representational project as such. Thus Eisenman understands our most elaborate imaginative efforts to conjure alternatives or to propose the next New as little more than projections out of our own historical predicament.

Cannaregio is the first of Eisenman's projects in which the site becomes a major factor in the signifying practice. The grid of Le Corbusier's unrealized Venice hospital project (1964–1965), his last design before his death—itself an absent emblem of the utopian, salutary ambition of modern architecture and, at the same time, a rationalization of the ad hoc urban structure of Venice—is reduced to a geometrical abstraction and folded over onto the irregular fabric of the adjacent site. Here we have for the first time, then, not only an incorporation of the immediate context into the structure of the work, but also an important new operation: that of *appropriation* and the concomitant nullification of the confiscated object's semantic qualities. Le Corbusier's project is reduced to a series of voids, holes in the ground, hollowed out so utterly that only an imprint of the material remains, calibrated and reiterated to become a procedure of inscription and repetition rather than an identifiable figure (even a figure as abstract and reduced as one of Rossi's types).

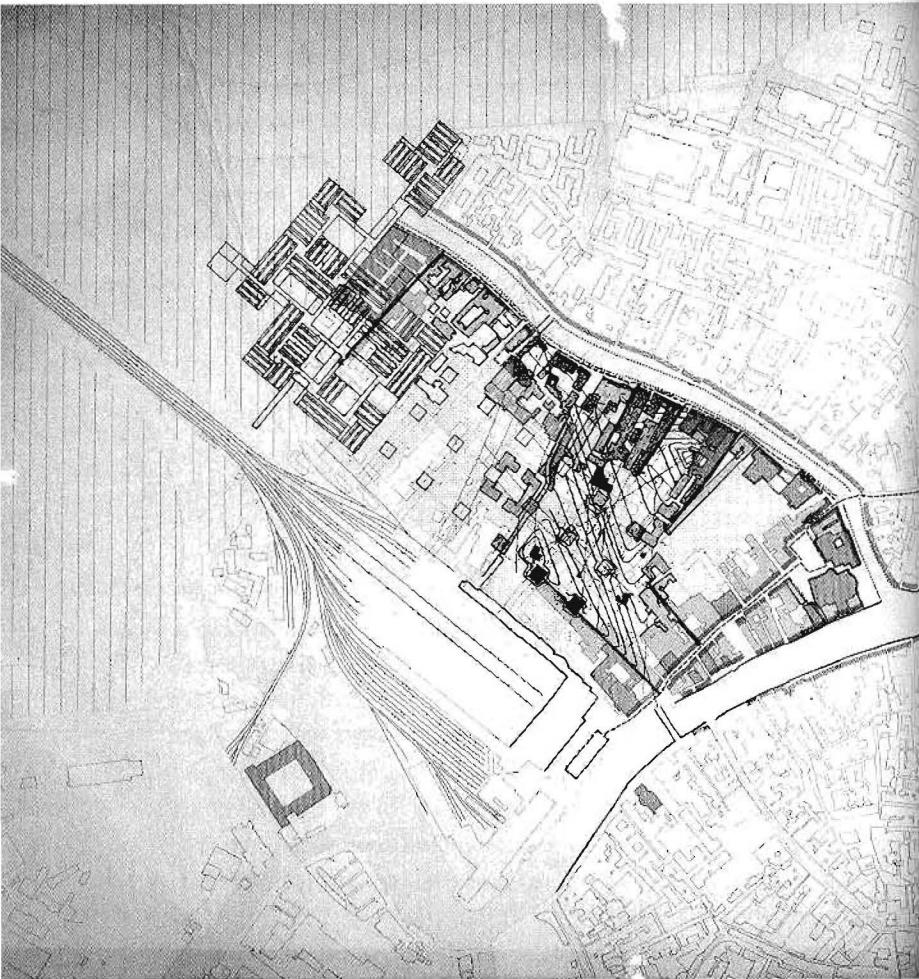
But the exact status of Le Corbusier's hospital confounds the reader, for in his redrawing of the hospital in the Cannaregio presentation, Eisenman renders Le Corbusier's project with precisely the same sort of line as his own presumably "real" proposal for the site, neither ghosted nor put into quotations pictorially; there is no graphic distinction between objects proposed but not yet realized and those proposed but never to be. Does Eisenman's project for Cannaregio then mean to include the "rebuilding" of Le Corbusier's never-built monument to the modern? Or do the documents and their codes of representation declare (or con-

demn) Eisenman's project to be of the same never-to-be-built status, the same failed utopia? In any case, such a graphic convention makes sense only if the project is understood to be a drawing *as such* and not a drawn representation of a hypothetical building construction; it is the *drawing* of Le Corbusier's hospital in Cannaregio that is the site of Eisenman's project. In the absence of a real place to begin, Eisenman reproduces the missing original in hallucinated form, not as an object of architectural desire but as a setting for the emplacement of a Symbolic order that is also a realm of absence and lack.

For Eisenman, Le Corbusier's drawing seems to grant a provisional stability to the otherwise endless drift of the Symbolic. The dead authority returns as drawing and contract—Name-of-the-Father, the pact among initiates that controls communication, the operator that links unassuaged desire to rule.¹² The centrality of drawing as drawing for Eisenman's problematic, and indeed for that of the entire late avant-garde, is not merely the result of economic contingencies or an inability to get projects built. It is rather that drawing is the necessary vehicle of imagination, symbolization, and self-reflection in architecture, analogous to writing in language; drawing is perhaps the necessary medium of *critical* architecture. Drawing is a medium of marks that have passed from the architectural unconscious through the signifier, thus enabling and controlling signification. The drawing is indeed a privileged signifier because it alone inaugurates the process of architectural signification.

Drawing is therefore also involved in architecture's desire and hence with the City. Bernard Tschumi once remarked of Antonio Sant'Elia that

the intensity of urban life had once been the ultimate object of desire; now it loses its fascination. The city is less important than its image . . . Sant'Elia brilliantly



3.3

Peter Eisenman, Cannaregio, 1978,
sketch site plan showing disposition
of el-cube structures with grid
derived from Le Corbusier's hospital
and diagonal axis of symmetry.
Canadian Centre for Architecture.

formalized desires. If he is not the first to replace architecture by its drawings, he certainly replaces the reality of the city by drawings of the city. And not of any city, but of the city of the future, promised by new technologies and socio-economic relations, yet inaccessible. His drawings . . . disregard the object of desire and replace it with a powerful substitute: drawing.¹³

Drawing operates as metaphor, as a substitute for the desire produced by the City itself. What is more, drawing and desire are closely related even at the level of the word, as W. J. T. Mitchell has so suggestively argued. "Drawing Desire" [the title of Mitchell's essay], then, is meant not just to indicate the depiction of a scene or figure that stands for desire but also to indicate the way that drawing itself, the dragging or pulling of the drawing instrument, is the *performance of desire*. Drawing draws us on. Desire just is, quite literally, drawing, or *a drawing*—a pulling or attracting force, and the trace of this force in a picture.¹⁴

When Eisenman decided to begin (again)—to draw from, to draw on Le Corbusier's drawing—he could not have known Derrida's contemporaneous account of the irreducibility of repetition in "Limited Inc a b c" (1977).¹⁵ Uncannily, Eisenman enacts what Derrida simultaneously articulates: any text can come into being only as a certain repetition, in terms of what it repeats and what repeats it. But what is repeated (in this case a canonic modernist project) can never be self-present (and it is important for Eisenman that Le Corbusier's project is literally absent), either in itself or in the text that repeats it. A *coming after* (hints of Rossi's "persistence") here emerges as the only condition under which anything can *come to be*. Iterability displaces the logic of self-presence by a graphics of deferral and differentiation that Derrida famously called "spacing," or *diffrance*. What is more, the superposition of Le Corbusier's grid onto the new site is a

quite vivid example of the Derridean concepts of supplement and graft. Read as supplement, Eisenman's attachment makes apparent the "originary lack" at the core of the modernist project.¹⁶ As graft, the setting of the two Cannaregio projects side by side generates resonances, distortions, and phase shifts both formal and historical that are themselves explorations of iterability and dissemination. The Cannaregio project declares that one cannot simply bring architecture into being; one can only trace the possibility of its being repeated.

But there are logics other than Derridean that I want to explore in the effort to define the territories of deprivation and loss within this field of geometrical, indexical forms. What figures can be adduced to capture the movement from the decontextualized structuring principles of the early houses to the site-specific appropriations and repetitions in Venice? First, it can be noted that this appropriation and consequent formal and semantic depletion of Le Corbusier's project follows in its general logic of transformation what Walter Benjamin, in his study of *Trauerspiel*, identified as the figure of allegory. Allegory appears in periods of crisis, when, through metaphysical or historical causes, some unspeakable loss is imposed on what had been presumed to be permanent and unchanging. Consequently, myths are demythologized and nature is historicized. "Allegory is in the realm of thought what ruins are in the realm of things," Benjamin wrote, insisting that the structure of allegory as an artistic procedure is imposed upon the artist by external physical and social conditions as a cognitive imperative, not chosen by the artist as a mere aesthetic preference.¹⁷

For Benjamin, the ruins of modernity—from buildings blasted apart by war to the detritus of commodity culture—force the recognition not of culture's permanence but of its temporality and transience, just as the decay and disintegration of nature forced baroque poets to confront in their own time the inevitability of

catastrophe and death. Like his baroque counterpart, the modern allegorist (the dadaist photomonteur, for example) ceaselessly piles up lifeless, fragmented, arbitrarily exchangeable images "in the unremitting expectation of a miracle," as if the sheer clutter of signs could compensate for the regressive conditions of reception imposed by the depletion of solidly meaningful forms.¹⁸ But the baroque intention "ultimately does not remain faithful to the spectacle of the skeleton [recall Derrida's metaphor], but faithlessly leaps over to the Resurrection."¹⁹ Whereas the baroque allegorist, in his melancholic contemplation, attempted to leave behind the fragmented, transitory realm of failed nature by making the very procedure of objective devaluation in this world the sign of its opposite, that is, of refuge in the eternally redeemed world of the spirit, the modern allegorist confronts a desultory "new nature" whose source of fragmentation is the modern process of production and consumption: "The devaluation of the world of objects within allegory is outdone within the world of objects itself by the commodity."²⁰ But characteristically the allegorist appropriates these objects and devalues them *a second time*, repeating the process of reification whereby the object is split off from its use value to become a mere signifier of monetary exchange—now in order to dialectically reappropriate the hollowed-out fragments and imbue them with new signification. "The allegorical mind arbitrarily selects from the vast and disordered material that its knowledge has to offer. It tries to match one piece with another to figure out whether they can be combined. This meaning with that image, or that image with this meaning. The result is never predictable since there is no organic mediation between the two."²¹ Thus the sequence of appropriation, devaluation, juxtaposition, and redistribution of depleted signifiers folds these signifiers, allegorically, into new diagrams and redeems them through the very logic by which they were first devalued. Allegory appears, then, as a displacement of or compensation

for a disappearing and irretrievable past, a past foreclosed by the historical and social present.

Like Benjamin's destructive character, Eisenman explicitly and emphatically renounces any attempts at consolation: "Upon close examination these objects reveal that they contain nothing—they are solid, lifeless blocks which seem to have been formerly attached to the context. On the ground is the trace of their movement, their detachment from life. They leave a trace, mark the absence of their former presence: their presence is nothing but an absence."²² For Eisenman, as Benjamin wrote of Baudelaire, "the century surrounding him that otherwise seems to be flourishing and manifold, assumes the terrible appearance of a desert."²³ Where other architects see in their postmodernism a return to plenitude, in Cannaregio the appropriated, fragmented, and doubly depleted signifiers are nothing if not emblemized iterations of loss in the Benjaminian sense. Indeed, according to Eisenman himself, the series of ghostly voids or holes in the ground that articulate the palpably absent Corbusian origin of the project's grid "embody the emptiness of rationality," "the emptiness of the future," and may be understood as "potential sites for future houses or potential sites for future graves." Now legible only in a highly ambiguous way, since they have been decoded and recoded as something else entirely, these rewritings of modernist ambitions are allegorical diagrams with no content as such—an axiomatic of meaning withdrawn.

It also seems correct to see in this project, involved as it is with the appropriation and semantic nullification of signs, a deliberate and thematic confrontation with the effects of commodification and commercialization of architecture; that is, with the inevitable process in modernity whereby any architectural element loses its use value to become a unit of visual exchange. After all, it is the definitive characteristic of the allegorical object that, once hollowed out, it can be refilled with altogether

different content. And indeed by 1978 architectural culture was deluged with various attempts to ballast the free-floating signs of visual exchange by filling them with a dissimulating aura of humanist functionality, cultural continuity, and individual bodily experience, as if such conceptions would restore the symbolic authenticity of thoroughly inauthentic appropriated images and ease the passage of the visual commodity into the private domain of the architectural consumer.

In this sense, the city that Cannaregio's grid traces, or "represents" (though that is no longer quite the right word), is the same city that Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi sought to emulate—the city of consumerism, mass media, and multiple publics. But now, according to Eisenman, that city has advanced beyond a threshold of meaningfulness: heterogeneity now becomes utter sameness, and communication is henceforth impossible. For Eisenman the logic of the simulacrum—which of course involves the incorporation and institutionalization of multiplicity in consumer capitalism along with its cognate desires as manifest in Scott Brown and Venturi's postmodernism—in fact precludes representation in any direct way and makes it anachronistic. Speaking of the representational vocation of Venturi's decorated shed, Eisenman writes, "A sign begins to replicate or, in Jean Baudrillard's term, 'simulate,' once the reality it represents is dead. When there is no longer a distinction between representation and reality, when reality is only simulation, then representation loses its a priori source of significance, and it, too, becomes a simulation."²⁴ What is more, it is this spinning sameness of the simulation that accompanies the particular historical (or posthistorical) impossibility of imagining a future. He continues: "The modern crisis of closure marked the end of the process of moving toward the end. Such crises (or ruptures) in our perception of the continuity of history arise not so much out of a change in our idea of origins or ends than out of the failure of the present (and its

objects) to sustain our expectations about the future.²⁵ As a result of this loss of referent and loss of future, the surface semiotics of Scott Brown and Venturi are, for Eisenman, bits and pieces of difference that make no difference, further evidence of the perpetual reversion of difference to the same.

All that is left, then, is to jettison their populist ballast so that nothing but the planimetric surface itself remains, hovering in midair seared hard and brittle, or pressed into the earth as the countervailing grids of an archaeological laminate, which, along with the operations like grafting and scaling that modulate it, is buried in self-reference. In the name of autonomy and negation, Eisenman seeks to construct a totality that is exquisitely systematic and utterly closed and from that totality to produce difference.²⁶ But the very isolation is itself historically specific and historically produced (Eisenman formulates it as a necessary transitional negation of humanism and anthropomorphism) and as such is still mediated through a larger cause: the City, if not History itself. The cities of artificial excavation, not quite representations, are a form of nonrepresentational mimesis. In their tenacious pursuit of an architectural system is found a palpable sense of being locked into the larger structure of society and history, perhaps even more so than through Scott Brown and Venturi's direct references to the social moment. Indeed Eisenman's pursuit of such an architectural system is in some ways indistinguishable from the requirements of the system itself: the relentless, suffocating sameness, the geological closure, the "end of the beginning, the end of the end" that must now be recorded. Like a neutron star whose immense gravity pulls in and distorts matter from surrounding stars, Eisenman's problematic sucks the contradictory system of autonomy and representation away from Rossi, compresses it while amplifying the heterogeneity-turned-sameness of Scott Brown and Venturi, and then generalizes the historical condition of reification, producing process-objects that are traits

and traces of a transitional moment in the great overarching plan that is the spatial imagination. The various gridded laminates of Cannaregio might be thought of as an architectural version of the X-rays emitted from that neutron star, weblike swirls and folds of space whose acoustical approximation would be a dull, slowly pulsating hum and that are only understandable as marks of the forces of reification itself.

"In the conscious act of forgetting, one cannot but remember": in what could be one of the most concise definitions of allegory, Eisenman introduces his 1983 project for the Koch-/Friedrichstrasse Block 5 of Berlin (where Friedrichstrasse intersects the Berlin Wall) as the site of anti-memory.

Anti-memory is different from sentimental or nostalgic memory since it neither demands nor seeks a past (nor for that matter a future). But it is not mere forgetting either, because it uses the act of forgetting, the reduction of the former pattern, to arrive at its own structure or order. . . . Anti-memory does not seek or posit progress, makes no claims to a more perfect future or a new order, predicts nothing. It has nothing to do with historical allusion or with the values or functions of particular forms; it instead involves the making of a place that derives its order from the obscuring of its own recollected past.²⁷

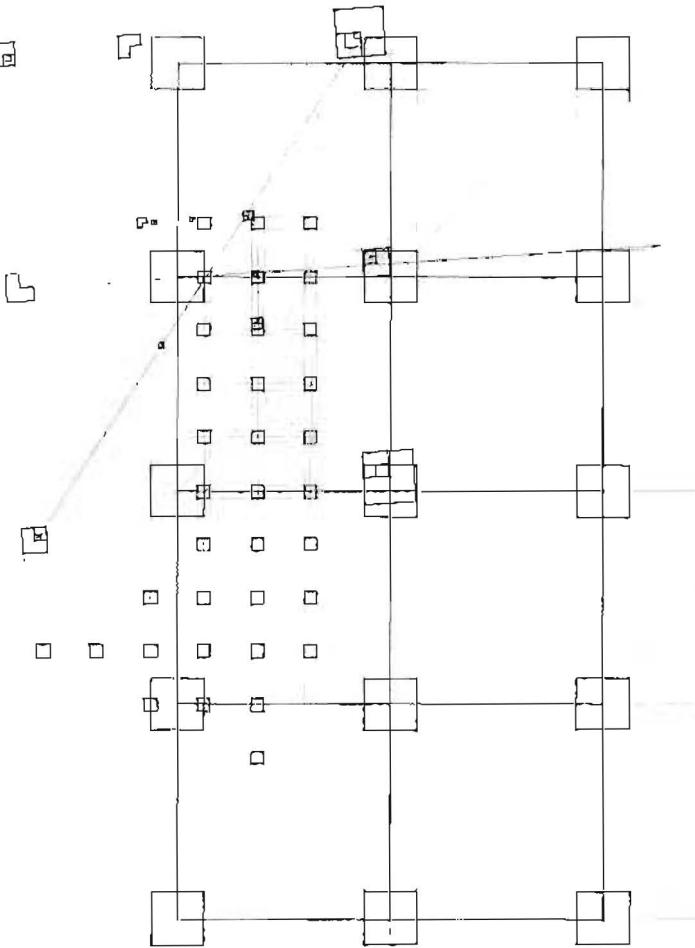
Following the same strategies used in Venice, the Berlin project begins with the erasure, reproduction, and superimposition of contingent features of its site. The hypothetically reconstructed eighteenth- and nineteenth-century foundation walls, the Mercator projection, and the implication of the Berlin Wall itself are marked as so many countervailing grids laid onto the site at varying heights developed from the heights of the present streets and the Berlin Wall. All of the buildings proposed for the project can be seen as

emerging almost automatically from the initial planimetric strategy. The Koch-/Friedrichstrasse project thus makes explicit what was already implied in Cannaregio: the triadic vocation of the grid as an architectural signifier—at once a diagram of the hypothetical structures of the site (an appropriation of a fictive archaeology), a material support for the building's functions (here little more than an economic division of housing cells, and at Cannaregio even less than that), and a reiterative, self-reflexive structure—a vocation we see tested later in variations at Columbus, Frankfurt, Cincinnati, Long Beach, Paris, Verona, and elsewhere.²⁸

Here Eisenman confronts, squarely and architecturally, what Benjamin Buchloh has described as "the essential dilemma" of conceptual art of the mid-1960s: "the conflict between structural specificity and random organization. For the need, on the one hand, for both a systematic reduction and an empirical verification of the perceptual data of a visual structure stands opposed to the desire, on the other hand, to assign a new 'idea' or meaning to an object randomly . . . as though the object were an empty (linguistic) signifier."²⁹ The random, arbitrary assignment, even invention, of archaeological content in Venice and Berlin opposes the empty, geometrical tautologies of the grid; the historical permeability of concrete architectural form opposes the structure's utter occlusion of any historical reference. And the only available figure of thought that can hold these oppositions of excess and lack together is the *text*—a tissue, textile, or texture of referral and delay in which there is neither beginning nor end, neither a past nor a future. Whether Eisenman's conceptual architecture, with its textualization of every domain of the practice—the site as text, the program as text, the body as text—is a redemptive detour out of reification (the identification of a possible critical vocation for the tissue of fragmented, floating, reified signs) or a postmodern flattening of allegory's material and tragic dimensions is not so much a dilemma of alternatives as a contradiction and a paradox:

the historical paradox of postmodern allegory itself, a paradox that cannot be escaped, a paradox in which Eisenman's work is fully immersed.

Twisting the paradox even tighter, Eisenman's appropriation of already reified material moves to yet a different level in a second operation of Cannaregio. The previously worked out House XIa—itself a formal record of the history of its own formation, comprising nothing more than a series of filmlike stills that trace the steps of devaluation from one state of the object to the next as it sucks itself in, doubles, and burrows in a chthonic-topological transformation (the lower half of the object is fully underground)—now becomes the appropriated object installed at the Venice site. Again, already depleted of its functional, material, and semantic potentials, the house is devalued even more thoroughly, first by its repetition across the site and again by its scaling, that is, the changes in size from that of a house to a series of objects either smaller than a house or larger than a house, each of which, in turn, contains nothing but the shell of the next-smaller object. A kind of diachronic sequence, analogous to Berlin's fictive archaeology, is thereby superinduced on the synchronic structure of the Venetian grid. But the molecular element of the cube—a cube with a smaller cube subtracted from it, which Eisenman calls an "el-cube," a figure awaiting its supplement—operates in opposition with processes of unveiling the formal device, insofar as the el-cube cannot be further broken down by the "decomposition." It is a figure, or better perhaps what Brecht called a *Gestus*—not merely a gesture but a condensation of attitudes, a compression of a complex ideological stance into a singularity. The el-cube as *Gestus* stands in dialectical contradiction to the processes of Cannaregio's *Verfremdungseffekt*.³⁰ At the same time, the complex repetitions of all the elements of House XIa involve singularities that multiply and reflect one another, such that each of the array of cubes includes difference within itself.



3.4

Peter Eisenman, sketch diagram of two Cannaregio grids at different scales in preparation for Choral Works, 1986.
Canadian Centre for Architecture.

And finally, the topological axis of symmetry of the inserted objects is traced as a cut into the ground, a line that connects the two bridges across the canals that delimit the Cannaregio district, reinscribing the territory already defined by the canals. Thus the boundaries of the site and Eisenman's own earlier work, as well as Le Corbusier's project, are all incorporated and grafted into the structure of the new work, now as so many redundant texts that oppose all rooted or solidly signifying usages of presumably authentic, historical languages (such as Venice's vernacular or Le Corbusier's modernism) in favor of an architectural material, well-formed and precise, that renounces any harmonizing or humanizing refilling in order to move toward the very limits of the signifying practice: an architecture connected not to a pretense of authenticity but to its own abolition; an allegory unto death, half-buried in the Venetian *fondamento*.

This eschatology of forever-deferred ends developed from never-begun beginnings produces a near illegibility or paralysis of reading when, in the Choral Works (1988), Eisenman's extraordinary collaboration with Bernard Tschumi and Jacques Derrida, the Cannaregio project is transported to Paris and superimposed at a different scale onto Tschumi's Parc de la Villette. With the Choral Works, Eisenman pushes the Cannaregio grid as signifier past Venice and Le Corbusier toward some incomprehensible, forever-deferred limit. Here the grid becomes nothing but the signifier of the lack of its own signifying finality, of the fact that it can never express itself fully and indeed has already exceeded itself, collapsing into an illegible singularity. All these ceaseless repetitions and retracings of elements across different sites—the telescoping fall of one element into another that itself duplicates the first and sets up a virtually uncontrollable metonymic series—are by no means inconsistent with the logic of allegory; rather, such obsessive repetition foregrounds the structural or axiomatic aspect of allegory as distinct from the thematic,

that is, allegory as a monadic plurality of domains. It is as if the allegorical signifiers carry within themselves the template of the larger allegorical system even as they are only the structural effects of that system. And if later we will want to ask whence comes Eisenman's compulsion to repeat, let us first question its effects.

I have already suggested that the group of artificial excavations is a meditation on the journey of the architectural sign to a visual commodity. But to this it should be added that the repetition and depletion of signs is a successor to the production of defamiliarization and alienation effects mentioned above, a procedure that repeats its object in order to interrogate it, to examine how it came into being, to foreground its arbitrariness, to show, that is, the object as constructed according to the conventional techniques and categories authorized by the discipline itself. The paradigmatic modernist object and its ideology of rationalization and remedial progress toward the future are here grasped not as object but as object symbolized, which is to say object as authorized by the architectural Symbolic. Building on already existing architectures and urban structures but shifting our attention to the ideological devices that normally frame our understanding of form, Cannaregio causes us to reflect directly on architecture's disciplinary presumptions—presumptions about the determinant structure of the site, about architecture's mimetic function, about the ideological status of form. By sliding a hiatus between form and content, the project renders the architectural sign exterior to itself and thus dismantles the ideological self-identity of the routine business of design in order to show just how deeply arbitrary and questionable what everyone takes for granted as obvious, real, and correct actually is. In construing the Cannaregio project in this way, I am insisting that it is by refolding and rescripting material institutions—in the sense that the discipline of architecture itself is an institution—and not merely by manipulating detached forms that Eisenman's work finds its ideological teeth.

But there is more. Eisenman's layering of visual texts—the superimposition of preexisting fabrics, the erasure of their use value, the redoubling of this visual text by his own interventions—and the shift of attention to ideologically motivated disciplinary devices further oblige us to locate the possibility of disciplinary critique in the process of constituting the object in interpretation, that is, in the practice of *reading*. And here we circle back to the notion of performativity. Concretely, this emphasis on performativity implies that the potential of critical action—the critique of the legitimating commercial and educational apparatuses and their classificatory and interpretive procedures—is produced and made available, in a symbolic mode, through new practices of reading propelled by the objects themselves. Through an almost complete "de-skilling" of the architect—an evacuation of craft, taste, and any notion of "good design" as criteria of aesthetic judgment—Eisenman's projects become almost pure ideology effects: registrations of the discursive (not merely formal) features of architecture as an institution, of the very rules of the architectural discourse that determine what can be thought and done.

But to dwell only on the "critical object" as the site of disciplinary critique is to miss the other, related, side of Eisenman's paradoxical procedure, which could be characterized as a kind of euphoria uniting the repetition of discursive codes with the moment in which the subject of the discourse is obliterated. Roland Barthes describes this as an act of reading—or, better, of rescripting—the doxologies of culture: a simultaneous pleasure of repeating what already exists (the enjoyment of cultural or disciplinary identity) and a *jouissance* of aesthetic disruption.¹¹ An architecture of pleasure would be a transaction within a bounded inventory of cultural codes, of preexisting elements lifted from the history of the discipline and redeployed. Barthes develops Lacan's notion of *jouissance* to describe the experience of the

abyss that such transactions open up. This is the same "perverse" coupling of affirmation and negation, of reproduction and suspension, that we find in the blank allegory of Eisenman, whose projects are invaded by the ideologies and repetitions of the disciplinary code even as he issues exhortations against them. What else are Eisenman's early houses but empiricist studies of the structural codes of modern architecture and art from Le Corbusier, Terragni, and De Stijl to Robert Morris and Sol LeWitt? In these houses the production of meaning is still a closed process in the sense that we return, again and again, to the most basic cognitive forms of architecture—the cube, the plane, the line, and the point—defamiliarized forms, perhaps, but closed nevertheless. And it is that same doxa that is entered into, opened up, unsettled, and finally blanked out in the profound disenchantment of Venice, where modernist formal logic is systematically reduced and superimposed on a specific site, absorbing the site into its own structure, forcing modernist critique and hope to the sterile condition of tautology. It is here that the modernist aspiration for total self-referentiality coupled with utter randomness is fulfilled, but we must also recognize the heavy price to be paid for that achievement: the complete evacuation of the signified. To read the Cannaregio project for its significance is to read it as a mobile play of signifiers that registers the ideologies of the architectural discipline itself. But the tragedy of history is not thereby transcended, as in classical allegory, nor are its shattered elements refunctionalized, as in modernist allegory. Rather, history is merely displaced by a bleached-out textuality: the anachronic subject falls into nonplace and nontime (Eisenman is explicit about this), into infinite deferral without the conflict of intervening meaning.

The coupling of jouissance and loss strikingly reveals the outer limits of modern subjectivity—the threshold of complete sense liquidation—and, at that borderline, the implacable closure of

Eisenman's signifying economy, whose only (impossible) escape is a kind of death wish.³² Eisenman's *texte de jouissance* takes a quasi-erotic pleasure in accomplishing the death of its subject in two senses: the dissolution of its content (its discursive subject matter) and of its agent (the author or reader as a subject possessing a disciplinary competence), creating a textual solution wherein the death wish is driven into the very aesthetic reflexivity of his architecture, leaving virtually no material residue to be found within the arid compartments of mirrors constructed by the architecture itself. In contemporary theory the *mise en abyme* has usually been taken as the sign of such aesthetic closure as well as the denial of the historical and sociopolitical contexts that such a mechanism of self-reflection ensures. But it should be underscored again that the infinite redoubling of the sign right up to the edge of the void is only the most extreme register of allegory. Eisenman's allegorical structure enunciates from the start its lost center and establishes as its project to reiterate that loss, infinitely deferring the redemption it promises.

We can now investigate the force behind this death of the subject, but we need to move to yet another level of interpretation to reveal its contours. For what links allegorical repetition to a final, shuddering release, and indeed what lies behind the fusion of repetition, self-immolation, and jouissance, is the Freudian mechanism of *Wiederholungszwang*, or repetition compulsion, which is itself motivated by the death drive—an aggression that is directed inward toward the subject and strives for a kind of subject degree zero through the neutralization of all internal tensions and quantities. The death drive is as fully developed a form of desire as the goal-oriented sexual and life instincts. Indeed, the latter are themselves provoked in characteristic Freudian binary opposition to death's "silent" drive; they are but recuperative responses to the differentiated death drive that continually introduce new desires and tensions into the system.



3.5

Peter Eisenman, sketch site plan showing superimposition of Cannaregio and La Villette sites at different scales, 1986. Canadian Centre for Architecture.

The clinical phenomenon of repetition compulsion was among Freud's principal starting points for his theory of the drive. He observed the syndrome both in the child's tendency to repeat, as in the game of *Fort-Da*, anything found to be effective in diminishing his displeasure during the absence of his mother, and in certain neurotic fixations on traumatic events and the paradoxical regression to unpleasure through the repetition of those events. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud identifies two different forces behind the syndrome of repetition and ascribes both to an instinctual impulse to achieve stasis in the psychic economy and reduce the quantity of stimulation and internal tension to the lowest possible level. On the one hand, there is a seemingly progressive force—prior to but not inconsistent with the pleasure principle—by which the subject stages the effects of absence and loss, then works through that material to master unpleasure by means of repetition. On the other hand, there is a force beyond the pleasure principle—that is, inconsistent with it—a regressive force that impels the subject to reinstate some previous psychic state (such as a fixation on traumas of war) even when that state yields unpleasure. Giving priority to the regression side of the progression-pleasure/regression-unpleasure dichotomy and combining this with the hypothesis that all repetition is a form of regulatory discharge within the psychic economy, Freud devised a formal definition of instinct: "But how is the predicate of being 'instinctual' related to the compulsion to repeat? . . . It seems, then, that an instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing forces."¹³ But if instinct is really a drive to restore an earlier state of things, then a degree zero stage of nonlife appears to be life's ultimate historical aim; the apparatus that strives to nullify all inherent tensions—to divest itself utterly of quantity—is an apparatus that ultimately extinguishes its subject: the death drive. Thus Freud

concludes, "Everything living dies for *internal* reasons . . . the aim of all life is death."¹⁴

Freud's equilibration between the developmental forces of progressive evolution (prior to the pleasure principle) and regressive involution (beyond the pleasure principle) seems to be structurally congruent with Eisenman's conjunction of the pleasure of repeating "a comfortable practice of reading" with the *jouissance* of imposing "a state of loss." Eisenman's pleasure conforms to the Freudian construction of homeostasis whereby, through repetition as discharge, the psyche seeks to eliminate all quantity. Houses I through VI encode the pleasure of such a reading; they embrace rather than refuse the doxas of the discipline. Reading these projects reproduces within the viewer the pleasure of the paradigms of culture the viewer has internalized—the genre of the single-family house, for example, or the articulation and legibility of forms and procedures still overseen by the symbolic authority of architectural institutions behind the scene. *Fort-Da*: authority is removed, then reconstituted. The subject gravitates to death's void but preserves pleasure by covering over the void with repeated signs. *Jouissance* is properly beyond the wish for pleasure, transgressing the law of cultural authority with repetition as infinite regress to subjective annihilation. The *jouissance* of Venice jams the pleasures of reading to train our attention on the shattered origins of the architectural discourse and prevents the architectural text from closing in on a signified; it exploits the elements out of which architectural signs are made, conforming to the Symbolic that circulates around it—but only to pin them to their ultimate inadequacy. For the Symbolic order is also the realm of absence and lack: indeed, of death. If desire depletes its objects, leaving nothing but hollow shells, it is because, at its extreme, desire matches up to nothing but desire itself. And thus Eisenman follows the logic of Freud's repetition compulsion as an avatar of the death drive, where the erotic and thanatotic func-

tions are conjugated in a signifier—repetition—that has as its signified the impossibility of its own signification. "The death drive is only the mask of the symbolic order," Lacan insisted.³⁵ The death drive is a maximum resolution of the compulsive return to lost origins, to the big Other; and jouissance is but the little death, the orgasmic shudder, experienced when we rehearse that finality.³⁶

But if the reader of Freud is hard put to find material evidence of the instinct underlying the compulsion, in Eisenman one faces the fact head on: the repetition compulsion is driven by the windless void of present history and the utter loss of the possibility of signification itself. In his essay "The House of the Dead as the City of Survival," on Rossi's analogous city drawings, Eisenman asserted the exigent program for present-day architecture to be to reckon with post-signification:

The problem [we face now is] choosing between an anachronistic continuance of hope and an acceptance of the bare conditions of survival. . . . Incapable of believing in reason, uncertain of the significance of his objects, man [has lost] his capacity for signifying. . . . The context which gave ideas and objects their previous significance is gone. . . . The [modernist proposal of the] "death of art" no longer offers a polemical possibility, because the former meaning of art no longer obtains. There is now merely a landscape of objects; new and old are the same: they appear to have meaning but they speak into a void of history. The realization of this void, at once cataclysmic and claustrophobic, demands that past, present, and future be reconfigured. To have meaning, both objects and life must acknowledge and symbolize this new reality.³⁷

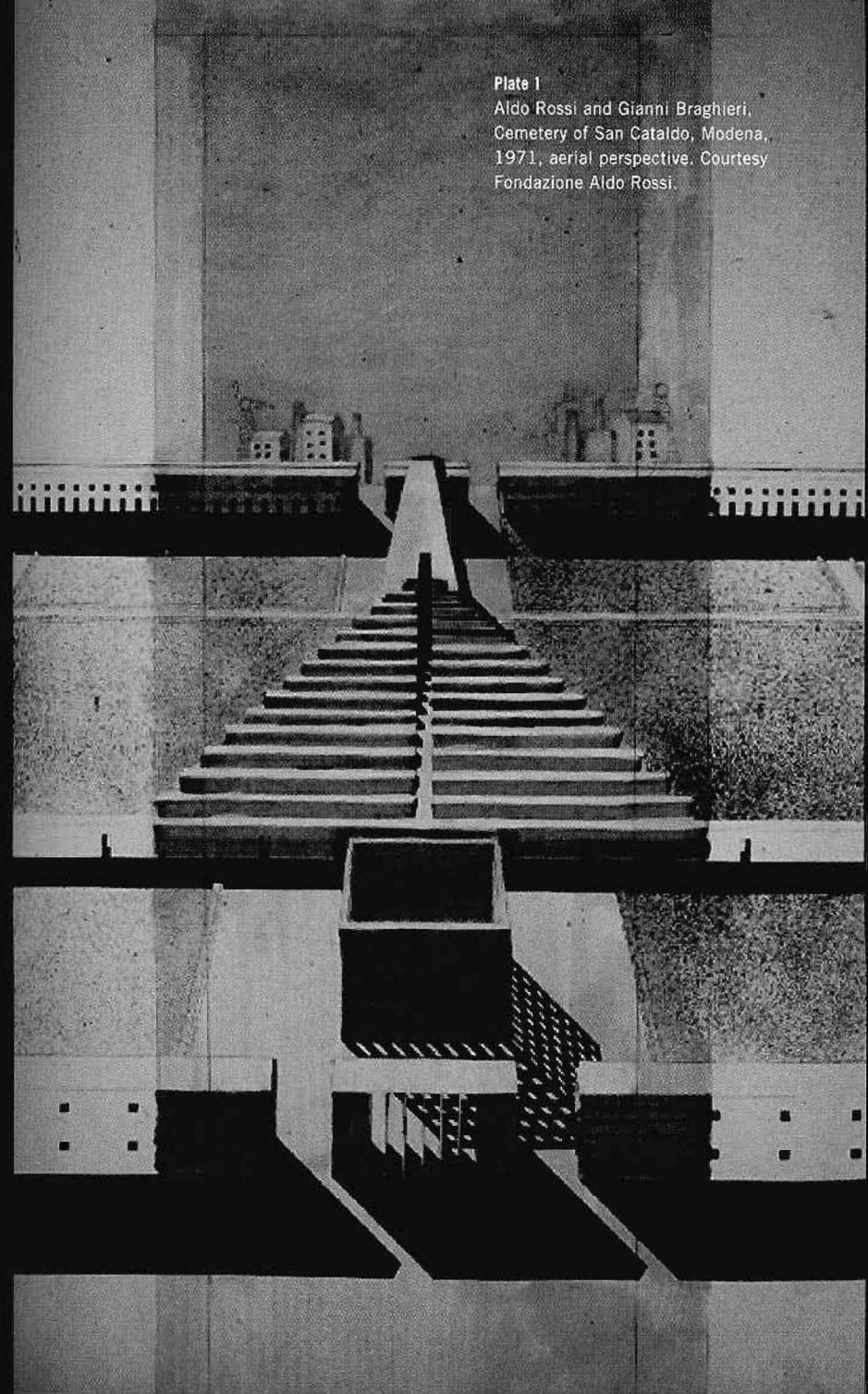
We must signify the fact that we can no longer signify; Eisenman generalizes the historical condition of loss and anticipates performative objects able to *sign* their own certificate of death. Reification—the complete penetration of the commodity fetish into the very structure of subjective relations, the complete erasure of all traces of object production—exasperates the desire to *mean* and forces a leap into the void. Eisenman here stages the overall project of the late avant-garde as just such a leap, as the becoming aware of loss—a kind of architectural death drive already latent in the modernism on which Eisenman's work is based.³⁸ What, then, is his objects' performativity if not the disclosing of the last remaining desiring procedures for signification; and what is his continual appropriation, depletion, and reappropriation of depleted signifiers if not a practical, allegorical use of the compulsion to repeat, an incessant replaying of the reification of signs and the cancellation of the subject, all as a signification that signification is henceforth impossible? "The game is already played, the die already cast," wrote Lacan. "It is already cast, with the following proviso, that we can pick it up again, and throw it anew."³⁹

But I am repeating myself, so let me bring this to an end. I have insisted that the reiterability of Eisenman's desiring processes and its consequences—the liquidation of traditional aesthetic experience, the potentiality of disciplinary critique—are played out in the architectural drawing. When Eisenman's project remains within the problematic of representation, then the critical force of the work seems effective. But it is a paradoxical force, for the medium of the critique must be the same abstract and reified material that the critique discloses: and the attempt of these "excavations" to evacuate history, past and future, is itself historically determined. It is just in the nature of the historical moment Eisenman confronts that it is experienced as

the bathetic completion of modernist ambitions to graphically refunction abstract signs. Eisenman's architecture is accurate and legitimate but perhaps also, in its representation of a culture dispossessed of meaning, obedient.

When the drawings are translated into built works, as in the housing block in Koch-/Friedrichstrasse, for example, Eisenman's glass beads of perfect repetition are thrown against the hard floor of building practice. A contradiction emerges that he was able to avoid in the never-to-be-built Cannaregio project: the functionalization of the dysfunctional diagram and the aestheticization of the conceptual sign. Eisenman's response is conservative. It derives from a reluctance to accept the complete disintegration of the aesthetic object, even after the radically altered historical circumstances that affect the conditions of architectural production and reception were recognized in Cannaregio and such a disintegration was first enunciated. The anti-aesthetic signifiers now reappear in a kind of aesthetic atavism, attempting (one last time) to recoup investments in meaning already liquidated, refusing the destiny Eisenman himself had already predicted. Yet it is just this performative contradiction (the refused destiny, its cynical truth claim) that gives the built work its power: it repeats the objective conditions under which any work of architecture in the present must be produced—the constant struggle against the two equally intolerable poles of mere obedient service to existing institutions and mere aesthetic voluntarism. Before hoping to surpass the contradiction, Eisenman must perform repeat it. Such unresolved antagonisms of reality reappear in architectural form.

Plate 1
Aldo Rossi and Gianni Braghieri,
Cemetery of San Cataldo, Modena,
1971, aerial perspective. Courtesy
Fondazione Aldo Rossi.



NOTES

DESIRE

1. See Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971). On the autonomy problematic, see my introduction to the *Oppositions Reader: Selected Readings from a Journal of Ideas and Criticism in Architecture, 1973–1984* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998). Following Althusser, "semi-autonomy" is perhaps a better formulation, but here I will maintain the word more used in architectural discourse.
2. I intend for these claims to hold whether my analysis is of a textual concept like Rossi's typology, a single design like Eisenman's for Cannaregio, an entire career as in the case of Hejduk, or some combination of all of these, as in the case of Tschumi. I take all these together and treat them synoptically as a single project called the late avant-garde.
3. Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 278–294. I owe the appellation "Architecture in the Age of Discourse" to Anthony Vidler.
4. Manfredo Tafuri, "L'Architecture dans le Boudoir: The Language of Criticism and the Criticism of Language" (1974), in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. K. Michael Hays (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), p. 148.
5. Ibid., p. 167.
6. Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 58.
7. Colin Rowe, "Introduction," in *Five Architects* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 7, 8; reprinted in Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968*.
8. Manfredo Tafuri, "Toward a Critique of Architectural Ideology" (1969), reprinted in Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968*, p. 17.
9. Tafuri, "L'Architecture dans le Boudoir," p. 148.

10. Ibid., p. 153.
 11. Denise Scott Brown, "Learning from Pop," *Casabella* 359–360 (December 1971), reprinted in Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968*, pp. 62–64.
 12. Tafuri, "L'Architecture dans le Boudoir," p. 155. Also see Massimo Scolari, "The New Architecture and the Avant-Garde," reprinted in Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968*.
 13. For a sampling of the realist discourse, see Mario Gandelsonas, "Neo-Functionalism," *Oppositions* 5 (Summer 1976): 1–ii; Jorge Silvetti, "On Realism in Architecture," *Harvard Architecture Review* 1 (Spring 1980): 11–32; Martin Steinmann, "Reality as History: Notes for a Discussion of Realism in Architecture," *A+U* 69 (September 1976): 31–34; Bernard Huet, "Formalism—Realism," *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* 190 (April 1977): 35–36. The last two are reprinted in Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968*, 248–253, and 256–260, respectively.
 14. Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essays on the Ontology of the Present* (London: Verso, 2002), pp. 198, 199.
 15. Edward W. Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature against the Grain* (New York: Pantheon, 2006), pp. 7, 8 (ellipsis in original). For Adorno's use of the concept, see Theodor W. Adorno, "Late Style in Beethoven," in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert, trans. Susan H. Gillespie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
 16. The reference is to the passage in the "culture industry" chapter in Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Continuum, 1984), p. 148. "The new ideology has as its objects the world as such. It makes use of the worship of facts by no more than elevating a disagreeable existence into the world of facts in representing it meticulously. This transference makes existence itself a substitute for meaning and right. Whatever the camera reproduces is beautiful. The disappointment of the prospect that one might be the typist who wins the world trip is matched by the disappointing appearance of the accurately photographed areas which the voyage might include. Not Italy is offered, but evidence that it exists."
 17. Jacques Lacan, "The Signification of the Phallus," in *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977).
 18. Anika Lemaire and David Macey, *Jacques Lacan* (London: Routledge, 1977), p. 162. Lemaire quotes from Serge Leclaire, "La réalité du désir," in Centre d'études Laennec, *Sexualité humaine: Histoire, ethnologie, sociologie, psychanalyse, philosophie* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1966).
 19. Is it a mere coincidence that Joseph Rykwert's *Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History* was published in 1972? Or was the writing of that book driven by the same desire that drove the late avant-garde?
 20. Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, p. 31.
 21. The title of Rossi's drawing is a reference to a line in Georg Trakl's poem "Abendlied."
 22. John Hejduk, *Mask of Medusa: Works, 1947–1983*, ed. Kim Shkabich (New York: Rizzoli, 1985), p. 63.
 23. Fredric Jameson, "Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan" (1977), in *The Ideologies of Theory: Essays 1971–1986*, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 104.
 24. Tafuri, "Toward a Critique of Architectural Ideology," p. 32.
 25. Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Routledge, 1981), p. 102. Žižek echoes Jameson: "The Lacanian Real is not some eternal essence, but strictly an historical Real. Not a Real that is simply opposed to quick historical change, but the Real that generates historical change while at the same time being reproduced by these changes." Slavoj Žižek, "Interview," *Historical Materialism* 7 (2000): 194.
 26. Steven Helming uses the concept of deliberate and inevitable failures in *The Success and Failure of Fredric Jameson* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001). On the practice-inert and its counterfinality, see Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (London: Verso, 2004).
 27. While I hope that each of these five chapters can be read independently, this writing has a logic that is cumulative and totalizing, which is to say that it attempts to unfold the fundamental positions in the ideological field of the late avant-garde, from which all corollary and subsequent positions derive. What is more, this introductory chapter is probably better understood if read last rather than first. As befitting a grappling with the negative of the sort presented here, however, I could not have told you that until now.
- ANALOGY**
1. Charles Jencks and George Baird, eds., *Meaning in Architecture* (New York: George Braziller, 1969)

2. As defined by Ferdinand de Saussure, *langue* (connoting "language" but also a particular "tongue") is the specific but abstract linguistic system that preexists any individual use of it and exists perfectly only within a collectivity. *parole*, the individual speech act, is the manipulation of that system to produce concrete utterances and includes localized contingencies and "accidents" like accent or personal style. See Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (1916), ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye in collaboration with Albert Réthlinger, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959). Also see Roland Barthes's *Elements of Semiology* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1968), which was the text that introduced many architecture theorists to semiotics.
3. The renewed discussion of typology was prompted by Giulio Carlo Argan, "Sul concetto di tipologia architettonica," in *Festschrift für Hans Sedlmayr*, ed. Karl Oettinger and Mohammed Rassam (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1962), translated as "On the Typology of Architecture," trans. Joseph Rykwert, *Architectural Design* 33, no. 12 (December 1963), 564–565. In the article, Argan summarizes and interprets Quatremère de Quincy's nineteenth-century theory.
4. According to Lévi-Strauss, mythemes "operate simultaneously on two levels: that of language, where they keep on having their own meaning, and that of metalanguage, where they participate as elements of a supersignification that can come only from their union." Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 143.
5. Theodor W. Adorno, "Functionalism Today" (1965), trans. Jane Nauman and John Smith, *Oppositions* 17 (Summer 1979): 37.
6. Jacques Lacan, "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious," in *Ecrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977), pp. 312 ff. The reflexive structure of the query conveys the enigma of the desire of the Other, the interpellated subject's unanswerable question as to what the Other desires. "That is why the question of the Other, which comes back to the subject from the place from which he expects an oracular reply in some form such as 'Che vuoi?,' 'What do you want?,' is the one that best leads him to the path of his own desire—providing he sets out . . . to reformulate it, even without knowing it, as 'What does he want of me?'" Lacan argues that the form of the subject's question to the big Other creates a distance between the questioner and the Symbolic order and designates a crucial lack in the Symbolic. But it also designates the moment of subjectivity. ("The Italian phrase is spoken by the Devil in Jacques Cazotte, *Le diable amoureux* [1772].) Slavoj Žižek derives a theory of ideology in part from the form of this query. Žižek, "Che Vuoi?," in *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), pp. 87 ff.
7. Rafael Moneo, "On Typology," *Oppositions* 13 (Summer 1978) 44.
8. Aldo Rossi, *Architecture of the City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), p. 23.
9. I think it is correct to credit Rossi with the fundamental theorization of the city as the object of architecture's desire, even though Rossi would never have used that formulation. But the potential for such a notion was in the architectural discourse at least since Guy Debord's psychogeography (1955) or Roland Barthes's mythology of the Eiffel Tower (1964). Bernard Tschumi probably saw the psychic potential of the City for architecture as early as any. Mario Candelas could have made a specifically structuralist-psychanalytic theorization of the relationship by the early 1970s and did so later in "The City as the Object of Architecture," *Assemblage* 37 (December 1998).
10. Rossi, *Architecture of the City*, p. 128.
11. Rossi, cited in Tafuri, "L'Architecture dans le Boudoir," in *The Sphere and the Labryinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, trans. Pellegrino d'Acierno and Robert Connolly (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), p. 358.
12. I should say something here about the relation of the imagination and the Imaginary, terms that I have let slide into one another in this chapter. Lacan's optico-spatial characterization of the Imaginary is comparable to Kant's imagination at least insofar as both produce schemata that organize experience and knowledge. It is important to emphasize, however, that in contrast to Kant's "productive imagination," Lacan's Imaginary is radically unproductive, misleading the fragmented subject into thinking it is a whole. It seems right to me, in the case of Rossi's logic of types, to retain some ambiguity about the productive or unproductive imagination.
13. Aldo Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, trans. Lawrence Venuti (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), p. 35.
14. "When I prepared this little talk for you, it was early in the morning. I could see Baltimore through the window and it was a very interesting moment because it was not quite daylight and a neon sign indicated to me every minute the change of time, and naturally there was heavy traffic and I remarked to myself that

- exactly all that I could see, except for some trees in the distance, was the result of thoughts actively thinking thoughts, where the function played by the subjects was not completely obvious. In any case the so-called *Dasein* as a definition of the subject, was there in this rather intermittent or fading spectator. The best image to sum up the unconscious is Baltimore in the early morning." Jacques Lacan, "Of Structure as an Inmixing of an Otherness Prerequisite to Any Subject Whatever," in *The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, ed. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), p. 189.
15. Rossi, *Architecture of the City*, pp. 57–61 passim.
 16. Ibid., p. 166.
 17. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 263.
 18. "Initially, no distinction was made between the typology of the house and that of the tomb. The typology of the tomb and of the sepulchral structure overlaps the typology of the house: rectilinear corridors, a central space, earth and stone materials. . . . Architecture can only use its own given elements, refusing any suggestion not born of its own making; therefore, the references to the cemetery are also found in the architecture of the cemetery, the house, and the city. Here, the monument is analogous to the relationship between life and buildings in the modern city. The cube is an abandoned or unfinished house; the cone is the chimney of a deserted factory. The analogy with death is possible only when dealing with the finished object, with the end of all things." Aldo Rossi, "The Blue of the Sky," *Oppositions* 5 (Summer 1976): 31, 34. Rossi's title is a reference to Georges Bataille's 1935 novella *Le bleu du ciel*.
 19. Rossi, *Architecture of the City*, p. 174.
 20. For illustrations, see *Aldo Rossi Drawings and Paintings*, ed. Morris Adjmi and Giovanni Bertolotto (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993).
 21. Adolf Loos, "Architektur" (1910), in *Trotzdem 1900–1930* (Innsbruck: Breitner, 1931), pp. 109–110.
 22. Rossi, *Architecture of the City*, p. 107.
 23. Cited in Aldo Rossi, "An Analogical Architecture," trans. David Stewart, *Architecture and Urbanism* 56 (May 1976): 74–76.
 24. Ibid., p. 74.
 25. Rossi, *Architecture of the City*, p. 163.
 26. Aldo Rossi, "Introduzione a Boullée," in *Scritti scelti sull'architettura e la città 1956–1972* (Milan: Città Studi, 1991), p. 360.
 27. Rossi, *Architecture of the City*, pp. 40–41.
 28. Rafael Moneo, "Aldo Rossi: The Idea of Architecture and the Modena Cemetery," *Oppositions* 5 (Summer 1976): 6, reprinted in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. K. Michael Hays (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), p. 6.
 29. Aldo Rossi, file 186, box 20, Rossi Papers, Getty Research Institute, cited in Mary Louise Lobsinger, "Antinomies of Realism in Postwar Italian Architecture" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2003), p. 287.
 30. Theodor W. Adorno, "On Lyric Poetry and Society," in *Notes to Literature*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 38–39.
 31. Moneo, "Aldo Rossi," p. 4.
 32. Aldo Rossi, "Introduction," in *Aldo Rossi in America: 1976 to 1979*, ed. Kenneth Frampton (New York: Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies, 1979), p. 3.
 33. Francesco Dal Co's observations are among the most acute: "'Analogous city' is the very place where monuments express mourning for the lost order to which they allude." Francesco Dal Co, "Criticism and Design," *Oppositions* 13 (Summer 1978): 10.
 34. Rafael Moneo, "Postscript," in *Aldo Rossi Buildings and Projects*, ed. Peter Arnell and Ted Bickford (New York: Rizzoli, 1985), p. 314. It is helpful here to think of Roland Barthes's characterization of the *studium* of black and white photography, through which one gains access to the Symbolic, and the uninterpretable *punctum*, with its touching, tearing, bruising effect. When the *punctum* occurs, the photography will "annihilate itself as medium to be no longer a sign but the thing itself." Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), p. 45.
 35. Alan Colquhoun, "The Deceptions of Rationalism," paper presented at "The 1970s: The Formation of Contemporary Architectural Discourse," Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, 2001.
 36. Anthony Vidler, "The Third Typology," *Oppositions* 7 (Winter 1976): 3.
 37. Abstraction, for Worringer, was the most ancient form of art, which had emerged out of the desire "to divest the things of the external world of their caprice and

- obscurity," to endow them with the regularity and certainty of geometry. "The urge to abstraction is the outcome of a great inner unrest inspired in man by the phenomena of the outside world. . . . We might describe this state as an immense spiritual dread of space." Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style*, trans. Michael Bullock (New York: International Universities Press, 1953), p. 15.
- 38 Peter Eisenman, "The House of the Dead as the City of Survival," in *Aldo Rossi in America*, p. 9.
 - 39 Microanalysis embraces rather than resolves the contradictions between the conceptual demand for the new and the impossibility of its actual achievement, allowing each to pass into its other. "It is up to dialectical cognition to pursue the inadequacy of thought and thing, to experience it in the thing." Microanalysis is the form this experience takes. See Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1973 [German ed., 1966]), p. 153.
 - 40 Eisenman, "The House of the Dead," p. 5.
 - 41 Ibid., p. 15.
 - 42 Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 3.

REPETITION

- 1 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 5.
- 2 In 1971 Rossi suffered a near-fatal automobile accident, after which he became increasingly interested in the idea of architecture as a fractured body or a series of skeletal fragments to be reassembled. See Aldo Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984).
- 3 Peter Eisenman, "The Houses of Memory: The Texts of Analogy," in Aldo Rossi, *Architecture of the City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), p. 5.
- 4 Peter Eisenman, "The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End," *Perspecta* 21 (1984): 166, reprinted in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. K. Michael Hays (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998).
- 5 *Cities of Artificial Excavation: The Work of Peter Eisenman, 1978–1988* (New York: Rizzoli, 1994).
- 6 Eisenman, "The End of the Classical," p. 172.

- 7 Eisenman's use of the term *competence* has two sources, I believe. One is surely Noam Chomsky, whose *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965) Eisenman was reading at the time. But "competence" is also Clement Greenberg's word for each art medium's essential technique. I think that both meanings remain in Eisenman's use.
- 8 Peter Eisenman, "To Adolf Loos & Bertold Brecht," *Progressive Architecture* 55 (May 1974): 92.
- 9 Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974 [French ed., 1970]).
- 10 Eisenman's title for his introduction to the Cannaregio project, "Three Texts for Venice," is only the most convenient confirmation of the goal of this trajectory. Peter Eisenman, "Three Texts for Venice," *Damus* 61 (November 1980): 9–11.
- 11 Peter Eisenman, "Presentness and the Being-Only-Once of Architecture," in *Written into the Void* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 46. "The importance of presentness as a term for architecture is that it distinguishes [architecture as] a writing from [architecture as] an instrumentality of aesthetics and meaning" (*Ibid.*, p. 47).
- 12 The Name-of-the-Father is a fundamental signifier that permits signification, confers identity, and positions the subject in the Symbolic order. See Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar Book III: The Psychoses*, 1955–1956, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Russell Grigg (New York: Norton, 1993).
- 13 Bernard Tschumi, "Episodes of Geometry and Lust," *Architectural Design* (January 1981), reprinted in *Questions of Space* (London: Architectural Association, 1990), p. 43.
- 14 W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 59.
- 15 Jacques Derrida, "Limited Inc a b c . . .," in *Limited Inc.*, ed. Gerald Graff, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman and Samuel Weber (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988).
- 16 Derrida offers grafting as a way of thinking about texts that combines graphic operations with processes of insertion and proliferation. Jacques Derrida, "The Double Session" (1970), in *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). On the supplement, see Jacques Derrida, *Of*

- Crommatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).
17. Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (London: Verso, 1998), p. 178.
 18. Ibid.
 19. Ibid., p. 233 (translation modified); see Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972–1989), p. 406.
 20. Walter Benjamin, "Zentralpark," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 660.
 21. Ibid., p. 681.
 22. Eisenman, "Three Texts for Venice," p. 9.
 23. Benjamin himself appropriated this passage from Edmond Jaloux (1921) and cited it in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 366.
 24. Peter Eisenman, "The End of the Classical," p. 159.
 25. Ibid., p. 170.
 26. Lacan emphasized the autonomy of the Symbolic order. See Jacques Lacan, *Seminar II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954–1955*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (New York: Norton, 1991), pp. 35, 37.
 27. Peter Eisenman, "Berlin: Submission to the Restricted International Competition," *Architectural Design* 53 (January–February 1983): 92 (italics in original).
 28. Perhaps it will be helpful to keep in mind that by 1986, with the re-presentation of the Verona project as *Moving Arrows, Eros, and Other Errors*, Eisenman had taken this triadic structure to the stage of reconsidering not only new forms of presentation of architectural concepts (the variously scaled and coordinated grids are now represented not in conventional architectural drawings but in a Plexiglas box of loose acetate sheets that can be randomly rearranged by the reader), but also new forms of distribution in a commercially mass-produced object with an ironically mass-produced signature on its cover, thus polemically collapsing the spaces of architectural production, architectural publication, and art commodity production. Peter Eisenman, *Moving Arrows, Eros and Other Errors: An Architecture of Absence* (London: Architectural Association, 1986).
 29. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962–1969. From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October* 55 (Winter 1990): 111.
 30. Brecht used the term *Gestus* to signify bodily gesture as opposed to spoken word. Eventually it came to be understood as the total process, the assemblage of all performative techniques into a single image.
 31. Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975 [French ed., 1973]), p. 14. Lacan makes the plaisir/jouissance distinction in Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Dennis Porter (New York: Norton, 1992).
 32. For Lacan, following Freud's "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," absolute jouissance is possible only in death. The link between jouissance and the death drive is most evident Lacan's treatment of Freud's mention of *das Ding*, the Thing, which names an emptiness at the center of the Real, a black hole condensing the properties of everything existing outside of the signified. See Lacan, *The Seminar Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, p. 121.
 33. Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–1974), vol. 18, p. 36.
 34. Ibid., p. 38. It will be understood that to interpret the death drive as a wish for actual physical mortality is a misconception. Desire necessarily emerges in a "bound" state, invested in a system of signs: what Freud called a *Vorstellungrepräsentanz*, or a conceptual representative, a structure of signification.
 35. In his early work, Lacan situates the death drive in the Imaginary, describing it as a nostalgia for lost harmony and a desire to return to the pre-oedipal connection with the mother (one thinks of Rossi's yearning for the Other). In the seminars of 1954–1955, however, Lacan argues that the death drive is the fundamental tendency of the Symbolic order to produce repetition. This shifts Freud's biological model to a firmly cultural one, which is the model I have followed here. Lacan, *Seminar II*, p. 326.
 36. The structural affinity of this Freudian machine to Eisenman's own negative originology is registered by critics like Rosalind Krauss, Kenneth Frampton, and Anthony Vidler, who have perceived in his work not only a preoccupation with death but also the figure of the uncanny. For the feeling of the uncanny is generated precisely in the becoming aware of the repetition compulsion. "It must be explained that we are able to postulate the principle of a repetition-compulsion

- in the unconscious mind, based upon instinctual activity and probably inherent in the very nature of the instincts—a principle powerful enough to overrule the pleasure-principle. . . . Taken in all, the foregoing prepares us for the discovery that whatever reminds us of this inner repetition-compulsion is perceived as uncanny." Freud, *Standard Edition*, vol. 17, p. 238.
37. Peter Eisenman, "Introduction," in *Aldo Rossi in America: 1976 to 1979*, ed. Kenneth Frampton (New York: Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies, 1979), p. 3 (my emphasis).
 38. Roland Barthes has observed that "the greatest modernist works linger as long as possible, in a sort of miraculous stasis, on the threshold of Literature itself, in this anticipatory situation in which the density of life is given and developed without yet being destroyed through its consecration as an [institutionalized] sign system." Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1968), p. 39.
 39. Lacan, *Seminar II*, p. 219.

ENCOUNTER

1. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959–1960*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Dennis Porter (New York: Norton, 1992), p. 282.
2. John Hejduk, *Mask of Medusa. Works: 1947–1983*, ed. Kim Shkapich (New York: Rizzoli, 1985), p. 50.
3. John Hejduk, *Practe [Practice]* (Prague: OBEG ArchitektD, 1991), p. 33.
4. "In painting, the English term still life and the Italian term *natura morta* haunt. Not an innocent combining of two words in English, 'still life,' in Italian 'dead nature.' If the painter could, by a single transformation, take a three-dimensional still life and paint it on a canvas into a *natura morta*, could it be possible for the architect to take the *natura morta* of a painting and, by a single transformation, build it into a still life?" John Hejduk, *Adjusting Foundations*, ed. Kim Shkapich (New York: Monacelli Press, 1995), p. 48. It is useful to compare Hejduk's still life projects with Aldo Rossi's domestic landscapes.
5. Hejduk, *Mask of Medusa*, p. 67.
6. The early work of Hejduk and Eisenman was presented together in *Five Architects* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).
7. Cited in Carol Armstrong and Laura Giles, *Cézanne in Focus: Watercolors from the Henry Rose and Pearlman Collection* (Princeton: Princeton University Art Museum, 2002), p. 80.
8. Hejduk, *Mask of Medusa*, pp. 62, 50, 62.
9. Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), p. 188. The invocation of Marcel Proust's notion of involuntary memory signals a kind of memory that seizes the viewer suddenly and unexpectedly, reminding him of a previous experience, but with an affective intensity unavailable to willfully revived memories.
10. Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1978), p. 107.
11. "On one side of the wall (the past), the circulatory elements—ramp, stair, elevator—were placed. They were volumetric, opaque, monochromatic, in perspective with the structure grounded. The color was white, grey, black, the materials reinforced concrete, steel and cement. Once the single inhabitant passed through the wall he was in a space overlooking a landscape (trees? Water? Earth? Sky?) which was basically private, contemplative and reflective. There were three suspended floors cantilevered from the collective elements. The materials on this side of the wall were glass and reflective metal, a fluidity was sought after. Whereas the collective side was hard, tough, concrete, the private side was inwardly reflective, a light shattering into fragments, mirror images moving along the polished surfaces of metal." Hejduk, *Mask of Medusa*, p. 59.
12. John Hejduk, *Victims* (London: Architectural Association, 1986).
13. Aldo Rossi, John Hejduk (Zürich: Arbeitsberichte der Architekturabteilung, 1973). The catalog is introduced with a German translation of Colin Rowe's introduction to *Five Architects*.
14. Daniele Vitale, "Inventions, Translations, Analogies: Projects and Fragments by Aldo Rossi," *Lotus International* 25 (1979): 55.
15. Hejduk, *Mask of Medusa*, p. 136. The project was, in part, a response to the call by the organizers of the 1975 Venice Biennale to bring awareness to the degraded state of the Giudecca and the Mulino Stucky and "to bring them back to life." See Carlo Ripa di Meana and Christian Boltanski, *A proposito del Mulino*