CARTHA

I The Limits of Fiction in Architecture | August 2017

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I The Limits of Fiction in Architecture. The Text Isssue

Editorial

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Information plays a pivotal role in the conformation of our society. It acts as a filter on the way we perceive reality which simultaneously shapes the way we receive information itself. In this constant change of focus between perception and information vastly different kinds of truths emerge, often incompatible with one another depending on what we consciously or unconsciously perceive and take as factual.

As much as this has been a constant throughout history, paradoxically in recent years the polarization of truth coincides with an ever-growing fan of information that is overwhelmingly present in the everyday life. As a consequence, in the increasing complexity and abstractness of the economic and social structures, the large amount of information available oscillates between fiction and reality, blurring the limits that defines them.

Architecture is neither alien to this condition not only directly relates to it but thrives on it. From the genesis of architecture fiction is a key component in its constitution, not being necessarily in opposition with reality, but rather complementary and necessary in the process of any project. Under this perspective neither a negative nor positive connotation could be placed on either fiction or reality, as long as they are relevant for the architectural discipline. It is in their transcendence that, independently from their factual status, a certain event, person or building becomes significant.

With twelve case studies that range widely in time, geography and culture, CARTHA's first issue on *The Limits of Fiction in Architecture*, engages on a discussion on the influence of fiction in the creation of architectural paradigms. Through different formats such as essay, short story or poem, the issue emcompasses varied approaches to the discussion, going from the religious idealism of XVI century Spain to the foundational elements of modern architecture; passing by Piranesi's drawings and intellectual agenda; enquiring Eisenmann's architectural practice; envisioning fictional cities against tourism and reconfiguring real estate literature; among others case studies about fiction and reality in architecture. The case study format aims to facilitate a clear reading across the issue and establishes a instrument to navigate through this expansive topic.

The issue is built up exclusively by texts without any visual content, to try freeing itself from the conventions and plays of codes that an image may convey. However, the infinite possibilities of images will be explored in the upcoming issue, which will consist uniquely of visual contributions, complementing and expanding on this first one.

The Limits of Fiction in Architecture – The Text Issue marks the beginning of the 2017 cycle in a moment when certainty is scarce not only in architecture but in the overall public discourse. It is precisely in this lack of certainty where the importance of approaching fiction lays, especially in a discipline that is commonly known for dealing with the realness of materiality.

Pushing the Limits – Villalpando and the Temple

Dennis Lagemman

1 *concinnitas* is the original expression, used by Alberti in *De Re Aedificatoria* to describe perfect harmony between all parts. In the 1755 edition by Edward Owen this term was translated as "Congruity". In Book 9, Chapter 5 , p. 654, he writes: "But there is still something else besides, which arises from the Conjunction and Connection of these other Parts, and gives the Beauty and Grace to the Whole: Which we will call Congruity, which we may consider as the Original of all that is graceful and handsome."

2 Essendo Ciriaco interrogato della ragione per la quale si affaticava, rispondeva: " Per far risuscitare i morti. Risposta di tant'uomo degna" (Lagemann, trans.) Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana (1959).

Prologue

At the end of sixteenth century Baroque set new limits to the way fictional objects were dealt with in Architecture. To make this possible it seems worth noting that already before Renaissance had changed the designing process and introduced the geometrical scale model as a regular planning device. By utilization of the scale-model and the *lineamenta*, Alberti and his contemporaries outperformed the medieval master builders. Another reason why they could build palazzi and even churches within a few years instead of lifespans as before, may be searched for in the inheritance of the dead old orders from Antiquity. They no longer had to design every detail on site, but gained the ability to solve conflicts by notation. These orders were now deprived of mystical meaning and simply became geometrical elements to achieve *concinnitas*. [1] This may have been the motivation to examine the artifacts of ancient architecture. Alberti noted about one of the first trailblazers of Archeology as it is understood today:

> *When Ciriaco was asked, why he was so passionate about taking this effort, he answered: To raise the dead, they give answers to the dignity of all mankind.* [2]

Inconveniently these orders rooted back to pagan traditions. The Great Ancients, as Alberti called them, had many gods. This entailed two major disadvantages to the design of sacral or complex buildings. Firstly, it became a point of discussion whether illustrations, such as *La Scuola di Atene* was an appropriate image for the decoration of the *Stanza della Segnatura* inside the Vatican. Secondly, the thinking implied in the "manyness" of incommensurate Elements set limits to re-think order itself. For example, the Renaissance palazzi basically resembled the setup of the greek Peristyle house and the only way to create more a complex setup seemed to be just adding more elements. So, if one compares the floorplans of Palazzo Rucellai (1451) and Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne (1536), the limits of the play of elements in fixed configuration becomes obvious. A more capacious instrument for gaining order was requested; a new model to deal with complexity and to push those limits further.

A Search for the Origins

On a broader scale, Renaissance had left italy in turmoil. The system of city states had failed to institute a consistent political system at the North of the Alps and Reformation had aroused many conflicts about the true belief. This situation was also reflected in something which may be called the enclosed space of Renaissance. The palazzi were fortresses, granting comfort on the inside,

while keeping enemies out. At the same time, the situation was quite different on the Iberian peninsula and in France. Here strong monarchies did not allow for civil wars and the supremacy of the catholic church was undoubted. King Philip II of Spain, for example, saw himself as a successor of the biblical King Solomon and tried to prove this by invoking an impressive building program.[3] Under his reign, many churches and monasteries, such as the Monasterio de El Escorial had been built.

3 Morrison (2009), p. 5

To support the efficiency of this program, he did not just unify building regulations, but also supported the creation of a model of fictional ideality. This ideality should not just apply to one building, but as a template for keeping track on ways of gaining higher order within Architecture in general. To achieve this goal, Jeronimo del Prado and Juan Bautista Villalpando, two Spanish Jesuits worked out the three volumes of "In Ezechielem explanationes et apparatus urbis, ac templi Hierosolymitani: commentariis et imaginibus illustratus" between 1596 and 1605. A work to be mentioned as constitutive for the Baroque period. After del Prado prematurely died in 1595, one year before the publication of the first volume, Villalpando took responsibility and continued the work.

In contrast to previous authors like Vitruvius of ancient Rome or Alberti in Renaissance, who mainly documented their knowledge or wrote about their personal experiences, this was a methodological, continuous research project conducted by Villalpando and his huge staff of illustrators and collaborators. In these three volumes Villalpando did not just survey on architecture, but also on geometry, optics, urban conditions and other related issues. The project was financed by King Philip and the Curia in Rome provided working spaces. So apparently, at the end of Cinquecento there was an increased interest in this project at the highest level.

4 Villalpando, (T. Morrison, trans.), Morrison (2009), p. 115

Although Alberti and his successors already had assumed that the catalyst for *concinnitas* must be concealed in the proportions between the single elements,

they could not clarify the reasons why the ancient artifacts looked how they looked like, or why their forms felt so pleasant. Alberti's *De Re Aedificatoria* rather reads like a collection of epistemes, set like markers, for the masterful mind to navigate in the sea of architecture. Opposed to this, Villalpando, who had studied at the office of Juan de Herrera, one of King Philip's favorite Architects, was more of a mathematician than an architect. A circumstance, which is not too surprising, since Herrera was famous for basing his designs on mathematical relations.

Thus, it was now up to authors like Villalpando to reconcile the intellectual and technical developments, which had emerged since the beginning of the Renaissance by rooting them back to an even more remote past and to recode them within a Judeo-Christian context. No surprise then that in search for an answer to the question, where the rules leading towards concinnitas originated, Villalpando turned to the only source which was not only expected to necessarily and exclusively contain the truth but, at the same time, to be the book on history that reaches back to the earliest beginnings of mankind, the Bible. In addition, Villalpando almost automatically assumed that at the origins of architecture there had to be a temple to the Lord. Accordingly, he postulated:

> *The sacred architecture constitutes the beginning of architecture, and the profane one is like a copy, or rather, a shadow of sacred architecture.[4]*

In fact in the Bible, there is a description of a monumental sacred building : the first temple of Jerusalem by Solomon in the visions of Ezekiel, respectively its restored counterpart, as foretold in the revelation of John. According to this passages, the temple of Solomon was a building instituted by God himself, and for its erection, the craftsmen were inspired by the divine spirit. So the origins and at the same time the highest perfection of architectural form were presumed in its instantiation. In the survey on these descriptions, Villalpando expected

5 Villalpando, (T. Morrison, trans.), Morrison (2009), p. 113.

6 Villalpando, (T. Morrison, trans.), Morrison (2009), pp. 388.

7 Villalpando, (T. Morrison, trans.), Morrison (2009), p. 10.

to reveal the sacred rules of architecture beyond the visible world.

Setting Limits for Pushing the Fiction

Thus it was in fact the aim of the project *Ezechielem Explanationes* to define a model template, out of which the rules for the forms of antiquity could be derived. The beauty in this approach was that he could generate a realistic image of the temple out of the description of a vision. On a purely fictional basis, he was creating a rule-based model-identity even if the real temple would be out of reach forever.

It was probably even helpful that the real temple of Jerusalem no longer existed, for only in this way could he show how to extrapolate an ideal from the descriptions of the scriptures. Architects who had previously been instructed by Vitruvius Pollio or Leon Alberti for the correct construction techniques and the appearance of the elements should now be able to ascertain the correct rules regarding the dimensions and proportions taken from this ideal, in order to decrypt the secret of beauty:

> But our purpose is not to instruct or prepare anybody for the practice of architecture, much less arrive at the foundation of the different parts of architecture. Our endeavor is to simply try to imply the rules of the architecture that were observed, by the order of God […].[5]

For this reason, Villalpando began to define the limits within which his model could unfold and by which he could separate his conception of architecture from that of his predecessors. While these boundaries had previously been given by the individual morphisms of antique structural elements, he now turned to the arrangements and the interval conditions which concerned the spacing of the structures he analyzed. For the way he did it, he referred to the way Daniele Barbaro described how to evoke a chord of multiple harmonic intervals through the partition of a string on the Monochord: pure mathematical relationality, starting from a whole and partitioning it into smaller sections. [6]

How to Filter Truth

And yet, despite all his effort, the Jesuit found himself confronted with the criticism of renowned Architects and so he sought for legitimization from his former mentor Herrera. In the foreword to the 2nd volume, he wrote:

> Herrera was so impressed by his designs that when he saw our descriptions, its proportions, the dimensions of parts and the most perfect coherence and beauty, as was gifted of an extraordinary ingenuity, all could examine it, and confessed ingenuously to have detected the Divine Wisdom that was hidden in the proportions of its architecture […]. [7]

Another reason for the criticism on the *Explanationes* may have been that there were different approved versions of the Bible and it was quite possible to argue whether the solutions to which Villalpando came were correct. Officially, the church solved this circumstance very pragmatically. After the publication of the first volume, Villalpando was accused of heresy only to be subsequently released by the Inquisition and considered innocent in all charges; through this, he and the *Explanationes* were officially rehabilitated. He might have been released and absolved by the Inquisition, because he could actually claim to have created a logical, coherent picture of the temple, a picture that could be agreed upon.

The question related to this topic is of great interest for the presence: How can one possibly extrapolate a solution that yields a single coherent image out of an abundance of partially contradictory data, especially if all of this data is virtually true? How could he claim that a church-approved version of the Bible, or legal versions of Old Testament scripture, could be false?

Instead of giving an overview over every related

text and then constructing a truth by eliminating false parts, he was synthesizing the most likely variant. He established his version of a realistic truth from those predicates, which can be composed without conflicting each other. He affirmed those parts of the descriptions to which one can agree and rather gave indication that in this or that version a transcription error must have happened, by drawing out an etymological survey with Hebrew or Aramaic originals. [8]

8 Villalpando (1595 - 1604) Tomi III, Liber Primus, pp. 9 – 13.

In terms of today's language, one could say that he filtered from the mass of available data, that which would create a realistic image, aware of the fact that it was fictional. Within the limits of the framework he set, his fiction could unfold. In this sense, he comprehended the descriptions of Ezekiel and other writings as material from which he can open up the architecture of the temple by the means of a model logic. This depicts a peculiar fact on the limits of fiction: no matter how realistic the model retrieved from real world data appears to be, it will always remain to be a projection of possibilities and a reflection of intentions.

Villalpando's Masterful Trap

Thus, what appears to be a limitation in the flexibility of designing, emerges as a new dimension in the question of how to deal information. Villalpando identified the description of a building by words in the way the idea of a plan was handed down from the times of Vitruvius: A text-based description holds a collection of the essential information to organize the spatial layout and specifications of a building, while the particular technical requirements can be reconstructed with the skills of literate persons: the educated architect and the competent craftsmen.

If Alberti had described different approaches as equivalent points in a potential field in which the master could navigate through his own abilities, Villalpando filtered out a single possible solution from the variety of data points by laying down the rulesets for the temple as a whole. By doing so, he has developed a communicative code. The tricky part was that Villalpando defined himself practically as the person who is able to read the divine will out of the 'plan' of Ezekiel with his rational competency, which made him vulnerable towards accusations.

But maybe, precisely because Villalpando's model remained disputable, it led to a further qualification by other authors. And since he made no less than the claim of "not coming to the origins of the elements of architecture", but "to imply the rules of architecture [...] by God's direct instruction", his fiction naturally produced criticism and skepticism, provoking those who thought they could counterpose it by turning his own logic against him. The ingenuity of his approach was that he almost laid out a trap into which the others who dealt with the topic stepped into: even if they may have come to draw different conclusions, they had to approach him on his level of extrapolation. The most famous among them are: Augustine Tornielli "Annales sacri et profani", 1610; Matthias Portreffer "Templum Ezechieleis", 1613, John Wood "The Origin of Building", 1741; and certainly Isaac Newton's reconstruction "Transcription of the Temple of Solomon" from 1728, as well as countless treatises on individual sections of Villalpando's work or images based on his illustrations, from Matthäus Merian d.Ä. in his "Icones Biblicae" from 1625 to Fischer von Erlach as he published it in his "Entwurf einer historischen Architektur", 1721.

By shifting the working model from the realized to the virtual level, which in turn allowed for the shift from the reflective to the projective plane and to produce identical patterns instead of individual facsimiles, he produced a highly dynamic formally communicative model.

New Limits

It remains to be noted that Villalpando expanded the intuitive mastery of architects to create beauty by the

element of logics through the definition where this beauty comes from and how it arises. However, this logic is founded in fiction; in the reconstruction of a building, which never really was as laid down in his *Explanationes*. For example: as Alain Balfour explicates in "Solomon's Temple: Myth, Conflict, and Faith" [9], in his case and also in the case of Fischer von Erlach's interpretation of it, the reflection of intentions resulted in a massive demonstration of power to reconcile the manifold approaches of Renaissance to a singular track to root them back to a common origin.

9 Balfour (2012), pp. 203.

The projections from this virtual model to realistic renderings created a framework that began to grow inwards: which means that complexity and density, especially information density, are increasing the smaller the surveyed entity becomes. [10] The model of the Renaissance, which was the means of solving geometric conflicts between principal spatial objects was now a virtual model, which shifted to the level of fiction by realism to investigate the conflicts of an underlying logic.

10 This can be deemed to be the starting point of the Baroque fold. (A.N.)

Villalpando pushed the limits and yet found them anew: no matter how realistic the result will be, it will always be a projection of available data and the reflection of the author's intentions.

Related Ressources

- Alberti, L. B. The Architecture of Leon Batista Alberti in Ten Books, 1755, London, Edward Owen
- Balfour, A. Solomon's Temple: Myth, Conflict, and Faith, 2012, Chichester, John Wiley & Sons
- Fischer von Erlach, J. B. Entwurff einer historischen Architectur, 1721, Vienna
- Morrison, T. Juan Bautista Villalpando's Ezechielem Explanationes, 2009, Lewiston, Edwin Mellen Press
- Villalpando, J. In Ezechielem explanationes et apparatus urbis, ac templi Hierosolymitani: commentariis et imaginibus illustratus, 1596 – 1605, Rome
- Enciclopedia dell'arte antica classica e orientale, 1959, Rome, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana

Dennis Lagemann is a Doctoral Candidate in Architecture. He holds a Diploma of Engineering in Architecture and a Master's degree of Science in Architecture. He conducted additional studies in Philosophy and Mathematics at the Department of Arts & Design in Wuppertal and at ETH, Zuerich. He was teaching CAD- and FEM-systems, worked as a teaching assistant in Urban Design and Constructive Design until 2013. On the practical side, he worked for Bernd Kniess Architekten on multiple housing and exhibition projects in Cologne, Duesseldorf and Berlin. In his research activities, Dennis was a member of PEM-Research-Group at the Chair of Structural Design at the University of Wuppertal, where he became a Doctoral Candidate in Computational Design. In 2015, he gave talks at several conferences, including ACADIA and ArchTheo. He is now located in Zuerich at ETH / ITA / CAAD, focused on finishing his PhD. His main research interest lies on the question how space is being conceptualized in Architecture, regarding historical and contemporary notions of space, time and information.

Peter Eisenman's *Chimera*

Andri Gerber

"There are no descriptions in fiction, there are only constructions…." [1]
William H. Gass, 1970

1 Gass, William H., Fiction and the Figures of Life, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970, S. 17.

2 Gerber, Andri, „A life less ordinary", in: AA files 71, 2015, S. 574-581; „Independent or Bureaucratic? The Early Career Choice of an Architect at the Turn of the Twentieth Century in Germany, France and England", in: Footprint 7, 2015, Volume 9, N.2, S. 47-67.

3 Tafuri, Manfredo, Teorie e Storia dell'architettura, Bari: Laterza, 1968.

Architecture's discourse has been scattered with fictions, mainly aimed at eclipsing the ineffectivity of architecture vis a vis a general public. The irrelevance of the discipline in the shaping of our environment, compared to the amount of built volume by developers or investors, has always been striking and at odds with the grand narrative of architects themselves and their history, made up of heroes and outstanding buildings. One example might suffice to substantiate this dystopic vision of the discipline: in its construction of the myth of the independent and creative architect, architectural history has successfully suppressed the fact, that until the second world war, in particular in Germany and France, most architects were bureaucrats, working for administrations (yet striving to free themselves from this bureaucratic bonds). [2] Fictions that tend to elide the reality of the profession, continue to haunt architecture, both on the meta-level of history and theory and inside the narratives architects produce themselves. Such fictions are mainly sustained by architectural faculties and by architectural magazines, be it by the retreat into the autonomy of architecture, or by the opening of the discipline into fields and disciplines outside of architecture. Manfredo Tafuri had once characterized this merry-go round, that periodically and alternating engages architecture, as "sphere and labyrinth". [3] Autonomy is such a fiction, because architecture can never be autonomous from the political, economical or technical context that sustains it, yet autonomy allows for an ideological suspension from these influences. The opening of the discipline also functions as a fiction, as it engages with everything, except with architecture itself.

While nowadays "Anthropocene" and "global south" are indispensable buzzwords for every serious architect/theoretician/curator, twenty years ago nobody would even remotely consider such subjects, lost into speculations about Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze and playing with Maya or 3D Max. At the time, these philosophical speculations reached such a magnitude, that one wished sometimes what Woody Allen put in scene in his 1977 film *Annie Hall*: While waiting in the queue for a movie and being bothered by a guy behind him in the waiting line, explaining the theory of Marshall McLuhan to his girlfriend, and pretending to give a seminar on the topic at Columbia, Allen in a magnificent *coup de théâtre* had the real Marshall McLuhan come out from an angle and tell the "want to be professor" of media theory, that he had no clue on the subject.

Twenty years ago, architectural discourse was sustained by philosophy, text-theory or structuralism in a splendid crescendo of complexity. One architect in particular was then at the edge of discourse: American architect Peter Eisenman. He was known rather for his highly complex texts and elaborated drawings and diagrams, than for his built architectural oeuvre, often not standing the test of time. Eisenman's theoretical reflections accompanied almost 50 years of development in philosophy and textual theory, from Ferdinand De Saussure to Roland Barthes, from Jacques Lacan to Michel Foucault and from Jacques Derrida to Gilles Deleuze. And if there was an architect who believed he understood Derrida, it was definitively Eisenman. Eisenman's aim was not only to understand these references in all their complexity, but through a concurrent work on text and project, to translate the philosophical preoccupations of his time – in the sense of a *Zeitgeist* – in built or unbuilt architectural projects. Yet, as he sometimes admitted, he never succeeded in doing so. As he said once: "What I am searching for is a way to turn deconstruction from a mode of analysis into one of synthesis. I ask myself, 'How does one turn Jacques Derrida into a synthesizer?'" [4]

Emblematic of this failure was his collaboration with Jacques Derrida on the *Villette* Project in Paris 1986 – they had been brought together by Bernard Tschumi – which resulted in the exchange of reciprocal accusations: Derrida would blame Eisenman for not having a clue of his philosophy and Eisenman would blame Derrida of having an extremely conservative view of architecture. Yet their fruitless collaboration had a very interesting by-product, the book *Chora L Works*, based on the discussions between the two of them, edited by Eisenman's collaborator Thomas Leeser and Eisenman's philosophical side-kick Jeff Kipnis. The book reflected radical literary experiments such as *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* (1897) or the unachieved *Le Livre* by Stéphane Mallarmé: it starts in the middle, trying to avoid traditional forms of hierarchy and is pierced by two different sets of holes that make the book basically unreadable.

Eisenman's work was thus sustained by his interest in philosophy and literature and by his strive to translate these influences into architecture, yet even though in his theoretical work he seemed obsessed by the former, it was the latter that really sustained his design. Even though he would seldom mention postmodern authors of fiction such as William Gaddis, John Barth, William Gass or Thomas Pynchon, these played a far more larger role when it came to establish a method of design. By focussing in his discourse on Derrida rather than on Pynchon, he consciously established a fiction about his own work and about the references that influenced him.

In my opinion, he did so for two reasons: first, because at the time Derrida was "hipper" than Pynchon and second, because Eisenman – as I will try to show in what follows – translated, in an extremely concrete way, techniques of writing from literature into techniques of design, a fact he was not willing to admit. He prefered to leave a veil of uncertainty over his work, instead of overtly declaring his methods, what would have brought him too close to a modernist position. Asked by the author about how consciously he would overlook such a reference, he answered with his usual irony: "[...] am I consciously unconscious, am I conscious in being unconscious? Yes, of course I am [...]." [5]

Gaddis, Barth, Gass and Pynchon, among others, were authors who, with regard to the failure of modernist literature to depict reality – what ended in the labyrinthine complexity of John Dos Passos or James Joyce – decided to explicitly create fictional worlds, that the reader would recognize as such. The construction of new worlds instead of the description of existing ones, was also a consequence of the structuralist intuition, that the world was a construction and thus their interest in ,manifesting such a construction in overtly fictional worlds. The resulting literature was based on the crossing of boundaries between disciplines and genres

4 Eisenman, Peter, Derrida, Jacques, Chora L Works, New York: The Monacelly Press, 1997, S. 8.

5 Peter Eisenman, Interview with Andri Gerber, in: Gerber, Andri, Theorie der Städtebaumetaphern. Peter Eisenman und die Stadt als Text, Zürich: Chronos, 2012, S. 370.

and as such, was labeled for example as "Fictiosophy" by William Gass or "Paraliterary" by Rosalind Krauss. In order to do so they would adopt a strongly self referential tone, explicitly discussing the construction of their text, with an often ironical tone, particularly towards the author as god-like creator and they would develop specific literary methods, which they used in their books and novels. These can be mainly identified as the metaphorical confrontation of opposites, the Mobius-like structure of their narrative, apparently without beginning or end, and the parody of detective novels, where clues were disseminated in the text announcing a solution that would never take place. These methods or strategies can be easily retraced in most of the novels of the authors mentioned above. The books of Pynchon in particular were masterly built upon these, with the aim of frustrating and alienating his reader, who is constantly holding up some structures and some clues, yet to discover that these are only there to throw him off the scent. The reader would have to interact with these texts and he should give up the search for an ultimate sense, instead experience the reading as a kind of "pleasure of the text" – to paraphrase Roland Barthes. [6]

6 Barthes, Roland, Le plaisir du texte, Paris: Éditions du seuil, 1972

If we come back to Eisenman, it is striking to retrieve exactly the same methods in his projects, particularly in those of the 1980s. If we take a project like *Cannareggio West* in Venice from 1978, we a have grid that is deformed, a ground that is folded in a mobius-like manner and the insertion of a house from a former project of Eisenman, that is scaled three times to become a museum, a house and a grave. The grid was taken from the unrealized project for an hospital in Venice by Le Corbusier (1964), it was extended and deformed. The same way as Pynchon would subvert the rationality of the detective novel, Eisenman would relativize the rationality of the grid. There is only one flaw in this operation: the original grid by Le Corbusier had an exception and was not regular, a fact Eisenman consciously ignored as he rectified it. He needed to have a totally homogeneous grid to transform. In order to criticize the rationality of modernism *via* grid, Eisenman would not stop at making Le Corbusiers' grid more modern. This deformation of the grid corresponds to the deformation of the detective novel – both *topoi* of modernist architecture and literature.

The superposition of the self-referencing houses on a Mobius-like folded ground corresponds to the metaphorical entanglement of opposites and to create a seemingly endless space.

The goal of Eisenman was to realize what he called a "textual architecture" – yet referring to Barthes or Foucault and not to Pynchon or Gass. While he even gave seminars on Pynchon and he had a collaboration with William Gass who wrote a piece on his House VI, which resulted in a never published book, these seminal experiences find almost no mention in his immense written oeuvre. Yet in all the projects Eisenman developed in these years we can find similar methods adapted to architecture, which maintain the idea that the act of design can be compared to the act of writing and sustaining our hypothesis.

Unlike many architects of the time who remained in the realm of fiction, Eisenman here tried to *realize* a fiction, by translating methods and not forms from literature to architecture. The case of Eisenman is thus particularly interesting because while sustaining another fiction – the translation of Derrida or Deleuze into his architecture –, he simultaneously attempted to translate a literary fiction into the reality of his projects. The boundary between reality and fiction thus becomes blurred – to use one of his favourite terms. As is well known, Peter Eisenman did not build many project and those realised often failed the test of time: House II in Vermont was saved by its last owner, who ironically added himself a garage in "Eisenman style", the *Wexner Center* had to be closed for three years, ten years after completion, to be refitted, the lecture halls of the *Cincinnati school of architecture* were leaking after some

students played golf on the roof, his building for the *Nunotani* corporation was one of the most expensive building in terms of cost/m^2 that was ever built in Japan – and the building was subsequently demolished after the bankruptcy of the firm, and finally his masterpiece, the *Ciudad de Cultura* in Galicia that was never finished, remaining a ruin with the cladding of the enormous façade falling to pieces, supposedly because of a mistake of the contractor, who is still working on its replacement in a process similar to Tantalus' torment.

Peter Eisenman came close to realising *fictions* with his oeuvre, inspired by the *fictions* of literary authors such as Pynchon, Barth or Gass yet to the cost of failure and ruin, which he seemingly accepted as endemic to his approach. To remain in the realm of fiction, we could name Eisenman's approach a *Chimera*, originally in greek mythology a hybrid made of a goat, a lion and a snake, today the term stands for that which is impossible and which is unattainable. It was also the title of a book by John Barth, published in 1972, where the author starting from three conventional plots, transformed them and gave them a new content. Interesting is how in the three stories John Barth himself appears and how the heroes of the stories wish to rewrite their history, to a point where it is not anymore clear who is the author and if there can be one at all. In a similar manner, Eisenman do not only explicitly appears in his projects, these are designed in a way to reflect their making and their making of other spaces. His work represents a fantastic investigation on the borders and threshold of the discipline and on the possibility of an indifference between reality and fiction but also an attempt to overcome by metaphorical interpretation of architecture as text and architectural design as writing. The question remains, whether he was consciously unconscious or unconsciously conscious in doing so.

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Piranesi, Movement, Fantasmal Invention

Clemens C. Finkelstein

1 Plato, Phaedrus, 275 d–e, ed. C. J. Rowe, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Socrates: You know, Phaedrus, there is a strange thing about writing which makes it analogous to painting. The painter's products stand before us as though they were alive: but if you question them, they maintain a most majestic silence. It is the same with written words: they seem to talk to you as though they have something in mind but if you ask them anything about what they say, from a desire to be instructed, they go on telling you just the same thing for ever. [1]

2 Mitchell, W. J. T., 1986, Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 39.

Prologue

Movement, in Giovanni Battista Piranesi's drawings, appears as a well-constructed dramaturgy of the hidden, the obscured, the unknown, or the back and forth of a before and after, of a moment retained in pen and ink. The construction and deconstruction of architectural structures and lucid fantasies simultaneously emanate from the etched lines, striations, and vibrations, that – frozen in time – exist as potentialities of forces unraveling and expanding from the two-dimensionality of the papyraceous surface in undulating pressure. An assemblage of directionality combines with layers of movement – time and space – synthesizing as a static image, which defies its very definition as such. By approaching one of the architect's etchings and scenographic works in a closer inspection of the performance of forces depicted, the following examines the inventive impetus of pitting reality against fiction, or vice versa, stretching the potential of time-based perception beyond the constraints of either dimensional manifestation. Setting out to go through two key movements that crystallize in Piranesi, this excerpt delves into the operations and visual syntax that reminds us that "we can never understand a picture unless we grasp the ways in which it shows what cannot be seen." [2]

Movement, in the way this paper is shaped, becomes structurally analogous to the characteristics it embodies in musical composition. Here, kindred to its more fitting German translation as *Satz*, movement is constructed as a sentence: words, meanings, and ideas sequentially linked together to make sense. Various movements, each with their very unique content and quality – tempo, directionality, semantic and grammatical pattern – perform jointly to recite a total history and stretch the limits of fiction and reality as malleable mutation. Entering an analytical reading of one of Piranesi's "imaginary architectural compositions" of the late 1740s, the initial operation, here, will unravel as *abduction* – a movement that strays away from the center – homing in on the temporal aspect constructed in Piranesi's compositions. A subsequent turn to the

movement of *adduction* – directed toward the center – will fold back the core and essence of the architectural narrative into a creative dynamism that anchors Piranesi in an intermediary state between reality and fiction, at the potential-laden moment where a dissolution of substance becomes possible. Here, the generative bivalence of image and text, Piranesi's fruitful navigation of both to prepare the ground for his dramatic projection of architectural hypotheses, will join in the syntactic construction – from an outward directionality to an inward folding to an unceasing negotiation of the visible/invisible.

[Movement A: Abduction] – The wor(l)ds of artifact

What is real is the continual change of form: form is only a snapshot view of a transition. [3]

3 Henri Bergson. "The Cinematographical Mechanism of Thought and the Mechanistic Illusion – A Glance at the History of Systems – Real Becoming and False Evolutionism", Chapter 4 in Creative Evolution, translated by Arthur Mitchell, Ph.D. New York: Henry Holt and Company (1911): 272 – 370 (301).

Floating in an oscillation between foreground and background, dark lines erect what might be thought of as a mausoleum or a palace that protrudes in cross-like extension from a core that poses as the entrance to the architectural structure, complete with two converging flights of stairs, forming a pyramidal shape with the convex balustrade at its base. Embellished by a group of three sculptures and a heavily ornamented surface structured by four hemicycles that push the mezzanine gallery upwards and outwards from the flatness of the medium in the direction of the viewer, the architectural structure in ebony-brunet ink sits on top of a chromatically less intense, ephemeral layer of red chalk. Sketch-like, in fast and deliberate strokes, the nether layer stacks space through superimpositions of movement in fluctuating fervor. A dramatic scene articulates in front of our eyes. Presence accumulates in the palpable substance of the monumental palace, which is lined by two rounded protrusions raised on tall Corinthian columns with heavily ornamented cupolas: frieze, vases, moldings, sculptural

figurines, and drop-like medallions that hang from the architrave, dangling in between pairs of fluted columns.

Two groups with anthropomorphic outlines allow for the dimension of the surrounding architecture to be fathomed in its magnificence, while at the same time paling in comparison to the numerous sculptures at the base of the mausoleum and spread throughout the surrounding landscape. Interesting in this quixotic composition is the elemental use of a classical ruin as archetypal foundation. A structure of three or four Doric columns, complete with entablature on which the crowning temple structure (and the concomitant sarcophagus) is planned to be erected, becomes evident through the faint chalk outlines of further columns and the accompanying cupola that sit perfectly on top the antique artifact. Growing upwards, gaining in depth, portrayed in point of view from an anterior positioned courtyard as stage, the central architecture sits like a pearl encased by a faint backdrop of flat painterly allusions to buildings that come across virtually abstract in their simplicity and immateriality. Enhancing the elevation of this monumental neoclassicist fantasy, the supporting structures in the background not only remain as such, yet act as a foundation for the construction of the ethereal palace.

Dark ink covering the fading red chalk outlines in an additive procedure lends the impression that the building-materials increase in mass according to the temporal characteristic of a development in lieu of architectural construction. This upward and forward movement, from the two-dimensional plane of the paper-medium to a three-dimensional appearance, is most prominent in the towering obelisk that dominates the center-right of the scene. Here, animated from the flatness of the bottom shaft that is losing its distinct outline in the midst of other similarly shallow forms reminiscent of sepulchral design, the obelisk is raised into objecthood with vertical strokes of amber ink, culminating in the chromatically emphasized rectangular prism that crowns the arcane monolith.

As *abduction*, this movement, traversing from the center outwards, dominates Piranesi's architectural composition and is mirrored throughout the image by diverse architectural and sculptural elements such as the spiral-like ascending staircase on the bottom left, which flows from the middle in a curve back to the central gallery. Indicative of clouds and an overarching sky, wavy and curvilinear traces of red chalk hover in and between the architectural fabric, additionally lending movement rooted in nature ("growth") to the composition, which is meant to gain a representative violence and power through these metaphorical elements. Dancing figurines on the right side of the scene furthermore underline the celebratory "birth" of this chimerically utopian *Luftschloss* (cloud-castle), celebrating the performativity of the human body and demonstrating the interplay between the individual and the architecture they dream up, construct, inhabit, and dwell in.

Taking full advantage of the width and height of the surface, Piranesi nearly fills the entire paper, the foundational material itself becoming an additional element and layer in the creation of perspectival difference and depth for the artist, a supplementary frame. Evoking the phantom smell of cheap plaster and *papier-mâché* lingering in the air, the theatrical backdrop that supports the scene unveils the fakeness of what is portrayed. One cannot help but tie this scenographic design to Piranesi's talent for dramatic structures, which he ingeniously constructs as architectural "truth" though the temporal characteristic of movement and the birth of grandeur rooted in classical architectural ruins instrumentalized as the centerpiece for his composition.

Piranesi arranges and disperses, combines and distorts his artifacts in these, as Manfredo Tafuri put it, "organisms that pretend to have a centrality but that never achieve one." [4] Perspectival multitude and ambivalence, which, as the Italian historian of architecture further remarked, dates back as far as Piranesi's compositions for the *Prima parte di Architetture e Prospettive* (1743), are utilized consciously to further emphasize movement and a narrative progression in his designs. Tafuri marked this scenographic tool set down to "not merely a set designer's whim, but rather a systematic criticism of the concept of 'center.'" [5] However, by reducing Piranesi's approach to a criticism of center dismisses too easily the autonomous, ontogenetic essence imbued in his etchings, a scripted progression that becomes most experiential in his fantastically inventive etchings and drawings – something that sways between reality and fiction to exceed the limiting conditions of either.

In his world of artifacts, Piranesi's predilection for archeology, resultant of his decade-long excavations in and around Rome, becomes apparent. Piranesi, who earned an international reputation and an honorary fellowship at the Society of Antiquaries of London following his four volumes of *Le Antichità Romane* (1756-57), freely moves from historical implementation to an imaginary creation, most vividly mirrored in the theatrical composition described above. The creation of something new, something fantastic in Piranesi is deeply reliant on an assemblage of elements taken from architecture's classical origin. However, the translation and appropriation of architectural elements into novel forms of creation here goes contrary to what the former Jesuit priest-cum-art-and-architectural-historian Marc-Antoine Laugier in his canonical *Essai sur l'architecture* (1753) describes as "imitation" in the sense of a non-reflective engagement with the "perfection" of a classical Greek architecture rooted in nature. [6] In his extremely eclectic approach to montage, Piranesi rather echoes a poetic engagement with origins. His dramatic movement comes in some way close to what Giambattista Vico, one of Italy's greatest Enlightenment thinkers, in his seminal work *The First New Science* (1725), similarly described as "intelligent substance":

> *When men want to create ideas of things of which they are ignorant, they are naturally led to conceive them through resemblances with things*

4 Manfredo Tafuri, The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1987), 27.

5 Ibid.

6 See Marc-Antoine Laugier, An Essay on Architecture, trans. Wolfgang and Anni Herrmann (Hennessy & Ingalls, 2009), 115.

that they know. And when there is a scarcity of known things, they judge the things of which they are ignorant in accordance with their own nature. Hence, since the nature that we know best consists in our own properties, men attribute to things that are insensate and inanimate, movement, sense and reason, which are the most luminous labours of poetry. But when even these properties are of no assistance, they conceive things as intelligent substances, which is our own human substance. This is the supreme, divine artifice of the poetic faculty, through which, in a God-like manner, from our own idea we give being to things that lack it.[7]

Vico, though referring rather to an origin of (Greek) poetry and the form of the fable than architecture per se, clearly resonates with the Piranesian approach to "giving being to things that lack it" through the attribution of "movement, sense and reason" in his representational work. Archeology and architecture – similar to image/text or reality/fiction – become different sides of the same coin here regarding the imaginative properties of Piranesi's architectural structures and their scripted limits; productive in that one turns subject of the other through time, which then in turn becomes subject of the first again.

The notion of "ruin" becomes crucial when unravelling this Piranesian complex, transcending a pure nostalgia over lost origins and an acknowledgement of finitude in regards to form. Both in Vico and Piranesi, confirms architectural historian Erika Naginski, "[th]ey take the things we remember to be fundamentally constructive and hinged in some essential way to making – making form, making sense of history (…) as double coded things, that is, as mechanisms for remembering as well as for imagining."[8] Archeology and architecture are thus intricately linked in a porous structure made up of truth and myth in equal measures. Naginski brings this to the point most decisively:

There is no definitive answer to such an open-ended question, but some preliminary responses can be formulated. The opposed epistemological tendencies: the purported objectivity of archeology is signposted just as prominently as the exaggerations of an invented architecture; faithful of observation and an evocation of what exists share page space with imagination and complete fabrication; truth and myth stand side by side, and even, one might propose, crucially depend on each other's formal mechanisms.[9]

Extant as composite, being and becoming, the ruin as artifact plays a crucial role as actuator in Piranesi. "The ruin," as Naginski states, "and the transmutation of form it implies might emerge as dynamic element whose composite aspect performs for its viewer the very nature of things seems to be central to Piranesi's sense of what ruins do."[10] The existence of ruins, their state of "being" after the fact of "completion," allows us to further tie this potential into Piranesi's fondness for the derelict classical edifice as "new" building block for his innovative conceptions. Ruins, both as concept and materialization, embody the Piranesian believe that in order to achieve architectural greatness, the architect has to eclipse pure imitation of form – in regard to cultural origins and opposed to firm held beliefs by contemporaries like Le Roy, Laugier, and Winckelmann – and literally build (future) ruins with ruins, perpetuating the amaranthine movement transforming fiction into reality into fiction.

[Movement B: Adduction] – Folding Image and Text

I will not repeat to you what you are observing close at hand.[11]

Piranesi's projective architecture needs movement. As procedural instrument and action, it is fueled by the

7 Giambattista Vico / Leon Pompa, Vico: The First New Science (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 151.

8 Erika Naginski, "Preliminary Thoughts on Piranesi and Vico," in Donald Kunze, Charles Bertolini, Simone Brott, eds., Architecture Post Mortem: The Diastolic Architecture of Decline, Dystopia, and Death (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), 179-204 (197).

9 Ibid., 188.

10 Naginski (2013), 197.

11 Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Prima Parte di Architetture, e Prospettive (1743), translation cited in Dorothea Nyberg, Giovanni Battista Piranesi: Drawings and Etchings at Columbia University, exhib. cat. (New York, 1972), 117; as cited in Naginski (2013), 179.

bivalence of image and text, forming in his work through intricate montage, a movement of *adduction* that folds towards the center again the unraveling systematic of *abduction*. Analogous to rain drops that agglomerate and converge into a raving stream, movement – as strategy to project and mediate states of construction that exceed the replication of a present moment by embodying prior and posterior states – enables Piranesi to allude to certain imperceptible processes imbued in his compositions through a threefold Vichean poetic expression: "*movere* ['to stir up'], *agitare* ['to toss about'], *versare* ['to turn over']."[12] After all, the image, which in Piranesi certainly takes premier position in sheer extent, though greatly autonomous in conveying ideas and projecting theoretical discussions, has to be seen in didactic tandem with the architect's written commentaries and treatises on architecture. It is in the potent back and forth between image and text – literally bound together and folded into each other for greatest impact – that the architect manages to mediate with effective force his point of view.

The text-image relationship in Piranesi exists in multi-dimensional arrangements and manifesting marriages of convenience. Text is thus occasionally used as addendum to the authority of form and style mediated in the image; it becomes a tool of justification, instructive in how and what to read or interpret in the etchings and drawings. Or, as the relationship is turned around, the image becomes supportive of the text, explaining how certain assertions have been arrived at, becoming a further rhetorical tool in criticizing the texts and treatises of rival architects and theoreticians that find themselves under passionate attack by Piranesi.

Text, for Piranesi, is yet another way to express his disdain over Greco-centric definitions of architecture's cultural origins and to lend a voice to his own thoughts. Imagination as protractor for architectural exploration stands at the fore. Imagination, as Tafuri duly notes, assumes its "irreplaceable role (…) as an instrument of scientific progress, as a source of hypotheses not otherwise

formulable, [which] had been repeatedly recognized within the debates of the Enlightenment movement."[13] Suspended selves, imagination and action as combined movement [image/text – text/image], make an appearance as decoding of theoretical paradigms for an analysis of cultural origins. The bivalence of image and text in Piranesi only illuminates this position. Text and image, as their other's respective *modification* – an image to be read and a text constructing (mental) images – stand firm in potent relational progression to each other.

The *adductive* folding toward the center, toward an amalgamation of text and image, is achieved by Piranesi through the structural makeup of either of his media, inciting an iterative switching between both as mode of operation. *Modification* here must be seen as a structural change that refers to the sequential spiraling towards a point. Similarly, reminiscent of poststructuralists Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's abstract diagrammatical machine, Piranesi's organisms are rhizomatic in that they continuously build connections with different points along their trajectory, tracing and mapping in their movement. That this polemic agitation is characterized by an unhindered traversing of fictional and real elements has become clear in the above analysis of Piranesi's composition from the late 1740s. Instead of a veiled inclusion of fantastical parts or the conception of chimeric hybrids, the architect openly concocts a series of conjoined vistas that act as a narrative scaling: "real" human bodies exploring the winding protrusions of a virtual architectural leviathan that is poised to construct and deconstruct itself according to amendments to its source code – a daringly surreal scenario for architects today, where this twofold process of VR construction is becoming a reality.

Epilogue
The above twofold movements of *abduction* and *adduction* have provided a first attempt at unfurling the creases of the wicked architect's "dark brain" and his

12 Vico (2002), 184.

13 Tafuri (1987), 29-30.

14 See Margaret Yourcenar, "The Dark Brain of Piranesi," in The Dark Brain of Piranesi and Other Essays, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Farrar-Strauss-Giroux, 1984), 88-128.

vision for architectural structures that reflect its inner workings between fiction and reality.[14] Far from complete, this journey comes to a preliminary conclusion here with the notion of movement that finally strikes in one of its intransitive etymological meanings: "to affect with emotion" or "to prompt or impel toward some action" – voluntarily or involuntarily.

Piranesi's metaphorical hybrids – architecture/archeology, text/image, or fiction/reality – occupy a curious position in between functioning as symbol or allegory, as something that Walter Benjamin in his *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (1928) accurately observed as "the one [the symbol] as a sign for ideas, which is self-contained, concentrated, and which steadfastly remains itself, while recognizing the other [allegory] as a successively progressing, dramatically mobile, dynamic representation of ideas which has acquired the very fluidity of time."[15] In this vein, the architect occasionally perforates the bivalence of image and text, fiction and reality as separate – yet relational – entities by means of a picturesque puzzle that moves its audience to actively dissect and construct his worlds of archi-facts. Contrary to the Platonic believe that written words only "go on telling you just the same thing forever," Piranesi's scripts depend on the agency of their readers and bear a near infinite capacity to stretch out the limits of fiction in architecture by enlisting the power of fantasmal invention present in all of us.

15 Walter Benjamin, The Origin of German Tragic Drama (Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels, 1928), trans. John Osborne (London: New Left Books, 1985), 43.

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Real Estate Poetry

Marija Marić

First-of-its-kind, not isolated, distinct, open, tranquil, public, new, cultural, historic, right, total, spectacular, new, world-class, the biggest, premium, cultural, educational, modern, wide, exclusive, residential, commercial, striking, the highest, residential, long, new, regional, retail, first, cultural, iconic, monumental, master-planned, under-utilised, long, new, central, world-class, Grand, retail, the must-visit, extensive, green, lively, international, major, landscaped, green, sheltered, existing, public, historic, Georgian, green, old, high, elevated, dramatic, spectacular, exclusive, new, regional, long, cultural, artistic, iconic, the highest, residential, prime, the first, residential, electrifying, full, exclusive, the latest, high, five-star, branded, gross, recreational, special, public, public, signature-, public, interactive, family-oriented, high, stylish, luxurious, branded, residential, gross, recreational, all-day, state-of-the-art, glamorous, ultra-modern, residential, new, residential, smaller, younger, medium, large, urban, branded, the world's most prestigious, the first, residential, prime, historic, urban, dense, urban, new, dynamic, striking, the highest, residential, high-end, prime, the first, residential, exclusive, residential, architectural, prime, adjacent, close, long, world-class, strong, renowned, touristic, the most sought-after, main, changing, public, high, five-star, branded, recreational, public, landscaped, unique, open, different, cultural, high, luxurious, branded, residential, recreational, early, key, the largest, regional, European, further, existing, palatial, the best, international, local, residential, truly urban, mixed-use, hybrid, lively, architectural, relaxing, green, optimal, visible, exclusive, retail, gross, sufficient. [1]

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Maison Dom-Ino – In Inconsistencies Dwells The Myth

Giulio Angelini

1 Pier Vittorio Aureli during the Symposium called The Dom-ino Effect at the AA School of Architecture, March 5, 2014. Source: youtube

A little more than a century ago, at the beginning of World War I, a very young Le Corbusier developed a new building system, whose goal was the rapid reconstruction of Belgian and French towns destroyed by the fights. It was named Dom-Ino, a compound word formed by *domus* (lat. house) and *innovation* (French). The name could also be interpreted as an innuendo to the game of domino: it was played with units long twice their width which could then be connected accordingly to specific rules.

Each Dom-Ino was a standardized, two-storey house made up of concrete slabs lying on columns and granted with a staircase. That was it: no walls, no rooms, just a skeleton. It was an open system to be completed by residents themselves. In fact it could be assembled by non-professional workers and it would be self-organized with walls and other architectural components from local resellers.

Although this project never found the interest of a client, it represented a breakthrough in the History of Architecture: a revolution. And, in order to transmit successfully the fundamental changes it was proposing, it needed a manifesto. Its declaration of intent, nonetheless, does not consist of construction drawings nor any clear practical instruction about the building process. There is no plan, neither a proper estimate about

any aspect of it, not even a single reference to the material of choice: concrete. There is just an idea, some sketches and among them a nice, almost naive, perspective drawing clearly inspired by the car industry's advertisements typical at the time. History made this sketch a mythological icon for architects and, as Pier Vittorio Aureli defined it, "an ever-present ghost in the contemporary city." [1]

Nevertheless a deeper analysis brings to light that this majestic silhouette, which has been haunting architecture for over a century, embodies a sum of intentions, managing to strength over its inconsistencies, which appear to belong to a level either *technical*, *compositional* or *architectural*.

The first of them includes details showing how the apparent simplicity of the Dom-Ino was actually very difficult to achieve. Although aesthetically the result is extremely powerful, since it appears to free itself from the bonds of gravity and technical constraints, on a technical level its putting in place look hardly possible: the pillars being too slender, the slabs too difficult to be built from prefabricated elements and the lever of the stairs way longer than feasible.

It should come as no surprise that Le Corbusier at the time suffered the lack of encouragement from Max Dubois, the engineer he was working with, who was

2 Tim Benson during the Symposium called The Dom-ino Effect at the AA School of Architecture, March 5, 2014. Source: youtube

strongly reluctant to support this idea, as he found it not interesting and prohibitive to carry it out just as Le Corbusier had conceived it.

The second inconsistency mainly regards the chain system, id est how the houses were supposed to be joined together. As illustrated in the drawing, the Dom-Ino is an independent unit that could not really be easily combined in a system end to end, despite what the name implies. Evidence of its intrinsic lonely nature can be found on multiple levels: what could one possibly do with the few centimeters left between the extreme columns and the edge of the slabbed storey? Doubling the pillar would sound pretty ridiculous. Not to mention the role of the staircase: are they within the single Dom-Ino or are they in between two of them? No matter what, the staircase forces the Dom-Ino into a singular unit, dysfunctional in sets.

In order to find an convincing evidence of a joining will, we may have to look up to the right top corner of the sketch: that little cut in the slabs could be our lucky guess. Unfortunately, it may not really constitute a functional architectural solution, but rather a winking "Fordist" symbol of extendibility.

The architectural expression conveyed by the representation could well be what the third level of inconsistency bears at its core. What emerges from the perspective is the intent to substitute load-bearing walls from being enactors of space, replacing them with columns and ultimately setting architecture free from the picky expectations of an assigned program. However, as proved from other sketches of the time, Le Corbusier's vision was still far from the elaboration of a *free space*. A sign of that is the shape of the columns. They are squared in order to sit the walls: the transformation to *pilotis* would happen few years later. Moreover, since walls and façades were actually planned, the elements present in the perspective *were meant* to be invisible: what is shown to us is an x-ray scan of the actual project. An utterly unreal point of view.

So how could we possibly interpret these three layers of dust upon this historic drawing? Tim Benson defined it "an entire legible aporia," [2] whose contradictions add intensity to the message instead of taking it away. He states that the contradictory peculiarity of its information is the reason for which this drawing has been so prone to misuse and misunderstanding.

It seems that Benson's *aporia* reflects the same point hinted at by the *inconsistencies*, and still the dust remains.

But is still fair to wonder: what would have Dom-Ino become in the universe of architecture if it had to withstand the trial of its construction?

It probably would not have had this much influence on the future generations: the lack of a client maybe was its greatest fortune, giving it the chance to lead the way. This is how the Dom-Ino system became, clearly, an example of fiction turning into a driving force for the author's work as well as for Architecture as a whole. Such a conceptually powerful idea that we are still using that simple drawing to describe something that is even more contemporary than what Le Corbusier could have ever imagined while tracing those lines.

In this icon we recognize an architecture capable to imagine, to fictionalize, to pursuit visions and not always interested in translating its ideas into the language of precise reality. An Architecture that is just as fictional as any other form of *media*, regardless of the fact that its consequences might be real.

Epilogue

A subtle proof of this peculiar condition of architecture is the experience of Valentin Bontjes van Beek, who built a 1:1 transportable model of the Maison Dom-Ino for the 14th Biennale in Venice. His goal was to give immanent form to the transcendent sketch, and, after an accurate examination, he faced the technical difficulties concealed within the simplicity of the drawing.

"We could reconstruct, as closely as possible in plan and elevation, what the Dom-Ino would look like," he said, ending the construction.

Marvellous: did Fiction eventually live up to the cumbersome nature of devil's details?

3 Valentin Bontjes van Beek. "Building an unbuilt icon.", Manijeh Verghese. AA conversations. Source: conversations.aaschool

"Which, to our surprise, did not really resemble the perspective" he finished.

Not quite. [3]

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Self-doubting intellectuals and primitive alter-egos – The life and times of Zorba and Rodakis in the island of Aegina, Greece

Nikos Magouliotis

It would be better for man / to be a cold stone / than to have thought / and reason and measure. I learned to live. αχ-1891-βαχ. [1]

To hell with the papers and pens! To hell with the good and useful. [2]

1 A poem inscribed by Rodakis on one of the walls of his house in Aegina.

2 Zorba's exclamation to author Nikos Kazantzakis, as the latter finally dances at the finale of the homonymous novel.

Fascination about the absence of the trained professional or the intellectual has been a recurring symptom of certain branches of theory, within and beyond architecture. It manifests itself in historical instances where radical changes in cultural, financial and technical conditions force architects and other professions to redefine their place in society and production. Usually, it emerges as a self-critical dialectic opposite of the intellectual discourse, a counter-weight to its excessive dogmatism and rationality through 'common sense' or 'primitive wisdom'. The two most famous examples of this in the early 20th century Greek context are the 'noble savage' figures of Rodakis and Zorba. Although the former overshadowed the latter, they were both "born" around the same time and within the same geographical region, the island of Aegina, in the Saronic gulf, only a few miles from Athens. Rodakis and Zorba constitute seminal examples of folk heroes, because their successive portrayals by different authors embodied two sets of anti-

thetical notions that were crucial to the discourse on the vernacular and the primitive: Firstly, they were both real (actual people whose lives and works were documented in partial accuracy) and fictional (idealized and mythologized for the use of artistic production). Secondly, they were simultaneously typical (indicative examples of an entire people) and exceptional (unique enough to formulate individual cases).

I

Alexandros Rodakis, a farmer who had built his own house in the village of Mesagros was initially discovered in the early 1900s by German archaeologist Adolf Furtwängler, who was excavating the nearby ancient temple of Aphaia. But he was later popularized in the Greek intellectual milieu by architect Dimitris Pikionis, one of the main advocates of the importance of the vernacular in the inter-war period. Pikionis visited Rodakis in the early 1910s, made drawings of the house and its intricate details and decorations and encouraged his students to visit and study it. Eventually, in 1934 two of his disciples, Julio Kaimi and Klaus Vrieslander published a book titled "The house of Rodakis in Aegina", which was the cornerstone to the myth of this noble savage. In the text, Rodakis was presented as the absolute "other" of modernist architects: He possessed an empirical wisdom, a

poetic attitude towards the ordinary and an individualist spirit of expression; his house was considered to achieve an ideal balance between rational and irrational or typical and peculiar and it was juxtaposed with and favored over the numerous urban modern buildings that trained professionals were designing at the time.

The house was described as an object infested with meaning: Every detail was seen as the crystallization of empirical wisdom, meticulous design and also personal expression. And yet the purely architectural description of the house occupies a rather limited part of the text. What seems to matter more for the authors is the persona of Rodakis, as it expressed through his work. But despite the mystifying praise and the references to his name, Rodakis appears to be somewhat absent from the text. In fact his authors had never met him, as he had died several years before they visited the house and they were merely interpreting an abandoned ruin. The hidden protagonist of the book is not the noble savage persona that lent its name to its title, but its authors; the modern intellectuals who encounter the work of a peasant and are lead through a process of rigid self-critique and re-evaluation of their theories.

A few years later and only a few kilometers from Rodakis, a similar persona was born in Aegina: In 1935, author and folk-enthusiast Nikos Kazantzakis moved to the island, seeking refuge from the political turbulences of Athens. The house that he built, designed by the prominent Athens-based Vasileios Douras, could be seen as an answer to the problems posed by Kaimi and Vrieslander in the aforementioned book: The small seaside residence made an effective combination of traditional and modern materials and forms, resulting in a hybrid of a typical vernacular house of Aegina and a modernist holiday retreat. Inside this particular house, around the late 1930s Kazantzakis would write his famous novel "The life and times of Alexis Zorbas", a semi-autobiographical recount of his encounter with the mythical figure of Zorba.

Although the book was written in and possibly influenced by a seminal piece of architecture, it is not particularly architectural. But it has several similarities to the previously mentioned book on Rodakis and, in fact, it makes the dialectic between the intellectual and the primitive man far more explicit: Although the plot includes the adventurous efforts of its two protagonists to set up a coal mine, together with several other tragicomic incidents, a large part of it is devoted to intense dialogues between Zorba and the narrator (who was a semi-autobiographical persona of Kazantzakis himself). In these long discussions, much like Rodakis, Zorba exhibits a fervent poetic and philosophical attitude about life that astonishes the author. Kazantzakis is gradually led to realize the irrelevance of his education and his intellectual work, and eventually looks to Zorba as an ideally opposite and almost unreachable model.

Again it is clear that, despite Zorba's name on the title, the disguised protagonist is the author who encounters him. The focus of the book on these dialogues (and not just the admirable works of a primitive man) makes another hidden aspect of this dialectic more apparent: The hidden drama seeking redemption is not the perishing tradition or the folkloric personas at the threshold of a modern era, but the emerging modern individuals that are realizing their inefficiency and are seeking a new place in society and a new matter-of-factness on which to reformulate their theoretical tools. The novel ends with a spectacular failure of the modernist project of the coal mine and the absurdity peaks with the redemption of the intellectual from his rationalism and his temporary transformation into his primitive alter-ego through dancing. Zorba's vindication is expressed by praises and simultaneous curses against "the papers and the pens" (as quoted at the start of the article), the symbols of Kazantzakis' intellectual status.

II

Over the years following the publication of the book,

the house of Rodakis, despite its ruinous state, became a place of pilgrimage for both local and international architects. Among the many that visited it was the then young student Georges Candilis, who later on published a fictionalized encounter with Rodakis himself (even though the former was already deceased). The dialogue between Candilis and Rodakis adopts a similar dialectic motif as the ones of Kazantzakis and Zorba: The young and curious intellectual asks questions to the old and wise peasant and the unexpectedly philosophical and poetic answers he receives make him re-assess his own values. This encounter is crucially placed in the beginning of the architect's autobiography and is described as a formative experience. Again, the balance between rational and irrational, and the surprising discovery of the latter as a balancing force to his formal education, are dominant features of the narrative.

Shortly after Candilis, Aldo Van Eyck was also charmed by Rodakis and his house: The cover of an exhibition of the architect's works, which took place in Athens in 1983 was adorned with the exclamation "αχ βαχ" (pronounced "ach vach", a popular expression of pain and anguish in the Greek language), which was taken from a poem that Rodakis had carved on one of the walls of his house. The poem (reproduced at the start of this article) is quoted in full in one of the pages of the book and Van Eyck declares that this is a tribute to both Rodakis and Pikionis who discovered him, but he also quotes Candilis' aforementioned recount. The architecture of the house (already blurry in Kaimi and Vrieslander's, but also Candilis' texts) is further dissolved and the building is eventually almost entirely replaced by the poem. The mythical persona of Rodakis is still present, but it is now diluted in its multiple readings by its intellectual admirers. Eventually, the peasant from Aegina had surpassed the local buzz generated by the Greek inter-war vernacular-enthusiasts and earned a place in the primitivist pantheon of Team X, beside the African tribe of the Dogons, who were similarly discovered and praised

by Van Eyck about two decades before.

Zorba enjoyed far broader fame than Rodakis, through the numerous translations of the book and its eventual adaptation in a film: "Zorba the Greek" (1964) was a movie produced in Greece and distributed worldwide by 20th Century Fox, which featured a cast of both local and international movies stars. The strong performance of Anthony Quinn gave a new dimension to the emblematic Zorba and the filming locations in picturesque villages around Chania in Crete (together with the numerous locals that were hired as extras) gave a stronger folkloristic texture to the story. But the elimination of the narrator's voice (and his numerous internal monologues expressing the intellectual's self-critical transformation) shifted the balance of the film on Zorba. The indulgent and mischievous peasant, in this case not as balanced by his skeptical opposite, dominates the film and gives it a far more comical overtone than the original book.

This change was perfectly fitting to the radically different conditions of the post-war era: Greece was recovering from about ten years of international and civil warfare and was gradually witnessing a tourism boom. The restructuring of the National Tourism Organization generated a campaign that aimed to promote Greece as a travel destination not only for its famous antiquities, but also for its bucolic, unspoiled landscapes and charming peasants. The admiration of primitivist and vernacularist intellectuals for the Greek countryside in the inter-war years has paved the way for a mainstream touristic exoticism. Evidently, Zorba's new cinematic version, separated from its original context, was very suitable for this new situation and was gradually elevated to a national stereotype of the indulgent and passionate Greek.

III

Despite their successive mutations, the intertwined myths of Rodakis and Zorba maintained the dialectic of the intellectual and the primitive, usually in praise

of the latter and as a critical tool for the former. The extensive discourse on the vernacular and the primitive, within and beyond architecture, has favored and occasionally fetishized the "absence" of the intellectual (be it an architect, a writer or a philosopher). But were Pikionis, Kaimi, Kazantzakis, Candilis, et.al. working fervently for their own annihilation? The answer is perhaps more complicated than a simple "no": All the aforementioned were certainly realizing the limits of their intellectual capacity and theories; they were unsatisfied with their bourgeois origins and they were searching for (or inventing) a new, more primitive ancestry. In essence, they were struggling for the redefinition of their role within society and hoping for their eventual dissolution in life and actuality.

Neither of the two books from which we started our analysis (or the numerous subsequent reprises of their stories and protagonists) could qualify as ethnographic documents, no matter how much they try to appear as such. They can mostly be understood as psychoanalytic or existential self-examinations of their authors: In both cases, the hidden protagonist is the intellectual in crisis (i.e. the author himself) and not the noble savage who dominates the plot and lends his name to the book. The emergence or invention of such unique hero-figures out of the great anonymous mass of the common folk is a theoretical device that allows the dialectic of the primitive and the intellectual to acquire the form of a literary and instructive dialogue. Moreover, none of the books expresses the nostalgia and lament for the loss of tradition that are common to folkloristic essays. In fact, they are essentially modernist texts: The issue at stake is not (or not solely) the extinction of wise primitives; the traditional past is not a long gone world or a distant object treated with historical detachment; it is modernity's ever-present and critically dialectic "other" and its way to understand and re-assess the future.

What we tried to describe here, through the examples of Rodakis and Zorba and their persisting presence in the cultural debates of the 20th century, is the peculiar relation between the "silent folk hero" and the "ventriloquist intellectual": the latter makes the former "say" what he dare not utter himself or the things that require some sort of external confirmation to be convincing. A common deception that stems from such theoretical constructs is that, through a supposed return to "real life" and "real people", subjective views and mystifying exaggerations are occasionally presented as matters of fact. This is often more intense within the architectural discourse on the vernacular and the primitive (in relation, for example, to similar discourses in more language-based disciplines): Vernacular buildings don't "speak" like the ones made by professional architects. Neither do their anonymous makers have any interest in explaining or writing about them. Consequently, the intellectuals who are fascinated with such buildings feel obliged to write these manifestos of the vernacular on behalf of the "ordinary people" that made them.

* The article is an extract from an ongoing research by the author on the late 19th and early 20th century architectural discourse on the Greek vernacular, dealing with Rodakis and Zorba, together with other case studies.

**The metaphor for the "silent folk hero" and the "ventriloquist intellectual" was borrowed and adapted from "The silent architect and the ventriloquist historians" (Ο σιωπηλός αρχιτέκτων και οι εγγαστρίμυθοι ιστορικοί), a lecture by architectural historian Stylianos Giamarelos (Athens, 19/12/2015).

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- Δ. Φιλιππίδης, Μεταξύ Λόγου, Κειμένου και Εικόνας (Between Word, Text

and Image). M. Φάις, Ένα λαϊκό σπίτι στην Αίγινα: συμπτώσεις και παράδοξα (A vernacular house in Aigina: coincidences and paradoxes)

- Π. Τουρνικιώτης, Τόπος-άτοπος: από τον Ροδάκη έως το Team 10. Η αρχιτεκτονική εκλογίκευση του πρωτόγονου ως μοντέρνου και ως κριτική του μοντέρνου (Place-non-place: From Rodakis to Team 10. The architectural rationalization of the primitive as modern and as critique to the modern), in Ιστορία της Τέχνης #6, 2017.

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Fiction as Space of Potential Becoming

Nicolò Zanatta

1 Aldo Rossi, A Scientific Autobiography, 1981, Cambridge, U.S.A., The MIT Press.

2 The group Nuove Tendenza lasted less than a year, from summer 1913 till spring 1914. Founded and headed by Ugo Nebbia, Gustavo Macchi and Decio Buffoni, a mixture of critics, artists and journalists, the group held some more moderate positions to the fellow newly born Futurist Movement, while sharing its drive towards new, modern aesthetics. Of the original group, it is quite incontestable that only Sant'Elia left an impression in the annals of Art and Architectural history.

3 Prima Esposizione d'arte del gruppo Nuove Tendenze, catalogo mostra Famiglia Artistica – Milano, 20 Maggio – 10 Giugno.

4 Given the theoretical scope of La Città Nuova, City, Reality, Fiction, etc. are to be intended in their most general meaning, on the level of the concept itself they represent. It is the effort of giving new and different images to these words, to build a new world of meaning.

5 as the creation of a finite space, set and unchangeable

6 Ernesto Nathan Rogers in The Hearth of the City: Toward the Humanization of Urban Life, 1952, London.

7 As of now, nobody would think of Reality as the product of an evil presence, of the Enemy par excellence. XIII century Cathars did though. This idea is what shaped their life, the lens through which they accessed the world, the veil of signifiers that influenced their thoughts.

8 Como, 30 April 1888 – Monfalcone, 10 October 1916.

"Yet we must also take hold of these very dense images which will comprise the history of the new city." [1]

Milan, 20th of May 1914, the exhibition "Nuove Tendenze" [2] is inaugurated. *La Città Nuova* [3] is shown: a handful of drawings and unfinished sketches nonetheless sublime in their appearance. Inseparably, indissolubly drawn, the buildings presented are the opposite of units, of objects identifiable from their context. They are fractals of urbanity, recursive images of styles and elements of city-making. His majesty Reinforced Concrete and her highness Structural Steel explode in every direction, releasing the liberating potential of their thoughtful exertion. The City is shown in its constant state of becoming, the unstoppable transformation of itself under the guidance of its citizens. Bridges, railways, streets, catwalks, stairs, plazas, people, life, an inextricable canvas of urbanity is woven. Its inhabitants, newcomers and old, define daily its shape, only to have it dismantled and reformed whenever needed. There is no settled identity, just the construction and constant layering of the palimpsest most fitting to necessity. No nostalgia, no space for a glorified version of the past that may cage the present. In addition, the *City* [4] shows us what is allowed to see, and that only. No voyeurism of private life, nothing to indicate the *de/finition* [5] of a domestic space, we can access exclusively to the space that is shared, the public space. No prudery in this, just the right distance posed between the architect and the life and autonomy of the inhabitants of the *City*, in opposition to the too common tendency of over-designing, "*from the spoon to the city*". [6] As the mask that defines each and every one of us, the visage that inevitably hides what our minds contains from one another; the domestic space is the equivalent of the person, unknowable. Nonetheless, the images that inhabit our minds and that we express, actively shape our world, they filter our reality, which is never innocent. It is the result of millennia, centuries, decades of labour, each period with its own set of signifiers attached to the signified, *Reality.* [7]

If *Reality* is not given, then a question arises, the same one that haunts Antonio Sant'Elia [8], the author of *La Città Nuova*: *"How could things be instead?".* It is a constant, tormenting query that needs a different answer every time. He poses it to his city, Milan, to his nation, Italy, to his architecture, and to his time, the dawn of the twentieth century. A period when people were moving intensively to cities, looking for a new life that the countryside could no longer offer. Expressed and unvoiced at the same time, these new possibilities gathered into the *City*: the potential of the raising industrial capital; the

potential of the proletariat; the potential of new construction technologies, amongst others. These and much more constituted the *City*, but at the same time they could give shape to something different, completely other. Unfortunately, past misconceptions still inhabit the idea of *Architecture*, inhibiting its mutation, its necessary transfiguration. To all of this, behold *La Città Nuova*.

Limited in their use, hidden and reduced to bones, covered in shreds of floral patterns and moldings, concrete and steel are disparaged, flouted, ostracized, as if their own existence is to be inherently shameful. The Beaux-arts architect fears concrete and steel, for they could force him to give a second look to his conviction, to reinvent his defined, definitive, idea of *Architecture*. Still under the spell of the Enlightenment, the mathematized space is his principle, the dogma of *Building* as an "object", Newtonian and unrelated, separated from its context and solipsistically autistic. The same block in Paris, in London, in Milan, as the *Capital* commands! They are tiles of a gigantic puzzle, presenting some grade of variation but finalized, a cast-in-stone form that does not accept any kind of radical change, no matter its usage, its inhabitant, its life.[9] *Reality* here is *tyranny* of the given which can only show what is already there, like a mirror. Fiction instead is the space of what-has-never-been, the never-seen-before, where the potential becoming can be unveiled, where *La Città Nuova* can be built.

Here *giving shape to reality* is at the core of the architect's exertion, his field of action. Antonio Sant'Elia brings forth images that give shape to reality, which influence the creation of other images: the fictional. His sketches discard plans, sections and elevation to get as close as possible to the aesthetical experience of reality, of things as they simply appear.[10] As human as it can possibly get, we only see what is humanly possible. What we cannot perceive is what is hidden beyond the frame but nonetheless what is visible implies and evokes images in our head that are possibly more powerful than the given one. This is arguably the most interesting

aspect of Sant'Elia's work, the possibility of what images show, what reality presents, implies to what is not shown, to fiction and vice versa. There is then no distinct boundary between the *Real* and the *Fictional* but a threshold, a space that Antonio Sant'Elia tried and, I claim, succeeded in identifying as the effective scope of action for *Architecture*. Here the role of the *Architect* is crucial, the effect of his work is at its maximum as it is dangerous. Only on the border of the abyss we can become self-aware of the extent of our actions and manifold becoming potentials. We look at *Casa comunicante con ascensori e ponte esterno* and we cannot avoid asking ourselves: *"How could it be instead?"*.

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9 What better example of this that the insane real estate market of London? Or the latest worldwide trends in urban planning? Raymond Ledrut, semiologist, spoke thusly of the mathematization of the urban space: "To the question: how does the city speak to us?, we have replied: as a work of art, which means as an object charged with meaning by the production and the use men make of it. The only way to learn what the city tells us is to examine the field of the urban experience, the lived city. To search for a code is in vain." (in The City and the Sign, curated by M. Gottdiener and A. Ph. Lagopoulos, 1986, New York, U.S.A., Columbia University Press.)

10 "The absence of plans merely does not indicate but a choice of method in the development of a research that recognizes the priority of image and synthesis over function and analysis" wrote Paolo Portoghesi. (in Antonio Sant'Elia: l'opera completa, curated by Alberto Longatti, Luciano Caramel 1987, Milano, Italia, Mondadori editore.)

E te, beltade ignota – A short play on Fiction and Realism

Giacomo Pala

1 Glovanni Verga, I Malavo-glia, (Milano: Fratelli Treves, Editori, 1881).

2 Giacinta is Luigi Capuana's first novel, published in 1879. On the its being a "verist" play, see: Carlo Alberto Madrignani, Capuana e il naturalismo, (Bari: Laterza, 1970).

Prelude: Real or Fictional

Associating architecture, reality and fiction presents more than one snag. Neither reality can be reduced to fiction (and vice versa); nor architecture can be described as either "real" or "fictional". On the one hand, it might appear that architecture is always "real" in the sense that anything that is material is real. On the other, architecture can be understood as rarely real and more obviously fictional. In this case, architecture is defined as a discipline narrowly confined to the metaphorical embodiment of cultural values. Notwithstanding this dualistic separation of fiction from reality in architecture, the thesis of this short essay will concern the possibility of finding some connections between these two definitions.

In order to deepen this complex relation, then, this text will consider two artworks that are – apparently – characterized by two very different levels of fiction and realism. The first one is Victorien Sardou's/Giacomo Puccini's "Tosca", a play in which fantasy takes place in the real world. While the second one is Giovanni Battista Piranesi's "Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma" where the real and fictional inventions are mutually entangled.

First Act: Tosca

Let us begin with the Tosca. This piece is commonly interpreted as an example of the Italian "Verismo": an artistic tendency defined as realist and represented by authors such as, among many others, the writers Giovanni Verga, Luigi Capuana and the musician Giacomo Puccini. Broadly speaking, these authors' work can be interpreted and read as the attempt of representing the things of the world as they are in "nature", focusing on their contemporaries and their problems. Giovanni Verga, in his novel "I Malavoglia", uses a language that reproduces some features of the Sicilian dialect and renounces to any external narrator. [1] Luigi Capuana, in his novel "Giacinta", depicts a story made of a relentless and endless series of tragic events: the main character, Giacinta, is first raped, then she marries a man who she does not love, she has a child with her secret lover; the daughter dies, the lover leaves. Finally, Giacinta commits suicide. For the aim of this essay, what is important to have in minde is Capuana's attempt of developing characters in a "naturalistic" way. So much so that, even though many critics believe that Capuana's attempt is not totally successful, this novel has often been considered as Verismo's manifesto: an illusion written in the most realistic way possible. [2]

Puccini's/Sardou's "Tosca" is, as Capuana's and Verga's work, a realistic piece. It is so, first and foremost, because it is set in Rome in the day of Marengo battle. Still, to consider something as realist only because of the historical features of the play would be reductive, to say

the least. In fact, in this piece love and politics are mixed in a plot of deceptions that leads to tragic and inevitable events and, as brilliantly and synthetically pinpointed by Alexander Kluge, "If he [Scarpia] hadn't died in this adventure, he would have disgraced himself with impotence".[3] As these words by Kluge highlight pretty well, Tosca is not realistic only because of the real events in which it is set, but also in the development of the main characters. In fact, the level of realism of the drama has to be taken so seriously that we could even read the psychological traits of the people involved in the drama's adventures. Yet, we must also admit that in any form or realism, such as "Verismo", the representation of reality has some unrealistic aspects. In fact, if realism means the representation of things of the world as they are, this same representation has some fictional aspects: it takes reality out of time and space. For instance, even in Tosca we can easily read the unrealistic representation of the real. One clear example among many is a dialogue between Scarpia and Tosca about the imprisonment of another character of the play, Mario: "Your lover is bound hand and foot, and a steel ring is clamped to his head. For every one of his denials, we make some of his blood spurt unmercifully!"[4]

Interlude: the imaginary beyond realism

Evidently, words like those by Scarpia are reminders to the romantic taste of the time as well as to some of the most relevant public discussions of the time; such as the ways of punishment. Indeed, even without mentioning Cesare Beccaria's "dei Delitti e delle Pene", or Giovanni Battista Piranesi's "prisons", it is pretty obvious that, in these words, there might be reminders to interdisciplinary imaginaries.[5] Still, allow us to remain focused on the most obviously realist aspect of the play: the set in Rome. Curiously enough, as proven by Lyle F. Perusse, both Sardou and Puccini, were inspired by the work of Giovanni Battista Piranesi. [6] As a matter of fact, we know that Sardou was abreast of the antiques trade and

admirer of Piranesi's prints and, moreover, that he might have possessed a copy of Piranesi's Campo Marzio. In fact, quoting Puccini, the French dramatist was inspired by an "immense topographical map of Rome."[7] This Piranesian influence is particularly interesting because it gives us the chance to seek for connections between the "real" and the "fictional", in the attempt of breaking the usual dualistic separation of these two domains. In fact, Piranesi's depiction of Rome in the Campo Marzio, can be defined in many ways (and it has been), but "realist".

Second Act: Campo Marzio

As well known, the Campo Marzio (1762) is a depiction of a strange ancient Rome that seems to announce future forms for architecture. This is an archaeological project in which history, invention and topography blur into each other. Indeed, Piranesi consciously reuses the historical fragments of the "fragmenta Urbis" in order to compose a project of invention combining original plans of ancient buildings with invented ones and his own imaginary. This is a city of monuments in which people can wonder the greatness of Rome and its architecture in a kind of urban scenography. Archaeological reconstructions, topographical maps, iconographic plans and perspectives contribute in reconstructing an imaginary Augustine Rome in its grandeur. This is a vision of Rome that is finally free from the medieval constructions: an ingenious planning in which the real and fiction become one. Emblematic cases of this overlapping of fiction and reality are those buildings left by Piranesi in their real state, such as the Pantheon or the Circus Maximus: architectures that exist in Piranesi's time as ruins, that were used in the hypothetical ancient Rome depicted by the plan and that are surrounded by the imaginary Rome designed by the Venetian architect. In this project we see then the constant mutual folding of the real on fiction, and vice versa.

Still, if this work is such a fictional project, how

3 Alexander Kluge, "Die Macht der Gefühle", quoted in Gertrud Koch and Jeremy Gaines, "Alexander Kluge's Phantom of the Opera", in New German Critique, No.49, Special Issue on Alexander Kluge (Winter, 1990), p.84.

4 "Legato mani e piè il vostro amante ha un cerchio uncinato alle tempia, che ad ogni niego ne sprizza sangue senza mercè!", in Burton D. Fischer (edited by), "Puccini's Tosca", Miami: Opera Journeys Publishing, p.75.

5 in "Dei delitti e delle Pene" (1764), Cesare Beccaria, accordingly to the culture of Enlightenment, famously defined torture as a useless practice. GIven the huge impact of this book, we can see Sardou's and Puccini's play as a comment to Beccaria's theories.

6 Lyle F. Perusse, "Tosca and Piranesi", The Musical Times, Vol. 122, No. 1665 (Nov., 1981), pp. 743-745.

7 Giacomo Puccini, quoted in Lyle F. Perusse, cit., p.743.

could it have inspired the writing of "Tosca"? How could such a fiction have been an inspiration for a realist play? An anecdote might help to solve this apparent contradiction.

Third Act: Real and Fictional

Apparently, while confronting himself with Puccini, Sardou thought about representing the last scene of Tosca's third act (Tosca's suicide) with the Tiber and Castel Sant'Angelo on the one side of the scene and St Peter on the other.[8] Of course, Puccini's reaction was not favourable (to say the least). Indeed, the musician, who – as we have seen – was a realist, could not accept such a vision of Rome; a vision that did not conform to the real landscape of the city. On his part, Sardou toyed with such an idea in order to create the visual illusion of Tosca's plunge into the Tiber. In other words, Sardou's intention was to create an illusion by altering elements of the Roman landscape in order to intensify the drama: a well-made play. Sardou knew all too well that reality, to be such, needs fiction.

This aspect is particularly interesting because of two reasons. It makes us solve the little mystery behind the influence of Piranesi's work on Sardou's and Puccini's and, more importantly, it allows the problematization of this specific case.

In fact, this anecdote implicitly shows us how every form of reality is a matter of fiction as well. In other words, any social object, as such, is a matter of our subjective understanding. Consequently, when an author, such as Sardou, Puccini or Verga, writes a "realist" novel, the real that he is describing is not the reality as such, it is, instead, something likely to be real: a verisimilitude.

Consequently, if we briefly expand this reasoning to architecture, we must admit that the boundary between the two aspects mentioned at the beginning of this essay are more blurred than how it is usually understood. In fact, we might say that architecture, being part of the

material world, has to take account of material and social realities. Yet, architecture must be fictional as well, in order to be something more than, and beyond, a service. In other words, architecture has to produce cultural "effects", exactly as an opera, a movie or a piece of art. Therefore, as shown by the examples of Tosca and Piranesi's Campo Marzio, the demarcation line between reality and fiction might be considered as blurry, vague and constantly moving: an ensemble of differences (what, referring to Jean-François Lyotard's vocabulary, might be called as "differend").[9] Yet, fiction must not be judged negatively, because, as often pointed out, there is no reality without a certain degree of fiction. Finally, we can re-read the relationship between "Tosca" and Piranesi's "Campo Marzio" presented here as a play on itself. In-fact, pursuing different levels of fiction, Piranesi, Sardou and Puccini show how the limit of fiction is something inherently ungraspable. In other words, quoting another character from Tosca (Cavaradossi): such a limit is a "beltade ignota", an unknown beauty.[10]

8 see: Lyle F. Perusse, cit.

9 Quoting Lyotard, the "differend" can be defined as "a case of conflict, between at (least two) parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgment applicable to both arguments." Jean-François Lyotard, The Differend, Phrases in Dispute, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988) p.65.

10 Burton D. Fischer (edited by), "Puccini's Tosca", Miami: Opera Journeys Publishing, p.49.

Unlearning from Barcelona – In-between fiction and reality

Jon Garbizu Etxaide

The City

A subtle movement is enough to wake me up. As I open my eyes to the sun coming through the tiny window resting above my head, I instantly feel the need to smell the soft summer breeze that mixes with the ocean. I go out onto the deck and take a look at the land in front of me; workers hum around and seagulls greet the Mediterranean sun, slowly cruising amidst the huge cranes that guard the docks. Suddenly I realize: today we finally reached Barcelona! I've been expecting to come back here for years, ever since I first visited the city with my parents, as a child. I still have a vague memory of the city. If I close my eyes, I'm still able to recall unorganized images of the Ramblas, the artists on the streets, that breathtaking cathedral… I eventually get off the ship amongst an excited crowd of countless visitors, all raising their heads to take the city in. For a moment, I catch a glimpse of the Sagrada Familia! We've been told that there will not be enough time to visit it, what saddens me deeply. Hopefully, I will at least be able to purchase the miniature of it. We finally stand on solid ground and everybody spreads out in every direction. I put on my hat and start walking with a fully charged camera on my hands.

"The statue of Christophorus Columbus!" someone shouts. I remember being told that he was pointing to America though I would swear that America is in the opposite direction… I go on walking up the crowded Ramblas. A couple of steps ahead, a group of visitors follows a tall woman who explains the history of the city with a strong Spanish accent. I was offered a place in one of those groups but they are simply not for me, I rather go on my own and mix in with the local life. I keep walking up, passing by a constant of souvenir shops and all-over-the-world restaurants.

Finally, I arrive at the Boqueria market. Here you see the vibrant Barcelona come to life: the sea-like smell of the fish stalls, the color explosion of the fruit stores. There is no place like this market, if you really want to feel the local life of the city. As I continue my journey I try to observe and catch every bit of my surroundings. I see people taking pictures with the stunning Gaudí buildings, which show off their bright colors and sinuous forms. Far in the distance, I rest my eyes on the gothic quarter. As I cross its streets, I gently touch the walls and It seems like I'm reading a history book. I picture it in my head, centuries ago, stone after stone how all of this architecture was raised from the ground. Then I find myself in front of the cathedral and I just stand there in amazement, taking my photographs.

I've been so absorbed by the city that I completely lost the notion of time. We have to start going back al-

ready. I didn't have time to have a walk through Paseo de Gracia! Well, I guess that leaves a reasonable enough excuse to come back. I make my way to where we have docked, crossing the Ramblas once again. I catch some of my fellow ship companions taking their last selfies and purchasing the last souvenirs. Shortly before entering the ship, I turn around to see this stunning city for one last time. Something catches my attention: I always thought the Montjuic hill was on the opposite side. Well, never mind.

The City!

These previous lines expose nothing more than a short experience of the city center of Barcelona, but not the Barcelona one might have in mind though. It all happens in "Barcelona!",a full size copy of the ramblas, built in the beginning of the XXI century as a response to the challenges the city was facing.

The unsustainable situation created by mass tourism and the impossibility of simply forbidding it, led to the point where the city council saw the creation of a replica of the Ramblas, on the periphery of Barcelona, as the best solution for the problem. It was an attempt to reduce the amount of visitors to Barcelona's city center in order to calm down the increasing protest and riots performed by the local inhabitants of the old town district whilst conserving the tourism related businesses that had meanwhile became vital for the city's economy.

The peripheral area of zona Franca, on the other side of the Montjuic hill, was the place chosen for this ambitious project named "Barcelona!". The strategic situation of this area, with direct connection to the city harbor as well as proximity to el Prat airport and the Fira exhibition center made it a perfect choice. The new city was projected taking the Barcelona ramblas as the main spine. Trying to replicate as much as possible the main landmarks and architecture of the original city, changing them, if necessary, to provide an easier experience of the improved Barcelona. Changes that, with

1 http://ajuntament.barce-lona.cat/turisme/en/noticia/international-contest-to-re-gain-la-rambla-for-local-resi-dents.

2 From the book "If Venice dies" Salvatore Settis 2016.

time, became imperceptible for the millions of tourist which visit the new city every year.

Private investment was a crucial factor for the success of the new development. It was an ideal opportunity for the hotel industry to open new hotels and businesses directed to tourism. It was as well an opportunity for the local economy like the boquería market, the shops around the ramblas or the hotels and apartments to extend their business into an attractive and even more successful new location.

What in the beginning was intended to be just a tool to decrease the amount of tourist in the old town, happened to become a way more attractive spot for tourism than the original and decayed city center of Barcelona, to the point where it became the main source of Barcelona's financial income.

In-between

In 2016, Barcelona beat its record of tourists arriving by cruises to the city: nearly 30.000 tourists in one day, more than 2 million tourists over the course of the year. The synchronized arrival of visitors and the prearranged city routes lead to the collapse of most touristic areas of the city. This fact, linked to the amount of hotels and apartments in the city, as well as new ways of unregulated renting, are transforming the local life. The unsustainable rise of touristic apartments are disproportionately increasing long time rentals' prices are forcing locals to move out of the core of the city. As a soft response, in March 2017 the Barcelona council presented an international competition to rethink the Ramblas with the aim of regaining it for the local community. [1]

This problem is not only affecting Barcelona; other cities like Venice, Rome or Lisbon are suffering similar transformations. Some experts already talk about the "heritagization" of the cities. [2] The system makes a huge effort to preserve historical buildings and cultural heritage, what does not seem wrong as an approach. However, in the process of protecting these monuments, it

3 Interesting webdoc about the invention of the gothic quarter, pretext and consequences http://www.farse-lona.com/en

4 "BCN World" or "Hard Rock entertainment world" are recent examples of entertainment complex planned on the coast of Salou, 40 minutes away from Barcelona.

5 https://www.theguardian.com/cities/gallery/2014/oct/22/venice-china-dalian-copy-canals-palaces-gondoliers

forgets that these buildings are not dead, they are still used and inhabited by the citizens of these cities. Citizens tend to be forgotten, tend to be pushed away, resulting in a city composed by monuments and the necessary infrastructure for their monetization. And while buildings do not talk, they are the tellers of history and, more often than one might think, they lie.

Most people who visit the gothic quarter in Barcelona may think that its architecture is, as the name says, gothic. In reality, most of the representative "gothic" architecture in the city center dates from the end of the XIX century. This sudden sprout of the Gothic style has nothing of casual of innocent. Since the birth of the nation state, authorities from different countries had made use of architectural styles to legitimize and reinforce national identities. In the late XIX century, the rise of nationalism and the purpose of creating a national feeling or identity promoted the reconstruction of the historical parts of Barcelona. The ruling class of the catalan bourgeoisie created the then new Gothic Barcelona. The old town was revamped by adding new gothic style ornamentation to the existing buildings' facades, completely altering its original appearance to the exterior whilst keeping their original structure. The aim was not to rebuild the decaid city as it was in its original state, but to transform it into an idealized mediterranean capital, even if they needed to rewrite history in order to do so. [3]

This designed reconstruction helped to calm and control the discontent of the working class by giving them a reason to believe in a common national feeling, but it also greatly influenced the birth of Barcelona as a prime touristic destination. The city was presented as an attractive destination for high class society, using its architecture, cultural and geographic settings as strong selling points. It might as well be seen as the first attempt to market this city as a product. A successful attempt, as the Barcelona brand still lasts and it has been the main political tool for the increasement of mass tourism and private investment during the last 20 years.

As elsewhere, in Barcelona architecture has been used to convey a selected aspect of a city's identity, dissolving something that could be interpreted as fake into the common imaginary, to the point when most locals do not know that this charismatic gothic quarter is not as gothic as they think.

This historic precedent seems to validate the idea of creating a copy of Barcelona, and it is not alone. There have recently been proposals to create new "amusement cities" in the periphery of Barcelona. [4] Could we then actually arrive to a point where the difference between the original city and the copy becomes blurry? One might argue that Authenticity will always be an antidote against this. Well, it might not be as effective as it might sound. For instance, in China and Japan, blunt copies of western cities like Paris, Venice or the alpine village of Hallstatt are being built, going so far as to replicate the icons and monuments of the original cities. [5] Despite being copies, these cities are visited every year by thousands of tourists, what seems to be enough to validate them as cities in their own right. Authenticity does not seem to be a requirement for the enjoyment of the visitor, as formal and folcloric features successfully fulfill its role in the current interpretation of a city as a consumption good.

With this premises, it is not outrageous to think that Barcelona could arrive to understand a twisted copy of itself as the real city, as we have seen something similar happening in the late XIX century with the gothic quarter. From veneer architecture to veneer urbanism, it would, at the end, be just a matter of scale. This leap has recently been taken with results that are completely aligned with the current ideas of successful city production, with a complete disregard for authenticity and identity. And if it is clear that fiction in architecture has been constantly used as a tool to filter history on the way to the creation of new realities and identities, at this moment, it seems crucial to me to preserve the local identity of the city and make it compatible with the evolving

roles a city has to currently perform. Building a copy is just a way of doing so… After all, a city without citizens is already a hollowed-out copy of itself.

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The Name of Palladio

Srdjan Zlokapa

1 The main source of information for this article is the catalog of the exhibition on Palladio that took place between Vicenza and London in 2008/09 curated by Giovanni Beltramini and Howard Burns. Most of the information about the life of Palladio and the whole story of the Apparato Ridolfi are taken from Beltramini's introduction to the first part of the catalog "Andrea Palladio 1508, 1580."

2 Palladio was a master of superimpositions. An example where Palladio has to superimpose the facade of the church with the one of the temple, as in the church of Vicenza in occasion of the "Apparato Ridolfi", is his late masterpiece, the church of the "Redentore." The problem is that the three naves church space generates a stepped shape in the facade that can't be covered by a temple front. Palladio's solution would be using two overlapping temple facades at two heights in order to cover the naves.

In his monographic work about Palladio, Guido Beltramini recounts the story of the architect with a masquerade. On 10 September 1543, the gothic city of Vicenza transforms itself into ancient Rome for just one night. Giangiorgio Trissino and Andrea Palladio design a set of wooden architectural "Folies" to celebrate Cardinal Niccolò Ridolfi's entrance in the city.

What is left of the "Apparato Ridolfi" is nothing more than some letters and a sketch. We know only that, along the path of the Cardinal, Palladio and Trissino staged a city tour that was supposed to mix reality with fiction. The ensemble was composed of an entrance archway, an artificial cave with a fountain representing the rivers of the city, some colossal statues and a wooden temple-like facade that covered the gothic cathedral of Vicenza with statues of Faith, Hope and Charity as acroteria figures. [1]

What is striking about this scarcely-documented project is its ambition: Palladio and Trissino did not just want to please an important guest through a revival of the past; they wanted to build an ephemeral depiction of a new idea of a city that could replace Vicenza. This project, more than just cosmetic, was dynamite.

It is interesting to see how the fragile, temporary and fake nature of the project makes its message stronger: the superimposition [2] of a fictional city over an existing one provides a built utopia, a visualization of an alternative present.

Trissino, the co-author of the "Apparato" was a reformer. Through his work, he supported the invention of Italian language and supported the unification of measures in the mosaic of countries that Italy was at the time. Building was one of his many interests and, like a lot of other intellectuals of the time, he endorsed a return to the principles of ancient Roman architecture.

Trissino can also be seen as the talent scout that invented Palladio. Just a couple of years before the "Apparato," Palladio was known as Andrea the Stonecutter (Andrea di Pietro Tagliapietra). Trissino introduced Palladio to Humanism, to his first clients and travelled with him to Rome. Even the name "Palladio" was Trissino's invention. It is a classical, ancient name for an architect that, in the eyes of Trissino, had to bring the Humanist reform to the field of architecture. Palladio is a programmatic name that already suggests the intention of his work.

The invention of the mask "Palladio" is one of the first known examples of branding in architecture. By adopting an ancient name, Palladio evokes, for himself and for his work, the "classical" virtues of rationality and controlled beauty. Until this moment, artists typically selected nicknames that would refer to their ori-

gins: Raffaello Sanzio was the son of Giovanni Santi, and Leonardo da Vinci came from the town of Vinci. In Palladio's case, the name has nothing to do with his origins but rather with the intentions of his work.

On the other hand, "I Quattro Libri dell'architettura," the book where Palladio compiles his projects, can be seen as the construction of a portrait or of an architectural myth. It is one of the first architecture monographs. Palladio gave so much importance to it that he bought the copper plates of the book in order to print his work himself and keep the publisher in his shadow. The projects are shown free from the context in which they were built, clients are often not mentioned and, the host city is omitted, such is in the project of the Rialto bridge, where any reference to Venice is missing. The plans are also adjusted in order to explain the principle of the project more than to describe the building in itself. Like the fiction behind the invented name Palladio, the fiction behind the omissions and adjustments of the "Quattro Libri" are also functional to the promotion of an idea of architecture. The drawings of the buildings are not just descriptions of an existing building: they are meant to be reproduced and to inspire. The "Quattro Libri" is a collection of archetype-typologies where every typology is a brick of a bigger project of reform of the human environment.

Fiction, in the case of the "Quattro Libri," is an important tool to generate an ideal world out of a collection of projects. For Palladio, the repetition of the ancient Roman past was not a nostalgic carnival but a critique of the present and a proposal for the future: he was interested in understanding the principles of the past in order to create new principles for the future.

The last project of Palladio, the "Teatro Olimpico" in Vicenza, faces this situation and, at the same time, is closely related to the "Apparato Ridolfi." The "Teatro" can be seen as the construction of a Palladian world in the scale of a single room. Palladio's approach to this renovation and extension project makes use of the woo-

den facades of his earlier project, the "Apparato Ridolfi," which become the wooden scene behind the stage. An ideal city (maybe the dream of Palladio's Vicenza?) appears as a trompe-l'oeil through the arches of the theatrical scenery. The whole theater can be seen as a step back from the ambitions of Palladio and Trissino. The old Palladio does not aim anymore to transform the whole Venetian republic as in the early times when he was dreaming about classical bridges in Venice.[3] In the "Teatro" the classical reformation takes place as a theatrical illusion between the four walls of a former prison.

But even though Venice remained a gothic city, Palladio's reformation dreams would not be completely disappointed. His imagined world and his teachings would sprout in far away lands followed above all by anglo-saxon architects.[4] In the 18th century especially, churches, villas and universities would look Palladian and entire cities would be built following the rules of Palladio. The wooden Facades of the Teatro Olimpico and of the "Apparato" in Vicenza would become the real city of Bath where also the unbuilt project of the Rialto Bridge was realized.

Seen with our contemporary eyes it looks almost as if the imagined city of Palladio gained its own life and continued to produce after the death of its master, demonstrating the power of Palladio's fictional world.

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3 The classical project of the Rialto Bridge will be supported by Palladio's influent noble clients but would never be accepted by the city. There is also a surviving letter in which Palladio wishes for very drastic renovation of the Palazzo Ducale. The architect finds the gothic building very ugly and suggests the construction of a classical ersatz. This proposal would also never be accepted.

4 A large portion of Palladio's drawings were acquired by English noblemen such as Inigo Jones and Lord Burlington, and served as inspiration in England, Russia America and many other countries. For instance, Palladio's influence can be admired in the Pronaos of the Chiswick House in Middlesex, in the Villa Pavlovsk in Saint Petersburg or in the Villa Monticello of Thomas Jefferson.

450 Meters Deep into 1 Million Years Safety

Joana Rafael

On the shore of the Gulf of Bothnia, in western Finland, a deep geological repository comprising a system of underground tunnels 5 kilometers long and circa 450 meters deep is being hollowed out of magmatic gneiss, the local solid bedrock. Named Onkalo, the Finnish name for "cavity", this repository is on track to be the first attempt to implement the preferred official and permanent solution for high-grade nuclear waste disposal. It is being built to be sealed off and never opened again once the accumulating spent (or used) nuclear fuel rods of the Finnish – and only the Finnish – have been buried and secreted in the tunnels deep underground. To that end, its construction follows the models for "robust-storage" (IAEA, 2006) that are being developed by many countries worldwide, and that conform to mandated solutions that regard geological facilities to be the most stable and secure option to deal with the risk posed by dangerously radioactive wastes, to our health and safety.

Since 1954, the year the world's first nuclear power plant became operational, significant experimental research and development programmes have been undertaken to determine satisfactory disposal sites and methods to shield the wastes produced by nuclear reactors from the environment. These comprise socio-technical combinations of many actors and factors that are, in many respects, only hypotheses of stability and functionality. The fundamentals of the recommendations for the disposal of waste in deep porous beds was first compiled in the *Status Report on the Disposal of Radioactive Wastes*, as a logical and necessary part of the *Study of the Biological Effects of Atomic Radiation* [1] published in 1957. The report states that deep underground disposal (or geological) facilities are best suited to the task of holding and leaving large volumes of high-level waste and nuclear fuel to rest, far into the distant future associated with radioactive half-lives and lethal emissions. Such disposal, it is argued, is capable of meeting the monumental forces of geological time and the gradational movement of radioactive materials that are active for millions of years. [2] For the material to be left undisturbed, these facilities must be built in environments unlikely to be affected by natural geological phenomena, unattractive to exploratory drilling or other anthropological interest, and also protected against acts of radiological sabotage and theft.

Accordingly, the Waste Management Committee of the International Nuclear Energy Agency, the group responsible for fostering international cooperation, stresses the importance of gathering information on long-term geological change and geo-storage processes through an analysis of the present characteristics and incidence of natural resources of any site, their differences in the

1 This was a study providing information on the nature and problem of radioactive wastes that proposed processes for a permanent disposal and background information on reactor processes, along with certain aspects of the economics of waste and a review of the potentialities and problems of land disposal.

2 As example, the half-life of uranium 235, for example, is 700 million years.

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geological past, and the likelihood of changes in the future. The depth at which the disposed-of material is to be placed depends largely on the type (and probable date of formation) of the host rock and the probability-based isolation capacity of the conditioning materials. The Committee reports that the main component of the tunnels, i.e. concrete, has inbuilt geological durability, and thus is likely to survive within the underground realm. Hardened into an artificial rock, concrete has good enough geological credentials to act as a fossil-containing rock – the stratum whose consistent characteristics scientists and engineers correlate with a hardiness over time. Architecture is hence considered to have the capacity to mimic geology, these facilities built to approximate the fossilisation of radioactive, and future, threats.

Fossiliferous Futures

Deep geological facilities for nuclear waste disposal entail the combination of waste form, waste packaging, engineered seals and geological formations to provide (very) long-term isolation, confinement and containment of high-level waste with no need for surveillance or maintenance – in contrast to the intermediate disposal facilities that currently exist, above the ground or near the surface, in ponds and other confinements, some of which are located in flood and earthquake zones.[3] Conceived as a purely technical design problem of multiple, autonomous barrier defences, these facilities are thought to be secure enough to protect us from the release and migration of radionuclides into the environment, by both stopping or retarding the capacity of radioactive waste materials to exit the interior of the repository, and protecting these materials from the intrusion or penetration of anything (like the groundwater) or anyone from the outside. They are constructed according to the intention to build an incorruptible place; the ideal protection-exclusion space, enclosed firmly in the underground mass. For that, it is necessary to take measurements and assure geophysical monitoring to ensure

3 Examples include the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster but many other sites are mentioned in the flood assessments performed by the US Nuclear Regulatory Commision (NRC) and/or the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) available online.

4 A joint company by Fortum and TVO, two Finnish nuclear plant operators.

that the models will meet the safety levels required to deal with the realities of the nuclear materials and the future that these engineered and natural barriers will need to accurately limit for perceived perpetuity. Much of this work is conducted with (not only for) the future. It is focused on the plausibility of possible outcomes, the application of better criteria, the employment of the most enduring materials and the development of better models of future (environmental and repository) conditions.

In Finland, the planning and preparation to deal with the stock of nuclear waste through this program started in the 1970s, around plant sites chosen based on thorough evaluations. The scope and the schedule were defined in 1983, and the decision was ratified in 2011 with the stable geologic environment of the magmatic bedrock (estimated to be approximately 1900 million years old), of the Onkiluoto Nuclear Power Plant, chosen as the site for the country's (very) long-term disposal of spent nuclear fuel: altogether circa 300'000 tons of high-level radioactive waste, a number that increases by an additional 12 000 tons annually. The construction of Onkalo started in 2004. The encapsulation plan – for the handling, storing and permanent disposal of waste – is expected to be completed by the year 2100 and to be sealed in 2120 to last one million years, without maintenance or surveillance and with no return of waste to the surface.

Posiva Oy[4], the licensed expert organisation that monitors and earmarked the site relies on existing and accessible empirical data – as well as the socio-scientific methods for collecting and dealing with it – to ensure that Onkalo will behave as predicted and remain isolated, for them to be able to respond appropriately. The experts are working with security standards based on theoretical and scientific assumptions (scales of risk, ideas of liability, ethical considerations and limits of predictability) in order to assert the "facts" of the measured life of the solid bedrock and the expected timescale in which radioactivity will decay, and to support and sustain an

epistemological realism as a means to manage and balance the ethical and technical considerations with the concerns of the public (and policymakers) about nuclear safety. Of course there is no practical way to actually eliminate the waste, spatial solutions are acts only of planned containment. The waste itself is the only commander of its own disposal, as it decreases its half-life over millennia.

It is, thus, hard to deny that this epistemological realism is a disturbing element in the arguments used to legitimate Onkalo. The temporality of the wastes to be deposited and the impossibility of accurately modeling all available futures renders our basic trust in the materiality – the infrastructural space (engineering and conditioning) and the geological barrier - to appear only to be a pretence of theory, an intrinsic fallacy that is ultimately a source of epistemological fallibility. In the end, if there is a consistent line that seems to run through Onkalo`s work it is, instead, a kind of belief or faith that is, in itself, not scientific.

Amongst all the various forms that this belief in the efficacy of burying radioactive materials takes, there is no guarantee that a site, nor a ground, will perform as projected over the one million years it is to be left undisturbed. Nor is it guaranteed that future generations will have great success (or better transmutation technologies) to deal with the waste stored there than we do at present. The proponents know that inadvertent intrusion into the site might result in accidental releases of radioactivity; the site cannot be secured for such (non) foreseeable futures, and it is inevitably, and inherently, subject to the uncertain. Thus, it provokes an inquiry into the future fraught with possibilities. In the words of key stakeholders in the Onkalo project:

When you do a project like this you must state what you know, and you must state what you know that you don't know. And also what you don't know that you don't know (Esko Rukuola,

5 Rumsfeldian epistemological riff derives from the United States Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, public response to the threats and lack of evidence linking the government of Iraq with the supply of weapons of mass destruction to terrorists' group.

principal advisor of Finland's regulation, radiation and nuclear safety authority, in Madsen, 2009).

When you make a decision concerning this kind of thing, which takes you to 2100 when the final sealing takes place, there will always be uncertainty. So you have to trust (Timo Aikas, Positiva's Vice-President in charge of Onkalo's engineering, in Black, BBC News, 2006).

Eventually, but at very different times for different parts of the disposal system, uncertainties are so large that predictions regarding their evolution [the evolution of the required assumptions about surface environmental processes, radiological exposure modes and even of a well-chosen site and design] cannot meaningfully be made (Nuclear Energy Agency, 2004).

In fact of course, the only certainty about the future is uncertainty. It remains unknown: a natural and certain uncertainty. The safety of both Onkalo's epistemological foundations and of the bedrock itself embody limits of control and knowledge but also of physical and intellectual capacities. In this notion is included the relationship between the known and the unknown, in line with the epistemological riff [5] of Donald Rumsfeld (2002) and Slajov Žižek's extrapolation of it, extending to 'unknown knowns' (Žižek, 2004) – i.e. things which we intentionally refuse to acknowledge that we know. Awareness of both the 'known unknowns' and 'unknown knowns' of future realities inflates the danger of Onkalo, as of the other geological storage facilities, rendering risk management and contingency planning to the realm of speculation. The authorities and group of experts involved maintain the conviction that the deeper the diggings, the more firm, stable and immovable will be the ground. Yet the further that is dug,

the more Onkalo's territory extends into the very earthliness of the Earth and the more complicated becomes the (en)closure of the repository itself. The further that is dug, the more 'unknowns' that are generated.

Conditional Fiction

The very recruitment of the Earth's body and the depth at which the Onkalo facility is to be placed confounds any possibility of the waste's enclosure through limiting structures – at both the micro and macro levels. The architectural solution employed to 'put a lid on' the waste cannot possibly encompass the crust of the earth as a whole. The artifice of human security can be further perceived due to the facility's reality as a gap in the bedrock. It is exclusively an interior, hollowed out of the vast and formless body of the Earth – an interior which renders the whole of the earth as the facility's host building. Thus, far from visibility, in the future, once the tunnel and especially the canisters have decomposed, geological facilities like Onkalo will be perhaps (only) discerned as dots, a pattern of radiation encrusted as an influence on the host rock. Legible as an artificial fossils, their symmetry to "natural" fossils does not signal an equivalent within the realm of nature but rather the fact of their - organic and radioactive materials both - being contingent on, and suppliant to, nature's forces. To respond effectively to the unpredictable changes that will inevitably take place under the Earth's surface is outside our control. Such a capacity is a fiction. There is a gap both in the rock, and in our abilities.

An awareness of the fictive and faith-based convictions which are foundational to the idealised design of future-bound deep geological facilities destabilises the certainties of nuclear waste entombment – literally undermining the perceived conditions of geological security that led to their being planned and built in the first place. Whilst employing extensive and fantastically advanced studies for nuclear waste to remain unseen and undisturbed, these facilities gamble with the Earth's stability, disregarding fossil formations as rare occurrences, fruit of a series of truly special events.

In Onkalo, we are fortunate that the natural geological formation provides an excellent medium for the excavations and works being undertaken to ride our environment of nuclear waste, but to complete the task there is an unprecedented need for, and guarantee of permanence being built in the absence of any certainty regarding the success of objectives of isolation, confinement and containment designed to deal with the wastes. This will either give rise to the withholding of radiant hazards or bring forward potentially catastrophic results. Applying Reza Negarestani's words, 'Anything can happen for some weird reason; yet also without any reason, nothing at all can happen. Things lead into each other according to a logic that does not belong to us and cannot be correlated to our chronological time' (Negarestani, 2008: 49). This is the part played by contingency – a realm of possibilities beneath the world of actuality. It remains to be seen if Onkalo´s success is psychological or physical – a desperate attempt to keep alive the fantasy of a concrete solution to the generations-old problem of radioactive wastes, or a winning strategy for eradicating radioactive threats. Is it radionuclides or simply our fears that will more effectively be buried in Onkalo?

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Castles in the Air

Emma Letizia Jones

I

On 6th May 1886, while hiking in the hills around Heidelberg, a young Swiss medical student and botanist named Hermann Obrist (1862-1927) had the first of five architectural visions that would transform the course of his life. He described them much later, in his own biography, in which he referred to himself in the third person:

> *"He looked up and into the distance. And at that moment… a fata morgana appeared… a clear vision of a strange, unknown city with towers and temple-like buildings and buildings such as he had never before seen, and never again would see to this day, whether in real life or in pictures. The city seemed to be translucent and was perpetually in motion, disappearing and then reappearing. Houses materialised, affording him a view of a wondrous interior, which to this day he has been unable to reproduce. A large square appeared and with it a fountain with a roof resting on ruby-red columns entwined in fantastical wrought-iron work. In the highest degree romantic and utterly strange."* [1]

Obrist promptly fainted. On awakening, he says, "he knew everything. Yet he returned to work and breathed not a word of it to anyone for fear of being deemed insane."

Not three weeks later, during a walk in the Tauber valley, Obrist experienced a second vision, which appeared above a bridge over the river Tauber. Again, it was of a city – though different in character to the last. This time, the houses contained "exquisite woodwork interiors", as well as "magnificent gardens" and a "wooded cemetery with tombstones made for giants." Crucially, the subject of Obrist's vision appeared to him to resemble no existing architectural style. Feverish and agitated, "he hurriedly drew sketches" to record his impressions. [2]

These two visions appear to have made a radical impression on the young student – to the extent that he was compelled to leave his studies and set about attempting to recreate what he had seen. [3] He began immediately, and for the first time, to sketch buildings rather than plants. He felt himself "a new and unfathomable person" who had been awakened to "the spirit of the Gothic." In this comparison, he was not referring to the architectural style, but to that particular 'will to form' that once afflicted itself upon those that had assembled the Gothic churches – seized as they were by a frenzy of visionary worship.

His third vision manifested itself in Berlin, during the Winter semester of his medical studies in 1886/87. "This one occurred at half past five in the morning on the

1 Hermann, Obrist, A Happy Life (autobiography); repr. in Eva Afuhs, Andreas Strobl, eds., Hermann Obrist: Sculpture, Space, Abstraction Around 1900 (Zürich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2009), 120.

2 A Happy Life, 124.

3 Obrist writes, "a voice inside him called out to him for the first time and said: Leave your studies; go forth and picture this." A Happy Life, 124.

4 A Happy Life, 126.

5 Obrist, in a letter to the Art Committee of I B Neumann gallery, Berlin, 1919; Afuhs and Strobl, Hermann Obrist, 30.

6 Walter Benjamin, The Arcades Project, translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Belknap Press, 3rd ed., 2002), 392.

7 Baudelaire, "The Soup and the Clouds," in Paris Spleen, translated by Louise Varese (New Directions, 1970), 86. See also Georges Teyssot, A Topology of Everyday Constellations (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2013), 128.

8 A Happy Life, 118.

9 Hermann Obrist, "Wozu über Kunst schreiben" (Dec. 1899), in Neue Möglichkeiten in der bildenden Kunst. Essays (Leipzig, 1903), 21.

10 A Happy Life, 124.

11 There are evident parallels here with the Einfühlungs-theorie of German psychologist Theodor Lipps.

Pfaueninsel near Potsdam and was confined to brightly coloured, purely decorative works; and even more powerfully than before, an inner voice called to him: Leave everything and picture this." [4]

After this, there was yet another vision: this time occurring somewhere between southern England, Cornwall and Wales. Having by now finished his medical studies, Obrist now devoted all his time to art and the craft of pottery, which would later develop into full-scale sculpture – as well as to opening an embroidery studio in Florence and then in Munich with Berthe Ruchet, a friend of his mother's. In fact, Obrist is best known today as a textile artist of the Munich branch of the Jugendstil movement, and as the inventor of the 'whiplash curve'; that sinuous, rhythmically looping linear flourish alluded to in the Jugendstil and Art Nouveau graphic arts at the turn of the century, which came to symbolise a kind of electric, frustrated desire. Yet for the remainder of his life, Obrist attempted, often clumsily, to recreate his visions in other less well-known ways: through grotesque, tendrillar stone sculptures and cave-like monuments. In Munich, the architect August Endell, with Obrist's help, designed a photography studio recreating the forested interior from Obrist's second vision; its staircase wrought with hypnotically curving iron. And his immense burial mound of Karl Oertel in Schmiedebach is certainly the "tombstone made for giants" from the same vision.

Though he never built anything larger than a grave monument or an ornamental fountain, Obrist always spoke of himself as an "architectural sculptor." [5] In 1919 he even took part in an exhibition of "unknown architects" organised by the Art Committee of I B Neumann's gallery in Berlin. Spires, arches, columns, capitals and buttresses can all be discerned attempting their escape from Obrist's rudely moulded matter – especially in works like the Krupp Fountain of 1912, or his "Model for a pillar for a vaulted grotto" of 1899. Yet these architectural elements never quite find their way to completion, remaining always in the dreamlike state. Detailed excessively in some areas, then falling into crude chiselled forms in others, the architectural compositions never manage to find their rhythm. Rather, they crystallise momentarily then slide away into lumpish matter, shifting into ambiguity – as if Obrist, tragically, could never quite capture in form the clarity of the visions. It is for this reason that the tactile, visceral and even repellent objects Obrist produced in the attempt to relive them are as flawed as they are fascinating.

Obrist's sculptures are as distorted, elongated and distended as they might appear in a hallucination. With their refracting, endless curves they seem to give form to Walter Benjamin's notion that "Jugendstil is the dream that one has come awake." [6] The immediate precursor to Benjamin's summation of that period in art was the poet Baudelaire; who saw buried behind the brusque modernity of late nineteenth century Paris – particularly within its interiors – a phantasmagoric, "fluid" architecture constructed upon "vapours, the marvellous structures of the impalpable." [7] Obrist too was undoubtedly attuned to the reverberating phantasmagoria thrown up as a by-product of the rapid advance of modernity. He believed himself a committed "psychist" [8], attuned to the vital forces inherent in all things, and a student of unseen – only felt and sensed - phenomena. Wishing to make manifest his own "inwardly seen or felt phantasms," [9] visions and ecstatic experiences, and alterations of consciousness, formed a crucial part of his understanding of the world. In fact he narrated them matter-of-factly in his own autobiography, with neither shame nor incredulity: "He was not alarmed by this incident [referring to one of the visions] as many another might have been. He had read an extraordinary amount for a man of his years, and… was quite familiar with the essence of divine, cosmic inspiration." [10] Imagination was no less real than the material world for Obrist, hinting at his belief in the vital role of the unconscious processes of the mind and body in making sense of it. [11]

Obrist's early training in biology has usually been credited as the source of his unclassifiable techno-organic forms, as plant life was for other Jugendstil artists. [12] Yet Obrist was a perennial outsider, unable to fit in at the *gymnasium* or at any art academy, and was therefore associated with the Munich branch of Jugendstil only loosely. His architectural sculptures come rather from a more ambiguous source, and distinguish themselves somewhat from the other foliage-inspired craft objects and decorative applications of Jugendstil in their half-formed crudeness. Their ceaseless curves are not smooth but mottled, childlike and rough. The plant-like molluscs unfurl into jagged roots that could equally be towers, piling one upon another. Another famous Jugendstil motif, the intertwined locks of women's hair featured in Peter Behren's highly charged, trance-like erotic work *Der Kuss* (1898), under Obrist's chisel are petrified into stone and plaster towers, pinnacles and caverns. The architecture of Obrist's dream has transformed into the organic, and the organic back into the architectural. This geology of forms suggests, again, Benjamin's belief that the art of the period poised at the turn of the century, like the bourgeois society that gave birth to it, conceals its alibi "in natural history." [13] In this manner, built technology and organic form merge into a kind of early abstraction in the products of Obrist's hallucinations.

Obrist's final vision was the most explicitly architectural of all, and it came in 1824, not long before his death. This time it was a waking dream of a church, the excitement of which sent him into a bout of anaemia that lasted well over a year. Whether this vision appeared either before or after his modelling of a series of hilltop churches is uncertain: but these works are nonetheless the most architecturally explicit of all his objects, with their impossible towers perched upon craggy precipices, about to bend, sway and tip into imaginary abysses below.

12 Afuhs and Strobl, Hermann Obrist, 24.

13 Benjamin, The Arcades Project, 226.

II

In his mining of the chthonic, the subterranean and the subconscious for the development of architectural form, Obrist joins a long though rarely codified tradition. Ever since the 1499 publication of the allegorical *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* by the erstwhile Dominican priest Francesco Colonna – a fevered, dreamlike account of a journey through an architectural landscape of antique fantasy that inspired architects from Bramante to Boullée – architects have allowed fictional and allegorical visions to drive their invention of form. The *Hypnerotomachia* is in fact a compound of three Greek words, hypnos (dream), eros (love) and mache (strife) – "the strife of love in a dream," as it has recently been translated into English by Joscelyn Godwin. The entire text is a narration of the erotic dream of Poliphilo, who attempts to win the love of Polia. Along this journey to reach her, Poliphilo, a lover of architecture, encounters the ruins of Antiquity; which he reconstructs, through the freedoms afforded him by his visions, into glorious palaces, temples and gardens. Poliphilo is, rather infamously, just as erotically aroused by great works of architecture as he is by Polia or the other beautiful nymphs he encounters. His unmitigated desire to taste, touch and feel the world in all its earthly senses is irrepressible. His dream presents a world in which all objects and subjects are rendered equal by his own sensual response to them – and this response is not just physical, but also idealistic and intellectual.

Poliphilo's dream has been richly mined by architects over the centuries since its publication. His reconstructions of classical architecture – which are part archaeological and part fantastical (such as could only be permitted to take form under the permissive conventions of a dream), have formed the basis of the revival of the antique from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century. Giulio Romano's Palazzo del Te in Mantua (1524-34), Bramante's Cortile del Belvedere and associated garden (c. 1506), Tommaso Temanza's design for S.

Maria Maddalena in Venice (1780, based on Poliphilo's description of the temple of Venus), the drawings of Baldassare Peruzzi, various works of the early French Renaissance and seventeenth century France (including Boullée's Cenotaph to Newton, 1784, and Ledoux' Shelter for Rural Guards in the city of Chaux, 1789) all owe their designs in part to descriptions of antique architecture in Poliphilo's dream. [14]

In the realm of the garden arts Colonna's text was no less influential. The *Hypnerotomachia* is directly quoted in the fountain of the sleeping nymph in the forecourt of the Villa d'Este (c. 1560-72), in the monstrous sculptures of the Sacred Wood of Bomarzo (c.1550s), and the layout of Versailles (1662-85). [15] The allegorical nature of Poliphilo's journey was also revived by propagators of English Picturesque garden designs of the mid eighteenth century – like Richard Temple, Viscount Cobham, whose allegorical paths dotted with temples, ruins and ephemera at Stowe gardens in Buckinghamshire (c.1716-1750) allude to the political choices of the individual, caught between the trappings of sensuous delight and his or her burgeoning moral development.

Yet the extent to which these visions are pure intellectual affectations rather than genuine experiences varies from case to case – and one can often be difficult to distinguish from the other. Colonna's text may well have originated in a dream, but it became something much more: a sprawling, frenzied exploration of the subconscious written in a gibberish of half-Latin half-Italian, an erotic meditation on pleasure and its uses, and a sublime reconstruction of an idealised image of the antique world. The dream-convention in these cases is the fiction that allows for the construction of the otherwise impossible. The late eighteenth century British essayist Joseph Addison later drew upon the structure of the *Hypnerotomachia* also as a mode of literary freedom: his aim was to lay out a radical Whig political position in the England of his day that could not be articulated explicitly, but only through the allegory of the 'dream'.

Addison therefore sets out a symbolic landscape in his somnambular fantasy, which is described in great detail in the *Tatler* (no. 123, 21 January 1710).

Addison, being a devotee of the garden arts, was uses the conventions of Poliphilo's dream expressly. Like Poliphilo, Addison falls asleep and dreams he is in a great wood made up of many paths, which in this case correspond to a series of moral choices. It is unsurprising that Viscount Cobham, politically inclined in the same direction as Addison, drew upon the writer's imagined landscape for the construction of Stowe gardens, and likewise for the articulation of its progressive political message. [16] Yet Addison's 'dream' cannot not be taken literally –it is a writerly flourish; the romantic's typical method of intellectual enquiry. The dream in question is a means to an end – not the end in itself. Obrist's visions are different to someone like Addison's, in that they are ends in themselves. The only message they carry is one of pure form and outline. If there is any moral implication to these visions, it is certainly not explicit.

It is of course possible that Obrist may too have been treating his cathartic visions, like Addison, as literary conventions used to lay out an artistic position. Perhaps they never really occurred, and were only fictions built to contain the myth of a 'visionary artist'. Yet the sculptures that later emerged from the workings of Obrist's unusual mind are so uncanny, and so unlike any existing form, that it seems otherwise difficult to trace their inspirational origins to any other source. Indeed, reactions to Obrist's outlandish archi-sculptures in his own lifetime were mixed, though they have since been considered by the art historian Nikolaus Pevsner to be the definitive precursors of twentieth century abstract sculpture, as well the sublime towering architectures of both Antonin Gaudi and Louis Sullivan. [17] The sculpture "Movement" for example, exhibited in front of the theatre designed by Henry van der Velde on the site of the Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne in 1914, is a tower of Babel in miniature, and a precursor to Tatlin's

14 Liane Lefaivre, Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili: Re-cognizing the Architectural Body in the Early Italian Renaissance (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), 42-43. Lefaivre hypothesised that it had actually been the architect Alberti, not Colonna, who had authored the book, which was originally published anonymously.

15 Joscelyn Godwin, Introduction to Francesco Colonna Hypnerotomachia Poliphili; The Strife of Love in a Dream, translated by Joscelyn Godwin (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999), xvi.

16 Christopher McIntosh, Gardens of the Gods: Myth, Magic and Meaning (London: I B Tauris, 2005), 87.

17 Nikolaus Pevsner, Wegbereiter moderner Formgebung. Von Morris bis Gropius (Cologne, 1996), 98.

18 Afuhs and Strobl, Hermann Obrist, 26.

tower. [18] It winds ceaselessly upwards, scaleless, forming something almost recognisable as an architectural composition – which just as suddenly dissolves back into those city-forms "perpetually in motion" described in his waking dream.

Obrist's lifelong attempt to give concrete shape to his singular fantasy can certainly be seen as part of the same trajectory set up for other architects by the *Hypnerotomachia*. But besides the obvious fact that in this case he was drawing upon his own visions rather than someone else's, Obrist's attempt was also related unequivocally to the upheavals of the period in which he lived. The retreat into the phantasmagorical and the organic was symptomatic of his desire to leave the viewer, as he put it, "fortified against the affliction of modern life." [19] In the service of this goal, no architect has written so explicitly about their direct experiences with hallucinations and ecstatic visions. By doing so, Obrist never ceased to give credit to the role of fictional illusion and frenetic delusion in the construction of his castles of retreat from modernity.

19 Hermann Obrist, "Wozu über Kunst Schreiben," 25-27.

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