

Spaces of Atrocity:
Political Architecture and Visualizing Vancouver

by

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B.A., University of Victoria, 2008

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of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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This thesis begins by presenting a case study of Vancouver's Yaletown neighbourhood, and the implementation there of a crime prevention program utilizing the built environment. This case study is then analyzed theoretically to make the argument that the city is a valid site for engaging with politics. This argument is made through the spatial theory of Henri Lefebvre, particularly his idea of a visual logic that is privileged in architecture and urbanism. I argue that if this is the case, then how the city is imagined is privileged over how it is experienced. This way of conceiving and experiencing the city, when combined with modern technology, has important consequences for how interactions occur in built environments that are designed to control. Finally, I contend that disrupting dominant ways of producing and imagining the city allows us to recognize and appreciate the diversity that is politically and socially important in cities.

Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Dedication	vi
Epigraph.....	vii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1	10
Section 1.1 Gentrifying a City	14
Section 1.2: Imagining a City	22
Section 1.3: Producing a City	41
Section 1.4: A Technical or Political City?	50
Chapter 2	55
Section 2.1: Architecturing for Control: Coding with Intent	57
Section 2.2: Living Architecture	60
Section 2.3: Running Wild into the Atrocity Exhibition of the High Rise	67
Section 2.4: Conclusion	76
Chapter 3	79
Section 3.1: Disrupting Architecture	80
Section 3.2: Displacing Architecture	88
Section 3.3: Moving Architecture	95
Section 3.4: Maddening Architecture	105
Section 3.5: In Conclusion	115
Conclusion	120
Bibliography.....	125

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Dedication

I dedicate this to my parents, Peter and Paula Nicholles. I am grateful for the wisdom, love, and unconditional support when I decide to do things my own way.

This thesis was partially inspired by the memory of the missing or murdered women from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

Epigraph

The sudden change of ambience in a street within the space of a few meters; the evident division of a city into zones of distinct psychic atmospheres; the path of least resistance which is automatically followed in aimless strolls (and which has no relation to the physical contour of the ground); the appealing or repelling character of certain places -all this seems to be neglected.

In any case it is never envisaged as depending on causes that can be uncovered by careful analysis turned to account. People are quite aware that some neighbourhoods are sad and others pleasant. But they generally simply assume elegant streets cause a feeling of satisfaction and that poor streets are depressing, and let it go at that. In fact, the variety of possible combinations of ambiances, analogous to the blending of pure chemicals in an infinite number of mixtures, gives rise to feelings as differentiated and complex as any other form of spectacle can evoke. The slightest demystified investigation reveals that the qualitatively or quantitatively different influences of diverse urban decors cannot be determined solely on the basis of the era or architectural style, much less on the basis of housing conditions.

- Guy Debord

Introduction

If politics is about the way in which we organize both our affairs and interactions with other people, then we should investigate the places where people live their day-to-day lives.¹ This means questioning the idea that politics only exists at the level of the state, and inquiring into the conditions of possibility for politics at localities. To investigate politics at the level of the city does not mean that the state is rendered irrelevant, rather, that “state formation, state policy-making, and interstate relations appear as *particular* activities that do not encompass the whole.”² To do this recognizes that the state is only one particular political site of many. The city, as another political site, is as important to engage with politics on an everyday level bringing forth a number of complex political problems and possibilities. Possibilities in the sense that in engaging with a number of people that are different from us by choice or by accident opens a field of possibility to make larger political claims.³ Problems in the sense that cities are not commonly conceptualized as political, and thus problems that arise in the day-to-day life in the city are not articulated as *political* problems.

A coherent, stabilized conceptualization of politics reifies the state as the place to fix politics, allowing both politics and space to be conceived of as singular and abstract, while repressing the city as a tangible site for politics. Warren Magnusson points out that Michel Foucault and a host of other critical analysts have stated, “in order to understand

¹ Warren Magnusson, *Search for Political Space: Globalization, Social Movements, and the Urban Political Experience* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 9.

² *Ibid.*, 280. Emphasis added.

³ *Ibid.*, 10.

things we have to focus on what those things displace or repress.”⁴ Clearly, in the context of the modern state system, local government has been displaced and repressed as locus for serious political thought. Perhaps this is also because of how we continue to characterize space as dichotomized from time, and as the sphere for power, order and representations of coherence –whereby spaces that *do* characterize movement, and change are rendered non-representational⁵ and at the margins of power, ultimately to be incorporated or excluded.⁶ In the space of the city, this marginalization is not explicitly recognized as political.

The problem is twofold: on the one hand, the normative conception of politics as particular to the state is too limited. On the other, any conception of politics that is locally produced is, in advance, limited by thinking about space as abstract. By this, I mean that space is thought of as static and representational, rather than as implicated in time. Thinking about space as static allows for its removal from everyday life, stabilizing it. If space is produced through interaction in the city, and thought of in terms of stability, then narratives of coherence, order, and security can dominate the urban landscape, as they are not subject to political scrutiny. This has very real implications for those who are not considered as part of such an order, and cannot articulate their claims to the state without first articulating themselves as subjects of the state. In this narrow conception of politics, there is little room for politicizing claims that seek not to pander to the state as a site of reprieve.

⁴ Ibid., 11.

⁵ This is because movement and change are not considered coherent and ordered under a static understanding of space.

⁶ Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), 47.

Doreen Massey writes that a static conception of space occurs because space is equated with representation, which can be rendered stable.⁷ Representation in this argument, is “seen to take on aspects of spatialization in the action of setting things down side by side; of laying them out as a discrete simultaneity...representation is also in this argument understood as *fixing* things, taking the time out of them.”⁸ Space conceptualized in this manner is assumed to be opposed to time. Thought of in this manner, according to Massey, space can become “the realm of closure.”⁹ This closure of space, and of ‘the spatial,’ from time,¹⁰ stabilizes space as a coherent, representational entity. This manner of thought does not allow for crucial dislocations to occur that could lead to potential political disruptions, as space is conceived of as a closed, coherent system. This, Massey notes, is perhaps a product of the turn towards structuralism to disrupt narratives of progression in anthropology and other related disciplines. She claims that in this turn, space “is rendered as the sphere of stasis and fixity.”¹¹ By separating space (as static) from time, politics can be rendered absent from how we conceive of space, allowing time and history to claim politics as their own.¹²

Massey is apt to point out that space is as impossible to represent as time, and to do so renders our attitude to space as nostalgic. What I mean by this is that coherent

⁷ Ibid., 27.

⁸ Ibid., 23. Emphasis added.

⁹ Ibid., 38.

¹⁰ While I agree with Massey that normative conceptions of space tend towards fixing it, thus robbing the spatial of time, I also recognize that in formulating the issue in this manner, there are already underlying assumptions that are being made about the fixedness of the categories of space and time. This is an important assumption that she overlooks, which allows her to privilege space over time without investigating the underlying conditions that would create our thinking that these are somehow differentiated categorical imperatives.

¹¹ Ibid., 37-38.

¹² Ibid., 42

compartmentalizations of space (city, state, international) do not reflect a rather complex reality where such ‘coherent categories’ do not exist. We continue to mourn something that does not exist, and to do so is damaging to how we think about politics. By being nostalgic about something that does not exist is to mourn a system that uses categorization to “legitimate the territorialization of society/space [and is] now deployed in the legitimation of a response to the undoing [of these categories].”¹³ Massey sums up the political and spatial implications of this nostalgia as:

...a response which takes on trust a story about space which in its period of hegemony not only legitimized a whole imperialist era of territorialization but which also, in a much deeper sense, was a way of taming the spatial. This is a representation *of* space, a particular form of ordering and organizing space which [refuses] to acknowledge its multiplicities, its fractures and its dynamism...It is this concept of space which provides the basis for the supposed coherence, stability, and authenticity to which there is such frequent appeal in discourses of parochialism and nationalism.¹⁴

By being nostalgic for representations of coherent space, we are robbing ourselves of a notion of politics in spaces other than that of the state. This allows for the continuation of conceptualizations of space in which difference is constituted through isolation and separation. Politics, in this compartmentalized situation, as a site of engaging with difference, is best left in the abstract. Taming space in this way allows for the stabilization of the ‘Other,’¹⁵ and a political cosmology that enables robbing those who

¹³ Ibid., 65.

¹⁴ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

¹⁵ See Blomley, Delaney, and Ford’s *The Legal Geographies Reader*, for research specifically on Vancouver, see Nicholas Blomley *Unsettling the City: Urban Land and the Politics of Property*. Don Mitchell also writes extensively on geographies of exclusion through the criminalization of acts that the homeless are required to do in public. There is a rich post-colonial literature that addresses the formation of ‘the Other’ at a distance from ‘us’. It is not my intention to go into the debates surrounding subject formation, and the role of colonialism in forming a discourse of ‘the Other’. For my purposes, I will note that the artificial construction of the Other as romanticized or as the ‘enemy’ to be co-opted and/or ruled is central to being able to marginalize and dis-empower those who might think and act differently. This does not mean I wish to look to the Other to solve these issues. I see this separation as a powerful discursive formation with the very real potential to dispossess, as our history shows and everyday practices continue to show. In this

are rendered ‘outside’ of both their histories, and conceptualizations of spatial organization, as they differ from what is declared to be the ‘norm’. Crucial to this thievery is rendering space as static, representational of coherence, and ahistorical – as the ‘proper’ way to organize spatial relations within a linear conception of time.¹⁶

This is where the city has the capacity to potentially disrupt the stabilization of space –through the everyday, random potential of encountering alterity, and having to work out differences with those that live in the same place as you. This day-to-day organization of our lives so as to work with those who are around us is political insofar as it is the negotiation of differences. This happens most pointedly in the city, and as such, the spatial encounters that the city allows shows that space *cannot and should not* be rendered static. To do so would remove one of the very positive aspects of the city, and what perhaps makes the city so captivating, that is, the uncoordinated production of space on an everyday level. To engage in the ‘purification of space’ is to wage battle against the “uninvited juxtaposition... [that] may enable ‘something new’ to happen.”¹⁷ It is this combination of chance and a variety of orders enabled by a non-static, non-represented space happening in a given material place that is interesting politically.

The Marxist analysis of space offered by Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space* indicates that space is not a neutral container in which relations are (re)produced, rather, that space *itself* is produced by these relations. In this manner, space is politically charged as it can be produced both as a site of opportunity and as a site of oppression. By politicizing the space of the city, political claims can be articulated through both urban

sense, the settlement of space through specific legal and political orders and categories is of utmost importance to rendering people into categories of ‘those who do not fit’ and ‘those who do’.

¹⁶ Massey, *For Space*, 122.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 94.

social movements, in which space is implicated in how we relate to and in the city. Yet, there has been very little work done on the intersection between how architecture informs our conceptualization of the city, and political space. Perhaps this is because space is considered an *a priori* category, and therefore viewed as a container for the reproduction of society. I wish to dispute the argument that architecture is productive of ideas of coherence, ‘order’ and stability in the city.

Architecture has an important role in thinking about both the production of space, and interactions that continually are reproduced within the city. Architectural theory has traditionally conceived of the body as reductive, homogenous or non-existent. With the increased interest in the co-constitutive production of space with gender in the last two decades, feminist geographers and philosophers among others have shed light on the relationship of architecture with space and the body.¹⁸ Consequently, predominant notions of architectural space as static and pre-ordained have been questioned with regards to bodily difference. The dominant view of the body, and space, as static within architectural theory fails to take into consideration ethnic, gender or physical differences. As Imrie has argued, “the body is either reduced to a mirror or self-referential image of the architect’s body [or] is ‘normalized’ as ‘a statistically balance symmetrical figure.’”¹⁹ It is not my intention to write a thesis on the imprints of architecture on the body, however, I owe an intellectual debt to the work done in this area, because it has politicized both architecture and space –allowing for questions to be asked about the relations between space, architecture and planning –which is the dominant theme of this

¹⁸ See for example, Grosz, 2001; Rendell et al., 2000.

¹⁹ Cf. John Franklin Koenig, “Spaces of denial and denial of place” (MA thesis, University of Victoria, 2007), 64.

thesis with regards to gentrification practices. Both the passivity of space, and the coherent rhetoric that underpins much of the architecture found in new urban developments, are questioned in this thesis, with the hope of disrupting notions of static, apolitical space, and coherence in the built environment.

There are two events in Vancouver that have inspired this thesis: the building of Yaletown, and the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. The Olympic Games have received the brunt of the criticism for being expensive, exclusionary, and having long-lasting social implications for those already marginalized in the city. Meanwhile, Yaletown is celebrated as an ‘urban achievement’ –a blueprint for downtown condominium development to both attract potential investors to the city, and to reclaim neighbourhoods deemed ‘dangerous’. However, Yaletown is linked to the production of the city to be an ‘Olympic City’. In most of the advertisements for the Olympics, the image we see of Vancouver is of the downtown peninsula –with Yaletown in the centre of the image. This indicates to me the importance of projecting a certain image of the city to showcase to the world –requiring the removal of those who do not fit that image. Consequently, space is produced in a specific manner that would seek to remove politics from discussions of how Vancouver is planned and conceived, cleaving to both urbanism and aesthetics as disciplinary mechanisms.

My primary objective is to politicize the question of how space is produced through architecture. While Yaletown is an inspiration to my thought and figures in the first chapter of this thesis, this work will largely be theoretical. My first chapter focuses on the production of gentrified space in relation to architecture and planning, while taking into account a political economy explanation of this phenomenon. However, I argue that

this explanation falls short of examining the nuances involved in projecting a specific image of the city. To begin to explain this, I turn to Lefebvre's conceptualization of produced space, and the role of a visual logic in how the city is perceived and thus produced. The remainder of this chapter focuses on the role of urban planning in solidifying this visual logic, through putting forth technical solutions to political problems. Both planning and architecture are implicated in how the space of the city is rendered apolitical, stable, ordered and coherent.

The second chapter of this thesis seeks to reveal the violence that is found within architectural spaces that are celebrated for their organization, coherence and aesthetics. I discuss, in relation to my first chapter, the effects of the built environment on the psychogeography²⁰ of urban spaces. This chapter seeks to further explain how the built environment acts as a filter for a relational politics. The idea of a visual logic as described in chapter one is important to understanding why these environments that are built for control are so happily consumed and consented to by the modern urban subject.

My final chapter focuses on some of the ways in which architectural theory has sought to disrupt stable representations of coherence. I largely focus on the theoretical work of architects Peter Eisenman and Bernard Tschumi, with their focus on deconstructive architecture in the 1980s and early 1990s. By focusing on theory within the architectural discipline, I had hoped to shed light on ways in which narratives of coherence can be disrupted and politicized. However, through the process of researching this chapter, I realized that due to disciplinary boundaries and the double nature of

²⁰ This term is associated with Charles Baudelaire's idea of the wandering *flâneur*, coming from the verb *flaner* in French, meaning to stroll. Guy Debord would pick up on this idea and apply it to how users of urban spaces come to be aware of their surroundings. I will explain this term in further depth in my second chapter.

architecture as both a theoretical process and an applied trade, space is still conceptualized in rather static, apolitical terms. While being able to theorize about disruption and incoherence, these two architects ultimately do not go far enough to politicize space, as they are not willing to destabilize it.

I conclude the thesis with a broader discussion of the politics of denial that seems to be a common recurring theme. Ultimately, this thesis deals with denial. The denial of those who do not fit the image of the city; of the chaotic, messy and disordered nature of space; and the relationships that are formed through city spaces that are architected to control. My second and third chapters rely on the dialectical relations that produce space introduced by Lefebvre in order to politicize what occurs within a given city space. This destabilization of space, in my view, is necessary to begin to appreciate the intricacies of politics in the city. This also allows for spaces to be articulated with history. The erasure of history from Vancouver's streets is never complete, and its' ghosts continue to haunt its present –from the removal of Indigenous peoples that populated the beaches of Kitsilano and the downtown peninsula, to the ongoing denial of hundreds of missing women from the downtown eastside. These events are important to Vancouver's ongoing denial of its own history and politics.

Chapter 1

*If there were continual stability, there would be no need for politics, and it is to the extent that stability is not natural, essential or substantial, that politics exists and ethics is possible. Chaos is at once a risk and a chance.*²¹

In the prefatory remarks for Max Weber's *The City*, Don Martindale states that one of the reasons that the city is so difficult to theorize is because it "is a living thing."²² Perhaps this difficulty stems from the elusive and ever changing nature of the city, along with how we theorize about urbanism in relation to politics. It seems that in trying to analyze the city, a move is made to first stabilize it, to make it governable. Only at this stage are politics inserted, in the shape of municipal or local government, nicely contained to elections, recreating sovereignty at a smaller scale. However, in making the move to stabilize the city, we have already made a prior political move. This move, I think, is to imagine the city in technical terms. By imagining the city technically we miss, and cut out, what makes the city so interesting, its' spontaneity. If we miss this, then the imagination of the city becomes one of aesthetics, rather than one of everyday life.

Unfortunately, the aesthetic of the urban is associated with a narrow imagination of what constitutes an urban community. It is my assertion that in creating specific images and narratives within the urban fabric, the politics of aesthetics is of increasing importance for political theory to address. These images are tied to aspirations to be a 'global city', to capital investment, and to securing the city through the built environment. This image of the city, or city of images, reveals that appearances are

²¹ Jacques Derrida. Cf. Massey, *For Space*, 122.

²² Don Martindale. Cf. Max Weber, *The City*, trans. Don Martindale and Gertrud Neuwirth (New York: The Free Press, 1958), 10.

problems to be solved through the revitalization, or reconstitution of the urban fabric to produce a coherent image and narrative, thus disappearing or making a spectacle out of politics, and ultimately, those who are deemed ungovernable.

The spectacle that is produced through the collision of capitalism with city space, combined with the accelerated pace of real estate development that we see in cities such as Vancouver, British Columbia, tends towards privileging “an individualist neoliberal politics of choice rather than any notion of public or collective responsibility for social reproduction.”²³ It is precisely this ‘neoliberal’ politics that allows for the democratization of fear, which in turn, promotes security and surveillance as a commodity. This is affecting how we view public space. As such, it is my assertion that we need to take a moment to think through important questions regarding how we conceptualize politics in relation to urban sites of social reproduction.

If we assess the city in technical terms, the role of ‘politics’ is often reduced to the reproduction of sovereignty at a smaller scale. As such, I wish to ask: why do our conceptualizations of local politics reproduce the logic of sovereignty? Is this helpful for an analysis of *politics* in the city? I think that at the interstices of politics, urbanism, imagery, and conceptions of spatio-temporality, we find a complex theoretical problem that is worth investigating. It is my claim that in order to rethink politics on a level that renders us capable of entering into political engagement, we must conceptualize the spatial location of politics not in terms of an abstract spatial practice that lies with the state, but rather as an everyday, concrete spatial practice in which we have a

²³ Cindi Katz, “Power, Space, and Terror: Social Reproduction and the Public Environment,” in *The Politics of Public Space*, ed. Setha Low and Neil Smith (New York: Routledge, 2006), 106.

responsibility.²⁴ It seems that in this intersection of space with image, the ‘global city’ is *represented* in a very specific way. The image of the city as ordered, sanitized, and idealized, closes off this encounter with difference and denies the city as a political space.

Some questions immediately arise: How does a very specific image of the city of Vancouver inform our understanding of urban space as a political entity? Why is the image of the city more important than the reality of it? Does this image construct an urban reality? If so, what sorts of rhetorical devices are used to construct this image? How does this rhetoric of the imagined city become a tool for the displacement of people that do not fit this image? Finally, how do architectural representations of coherence and community compel a specific image of the ‘global city’? These questions are complex, and by no means exhaustive. I do not claim to be able to answer all these questions; rather I wish to attempt to get at what I think the central problem is. This problem, I contend, is the inattention to politics in the places where people actually live –revealing our limited conceptualization of politics as an affair that only occurs in the far-off land of ‘the state’. This is amplified, in the case of Vancouver during the Olympic Games, by a disjunction between the imagination of the city and its’ reality -or as RBJ Walker has put it, “the ideal is the justification for the real.”²⁵

The image of the city under this rhetoric becomes separated from the everyday experience of it. This use of a sanitized and idealized image of Vancouver indicates a political problem that is intimately tied to the depoliticization of the study of the global city. To study the city as a political entity, we must first question the underlying

²⁴ Warren Magnusson, *The Search for Political Space*, 7.

²⁵ Cf. Warren Magnusson, “Politicizing the Global City,” in *Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City*, ed. Engin Isin (London: Routledge, 2000), 290.

conditions that allow for a spatial imaginary of what is included in the 'global city' and what is left out. Vancouver is interesting in this regard because it is a city that has long been obsessed with its' image, and it is precisely the rhetoric of the image that has very real political effects on the spatial organization of the city. This is particularly amplified right now because of the Olympic Games. However, many of the issues that come about because of this obsession with image are not only apparent during hallmark events in Vancouver, they are also evident in the everyday life of the city. This obsession with image is not necessarily new with regards to how Vancouver is conceptualized. However, with the popularity of newly built, 'condominium communities' such as Vancouver's Yaletown, image seems to be increasingly important for both how the city is idealized, and how it is policed. These new neighbourhoods are intimately tied to gentrification processes; yet, they are different in important ways. This is because in the production of a consumable spectacle, developers of Yaletown are able to 'imagineer' the city. In this process of 'imagineering', we see what Neil Smith calls 'revanchist' outcomes: intolerance to street people, protest, and difference that may threaten the imagined order.

I see a shift occurring in how we view and occupy city spaces. It seems that the processes associated with gentrification have taken on important and intertwined aspects when we begin to look at new urban developments. First, there is an increasingly global aspect, which has been covered in depth by literature on global cities that is intimately linked to global capital flows. Second, there is a carefully crafted image as to what downtown urban living is properly supposed to be that is associated with gentrification. It is the second aspect (which cannot be separated from the first) that captured my attention when I began to study Vancouver's Yaletown.

In this chapter, I will begin with an explanation and analysis of gentrification generally and historically to magnify the importance of hallmark events and image in how gentrification has proceeded in Vancouver. To exemplify this, I will present two brief case studies: the city's Golden Jubilee celebration in 1936 and the development of Vancouver's Yaletown neighbourhood. From this case, I will analyze the links between architecture, security and image through the work of Mike Davis, Eyal Weizman and Dan Monk. This will also include a brief discussion of architecture's relationship to law. This will lead me to the third part of this chapter, to elaborate on the importance of the image and spatial production. To do this, I will discuss Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* and its' importance to how we conceive of cities, in particular the relationship between space and vision. I will end this chapter with some remarks inspired by the work of Manuel Castells on the technical aspects of how we imagine the city. It is my goal in this chapter to present the city as an important space of political analysis because of how space is conceptualized within it, and the implications this has for those who do not fit this conceptualization.

Section 1.1 Gentrifying a City

*The downtown condo...enshronds an economic model in the rhetoric of 'lifestyle.' But this lifestyle is a transitory occurrence, vanishing at the same moment its conspiring presentation centre is dismantled or relocated.*²⁶

Practices of gentrification, land speculation, and displacement have become all-too-familiar in Vancouver. What is the underlying rhetoric that allows this to continue without question? One way to begin to analyze this is to think through how space is conceptualized in the city. The turn towards gentrification makes the move of purifying

²⁶ Joey Giamo, "Veil," in *Vancouver Matters*, eds. James Eidse et al. (Vancouver: Blueimprint, 2008), 167.

space, emptying it of its' political (dis)contents, so as to render it homogenous. This move towards purification is intertwined with capitalist spatial practices, producing space in a particular manner.

David Ley writes that in the 1970s, it became apparent to many landowners that they would receive “a higher, faster, and more secure economic return from selling apartments rather than renting them.”²⁷ This transition from rentals to renovating and redeveloping housing stock can be generalized throughout North America, and into parts of Europe as the process of gentrification. This term was originally employed in London by Ruth Glass “to describe... the movement of the ‘gentry’ into existing lower-income housing which they subsequently rehabilitated and upgraded.”²⁸ Attention to shifts in housing class in the inner city has broadened how gentrification is thought of to include both the renovation of old properties, and the development of new units, as part of a broader process restructuring the city.²⁹ This process of restructuring has had substantial consequences. Two examples illuminate this: in central London, “the breakup of private rental market in favour of condominium tenure is estimated to have removed 45 per cent of the purpose-built rental stock between 1966 and 1981.”³⁰ Second, in New York, it has been suggested that “between 10,000 and 40,000 rental households were being displaced by gentrification *annually* at the end of the 1970s.”³¹ In this sense, there are grounds for viewing gentrification as a cause of issues to do with housing affordability since the 1970s. If one can view the inner city as having a role in providing a major accumulation

²⁷ David Ley, *The New Middle Class and the Remaking of the Central City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 2.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, emphasis in original.

of private, low-cost housing, gentrification not only increases housing costs, but also can be held partially responsible for a dislocation and a loss of affordable, inner-city rental units.

Ley tells us that gentrification processes counter the mass production of the modern city, characterized by the standardized architecture of the Fordist apartment. Symbolically, the standardized, ahistorical model of modernist city planning and architecture collapsed with the “demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe public housing complex in July 1972.”³² This complex was built twenty years earlier as a prize winning modernist design, which utterly failed in terms of liveability. Often told as a postmodern parable, Pruitt-Igoe is now an object lesson of “the failure of the machine-age aesthetic as metanarrative.”³³ The answer to the failure of mass production, in part, lies with the development of the niche market, or the non-standardized products, allowing for the identity formation of the new middle class through discriminatory consumption. In developing the product of the condominium, developers solved the problem of the “falling profitability in one of their two principal products, the mass-produced rental apartment building.”³⁴ The condominium served the demands of the discriminating niche market providing both immediate cash returns and demand for specialists in community development through architectural practices. In the language of architectural discourse, this postmodern movement provided a symbolically loaded alternative to the now devalued inauthentic, mass-produced standardized apartment. Along with this came the

³² Ibid., 19.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 18.

idea that the city could be thought of as a ‘neoliberal dreamworld’, where consumption takes precedence over provision.

Economically, this can be witnessed through the expansion of renovation and rehabilitation in the housing market. By the mid-1980s, “the value of housing renovation in Canada exceeded the value of new home construction.”³⁵ Ley argues that with the shift from the mass production of the apartment to the launching of the condominium, ‘authenticity’ could be marketed as a post-Fordist model of consumption. The hyper-real ‘authentic community’ of condominium developments offers the promise of meaningful inner city living.³⁶ Much more than the renovation or redevelopment of existing housing stock, these new developments can be seen as not only part and parcel of gentrification, but also as an ‘imagineering’ of what urban living is properly supposed to be. Hallmark events and urban spectacles provide another excuse for furthering the profitability of these developments through being able to fast-track development, redevelopment and infrastructure upgrading which would otherwise be difficult to achieve.³⁷

Urban political economy provides us with an important structural analysis of how the processes of gentrification and urban redevelopment exemplify what David Harvey calls accumulation by dispossession.³⁸ Harvey explains that the theory of overaccumulation, “identifies the lack of opportunities for profitable investment as the fundamental problem” as key to explaining financial crises. This lack of opportunities to invest is integral to explaining crises because in the internal dialectic of capitalism,

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ For more information on the specificities of the geography of gentrification, see Ley, 1996, ch. 3.

³⁷ Ibid., 10.

³⁸ David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 137.

overaccumulation forces capitalism to “seek solutions external to itself.”³⁹ Harvey

explains:

Capital accumulation, in the absence of strong currents of labour-saving technological change, requires an increase in the labour force. This can come about in a number of ways. Increase of population is important...Capital can also raid ‘latent reserves’ from a peasantry or, by extension mobilize cheap labour from colonies and other external settings. Failing this, capitalism can utilize its powers of technological change and investment to induce unemployment (lay-offs) thus creating an industrial reserve army of unemployed workers directly. This unemployment tends to exert a downward pressure on wage rates and thereby opens up new opportunities for profitable deployment of capital. Now in all of these instances capitalism does indeed require something ‘outside of itself’ in order to accumulate...put in the language of contemporary postmodern political theory, we might say that capitalism necessarily and always creates its own Other.⁴⁰

This is one facet of the dialectic of capital accumulation, the other being expanded reproduction. With the idea that an ‘outside’ is necessary, Harvey examines how, within the dialectic of capital accumulation, the relation between expanded reproduction and accumulation by dispossession have “shaped the historical geography of capitalism.”⁴¹ In the quote above, Harvey exemplifies capital accumulation through the deployment of technological change to induce unemployment, thus driving down wages and opening up space for the deployment of capital. According to Harvey’s explanation of Marx, who in following Adam Smith, tells us that this allows for the profitable ‘original’ or ‘primitive’ accumulation of assets such as empty land.⁴² Harvey goes one step further than Marx by speculating, “if those assets...do not lie to hand, then capitalism must somehow produce

³⁹ Ibid., 141.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 142.

⁴² Ibid., 143.

them.”⁴³ In other words, if ‘original’ accumulation has already occurred (ie. there is no more land), then these assets must be found vis-à-vis the process of expanded reproduction through market liberalization. In Marxist analysis, such liberalization “will not produce a harmonious state in which everyone is better off. It will instead produce ever greater levels of social inequality...it will also...produce serious and growing instabilities culminating in chronic crises of overaccumulation.”⁴⁴

For Harvey, this is where accumulation by dispossession enters the scene. This can occur in a number of ways: through the commodification of cultural forms, the patenting of genetic materials and seeds, the corporatization and privatization of public assets –this can be encapsulated as a new form of ‘enclosing the commons’.⁴⁵

Accumulation by dispossession solves the problem of overaccumulation by releasing

a set of assets (including labour power) at very low...cost. Overaccumulated capital can seize hold of such assets and immediately turn them to profitable use. In the case of primitive accumulation as Marx described it, this entailed taking land...enclosing it, and expelling a resident population to create a landless proletariat, and then releasing the land into the privatized mainstream of capital accumulation.⁴⁶

In light the recent economic downturn, this explanation makes sense. Due in part to inflated real estate speculation, the ‘economic crisis’ allows for devalued capital assets to be “bought up at fire-sale prices and profitably recycled back into the circulation of capital by overaccumulated capital.”⁴⁷ An example of this can be found in Margaret Thatcher’s privatization of formerly public social housing. By making enclosure of the

⁴³ Ibid. There is an exception to this. Marx does consider this possibility in the case of technologically induced employment.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 144.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 148.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 149.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 150.

commons a state policy, Thatcher allowed for assets held in common to be “released into the market where overaccumulating capital could invest in them, upgrade them, and speculate on them.”⁴⁸ In this example, the speculation on housing displaced low-income populations to the periphery of London, because of astronomically high land values, allowing for the process of gentrification to occur.⁴⁹

Neil Smith discusses gentrification in term of three waves, a first wave of sporadic gentrification beginning in the 1950s. The second wave in the 1970s and 1980s witnessed gentrification becoming “increasingly entwined with wider processes of urban and economic restructuring...A third wave emerges in the 1990s; we might think of this as gentrification generalized.”⁵⁰ By examining gentrification in this manner, Smith points to a second dimension of gentrification, “the generalization of [it] as a global urban strategy.”⁵¹ He explains that the ambition for urban renewal outstripped the regeneration plans of the 1960s.

The gentrification and intensified privatization of inner-city land and housing markets since the 1980s has...provided the platform on which large-scale multifaceted urban regeneration plans...are established. [This platform] bespeaks...a generalization of gentrification in the urban landscape.⁵²

This generalization has occurred in tandem with the development of circuits of global capital and cultural circulation.⁵³ He goes on to explain that what marks this most recent phase of gentrification is the blurring of public/private lines through corporate-

⁴⁸ Ibid., 158.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 440.

⁵¹ Neil Smith, “New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy,” *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 438. <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/118485807/home>.

⁵² Ibid., 438-439.

⁵³ Ibid., 427. For more on this see Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001).

government partnerships –merging powers into a much more ambitious effort to gentrify the city.⁵⁴ This effort is most evident in the practice of “urban real-estate development –gentrification writ large –[which] has now become a central motive force of urban economic expansion, a pivotal sector in the new urban economies.”⁵⁵

Smith and Harvey both identify an important aspect of gentrification –the intimate ties that this form of redevelopment has with economic expansion. However, they do not make an explicit connection with the way in which image has played a role in allowing for gentrification to occur. In order to sell these real estate developments that are often overpriced for the amount of square footage that is offered, the idea of life in a world-class ‘global’ city must be put forth, producing space to cater to a specific type of urbanite.

The use of a particular imaginary of Vancouver to set aside political claims is nothing new. We find similar rhetoric used to justify the appropriation of land during Vancouver’s Golden Jubilee Celebration of 1936, in the displacement of people during the World Exposition Fair of 1986, and in current restrictions of movement before, during, and after the 2010 Olympic Games. It is my contention that the rhetoric we find throughout these cases exemplifies the problem of how we conceptualize both politics and space as abstract, and therefore not related to everyday occurrences in the city, and to events (such as the Olympics) that claim not to be political. Walter Benjamin, in his criticism of the nineteenth century world expositions held in Paris, identifies a key component that enables the penetration of mega-events into everyday life. He writes that these events “opened up a phantasmagorical world, where man entered to be entertained.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 443.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 447.

The amusement industry made this easier for him by elevating him to the level of a commodity. He had only to surrender himself to its manipulations, while enjoying his alienation from himself and from others.”⁵⁶ This quote reveals an underlying rhetoric using imagery that justifies setting aside or ignoring concerns of social and political significance. This alienation ‘from himself and others’ is allowed through the creation of an image, which relies on a willingness to set aside political claims.

Section 1.2: Imagining a City

Jordan Stanger-Ross traces a history of what he terms ‘municipal colonialism’ in Vancouver that points to the normalization of dispossession through claiming and developing land. This was justified in many ways, but namely through the ideological claims of ‘regeneration’ and ‘better use’ as evidenced by a 1933 editorial that appeared in the city’s *Daily Province*, proclaiming, “The city is suffering, as it has suffered these forty years or more, from a useless, undeveloped, untaxable piece of waste land impinging on the populous area.”⁵⁷ At this time, the designs were for Aboriginal land that was viewed as ‘uncivilized’, ‘barbaric’ and anachronistic to the development of the city – justified through both economic reasons, and broader colonial visions of what the city could be.

Economic reasons aside, the description of what was then a reservation in the middle of the city as ‘useless’ and ‘undeveloped’ invokes an aesthetic argument as to what is considered ‘useful’ and ‘proper’ to the development of a city. This aesthetic rhetoric is further evidenced in Stanger-Ross’ article by the power of the Board of Parks

⁵⁶ David Ley and Kris Olds, “Landscape as spectacle: world’s fairs and the culture of heroic consumption,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 6, (1988): 198.

⁵⁷ Jordan Stanger-Ross, “Municipal Colonialism in Vancouver: City Planning and the Conflict over Indian Reserves, 1928-1950s,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 89, no. 4, (2008): 542.

and Recreation in the appropriation and development of Kitsilano Reserve land.

Originally established in 1888 to manage the operation of Vancouver's Stanley Park, by the early twentieth century, the board gained responsibility for recreation in Vancouver.⁵⁸

By 1929, the Board viewed itself as integral to the planning of Vancouver. In *A Plan for the City of Vancouver*, Bartholomew and Associates advised:

In every way [the city plan] must erase from the mind of the city dweller the monotony of daily tasks, the ugliness of factories, shops and tenements and the fatigue of urban noises... The city becomes a remembered city, a beloved city, not by its ability to manufacture or to sell, but by its ability to create and hold bits of sheer beauty and loveliness.⁵⁹

The Board of Parks and Recreation saw this as their task, and by the spring of 1936, with the planning of Vancouver's Golden Jubilee celebration, the Board "pressed the Department of Indian Affairs for a 'clean-up' of the [Kitsilano] Reserve"⁶⁰ as the Board viewed the Reserve as an 'eyesore' to the city and a hindrance to tourism in the city:

The thousands of tourists expected to visit Vancouver this summer will travel across the Burrard Bridge, below which is the Indian reserve and the wonderful view from the bridge is somewhat marred by the unkempt condition of the Reserve.⁶¹

The visual appearance of the reserve was used to justify turning it into a city park (now Kitsilano beach). This aesthetic reasoning was in line with the city's encouragement of its' residents to 'clean-up' the city in time for the Jubilee event.

Throughout the later years of the 1930s and the 1940s, the rhetoric of beautification was increasingly coupled with public safety concerns. Since the 1920s, a

⁵⁸ Ibid., 558.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 559.

⁶¹ Vancouver Board of Parks Commissioners to superintendent, Department of Indian Affairs, 23 April 1936 Cf Ibid. Stanger-Ross points out in a footnote that the Burrard Street bridge, built in 1930, increased the visibility of the reserve by placing it in the centre of municipal development at the time.

millworks operated by squatters on the Kitsilano Reserve processed and used driftwood that escaped from booms transporting logs to legitimate mills on the inlet. These fugitive logs were used to build homes and fires, as well as being cut up and sold as lumber.⁶² This mill was considered particularly offensive because it escaped city zoning practices which had designated the land as low-density residential and park, as it was officially on Crown Reserve land. The rezoning by the city therefore had no legal effect, as it remained Crown property.⁶³

By 1936, the Parks Board was increasing pressure on City Council to convert the land from Reserve to park land, arguing that the debris from the millworks “constitute...an unhealthy and embarrassing problem...The flotsam and jetsom, general debris and offal...is picked up by the tide and scattered along the Kitsilano and English Bay beaches.”⁶⁴ The letter goes on to complain, “the squatters caused embarrassment not only of the Board and our own people, but to the tens of thousands of visitors we have invited to Vancouver and who are using these beaches.”⁶⁵ Notably, R. Rowe Holland, a prominent Vancouver lawyer at the time, characterized the millworks as being a “dangerous nuisance created by the squatters [and their] unsanitary conditions”⁶⁶ providing further fodder to appropriate and redevelop the Reserve lands, by linking sanitation to aesthetics. By 1937, the Parks Board had succeeded in removing the squatters. With the recent history of redevelopment of Vancouver’s downtown area, and the further augmentation of class relations that this has produced, this analysis reminds

⁶² Ibid., 561

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Vancouver Parks Board to City Council, 13 July 1936. Cf. Ibid., 562.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

me of what I see occurring in lieu of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. Such a mega-event only serves as a catalyst for practices of real estate development, and is interesting analytically because it serves to magnify the ongoing politics of property relations that we see occurring in many ‘global’ cities.

A recent example that involves much the same rhetoric as what allowed for the dispossession of land in 1936 is the area now called Yaletown. This piece of Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) land was first targeted for redevelopment during the 1970s. Characterized as a ‘former dump’ and industrial site along the harbour, this area contained mixed-use commercial and residential buildings. Over the 1980s, Vancouver increasingly adopted a ‘living first’ policy, which promoted residential densification within the inner-city core.⁶⁷ Planners during this time “significantly increased the number of people living downtown, reduced the number of cars commuting, and started a baby boom downtown.”⁶⁸ False Creek North, along with Coal Harbour, were the prominent waterfront neighbourhoods that resulted from redevelopment of the downtown margins to accommodate the number of people moving downtown, and overseas investors in residential condominiums.

In 1974, architect Randle Iredale proposed the redevelopment of the north shore of False Creek. At that time, there was already development occurring on the south shore, and Randle’s ideas were considered a way to expand growing housing demands. In 1982, the City of Vancouver released a development objective pamphlet for British Columbia Place. This pamphlet stipulated that a “major proportion of the site should be developed

⁶⁷ Jill Grant, *Planning the Good Community: New Urbanism in Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 155.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 166.

for housing peoples of all incomes and types of households at high densities which are consistent with good standards of livability and community services.”⁶⁹ This development proposal outlined a need to respond to the city’s housing requirements, with the building 7500-8000 units on around 72 acres for an estimated 15,000-16,000 inhabitants. 4000 of these units were slated to be either non-market or non-profit properties.⁷⁰ However, with the progressive withdrawal of the federal government from social housing funding, the middle-income class inhabited much of the non-market or non-profit housing in the form of cooperatives.⁷¹

In the middle of the 1980s, when Vancouver increasingly became part of a global property market, Asian immigration and investment began to impact Vancouver’s commercial and residential markets.⁷² Expo ’86 is largely credited for this upswing in investment. However, events in Tiananmen Square and the upcoming return of Hong Kong to China also heightened the interest of wealthy Asian investors. With a substantial Asian community already in Vancouver, developers began to realize the economic potential in residential condominiums. According to Punter, “up to 600 high-rise condominium units were built annually between 1986 and 1990.”⁷³ With the growth of employment in the first half of the 1980s, Vancouver adopted policies to accommodate the growing number of one- and two-person households “with a preference for urban lifestyle.”⁷⁴

⁶⁹ City of Vancouver, *North and East False Creek: Development Objectives for B.C. Place-May 1982* (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 1982), 3.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷¹ John Punter, *The Vancouver Achievement* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), 108.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 58.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Over the 1980s, Vancouver increasingly adopted a 'living first' policy promoting residential densification within the inner-city core. At the same time, a World's Fair was proposed to mark Vancouver's centennial anniversary. In January 1980, Premier William (Bill) Bennett announced that he wished to build British Columbia Place: consisting of a sports stadium and a brand new rapid transit line linking the central business district to the World's Fair site and the suburbs.⁷⁵ Although the project was enormous, he saw the potential benefits for the people of Vancouver, if the project were developed properly. In the spring of 1980, the Expo '86 (then the Transpo '86) Corporation was established. It should be noted that the fair and its 70 hectare site was situated next to the Downtown Eastside, notoriously labeled as one of Canada's poorest neighbourhoods. The juxtaposition between the dispossession and social issues on the Eastside, and the conglomeration of wealth and property ownership in Yaletown, continues to haunt Vancouver's reputation as a 'world-class city.'

The fair, along with real estate speculation, propelled the city to rezone Pacific Place, the site of the fair, from industrial to residential after the fair finished. The provincial government sold the Expo site and surrounding industrial land to high profile Hong Kong property tycoon, Li Ka-shing.⁷⁶ The province sold the site from Granville Bridge to the end of East False Creek for \$320 million shortly after Expo '86 ended.⁷⁷ The balance of payments due in 2003 did not have any interest accumulated, and of the

⁷⁵ Kris Olds, "Canada: Hallmark Events, Evictions, and Housing Rights," The International Development Research Centre, 2003, http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-32007-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html.

⁷⁶ Punter, *The Vancouver Achievement*, 193.

⁷⁷ Ibid; Art Cowie, *Vancouver's Future Growth*, http://www.cowierowhouse.ca/Vancouver-Hot-Spots/Canada_Line_Route.html.

66 hectares, 36 were slated for development with developers paying \$100 per developable square metre.⁷⁸

The impact of Expo '86 is succinctly explained by Kris Olds in his comparison of hallmark events in Vancouver and Calgary, and the bid for the 1996 summer Olympics in Toronto. Hallmark events such as Exposition Fairs and the Olympics are

major one-time or recurring events of a limited duration, developed mainly to enhance the awareness, appeal and profitability of a tourism destination in the short and/or long term. Such events rely for their success on uniqueness, status, or timely significance to create interest and attract attention.⁷⁹

Often, “long-term redevelopment planning occurs with the hallmark event acting as a catalyst.”⁸⁰ This is exactly what occurred with the rezoning and development of False Creek North. Although no housing was demolished, mass evictions occurred on the bordering areas, and much of the land has appreciated in value, causing the closure of low-income single room occupancy hotels and rental units. The solution proposed at the time of the fair by Alderman Gordon Campbell was to relocate the people evicted to ‘appropriate accommodation’-outside of the community.⁸¹ The Minister of Municipal Affairs at the time, Bill Ritchie, stated in agreement that, “despite hardship of individuals, development must take place.”⁸² Bill Bennett agreed with this position, arguing that legislation aimed at preventing evictions would slow development.

The events surrounding Expo '86 symbolize the growth of tourism the city and the culmination of the city's transition from industrial to post-industrial. In 1986,

⁷⁸ This price was extremely favourable at the time as the market price was \$250-350 per square metre. Punter, *The Vancouver Achievement*, 193.

⁷⁹ Bill Ritchie. Cf. Olds, “Hallmark Events.”

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Cf. Ibid.

⁸² Cf. Ibid.

Vancouver was the second to Toronto as the most expensive city in Canada to live in, and surpassed Toronto in 1992 in terms of overall living expenses.⁸³ The increased land values in the inner city during this period began to attract the attention of investors and developers, motivating the city to rezone land from industrial to commercial/residential. This growing attention was also facilitated by the sale to Ka-shing as the province recognized that by selling to Hong Kong's wealthiest man, massive amounts of Asian investment in Vancouver real estate could be stimulated.

The end of the 1980s and into the early 1990s put social housing aside in view of declining federal funding. The 1986 election of Confederation of Progressive Electors (COPE) mayor Gordon Campbell smoothed the way for redevelopment of the False Creek North site as "his pro-developer voting record on council had attracted major campaign contributions for the development industry."⁸⁴ A liveable downtown was becoming a reality, with residential development trumping commercial development. As such, development shifted to the margins of downtown with a greater emphasis on lively, safe and attractive streets that could be inhabited by residents and business people.⁸⁵ The tower and apartment/townhouse model became the sought after architecture for designing and planning new neighbourhoods on the downtown margins. This model increasingly integrated Jane Jacobs' idea of 'eyes on the street,' and focused on accommodating high-density living.⁸⁶ Key concerns in the design of the various projects to be incorporated in False Creek North were "visual privacy and quiet; unobstructed views; quality communal

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Punter, *Vancouver Achievement*, 59.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 76.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 106-107.

amenity space; and a positive relationship to the street providing animation, surveillance and domestic scale.⁸⁷

The late 1990s until the present have seen the development of False Creek North and other waterfront areas into the ‘urban villages’ we now know. Punter explains that in relation to the other waterfront developments, ‘False Creek North is arguably Vancouver’s most important urban design achievement,⁸⁸ with this community viewed as the ‘envy’ of other North American cities. To put this in perspective, Punter claims that False Creek North and Coal Harbour

are among the most successful large-scale redevelopment projects anywhere in North America over the last two decades. The targets of over 12,200 housing units and 20,400 residents for the two projects combined and a further 4,000 people in Southeast False Creek –make them collectively the most ambitious high-density residential neighbourhoods on the edge of a downtown anywhere in North America in the 1990s.⁸⁹

This is an impressive achievement, however, both Coal Harbour and False Creek North are ‘cheek to jowl’⁹⁰ with the Downtown Eastside. These newly ‘livable’ (albeit unaffordable) residential ‘margins’ of downtown have serious implications for how the Eastside, which is characterized as ‘unlivable’ becomes (re)developed.⁹¹

Much of Yaletown was built in line with principles of urban design that take into account a crime prevention program called Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design or CPTED. CPTED is an application stemming from the theories of defensible space, environmental criminology, broken windows theory and rational choice theory.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 107.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 213.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 232-233.

⁹⁰ With the redevelopment of the Woodward building into condominiums, and recent expansions northeast along false creek, one could very easily make the claim that these neighbourhoods are no longer cheek to jowl with the downtown eastside, but rather that gentrification is quickly encroaching.

⁹¹ Ibid., 286.

According to its practitioners, this program is premised on the idea that urban spaces can be designed to prevent crime from occurring. Pearcey and Schneider summarize that CPTED operates to reduce crime in two basic ways: it works directly by removing criminal opportunities through restricting access to property, and it indirectly affects both the fear of crime, and crime levels by including residents in crime prevention programs, and through influencing potential offenders' behaviour.⁹²

In order for these goals to be achieved, CPTED practitioners have some common guidelines on how neighbourhoods should be designed. According to a Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) issued brochure on CPTED, this program can be applied in seven ways:

1. *Territoriality*: fostering residents' interaction, vigilance, and control over their neighbourhood. This includes making private, semi-private and public spaces dynamic to give the cue that there is ownership over the space. This can be done subtly through tactics such as planters or edging along property lines
2. *Surveillance*: maximizing the ability to spot suspicious people and activities through planned features such as kitchen windows facing public spaces, or keeping landscaping trimmed.
3. *Activity Support*: encouraging the intended use of public space by residents
4. *Hierarchy of Space*: identifying ownership by delineating private space from public space through real or symbolic boundaries.

⁹² Patti Pearcey and Steve Schneider, *The Theory and Practice of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design: A Literature Review*. BC Coalition for Safer Communities. (Vancouver: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1996), ii.

5. *Access Control/ Target Hardening*: using physical barriers, security devices and tamper resistant materials to restrict entrance. This aspect of CPTED is dependent on the project, spanning from access codes, gates, deadbolts, and signage to textured floor covering and lighting.

6. *Environment*: a design or location decision that takes into account the surrounding environment and minimizes the use of space by conflicting groups. An example of this is giving extra care to designing spaces to encourage ‘legitimate’ use through proper placement of pathways and other thoroughfares. This is evident particularly in developments that may have users that could be categorized as ‘high risk’ to offend.⁹³

7. *Image/Maintenance*: ensuring that a building or area is clean, well maintained and graffiti-free. According to broken windows theory, an abandoned building attracts vandalism. Once this occurs and is ignored, theoretically, the decline of that building is inevitable. Maintaining a good image also gives the visual illusion of responsibility and ownership of a building.⁹⁴

These design guidelines have been implemented in many communities across North America, Europe, and Australia. With the creation of the International CPTED Association (ICA) in 1995, police jurisdictions and community planners can share information and become CPTED certified in order to implement the above design

⁹³ This is exemplified in the newly developed Woodward building in Vancouver, where a portion of the condominiums built were allocated to be subsidized housing. There is security at the entrance of the building 24 hours, and like many new condominium developments in Vancouver, owners can only access their own floors.

⁹⁴ Royal Canadian Mounted Police, “Creating Safer Communities: An introduction to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) for architects, planners and builders,” RCMP, <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/pubs/ccaps-spcca/safecomm-seccollect-eng.htm>.

guidelines in their local communities.⁹⁵ Underlying the guidelines put forth by the ICA is the theory that the physical environment plays a role in promoting and deterring criminal behaviour. According to CPTED practitioners, making efficient and proper use of an urban environment can lead to the reduction in the incidence of crime, as well as promote greater responsibility amongst neighbourhood residents.⁹⁶

Under the rubric of CPTED, the term 'environment' includes people and their physical and social surroundings. 'Design' includes physical, spatial, social, psychological and management directives seeking to affect human behaviour through how people interact with their environment.⁹⁷ 'Crime' is not explicitly defined; however, a normative conceptualization of property crime along with crimes against the person that occur in the public realm (assault, robbery, homicide, etc.) seems to be the definition that CPTED practitioners use. These practitioners, in theory, seek to empower the community to prevent crime without building 'fortresses.' Theoretically, this is based on rational choice theory in which the potential offender makes a decision about whether to commit a crime or not based on the environment.

The community has an important role in the effectiveness of CPTED initiatives as its' practitioners believe that public peace is kept through an informal network of voluntary controls and standards enforced by social norms.⁹⁸ Peace is kept not only by these social controls, but also by the perception that the surveillance, which occurs within a given community, is effective. This is based on the assumption that 'abnormal'

⁹⁵ International CPTED Association, "International CPTED Association Home Page," ICA, <http://www.cpted.net>.

⁹⁶ Pearcey and Schneider, *Theory and Practice*, 8.

⁹⁷ Tim Crowe, *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (Boston: Butterworth – Heinman, 1991): 29.

⁹⁸ Pearcey and Schneider, *Theory and Practice*, 25.

(illegitimate) users of space will be noticed and reported. To equip the community, CPTED includes programs targeted at “mediating the human/environment relationship, including community development, managerial approaches and law enforcement efforts.”⁹⁹ The underlying idea is that through providing urban spaces to live in that are conscientiously built with the goal of preventing crime, a whole community can be empowered to decide who is a ‘normal’ (legitimate) user, collectively acting to prevent crime. This sorting of people in the city into categories of ‘illegitimate’ and ‘legitimate’ has the consequence of rendering those deemed ‘illegitimate’ as in need of removal, thus having the effect of both securing and stabilizing the city. This is more than just a technical solution to crime in the city; it is also a political intervention.

Mike Davis, in his revealing case study of Los Angeles in *City of Quartz*, states, “we live in ‘fortress cities’ brutally divided between ‘fortified cells’ of affluent society and ‘places of terror’ where the police battle the criminalized poor. Not only has this division been institutionalized, but also it is actively celebrated in the continuing sanitation of space, as we can see in

the obsession with physical security systems, and collaterally, with the architectural policing of social boundaries [that] has become a zeitgeist of urban restructuring, a master narrative in the emerging built environment of the 1990s. Yet contemporary urban theory, whether debating the role of electronic technologies in precipitating ‘postmodern space’, or discussing the dispersion of urban functions across poly-centred metropolitan ‘galaxies’, has been strangely silent about the militarization of city life so grimly visible at the street level.¹⁰⁰

Davis is correct to point out this strange gap in literature -however, this may be less to do with urban studies overlooking a problem that might seem obvious to Davis, and more to do with how the urban has been framed as apolitical. As such, security issues are largely

⁹⁹ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰⁰ Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Verso, 1990), 223.

studied at the level of the state, and the international, with the city playing a passive role therein.¹⁰¹

In his observation of “an unprecedented tendency to merge urban design, architecture, and the police apparatus into a single, comprehensive security effort,”¹⁰² Davis notes that security has more to do with a degree of insulation from groups deemed ‘unsavoury’, than with personal safety. The city becomes a place where the social perception of threat can be repackaged and sold in a growing security industry. The Canadian military has also taken notice of the city as they recently decided to invest in uniforms that incorporate a “Canadian Urban Environment Pattern,”¹⁰³ as described by a Canadian Military *Advanced Contract Award Notice* as “based on the unique requirements of Canada's three major metropolitan areas, Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal.”¹⁰⁴

Why the military feels it necessary to invest in uniforms that are “designed to provide camouflage on the streets of *our* largest cities”¹⁰⁵ unless they plan on fighting there, is open to question. It certainly seems to point to consequences of not studying politics at the level of the city. Ineluctably, one of the consequences of overlooking the city is that municipal policy “has taken its lead from the security offensive and the middle-class demand for increased spatial and social insulation.”¹⁰⁶ It would seem that

¹⁰¹ For an important exception to this, see Abrahamsen and Williams, in *Global Governance Securing the City: Private Security Companies and Non-State Authority*.

¹⁰² Davis, *City of Quartz*, 224.

¹⁰³ David Pugliese, “Soldiers could get uniforms for urban jungle: Camo tailored for Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver –but not Ottawa.” *The Ottawa Citizen*, November 18, 2009.
<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/business/Soldiers+could+uniforms+urban+jungle/2230598/story.html>

Emphasis added.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*, 227

the aim coming from the convergence of architecture, urban planning, and policing is to address the instability of the city through homogenizing the inhabitants by setting up architectural, semiotic, and image barriers to ‘filter out’ undesirables.¹⁰⁷ We can see these mechanisms at work in Vancouver. This obsession with ‘imagineering’ Vancouver is thus closely tied to security that relies on both design interventions, and how space is conceptualized.

The concept of the ‘built environment’ is useful as it helps to analyze the political aspects of architectural and design interventions. The built environment refers to man-made surroundings that provide the setting for human activity occurring in an urban environment, and how these surroundings are used. This can range from large-scale civic surroundings to personal places. The idea of the built environment is usually drawn upon with reference to sustainability initiatives in building, and thinking of artificial, man-made surroundings as a cohesive whole. I will use this idea slightly differently by drawing a distinction between two conceptions of the built environment. The first conception of built environment relates to architecture, environmental psychology and psycho geography in that it refers to the distance between how buildings are conceived and produced, and how they are eventually used.

The second conception I will distinguish refers to landscape architecture in that the built environment is differentiated from the natural environment. However, the process of architecture can have a naturalizing or normalizing effect, for example, the building of a park to make it feel like one is in nature when the whole park has been planned and constructed. To summarize these distinctions: first, buildings, and

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 250.

developments more generally, are conceived some distance from where they are actually implemented and used. Second, that the landscape implemented by architects, developers, etc. can become naturalized in how we perceive a given environment. These ideas are not novel. It is common practice to plan how a space is to be used before implementing it. The issue at hand is when there are people occupying space in such a way that does not match up with how it is conceptualized for to best use. A good example of this is the practice of squatting land to make a political point. Squatting is a way to settle a place, and one way to imagine how that space could be used among many. This way of thinking about settling and conceptualizing space goes against (often intentionally) dominant forms of planning and architecture. A tent city is just as much architecture as a condominium tower. However, one is viewed as political, whereas the other is not.

As per my first distinction, there is a distance between the conceptualization of the built environment and the actual use of it. Both the selling and developing what was formerly public land in Vancouver is the product of how someone conceptualized that space to be put to better, more productive use as opposed to how that space may have already been used by members of society that have been deemed 'illegitimate.' The gentrification process that we see in Yaletown can be viewed as a specific conceptualization of 'the' history of a given place, allowing for the implementation of an idea as to how that space should be structured. This in turn contributes to a powerful image of what that place is supposed to represent, which is also socially motivates how people conceive of their cities.

To give a further explanation, I will turn to an example of work done by architect Eyal Weizman. His work focuses on 'architectures of control' in Palestine and Israel and

while this seems to be a leap away from Vancouver, it is instructive as it highlights the importance of architecture in representing and imagining ways of interpreting our interactions with a given place.

As the 1960s were drawing to an end, the tenets of the modern movement were being challenged. The vanguard of planning and architecture attempted to escape the ‘simple’ utilitarian logic of the modern movement, reinvigorate design with a reawakened obsession with urban history and charge the language of architecture with symbolic, communicative and semiotic content. The architecture of this period started to be infatuated with ‘place’, ‘region’ and the ‘historic city’, with a passion that pitched the idea of ‘dwelling’ against that of ‘housing’, and ‘home’ as a remedy for an increasingly alienating modern world. These emergent sensibilities went worldwide under the general terms of ‘post-modernism.’¹⁰⁸

Weizman names this the ‘structured chaos’ of spatial organization. He points out that this organization is a reflective of both the ordered process of planning and implementation – where government is selectively absent, thus allowing for the unregulated process of dispossession.¹⁰⁹ We see this in the selling of land that was supposed to be put to public use in Yaletown. This sounds repetitive, but there is a disjuncture between conceptualization and interpretation of a place as *terra nullius* and the actual experience and use of a place. This disjuncture allows for violent dispossession, through a process of re-interpretation and reorganization of both public and private spaces.

As per my second distinction, the built environment regulates how we interact within it as it becomes naturalized through its implementation. Dan Monk makes this point in *Aesthetic Occupation: The Immediacy of Architecture and the Palestine Conflict* by stating that in much of the literature about the politics of the modern struggle over

¹⁰⁸ Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (London: Verso, 2007), 36.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

Palestine and Israel views the immediacy of architecture in passing.¹¹⁰ Monk argues that architecture is able to “assemble and reassemble the constellation of possible positions assumed by participants in the conflict, who confront the element of the non-identical within architecture as if that element were the trace of the agency of the Other.”¹¹¹ Architecture plays an extremely politically potent role in signaling more than just a performative brutality. It gives form to history through both the process of building and normalization.¹¹² Weizman also makes this point as “resettlement projects have been carried out as central components of strategies of ‘counter-insurgency’ and pacification, demonstrating that the default response to the violence of the colonized has always been increased spatial discipline.”¹¹³ Much of the urban development of the waterfront condo community and the implementation of CPTED perform this discipline by way of organizing how the user normatively conceives a place. As such, architecture can be understood as one of the direct instruments of occupation.

These two conceptualizations of the built environment add up to organize and control a place before legal regulation can be made/contested. Of course this is cyclical, and teasing out legal regulation from how a place is conceived of is difficult, however, I wish merely to point out that legal regulation, at least from a political theory standpoint tends to be privileged, while architecture is pushed to the background of our analysis. We see this in the intolerance of the homeless figure on the streets of Yaletown. Agency to re-interpret, or refusal to conform, within these spaces is viewed with suspicion and lends

¹¹⁰ Daniel Bertrand Monk, *An Aesthetic Occupation: The Immediacy of Architecture and the Palestine Conflict* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 5.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 6.

¹¹³ Weizman, *Hollow Land*, 229.

itself to legal regulation and a further normalization of what is acceptable within that place, thus making architecture political. All this is politically important, and architecture's role in the city remains a neglected site of political discussion. However, cities are exactly the sites on which the projects of surveillance, crime prevention and securitization are mapped. Cities are more than just passive, apolitical recipients of the state's policies; rather they are active political sites of the spatial production of control.

The re-organization of space through erasure and subsequent re-articulation through certain building codes and regulations play an organizing role in the way we view who belongs in a place and who does not. There is a linkage between the contested histories of a given place, and how a singular history becomes represented and projected in the urban environment. This has been done consciously in Yaletown to prevent certain people from even entering or using a given place, or engaging in activities deemed illegitimate. In this case, architecture has a prior role in securing against unwanted users, and settling a place in a certain historical and political manner, with the seemingly innocent project of building in a conception of the city's public spaces as places where only 'legitimate' activities can occur by a voluntary association of citizens.¹¹⁴

This renders homeless people 'illegitimate' users of these places because of their involuntary public nature, making the issue of homelessness a legal problem. However, this is because they have already been spatially excluded in the building of a given public place. Architecture is used to normalize the constitution of the city through building with mechanisms for exclusion. This suggests that a certain conceptualization of a non-contested history of a place can be built in through erasure and subsequent re-

¹¹⁴ Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (New York and London: Guilford Press, 2003), 135.

interpretation of the place in question. This move allows for representational places to be built for the ‘cosmopolitan urbanite’ that city planners wish to attract. This type of consumer can buy into the image of that place without knowing the prior history, allowing for a certain representation of a place to be produced.

Section 1.3: Producing a City

*The political organizations of today misconstrue or are ignorant of space and of issues relating to space. Why? This has profound implications, for it pinpoints and defines the essence of the political.*¹¹⁵

To understand the production of social relations, Lefebvre explains that production “transcends the philosophical opposition between ‘subject’ and ‘object’, along with all the relationships constructed by the philosophers on the basis of that opposition.”¹¹⁶ He tells us that instead of focusing on rationality as emanating from the relationship of subject and object, rationality explained through production “organizes a sequence of actions with a certain ‘objective’ (i.e. the object to be produced) in view. It imposes a temporal and spatial order upon related operations whose results are coextensive.”¹¹⁷ This means that space is an outcome of a set of operations as it is not a product per se. Rather, it “encompasses the interrelationships of things produced in their coexistence and simultaneity –their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder.”¹¹⁸ With this in mind, Lefebvre adds the caveat that space is not imagined, unreal or ‘ideal’ compared to representations, ideas or dreams. By being the outcome of past actions and

¹¹⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 420.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

productions, social space has the capacity to permit “fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others.”¹¹⁹

Through thinking of space as produced, we can see how it can become occupied both by work and by objects, which, in turn, fashion new spaces. It is possible then, to imagine the way in which space could contain a “great diversity of objects, both natural and social, including the networks and pathways which facilitate the exchange of material things and information. Such ‘objects’ are thus not only things but also relations.”¹²⁰ To contextualize this, Lefebvre gives the example of the development of visual perspective in thirteenth century Tuscany. Through the increase of wealth in the urban oligarchy, “luxurious spending on the construction of palaces and monuments gave artists, and primarily painters, a chance to...display what they perceived. These artists ‘discovered’ perspective and developed the theory of it because a space in perspective lay before them, because such a space had already been produced.”¹²¹ The outcome of the process of developing visual perspective was a new representation of space emerging from the works of painters and architects. In this manner, knowledge came from practice, and was elaborated on by “means of formalization and the application of a logical order.”¹²² Lefebvre contrasts this new ‘logical’ order of space with conceptualizations of ‘traditional’ space that are more emotional and religious. These ‘traditional’ spaces were (are) still experienced “by means of the representation of an interplay between good and evil forces at war throughout the world,” particularly in *places* of special significance for each individual: the body, house, land, and church. However, his point is not to contrast

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 77.

¹²¹ Ibid., 79.

¹²² Ibid.

the two conceptualizations, but rather to point out that through the interplay of space, ideas, and material reality, “some artists... arrived at a very different *representation of space*: a homogenous, clearly demarcated space complete with horizon and vanishing-point.”¹²³ This example not only illustrates how Lefebvre conceptualizes of spatial production, but also is telling of a historical moment that is important for how space is conceived of today in terms of homogeneity and logical ordering –a point I will return to.

First, however, a further explanation about the production of space is in order. By replacing the study of things ‘in themselves,’ “a critical analysis of productive activity (social labour; the relations and mode of production)”¹²⁴ problematizes the naturalization of space as a passive receptacle to be occupied and fragmented. Lefebvre argues that by focusing on space itself, “with a view to uncovering the social relationships embedded in it,” a critique of the dominant tendency to fragment space can be mounted.¹²⁵ He gives the example of academic specializations, which “divide space among them and act upon its truncated parts, setting up mental barriers and practico-social frontiers...the *ideologically* dominant tendency divides space up into parts and parcels in accordance with the social division of labour.”¹²⁶ In this manner of thinking, space is both a social relationship inherent to property relations, and also a means of production: as such, “social spaces interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another.”¹²⁷ The question of space is intimately caught up with both the reproduction of social relationships and the problems of the urban sphere.

¹²³ Ibid., emphasis in original.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 89.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 89-90.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 86.

To analyze the production of both space and social relationships in the city, Lefebvre argues for the destruction of the ideologies that would promote abstract “spatiality and segmented representations of space. Naturally, such ideologies do not present themselves for what they are; instead, they pass themselves off as established knowledge.”¹²⁸ At a glance, the established knowledge that space is fragmented does not hold up, as cities spill over into suburbs, centres shift, and pedestrians and automobiles occupy the same space. Yet, we still think in terms of containment and separation, as public facilities, blocks of flats, and ‘environments for living’ are “assigned in isolated fashion to unconnected ‘sites’ and ‘tracts’; the spaces themselves are specialized just as operations are in the social and technical divisions of labour,”¹²⁹ naturalizing a passive social space that can be fragmented in accordance with specialization.

Within these fragmented spaces, the activity of production can be obscured, while the product of such an activity can be fetishized as more ‘real’ than the reality of what produces it.¹³⁰ This fetishization of the product allows for spaces of consumption to be naturalized considering how these spaces became possible. Urban centres are critical in this regard, as they concentrate products, markets, symbols, actions and spectacles, allowing for the possibility of accumulation.¹³¹ This is why the city (whether possible, imagined or real) is important to understanding capitalist space. In this sense, buildings, and thus architecture, are

the homogenous matrix of capitalistic space, successfully combin[ing]

¹²⁸ Ibid., 90. Lefebvre warns that this is not an easy task as it pertains both to mental forms, and practical contents of space.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 98.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 81

¹³¹ Ibid., 101

the object of control by power with the object of commercial exchange. The building effects a brutal condensation of social relationships... They supply 'syntagmatic' links between activities within social spaces as such –that is, within a space which is determined economically by capital, dominated socially by the bourgeoisie, and ruled politically by the state.¹³²

Through the act of concentrating buildings and people, the city establishes a fixed centre, a privileged focal point, under which the “vastness of pre-existing space appears to come under the thrall of a divine order.”¹³³ Space is thus produced through the ordering of the city in relation to the periphery.

This is somewhat reminiscent of the Greek *polis*, in which unity was achieved “between the order of the world, the order of the city and the order of the house –between three levels of segments constituted by physical space, political space (the city along with its domains), and urban space (i.e. within the city proper).”¹³⁴ This unity was not homogenous, but rather one of proportion and composition, embracing hierarchy and difference as presupposed. Lefebvre asserts that in this way of thinking space, “knowledge and power, social theory and social practice, were commensurate with each other.”¹³⁵ There is an important factor that differentiates the order of the city today from that of the Greeks: visual logic. Lefebvre alludes to this through the work of Erwin Panofsky, whose work *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* puts forth a homology between architecture and philosophy “arguing that each, though complete in its own way, partakes with the other of a unity of which is a ‘manifestation’ –an elucidation, in the sense in which faith may be said to be elucidated by reason.”¹³⁶ Lefebvre explains that

¹³² Ibid., 227.

¹³³ Ibid., 235.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 247.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 258.

what Panofsky discovered when he discusses this homology between architecture and philosophy, is the idea of a visual logic.¹³⁷ He goes on to explain this through description of the architecture of Gothic cathedrals:

The religious edifice, by rising higher, receives more light; that its naves no longer have the compact and somber atmosphere of so-called Romanesque churches; that its walls become less massive now that they no longer bear all the weight, and that the pillars, small columns and ribbing rise with slender elegance towards the vault; that stained-glass windows make their appearance and the making of them becomes an art.¹³⁸

By shedding the weight and darkness of Romanesque architecture, the Gothic cathedral represents the demands of the “Scholastic mind –the ‘clarification of function through form’ and the ‘clarification of thought through language’.”¹³⁹ However, for Lefebvre, Panofsky does take the implications of a visual logic far enough. This discovery, claims Lefebvre, opens up an important moment: “an emergence from darkness and a coming out into the light.”¹⁴⁰

The idea of a ‘visual logic’ allows for coherence to be achieved far beyond Gothic architecture: to involve “the towns, political action, poetry and music, and thought in general...a reconciliation between flesh and spirit effected thanks to the intervention of the Third Person, the Holy Spirit.”¹⁴¹ This production of such a luminous space signals, for Panofsky, a trend towards visualization. In combination with the abstraction of space through geometry and logic, such a conceptualization could become authoritative through being seen.¹⁴² However, this production of a “luminous space and the emergence of that

¹³⁷ Ibid., 259.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Panofsky. Cf. Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 260.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 260.

¹⁴² Ibid., 261-262.

space did not as yet, in the thirteenth century, entail either its subordination to the written word or its mounting as ‘spectacle’.”¹⁴³ This is perhaps because of the role of religion, whereby the eye would have been that of God. However, with the ‘disenchantment of the world,’ this visual logic is rendered spectacular in the arrogance of capitalism, exemplified through the phallocentrism of modern skyscrapers.

Space, in this context, is defined in terms of

the perception of an *abstract subject*, such as the driver of a motor vehicle, equipped with a collective common sense, namely the capacity to read the symbols of the highway code, and with a sole organ –the eye –placed in the service of his movement within the visual field. Thus space appears solely in its reduced forms. *Volume* leaves the field to *surface*, and any overall view surrenders to visual signals spaced out along fixed trajectories already laid down in the ‘plan’. An extraordinary –indeed unthinkable, impossible –confusion gradually arises between space and surface, with the latter determining a spatial abstraction which it endows with a half-imaginary, half-real physical existence. This abstract space eventually becomes the simulacrum of a full space.¹⁴⁴

The illusion of full space becomes dominant conceptually, and is made with “the visibility of people and things, of spaces and of whatever is contained by them. The predominance of visualization serves to conceal repetitiveness.”¹⁴⁵ As sight dominates how we consume, what we build, and how we interact with one another, what was once the epitome of intelligibility in Western tradition has become its trap. The trap lies where difference can be simulated, and homogeneity is the norm. Visually, space appears to be separated by walls and barriers, delineating inside and out: yet, the private space of a bedroom, house or garden exists in continuity with social space, despite having the sign of private property. If this is the case, and space is produced through the predominance of

¹⁴³ Ibid. 261. Lefebvre notes: “the first development, as it occurred from the fifteenth century on, has been described by Marshall McLuhan in *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. The second is the subject of Guy Debord’s *The Society of the Spectacle*.”

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 313.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 76.

an illusion, then the optical and visual world “play an integral and integrative, active and passive part in it. [The illusion] fetishizes abstraction and imposes it as the norm...After its fashion, the image kills.”¹⁴⁶

For Lefebvre the visual “has increasingly taken precedence over elements of thought and action deriving from the other senses.”¹⁴⁷ If this is the case, then the abstractness of laws, forms, and concepts can be imposed on the realities of bodies, senses, and desires. Once again, this occurs in the space of the city through architecture – which conveys an impression of intelligibility through the visibility of the built environment. However, this sense of intelligibility actually “conceals far more than it reveals. It conceals precisely, what the visible/readable ‘is’,”¹⁴⁸ producing ‘meaning’ through a sequence of actions. This is where the architect and/or planner is seen as the ultimate authority on space because of their ability to plan and conceive of a series of actions to build in a content and a vision.

Panofsky’s identification of ‘the ‘logic of visualization’ as an important strategy embodied in Gothic cathedrals now informs the entirety of social practice.”¹⁴⁹ Both the predominance of the written word (Marshall McLuhan), and the spectacularization process (Guy Debord), function as part of this visual logic, corresponding respectively to two aspects: “the first is metaphoric (the acting of writing and what is written, hitherto subsidiary, become essential), and the second is metonymic (the eye, the gaze, the thing seen, no longer mere details or parts, are now transformed into the totality).”¹⁵⁰ The

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 97.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 139.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 144.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 286.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

visual is primary over the other senses, leaving social space and what this contains to be deciphered through the eyes -requiring visual coherence to be intelligible.

If this is the case, then space can be rendered passive by the act of seeing which tends to separate subject from object through relegating objects to a distance. In this manner, “that which is merely *seen* is reduced to an image...by the time this process is complete, space has no social existence independently of an intense, aggressive and repressive visualization.”¹⁵¹ Under this logic, ‘true’ space is visual space, and a set of locations of coherence –unable to contain contradictions. According to Lefebvre,

true space’ was thus substituted for the ‘truth of space’, and applied to practical problems...so creating the illusion of a less chaotic reality; social space tended to become indistinguishable from the space of planners, politicians and administrators, and architectural space...from the (mental) space of architects.¹⁵²

Abstract space, understood as such, is not much different from the space described by philosophy in the fusion of the intelligible with the political, of knowledge with power. The outcome is an authoritarian, visually dominated, spatial practice. What is involved in this is “the effective application of the analytic spirit in and through dispersion, division and segregation.”¹⁵³ Such a strategy works out to prioritize immediate interests over future prospects, “while destroying the present in the name of the future at once programmed and utterly uncertain”¹⁵⁴ –a relationship with produced space that is speculative, based on images of ‘lifestyle’.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 286.

¹⁵² Ibid., 300.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 308.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 336.

Section 1.4: A Technical or Political City?

*These issues are nothing new. The strife between those who theorize
The city and those who plan it has worn thin.*¹⁵⁵

*An elucidation of the 'urban question' is becoming urgent, not only
as a means of demystifying the ideology of the dominant classes, but
as a tool of reflection for the political tendencies which, confronted
by new social problems, oscillate between the dogmatism of general
formulations and the apprehension of these questions in the (inverted)
terms of the dominant ideology.*¹⁵⁶

Technical solutions for political problems is as much a mantra for dealing with 'urban issues' today as it was almost 40 years ago when Manuel Castells first wrote the above words. As a young professor trying to understand urban social movements, and relationships between politics, urbanism and political economy, Castells contributed much to the study of urbanism. One of Castells' early realizations was that urban social life was increasingly being analyzed through technocratic means. On the question of the ideological function of studying the city in this manner, Castells remarks,

*the manipulation of social life through the arrangement of the environment is a dream sufficiently linked to the utopists and technocrats to give rise to an ever growing mass of research, aimed at verifying a correlation, empirically observed in another context.*¹⁵⁷

This 'ever growing mass of research,' posed in technical terms, has served to mask the ideological function of achieving the study of 'natural' social organization in the city. In this sense, Castells tells us that an ideology of the urban views forms of social organization "as characteristic of a phase of the evolution of society, closely linked to the

¹⁵⁵ Joey Giamo, "Veil," 163.

¹⁵⁶ Manuel Castells, *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: E. Arnold, 1977), 2.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 96.

technico-natural conditions of human existence and, ultimately, to its environment.”¹⁵⁸

The ideological function of naturalizing urban organization both in the environment of the city, and in social relations, has served to make possible a ‘science of the urban.’¹⁵⁹

This naturalization of the technical study of urban social organization conceals what Castells rightly points out, that this way of viewing the city is not neutral. Rather, it is ideologically charged. The issues that we see at the level of the city are not technical problems in terms of an ‘unnatural’ arrangement, they reveal “the impossibility of a theory that is not centred on the articulation of the ‘urban question’ with political processes.”¹⁶⁰ This is to say, technical solutions will not solve political problems and that the “urban milieu...*must* be understood as social products, and the space/society link must be established as problematic, as an object of research rather than as an interpretive axis of the diversity of social life.”¹⁶¹ Through problematizing this link, urban social organization is de-naturalized, and important political questions arise. Space, in this articulation, is intimately linked to history, and is a social form deriving its meaning vis-à-vis social processes expressed through it. In this manner, the city becomes an important place to study the overlapping relations between space, time, and politics.

Castells writes in *City, Class and Power* that under a technical perspective, social problems in advanced capitalist cities are supposed to be “produced by the forms of organization of space and nature”¹⁶² causing a chain of events whereby technological progress leads to urban concentration. This produces social disorganization and further

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 73.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 74.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 6.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 115.

¹⁶² Manuel Castells, *City, Class and Power*, trans. Elizabeth Lebas (London: MacMillan, 1978), 6.

technological progress in which the ‘artificial milieu’ dominates the ‘natural milieu’. He goes on to neatly summarize this chain of events by the following propositions:

- 1) Social contradictions are encapsulated. Problems are due not to a form of social organization but to a technological and natural process.
- 2) These problems become socially undifferentiated. Classes (as human persons) are considered only to the extent that the key question is that of the relationship to nature. In this way urban... ideologies play down class contradictions and mystify the historical structural roots of the problems they pose.
- 3) The consequence of this way of approaching the question is that the solution to the conflicts and contradictions implied become technical, *not political*. Planning (rational, neutral, and scientific) should replace social and political debate about the decisions, which are at the basis of the concrete manifestations of these problems.¹⁶³

This turn to technical solutions for political problems strips us of our ability to appreciate the diversity that the city offers us, through both social organization, and spatial expression. The need to integrate and stabilize the city through planning displaces questions of power and politics. Castells points out, “the discrepancy between existing modes of political thought in the urban social sciences and actual and increasingly political experiences has been realized.”¹⁶⁴ In this manner, his work is of importance for the analysis of social movements, and central to theorizing urban social movements.¹⁶⁵ Castells saw urban social movements politicizing the city as a locus for social and economic justice issues. While the politics of urban social movements was directed to specific issues and localities, it also tended to raise wider questions of cultural identity and lifestyle, especially as these were linked to the uses of space or to forms of spatial practice. This becomes apparent in Castells’ later work, *The City and the Grassroots*.

¹⁶³ Ibid., emphasis added.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 9

¹⁶⁵ Fran Tonkiss, *Space, the city, and social theory: social relations and urban forms* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity, 2005), 61.

The effect of this recognition was to extend the concept of urban social movements beyond issues of economic inequality and exclusion, and to open up certain cultural and ‘symbolic’ dimensions of urban politics.¹⁶⁶ In recognizing the symbolic dimensions of urban politics, Castells engages more seriously with the politics of meaning—leading to the idea that competing visions of the ‘good’ city can be a basis for political action. These different claims “open onto conflicts over space and power, cut lines of division and difference in the city, and are fought out in disputes over meaning and representation.”¹⁶⁷

Important to disputes over meaning and representation are questions of how the city gets carved up, the functions of spaces, and who gets to use these spaces. In this way, urban space is “both the object of political agency and its medium.”¹⁶⁸ The organization of space in the city is intimately linked to architecture, and as a technical discipline, is consistently expected to produce solutions to urban ‘problems’ of decay, land devaluation, crime, etcetera. With the rise of postmodern architecture as a reaction to modernism, architects are often cited as having a role in the way that we interact with each other in urban public spaces.

What sort of society does this produce? If Lefebvre is correct to assert that space is produced through relationships, then what kinds of perversities and violences are hidden behind the walls of the modern, secure, condominium? The idea of a visual logic has illuminated the importance of image with regards to gentrification practices.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 62-63

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 63.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

However, if we are premising the development and redevelopment of the city on this, what kind of psychogeography of architecture is made apparent in urban spaces?

Chapter 2

Guy Debord wrote in 1955 that the term psychogeography is “the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals.”¹⁶⁹ This definition is intentionally vague as it was intended to provide a broad label for the observation of both chance and predictability in the streets of the city. In this manner, Debord applied the adjective psychogeographical to “the findings arrived at by this type of investigation, to their influence on human feelings, and even more generally to any situation or conduct that seems to reflect the same spirit of discovery.”¹⁷⁰ In this regard, the influence of media on the creation of urban landscapes is of interest for Debord, as “the realization of a chosen emotional situation depends only on the thorough understanding and calculated application of a certain number of concrete techniques.”¹⁷¹ For Debord, psychogeography could be used as both a form of manipulation, and as a way to consciously bring up recognition of urban landscapes through disruption. This chapter focuses on the way in which psychogeographies of the urban landscape can manipulate how the user perceives of both their environment, and of themselves within such a place.

The built environment of the city interacts with us just as much as we interact with each other. Environments built with the intention of controlling the way in which we interact with man-made structures and each other are increasingly becoming normalized in new urban real estate development. How do these spaces articulate a psychogeography

¹⁶⁹ Guy Debord, “Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography,” *Les Levres Nues* 6, (1955), <http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/2>.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

that orders us in a very specific manner? What is sublimated in this geography? If we think of relationships with each other as mediated by architecture, and if we are building environments that are controlled, this has implications for who is excluded in the psychogeography of urban spaces. Further, if these spaces are built to architecturally control, what is repressed underlies the architecture in which we find ourselves.

As these controlled built environments often are coded into space, as being beneficial for interaction with each other and the environment, underlying political intentions are not questioned. To discuss this, I will begin with an explanation of what I mean by ‘architectures of control’ using Lawrence Lessig’s work on coding and control in cyberspace. Second, I will relate this to architecture found in the city to make the claim that architectures of control are being coded into our built environments. The work of Dan Lockton, a doctoral candidate in design engineering discusses this possibility. To articulate how this type of control creates a psychogeography of urban spaces, I will use Giorgio Agamben’s camp along with Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer’s discussion of the myth of enlightenment. Finally, to articulate architectures of control with a psychogeography of urban spaces, I will turn to JG Ballard’s novels *High-Rise*, *The Atrocity Exhibition*, and *Running Wild*. These novels allow me to examine intermeshing between media, landscape, architecture, and psychological experience in controlled built environments. This will allow me to think about the stylized and aestheticized violence formations found in architectures of control, and what sorts of psychologies of control mechanisms are formulated with interactions in these environments.

Section 2.1: Architecturing for Control: Coding with Intent

Stanford law professor Lawrence Lessig uses the term ‘architectures of control’ to describe how authentication processes regulate user behaviour on the Internet. These processes are intended to enforce, reinforce, inscribe and restrict certain behaviours.¹⁷² Lessig tells us that the coding of the Internet is architected so as to make it anonymous. However, this anonymity is simply a product of the Internet’s design, which could be designed and architected differently. He argues that the Internet could become “the most regulable space man has ever known.”¹⁷³ He traces this regulation to the problem of German youth accessing pornography in 1995. CompuServe, the major server at the time of the dispute retaliated that they could not remove porn from every server in the world. However, as a solution, they would design a technology to filter content on a country-by-country basis.¹⁷⁴ In order to do this, CompuServe had to be able to distinguish who a user was, where they were and what they were doing.¹⁷⁵ With this move, the future of regulation was set for the Internet. This is found today in authentication codes, cookies tracking Internet browsing, and targeted behavioural advertising. However, these architectures of control are not only found in the space of the cyber world, but also in the built environments we interact with in the city.

Diana Agrest provides a useful bridge from Internet coding to the coding of space practiced and implemented by architects, planners, and designers. Agrest argues “the case of planning in relation to architecture is a good example [of] a political tool [as] it served as an intermediary between the overall ideology and the architectural world.” This tells us

¹⁷² Dan Lockton, “What are architectures of control in design?” *Design With Intent*, <http://architectures.danlockton.co.uk/what-are-architectures-of-control-in-design>.

¹⁷³ Lawrence Lessig, *Code Version 2.0*. (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 38.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

that architecture and planning can be overtly ideological political tools in space formation.¹⁷⁶ Thinking of planning and architecture in this way allows us theorize about the interstices between cultural and political production. Agrest tells us that by theorizing of architecture as a cultural filter, the urban environment has a text of its own, with the built environment giving cues to those who interact with it.¹⁷⁷ Given the idea of supposed accessibility for all, this is particularly true in public spaces. If we focus on the messages of these cues, new dimensions of built environments are revealed as they are

conceived as carriers of messages, every material object –its real appearance or its properties –becomes a sign that is, in the process of communication it becomes something that designates something different from the designating thing. The fulfillment of this process requires the framework of a language to be accepted by both addresser and addressee... in the process of communication, messages carried by built environment are made according to the rules of a particular system of signs being used.¹⁷⁸

This means that messages of the built environment can be thought of in terms of code, or a system of signification. Thinking about architecture in terms of code has been set aside for thinking in terms of a ‘form/function’ distinction.¹⁷⁹ This distinction presupposes a linkage between function and form, with the latter determining the former. The function of given design presupposes the form of it, meaning that the coding of the space is determined by the form of the architecture. However, function is not the only meaning signified by the built environment.¹⁸⁰ This relates to architectures in the built environment as design with intent often has underlying functions and significations as to how the user is supposed to properly interact with the space. An obvious example of this

¹⁷⁶ Diana Agrest, *Architecture from without: Theoretical Framings for a Critical Practice* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1991), 2.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

is benches with handles delineating seating spaces serving the double function of individualizing seats on a bench, and also preventing other uses of the bench such as lying down or skateboarding on it.

Designing by embedding code as a mechanism of control in a system perhaps orders individuals more powerfully than any external legal regulation. This is because the embedding of order requires the user of the system to use it in a given manner.¹⁸¹

Lockton defines architectures of control in the urban and design environments as “features, structures or methods of operation designed into physical products, software, buildings, city layouts –or indeed any planned system with which a user interacts.”¹⁸² The assumption is that we can engineer spaces and products with more than visually obvious rationales by embedding underlying intentions and significations.

The use of the word ‘architecture’ is intentional as it is in the planned systems that people inhabit that the idea of shaping behaviour is most evident.¹⁸³ Examples of this include ‘traffic calming’ speed bumps, light timers, deliberately uncomfortable café chairs, and CPTED mechanisms such as public spaces that are easily observed by surrounding apartment buildings. This could easily be called ‘defensive architecture’, however it could be more accurately be called ‘disciplinary architecture’ as the user is disciplined into how s/he is supposed to use it. This architecture ‘defends’ the public against unwanted behavior through prevention.¹⁸⁴ However, naming architecture in this manner, while instructive of its true purpose, does not take us very far in thinking about what sort of psychogeographies are created by interacting with these coded environments,

¹⁸¹ Lockton, *Design with Intent*.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

nor does it allow us to think about the sort of violence that occurs when these architectures are coded into space.

Section 2.2: Living Architecture

Michel Foucault articulates discipline as able to create subjects, as “it is the specific technique of power that regards the individual both as object and as instrument of its exercise.”¹⁸⁵ His discussion in *Discipline and Punish* of power is premised on the architectures he describes such as prisons, hospitals, schools, working-class housing estates, and asylums. This is architecture that operates to articulate

an internal...detailed control—to render visible those who are inside it; in more general terms, an architecture that would operate to transform individuals: to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them.¹⁸⁶

This type of architecture speaks of a knowable subject and is rendered as such through the interaction with disciplinary architecture. What is missing from this reading of architecture is the aspect of voluntary subjugation to control through architecture.

Foucault’s description of the disciplined individual becomes fixed through architectural containment. When discussing the plague, and the restrictions on movement imposed to keep it from spreading, Foucault points out that any movement is done at the risk of life—through contagion or punishment.¹⁸⁷ However, this does not take into consideration voluntarily submitting to control through architecture. Voluntary supervision in an observed space renders the individual static through his/her spatial position and does not allow for movement. This voluntary surrender to discipline through

¹⁸⁵ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 2nd ed. Trans. Alan Sheridan (Toronto: Random House Canada, 1995), 170.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 196.

architecture relates to what Foucault describes as “the increase of power created by the panoptic machine [not allowing it to] degenerate into tyranny.”¹⁸⁸ The reason why it cannot degenerate into tyranny is because of voluntary submission to surveillance and securitization through embracing mechanisms and architectures of control. This fixes discipline in the space of the city, regarding anyone or anything nomadic as suspicious, having an influence on our psychological interaction with urban spaces. This type of spatial arrest fixes and stabilizes movement by clearing up confusion and creating a fictitious sense of security in the disciplined space of the coded, architectural space. People are then grouped according to calculations as to how they are supposed to act towards a given space and each other.

The voluntarily regulated human is found in Foucault’s later writings on biopolitics and care of the self, however, he does not relate this back to his original articulation of the disciplined body in architecturally controlled spaces such as the asylum. Nor does he extrapolate the control he sees occurring in the space of the asylum to the scale of the city. Only when catastrophe occurs, such as the plague, do we see regulation of urban space appear in his writing. However, when one begins to inspect how architectures of control create a disciplined imagination of modern cities, we can begin to see some aspects of Giorgio Agamben’s camp.

Agamben begins by discussing Schmitt’s idea of the ‘state of exception.’ The state of exception allows the sovereign to “create and guarantee the situation’ that the law needs for its own validity, [resulting in] not the chaos that precedes order, but rather the

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 214.

situation that results from its suspension.”¹⁸⁹ This situation is that which is taken outside, and not just excluded. The state of exception can be found between the normal juridical order and chaos, a zone of indistinction between outside and inside.¹⁹⁰ This state of exception cannot be thought of in clear limits, rather, it reflects a twisting of limits, as it is “not so much a spatiotemporal suspension as a complex topological figure in which not only the exception and the rule but also the state of nature and law, outside and inside, pass through one another.”¹⁹¹ This ‘space of twisting’ has important implications for the potentiality of bare life as law becomes indistinguishable from life, inasmuch as life is entirely transformed into law.¹⁹²

To discuss this, the distinction between the Greek concepts of *bios* and *zoe* is instructive as it formulates two different ways of thinking about life. *Zoe* is life thought of in terms of animalistic or instinctual life, life generalized or a bare life in Agamben’s terms. *Bios* is described as a ‘higher’ form of life, the good life, life that is sustained by resources, wealth, goods, and participation in politics, a specific life worth living. This state of exception does not so much focus on the subject of life, but rather, what sort of twisting can occur to life, focusing on death and the stripping of *bios* into *zoe* within the space of exception. The bare life found in the state of exception is no longer *bios*, as it has been transformed into *zoe*, which can be killed but not sacrificed in the sovereign sphere.¹⁹³ Agamben seems to claim that these terms are mutually exclusive, and this is a point that he has been criticized on, specifically with regards to his reading of Aristotle.

¹⁸⁹ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 17.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 83.

While this is an interesting argument, it is not within my capabilities to explore this criticism.¹⁹⁴ However, what interests me in Agamben's differentiation between *zoe* and *bios* is that the premise of bare life in the camp makes possible a spatialization and localization within a given territory in which bare life becomes possible and normalized.¹⁹⁵

In this territory, Agamben asserts that the "radical transformation of politics into the realm of bare life legitimate[s] and necessitate[s] total domination."¹⁹⁶ In this space of total domination the reference becomes bare life and it is on this limit where the traditional "distinctions between left and right, liberalism and totalitarianism, public and private lose their clarity and intelligibility and enter into a zone of indistinction."¹⁹⁷ On this limit between public and private space is where architecture of control functions transforming the space of the city into a normalized state of exception. In this regard, Agamben asks, "what is a camp, what is its juridico-political structure, that such events could take place there?"¹⁹⁸ This question challenges us to think of the camp not as historical, but rather a hidden feature of contemporary political space.

We see this today in concepts such as 'good morals,' 'public security and order,' and 'state of danger' that refer to a given situation, rendering obsolete a law able to a priori regulate all cases and situations.¹⁹⁹ This enables Agamben to make the claim that "we must expect not only new camps but also always new and more lunatic regulative

¹⁹⁴ For more on this argument, see James Finlayson, "'Bare Life' in Aristotle's Politics and Agamben's Critical Social Theory," *The Review of Politics* no.72 vol. 1 (2010): 1-71.

¹⁹⁵ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 111.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 122.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 169.

definitions of the inscription of life in the city. The camp, which is now securely lodged within the city's interior, is the new biopolitical *nomos* of the planet."²⁰⁰ This has implications for how we view our relationships with each other in the city. The socially constructed ordering of experience in city spaces Agamben describes articulates a life privileging interaction with territory over that with each other. Our relationships with each other are mediated by territory. The logical flip of this is that our relationships with each other inscribe how we relate with territory, a prospect written out by the spatialization of a given situation necessary for the invocation of the state of exception.

This thesis goes beyond Foucault's idea of the disciplined body in the institution, to inscribing the normalized, permanent spatial arrangement on the space of the city, throwing "a sinister light on the model by which social sciences, sociology, urban studies and architecture today are trying to conceive and organize the public space of the world's cities."²⁰¹ The stripping of life in the space of the camp presupposes a loss of authenticity where authentic forms of life become no more than nostalgia. The standardization and sanitization of the city through architectures of control has much the same effect as visual experience continues to be privileged. Ultimately, the individualization and suppression of difference in the name of security and 'good order,' sublimates the perversity and violence of the controlled built environment.

Adorno and Horkheimer's prophetic words come true: "anything which does not conform to the standard of calculability and utility must be viewed with suspicion."²⁰² Why do we view those who do not conform as suspicious? What myths are found in

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 176.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 181.

²⁰² Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 3.

designing for the benefit of society? If the camp can be found in the space of the city, surely the iteration of this mythical idea of order through coding space becomes necessary. Through the eradication of different ways of experiencing the city, we are able to “learn from nature how to use it to dominate wholly both it and human beings”²⁰³ this is clear in the built environment of the city. Nature in this space is only representative, a mere replication as it becomes the object of human purchase. This strange objectification allows both nature and the ‘Other’ to be rendered visible, while covering up the perversities implicit in the insecurities of thinking about what we are hiding and repressing in ourselves. Architecture is then able to mime and inscribe order, enlightenment and the idealized human being/body. Adorno and Horkheimer tell us that “in the guise of regularity, [humans are imprisoned] in the cycle now objectified in the laws of nature, to which they believe they owe their security as free subjects.”²⁰⁴ This false sense of security fixes and orders, banishing anything reminding of unsecured life. This is apparent in the individualization of life, and the underlying perversities found in both the city and media that become repressed.

Adorno and Horkheimer explain that truth is equated with classificatory thought, learned through subordination and order.²⁰⁵ In this space of classified, controlled thought, humans believe themselves free of fear, as standardized behaviour becomes the only natural, ‘decent’ way to act. Related to this normalization of behaviour is the relationship we have with spatiality, in that space pre-determines our relationships with each other. This standardized behaviour becomes inscribed in the city through architectures of

²⁰³ Ibid., 2.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 8.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 10.

control and it is in these spaces that those who do not fit are made spectacle of. In this manner, the

pitiless ban on regression appears like an edict of fate; the denial is so total that it is no longer registered consciously. Those blinded by civilization have contact with their own tabooed mimetic traits only through certain gestures and forms of behaviour they encounter in others, as isolated, shameful residues in their rationalized environment. What repels them as alien is all too familiar.²⁰⁶

The shameful residues in 'rationalized' environments are taken to the extreme in architectures of control. That which is rendered 'alien' is made permanent with intention. Shamed action becomes taboo, and only through mimesis and transference to other environments found as mediascapes, can we find the violence that is repressed in the concrete space of the city.

The politics of violence, death and catastrophe pile up in the disenchanted space of media. Media is a convenient place to re-inscribe these barbarisms, as it effectively sanitizes violence into visual simulations, removing them from all the senses except sight and hearing. This allows us to passively observe and hear that which we recognize as all too familiar, stripping it of touch, taste and smell. In the chapter "Elements of Anti-Semitism," Adorno and Horkheimer articulate that this removal of three senses, particularly the sense of smell, allows us to have distance from that deemed perverse as "the act of smelling, which is attracted without objectifying, reveals most sensuously the urge to lose oneself in identification with the Other... in civilization, therefore, smell is regarded as a disgrace."²⁰⁷ The stripping of the proximal senses allows for the safety of distance through a visual logic as described in my first chapter. This has the effect of relegating the messiness of authentic life and death, to simulation.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 149.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 151.

Section 2.3: Running Wild into the Atrocity Exhibition of the High Rise

*I think that new emotions and new feelings are being created, that modern technology is beginning to reach into our dreams and change our whole way of looking at things, and perceiving reality, that more and more it is drawing us away from contemplating ourselves to contemplating its world.*²⁰⁸

JG Ballard's work is an interesting interjection into the problematic of relational experience with the built environment. Much of the discussion in this thesis has implied that designers or architects consciously inscribe intent into a system or environment.²⁰⁹ However, Ballard in much of his writing divorces the architect or designer from conscious intent.²¹⁰ In the voiceover for the 1971 short video *Crash*, Ballard asks, "what effect does using these building have on us? Are the real myths of this century being written in terms of these huge unnoticed structures?"²¹¹

Ballard explores the psychogeography of urban space in a number of ways and his writing style reflects this by concentrating on "inner changes and self-discovery rather than action, on imagery rather than plot."²¹² By reflecting on the inner catastrophes of the modern individual in built environments, Ballard challenges Foucault's thesis that Western society excludes madness in order to allow for various kinds of social hygiene and moral uniformity.²¹³ Instead, he argues that madness is sublimated, not excluded, through ordered urban landscapes leading to tighter social and psychological control. He

²⁰⁸ J.G. Ballard, 1971. Cf. Dan Lockton, "JG Ballard & Architectures of Control," *Ballardian*, <http://ballardian.com/jg-ballard-architectures-of-control>.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Michel Delville, *JG Ballard: Writers and their Work* (Plymouth: Northcote House Publishers, 1998), 13.

²¹³ Ibid.

comments that this sublimation in the controlled space of the city manifests itself in media landscapes. This emerges as

.a laboratory designed specifically to cure [us] of all [our] obsessions. The brutalizing newsreels of civil wars and assassinations, the stylization of televised violence into an anthology of design statements [are] matched by a pornography of science that took its material, not from nature, but from the deviant curiosity of the scientist.²¹⁴

However, the ‘deviant curiosity of the scientist’ is not completely removed from architectures of control, as there is a psychopathology behind these landscapes. This is explored in *The Atrocity Exhibition* as such landscapes “convey the erosion of human relationships and the individual self into a state of two-dimensional anonymity.”²¹⁵ It is this anonymity that allows for the exploration of human beings who tend, through visual distance, to become engulfed in the world of objects and even “become mere extensions of the geometries of situations.”²¹⁶ While *The Atrocity Exhibition* tends to focus on the media aesthetics of sex, and the negation of the self in relegating perversities to media representations, there is an important spatiality to this text. Most of the short chapters find humans interacting in architecturally stylized aesthetic media environments such as cinemas and laboratories.

The controversial chapter “Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan” discusses a spectators’ engulfment in a ‘geometric situation’ illustrating Ballard’s interest in the covert libidinal strategies of technological landscapes. He describes the results of studies in which the subject, in terminal paresis, is required to design simulated car crashes in which the death of Ronald Reagan is assured. Ultimately, the goal of the experiment is to

²¹⁴ J.G. Ballard, *The Kindness of Women* (London: Harper Collins, 1991), 185.

²¹⁵ Delville, *J.G. Ballard*, 24.

²¹⁶ J.G. Ballard Cf. *Ibid.*

define the auto disaster of maximized audience arousal on the basis of Reagan's optimum sex-death.²¹⁷ While it would be easy to say that Ballard is suggesting that the inherent pleasure or sexy experience of the car crash can be found in our mediascape, it is perhaps more correct to state that the main target of Ballard's work is to critique media culture's trivialization of cruelty through packaging it into a commercial product.²¹⁸

This interpretation is apt, but it misses reading the spatiality of the 'sex-death' in this chapter, and the interfacing of the crashed car on the libidinal pleasures found in 'fucking' Ronald Reagan. This strategy of catastrophically displaying the stylizations of violence reflects Ballard's use of Freud's distinction between the latent and manifest content of the subconscious mind. This, he argues, should be applied to the 'outer world' of "a reality increasingly dominated by an endless, metastasic flow of free-floating images and signs."²¹⁹ This is reflected in the significations found in coded architectures of control, as it can be interpreted as symptomatic of the psychosexual repressions found in our daily lives. Subsequently, the comment that "Ballard...emerges less as a fiction writer than as a secular exegete of the emotional and spiritual drought of post-industrial Western culture" becomes particularly telling when we think of architectures of control as creating an image of normalcy through sublimating deviance.

Repressed humans in architecturally controlled landscapes are further explored in Ballard's later novels *High-Rise* and *Running Wild*. In *High-Rise* Ballard comments that "the multiplication of images in our mass media world and the subsequent trivialization

²¹⁷ J.G. Ballard, *The Atrocity Exhibition* (London: Jonathon Cape Ltd., 1970), 152.

²¹⁸ Delville, *J.G. Ballard*, 30.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

of war, murder and rape have given rise to a new semi-unconscious logic of violence.”²²⁰

In *The Kindness of Women*, Ballard reflects on this theme by explaining that the gradual alienation from direct, or unmediated experience, combined with the unlimited capacities afforded by modern technology, has left us “free to pursue our own psychopathologies as a game.”²²¹ The violence and perversity underlying this ‘semi-unconscious logic’ become the only way in which the highly individualized characters can relate to each other in the novel *High-Rise*

The theme of the psychopathological, semi-conscious logic of violence in the media saturated human is worked out spatially in the novel *High-Rise*. Long before it became a site for redevelopment and gentrification, Ballard set his novel in London’s Docklands. In a manner eerily predictive of the type of condominium development that has become so popular today, Ballard’s protagonist, Dr. Robert Laing, describes his apartment as an “over-priced cell, slotted almost at random into the cliff face of the apartment building, [which] he bought after his divorce specifically for its peace, quiet and anonymity.”²²² Laing goes on to describe that he “found something alienating about the concrete landscape of the project –an architecture designed for war, on the unconscious level if no other”²²³ portraying a false sense of security in the building. Further, the tenants we find in the high rise are of a socio-economic level that relates to the standardized, securitized building:

The two thousand tenants formed a virtually homogenous collection of well-to-do professional people –lawyers, doctors, tax consultants, senior academics and advertising executives, along with a smaller group of airline hostesses sharing

²²⁰ Ibid., 37.

²²¹ Ballard, *The Kindness of Women*, 221.

²²² Ibid., 7.

²²³ Ibid., 10.

apartments. By the usual financial and educational yardsticks they were probably closer to each other than the members of any conceivable social mix, with the same tastes and attitudes, fads and styles –clearly reflected in the choice of automobiles in the parking-lots that surrounded the high-rise, in the elegant but somehow standardized way in which they furnished their apartments, in the selection of sophisticated foods in the supermarket delicatessen, in the tones of their self-confident voices.²²⁴

However ‘refined’ and ‘enlightened’ Ballard’s characters appear to be, they reflect the catastrophic intertwining between outer and inner landscapes, as evidenced by the unemotional Laing. This is exemplified by the first sentence of the novel: “as he sat on his balcony eating the dog, Dr. Robert Laing reflected on the unusual events that had taken place within this huge apartment building during the previous three months.”²²⁵ While some commentaries have interpreted the catastrophic events that occur in the building as the residents’ descent into barbarism, I wish to offer that this interpretation overlooks the fundamental aspect of modern alienation apparent in the novel, made possible by the intermeshing of technology with architecture.

At the beginning of the novel, Laing acts as Ballard’s mouthpiece in articulating the alienation from others found in the urban high rise dwelling, as it is “a huge machine designed to serve, not the collective body of tenants, but the individual resident in isolation.”²²⁶ In this space, relationships are premised on spatial proximity, inflecting a certain architectural and social uniformity in the securitized space of the building. The overt self-sufficiency of the building, equipped with every modern convenience masks the underlying tensions between the tenants. These tensions soon become apparent to Laing as “the apparent equilibrium of the apartment building is constantly on the verge of

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid., 7.

²²⁶ Ibid.

being destroyed by a growing number of minor confrontations, frustrations and personal rivalries lurking beneath an illusion of civility and normalcy.”²²⁷

The coercive structure of the high rise eventually mounts pressure on the ability of the tenants to express their individual narcissism. Delville concisely illustrates this point as

Ballard’s dystopian fable is [about] the way in which the new man-made environment panders to a number of archetypal anxieties and perversities, some of which may lead to the final disintegration of the ‘social contract’ that binds the characters to each other.²²⁸

The structures and mechanisms found in controlled built environments repress interaction in the name of security and order. In the space of the high-rise, Laing discusses this repression in terms of “a Pandora’s box whose thousand lids were one by one inwardly opening.”²²⁹ Reflecting on the psychogeography of this architecturally controlled space,

Laing comments that:

a new social type was being created by the apartment building, a cool, unemotional personality impervious to the psychological pressures of high-rise life, with minimal needs for privacy, who thrived like an advanced species of machine in the neutral atmosphere. This was the sort of resident who was content to do nothing but sit in his over-priced apartment, watch television with the sound turned down, and wait for his neighbour to make a mistake... This social type has no qualms about the invasion of their privacy by government agencies and data-processing organizations, and if anything welcomed these invisible intrusions, using them for their own purposes.²³⁰

The images found throughout this novel are disturbing because they are all too familiar.

These are people that “thrive on the rapid turnover of acquaintances, the lack of involvement with others, and the total self-sufficiency of lives which, needing nothing,

²²⁷ Delville, *J.G. Ballard*, 49-50.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

²²⁹ Ballard, *High-Rise*, 35.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

were never disappointed.”²³¹ Consequently, high-rises, electronic media, and the large-scale entrance of mass-merchandized technology into our everyday lives affect our sense of self, particularly in relation to architectures of control.²³²

Although it would be easy to retreat into some sort of ‘panic morality’ to explain acceptance of this changed interaction with built and media environments as necessary for security against one threat or another, Ballard never invokes this. Rather, even during the most catastrophic of events, Ballard’s characters peacefully accept their ‘devolutionary’ descent and are anything but desperate. This peaceful acceptance is especially apparent in the character of Royal. Despite his role as one of the architects of the building, Royal does not take responsibility for the consequences of his work.²³³ The character Talbot discusses an implication of intent on part of the architect. He explains that the building is “a powerhouse of resentments” and is linked to the tenants “working off the most extraordinary backlog of infantile aggressions.”²³⁴ He goes on to explain,

it’s a mistake to imagine that we’re all moving towards a state of happy primitivism. The model here seems to be less the noble savage than our un-innocent post-Freudian selves, outraged by all that over-indulgent toilet-training, dedicated breast-feeding and parental affection –obviously a more dangerous mix than anything our Victorian forebears had to cope with. Our neighbours had happy childhoods to a man and still feel angry. Perhaps they resent never having had a chance to become perverse.²³⁵

In stating this, Talbot addresses the underlying resentment found in the relationship between the tenants, the building, and each other. Linking this to technology, Laing tells us “the true light of the high-rise was the metallic flash of the Polaroid camera... which

²³¹ Ibid., 35.

²³² Delville, *J.G. Ballard*, 64.

²³³ Lockton, *Ballardian*.

²³⁴ Ballard, *High-Rise*, 109.

²³⁵ Ibid.

recorded a moment of hoped-for violence for some later voyeuristic pleasure.”²³⁶

Ballard’s attentiveness to the emergence of modern media technology within the domain of the aesthetic highlights his attention to the effects technology has on the ‘chance to become perverse.’ In this iteration, the repression of these urges through spatial and architectural control occurs through the built environment and through the transference of emotional experience to media experience.

The attentiveness to architecture and the role of new media technologies in Ballard’s work reflects his ability to recognize the former’s role in triggering violent and radical changes within the individual. This implies that the aesthetics of architecture and media are capable of making statements about politics and social ordering.²³⁷ This recognition undermines the idea of a rationally thinking, independent individual who is not influenced by the environment surrounding him/her. This reveals what most concerns Ballard, “the secret nightmare logic of contemporary violence.”²³⁸ According to him, the geometrical stylization of this logic in architecture shadows a totalitarian view of the ‘common good’ leading to the psychological confinement of the individual.²³⁹ This echoes with Adorno and Horkheimer’s project in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that claims, “the wholly enlightened earth is radiant with triumphant calamity.”²⁴⁰ This is revealed in Ballard’s work through the notion that the post-Freudian, enlightened individual is more than capable of cruelty and violence.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Delville, *J.G. Ballard*, 87-88.

²³⁸ Ibid., 30.

²³⁹ Ibid., 87.

²⁴⁰ Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 1.

The theme of resentment underlies Ballard's later novel, *Running Wild*. This resentment is found in children raised in the transparent, safe, gated panoptic community of Pangbourne Village. The novel opens with a scene where all the adults in the village are murdered, and the children have all disappeared –presumed kidnapped. In the resulting investigation, Ballard reveals what he considers to be the “affective flaw in the heart of the late capitalist machine age.”²⁴¹ He claims that feeling, when it is evoked is tied to perversion found in entertainment, advertising, technology and architecture. This powerfully displaces human relationships into the mechanical images of consumer culture.²⁴² The narrator of this novel, a psychiatrist, speaks of the children as being suffocated by care and attention, in a life of “unlimited tolerance and understanding [which] erased all freedom and all trace of emotion –for emotion was never needed.”²⁴³ Through this erasure of affect, Ballard problematizes the benign gaze of authority found in contemporary practices of architecture and surveillance and the formation of the subject they invoke. This subject has an interior that has become redundant, much like Agamben's idea of bare life. The theme of the cool, unemotional, calculating individual found in both *High-Rise* and *Running Wild* serve as warnings to one of the obsessions running through Ballard's work: the effect of architecture on individual subject formation.

Dan Lockton, in his article on Ballard's work, explains that *High-Rise* explores the ways that architectural decisions can directly impact behaviour. According to Lockton, Ballard's later works, such as *Running Wild*, concentrate on the impact

²⁴¹ Dennis Foster, “JG Ballard's Empire of the Senses: Perversion and the Failure of Authority,” *PMLA* 108, no. 3 (1993): 519, <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublication?journalCode=pmla>.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ J.G. Ballard, *Running Wild* (London: Century Hutchinson, 1988), 82.

architecture bears on the construction of social and psychological environments and, ultimately, its' users. This picks up on themes in *High-Rise* and *Running Wild* serving as a link from his exploration of the architectural and technological effects on users, to the interface between technology, architecture and our bodies. Foster summarizes,

the car and the camera provide the coherent body that the contemporary subject lacks, the image of power and independence human beings aspire to, and advertising, politics and entertainment insinuate these productions into current habits of language and consumption, shaping individuals' capacities for pleasure. In this way the perverse and the political become intertwined.²⁴⁴

This is also evident in *Super-Cannes* where Ballard articulates the speed in which a moral order is engineered into our lives “along with the speed limits and the security systems.”²⁴⁵

Section 2.4: Conclusion

Ballard's work allows for reflection on the implications of architectures of control on how we relate to each other in the modern city. The relational aesthetic we find ourselves engaged in is increasingly defined in terms of control, security and order. In relation to this, Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* reveals that the myth of enlightenment is important in how we distance ourselves from affect. Enlightenment effectively mitigates emotion, and allows for the perversities and actions to become associated with the most violent representations in media. This allows us to distance ourselves from subliminal perversities through defining our relationships with each other, architecture, and emotion through control. This is reflective on the idea of visual logic described by Lefebvre in my first chapter as the negation of violence by

²⁴⁴ Foster, “Empire of the Senses,” 527.

²⁴⁵ Lockton, *Ballardian*.

media allows for distance from the images viewed, and emotions normally associated with such situations.

By reflecting on the psychogeography of urban streets, we can recognize what Debord was apt to point out, that the built environments we find ourselves in affect us not only visually but also emotionally. This becomes political when those emotions are violently directed toward those who make us feel insecure. As was noted in the epigraph,

people are quite aware that some neighborhoods are sad and others pleasant. But they generally simply assume elegant streets cause a feeling of satisfaction and that poor street are depressing, and let it go at that. In fact, the variety of possible combinations of ambiances, analogous to the blending of pure chemicals in an infinite number of mixtures, gives rise to feelings as differentiated and complex as any other form of spectacle can evoke.²⁴⁶

It is not so easy to simply write off some areas of the city simply because they do not fit within the dominant visual logic of the city. To do so creates not only a homogenous city architecturally, it also dispels diversity in how the city is experienced by different people.

This stripping of affect from life, and the ordering mechanisms found in newly architected buildings articulate together in catastrophically perverse and violent terms in *High Rise*. The individualization of urban life, along with the spatialization of relations found in the novel reminds us that Foucault's disciplined subject more than internalizes the exterior mechanisms of control; the post-Freudian individual represses any emotional urges, deeming them perverse and/or insecure. This reflects the new relational aesthetic found in the city, which leaves us with important questions about what sort of messages we are coding into architecturally controlled spaces. If we think about relationships between individuals, as being mediated by architecture, then there is an effect on the formation and control of the subject, described in the work of JG Ballard. How can we

²⁴⁶ Debord, "Introduction."

begin to re-imagine the order imposed on the subject by the built environment? This is a question I will turn to in my final chapter. I will analyze this in regard to the theories of two architects, Peter Eisenman and Bernard Tschumi.

Chapter 3

As the discipline that claims to define space, architecture presents an important avenue for political theory to think through the nature of space and place. Architecture takes the category of space as a given, and as such is caught up in the project of determining boundaries. Through this project, architecture constructs the limit, and draws boundaries as much as political theory seeks to question, or problematize them. By turning to architectural theory, I hope to question the way in which architecture determines boundaries. By looking outside of the disciplinary boundaries of the canon of political thought we can begin to look at the ways limits are articulated by those who find themselves straddling the ‘line’ between theory and practice. Architecture, as the discipline that requires its practitioners both to think and to act with regards to space, presents an opportunity to do so. This will hopefully allow me to begin to think of some ways to disrupt the normalization of control in architecture.

The work of Peter Eisenman and Bernard Tschumi draws attention to the role that architecture plays in creating discourses about coherent communities. Their work is useful in this thesis as it allows for me to think of ways to disrupt claims to securing ‘the’ community by naturalizing a certain conception as to what constitutes urbanism and who is included in this project. Thematically, their work addresses the theme of displacing meaning in architecture. In this manner, they privilege dissonance and difference over coherence and sameness. Both architects wish to intervene and contradict naturalized orders of architecture by questioning foundational premises in architecture such as form follows function. By disrupting naturalized discourses of architecture’s role in shaping

social relations, both architects claim their work is political. Eisenman and Tschumi question the limits of the imaginable for how architecture is conceived and the intervention it makes into social life.

Section 3.1: Disrupting Architecture

Peter Eisenman's work spans over three decades from his doctoral dissertation in 1963, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, to currently holding the Louis I. Kahn Visiting Professor of Architecture at Yale University.²⁴⁷ Eisenman has been recognized with many accolades for his work as an architect, and while his built projects merit discussion, his theoretical work is more widely recognized as having re-engaged the social, cultural and political aspects of architecture. Broadly speaking, Eisenman's early work attempts to construct a critical architecture, asking questions of *how* architecture can be used critically. Architectural critic Jeffrey Kipnis separates Eisenman's theoretical work into two 'acts': in the first act, we find "a young, arrogant architect [who] proposes to transform architecture from an artistic into an intellectual discipline."²⁴⁸ In this act, Eisenman theorizes about architecture as autonomous through attempts to disrupt what it means to 'dwell' and 'house' by creating (on paper) a series of abstract numbered houses.²⁴⁹ These houses are "an interrogation of new possibilities of occupiable form [in which] the initial act of architecture is an act of dislocation...the essence of the act of architecture is the dislocation of an ever-reconstituting metaphysic of architecture."²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ Eisenman Architects, *Principals*, <http://www.eisenmanarchitects.com>

²⁴⁸ Jeffrey Kipnis and Peter Eisenman, *Written into the Void: selected writings, 1990-2004* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), vii.

²⁴⁹ Joan Ockman, cf. *Eisenman/Krier: Two Ideologies*, ed. Cynthia Davidson (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2005), 9.

²⁵⁰ Peter Eisenman, *Eisenman inside/out: selected writings, 1963-1988* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 209

Eisenman makes the claim that architecture is constituted through dislocating concepts of dwelling to re-think our relationship to the built environment, and what it means to occupy form. This theme of dislocation runs through Eisenman's architectural and theoretical career in an attempt to move architecture away from its' traditional role as the symbolization of customary use, foundations, and security.²⁵¹ By attempting to dislocate architecture, Eisenman interprets "the history of architecture as a record of heresy...retold as orthodoxy"²⁵² whereby the foundations and origins of architecture are not questioned.

Eisenman's thought began to shift in the 1980s through his meeting and working with philosopher Jacques Derrida on a garden for Tschumi's Parc de la Villette in Paris.²⁵³ Derrida confronted Eisenman with the proposition that architecture is "more than building design or buildings. It must be explored as having to do with relationships, including urbanism, of course, but moving beyond what one calls 'culture' in general."²⁵⁴ This prompted Eisenman to think of critical architecture less in terms of 'how' and more in terms of 'why'. Through working with Derrida, Eisenman came upon a crucial turning point in his theorization of architecture: the concept of architecture as writing. This conceptualization builds on his use of Noam Chomsky's ideas of generative and context-free grammar to generate new and spontaneous architectural codes as a way to liberate architecture from cultural form. Although he moved from language to writing, Eisenman continued to hold onto the idea of architecture as de-linked from context. He began to

²⁵¹ Jeffrey Kipnis, cf. Peter Eisenman and Jacques Derrida, *Chora L Works*, eds. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leiser (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997), 139.

²⁵² Kipnis, *Written into the Void*, x.

²⁵³ The importance of this park will be discussed at length below with regards to Tschumi.

²⁵⁴ Derrida, *Choral Works*, 170.

think of architecture in terms of absence and presence, as constituting not only the built work, but also what is in-between. This shift would have important implications leading to his later work focusing on the themes of affect versus effect, and the differentiation of reality from image, which I will explore further in the following sections.

The debates between Eisenman and Leon Krier held at the Yale School of Architecture in November 2002 are important in this regard as they emphasize the differences between Eisenman's thought and that of his contemporaries.²⁵⁵ While Krier argues for intervention as a "planner and an architect to repair the wounds and make the body whole again, [Eisenman] teases out discontinuity and memorializes loss."²⁵⁶ Krier imagines the city as a coherent whole, with an ameliorative relationship between architecture and the city. Eisenman understands the city as "the place of difference and otherness [where] our experience of [it] is fragmented and discontinuous."²⁵⁷ It is in this fragmented and discontinuous experience that Eisenman locates his architecture. Thus, the theme of dis-location figures prominently in his attempts to liberate architecture from context and meaning. It is perhaps in this dis-location that Eisenman challenges the linking of capital to the built environment, and the police order that has become naturalized in the imagination of 'revitalized' urban public places. By disrupting this narrative, Eisenman's theoretical work holds potential for architecture that is not premised on a narrative of coherence, but on difference and multiplicity. With these thoughts, I will turn to some of the central themes found in Eisenman's writing on

²⁵⁵ Stern, *Eisenman/Krier*, 7.

²⁵⁶ Allen, *Eisenman/Krier*, 69. These debates were held in the context of 9/11, with both architects thinking about the role of architecture in addressing tragedy and loss.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

architecture, to further explore the relationship between architecture and the politics of coherence and aesthetics.

The difference in the conceptualization of the city by the two architects reflects different approaches to how ‘problems’ in the city should be resolved. Eisenman, by reflecting on the city as spontaneous and discontinuous refuses the idea that city is necessarily coherent and stable. Krier thinks of the city as a natural, coherent organized whole. Technical solutions can ‘fix’ and stabilize the city under this rhetoric. The image of the coherent city is ultimately political in nature because in imagining an order, philosophers and architectural theorists strive for the same goal, inscribing order through building.

In order to achieve intelligible use, we imagine that architecture must have meaning to its’ users. Through the inscription of meaning in building, architecture becomes the “scene of the proper and a scene of stabilities unlike any other –physical, aesthetic, historic, economic, social and political.”²⁵⁸ In this manner, architecture, through the giving of form, becomes more than building aesthetically pleasing objects, rather,

it is the presentation of an order, whether it be directed toward the clarity of concept and function of a specific building, or toward the clarity of the relationship between the individual building and the total environment. Form is therefore specific yet at the same time general. It is architecture’s particular means of expressing intent and accommodating function, and it is its general means for creating an ordered environment.²⁵⁹

In recognizing form as the giving of order, Eisenman wishes to demonstrate that architecture has an order of meaning already at work, if repressed. His ideas of ‘presence of absence’ and ‘absence of presence’ evidence his effort to articulate another mode of

²⁵⁸ Kipnis, *Chora L Work*, 138.

²⁵⁹ Eisenman, *Inside/Out*, 9.

intelligibility in architecture. Through work with Jacques Derrida's idea of deconstruction, Eisenman theorizes an architecture that has the possibility of questioning meaning, having relevance as more than the inscription of a political order.

Intellectually, Eisenman began to shift his thought from architecture as a language to architecture as writing. This shift caused him to gravitate

toward the texts of Derrida, the name synonymous with the most radical yet compelling reflection on writing offered by contemporary philosophy... Noting that the structures and processes that semiotics had identified as the basis of all signification were precisely the same as those associated with phonetic writing's relevance to speech, Derrida generalizes the concept of writing into 'archi-writing'. This provides [Eisenman] with the intellectual framework within which to theorize architecture as writing. Concomitantly, the philosopher demonstrates that writing, now the very possibility of meaning, also always destabilizes meaning.²⁶⁰

In applying Derrida's work to architecture, Eisenman began to recognize the significance of architecture as cultural research and discourse, that is, as significantly different from the building profession. This difference lies in his proposal that "uniquely in architecture, the distance between the architecture signifier and signified has collapsed to an absolute minimum, beneath awareness."²⁶¹ For him, this means that in the everyday experience of architecture, cultural discourse is not recognized. Architecture is not conceived of as a political act that inscribes meaning and order into the fabric of the city. The conceptualization of architecture as apolitical, in Eisenman's words, occurs because architecture "has always been subordinated and legitimated by laws of resemblance and utility in such dicta as form follows function. If form follows function, then form already has meaning, and when form follows function, form is already subordinated to the laws

²⁶⁰ Kipnis, *Written into the Void*, xii.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, xx.

of resemblance and utility.”²⁶² In this manner, the form of architecture already has a preordained cultural meaning because of the function that is attributed to it.

‘Meaning’ in architecture is a dogma that Eisenman seeks to critique and problematize. Eisenman defines the term critical as understanding the

unconscious repressions that exist in any of the internal mechanisms of a discourse, particularly in reference to an idea of origins. A critical text therefore makes the subject aware of the unconscious forms of repression that determine consciousness. In this sense, a critical architecture is not merely one that is a manifestation of being or meaning but rather a manifestation of the unconscious relationships that determine being and meaning.²⁶³

In thinking of architecture as a cultural discourse, Eisenman opens up room for critique of existing power structures that inscribe meaning into an architectural site. By turning to the minimalist work of sculptor Robert Morris and artist Donald Judd, Eisenman concretizes his critique of the internal logic of architectural meaning. Both Morris and Judd attempt to take meaning away from objects in the “sense of meaning which is received from an aesthetic experience, or the meaning which is received from a representational image.”²⁶⁴ Judd and Morris serve as a reminder to Eisenman that cultural meaning is created through coded structure, and that an object has the possibility of having no meaning other than as the physical object itself. Through his study of these two artists, Eisenman differentiates between two ways of ascribing meaning to architecture: through aesthetic experience and representational image.

By refuting what is viewed as a central assumption in architecture, Eisenman’s theoretical work requires us to question what effective architecture means. He articulates this in terms of the relationship between an object and its function or meaning. According

²⁶² Eisenman, *Written into the Void*, 57.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 129.

²⁶⁴ Eisenman, *Inside/Out*, 13.

to this logic, architecture is only good if it is effectively serves more people. This is particularly apparent in the utilitarian creed of modern architecture where form follows function, and users are supposed to ascribe what the building is to be used for by its given form. This allows the architect to pre-determine the meaning and use of a building before it is built. In this manner, the architecture becomes elaborated as a part of a preordained social and political program, with the expectation that in order to be good, architecture must be effective. Eisenman contrasts effectiveness with affect, whereby architecture provides a “sensate response to a physical environment”²⁶⁵ without expecting a certain use of that architecture.

Eisenman criticizes the turn in architecture to effectiveness as a move towards naturalizing architecture as part of a social and political order that privileges a preconceived notion of ‘the good,’ reducing the architect to a decorator. Eisenman argues that in the articulation of architecture as effective, the affective experience of a place no longer register much importance. Rather, the appearance of a place as effective becomes more important. This leads to repetition and standardization of a certain conceptualization of ‘good’ architecture. This turn to standardization of architecture lends to a shift in the language from architecture that is contingent on cultural differences to a language that naturalizes a certain standard of architecture removed from culture. This means that the “question of the possible is removed, and cultural shifts in architecture are limited.”²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Eisenman, *Written into the Void*, 130.

Through the conceptualization and planning of a city, the ideology of a political order that starts with Plato's Republic is taken for neutral or natural.²⁶⁷ The representation and the image of the city becomes the cultural discourse about how a city is imagined to be and assumed to look like. Eisenman disputes this representation of the city as static or natural and attempts to imagine a different discourse about architecture in terms of time and event articulated with space. By doing so, Eisenman hopes to question the stabilization of aesthetic experience through perspectival distance and a visual logic. He writes that "perspective is even more virulent in architecture than in painting because of the imperious demands of the eye and the body to orient itself in architectural space through processes of rational perspectival ordering."²⁶⁸ This move away from perspectival ordering in architectural space makes room for experiences that do not rely on the eye, and thus attempt to privilege other ways of experiencing architecture. This move away from perspective opens up room to dispute architecture that attempts to naturalize a certain image of the city.

Disputing representational images of what architecture is supposed to look like, and how it is to function allows Eisenman to question traditional descriptions in which architecture "embodies meaning and [is] legitimized by function."²⁶⁹ Architecture, in this description, is not only the literal structure of a building, but also the inscription of a foundational structure. This description also embodies the idea of stability, allowing the naturalization of a specific image of the city through building in a certain manner.

Through being foundational, architecture contributes significantly to the rationale of

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 32. According to Eisenman, architecture is conceptualized spatially as on a Cartesian grid system containing Platonic solids.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 36.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 51.

settling and claiming space. By establishing foundations, architecture establishes a discourse about how the city develops. Historically, according to Eisenman,

it was [the architect] Alberti who first said that painting's most important task was to establish a *storia*, a history that would allow painting to develop. This history required a subject, and from that, a relationship between the subject and the object –how the subject views the object. At this point, the object becomes more than just a thing. Because it now has a history, it begins to have a form, a representation, and a meaning, and thus a metaphysics beyond its being, which reads into being, into form. The entire enterprise of metaphysics in the arts and architecture can be said to be lodged within this 'invention' of history, and thus of meaning, by an unsuspecting subject.²⁷⁰

It is this relationship between subject and object, the inference of meaning from an object through a given historical discourse about it that makes architecture political. This is because the inference of meaning into a given object is a political act of power that becomes naturalized as apolitical.

Section 3.2: Displacing Architecture

Frederic Jameson writes that this naturalization of what architecture is properly supposed to mean lends to architecture's mimesis of the urban to inscribe a sanitized, ordered, image of the city. This ideological move, according to Jameson, allows for the reality of the city to be symbolically replaced by "some glittering postmodern space [which] is very precisely tantamount to a class defense mechanism, in which privileged enclaves are sealed off against a city whose possibilities have been written off in advance."²⁷¹ This 'glittering postmodern space' Jameson describes is embedded in the remaking of the city in spectacular terms, in which meaning is inscribed through

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 114.

²⁷¹ Peter Eisenman, *Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial: Eisenman Architects, 1988-1998* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003), 64.

representation and secured aesthetic experiences. This is the city in which the meaning of a place is secured before anyone experiences it.

Eisenman's work provides us with a critique of that 'glittering postmodern space' as he theorizes about architecture that displaces and questions the traditions of the discipline. Instead, he is

interested in the psychologization of space [which] he achieves by consciously breaking with the conventional harmonistic concepts of space...he is not interested in the harmonic, orderly space that gives orientation. He is not interested in the canonical space but in its opposite: the lack of orientation, the uncertain, the baffling, claustrophobic space.²⁷²

In constructing these types of spaces, Eisenman uses architecture as a critical act, to question current methods and accepted rules, to attempt to change the conditions imposed by constructs of space and time.²⁷³ Eisenman's architecture attempts to transport it out of the sphere of the useful or meaningful. In doing so, he questions our assumptions of dwelling, intelligibility and comfort.²⁷⁴ To cite Thomas Patin, Eisenman's architecture participates in the work of "many recent artists, architects and critics to rethink and rewrite the relationship of the arts to the wider culture in which they find themselves."²⁷⁵

This critical act follows from Michel Foucault's work in *Discipline and Punish* in which he claims that the mechanisms organizing us into disciplined subjects work not on thought, but on the body.²⁷⁶ Patin writes that the body is the site on which social and

²⁷² Peter Noever, *Barefoot on White-Hot Walls* (Vienna: MAK, 2004), 11.

²⁷³ Luca Galofaro, *Digital Eisenman: An Office of the Electronic Era*, trans. Lucinda Byatt (Boston: Birkhauser, 1999), 10.

²⁷⁴ For more on this notion, please see the debate between Eisenman and Leon Krier in *Eisenman/Krier*, pp. 31-39.

²⁷⁵ Thomas Patin, "From Deep Structure to an Architecture in Suspense: Peter Eisenman, Structuralism, and Deconstruction," *Journal of Architectural Education* 47, no. 2 (1993): 95. <http://www.jstor.org/pss/1425170>.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

aesthetic theory “stops being abstract and has its material effects. Space, as Foucault describes it, ‘is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power’.”²⁷⁷ In physically structuring space, architecture is the backdrop to the way in which we place and attribute meaning to an object, as well as to ourselves as subjects in relation to an object. By creating that relationship between subject and object, architecture disciplines what occurs within a given space.

Jacques Derrida echoes this sentiment in thinking about the role of architecture in the organization of the ancient Greek city, and how that organization is used to sort between those who have a proper place, and those who do not. He writes:

In allowing for the place and the conditions of birth as well as the education, the nation or race of imitators (*mimetikon ethnos*) will have difficulty in imitating what it has remained alien to, namely, that which happens in actions and words (*ergois, logois*) rather than in spectacle or simulacra. There is also the genre of the tribe of the sophists (*ton sophiston genos*). Socrates privileges...the situation, the relation to place: the genus of sophists is characterized by the absence of a proper place and economy, a fixed domicile; these people have no domesticity, no house that is proper to them (*oikesis ideas*). They wander from place to place, from town to town, incapable of understanding these men who, being philosophers and politicians, *have (a) place*, that is, act as guardians of gesture and speech, in the city or at war. *Politikon genos, mimetikon ethnos, ton sophiston genos*, after this enumeration what remains? Well, then, you, to whom I am speaking now, you who are also a *genos*, and who belong to the genre of those who have (a) place, who take place, by nature and by education. You are thus both philosophers and politicians. Socrates’ strategy...operates from a sort of non-place, and that is what makes it very disconcerting, not to say alarming. In starting by declaring that he is, a little like the poets, the imitators, and the sophists, incapable of describing philosopher-politicians, Socrates pretends to rank himself among those who feign. He affords to belong to the *genos* of those whose *genos* consists in affecting: *in simulating the belonging to a place and to a community, for example, to the genus of true citizens, philosophers and politicians, to ‘yours’*. Socrates thus pretends to belong to the genus of those who pretend to belong to the genus of those who have a place, a place and economy that are their own.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 96.

²⁷⁸ Derrida, *Chora L Works*, 22-23. Emphasis in original.

The city in this iteration is a sorting mechanism in which urbanism is imagined in terms of those who properly have a place and those who do not. Derrida expands on this notion, when he states that architecture is concerned with “not only...writing, but to the writing of the other.”²⁷⁹ As the image of the city is preserved through building, the “living memory must be exiled to the graphic vestiges of another place, which is also another city and another political space.”²⁸⁰

Eisenman picks up on this notion of memory of the city through his emphasis on affective as opposed to effective architecture. He proposes affect as a way to displace the traditional concept of place.²⁸¹ Eisenman attempts to disrupt the use of architecture to concretize habit, and to unveil unconscious motivations that become conscious in architecture: “the desire for ground or to be rooted; the desire for shelter; the desire for meaning.”²⁸² By focusing on affect, architecture has the potential to disrupt habit, and perhaps can reorient the production of space towards a different political end. In this way, he calls attention to architecture’s own rhetoric: which is a response to a desire for place, ground, containment, representation, and is used to make things intelligible, tangible, secure and comfortable.

These rhetorical devices are, according to Eisenman a way to erase

the fact that the architectural knowledge is owned and produced by a limited sect to the service of a determined social class. It is the notion of culture that is hidden or excluded which functions in a way to in itself ‘exclude’ other cultures... The exclusion of culture implied by the notion of the universal can only reinforce the ideological machinery built during centuries by the histories of art and architecture. History orders buildings and objects in a hierarchical way through its

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 25.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Eisenman, *Written into the Void*, 77. He defines ‘the traditional concept of place’ as being bounded to a bounded, or framed condition of presence.

²⁸² Eisenman, *Blurred Zones*, 6-7.

uses of the implied opposition between Western culture and the rest of the world. The latter is always thought of as the inferior replica of the former.²⁸³

In this iteration of the production of architectural knowledge, Eisenman calls attention to the political rhetoric of architecture: that it is premised on exclusionary terms. This exclusion allows for the universalization of a certain manifestation of the image of the city, where unity, sameness and ‘origin’ are always preferred over diversity, difference and ‘nomadism.’ His theorization views the task of architecture in post-structuralist terms,²⁸⁴ as “only when the architectural text dislocates this repression [of difference] is it able to stop reenacting an endless nostalgia for the aura and authority of traditional presence and begin to explore its own displacing possibilities.”²⁸⁵ It is in these possibilities that the site for an idea of urbanism resting upon difference and diversity can be used to politically challenge the re-appropriation of the city to sanitize.

By bringing politics to the forefront of architecture, Eisenman seeks to disrupt the securitization of the built environment through architecture that privileges coherence. This way of viewing architecture has the possibility of disrupting the depoliticization of urban spaces to reveal the political nature of the built environment. He questions the cultural assumptions and prejudices that come from the individual architect who is in a position of authority over how a building is made aesthetically, but also how it functions as a cultural icon, manifesting a set of culturally predetermined ideals.²⁸⁶ In this manner, the architect has a role in determining the distance between subject and object, an idea that Eisenman disrupts through the notion of the ‘gaze’. This notion, he writes,

²⁸³ Eisenman, cf. Patin, *From Deep Structure*, 92-93.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 93.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ Eisenman, *Inside/Out*, 217.

concerns the idea of the looking back of another subject, or, in the case of architecture, the looking back of an object. This looking back does two things. It changes the relationship of subject to object in architecture by decentering the subject, and thus critically limits the validity of classical organizations of perspectival space such as axes, symmetry, etc.²⁸⁷

Decentering the subject allows for new possibilities in thinking about architecture's relationship to urbanism and how we occupy urban spaces. This, Eisenman claims, is essential to rethinking the social and cultural role of architecture, as it "must move away from structured rigidity of dialectical oppositions and explore the between within these categories."²⁸⁸ Eisenman writes that in order to move in between the rigid categories of architecture, one must engage with deconstructive places –places that dislocate their traditional functions, for example, the structure of a museum does not necessarily need to represent its' function, hence dislocating traditional symbolism in architecture.²⁸⁹

To suggest that architecture can be dissonant is a political act to Eisenman. This is because in producing dissonant architecture, we find "not merely an aesthetic argument, [but also] a political argument...Processes which produce difference can be seen to be resistant to the existing spaces of power which would seek to naturalize a narrative of coherence."²⁹⁰ This is because architecture thought of in this manner does not immediately make itself intelligible to its' user, rather, it requires an understanding that is tied to one's experience of it. This way of understanding allows for the displacement of ideas of coherence without eliminating them. Attempting to think of architecture in terms of displacement allows Eisenman to think between two limited categories. These categories, the history and the theory of architecture are "either [thought of] in the

²⁸⁷ Eisenman, *Written into the Void*, 9.

²⁸⁸ Patin, *From Deep Structure*, 97.

²⁸⁹ Eisenman's built example of this idea is the Wexner Centre for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio.

²⁹⁰ Eisenman, *Written into the Void*, 71.

context of classical rules of composition based on proportion, harmony and the like, or as the expected normative relationships of openings to surface, columns to wall.”²⁹¹ In this iteration, Eisenman claims that over time, classical relationships have assumed natural status. Both relationships imply geometry, stability, and normalcy “repressing other possibilities for an interiority of architecture. While the study of these unconscious repressions has formed the basis of critical theory since the nineteenth century, these studies have rarely included architecture.”²⁹²

Eisenman attempts to bring forth these repressions in creating anxiety as opposed to comfort, making his architecture a political act against foundations, and an attempt to mark the information that is being conveyed at the less-than-conscious level. This marks a fascination with the psycho geography of architecture, and an attempt to bring this to a more conscious level. Eisenman writes that this psychologization of architecture subverts the normalization of architecture as the promise of something real in a relativist world, where truth becomes a managed item, and politics is increasingly aesthetic. Contrary to this, Eisenman attempts to create an architecture that “must confront and dislocate [the promise of something real] in order to be... Contrary to popular opinion, the status quo of dwelling does not define architecture. What defines architecture is the continuous dislocation of dwelling, in other words, to dislocate what it in fact locates.”²⁹³ This dislocation opens up space to use architecture as a political act, to disrupt narratives of coherence that are primarily based on narrow iterations of urbanism which require architecture to be used as a depoliticized but exclusionary act.

²⁹¹ Eisenman, *Inside/Out*, xiii.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Eisenman, *Inside/Out*, 203.

To explore dislocation in architecture further, I wish to explore the work of an architect that worked closely with Eisenman on the Parc de la Villette project in Paris, Bernard Tschumi. After giving a general outline of Tschumi's theoretical work, I will draw out two themes: the pyramid/labyrinth in relation to how we think about and experience architectural space, and *folie* in relation to how we interpret and attribute meaning to architecture. These two themes will allow me to draw out the implications of thinking about Tschumi's architecture as a way to think about the conceptualization and experience of space in his thought. Related to these themes is the work of Denis Hollier on Georges Bataille in *Against Architecture*, and Michel Foucault's *History of Madness*. In both works, the authors lay out questions with regarding madness, which relates to Tschumi's work as he attempts to create architecture without meaning. Looking at these two themes in Tschumi's work theoretically will allow me to work through an internal contradiction of architecture: the conceptualization of defined space, and the experience of it.²⁹⁴

Section 3.3: Moving Architecture

*I could write philosophy as an architect...my thinking is architectural before it is conceptual. I do not write in a linear fashion; I write spatially. For me, building and writing are very similar acts –both are methods of organizing thoughts in time and space.*²⁹⁵

Influenced by the Situationists, and concerned with questions of representation, Bernard Tschumi argues that traditional forms of architectural building, drawing, and thought exclude events and occupation. He attempts to re-incorporate these exclusions by

²⁹⁴ Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, 1996), 16.

²⁹⁵ Bernard Tschumi, *Zenith de Rouen*, Source Books in Architecture, eds. Todd Gannon and Jeffrey Kipnis (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2003), 16.

story-telling and using movement to depict the collision of architecture with event. Tschumi's theories on architecture are presented through gallery installations, texts, advertisements and built projects. These include the Parc de la Villette in Paris; the Zenith de Rouen in Rouen; Le Fresnoy Art Center in Turcoing; Marne School of architecture in Marne-la-Vallee; in the United States, the Miami School of Architecture; the Blue Tower in New York; and the Richard E. Lindner Athletics Centre in Cincinnati; amongst a vast and diverse array of works.²⁹⁶ His work focuses on society's disjunction between use, form and social values. Tschumi therefore views any sort of relation between these ideas as obsolete and impossible. His work questions one of the central tenets of architecture: stability. Through questioning the way in which architecture tries to secure stability, Tschumi is able to articulate the importance of thinking through fragmentation, as he sees building not in terms of trying to stabilize, but rather as an attempt to portray the fragmented state of relations within the urban environment. In thinking of architecture in terms of fragmentation, or dissociation, Tschumi attempts to set aside the traditional categories of architecture: form and function, style and use. Rather, he attempts to think in terms of the architect as an 'inventor of relations.' This requires the architect to think categories such as space, movement, and event together. Consequently, Tschumi questions stability by way of thinking in terms of fragmentation, allowing him to theorize architecture through other categories than what architects have traditionally thought together.

In an interview about his theories and his thinking with regards to building the Zenith de Rouen, Tschumi states that "certain components [are] irreducible from

²⁹⁶ Bernard Tschumi, *Projects*, Bernard Tschumi Architects, <http://www.tschumi.com>.

architecture: space, event, and movement... to eliminate the question of space eliminates the possibility of architecture.”²⁹⁷ Tschumi is interesting in that he refuses to abandon architecture’s confrontation with space, when many of his colleagues were doing exactly this in order to privilege place. This insistence on architecture as a confrontation of space and use and the disjunction that inevitably occurs between the two terms, means that architecture is not inherently linked to stability. It is paradoxical to him that “three thousand years of architectural ideology have tried to assert... that architecture is about stability, solidity, foundation.”²⁹⁸ Tschumi claims instead that architecture, in claiming foundations, is used against and despite itself as society tries to employ it as a means to stabilize, to institutionalize and establish permanence.²⁹⁹

Tschumi writes that the generally supported view of the architect within a historical analysis of twentieth century architecture is to project the images of social institutions in an attempt to translate the current economic or political structure of society into buildings.³⁰⁰ In this sense, architecture adapts space to socioeconomic structures, serving the powers in place, reproducing the views of the existing political structure. In reflecting on this in another piece, Tschumi writes that this period of time is when architecture ‘lost its innocence.’ This means that we find ourselves in a time when it has become clear “that neither super-technology, expressionist functionalism nor neo-

²⁹⁷ Tschumi, *Zenith de Rouen*, 17.

²⁹⁸ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 19.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 5.

Corbusianism [can] solve society's ills, and that architecture [is] not ideologically neutral."³⁰¹

In recognizing this loss of innocence, many architects are encouraged by developers to "become mere decorators."³⁰² This, Tschumi asserts, allows many architects to desert their professional responsibilities with regards to events and activities taking place in the spaces designed. In this sense, questions of space are abandoned for questions of place. A minority of architects, in trying to understand the nature of the mechanisms of space, which makes cities "not only was the city the place where conflicts are exacerbated, but [also] the urban condition itself could be a means to accelerate social change."³⁰³ Tschumi argues that architecture does not change society, but it can be part of the process of starting or accelerating change already underway.³⁰⁴ In this manner, architecture is about much more than decoration, but does not necessarily bend to the prescriptions of dominant political and financial influences.

Thinking of architecture not in terms of stability, allows for a definition of architecture in Tschumi's thought that is focused simultaneously on space and event. This allows for political concerns to arise over the question of space and its relation to social practice. If architecture can be thought of as neither pure form as determining socioeconomic or functional boundaries, then architecture is involved in the complexities of the urban dimension. This means that social, economic, and political mechanisms controlling the expansion and contraction of the city affect architecture and societal use

³⁰¹ Bernard Tschumi, *Questions of Space: Lectures on Architecture* (London: Architectural Association, 1990), 89.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 88.

³⁰³ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 7.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

within these spaces. In this way, “space always marks the territory [as it foregrounds] the milieu of social practice”³⁰⁵ and it is always the common framework for action. Due to this common framework, architecture can be used politically to give an appearance of coherence through standardization concealing social contradictions.

In this move towards coherence, architecture can be thought of as playing the role of representing what urbanity is supposed to look like. Tschumi explains this as “the representation of urban scenes become more important than the scenes themselves. The intensity of urban life had once been the ultimate object of desire; now it loses its fascination. The city is less important than its image.”³⁰⁶ In this manner, through representation, architecture inscribes meaning and coherence into the city without asking the prior political question of who gets to determine what represents the urban. Tschumi challenges this move towards representation in architecture by understanding the implications of claiming coherence and meaning through architecture. This leads him to actively reject planning processes through counter-design strategies that attempt to cast doubt and impel reconsideration of the cultural values attached to architecture. Instead, Tschumi tries to deconstruct some of these cultural values through fragmented and dissociated architecture.³⁰⁷

By thinking of architecture in terms of dissociation and fragmentation, Tschumi’s thought addresses what occurs within buildings and cities. Rather than manipulating the formal properties of architecture, Tschumi seeks to build in the actual function, program

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 22.

³⁰⁶ Tschumi, *Questions of Space*, 43.

³⁰⁷ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 13.

and history of a given space.³⁰⁸ Tschumi does this to speak of the crisis of grand narratives of modernity in which architecture finds itself caught up. This crisis prefigures any attempt at a coherent of narrative, discourse or representation, which is also a crisis of limits. Reflecting on this, Tschumi claims, “there are no more boundaries delineating a coherent and homogenous whole. On the contrary, we inhabit a fractured space, made of accidents where figures are dis-integrated.”³⁰⁹ It is in these fragments that we find a new way to think about architecture, by abolishing permanence. He claims that the city and architecture “lose their symbols –no more monuments, no more axes, no more anthropomorphic symmetries, but instead fragmentation, parcelization, atomization, as well as the random superimposition of images that bear no relationship to one another, except through their collision.”³¹⁰ It is in this collision that we can begin to think of different architectural categories.

Tschumi’s charge to architects is a serious one: that architecture should be more about finding unfamiliar solutions to problems rather than clinging to the comforting solutions of the established community.³¹¹ While the general public will usually stand behind the traditionalists in thinking that architecture is about comfort, shelter, brick and mortar, Tschumi asserts that through using the tool of shock, architecture can also be about social change. This inclination to think of architecture in terms of comfort and shelter allows architecture to be turned into “a passive ‘object’ of contemplation instead

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 253.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 217. I should note that Tschumi does not dismiss limits, rather he attempts to rework the content within them, a point I will return to when discussing his thoughts about framing.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 218.

³¹¹ Ibid., 247.

of a place that confronts spaces and actions.”³¹² Theorizing about architecture as active allows the architect to be considered an instigator of relations and as able to analyze the set of combinations and permutations possible amongst different categories. For Tschumi, these categories include space, movement, event, technique and symbol allowing for architecture to be more than just a reification of current political claims to space.³¹³ Architecture, from this perspective, is no longer about the expression of a function, but rather can be seen as the combination of a large set of variables. In this manner, the traditional ‘cause-and-effect’ relationship between form and function can be dislocated.

Tschumi’s ‘architecture of disjunction’ led to him securing the contract for the 1983 construction of the Parc de la Villette in Paris. The park is made up of a number of separate areas: a science and technology museum, a music center, sport and recreation areas, playgrounds and gardens. Tschumi was put in charge of a team of architects for planning and constructing the park. He used a grid pattern to create non-contextual reference points throughout the park, and superimposed three different ordering systems: 35 *folies*, the lines of the paths, and the planes of the sport areas.³¹⁴ The idea was to create layers of non-related systems to attempt to pose an arbitrary, non-hierarchical architecture aiming at interpretive infinity. Tschumi used madness as a constant point of reference in thinking about La Villette. He explains this as

it appears to illustrate a characteristic situation at the end of the twentieth century...Madness, here, is linked to its psychoanalytical meaning –insanity –and can be related to its built sense –folly –only with extreme caution. The aim is to

³¹² Tschumi, *Questions of Space*, 89.

³¹³ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 181.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 203.

free the built *folie* from its historical connotations [of ornamentation] and to place it on a broader and more abstract plane.³¹⁵

His intention was to build an autonomous object that will allow people to be free to interpret and transfer meaning as they see fit.

The name, Parc de la Villette, is also indicative of the way that Tschumi was using madness to think through this piece. La Villette, meaning ‘small city,’ refers to the state of being disconnected or dissociated in the city.³¹⁶ Through this architecture, Tschumi asks of knowing one’s relationship to such dislocated city parts, from which he hypothesizes, “this relationship necessarily suggests the idea of transference.”³¹⁷

Transference refers to theoretical reconstruction of the totality of the subject is attempted through rebuilding by redirecting emotions to a substitute, such as a therapist. Through the coupling of transference and dissociation, Tschumi approaches La Villette in terms of suggesting “meeting points, anchoring points where fragments of dislocated reality can be apprehended.”³¹⁸ This allows for the dissociated reality of the city to be interpreted through a series of transferences by the individual apprehending the architecture. In this sense, the guiding principle of La Villette is the empty slot, or the space where meaning is only apparent through that which makes it intelligible.³¹⁹ It is in this moment of ‘making intelligible’ that Tschumi’s work in La Villette is able to claim “the relation between form and meaning is never one between signifier and signified.”³²⁰ In the de-linking of form and meaning, signifier and signified, Tschumi is attempting an attack

³¹⁵ Ibid., 174.

³¹⁶ Tschumi lists New York and Tokyo and their surrounding areas as two examples.

³¹⁷ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjuncture*, 178.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 182.

³²⁰ Ibid., 185.

against the usual ‘cause-and-effect’ relationship of architecture by “replacing these oppositions by new concepts of contiguity and superimposition.”³²¹

By attempting to dislocate and deregulate meaning through ascribing to dissociative architecture, Tschumi rejects humanist architecture, refusing to think of the park as expressing preexisting content. This is the point that many of his critiques latch onto, namely: Tschumi’s work in La Villette is ‘de-humanizing.’ This is precisely his point. By refusing to capitulate to an idea of ‘the human,’ Tschumi postpones the inscription of meaning and presence, and instead aims at architecture that means nothing. In La Villette, Tschumi confronts “a particular premise of architecture –namely, its obsession with presence, with the idea of a meaning immanent in architectural structures and forms that directs its signifying capacity.”³²² By taking issue with presence, Tschumi problematizes what he calls the ‘myth of recuperation,’ whereby meanings, symbolisms, and codes are used to inscribe a particular, coherent, understanding of architecture and the built environment³²³ -as found in architectural postmodernism.³²⁴ Unlike other readings of postmodernism, this reading opposes the modern movement, nostalgically the re-inscription of ‘meaning’ to a certain ‘place.’ This type of architecture, Tschumi complains, “is frequently the avatar of a particularly conservative architectural milieu.”³²⁵ His complaint is related to how architecture is increasingly being used for purposes of social control through inscribing meaning into a particular place.

³²¹ Ibid., 199.

³²² Ibid., 200.

³²³ You will recall that I discussed the idea of the ‘built environment’ earlier in this thesis.

³²⁴ Ibid. Architectural postmodernism should be differentiated from the reading of postmodernism in other domains where it “involves an assault on meaning, or more precisely, a rejection of well-defined significations that guarantee the authenticity of a work of art,” whereby the dismantling of meaning reveals the social production of a certain idea of truth.

³²⁵ Ibid., 201.

Tschumi subverts efforts at social control through the built environment. Instead, he makes an effort to allow each observer to

project his own interpretation, resulting in an account that will again be interpreted (according to psychoanalytic, sociological, or other methodologies) and so on. In consequence, there is no absolute truth to the architectural project, for whatever meaning it may have is a function of interpretation: it is not resident in the object or the object's materials.³²⁶

In allowing for this 'function of interpretation,' the *folies* in the Parc do not have a meaning, or a truth, just as the system of points does not contain the same truth of a system of lines. In this sense, La Villette does not attempt to be internally coherent, rather the park "looks out on new social and historical circumstances: a dispersed and differentiated reality that marks an end to the utopia of unity."³²⁷

La Villette takes on the contradiction I referred to earlier of conceiving space and experiencing it by allowing for experience to determine conception. Experience is important in the construction of the park, which is represented by two themes in Tschumi's thought: that of labyrinth as opposed to pyramid, and *folie* as signifier rather than signified. I will first discuss how Tschumi uses the idea of the labyrinth as opposed to the pyramid to conceive of space through the use of grids, and attempt to relate this to Bataille's thinking on the pyramid and labyrinth. Second, I will discuss the idea of *folie* as signifier in relation to Foucault's work in the *History of Madness*.

³²⁶ Ibid., 204.

³²⁷ Ibid.

Section 3.4: Maddening Architecture

*Spaces are qualified by actions just as actions are qualified by spaces. One does not trigger the other; they exist independently. Only when they intersect do they affect one another.*³²⁸

Tschumi uses the idea of the grid as a device in the organization of the park. The grid in La Villette is used as a tool to argue against functionalist doctrines, against the cause-and-effect relationship between architecture and use. This is a disjunction between architectural signifier and programmatic signified.³²⁹ Tschumi also used the point grid as a way of resisting the “stamp of the individual author [allowing for] a potentially infinite field of points of intensity: an incomplete, infinite extension, lacking centre or hierarchy.”³³⁰ In this context, the grid structure encouraged the use of different systems throughout the park, allowing for difference without organizing it into a hierarchy.³³¹ This superimposition of different systems without articulating a hierarchy can be thought of in terms of a labyrinth.

Tschumi’s architecture in La Villette takes the limit of architecture and re-conceptualizes it in ways that articulate new in-betweens of inside/outside, between concept and experience. For example, he questions the nature of program and space: “the skater can skate on the ice rink just as easily as the quarterback can tango on the ice rink, suggesting no relation between form, program and movement.”³³² In orthodox

³²⁸ Bernard Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts* (London: Academy Editions, 1994), xxvi.

³²⁹ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 194.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Ibid., 195.

³³² Tschumi, *Manhattan Transcripts*, xxvi.

architectural thought, the structure of a building must be stable “otherwise the edifice collapses –the edifice, that is, of both the building and the entire edifice of thought.”³³³ Control, in this sense, must be absolute, and the limits of architecture must be fixed, instituting a new order against the disorder it seeks to avoid. Nothing strange or unexpected must happen. In this way, architecture imposes limits to how it is supposed to be conceived and experienced, as traditionally, both frame and structure perform the function of ‘holding it together’. The limits become articulated in terms of structural foundations, in which context has a politically inscribed meaning. Tschumi challenges this essentialist interpretation of space by questioning the foundations of architecture by way of questioning structure.

He does this through engaging in poststructuralist thought seeking to challenge the idea of a unified set of images and the idea of certainty within a given framework. Ultimately, this challenges the binary oppositions of traditional architecture: form versus function and abstraction versus figuration. In challenging these binaries, he questions the implied hierarchies such as form follows function, and ornament is subservient to structure. This repudiation of hierarchy leads to Tschumi’s “fascination with complex images that [are] simultaneously ‘both’ and ‘neither/or’ –images that were the overlap or superimposition of many other images.”³³⁴ In the superimposition of images, Tschumi seeks to disrupt the rational structure of architecture, opting instead to privilege experience as a way to think about architecture.

Georges Bataille discusses in *L'Experience Interieure* the “relationship between the objective and rational pyramidal structure and its destruction through the experience

³³³ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 249.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, 251.

of the labyrinth.”³³⁵ In this articulation, transgressing limits is sensual. Tschumi writes that the concept of labyrinth when opposed to that of the pyramid, allows for a differentiation between real space (the product of social praxis) and ideal space (product of mental processes). Real space is related to the ‘labyrinth of experience,’ in the sense that material architecture has a presence, and cannot escape from experience. This is juxtaposed to the ‘pyramid of concepts,’ or immaterial architecture. This means that although we frame architecture conceptually in terms of a pyramid, we actually experience it as a labyrinth.

Architecture is not “a synthesis of formal concerns and functional constraints, but rather is part of a complex process of transformational relations.”³³⁶ In *Against Architecture*, Denis Hollier writes on this in relation to Bataille. In a beautiful passage, Bataille tells of the human being’s labyrinthine structure:

All of existence, as far as men are concerned, is specifically bound up with language, whose terms decide each individual’s vision of it. Each person can imagine his total existence, even for his own eyes, only by means of words. Words rise up in his head bearing all their multitude of human or suprahuman existences in relation to which his personal existence exists. The individual being is, therefore, only something mediated by words that can present a being only arbitrarily as an ‘autonomous being,’ through very profoundly as a ‘related being.’ It is only necessary to track for a little while the routes repeatedly taken by words to discover the disconcerting sight of a human being’s labyrinthine structure.³³⁷

The labyrinth having no inventor, author, nor architect is the space in which “oppositions disintegrate and grow complicated... it is not a safe space, but the disoriented space of someone who has lost his way, whether he has had the good fortune to transform the

³³⁵ Tschumi, *Questions of Space*, 73.

³³⁶ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 165.

³³⁷ Georges Bataille, cf. Denis Hollier, *Against Architecture*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989), 57.

steps he is taking into a dance, or more banally has let spatial intoxication lead him astray: the labyrinth is drunken space.”³³⁸ In this drunken space, words have no more meaning than a drunken man has balance. Orientation is lost, and the questions Nietzsche’s madman asks become relevant. “What did we do when we detached this world from its sun? Where is it going now? Where are we going? Far from all suns? Are we not just endlessly falling? Backward, sideways, forward, in every direction? Is there still an up and a down? Are we not being borne aimlessly into an endless void?”³³⁹ Within these questions there is implied a loss of sight, and of direction. One cannot see their way out of the labyrinth. Rather, one must experience it.

In this manner, Bataille reverses the usual metaphor of the labyrinth which generally links it with a desire to escape. This desire is apparent in philosophy as it condemns those without access to the thread of knowledge to lose their way. This affront to those seeking to escape the labyrinth through philosophy is delusional to Bataille as

knowledge always takes the form of something to end all error and errantry. Bataille, on the contrary denounces solutions. Above all, he denounces the wish that it lead somewhere, have a solution, because the only result of this wish is that, far from being a real exit from the labyrinth, it transforms labyrinth into prison. To will the future, to submit it to planning and projects, to wish to construct it, is to lock oneself into a devalored present that is airless and unlivable.³⁴⁰

This is an affront to the tendencies of architecture and philosophy, which seek to plan, project and set a course, to leave the labyrinth of experience, thus turning it into a prison. In this sense, Labyrinthine structure has lost the Archimedean reference point: it is anti-hierarchical, anarchic, and decapitated. It is the space where “man has escaped his head

³³⁸ Ibid., 58-59.

³³⁹ Ibid., 59.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 60.

as the convict escapes from prison.”³⁴¹ Without knowledge, without the head, man is reduced to experience, to being caught in a blind spot and he no longer knows where he is heading.

Tschumi writes that this reversal of the labyrinth that Bataille works with reveals that one never knows “whether one is inside or not, since one cannot grasp it in one look. Just as language gives us words that encircle us but that we use in order to break their surround, the Labyrinth of experience is full of openings that did not tell whether they opened toward its outside or its inside.”³⁴² This, for Tschumi, does not lead only to a confrontation between mind and body, but to questions of context in which the ambiguous particularities of the relationship between politics and architecture can be explored. He claims that architecture by being caught up in trying to offer directions out of the labyrinth approaches politics in two ways. First, if the architectural piece renounces autonomy through ideological and financial dependency, it is capitulating to building for a specific purpose. Second, if architecture is viewed artistically, it falls into an ideological compartmentalization, as the architect becomes a decorator. Both options are socially expected of architecture, but are problematic for Tschumi.

Tschumi writes, “architecture seems to survive only when it saves its nature by negating the form that society expects of it... there has never been any reason to doubt the necessity of architecture, for the necessity of architecture is its non-necessity. It is useless, but radically so.”³⁴³ In this sense, architecture falls into the problem of turning the labyrinth into a prison by trying to be necessary, to inscribe meaning into space. This

³⁴¹ Bataille, cf. *ibid.*, 64.

³⁴² Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 43.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 46.

leads us to a paradox: that impossibility of questioning the conceptual nature of space while still trying to create or experience real space as “we cannot experience and think that we experience.”³⁴⁴ In this manner, architecture is defined by a shortcoming; it always misses something, either reality or concept. In his work in La Villette, Tschumi privileges the labyrinth as a way to think about non-meaning in architecture. This allows him to articulate architecture with madness, to think of producing spaces allowing for experience. The labyrinth becomes a way to think of architecture, as “the route is more important than any one place along it.”³⁴⁵

In this manner, Tschumi is using disjunction to bring architecture to its limits, to put concepts in new relation to one another, much like Foucault’s project in the *History of Madness*. It is in this madness, in Tschumi’s *folies*, that we find an attempt at structural articulation of non-meaning. The point of *folie* within a labyrinthine structure of experience allows for play with meaning. Tschumi’s aim with building *folies* was to free them from their historical connotations and as explained earlier, to allow for interpretative freedom. However, the word *folie* is associated with madness, and it is in this association that the point of the *folie* becomes the focus of the dissociated space of La Villette. By acting as a marker on a grid, the *folie* “acts as a common denominator, constituting itself as a system of relations between objects, events and people.”³⁴⁶ Being the common denominator on the grid, the *folie* allows for the combination of place and object of transference, it is constituted as a system of relations between objects, events and people. It acts as a point of reference, an anchoring point within madness.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 48.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 163.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 178.

With madness acting as a new reference system, Tschumi theorizes that the *folie* secures presence within the reference system of the labyrinth. This is because the structure of the *folie* is built to portray non-meaning, it refuses hierarchy in that it refuses a proper interpretation, and rather it acts as a map into the disorder of reality. For Tschumi the use of *folies* plays a political role, in rejecting a prior master plan for how space is defined and used. Instead, the *folies* in La Villette “offer the possibility of restructuring of a dissociated world through an intermediary space in which the grafts of transference can take hold.”³⁴⁷ It is in this intermediary space that architecture can be used to allow for a transition space or a way of access to thinking about expression, even when speech has disappeared, as with the madman.

By looking at the outside at thinking of architecture as madness, Tschumi confronts the coherence of the discipline. In suturing frame from coherent structure, Tschumi’s work rearticulates architecture’s relationship to meaning. Tschumi’s *folie* directs the individual experiencing it to think through the presumed causal relationship between building and content, between use and meaning.³⁴⁸ In de-linking form from function, architectural objects no longer have symbolic meaning because the symbolic value can be separated from the utilitarian one. There have been attempts in architecture to reconcile utilitarian and symbolic meaning, most notably, the Bauhaus reconciliation into the duo of signifier and signified.³⁴⁹

Tschumi theorizes that the *folies* attempt non-meaning through being signifier, but not signified. This is because structures such as columns and pediments can be

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 179.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 21.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 219.

interpreted in multiple different ways. This is because “there is no cause-and-effect relationship between an architectural sign and its possible interpretation. Between signifier and signified stands a barrier: the barrier of actual use.”³⁵⁰ Actual use constantly questions and re-interprets meaning because through differing interpretation, meaning does not stay fixed. Ideas about ordering of objects to reflect ‘a’ meaning is inapplicable in a Nietzschean world characterized by dissociation, where meanings multiply, as “the excess of meaning lacks meaning.”³⁵¹ In this manner, form cannot be linked to function, rather what matters is how architecture is used, and the multiplicities of meanings assigned to it. This is characterized by the *Les Evenements* of the Situationists, in the ’68 era. These were events not only in action, but also in thought. The psychogeography of spaces was questioned through play between functions and forms “erecting a barricade (function) in a Paris street (form) is not quite equivalent to being a dancer (function) in that same street (form).”³⁵² These events dissolve the hierarchical presumptions that lie behind the cause-and-effect relationship of form and function. The *folie* attempts to remove this relationship by not having a predetermined function linked to its form. The idea of event in this case, is more important than structure or sequence. Tschumi discusses this in relation to Foucault, as he

expanded the use of the term event that went beyond the single action or activity and spoke of ‘events of thought.’ For Foucault, an event is not simply a logical sequence of words or actions but rather ‘the moment of erosion, collapse, questioning, or problematization of the very assumptions of the setting within which a drama may take place –occasioning the change or possibility of another, different setting.’³⁵³

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 221.

³⁵¹ Ibid., 176.

³⁵² Ibid., 255.

³⁵³ Ibid., 256.

Foucault sets out to expose the erosion of thought in his *History of Madness*. I should state that it is not my intention to provide any sort of summary of the *History of Madness*, rather, I wish to look at Foucault's project in relation to what Tschumi is doing theoretically. Foucault, in drawing up an archaeology of silence that allowed for the emergence of Western philosophy, to the exclusion of madness looks at the 'other' side of how we came to the modern subject. There is a commonality with Tschumi's work with the *folies* in La Villette. By attempting to define space not in terms of reason, but in terms of madness, the *folies*, in the ambiguity of their structure do not make a claim to mean something. Similarly, Foucault grapples with the question of a claim to meaning through the articulation of reason set against unreason.

Foucault questions how madness came to be articulated against reason. He lays out a genealogy through which madness comes to be defined and medicalized. From viewing madness as "always a distance from reason,"³⁵⁴ Foucault ultimately articulates the other side of reason, producing a binary structure, in which the subject is constituted through the exclusion of its other, the madman. In this separation, the madman is made into an object to be studied, as

this status as object, which will later be the foundation of the positive science of madness, is inscribed from the moment of the creation of this perceptual structure that we are currently analyzing: an acknowledgement of the rationality of the content, as part of the movement that simultaneously denounces all that is unreasonable in its manifestation. There lies the primary and most apparent paradox of unreason: an immediate opposition to reason, whose only content can be nothing other than reason itself.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁴ Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, trans. Jean Khalfa and Jonathan Murphy, ed. Jean Khalfa (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 184.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 185.

In this paradox, madness is always excluded from reason, but always in relationship to it. Reason requires madness to define itself against, and it is in this defining that meaning can be articulated, that sense can be made. When discussing the classification of madness, Foucault speaks of how the logical ordering of the space of madness excludes madness from speaking for its manifestations as “the origin and significance of the order are thus to be sought outside that order.”³⁵⁶ In this manner, through the extraction of reason from unreason, the mad become ordered and classified from the outside, never able to speak of their condition.

By drawing up madness as excluded from reason to be studied, the madman becomes a matter of social order. Foucault states this as “once, he was welcomed because he came from without; now he was excluded because he came from within, and the mad were forced to take their place alongside paupers, beggars and vagabonds...the mad still wandered, but no longer on the road of a strange pilgrimage –they just troubled the order of the social space.”³⁵⁷ In troubling social space, the mad resemble the *folie*, they have no reason to be there, and they disturb the coherence of the conceptualization of orderly social space. The presence of non-meaning, unreason, and madness is disruptive to the coherent trajectory of history, reason and a visually logical way of organizing space. By coupling the mad as an object of psychological inquiry with the dissociation of truth into multiplicities,

madness was no longer to speak of non-being, but of the being of man, of the content of what he is and the forgetting of that content. While previously he was a Stranger to Being –a man of nothingness, of illusion –now he was trapped in his own truth and thus exiled from it. A Stranger from himself, Alienated.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 195.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 62.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 516.

In this iteration, man is chased outside and objectified. Through the language of psychology, which needs an outside and an object, madness can become a concrete truth and an object for the gaze of authority. This is the point that Tschumi makes, as between signifier and signified lies interpretation. Foucault states this point as “the path from man to the true man passed through the madman”³⁵⁹ whereby the rational subject takes on meaning by articulation against an ‘other.’ Tschumi’s use of the contemporary mad, fragmented condition allows him to play with interpretation, meaning and social taboo. In this manner, the *folies* verge on the limit by transgressing architectural norms, as there are no semantic intentions governing the *folies*.³⁶⁰ Drawing on Foucault’s work, Tschumi’s *folies* encourage madness and play over synthesis and unity and they snub the practice of signification.

Section 3.5: In Conclusion

Is Tschumi able to practice architecture of madness? If architecture is about defining space through practices of building, is there not always the prior question of the architect’s intentions, and even in trying to capitulate to madness, still there is coherence in making a structure? Tschumi attempts to question the prior assumptions of how people are supposed to interpret architecture bringing into focus the problem of making places with a specific intention, to the exclusion of other ways to use these places. I think he is quite right to de-link form and function, and the presupposed cause-and-effect relationship. However, I am not sure how much this destruction of the relationship between form and function actually serves to create anything different, people have still adopted the *folies* to their uses against other uses, despite an inarticulate function.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 526.

³⁶⁰ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 185.

Perhaps, to a certain degree, this relationship is inescapable, but could be thought of as less prescribed than many advocates of the meaning inscribed built environment. I think, in this sense, Tschumi's work is an affront to the move towards architecture that prescribe a certain use through controlling how people interact with these buildings. This is much like the intentions of crime prevention programs which seek to inscribe 'legitimate' users as opposed to 'illegitimate' users –an interesting link to Foucault's theorizing about how the mad, along with other socially excluded people disrupt the order of spaces.

I do not know if the discipline of architecture has the capacity to extricate itself from its historical connotations of building towards something. It is different from art in this sense, in that architecture is intimately linked to the provision of something more permanent, less fleeting, ultimately to be useful. This is a paradox both Eisenman and Tschumi recognize and theorize against, but are not necessarily able to build. We are back at the paradox that Tschumi gives us: between the real space of experience, and the ideal space of conceptualization. The idea of relationality makes Tschumi's architecture appealing as he attempts to bridge this gap between real and ideal through thinking in new combinations. This is apparent in his thought on the 'labyrinthine structure of experience,' architecturally signified vis-à-vis the pyramid. In this manner, his work speaks volumes about how architectural theory is political and it allows us to think of structure at the limits, not as necessarily prescriptive and all-encompassing, but allowing for meaning to be postponed.

In the Order of Things Foucault asks

how to specify the different concepts that enable us to conceive of the discontinuity or the threshold, between nature and culture, the irreducibility one to

another of the balances or solutions found by each society or each individual, the absence of intermediary forms, the non-existence of a continuum existing in space or time.³⁶¹

Tschumi's architectural theory reminds us of this non-existence and the distance between conceptual and real space, allowing us to politically question the practices of structuring and defining spaces to the exclusion of experience and event. Intertwined with this is Eisenman's idea of memorializing loss by accepting the discontinuity and incoherence of the city. Both architects seem to want to return to architecture that privileges experience over stabilization. Eisenman does this through his theorizations of affective architecture, and Tschumi by theorizing through the idea of the labyrinth. This leads us to a very different conceptualization of the city than what seems to be the dominant mode of attempting to resolve political issues through technical solutions. This different way of thinking about the city allows for politics to embrace and privilege experience through proximity rather than visualization at a distance. By engaging with politics in this manner, the city as a political space does not require stabilization.

The re-conceptualization of alternative places through architecture is a project that is common to both Tschumi and Eisenman, and is influenced by their work with Derrida. Derrida mounts a critique of institutional architecture that Eisenman and Tschumi take notice of. That is, of architecture that continues to unreflectively pursue "the built equivalents of metaphysical determinants such as origin and telos, utility and beauty."³⁶² This critique allows Derrida, along with Eisenman and Tschumi to appreciate and embrace heterotopic and dissonant spaces. In rejecting architecture as built permanence, and privileging the idea of the event in architecture, Tschumi and Eisenman theorize

³⁶¹ Cf. Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts*, xx.

³⁶² Ibid.

about the possibility of alternative spaces that do not require visual coherence to be intelligible.

Tschumi and Eisenman's work disturbs and politicizes canonical notions such as coherence in architecture, however, their built work still does not disrupt the normalization of certain functions and with this, the inclusion of certain bodies within a given built environment, to the exclusion of others. Perhaps this is because both architects still get to an appointed place by way of building, which implicates the body by the interiority of architecture.³⁶³ As such, we find ourselves at the problem again of using architecture for control, as even in deconstructive architecture, there is usually an intention for the use and inhabitation by bodies. Despite the challenge such architecture makes against the fixed function of most building on sites, it still occurs within the framework of first deconstructing architectural functions and then reincorporating them within new works.³⁶⁴ In this sense, the a priori intentions of the architect in building such alternative spaces still prescribe how architecture is to be used. In this sense, while architects should and do recognize their interventions as political, it is in the re-articulation of how built environments are used, that the theoretical work of architects such as Tschumi and Eisenman, becomes a place where structures of power can be contested and named.

The problem may be that Tschumi and Eisenman can only go so far. They ultimately do not politicize space. This is perhaps because of the position they find themselves in as architects, in having to build something. Maybe the issue is not with

³⁶³ Peter Eisenman, cf. Edward Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 317.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 318-319.

coherence, per se, but with representations of coherence in any given architect's work. By not politicizing space, Tschumi and Eisenman's work still occurs within an orbit of space conceived of as static, and representational. These architects bring us to a point of deconstructivism, but ultimately cannot be viewed as a politicizing representations of coherence. Eisenman's theoretical work is celebrated for separating form from function in architecture. This is important as he makes the point that the form of a house does not necessarily need to look like a house in order to function as a house. While it is important to de-link these two ideas to come to a place where we can begin to think about space as non-representational, ultimately, Eisenman *still ends up building a house* without questioning the underlying spatial representation of coherence, regardless of the form. The space of house is still rendered static and representational of a coherent system, thus not questioning the underlying conditions of conceptualizations of space in architecture.

Conclusion

In my first chapter, I make the argument that thinking about the city as political is important if we are to understand how architecture and conceptions of space produce relationships. I begin by attempting to politicize the city by discussing gentrification practices, and how these are political through exclusion. After giving a brief overview of gentrification, and a political economy explanation of it, I argue that both the image that gentrification produces and projects, and the occurrence of a high profile hallmark event, are important to understanding the phenomenon. I highlight this through two related case studies: Vancouver's Golden Jubilee celebration in 1936, and the development of Yaletown between Expo 1986, and the Winter Olympics 2010. To theoretically begin to analyze these cases, I look to discussions of architecture in Los Angeles, Palestine and Israel as there is a wealth of literature on how architecture can be used to exclude. Following this, I argue that this ultimately comes down to a very specific production of space that relies on a visual logic. Through this visual logic, the city's problems are not viewed as political; rather, they are conceived of as technical. I end my first chapter with this proposition.

To dispute the argument that issues framed, as 'problems,' can be resolved through technical means, I look at psychogeography and the dark side of enlightenment in my second chapter. After discussing how architecture in gentrified developments is designed to control, I explore this in relation to the idea that the enlightened, free individual is barbaric and perverse because of what we are willing to do to one another due to fear and paranoia. Modern technology is important in this regard, as it allows for

unprecedented ways to be violent, and also to displace violence and perversity into media simulations. To discuss this, I look at JG Ballard's science fiction. I conclude the chapter by arguing that trying to stabilize, rationalize and segregate through architecture is not only a political act, but also is detrimental to the way that we relate to one another.

My final chapter explores the way in which architectural theory can be used to displace and disrupt naturalized narratives of coherence and stability. To do so, I discuss the work of two architects, Peter Eisenman and Bernard Tschumi. The former can be described as an architect who memorializes loss through theorizing about affective architecture, while the latter theorizes about architecture in terms of madness. Doing architecture in this manner privileges the incoherence of the city, and why this is important to our interactions with each other. By being open to spontaneous encounters gives the chance of something radically new and potentially positive to occur, and it embraces a fundamental aspect of the city, its constant changing dynamic. This dynamic is not something to be built over through architecture, it is not a problem to be healed by planning, rather, it is politics at the level of everyday life. This is not something that should be denied through benches with handles in the middle, or hiring more security guards.

The imaginary is that which tends to become real. But what if our imagination is so limited that what becomes real is catastrophic? If we continue to privilege a visual logic in how we engage with architecture and urbanism, then other aspects of urban experience can increasingly be written off in advance through the creation of technical cities. However, technical solutions will never resolve 'problems of order,' because 'problems of order,' when articulated as such, are political, and politics are not necessarily sites to

resolve problems. To apply politics to resolve anything reduces it to the same technocratic solutions proposed by planners, architects, etcetera. Politics is much more complex than that. Politics encapsulates our everyday interactions with each other, with our built environments, how we experience the city. This complexity is what is so interesting about politics. By trying to pin down or remove 'the political' is a grave error because to do so denies what brings together different people in the city. I am not going to name what this is, because I cannot claim to know what 'it' is. Perhaps this means that politics is intentionally and delightfully vague, because it allows for relationships to be formed and abandoned, opinions to be voiced, places to be built and torn down, spontaneity and chaos to coexist with coherence and order. To deny this would be, quite simply, boring. Yet, denial seems to be the most popular reaction to complexities presented by living with each other.

I was walking my dog down Hastings on a beautiful, sunny afternoon one Saturday with a large group of people that had come together to remember and grieve the scores of women missing or murdered on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. On this walk, I realized over the course of those two events that this thesis, while not explicitly about those women, is implicitly about them. Their memory continues to haunt even the most expensive areas of the city. However, while fear and spectacularization are a common reaction within the media to the Downtown Eastside, more often than not, denial seems to be the way that most people deal with the intense poverty, and scores of people missing from or murdered in that neighbourhood. Denial is a common reaction to the loss of a loved one. However, in order to move on, mourning and grieving that person

is necessary. Even more, contributing in some way to help stop someone else from losing a loved one can also be part of the healing process.

If one is perpetually in a state of denial, they are paralyzed. This state of denial is what I see occurring in Vancouver. The people in power have become so caught up in making a positive name for itself, and attracting the ‘right’ kinds of people, that they neglect to see that they are in denial. This reaches far, into the architecture of the city, which is built to deny certain people. The denial has effects. It affects how we relate to one another. If we are constantly too afraid to go and walk around on East Hastings during daylight, then how are we supposed to recognize and face up to the losses and the intense pressures of living there? Yet people everyday continue to live there. They are not going to go away, and if anything, there is much to learn in terms of community, accepting difference and relating to one another. This is something Eastsiders are proud of. They have a very strong community. In the words of one woman who has been clean for over a year because of help she received from her peers, she misses her community. This type of strong, emotional attachment is missing from the highly celebrated ‘condominium communities,’ and by constantly perpetuating fear through revanchism does nothing for allowing politics to occur. Ultimately, this is what is denied, the ability to engage in politics.

This is why I was inspired to write this thesis, because I was frustrated with the lack of political thought that goes into city planning and architecture. The act of writing is one way to deal with this denial, and by attempting to theorize about what I see occurring through the reiteration of a class war through architecture, I have hoped to disrupt normalized and accepted ideas that the city must look and be a certain way. One of the

most important aspects of the city for me is its heterogeneity, spontaneity, and the potential that this has for something interesting to happen. By denying this aspect, we miss out on something very important to how we conceptualize politics, that of being able to positively engage with politics through interacting with one another, despite what we may fear or deny. By not recognizing the psychological and political impacts of the built environment, we continue to deal with our own psychopathologies as a game of repressing something in ourselves, that is, our emotional connections to the places we inhabit.

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