"Science; the first word on everything…"

"…and the last word on nothing." Victor Hugo (1802-1885)
    [https://twitter.com/Scienceofsport/status/1118763772968144896]

<u>How is Architecture?</u>

tldr: *The following essay is a B-side reprise to 'www.please stateyourproblem.com: The Talking Cure – a Practic~~al~~tioner's Guide to Dreamwork', a Master of Architecture thesis by Simon Glaister.*

<u>How Is Architecture?</u>[3]

<u>[an other] Master of Architecture Thesis by Simon Glaister</u>

.   .   .

---

[1] Lucier, A. (1970). *I Am Sitting In A Room*. New York: Guggenheim Museum:
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Am_Sitting_in_a_Room]
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAxHlLK3Oyk]

[2] With a market capitalisation of over $550 billion, *Apple Campus 2* at Cupertino by Foster + Partners is the headquarters of arguably the wealthiest company in the world.

[3] *How is Architecture? How to History?* and *What is Criticism?* are riffs on Emmanuel Kant's essay *What is Enlightenment?* (Kant 1784)[a] – in which he advances independent thinking against religious and state sponsored (i.e. institutional) dogma – and Deleuze and Guattari's last book, *What is Philosophy?* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994) – in which they argue that the difference between philosophy and science is that the former creates concepts and the latter functions.

[a] "*Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed nonage. Nonage is the inability to use one's own understanding without another's guidance. This nonage is self-imposed if its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in indecision and lack of courage to use one's own mind without another's guidance. Dare to know! (Sapere aude.) 'Have the courage to use your own understanding,' is therefore the motto of the enlightenment*" (Kant 1784): [http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/etscc/kant.html]

Para.1   *4*This thesis begins with **The Idea** that *architecture is the process of entering its field*[5]. If it is true, it is by its own definition as old

---

[4] On Grammatology: 1. Italics: Indicate a title or stress the obvious meaning of a word or passage; 2. Double quotes: Contain a statement, "speech", or direct (and referenced) citation of another text; 3. Single quotes: Indicate the *mention* as opposed (or in addition) to *use* of a 'word' or 'phrase'; 4. Square brackets: Contain any part of the main body that could just as well not be [i.e. meta-commentary and footnotes] or indicate the modification of a citation for brevity and style; 5. Round brackets: Contain additional information regarding the word or phrase that directly (follows or at other times) precedes them.

[5] This phrasing of The Idea is a chewy middle ground between the more or less circular but none the less identical: '*architecture is the process of entering it*', and '*architecture is the process by which one enters its field*'. In each case architecture is reasoned to be equivalent to its field and understood as comprising all those actions undertaken by its practitioners whose intentions are to produce radically new concepts that retroactively re(de)fine our experience of the architectural landscapes that produced them[a].

[a] PLOT SPOILER ALERT! For those who preferred the trailer to the movie, the movie to the book, or *Eat Pray Love** to a therapy session followed by actual yoga: The punchline of this thesis (and the locus of its own tenuous novelty) is the claim – already present in The Idea – that architecture is *a reality producing fiction*; that this is terrifying and demanding, but also sacred, liberating, joyful and significant; and that acknowledging this ~~truth~~ improves the quality[b] of all architectural concepts[c] – or alternatively, that the uptight and inhibited denial of *architectural uncertainty*[d] causes many of the problems that face architecture today[e]. Whatever the case, architecture demands to be recognised as a promise to itself made on behalf of a future it can only ever fail to properly meet but must, by necessity and definition, nevertheless try.
* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjay5vgIwt4]

[b] Agency; veracity; value; sophistication; enjoyment; environmental-ness etc.

[c] e.g. national representation; door-handles; ornament; urban planning; fenestration; siting; floorboards; programme; weather tightness; letterboxes; form; advanced material research; aeroplanes; cat-flaps; parametricism; purpose; bathroom layouts; civic-ness; property;

as architecture itself, and yet like gravity it seems to have gone largely unnoticed, or perhaps more simply unsaid, until very recently. Like culture, consciousness, and life itself, this idea is circular, or worse, self-evident. It is an idea that at once collapses and opens-up architecture's field. It is discursive, methodological and decisive, simultaneously answering and infinitely deferring any answer to the question that has sustained architectural production since Alberti discovered Vitruvius:

What is architecture?... *Architecture is the process of entering its field*.

Para.2   In his lecture on the work of Stanley Tigerman, *Scaffolds of Heaven* (2011)[6], Emmanuel Petit suggests that to enter the architectural "*hall of fame*" (Petit, 2011) one must do more than design significant civic and institutional buildings, found a school with a radical agenda, be a respected educator, or direct a commercially successful firm – "*our intellectual discipline does not work [this] way [...] For that you need other techniques; you must have a theory of architecture*"[7]

---

thresholds; Le Corbusier; functionalism; scale; light-fittings; critique; automation; modelling; drainage etc.

[d.]   of its products *but also of itself*.

[e.]   like the popular adoption of largely neoliberal sponsored myths of post-political space and the resulting acceptance of architectural transience in the face of architecture's particular responsibility to future generations that requires a lasting architecture, which paradoxically must order future space while maintaining its liminality.

[6] See: Petit, E. (2011). *Scaffolds of Heaven: On Stanley Tigerman* [Lecture]. Yale University:
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Vj4yYsSAuU]

[7] Petit received his PhD in Architectural History Theory and Criticism from Princeton in 2006 under the supervision of Beatriz Colomina, so it is no surprise that his position here complements hers. However, while Petit's arguments are indebted to her rigorous analysis of the observation that architectural history is *registered* rather than built, his framing of Tigerman's career adds a rhetorical

twist that shifts the emphasis from the medium of (historical) production to the agency (i.e. strategic success) of the thing or theory being recorded. Nevertheless, it is Colomina's scholarly de-trivialisation of the relationship between architecture and media that provides the academic platform from which both The Idea and Petit's lecture launch their related conjectures. This being the case, her work and its place in this thesis demands some further explanation:

Speaking at Stocktaking 1: *Architecture and its Past* (2010)[a], Beatriz Colomina begins with the brief analysis of a claim made by Bernard Tschumi in 2003, while he was still Dean of Architecture at Columbia University, that "[its] faculty and alumni are constant fixtures in exhibitions, publications and building short-lists all over the world" (Tschumi 2003), noting that "not only are publications and exhibitions ahead of buildings in this list, but [being elements of building short-lists] the buildings themselves are not even real buildings!" (Colomina, 2010). Furthermore, whether architects 'win' or not seems to be beyond the point; the project has been 'made' – modelled, photographed, published, criticised – which to say the project already exists, or does so in all the ways that are most relevant to the discourse. "The project is an architectural idea. A form of thought" (Colomina, 2010).

Building towards an argument for the under exploited potential of studio and design strategies in architectural PhD programmes, she explains how the tenure process similarly emphasises the publications, exhibitions, and competition entries of prospective candidates over built work, which "paradoxically brings historians and theorists teaching in schools today [who since the 70s are generally trained architects themselves] very close to the best so-called practicing architects because what they are also practicing is the art of making books, or putting together exhibitions, or entering competitions. That is, intellectual activities involving research, writing, and thinking" (Colomina, 2010).

According to Colomina, the rise of PhD programmes in architecture was the product of debates that took place at the *Architectural History and The Student Architect Symposium* organised by Sibyl Moholy-Nagy at the Pratt Institute in 1969, where Moholy-Nagy argued against the pedagogical practices of architectural history of the time in which it was a kind of art history taught by non-architect architectural historians. "Repeated experience has shown that [the art historical products of our Fine Arts Institutes] are like juvenile alcoholics, in that no matter how sincere their intentions may be of drying themselves out, they will return to the euphoria of Burkhardt, Wolfflin,

Panofsky, and Green at the first sniff of a familiar historical interior..." (Moholy-Nagy, 1967). But the result was not just a new and improved breed of architectural history & theory teachers. What changed on the side of architectural history also changed on the side of practice, as each provoked the other towards common ground. As Colomina observes, "We have ended up [not just] with a whole new generation of architectural scholars that were trained first as architects, but also a new generation of architects who think of their work as research too. [Once it was just OMA and Diller Scofidio] but now it's hard to find an architect who doesn't use research to describe and legitimatise their practice" (Colomina, 2010).

    As a young practitioner emerging within this environment (who lives a duplicitous life as a practicing artist with Fine Arts training) I am interested in: 1. the general absence (or apparent lack of registration) of these developments here in New Zealand. [This is really another essay, but I think a generous interpretation of this claim, one that appreciates the character and qualities that Colomina is alluding to – namely the highly creative design like nature of contemporary academic research as demonstrated by her own collaborative projects at Princeton (such as *Hot House/Cold War*, *Clip Stamp Fold*, and *Playboy Architecture*) and the necessary relationship to history and theory in the strategic negotiations of an architectural practice that aspires to anything other than the provision of commercial services to paying clients – will find some agreement with it]; and 2. as Colomina herself explains – in spite of the radical appearance of the debates in 1967, and subsequent sweeping changes in the popular architectural consciousness regarding the relationship of history, theory, and practice – "The entire history of architecture since Alberti could be written from this point of view. The history of avant-garde architecture is inseparable from its engagement with different kinds of media, by which I don't mean that the avant-garde use various forms of media to publicise their work, but that the work did not exist before its publication which is a very important distinction" (Colomina, 2010). For instance, futurism did not exist before the publication of the futurist manifesto, or Le Corbusier before the publication of L'Esprit Nouveau –which also constitutes most of the content of his later books; even his name began as a pseudonym he created for his first published writing about architecture in his own magazine, so the closer you look, the more sense it makes to say that Le Corbusier really is a product of this publications rather than the other way round. "Even Mies van der Rohe who is primarily remembered in terms of craft and tectonics [and for his silence] also could not really exist without media." (Colomina, 2010); without *G*, which he published, or

Mertz, or *Frulich*t. And here again, like Le Corbusier, it is definitely not that his work was published in these magazines, but rather that the work was produced for them. "So, [all avant-garde] publications are really construction sites themselves" (Colomina, 2010).

In defence of Oedipus: The tacit self-reflexivity of Petit's argument – along with his description of Tigerman as an "*anti-architect*" (Petit, 2011) [which the main text will soon explore] – made him an irresistible hors d'oeuvre, but it is really Colomina who provides the vital chemistry of historical rigour and interpretive insight that enables both our speculations. Colomina's thesis that architecture – of the last century and today – is produced in the space of photographs, publications, exhibitions, world fairs, magazines, museums, art galleries, international competition, films, television programs, computers, "and now also the internet"[b] (Colomina, 2010) via websites, hyperlinks, tweets, posts, 'grams, chats etc. – as she herself speculates "I suppose there are some very interesting things [happening online] that we are not yet even able to talk about yet but are [being produced in and by] this media" (Colomina, 2010) – is arguably the foundation of this entire thesis. Its golden thread... a shabby and er(a/o)tic line that draws together still loosely its many sutures.

Deceptively simple, the counterintuitive consequences of Colomina's work – that the history of architecture is the history of ideas rather than buildings; that those parts of architecture that are most ephemeral and most temporal are the very things that have the most enduring effect; "that three sentences in a magazine can change the course of design, or a pavilion in a fair that nobody saw be declared in all the books as the most beautiful monument of the 20th century" (Colomina, 2010) – have proven difficult for the profession to accept and properly appreciate. As Sibyl Moholy-Nagy already said in 1967, "In the age of media the historical survivors are architects who can write" (Moholy-Nagy, 1967). Which is more-or-less to say that it is only because of media *as a construction site* that there is any building of the field at all.

Postscript: Returning to the argument Colomina begins with her analysis of Tschumi, "if the construction site of architecture really is its media" (Colomina, 2010), then learning about the history of the field and learning how to meaningfully participate in that field become the same thing. *History & theory are indistinguishable from design*.

[a] Colomin, B. (2010). *Architecture PhD* at Stocktaking 1: Architecture and its Past. KTH Arkitekturskolan:
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oml_XGyMpnk]

[b] See: *ELIZA*, online psychoanalysis chatbot and architecture publication:

(Petit, 2011). Petit's reading of architectural record making is itself a theory of architecture whose structure and intention brings it close to **The Idea**, but in the final analysis, it does not go far enough. Like *architecture is discourse*, or aphoristic sentiments of the *history is written, not built* type, it is neither sufficiently *This part of the essay intentionally left*

blank.[8]

[http://www.pleasestateyourproblem.com]

[8] Bernstien, C. (2001). *This Poem Intentionally Left Blank*, in The Norton

prescriptive nor open ended. Rather than simply have *a* theory, to be remembered[9] an architectural practitioner must perform a series of strategic manoeuvres that *change architectural reality through the act of describing it*[10]. **If architecture is the process of entering its field, then it is also a reality producing fiction:**

Anthology of Poetry (5 ed.). (M. Ferguson Ph.D, Ed.) New York: W.W.Norton, 2004.

[9] Expanding on Petit's reference to architecture's "*hall of fame*" (Petit, 2011), the word 'remembered' is used here to signify a more general idea of 'architectural memory' within which all actions that have a lasting effect on architectural discourse are inscribed (and of which its canon or grand narrative is a subset): If *architecture is the act of entering its field*, then this field is the incomplete and partially unconscious ~~ahistorical~~ memory of all the actions (i.e. strategic manoeuvres) that have produced it. If the minimal threshold of newness is the effect of modifying the past, then new architectural actions are strategic because they must be seen to exceed that which they cannot transcend – that is, the field they seek to enter. Successful field-entering architectural actions are therefore similar to Baduoian *Events* – like the invention of the proletariat; ambient music; or minimal art – that retroactively expand the spectrum of articulate experience by producing a kind of newness that emerges from *within* present understanding via a pathway of non-contradiction rather than replacement (like in science): Brian Eno helps us to hear Bach differently; Turner looks the same but different after Newman and Rothko and Twombly; Landscapes, music, and photography become cinematic after cinema etc.

[10] Speech theorist John Austin defines such acts as "*performative utterances*"[a] (Austrin, 1962). Without wanting to draw a rigorous correlation between speech theory and The Idea, Austin's original example of a performative utterance – the marriage vow "I do" – provides a useful aid in understanding the kind of 'architectural act as field altering/entering description' I am talking about. According to Austin, statements of this type are not truth evaluable. So it is for architecture. Take Koolhaas' *Delirious New York*, Utzon's *Sydney Opera House*, Gehry's *Bilbao Guggenheim* or drawings and teaching of Hernan Diaz Alonso for instance, none of which could be said to be true or false. Rather you accept them, in which case they change architectural reality forever, or you don't, and they are nonsense. Just another book, building, or worse...

[a]   [https://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Performative_utterance]

A myth that is not a myth.

Para.3   As a young and ambitious academic presenting his theory of how to enter the architectural record as a means of doing this very thing, the looping, circular reflexivity of Petit's lecture makes it a better demonstration of **The Idea** that *architecture is the process of entering its field* than his own: To the extent Petit's historical analysis of architectural record keeping and subsequent reading of Tigerman's career is true, it is a successful field-entering strategic manoeuvre with three modes of operation: 1. Historical revelation – it is a demonstrable theory of the conditions under which practitioners are admitted to the canon; 2. Field entering reality distortion – it is a novel object that changes architectural reality by describing it; 3. Architectural production – it is a practical guideline for any subsequent practitioner desiring canonisation. In this regard, Petit's lecture (Petit, 2011), Tigerman's oeuvre [as framed by Petit in the exhibition of Tigerman's work he curated at Yale in 2011[11]], and **The Idea** are the same: attempted field altering/entering strategic manoeuvres. However, by providing a rigorous distinction between architecture and building, and an analytical relationship between buildings and discourse, **The Idea** that *architecture is the process of entering its field* is loopier and goes further than either Tigerman or Petit.

.   .   .

---

[11] See: Baker, D. (2011, June 20). *Yale School of Architecture Exhibition Salutes Architect Stanley Tigerman*. Yale News:
[https://news.yale.edu/2011/06/20/yale-school-architecture-exhibition-salutes-architect-stanley-tigerman]

Para.4   There are many reasons why an architectural theorist might choose Tigerman as the medium of their strategic manoeuvring: For instance, as the title of Petit's lecture alludes, Tigerman "is someone who insists that what architects do with physical architecture is important, but that ultimately the architecture of the here and now is a mere scaffold to support ideas that exceed by far the expressive capabilities of [built] architecture"[12] (Petit, 2011) – a valuable hypothesis for anyone who does not themselves build, but nevertheless seeks admission to the canon on equal footing with those who do. Nevertheless, Petit's analysis of Tigerman as a libertine of the discipline who paradoxically constructs himself as the simultaneous defender of its ethics begins an argument that is at once more strategic and less obviously self-serving. It is also more relevant than his own softly stated thesis: that to the extent that architecture is its record, its agency and vitality lies more in its discourse than its buildings.

Para.5   Likening Tigerman to philosophy's anti-heroes; Diogenes, Socrates, Spinoza, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Bataille, and Derrida, "those thinkers who don't play by the rules, and who some would claim have no business being part of the discipline of philosophy"[13], but from which it has nonetheless drawn its vitality and who appear with increasing distance to have been "*ever more indispensable in making philosophy move*"[14] – Petit builds a case for Tigerman as an anti-architect.

---

[12] See: Petit, E. (2011). *Scaffolds of Heaven: On Stanley Tigerman* [Lecture]. Yale University:

　　　[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Vj4yYsSAuU][4:00-5:30]

[13] Ibid. [4:00-5:30]

[14] Ibid. [4:00-5:30]

> <u>This idea of an **~~anti-tradition~~**[15] is the first of three themes central to this thesis.</u>

Para.6   The history of philosophy is rife with metaphors of space and building. One could argue, as Sloterdijk does, that culture itself is a project constructed 'against gravity' [16], that language – by necessity and definition – derives its meaning from this condition and is subsequently dominated by tropes of weight and elevation. While this may indeed be

---

[15] Heidegger puts Being under erasure. In doing so he tries to point towards a 'field of existence' called Dasein that he believes precedes Being. But Derrida believes Heidegger has achieved nothing. Dasein is just Being by another name. Derrida demonstrates this by replacing '~~Being~~' with his idea of the trace. A trace is the presence of an absence, and therefore just another kind of presence. Derrida wants to escape presence, but simply negating the trace would leave Heidegger's Dasein intact. Derrida avoids this trap by putting even the trace under erasure, creating a signifier that points towards an impossible thought: the absence of absence itself – but *not* 'not even nothing'[a/b]. Likewise, putting architecture as ~~anti-tradition~~ under erasure points towards a signifier that escapes any idea teleological dialecticism (revelation, subversion, historicity, progress etc.) while maintaining a sense of memory, criticality and optimism.

[a]   [https://www.twitter.com/the_eco_thought/status/195962215478738944?lang=en]

[b]   See: Morton, *The Oedipal Logic of Ecological Awareness*, p.17: [https://environmentalhumanities.org/arch/vol1/EH1.2.pdf]

[16] "Marx argued that all criticism begins with the critique of religion; I would say instead that all criticism begins with the critique of gravity."[a] (Sloterdijk, 2005). See: Sloterdijk, P. (2005). *Against Gravity*. (B. Funcke, Interviewer) Book Forum; Sloterdijk, P. (1983). *Critique of Cynical Reason* (Vol. 40 of Theory and history of literature). USA: University of Minnesota Press, 1988[b].

[a]   [http://www.bookforum.com/archive/feb_05/funcke.html]

[b]   [https://books.google.co.nz/books/about/Critique_of_Cynical_Reason.html?id=y0-RQgAACAAJ&source=kp_cover&redir_esc=y]

true, essays such as Heidegger's *Building, Dwelling, Thinking* (1951)[17], and Derrida's *Pointe de Folie – Maintenant l'architecture* (1986), have pushed this age-old correspondence further than Aristotle or Plato ever did, providing the catalysts for the schools of architectural phenomenology and deconstructivism respectively. That Derrida's text, which challenges the significance given by architects to the concepts of home, dwelling and hearth, and the nostalgic desire of modern architecture for a return to some lost or forgotten sacred centre, is an explicit critique of Heidegger's[18], places these schools on opposing vectors of architectural introspection.

Para.7   The increasing dependence of architecture on philosophical discourse during the 20th century – particularly since the Second World War[19] leverages arguments about language (such as Sloterdijk's) to establish architecture as both philosophical sub-structure and philosophical product. In doing so provides the archetype for modern architecture's desire for self-transcendence – an ambition through which it paradoxically claims organisational priority and functional

---

[17] See: Heidegger, M. (1971). Building Dwelling Thinking. In *Poetry, Language, Thought* (A. Hofstadter, Trans.). New York: Harper Colophon Books.
   [http://www.arch.mcgill.ca/prof/luka/urbandesignhousing/temp/other/misc_refs/Heidegger1971.pdf]

[18] "Architecture seems to preserve and transfer these cultural foundations, and thereby to resist deconstruction. For Derrida these tangible factors conspire to render 'architecture as the last fortress of metaphysics […] Any consequent deconstruction would be negligible if it did not take account of this resistance and this transference (Derrida, 1986, p. 328)" (Coyne, 2011)[a].

[a].   [https://richardcoyne.com/2011/02/26/architecture-as-the-last-fortress/]

[19] It could even be argued that The Idea [that architecture is the process of entering its field] is rephrasing of Hegel's famous aphorism "Philosophy is the history of philosophy".

dependence on more-or-less every other form of human knowledge, need, and expression[20]. The irony here is twofold: 1. Architecture is seen to become both increasing discursive and esoteric, thus weakening its professional autonomy and perceived significance in the political economy; and 2. Its discourse is forced to conform with increasing severity to categories of evaluation – such as 'design research' or commodity metrics – and modes of expression – such as academic writing – that are not only fundamentally alien to architecture[21], but belie its vitality as an incorporeal investment in corporeal things.

Para.8   However, the clearest demonstration of the otherness of philosophy to architecture is illustrated by the different character of their respective arterial canons: Tatlin, Malevich, Steiner, Loos, Taut, Debord, Gideon, Corbusier[22], Fuller, Goff, Mies, Johnson, Constant, Venturi, Cook, Banham, Eisenman, Koolhaas, Hadid and Wigley are *not* the same as Aristotle, Plato, Bacon, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Russell, Wittgenstein and Heidegger. Even the most conservative architects-of-record – the Smithsons, the Eames, Wright, Rossi, Khan, Utzon, Gehry, Chipperfield etc. – are more libertine in both work and spirit than any philosopher in the major cord of western thought. As Petit points out, philosophy's canon consists of a series of positive thinkers – those people responsible for the very 'metaphysics of presence' deconstruction

---

[20] A kind of grand structuralism; something akin to Wallace Stevens' jar. *Anecdote of the Jar* (Stevens, 1919):
[https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/14575/anecdote-of-the-jar]
[21] See: Wigley, *The Strange Time of The Sketch*, 1997:
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbFfcLYEnSc] [52:20-56:20]
[22] "...the new architecture is the work of rebels." (Le Corbusier, 1935, *Aircraft: A New Vision*, part.5)

sought to critique. Nevertheless, despite Derrida's claim of architecture as "*the last fortress of metaphysics*"[23] (Derrida 1986), its modern canon is largely dominated by figures much more like him[24] – trouble makers and disruptors – ~~anti architects~~ who, rather than simply accepting the professional norms and 'best-practices' of their time, rewrote, redefined and revised the field through work that, like *L'Esprit Nouveau*, *Learning from Los Vegas*, *Delirious New York*, *the Sydney Opera House*, or the *Guggenheim at Bilbao*, radically and retroactively redescribed the field of architecture[25].

.   .   .

Para.9   Buildings, like philosophical arguments, may be necessarily coherent and logically assembled totalities ultimately determined by the immutable laws of gravity and finance, but architecture – in as much as it is supplementary to building science and the like – has no such *a priori*

---

[23] See: Derrida, J. (1886). *Point de Folie: Maintenant L'Architecture*, in Rethinking Architecture: A reader in Cultural Theory. London: Routledge. p.305-317:
  [https://designpracticesandparadigms.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/leach-edrethinking-architecture.pdf]

[24] This idea of *architecture as ~~anti-tradition~~* has the curious effect of putting the entire field under erasure: constantly present and yet constantly in question. This opposes science in which new formulations supplant previous ones, erasing them from its ledger and consigning them to the historical trash heap. For architecture, this 'ledger' and 'trash heap' are identical.

[25] In the same way that the advent of ambient music and minimalist sculpture modified our experience of all the music and visual art that preceded them, in addition to more obviously providing us with new methods of production, these buildings added new analytical and generative tools to architecture – like "*iconicity*"[a] (Tschumi 2013).

[a]   See: Tschumi, B. (2013). *Deconstructivism: Retrospective Views and Actuality* [Panel discussion]. Museum of Modern Art:
  [https://www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/videos/255/]
  [1:02:30-1:04:00; 1:09:00-1:09:50]

correspondence with either the laws of nature or human experience; unlike philosophical or scientific progress, novel architectural concepts are undeniably local in their meaning and significance and do not overwrite or undermine previous ones. Architecture is thus polytheistic, nonlinear, and incomplete. As such, notions of scientific progress and philosophical telos do not properly belong in it discourse. Rather, architectural ~~improvement~~ must be placed under erasure.

Para.10   *"Even deceptively simple questions such as the design of a comfortable chair can become quickly complex and uncertain"*[26] (Knoblauch 2017). As Galen Cranz, in his survey of the perennial search for a comfortable chair reveals[27] (Cranz 1998), the problems of the 'science' of ergonomics are no different to those encountered in any other human science; in attempting a degree of precision, ergonomics research encounters the problem of subjectivity. However, turning to a materialist approach is no great help either; for instance, a user's idea of what a comfortable chair should *look* like influences the way their physical body feels in that chair, while the expectation of how a chair ought to feel in turn influences how a body feels in that chair[28].

Para.11   The history of the science of comfort thus suggests that, "while the domestication of the body into the sitting position is perhaps not all

---

[26] See: Knoblauch, J. (2017). *Toward a Critical Ergonomics: Beatriz Colomina and Mark Wigley's Are We Human?* in The Avery Review, Issue 23. Retrieved 2017, from www.averyreview.com:
    [http://averyreview.com/issues/23/toward-a-critical-ergonomics]
[27] See: Cranz, G. (1998). *The Chair: Rethinking Culture, Body, and Design.* New York: W.W.Norton. p.113, in Knoblauch, J. (2017). *Toward a Critical Ergonomics.* The Avery Review, New York:
    [http://averyreview.com/issues/23/toward-a-critical-ergonomics]
[28] See: Rudofsky, B. (1980). *Now I Lay Me Down to Eat: Notes and Footnotes on the Lost Art of Living.* New York: Doubleday. p.46-101.

in one's head" (Knoblauch 2017), chasing a universally comfortable design is futile when the subject is always conditioned by previous experience, knowledge, and expectations. "The science of ergonomics can provide insight and tools, but the complex causality involved in chair design suggests that 'getting it right' is impossible" (Knoblauch 2013). Ultimately, Cranz concludes, "The best chair would be one that allows stresses to shift" (Cranz 1998) – a hard chair that puts the body in perpetual motion, continually chasing way discomfort, rather than perpetually comfortable. Counter-intuitively, "the most comfortable chair (and the least likely to cause injury) turns out to be the one that causes some pain and reminds one they are actually sitting, perhaps even causing them to periodically get up and walk about" (Knoblauch 2013).

> This idea of *productive discomfort* is the second theme central to this thesis.

Para.12   In fact, everything presented here has been designed to work like Cranz's 'best chair'. To agitate and provoke – but more like a sports massage than a plain irritation. To keep everything moving in circles. A system of continuously shifting forces whose incompleteness and aporias provide a sharp reminder that architecture only makes sense after the fact (if at all), and that

> here on the *bleeding edge*[29] *architecture has always been a combination of magical thinking*[30]*, make-believe*[31] *and nonsense*[32]
>
> .   .   .

---

[29] "Before cracking the spine, I grinned at how aptly Thomas Pynchon's title, Bleeding Edge (Pynchon, 2013), worked for a historical novel set during the fin-de-siècle dot-com crash. A phrase that once served as a self-congratulating signifier of way-ahead-of-the-curve-ness, bandied about by preening venture capitalists, start-up CEOs and phalanxes of blow-dried public relations myrmidons, had become appropriately musty and nostalgic, exquisitely dated. Very deft, Mr. Pynchon! How far we've come, that the very words 'bleeding edge' now [also] summon up the past…"[a] (Leonard, 2013).

There can be little doubt that Pynchon had more than just the irony of an outdated but nonetheless prophetic anachronism about the future[b] in mind when he chose this one time battlecry of New York's 'Silicon Alley' as the title of his 2013 novel investigating the oedipal love triangle of American foreign policy, the rise of the internet, and transhumanism as they circle one another and the events of 9/11: is the 'bleeding edge' a surface of expanding and increasingly sophisticated cultural prosthesis that connects us to and cuts us off from a seemingly unlimited beyond; a masochistic sphere of advancing *neonativity* (Heidegger's 'clearing' or Sloterdjik's 'anthropotechnics') upon which the unfettered innocence and artless energies of 'reason without reason' (i.e. the avant-garde) is converted into biopolitical and neopolitical force by 'societies of control' (Foucault, Deleuze, Morton etc.)[c/d]? or a liminal, deterritorialised, and minimally stratified region of shifting associations in which difference is capped by the placental membrane?

To be 'on the bleeding edge' means to be engaged in the use or development of highly experimental technologies whose safety, reliability, and sometimes even ultimate purpose remain as yet undetermined[e]. The first record of the phrase was in the New York Times in 1983[f] (Hayes, 1983) when it was used by an unnamed banking executive to describe his firm's disastrous early adoption of new storage technologies purchased from StorageTek. Its clever mix of rhyming and semantic association alludes to the pre-existing metaphors 'leading edge' and 'cutting edge', creating a new assemblage that is surprisingly effortless in its evocation of the inherent risks of new technologies on one hand, and the avant-garde-like moral ambivalence (and hype) that surrounds their development on the other, i.e. the sadomasochistic eroticism of transhumanist technophilia. Often requiring large amounts of investment with uncertain (if potentially vast) returns, extreme expertise, and a disregard for convention (like the primacy of meatspace over cyberspace, or outer-space over sectarian crises and mass displacement across the middle-east, i.e. *SpaceX*), bleeding edge technologies are frequently cited as amoral, esoteric, hermetic and anti-

humanist. Like the development of 'General A.I' today, or heavier than air flight since the beginning of time until it went industrial in the early 20th century, bleeding edge technologies are, by degrees, perceived to be in direct contradiction to the 'order of things' and a danger to society.

By this definition, the quest for flight is arguably the prototypical bleeding edge technology[g]: reckless, hedonistic, life threatening, unnatural, socially disruptive, and speculative beyond reason. From Icarus to *Challenger*, the desire to fly has provided a constant reminder of the unnaturalness of human nature; our pre-critical, involuntary desire to be more than we are. To be transhuman. n = n + 1[h].

In 852 A.D. Armen Firman covered his body with vulture feathers and jumped from a window in the south of Spain[i]. This is the earliest recorded 'tower jump'. Armen is followed in the history books by Eilmer of Malmesbury[j] circa 1100 A.D. (White, 1961) who, believing Ovid, attached wings to his hands and feet and jumped from the roof of Malmesbury Abbey, but I think it's safe to assume men and women have been chasing flight from windows and rooftops since we invented the second story. Curiously, the popularity of what must have seemed like increasingly bizarre dreams of ornithoptic flight (bird like wing flapping flying machines) continued into 19th century fuelled no doubt by a supercharged cocktail of premodern resemblance, post-Enlightenment empiricism, and industrial age mechanics.

The last recorded act of such proto-surrealist transhumanist conjecture was made by Albrecht Berblinger[k], 'The Tailor from Ulm', who studied the flight of owls in his spare time and from 1808-1811 developed an ornithopter. His dedication to his work resulted in widespread ridicule and financial ruin. He was even threatened with exclusion from the guild in 1810. However, the timely support of the King (Frederick the 1st) enabled him to continue his work, and he finally attempted to fly across the Danube on the 31st of May 1811: after much delay – and the unrequested 'assistance' of a local policeman – Albrecht fell directly into the river where upon he was rescued by fishermen who could not also save his reputation. Further investigation of his designs in the 20th century have since proven their validity, but it is the allegorical quality of Albrecht's story that is most intriguing: the humdrum schadenfreude and reactionary politics of professional and social formations in the face of the very forms of speculation that give them their vitality, or *how easily the architecture of state or institutional sponsorship of bleeding edge technology can slip from liberating to life threatening*[l].

In 1891 Otto Lilienthal[m] finally left the subjunctive of heavier than air flight behind after gliding some 25m off the side of a small hill. Nevertheless, many of his flying machines (which included 2 with flapping wings) appear no less surrealist (i.e. unmediated by critical reflection and empirical science) than Albrecht's early ornithopters. Aside from his numerous 250m flights, and 5 hours' worth of elevated heartbeats – records that would remain unbroken until the Wright brothers successfully completed the first powered flight – Lilienthal is also notable for his architectural innovations, arguably building the first two modern airports. The first was a 6m high hill called Maihöhe in Steglitz, near Berlin, where upon he built a 4m tower[n] in 1892 that served as his workshop and hanger and supplied him with elevated launch pad. After outgrowing this site and failing to find any other suitable locations in the area, Lilienthal constructed a 15mx70m conical earth mound he called *Fliegeberg* (lit. 'Fly Hill') near his home in Lichterfelde from which he could both launch and land his famous 'zero groundspeed' flights no matter the wind direction...

Windows, roofs, wings, textiles, mounds, platforms, beating hearts, and combustion engines... Le Corbusier's obsession should come as no surprise: flying machines from who knows when until whenever you like seem to illustrate Semper's four elements of architecture more clearly that a building ever could! But don't worry... just as Colomina never said we should stop building buildings (Colomina 2010), this is not a plea to put down our pencils and take to the sky (although pilots also make plans...). Rather, just as her analysis of architecture and media during the 20th century demonstrates the crucially productive role of media in architectural discourse as the literal construction site of architecture's most radical and effective innovations (Colomina, 2010), this brief history of flight demonstrates how architecture is not simply flight's number one fan cheering on from the wings... but literally is its wings; that flight *is* architecture on the bleeding edge... over the edge... beyond itself... transforming and alchemical. Aeroplanes are architecture sublated[o].

On Saturday the 9th of August 1896, Lilienthal went to *Flyhill*, as he did every weekend. The day was sunny but not too hot. The first three flights of the day were successful, each reaching a distance of nearly 250m, but, during the fourth flight his glider pitched forward and began to fall. Unable to recover control, Lilienthal hit the ground from a height of 15m, breaking his neck. His last words, spoken to his brother and collaborator Gustav the following day, were "*Opfer müssen gebracht werden!*" ("*Sacrifices must be made!*") (Ludwig, 1985, p.183). In 1932, *Fliegeberg* was redesigned by Berlin architect Fritz Freymuller according

to whose plans a small temple-like memorial to Lilienthal consisting of pilotis supporting a sloping circular roof was constructed at its peak[p], as if somehow denying the transmutation of architecture into aeronautics that is testified by runways, gate lounges, jet bridges and duty-free shopping the world over. There's no flight without foundations.

That the innocence of both lighter than air flight (balloons) and powered aviation (aeroplanes) were equally short lived[q] presents an all too real and appropriately bloody allegory concerning the danger of bleeding edge technological progress for anyone who seeks it. A narrative that was only continued by the 'Space Race' and now looms ominously on the far side of the event horizon of life on Mars; what role will architecture play as the dust of Lilienthal's *Flyhill* finally settles on truly foreign soil?[r] Interplanetary colonialism, A.I., cyberspace, particle physics, moon landings, nuclear fission, special and general relativity, radio waves, electricity, photography, metaphysics, neoliberalism (the invisible hand…), vitalism, transatlantic navigation, alchemy, heliocentrism, Ptolemaic cosmology, and the eucharist: bleeding edge technologies are alchemical construction sites of transmutation; various forms of hyperreality that paste over (with nightcap and dressing gowns?) the limits of knowledge they expose, or tear open, with paranoid conjecture and delusional conviction; *reality producing fictions* that – like mind-independent versions of Austin's unverifiable speech acts, Aristotelian substantial forms in reverse, Schrödinger's cat inside a box that is impossible open, or noir-ish whodunits in which the detective is also the screenwriter and the criminal etc. – are either 1. crazier than they appear or 2. insanely true in ways we are not yet capable of comprehending.

Even Le Corbusier's techno utopianism could not escape reflection on the bleeding-edge edge of bleeding edge technology, quoting the following passage from a letter penned by Colonel Vauthier in the opening pages of his 1935 mediation on the aeroplane, Aircraft: The New Vision: "The officials still believe that aviation could be introduced into our lives by a nice juxtaposition, modestly settling down into a mall corner, while in fact it is bursting through everything: our customs, our law, our economy. The soldiers also have tried to persuade themselves that aviation would politely adapt itself to the old rules, while in fact it compels the general revision of all previously accepted values." (Le Corbusier, 1935, part.1).

However, while the Colonel's remarks maintain a certain ambivalence to the effects of aviation, Le Corbusier's own position soon becomes clear: disorder, terror, and even death are but means to an end – a historical justification for his

own inherent vice: a decade long quest to find a landing-strip/blast-zone for his greatest innovation: urbanism's first intercontinental ballistic projectile, Ville Radieuse, after it was turned away by Parisian ground control in 1924 and forced to circle the globe in his briefcase (until WW2 cleared a site for it): "PRE-MACHINE CIVILISATION IS FINISHED. Were Railway Companies forbidden to launch their enterprises? Yet the total disorganisation of the political, social, and economic system was threatened. Was the printing press forbidden? Yet the Daily Press was to group people in mass at the bidding of partisanship […] and have the power to incite wars and to declare them, to feed war with men, munitions, and enthusiasm. Was the cinema forbidden? Yet it was to arouse covetous desires, to instil the ostentation of wealth into simple souls, break down classes, and social barriers. Was the radio? By its means the voice of the world was audible to every ear […] public rejoicings and propagandist poison. Everything was allowed. […] Why then do the 'academies' endeavour to bar the path today, and to prevent us from bestowing on man the pleasures of living [in] cities which perform their function? Let us […] advance into a New Age" (Le Corbusier, 1935, part.10).

Still, it's hard not to get caught up in Corb's machine age rhetoric until the final pages of Aircraft reveal his ultimate delirium: having spent so long scanning the earth from the windows of aeroplanes on his mission to save the modern city from itself with a repressed copy of its accidental archetype – [Delirious] New York – flagellated of all intensity, he succumbed to the sublime objectification of this transhumanist-eye-view… internalised it… became it… "From the plane: there is no pleasure… but a long, concentrated, mournful meditation. […] I understand and ponder, I do not love; I am not attuned to the enjoyment of these spectacles […] Everything escapes me […] The non-professional who flies can take refuge only in himself and his works. But once he has come down to earth his aims and determination have found a new scale. The world lacks harmonisers to make palpable the humane beauty of modern times. One can be lulled and reassured by saying to oneself that in spite of everything a stirring unity will come to prevail by degrees. But there should be no misunderstanding about the value of individual effort, which must be granted its rightful place. Sometimes in the course of the centuries a man has sprung up here and there, instinct with the power of genius, establishing the unity of his time. A man! The flock needs a shepherd" (Le Corbusier, 1935, part.13). And we need Black Ops![s] Architecture's presumptive tendencies[t] demand continual vigilance, and periodic counterstrikes of a poiria and doubt – defensive technologies Le Corbusier misplaced on his Voyage D'Orient circa 1910.

Bleeding Edge[u] is the undeclared long title[v] of this thesis. Like Frankenstein's creature, Dali's *Angelus*[w] (Tush, 2012), or, more prosaically, the same 100 names and faces that bounce around the world from one architecture school to the other (now often ironically faceless thanks to *Pinterest*, I*nstagram*, T*umblr* etc.) which always look the same but say something different, Pynchon's novel is an unstable, genre blurring, profligate assemblage of innumerable parts (n = n+1), possessed by a spirit of uncontrollable and indeterminate interconnection it refuses to either explain, discipline, or exorcise. "*A search result with no instructions on how to look for it*" (Pynchon, 2013, p.218).

a. A.Leonard, Leonard, A. (2013, September 13). Bleeding Edge: Thomas Pynchon goes truther. Retrieved May 7, 2017, from Salon: [https://www.salon.com/2013/09/11/bleeding_edge_thomas_pynchon_goes_truther/]

b. A utopian transhumanist neoliberal catch phrase of the dot.com error that warned of the post 9/11-Orwellian-http://www. world we now inhabit, definitively exposed by Edward Snowden only 3 months before *Bleeding Edge* was released.

c. This is kind of important so here's three minutes of theory to bring you up to speed: Three Minute Theory: What Are Societies of Control? (Kerr, 2013): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v =onZ1U4jKJdk]

d. "The coils of the serpent are much more complex than the burrows of the molehill." (Deleuze, 1992, pp. 3-7)

e. See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bleeding_edge_technology]

f. Hayes, T. (1983, March 21). *Hope At Storage Technology*. Retrieved 2017, from New York Times: [http://www.nytimes.com/1983/03/21/business/hope-at-storage   -technology.html]

g. 'Leading edge' and 'cutting edge' refer to front edge of an aerofoil which 'cuts' the air and produces lift.

h. See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transhumanism#Early_transhumanist_thinking]

i. See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_aviation#Tower_jumping]; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz _Reichelt]

j. *White, L. (1961). Eilmer of Malmesbury, an Eleventh Century Aviator: A Case Study of Technological Innovation, Its Context and Tradition, in 'Technology and Culture', Vol.2 No.2 p.97-111.*

k. Who also designed some of the first articulating transfemoral prostheses:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albrecht_Berblinger]

l.   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAwiyS5aTcU]

m.   [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto_Lilienthal]
        [http://www.lilienthal-museum.de/olma/eotto.htm]
        [http://www.flyingmachines.org/lilthl.html]

n.   [http://www.lilienthal-museum.de/olma/eba1893.htm?q=maihöhe]

o.   SpaceX at the International Astronautical Congress (IAC) Adelaide, 2017:
        [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdUX3ypDVwI][40:30-end]

p.   See: Lilienthal Memorial_1923.jpeg:
        [http://www.gettyimages.co.nz/detail/news-photo/inauguration-of-a-
        new-monument-for-avitation-pioneer-otto-news-photo/5510 15497]

q.   The first successfully piloted balloons were flown by the Montgolfier
        brothers in 1783. Balloons were used for observation only a decade later
        in the battle of Fleurus in 1794 after which the French military established
        a special balloon corps – which was later disbanded by Napoleon in 1799
        despite its obvious utility – a classic example of the typically 'anti-bleeding
        edge' stance of reactionary agendas. The first bombs were dropped by
        Austrian aviators from balloons over Venice in 1849. The first successful
        powered flights were made by the Wright brothers in 1903. In 1911 Giulio
        Gavotti became the first person to complete a aerial night mission and drop
        a bomb from an aeroplane but military flight remained largely a
        reconnaissance exercise, however, the onset of the First World War in
        1914 transformed the sky and birds eye view alike mediums of observation
        to obliteration:
        [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_military_ballooning]

r.   SpaceX at the International Astronautical Congress, Adelaide, 2017:
        [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdUX3ypDVwI][39:20-40:00]

s.   '*Black Ops*'; ambivalence, humour, and ellipses. Intellectual strategies that
        help to maintain sanity, nimbleness, and critical distance as architecture
        navigates the reality producing flows of paranoid conjecture.

t.   Vanstiphout, W. 2011. *Historian of the present*, Rory Hyde Int. Australian
        Design Review, 2011:
        [https://www.australiandesignreview.com/architecture/historian-of-
        the-present-wouter-vanstiphout/]

u.   *Bleeding Edge* continues a meditation on *the limit of the limit of knowledge*
        that underwrites all Pynchon's work and supplies this thesis with that
        'other centre' of its elliptical rotation: What happens when everything is
        known, or at least appears to be? When the rounding of the globe and the

surveying of the territory erases the last traces of *terra incognita*, that ineffable continent of unknown unknowns… of the counterfactual and the forever possible… "*of might-b's and if-it-weres*" (Pynchon again but I can't remember where)… changing all subjunctives to declaratives, reducing possibilities to simplicities, consuming the sacred, and canceling out all counter-narratives?* What happens when the limit of the limit is exceeded by the limit itself? So yeah, this is a postcolonial thing too…

* "Does Britannia, when she sleeps, dream? Is America her dream? In which all that cannot pass in the metropolitan Wakefulness is allow'd. Expression away in the restless Slumber of these Provinces, and on West-ward, wherever 'tis not yet mapp'd, nor written down, nor ever, by the majority of Mankind, seen,-- serving as a very Rubbish-Tip for subjunctive Hopes, for all that may yet be true,-- Earthly Paradise, Fountain of Youth, Realms of Prester John, Christ's Kingdom, ever behind the sunset, safe till the next Territory to the West be seen and recorded, measur'd and tied in, back into the Net-Work of Points already known, that slowly triangulates its Way into the Continent, changing all from subjunctive to declarative, reducing Possibilities to Simplicities that serve the ends of Governments,-- winning away from the realm of the Sacred, its Borderlands one by one, and assuming them unto the bare mortal World that is our home, and our Despair." (Pynchon, Mason & Dixon, 1997);

v. Long title in as much as: 1. When is say 'Bleeding Edge' I mean the whole book, not just the title; and 2. The 'long title' defines the scope of a Bill, Act, or Statute in the New Zealand parliament beyond which it cannot be amended.

w. Tush, P. (2012). *Dali and Paranoia*. Florida: Dali Museum: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pnURAFKqYc][21:30]

x. If you're looking for a precedent study or a thesis question, or just something to hold onto, then turn around. That was it is. The question is the answer and what your reading is the search query, or the landing page, or the redirection error; 'Would you want to replace the existing normal?'*, or what they might have written on the underside of yogurt lids if there hadn't been only just enough space for "*Better luck next time…*" But there is no next time. When you open the refrigerator, the light is on… whether it already was or not. This is not a joke; it's a just punchline that consumes the universe. A place of safety I no longer believe in.

* "*Would you like to create a new Normal.dotm?*" a Microsoft Office Word error message that appears in editions of Word from 2006 – 2011:

[https://static.spiceworks.com/shared/post/0018/4101/word%20dotm
.jpg]

[30] In 1959 Salvador Dali completed *The Discovery of America by Christopher Columbus*[a]. The painting depicts Columbus mid stride, his big toe closing in on that "*last unmeasurable delta-t*"[b] (Pynchon, Gravity's Rainbow, 1973), a literal millisecond before his footprint transforms conjecture into confirmation, proving once and for all that the world is round, *and* that by sailing west he would arrive in India…The painting is a case study on discovery, or rather, conquest and its B-side, its own heterotopic twin *erros*[c].

From *The Promised Land* to *Saturn V*, Dali illustrates discovery as conquest, an inextricable synthesis of inner and outer space (Kant's Copernican revolution meets *SpaceX*); literally, mentally, spiritually… that writes its own rules in the language of paranoid conjecture; belief, faith, feelings, whatever: a vector field of unfalsifiable claims to absolute truth within which all facts are made to point north. For Dali, conquest is *THE* reality creating fiction, and Columbus' first foot step on Indian soil – the original "*one small step for man…*" (Armstrong, 1969)[d] – conquest par excellence.

Dali's fascination with Columbus began shortly after his own discovery of America in 1934. Although he painted the seafaring Genoan only once, Columbus features frequently in Dali's diary, beginning on the day of his arrival by boat in New York City: "And suddenly I beheld New York. It was before me, for a degree, pink and creamy white, it looked like an immense gothic roquefort cheese. I love roquefort and exclaimed "New York salutes me!", but immediately the pride of my Catalonian blood of Christopher Columbus which flows in my veins cried to me "Present!" and I in turn saluted the cosmic grandeur and originality of the American flag"[e] (Dali, 1963). Dali believed Columbus to be a fellow Catalonian[f] and took immense pride in seeing himself as part of a tradition of great Spanish conquistadors that began with the westward reaching of *La Santa María de la Inmaculada Concepción* (Holy Mary of The Immaculate Conception) from Palos de la Frontera. Like Columbus, Cortes, and Pizarro before him (but also Picasso, Duchamp, Miro and Mondrian), Dali and his wife Gala[g] were part of a centuries-long tide of European avant-gardism that made its fortune plundering America's physical and mental space[h]. However, as the title of Dali's 1935 essay *The Conquest of The Irrational*[i] (arguably still his most overlooked and major contribution to artistic theory (Koolhaas, Salvador Dali, The Paranoid Critical Method, Le Corbusier, New York, 1976)[j/k]) says, his primary ambition was literally *the conquest of the irrational itself*.

Surrealism is typically understood as the movement that had as its ambition the realisation of an uninterrupted flow of the unconscious in material form, or more precisely, to make the unconscious speak with minimal interference from the critical or intellectual faculties. However, for Dali this definition constitutes only the first phase of surrealism in the early 1920s[l] (Dali, 1935). Looking back today it is clear that after only a few years of letting the unconscious speak, a sense of mannerism and of stylism and of obvious manipulation begins to enter the work – that no matter what the official position, an element of good taste and of control emerged from within these supposedly uncontrolled situations (Koolhaas 1976).

It was at that time Salvador Dali appeared on the scene. Having arrived late to the game the young prodigy absorbed the implications of surrealism in its unconscious phase with tremendous virtuosity and speed (Koolhaas, 1976). Then in 1929, having identified the growing inability of Surrealism to satisfy the principles of verification first announced by Breton (i.e. the anti-surrealist tendency of surrealist work to desperately tend toward its objective and physical existence in reality[m]), there is a REVELATION that would quickly move to dominate his work and eventually lead to his self-styled usurpation of the entire Surrealist movement[n]: "It was in 1929 that Salvador Dali turned his attention to the internal mechanisms of paranoid phenomena, envisaging the possibility of an experimental method base on the power that dominates the systematic associations peculiar to paranoia. Subsequently this method was to become the frenzied critical synthesis that bears the name of PARANOID CRITICAL ACTIVITY"[o] (Dali, 1930).

We can already see in this statement a certain quality of Dali, and of paranoid critical activity, that separates it from innocent surrealism. A sense of paranoid critical activity's radically mutagenic reversal of surrealism's founding principle that attempts to control rather than liberate the irrational. Paranoid critical activity is thus new radically revised and openly conscious phase of surrealism that imposes (rather than minimises) critical and intellectual control on the flow of the unconscious. In 1935, frustrated by the increasing tension between himself and his comrade Surrealists, and seeing an opportunity to claim American soil as his own, he published *The Conquest of The Irrational* (Dali, 1935), his first English language text, in which he repeats this statement, this time following it with his only explicit formulation of the PARANOID CRITICAL METHOD: "The spontaneous method of the production of irrational knowledge based on the critical and systematic objectification of delirious associations and interpretations" (Dali, 1935).

a.   The Discovery of America By Christopher Columbus:
      [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BQ43zSHVI8]

b.   "And it is just here, just at this dark and silent frame, that the pointed tip of
      the rocket, falling nearly a mile per second, absolutely and forever without
      sound, reaches its last unmeasurable delta-t. There is still time, if you need
      the comfort, to touch the person next to you or to reach between your own
      cold legs…" From the final page of *Gravity's Rainbow* (Pynchon, 1973). See:
      For The Love of Ryan:
      [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syYPqfM1L48];
      The Book Chemist:
      [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ua7VRKDtcds]

c.   [https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/erro#Galician]

d.   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCt1BwWE2gA]

e.   "And suddenly I beheld New York. I was before me, for a degree, pink and
      creamy white, it looked like an immense gothic roquefort cheese. I love
      roquefort and exclaimed "New York salutes me!" but immediately the pride
      of my Catalonian blood of Christopher Columbus which flows in my veins
      cried to me "Present!" and I intern saluted the cosmic grandeur and
      originality of the American flag. New York, you are an Egypt, but and Egypt
      turned inside out. For she erected pyramids of slavery to death and you
      erected pyramids of democracy with the vertical organ pipes of your
      skyscrapers all meeting at the point of infinity of liberty. New York, granite
      centennial facing Asia, resurrection of the Atlantic dream, Atlantis of the
      subconscious, New York the stark folly of whose wardrobe gnaws away at
      the earth around her foundations and swells the inverted cupolas of your
      one thousand new religions. New York, what Piranesi invented the
      ornamental rights of your Roxy theatre, and what Gustave Moreau
      apoplectic with Prometheus lighted the phenomenal colours that flutter at
      the summit of the Cherisher building." (Dali, 1963)

f.   *The Discovery of America by Christopher Columbus* was painted at a time
      when Columbus' origins were in doubt. Many, like Dali, still believed him
      to be a Spaniard of Catalonian origin rather than a Genovese Italian. In this
      sense Dali's painting is, in part, an advertisement of this belief; his own
      paranoid conjecture. An expression of Dali's already zealous patriotism
      intensified by the approaching 300th anniversary of Velasquez death in
      1960.

g.   From 1936 Dali signed all his paintings with both their names.

h.   That began to ebb towards the end of the 19th century and arguably completed its transatlantic turn at the end of WW2 with the rise of American military industrial complex, emergence of the 'New York School' in the late 1950s, and the beginning of the Cold War (which turned Central Europe into a no man's land/buffer-zone of political irrelevance).

i.   [http://www.abuildingroam.com/2010/12/salvador-dalis-essay-c onquest-of.html] (Dali, 1935);

j.   Koolhaas, R. (1976). *Salvador Dali, The Paranoid Critical Method, Le Corbusier, New York*. Retrieved 2017, from YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcnRzxQu27w][5:00]

k.   In 1976 Rem Koolhaas delivered his first public presentation of research that would eventually culminate in *Delirious New York* (Koolhaas, 1978) in a lecture he called *Salvador Dali, The Paranoid Critical Method, Le Corbusier, New York*. The first half of the lecture consists of a more-or-less undisclosed relay of Dali's little known 1935 essay, *The Conquest of The Irrational*, from which Koolhaas appropriates his [Dali's] analysis of Surrealism, adds a few of his own conclusions, and explains the central subject of the [Dali's] essay: *Paranoid Critical Method*. Having reviewed the lecture's source material – *The Femme Visible* (Dali, 1930), *The Conquest of The Irrational* (Dali, 1935), and *Diary of a Genius* (Dali, 1963) – what follows is a similar operation by the author upon this lecture as Koolhaas performs on Dali's little-known texts in his writing of it.

l.   Emblematic of this period is the now well-known game *Exquisite Corpse*.

m.   "Only those people who are unaware of this can still flounder about in the gross misunderstanding of the 'poetic escape', and continue to believe our mysticism of the fantastic and our fanaticism of the marvellous." (Dali, 1935)

n.   "The only difference between me and the Surrealists is that I am a Surrealist" (Dali, circa 1950)

o.   First published in French in *La Femme Visible* (Dali, 1930) and in English *The Conquest of The Irrational* (Dali, 1935)

[31] In diagrammatic terms, the clearest way to explain paranoid critical activity is through an example of its opposite: the rise of reinforcement therapy in 1970s America as a means of correcting various psychological pathologies[a] (Koolhaas, 1976). Reinforcement therapy takes place in an isolated and highly contrived environment in which doctors induce the inmates to behave normally via the accumulation of points and the distribution of rewards. Special events are routinely organised at which normal behaviour can be demonstrated: e.g. the

application of lipstick; smiling when two people meet; the making of polite conversation; the shaving of legs; the holding of tea cups and proper manners at tea. Every normal act is catalogued, and points accrue which can be later exchanged for rewards resulting in an absolutely horrible caricature of normal behaviour. The basic diagram then, is that a society of people suffering from various kinds of mental abnormalities, under critical supervision, insinuates itself into the structure of normalcy, assuming its appearance and modes of operation. The paranoid critical method is the exact opposite of this: a process in which the rational critical faculty is used to consciously insinuate a sane intellect into the operative mode of paranoid psychosis (Koolhaas, 1976).

Modern psychiatry owes its theory of paranoia to Jacques Lacan[b]. Like Dali, Lacan was part of the Parisian Left Bank[c] scene. He was Picasso's physician and friends with James Joyce and André Breton, whom he is known to have associated with throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s. The point here is that Lacan and Dali were not only developing similar ideas within the same cultural milieu but also had plenty of opportunity to familiarise themselves with each other's work. The claim is that Dali was as important to modern Lacanian psychoanalysis as Lacan was to surrealism.

While it is commonly agreed that Lacan's early writing (circa 1928) on paranoia influenced Dali's development and understanding of paranoid critical activity[d], it is also possible that the idea of 'systematic confusion' developed by Lacan's in his medical thesis, *Paranoia Considered in Relation to Personality* (Lacan, 1932), was influenced by Dali's book, *La Femme Visible*, in which he famously declares: "The moment is at hand when by paranoid and active advance of the mind it will be possible to systematise confusion and thus to help discredit completely the world of reality"[e] (Dali, 1930). Here Dali is suggesting that our new understandings of paranoia might soon provide us with a way of wilfully *re*reading reality in such a way as to give it an entirely different meaning than the one previously thought to be objectively true, *and* that paranoid psychosis is a desirable and productive mental state that can be achieved by 'sound mind' through an act of critical thinking.

With this statement, Dali makes the ambition of the paranoid critical method clear: *to discredit the world of reality*. This is part of the program of surrealism, but what is more interesting about Dali's version, is that it has this active dimension. That it is not subverting the world through vaguely disturbing unconscious creations (i.e. the inherently compromised *passive manifestation* of evidence for a repressed but no less real parallel universe of unconscious forces that underwrite the everyday) but by an absolutely conscious active act. As the

name suggest, what is essential about paranoid critical activity is its jointing of the seemingly contradictory activities represented by its two terms: first paranoid activity, which produces certain unexpected conjectures associations and delusions, and then critical activity which, when applied to these delusions, gives them a legitimacy and reality that their initial point of genesis doesn't really warrant[f/g]. "What paranoid critical method really means is the fabrication of evidence for things that do not exist [...] or the fabrication of evidence for paranoid systems from elements stolen or borrowed from the real world, [...] or the successful graft of a paranoid conjecture on the world" (Koolhaas, 1976) which bring us back to Columbus' big toe...].

The deep reason for Dali's sustained interest in Columbus, in America, and in this moment, is that it is a demonstration of the unconscious paranoid critical activity that permeates all acts of conquest[h] – including his own; which means the conquest of the irrational through paranoid critical activity is actually also perhaps the only means of achieving surrealism's original goal; that every act of conquest proves something that is true and something that is untrue and that it is impossible to tell which is which... Which brings us to the final, most subtle quality of paranoid critical activity as a *method*: That it is, by definition, a creative act of *retroactive re*interpretation that gains its authority from historical revelation, i.e. 'facts', whether existing or newly fabricated, discredit reality by presenting alternative pasts that bring new meaning to the present, which is to say it always involves the partial reinterpretation of historical situations such as they pertain to present circumstances, and therefore constitutes [both the minimal threshold of newness and] the necessary first half of the act of manifesto making[i] (Wigley, Manifesto Fever in What Happened to The Architectural Manifesto? Session 3, 2011).

Paranoid critical activity is itself proof of the always already paranoid unstable meshwork of metonymy and zeugma from which meaning is endogenously created and from which objective 'facts' are only later produced... the decisive point is that a paranoid critical formulation is a non-truth evaluable plot (in both senses of the word) that must be either accepted – in which reality is changed forever – or rejected – in which case its paranoid conjecture remains nonsensical.

[a.]   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcnRzxQu27w][10:50-14:50]

[b.]   Paranoia is commonly misunderstood as persecution mania, but its meaning is really much broader than that. The word *paranoia* comes from the Greek παράνοια (paranoia), "madness", and that from παρά (*para*), "beside, by" and νόος (*noos*), "mind"[*]. The term was used to describe a

mental illness in which a delusional belief is the dominant feature. In the 1880s German psychiatrist Emil Kraepelin was the first person to formalise the term using it to describe a condition where a delusion was present, but without any apparent deterioration of the intellect. Then, in 1928, the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan wrote a dissertation that extended this definition with a generative structure. After Lacan, paranoia became the collective name for all psychological phenomena in which a frenzy of interpretative activity produces the delirious effect whereby all facts are [mis]construed to reinforce each other through some common a priori conjecture that is not necessarily delusional and may in fact be itself true. Obviously, persecution mania is one version of this – in the sense that every person one meets seems to be involved in the same conspiracy, but what is actually *paranoia in general* is understood to be a kind of fabricated *re*interpretation of the world in which all phenomena are made to support to some pre-existing (typically) paranoid conjecture by an act of subjective reality distortion. So, rather than simply persecution mania, paranoia is really a completely uncontrollable form of automatic association where everything is associated with everything else, and every new association only confirms what was previously believed to be true.
* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paranoia#History]

[c.] "Rive Gauche" or "Left Bank" generally the large group of artists, writers and philosophers, that associated with each other and the city around the fin de siècle. This group including: Margaret Anderson, Djuna Barnes, Natalie Barney, Sylvia Beach, Erik Satie, Kay Boyle, Bryher, Caresse Crosby, Nancy Cunard, Salvador Dali, Hilda Doolittle, Janet Flanner, Jane Heap, Maria Jolas, Jacques Lacan, Mina Loy, Henry Miller, Adrienne Monnier, Anaïs Nin, Jean Rhys, Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas, Renee Vivien, Edith Wharton, Pablo Picasso, Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Verlaine, Henri Matisse, Jean-Paul Sartre, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, James Baldwin and dozens of other members of the great artistic community at Montparnasse. The phrase implies a sense of bohemianism, counterculture and creativity. See: Woody Allen's film *Midnight in Paris* (Allen 2011):
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYRWfS2s2v4]
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXxw6tpM970]
[http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1605783/]

[d.] [https://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176/appi.ajp.160.5.855]

[e.] Tush, P. (2012). *Dali and Paranoia*. Florida: Dali Museum:
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pnURAFKqYc][7:45]

f.   Or, as Koolhaas describes it in Delirious New York: "Dali's Paranoid Critical Method is a sequence of two consecutive but discrete operations: 1. [paranoid activity] the synthetic reproduction of the paranoiac's way of seeing the world in a new light – with its rich harvest of unsuspected correspondences, analogies and patterns; and 2. [critical activity] the compression of these gaseous speculations to a critical point where they achieve the density of fact: the critical part of the method consists of the fabrication of objectifying 'souvenirs' of the paranoid tourism [i.e. operation 1.], of concrete evidence that brings the discoveries of those excursions back to the rest of [human]kind, ideally in forms as obvious and undeniable as snapshots" (Koolhaas, 1978).

g.   Or, describing one of his dreams as model of this process in the manor of a pseudo-scientific experimentalist detective who uses the scientific method to produces effects that confirm his hypothesis: "Take five bags of green peas. Put all of them in a single big bag and drop them from an altitude of 50 feet. Now on the falling peas project an image" … and I hope that ah everyone in the audience can temporarily suppress at least for the duration of this talk and hopefully longer one instinct for good taste because looking at what remains of this lecture anything of good taste will be absolutely shattered ah so "Put all of them in a single big bag and drop them from an altitude of 50 feet. Now on the falling peas project an image of the holy virgin. Each pea separated only by space as with the particle of an atom will reflect a small part of this image. Now one project the image upside down and takes a photograph. Due to the effects of gravity and the acceleration of the peas the upside-down photograph with produce the effect of ascension. To reinforce the effect even more one can coat each pea with a reflective film that will give each one the quality of a screen that will on close inspection contain a smaller copy of the image itself." i.e. the paranoid conjecture that Mary went to heaven is fixed in photography whose essence is that it cannot lie.

h.   As discussed in fn.31 Columbus had two conjectures: that the world was round, and that he would arrive in India by sailing west from Spain. Therefore, one could say that America itself has had, from the beginning, a kind of paranoid critical illegitimacy which may or may not account for some of its problems and wonders. Like the Indian problem – which can now be seen as the erasure of that part of the evidence which is embarrassing in the sense that it doesn't confirm the initial conjecture – or hippie-modernism, and a certain kind of counter culture that is based on a

fundamental distrust of the government, of large institutions, and of corporate power – a sceptical vanguard (of which Thomas Pynchon is a product) whose utopian ideals are fundamentally opposed to the machinic smoothness and high-brow temperament of their European counterparts.

i. Wigley, M. (2011). *Manifesto Fever*, in What Happened to The Architectural Manifesto? Session 3*:
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOfffjXd2Yc][48:00-1:20:00]
[56:30-59:30]

* Here Wigley identifies the imperative mood of manifesto language: should, must, will, won't etc, "*of which the highest order of which is 'is', which is perhaps the most important word in manifesto writing*" (Wigley, 2011), suggesting that it is the word 'is' that lends the future conjecture of the manifesto – i.e. the particular change it demands in the order of things – the power of an already present historical fact. However, a paranoid critical reading of manifestos writing suggests instead that this imperative language is really a kind of strategic red herring that enhances its affective power by distracting readers from that power's actual source, which is rather much more subversively located in the almost unnoticed and certainly innocuous seeming word 'the': As in (late Romantic) 'Classic Realism', the repeated paratactic deployment of 'the' is the joint across which real and imaginary objects, summoned in support of some paranoid conjecture**, graft themselves onto the reality of the reader with an almost automatically, involuntary immediacy. Rereading Wigley's own example I think makes this point clear: "The Columns: Assiduous and stubborn research has resulted in partial realisations which can be considered as having been acquired in a laboratory. These results open new prospects for architecture; they present themselves to an urbanism which can find the means therein to arrive at the solution of the great sickness of our present-day cities. The house on Columns! The house used to be sunk in the ground; dark and often humid rooms. Reinforced concrete offers us the columns. The house is in the air, above the ground; the garden passes under the house, the garden is also on the house, on the roof." (Le Corbusier circa 1921 in Wigley, 2011) The open-ended actuality of 'the', and the tacit way in which it makes the reader feel as if they should already 'get it' even if they don't is the real source of this statements self-evident already presentness.

** Classic Realism; A literary genre (and theory of art) which maintains that reality is ontologically independent of human conditioning and thus

knowable to the artist, who can in turn distil its universal essence and convey this to any reader using precise direct language and minimal dramatisation. For example, the opening line of A Picture of Dorian Grey: "The studio was filled with the rich odour of roses, and when the light summer wind stirred amidst the trees of the garden, there came through the open door the heavy scent of the lilac, or the more delicate perfume of the pink-flowering thorn" (Wilde, 1890). If early romantic prose are to their content like a glove to a hand, then Classic Realism attempts to be more like skin, and is, in this way, arguably the beginning of minimalism/conceptualism in art and literature… which is basically art reimagined as a reality producing fiction, which is fundamentally what Romanticism is, in as much as its desire from the very beginning was to induce a necessarily political change in the mind of the reader, not necessarily revolutionary but nonetheless utopian, through which the common experience of some truer truth would produce a general improvement in the order of things… which means also that manifestos are, like all reality producing fictions, part of this artistic genre. (And architecture too, which is a problem…).

[32] One could wonder, why paranoid critical conjecture was invented in the 1930s and why it is still relevant today; why then and why now? Why not earlier or why not later? No doubt Foucault would say that such an idea has its origins in the Plague, which according to him, catalysed the rigorous culture of observation that lead Schelling and Coleridge to invent the words 'unconscious' and 'psychology' in the late 18th century (following Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, 1781), and relationships of power and discipline that enabled Freud to later theorise it, which might all be true… but a lot of other important things happened in the five hundred or so years between the siege of Feodosia by the Mongols and invention of psychoanalysis, the discovery of America and the circumnavigation of the globe, the development of accurate timekeeping, linear algebra, orthogonal projection, perspective drawing, and of course modern cartography which brought all of these discoveries and inventions together.

So, one could argue that the appearance of the inner world as a historical object – an explored territory ripe for analysis, exploitation, and conquest – was simply the re-relocation of the necessarily immaterial *terra incognita* after it had been literally chased off the surface of the earth. In this sense, one of the reasons for the emergence of surrealism – considered as radical aesthetics rather than political gesture (bearing in mind that the initial clarity of this difference is inversely proportional to the time spent thinking about it) – is as an almost

---

allergic reaction to a world where all facts are known; a world where there is no *terra incognita[a]*. Here again, we can begin to sense a difference between the innocent surrealism of the 1920s and paranoid critical activity in as much as they are opposite responses to this problem: surrealism desires to close off the unconscious world from further conquest and thus maintain its unknown/ unknowable status; while paranoid critical activity exploits the gap between reality and consciousness to return uncertainty to the world in general.

One could say that, before our time, at least before Freud, there were always still things to be discovered in the world; parts that had not been mapped; tribes that were living according to completely unpredictable patterns: doubly uncertain objects of knowledge that sit precisely on the epistemological border between 'unknown unknowns' and 'known unknowns'. The irony is, of course, that the loss of free play that occurred when the cartographer's ICBM re-entered the atmosphere, descended to ground zero, and drew the final lines of the first definitive map of the world and all its phenomena, created a certain sense of depression and of anxiety far more unsettling than the presence of any as yet unobserved elements predicted by the intrinsic geometry of the periodic table. The importance of mapping is critical here. Mapping is visual, or at the very least spatial, so to map is always to make some kind of spatial metaphor and it is through the reductive transformation of this metaphor that a sense of knowing everything is produced – even when one perhaps knows nothing, or perhaps even less that nothing as a consequence of the map itself. In any case, this mixture of knowledge and space and anxiety is the essence of cartography, which is an intrinsically visual phenomenon and which underwrites architecture.

From this cartographic perspective, paranoid critical activity is the systematic *re*mapping of rational thought upon the world; an unfalsifiable alternative truth that disturbs the assumed isomorphic correlationism[b] between rational thinking and objective reality, thus revealing the heterotopic ocean of shifting signification that is the condition of possibility of any specific meaning, however stable it appears (Kant's "unknown equals"). Which is to say that paranoid critical activity is like a second layer, a parasitic or phantom cartography on top of the 'real map' that, through an act of falsification, attempts to convey the sense of a certain trace of alterity inherent in any map, that the dots could be just as well connected by other lines… In this sense, like Columbus' arrival in 'India', the planting of an American flag on the moon becomes an accidental demonstration of the kitsch, pastiche, self-deconstructing essence of mapping which is always already a form of paranoid conjecture in as much as it

is basically the projection of mannerisms from one system onto an absolutely different system, sometimes completely dysfunctional and inexplicable, like the signs of the zodiac, and sometimes imaginary but useful, like the cartesian grid.

The trace is the joint between paranoia and mapping; the node from which they depart as interchangeable expressions of the same root, like the way 'zeugma' (Greek for 'that which is used to join', often referring to a boat-bridge but also an English language trope in which an adjective is made to join with two or more nouns in a sentence while only applying properly to one of them) and 'yoga' (Hindu for 'yoking or union' but conventionally used to describe a joining of the mind with the breath, body, and/or spirit) both descend from the same Proto-Indo-European word 'yueg' (which is the root of the English words 'join' and 'yoke' and all their derivative forms[c]). Their common root is an iconography of footsteps and of tracking, such that both mapping in general, and the paranoid critical method in particular, constitute the fabrication of footprints that point to new territories, new situations and trajectories of motion that cannot exist but nevertheless undeniably exist[d].

In closing his introduction to paranoid critical activity at the Architectural Association in 1976, Koolhaas presented an alternative reason for its emergence that is even more relevant today, and also somehow counter and somehow complementary to the anxiety of knowing everything, which is really a very ecological thing, in as much as the disappearance of *terra incognita* is really the disappearance of 'the environment' as such, or rather the disappearance of *nature*, in as much as it is a 'becoming foreground' of the background, which is really a collapsing of these very categories[e], which is really a very architectural thing in as much as it is basically the loss of the idea of a container, or of some infinite, or at least infinitely absorbent away, which is really a very architectural kind of question; because what is architecture if it is not a container… a passive receptacle… background? Which is a very viscous claustrophobic feeling, like being stuck inside a chocolate you are also at the same time eating, but you can't stop eating, because you love chocolate and because eating is like, just what you do… the feeling that there is no 'over there', no *unaffected*, and this is where paranoia and Pynchon and postmodern American literature come in, and of course paranoid critical thinking, but not just as some way of returning mystery and wonder and free-play to the world, or as an allergic reaction to knowing everything masquerading as the ethical deconstruction of rational certainty, which it is, but as a strategy – perhaps the only strategy – for coping with the vast catatonic paranoiac cartographic data-scapes of *terror cognito*, which actually segues nicely into Koolhaas' idea of this alternative countervailing

reason for the sudden formulation of paranoid critical activity in the 20th century, which must have seemed much more speculative in 1976 because it has to do with the media and with metropolitan life which in itself is no surprise as these were his two big interests at the time, his own unacknowledged 'synthetic judgements a priori', or reality distortion field, or periodic table to which he forced his observable universe to conform, and through which he produced the following discovery:

"Metropolitan life, or life in the metropolis, life in western society consumes facts like the big toe of a saint's statue that gradually disappears under the relentless onslaught of their devotees' kisses; in the same way you could say that every fact in the world is subjected, to a larger or lesser degree, to this sort of metaphysical kiss, collective kiss of the society, and that the big toe of reality dissolves under the perpetual exposure of our sustained and collective kiss. And further, that this process is accelerated through the density and flow of information, and though the increased density of our metropolitan existence. Therefore, one could also see the paranoid critical method as a sort of synthetic reproduction of reality […] through interpretive activity" (Koolhaas, 1976): a kind of recycling, or duplication, or 'patching up' or over or replacing of big toes that have been kissed out of existence[f]…

a. Surrealism essentially opposes Freud through its deployment of two contradictory strategies united in their goal of converting the unconscious into a kind of spatial territory, like a national park or a nature reserve: 1. defending the unconscious from further conquest by reinstating its status sacred ground; or 2. demonstrating its inherent unknowability and thus close it off as the inscrutable locus of all terra incognita (but paranoid critical activity transcends these strategies by exploiting a gap between physical reality and the space of signification thus revealing the immanence of terra incognita in all things).

b. See Timothy Morton on Correlationism: [http://ecologywithoutnature.blogspot.co.nz/2012/04/ooo-class2correlationism -video-mp3.html][34:00-1:05:00]

c. This thesis traces architecture to its etymological roots in the Proto-Indo-European words 'yeug' and 'ar'[**] from where it finds rich repressed content for a (neo-luddist*) contemporary revival.
*[http://www.nytimes.com/books/97/05/18/reviews/pynchon-luddite.html]
[https://www.salon.com/2013/09/13/thomas_pynchon_attacks_the_internet_in_new_book_partner/]

**[http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=yeug][http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=ar]

d. Or, as Koolhaas analogises it: "The paranoid critical act is like cheating in the last moves of a game of patience just as you realise it's not working out, because that's what the world is; it's a game of patience that didn't work, or like banging in a piece of a jigsaw puzzle with a hammer and making it stick because one just wants it there and not somewhere else, and because one maybe doubts whether or not the correct piece does exists. So paranoid critical activity is like banging puzzle pieces in place even though one knows that those pieces are not actually in place or if they are that they remain the wrong pieces… Obviously this requires a certain suspension of the moral faculty, and this is no doubt the reason with the present state of our intelligencia [sic] we cannot hope that these methods will ever be taken very seriously." (Koolhaas, 1976).

e. Paranoid critical activity is also interesting in that it is always a mixture of subversive activity and conservative activity. Obviously, to work, it demands the prior existence of a preferred reality, or at least its *effectiveness* is somehow proportional to the certainty or depth of faith with which some existing order or arrangement of things is held. But also, as Dali's photographic proof of the accent of the Virgin Mary to heaven demonstrates, the making real of a paranoid conjecture – its becoming true – relies on the maintenance of a pre-existing fallacy which much remain absolutely beyond question; in this case the idea that photography is a medium that cannot lie. So, "paranoid critical activity always has the double element which is that its message or its content is a subversive and aggressive act committed against the world while its medium – the way it imposes itself upon the world – is maximally conservative, and even reactionary. In a way, you could see [the paranoid critical method] like Robin Hood in Sherwood forest – getting money for the poor from the rich, a subversive activity, but at the same time the success of his actions is dependent on the uninterrupted flow of rich people through the forest" (Koolhaas, 1976) – and the paranoid critical object like double agent whose very invisibility, i.e. conventionality, brings about the collapse of a society her existence depends on.

f. Bataille, G. (1929). *The Big Toe*, in Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939 (A. Stoekl, Trans.). Minneapolis: UMP, 1985: [http://supervert.com/elibrary/georges_bataille/the_big_toe]

Para.13   In their recent book, *Are We Human?*[33] (2016), Beatriz Colomina and Mark Wigley argue that design across the ages is primarily a form of anaesthetics[34] – that the central aim of 'good design' is to minimise psychological, physical, and social discomfort. That being the case, the sweeping, default operations of 'best practice' might be likened to a kind of autoimmune disorder that causes lethal overcompensation in response to any perceived contradictions or discomfort in 'the order of things'. If this is true, then this thesis is **my best attempt at *bad practice***: rather than anaesthetise *against* discomfort, it tries to inoculate against a certain cultural [over]*reaction* towards it. To cure this disorder. A vaccine or pharmakon that serves to

---

[33] B. Colomina & M. Wigley, 2016, *Are We Human? An Archaeology of Design*, Lars Müller, Zurich.

> [https://www.amazon.com/Are-Human-Notes-Archaeology-Design/dp/303778511X]
> [https://www.lars-mueller-publishers.com/are-we-human]
> [https://www.domusweb.it/en/design/2016/11/03/are_we_human_.html]

[34] The modern apotheosis of this vision is Buckminster Fuller, whose life and work was guided by the central ambition of reforming the environment in response to (supposed) 'natural' human needs, thus placing himself steadfastly within the 12000-year-long tradition of *agrilogisitcs*[a]: a conceit of modern human psycho-social conditioning, or conceptual 'blankie', we have lived with and depended on for so long it has graduated from comforting-tool to ideological-weapon to reality-principle – which is basically a kind of hyper-rational utilitarianism in which existing is always better than any quality of existing, and existing means not contradiction yourself so let's get rid of all the weeds and pests and bad stuff and have nature over there and humans over here and use genetic engineering to develop super-identical crops that positively transcend themselves becoming ever more of what they are in respect to their human use value.

[a]   [http://ecologywithoutnature.blogspot.co.nz/2015/10/what-is-agrilogistics.html]

reveal the necessarily loose fit between architecture and itself[35] so that, as a society, we might be better equipped to deal with those larger and darker discomforts that continue to fuel our anaphylactic addiction to agrilogistics[36]: the unresolvable anxiety of existence; with the absence of telos; the fear of death etc; but also, since 1964 (or 1945, or 1917,

---

[35] True of everything really, and scary and frustrating and embarrassing etc., but also ethical, vital, liberating, and joyful etc.

[36] Agrilogistics is basically 'retweet' that says an infinite number of eternally suffering humans spread throughout the universe is better than one happy person here on earth. The dysfunctionality built into this logic is periodically challenged by applied research, like Cranz's 'best chair', but also in quantum mechanics (vibrating atoms at zero degrees Kelvin), thermodynamics (the impossibility of equilibrium), speculative atopias like Constant's *New Babylon* (the heterotopic antithesis of Fuller's project), or various 'crisis of the present', like global warming, nuclear technology, and industrial capitalism – all of which demonstrate the necessary and unavoidable way that what is 'human' is invariably distorted and deformed by an unknowable, twisted, loopy connection to what humans do[a] (Morton & Obrist, 2014). A dark and uncanny loop that puts the distinction between what is human and what is not under erasure. As Isaac Asimov points out, even an escape to Mars presents us with the very same problem that would drive us there, the management of the biosphere, only this time infinitely more difficult, since first we would have to create it. See: *Ecology Without Nature*[b] and *Dark Ecology* (Morton, 2016)[c]

[a] See: Timothy Morton & Hans-Ulrich Obrist at, Extinction Marathon: Visions of the Future, 2014:
[http://dismagazine.com/disillusioned/discussion-disillusioned/68280/hansulrichobrist-timothy-morton/]
[http://serpentinegalleries.org/exhibitions-events/extinction-marathon]
[http://serpentinegalleries.org/exhibitions-events/extinctly-0]

[b] [https://www.amazon.com/Ecology-without-Nature-RethinkingEnvironmental/dp/0674034856]

[c] [https://www.amazon.com/Dark-Ecology-CoexistenceLibraryLectures/dp/0231177526]

or 1790, or 1610, or…)[37], the terrifying loss of our collective ability to deny the knowledge of everything we now know but wish we didn't.

Para.14   These are grand claims, but **The Idea** that architecture is an intrinsically non-teleological, non-truth evaluable, reality producing

---

[37] When did the Anthropocene begin?[a] 1610: a dip in atmospheric CO_2 recorded in the Arctic ice sheet caused by the death of 50 million native Americans and the reversion of their farmland to rainforest following the arrival of Europeans; 1790: a thin layer of carbon deposited in the earth's crust as a result of early, coal powered, mass industrialisation across Europe (and coincidentally, the year of the completion of Kant's Critiques – considered to be the first works of modern philosophy; 1917[b]: the year of the Russian Revolution, the splitting of the atom by Ernest Rutherford, and a step change increase in both the production of non-degradable consumer materials and mining of the earth's crust across the northern hemisphere; 1945: the first nuclear explosion, Trinity test[c], New Mexico, 16th July; 1964: a statistically significant increase in the proportion of radioactive isotopes in near-surface mineral and rock deposits of the earth's crust as a result of fallout from nuclear tests and bombs.[d]

[a]   [https://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/holocene-anthropoc en e-human-epoch]

[b]   [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_Vernadsky]

[c]   [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity_(nuclear_test)]

[d]   "All of us feel, by means of our own detectors, tracers and seismographs, that we are inhabiting a different earth; that the old model of public life has come to an end; just as has the possibility of the limitless modernisation of an inexhaustible Earth. What shall we call the projection of an ideal into an abstraction decoupled from the earth? A utopia. So here's what's happening: we are leaving utopia and returning to Earth. But upon our return, we notice that this Earth doesn't look the same. Like the astronauts in a science-fiction story who return to their planet after a long separation spent daydreaming in the stars, we are discovering an Earth which, in the meantime, has changed its form and its movement. The surprise is as great as was the discovery of the New World at the time of Columbus. Except this time we haven't discovered a new continent, but the same continents as before, albeit warped by the action of humans in the midst of things." (Latour, 2014): [http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/downloads/14-11ANTH ROPO-translGB.pdf]

fiction[38] make it the ideal critic of the very boundaries it is claimed to maintain: cultural norms; existing hegemonies; and categorical distinctions between the sacred and profane etc. A contrarian science whose duel necessity and supplementarily make it enduringly hopeful. Political. Ethical.

Para.15   If architecture is "*articulate building*"[39] it is always already not itself in as much as it [architecture] marks the irreconcilable difference between what a building is and how it appears. Inhabiting this gap, architecture becomes the last refuge of ~~transubstantiation~~ in a world were God is always already dead.

.   .   .

---

[38] The very same attributes that have enabled the enduring presence of geometric vitalism throughout the ages, whether that be the essentialism of Pythagoras and Plato; the cosmographies and mercurialism of the Mediaeval period (Evans, 1997, pp. 6-46); man as the measure of all things[a] during the Renaissance (Vitruvius,, Brunelleschi, Alberti, Leonardo, Palladio, Borromini); modern universal transcendentalism (Emerson, Wright, Malevich, Tatlin, Taut, Griffen, Goff, Gropius and Mies); contemporary biomorphic parametricism (Lynn, Roche, Schumacher); or the inexorable[b] spectre of the right-angle (just look around the studios at any so-called free-thinking architecture school).

[a]   "Which is not to say an 'anthropocentric world view', since as man was made in the image of God, his proportions must reflect the divine cosmic order" (Wittkower, 1949): [https://leonardodavinci.stanford.edu/submissions/clabaugh/history/architecture.html]

[b]   As in: not to be persuaded, moved, or affected by prayers or entreaties

[39] Wigley, M. (2013). *Deconstructivism: Retrospective Views and Actuality* [Panel discussion]. Retrieved 2017, from The Museum of Modern Art: [https://www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/videos/255/] [0:15:00]

Para.16   In 1959 Le Corbusier added a preface to his 1925 book, *The Decorative Art of Today*[40], in which he described his work as being from the beginning the product of an ongoing inquiry into the question "*where is architecture?*". Whether his formulation of this question occurred, as he claimed, during his *Voyage* of 1910, or sometime between then the publication of this preface, it must be understood as the tacit modification of an earlier one, "*what is architecture?*", that had driven architectural discourse since the re-discovery of Vitruvius. A strategic manoeuvre in which 'where' emerges from within 'what', displacing rather than replacing it, rearranging the field and increasing its vocabulary. An act of reality producing description that demonstrates architecture as the process of entering its field.

Para.17   But does Le Corbusier's 1910 (or 1956) manoeuvring still make sense in a world where the many and varied technologies of globalisation mean everything is always already everywhere? Is a new question is needed? If so, it is tempting (and perhaps logical) in the time obsessed present to suggest instead "*when is architecture?*", but here I see two problems: 1. That to the extent **The Idea** [that *architecture is the process of entering its field*] is correct, '*when* architecture occurs' does not account for the non-teleological nature of its field, and displaces its locus too far towards building on the one hand, and atomised moments of 'phenomenological' experience on the other. 2. The very obsession with time that promotes this question is, I would claim, an expression of a crisis *of* the present, by which I mean more than just a growing set of increasingly urgent present crises, like artificial intelligence, automation,

---

[40] Corbusier, L. (1925). *The Decorative Art of Today*. London: Architectural Press, 1987.

global warming, nuclear waste, mass extinction etc.[41], but also, as the vast temporal extension of these specific crises demonstrate, the present crises of the present that puts the present itself into question; the Anthropocene – or the appearance of humans on the stage of geological time – melts away the comfortable idea of the present as 'here and now'. In a world where future futures so distant as to test the limits of rational thought (let alone human empathy) are massively altered by the cumulative effect of even the tiniest human actions (driving to work; eating coco-pops; watching T.V; mowing the law; appreciating the view... etc.), we are forced at every turn to ask ourselves across what temporal frame should consider the ethical/political consequences of our decisions?[42]. In such circumstances the question

---

[41] Crises that – like the hum of a refrigerator, the rattle of an idling car, electric lighting, cabin pressure somewhere above the Pacific Ocean, plumbing, carpet, or any number of stray cats – cumulatively produce a kind of background radiation that permeates the everyday, rising infrequently to the surface whenever the logic of 'good design brakes down' or circumstance demand that we attend to 'the environment', or think ecologically. Ethically. Politically. Thank God for architecture school!

[42] While such speculation will receive little sympathy from some (particularly in New Zealand where short-term thinking and chasing the next buck are architectural art-forms, immortalised in our national museum and demonstrated at every turn by our professional body) the title of the 3rd Istanbul Design Biennale – *Are We Human? The Design of the Species: 2 Seconds, 2 Days, 2 Years, 200 Years, 200,000 Years*, curated by Beatriz Colomina and Mark Wigley (Professor of architecture art Princeton, and Dean Emeritus at Columbia respectively), – is 1st class evidence of the serious consideration given this kind of thinking by others elsewhere. An even more convincing case for the relevance of this question than the patronage of such prestigious ~~antiheroes~~, is the frequent sensitivity for eco-political questions of ethical duration in those scene-setting opening moments of studio crits from Auckland to Dakar – you know, all that tacit 'values' establishing stuff acknowledged only as a form of dismissal (if at all), before moving on to talk about 'architecture'.

"*when is architecture?*" seems both flippant and imprecise. So, what then?

Para.18   It seems to me that the layered, mesh-like, non-linear, hyper-durational, interconnectedness of the crises of the present – attributes of what Timothy Morton calls "Hyperobjects"[43] and which he claims force a kind of deconstructive[44], ecological, hyper-ethics that connects taps with rat poison with solar panels with Vitruvius with bunny rabbits with Domino's Pizza with actual dominos etc.[45] – invokes a sense of process that draws on the spectre of prophecy and circumstance that resides within 'when' – 'when the time is right', 'when the stars align' etc. – suggesting instead the question "*How is architecture...?*".

So... *How is* Architecture...?

Para.19   This question possesses a curious ambiguity that unites the original proposition of this thesis, [The Idea] '*that architecture is the process of entering its field*', with its purpose, '*to cure our disorder*'[46]: on the one hand it pulls architecture sideways, drawing our attention to it as something not only thought, embodied, and conditional – 'what?', 'where?', and 'when?' respectively – but also done, 'How is architecture?'; while on the other, as architects – green-thumbed avant-gardener-demiurges of the our field – we find ourselves shifted,

---

[43] Morton (2013)
    [http://massivelyinvisibleobjects.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Hyperobjects.pdf]
    [https://www.amazon.com/Hyperobjects-Philosophy-Ecology-afterPosthumanities/dp/0816689237]
[44] As in 'Derridean'
[45] Or Pip Cheshire with King Charles II with Jacques Cousteau.
[46] Please state your problem at www.pleasestateyourproblem.com

teleported to the hospital or doctor's surgery for a medical check-up[47], "How *is* architecture?". Such that to ask, "*How is* Architecture...?", is to make a joint[48].

---

[47] Mark Wigley frequently describes his public lectures as "medical check-ups"[a]. The hypothesis that design is a form of anaesthetics, and the idea of 'bad practice' as an inoculation against [a kind of reactionary anaphylactic over application of] this tendency literalise this medical metaphor.

a. See: online lectures: *The Strange Time of The Sketch*/ (Wigley, 1997); *Pipeless Dreams*; and *Deconstructivism: Retrospective Views and Actuality* (Wigley, 2013):
[https://youtube.com/watch?v=PbFfcLYEnSc][1:30]
[https://youtube.com/watch?v=q6BMNsARLm4][3:30; 24:00]
[https://moma.org/explore/multimedia/videos/255/][13:50]

[48] *The Ruined Cottage*[a] (Wordsworth, 1787), a war poem about the life of a woman whose husband set off for the front and never returned, presents the reader with two opposing readings: that everything happens for a reason, or that nothing does, and one should be weary of the anaesthetising effects of such escapist thinking. Both views are put in doubt by the opening section of the poem that describes an other-worldly realm in which a sleepy giant looks "*with sidelong eye upon the scene*" (Wordsworth, 1787). But what scene... his own; the narrator; the author; the reader? That neither giant nor his world are mentioned again puts everything that follows, the entire poem, not just into question, but under erasure, in a way that cannot be felt until after the poem ends but has already occurred before it has even properly begun: does this poem even have a meaning? If not, is that in-itself a kind of meaning? Or can we hold its richly allegorical content at bay?[b]

"Imagination is so always so active: unless you suppress it, it will suppress you" from *The Cloud of Unknowing*, a 14th century text of Christian mysticism (author unknown). "The underlying message of this work suggests that the way to know God is to abandon consideration of God's particular activities and attributes, and be courageous enough to surrender one's mind and ego to the realm of "unknowing", at which point one may begin to glimpse the nature of God"[c]. One reading of this thesis is as an argument by demonstration for an architectural practice of *unknowing*, by which I do not mean *forgetting*, but rather a tacit reconciliation with our growing sense of the ontological incompleteness[d] and radical interconnection of all things, in which the whole is always somehow *less* than its parts[e]....

> <u>This idea of ***the joint***<mark>[49]</mark> is the third theme central</u>
> <u>to this thesis.</u>
>
> . . .

Para.20   The joint is a popular theme in architectural discourse. In as much as 'articulate building' means to shape and assemble otherwise distinct objects in a structured, enduring, and intentional way[50], architecture itself is a joint, but its joint-i-ness goes much deeper than that. In *The Structural Study of Myth* (1955), Levi Strauss claims that all

---

a.   Wordsworth, W. (1787), *The Ruined Cottage*, in Selected Poems By William Wordsworth. London: Penguin Classics, 2005. [https://genius.com/William-wordsworth-the-excursion-book-i-the-ruined-cottage-annotated]

b.   This poem is written in non-rhyming iambic pentameter, or 'blank verse' – the most open and least invocational pre-modern style.

c.   John Choi: *The Cloud of Unknowing [in a nutshell]*: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Cloud_of_Unknowing] [https://youtube.com/watch?v=uOKkUaZDtiw]

d.   Žižek. S, 2012, *Ontological Incompleteness in Painting*, Saas-Fee: EGS: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddctYDCTlIA]

e.   Morton.T, 2017, *Subsendence*, e-flux #85: [http://www.e-flux.com/journal/85/156375/subscendence/]

[49] The arrival of the '*joint*' marks the *volta* of this thesis: a rhetorical shift or change in thought and emotion that marks a move away from the increasing interiority and complexity of the development phase and towards a combined sense of expanding environmentality[a], irony[b], and resolution[c] – from breathing in to breathing out – such that here, in this moment, *the idea* of a joint becomes a joint itself.

a.   Awareness of the way in which one's physical surrounds both are an *effect of* and *affect* their present circumstance.

b.   Irony: the aesthetic exploitation of the gap between one or more levels of signification.

c.   The intention of this thesis being to sublate this effect.

[50] i.e. Architectonics.

myths are origin stories reducible to various arrangements of the same four fundamental signifieds[51]: the one, the many, the other, and the same[52]. In this view, mythological spaces are powerful reality producing fictions that help us assemble (join) meaningful images of the world and locate (fit) ourselves within it[53]. In the story of Oedipus for instance, 'the other' and 'the same' are signified by the earth – one – and nuclear family – many – respectively. Alternatively, in Maori legend 'the one' is Maui, a more-or-less human and humanist trickster figure with magical godlike powers who represents autonomy, innovation, wisdom, cunning, and foolishness, while 'the many' is Papatuanuku and Ranginui who combine the familiar figure of the family – mother and father – with the other – earth and sky. More recent myths, like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), collapse these categories into a single figure – Frankenstein's monster is one, many, other, and same, which is why he is so terrifying (and relevant) – and introduce an element of distinctly human agency that is both the cause and subject of effects that are beyond its control.

---

[51] In classic structuralism, this arrangement is itself a type of signified, but one that remains invariable and therefore outside the linguistic system (what Derrida would eventually term the *transcendental signified*).

[52] See: Strauss, L. (1955). *The Structural Study of Myth*. London: Routledge, 2010: [https://www.amazon.com/Structural-Study-Myth-Totemism/dp/0415611628]

[53] Myths are also therefore not myths – like architecture, they are 'reality producing fictions' whose "spiritual growth [or evolving isomorphic correlation with 'reality' – that is, 'not myth-ness'] continues until "the intellectual impulse that produced them is exhausted" (Strauss, 1955, p. 229), that is, new questions regarding the origin, composition, and articulation of reality – which is to say 'jointing' – arise that exceed the structure of their signifieds.

Para.21   Frankenstein is particularly useful in thinking about architecture. As both were arguably invented around the same time, during the romantic period during at the birth of Modernity, it is not surprising that they confront similar questions and have the same structure: people assemble inanimate objects in their own image that subsequently develop uncanny autonomous agency, jump off the operating table (or out of the mirror) and lurch towards us for a hug[54]:

---

[54] Here the architectonics of *Frankenstein* (Shelley, 1818) are informative its narrative: While the bulk of the tale consists of Victor's well-known account of his own life, readers of the book are often surprised to discover that it is written neither in first person present tense nor plain memoir. Rather, the beginning and end of the book frame Victor's voice within a second story – that of Captain Robert Walton's half-baked expedition to the North Pole, which is itself told through a collection of letters written by Walton to his sister, Mrs Margaret Saville, who resides in London. In short, Walton's crew spot and rescue Frankenstein from a floating ice-sheet not long before the boat is trapped in frozen waters and forced to stop. After nursing him back to health, and with nothing else to do, Walton listens to his story by day, and transcribes it "*word for word as best he can remember*" (Shelley, 1818) each night that he might share it with his sister. This formal structure creates series of embedded spaces that first expand out from the reader and their immediate environment, to London (and Mrs. Saville sitting at her desk in some suburban drawing room), to the world (which now includes Victor's tragedy), before contracting back on to a boat trapped on the ice in a frozen landscape, into a cabin, a conversation, and finally Walton's mind.

The strength of Shelley's allegory is increased by the distancing effect of this spatial jointing, as if looking at it head on would have made it somehow less real... or perhaps too immediate, and therefore more plainly fictional. The epistolary technique was not uncommon during the romantic period; the present tense of modern fiction was yet to emerge and the adoption of 'cool' documentary tropes from the closely linked fields of natural history and colonial adventure brought renewed vitality to the sentimentality of pre-Romantic literature through their very displacement. In addition to this, the multiple frames of the narrative enable Shelley to demonstrate its allegorical force as she moves between them, first on the creature, then Frankenstein, and finally upon

Walton, whose situation, while different, is nonetheless similarly driven by a desire for adventure, originality and greatness[a].

By the end of the novel, the reader is compelled to consider the book's allegorical content, which – given Shelly's original mix of scientific tropes, creationist thematic, and prescient restructuring of Strauss's four mythical signifieds – make the book seem more like a work of modern philosophy, environmental ethics, or eco-politics from the new millennium – such as Varilio's idea of inventing the accident[b] (*The Original Accident*, 2007), the Gaia theory of James Lovelock and *Ecology Without Nature* (Morton, 2009) – than a genre defining romantic horror from 1818.

Looking back cross 19th century literature the figure of the ship is well represented: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (Samuel Coleridge,1798), *Moby Dick* (Melville, 1851), *Nostromo* (Joseph Conrad, 1904) etc. These texts cover a period over which the image of 'the sea' in nautical fiction shifted from a materialist, libertarian, laissez faire economic zone (which lead to tales of adventure, mutiny, and pirateering that reflected the mercantile capitalism of the early colonialism), to the genius loci of the romantic sublime (or idealist nature [Edward Burke etc.], that corresponds more with industrial capitalism and imperialism, and from which contemporary maritime romance fiction [like *The Love Boat*[c] and *Fantasy Island*[d]] descend)[e]. However, they do not so easily conform to these categories themselves, putting them instead it into unstable, boundary-blurring, dialectic opposition. In each case, this effect is enabled by the architectonic of the *ship as a joint* which operates as both a figurative *and* literal ferry between the supposed structured and coherent 'world of the reader' (lawful, consistent, official, stable etc.) and the unstable, slippery, shadow economy of the text, in which the otherwise transcendental arrangement of signifieds that lends the prevailing ideologies their *presence* as 'natural facts' is cast adrift. So, the joint is a *joint*[f] in more ways than one...

a.   In recounting his story Frankenstein is lead to the realisation that his tragic narrative is a product of his own "*contempt for the modern uses of natural philosophy [which] seemed to limit itself to the annihilation [of those] grand visions [of] immortality and power [upon which] their discipline was original founded*" and resulting aspiration to "*harness the tools of modern science*" such that he might succeed where alchemists did not; Reflecting on Frankenstein's life, Walton comes to see the vanity that fuels his own ill-conceived ambition to make his name exploring the arctic after failing as a writer.

background[55] becomes foreground via an act of articulate building[56].

[b.]   See: Appendix A: *Reinventing the Accident: Renovations and Additions to The Auckland Art Gallery* Toi o Tāmaki

[c.]   The Love Boat 'Intro':
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_wFEB4Oxlo]

[d.]   Fantasy Island s04e01:
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MUrIGnWoEA]
Tullock, E. & Schulz, D. (2017). *Never Discuss Politics at Home* e01c04. Madrid: Grupo Toma:
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MAfyUppU6i0&list=PLLF9k_6Yzkx dCARGrE3YP20hzXqdxQqiu&index=5]

[e.]   See: *The Last Resort*, para.3-6

[f.]   A secluded or otherwise ulterior site of abnormality (i.e. illicit, illegal, amoral, deviant, queer, grotesque, or monstrous, but also irrational, unconscious, automatic, alien, other).

[55] A (politically) transparent object whose 'presence' flips-flops between the invisibility of Heideggerian *ready-to-handedness* (i.e. pre-political materialism) and the transcendental metaphysics of the Burkean sublime (i.e. apolitical idealism) – like the white wall[a].

[a.]   See: *The Shower of Perception*; *The Emperor's New Paint* (Wigley, 1995)

[56] [Articulate building = architectonics = jointing] When we think of a joint in the context of architecture it is rarely in this figurative way, but as *Frankenstein* demonstrates, there is more to architectonics than dropping pediments on entablatures: jointing – however clear or stable – perverts meaning through metonymy, such that a joint is both literally-figurative *and* figuratively-literal. The oldest Indo-European word for the joint[a] provides the root of the English word *art*. To be an *art*ist, *art*isan, or *arc*hitect then, is to be in some way a joint worker, to articulate something. But to articulate is also to break (like how the tongue and lips break-up sound to make language). So, something joined is something that is at once itself, not itself, and something else. To join, therefore is also to defer completion, and therefore identity. If architecture really *is* articulate building, then it is also a side-room, annex, or lean-to; always already aside from itself. The joint is unavoidably subject to its own effects.

For all its supposed "presence" (Heidegger/Derrida etc.) or self-evident identity (A=A) architecture is queer (i.e. deviant, perverted, A = not A). Its apparent coherency itself is produced by the very contradictions it hides[b]. The word *parlour* (from the Old French *parler* or *to speak*) was first used in spatial design to designate the two rooms in a monastery where monks, otherwise

constrained by a vow of silence or some similar regulation of speech, were allowed to converse: the outer *parlour*, where members could conduct business with those outside the monastery; and the inner *parlour*, where any conversation between its members required for the operation of the monastery could take place[c]. I like this example. It highlights the way any formally rigorous system must break down to maintain itself[d], and the tri-vocal way that structured space is necessarily jointed to enable this: 1. as public sites of sanctioned exemption that maintain existing hier*arches*[e] by functioning as transitional zones *between* different systems[f]; 2. as *doubly* cloistered spaces where the contradictions and aporias that arise *within* a given order are simultaneously expressed and concealed[g]; and 3. as secluded, non-hegemonic[h] heterotopias, underground, or cant[i] spaces[j], that actively encourage deviance and free-play[k].

That the word *joint* has acquired the connotation of the very metonymic alterity jointing itself produces – shady joint, opium joint, marijuana joint, doing time in the joint, out of joint etc. – is a wonderfully circular proof of the essential queerness of even its strict, architectonic, definition: *the study of the character of the structural arrangement of parts*, which is to say that n = n+1, or that the whole is always less than the sum of its parts[l]. This is the terrifying truth that Frankenstein[m] represents. Victor hardly need have flicked the switch: the *organic growth*[n] of our combined mental and material world is autonomous, automatic, luxurious, profligate, unintentional, and ambient[o]. If the role of conventionally good design is to anaesthetize the various discomforts of our necessarily physical and social existence, then role of best practice – whether that be in the form of cultural conventions, local and state-wide regulation, professional codes, economics, or the sociopolitical tropes of taste – is to induce a psycho-social state of anesthesia that appears to control this organic assimilation, but rather only numbs our awareness of it, thus leaving the monster (us) alone, unconscious, unloved, and unchecked...

[a].   ar-: Proto-Indo-European root meaning "to fit together" See: Etymonline.com: [http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?ter m=*ar&allowed_in_fram e=0]

[b].   Hegel was already here with his revelation that identity only appeared through the sublation of it its opposite; to have an identity is to be always already beside yourself.

[c].   See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parlour]

[d].   See: Kurt Gödel's *Incompleteness Theorem*, 1931, which states that for any formal system whose axioms can be listed there will exist a set of theorems

that are true but unprovable, that such a system will be incapable of establishing its own consistency, and further, the more rigorous the system the more unprovable truths and the less consistent it becomes: [https://www.amazon.com/G%C3%B6del-Escher-Bach-Eternal-Go lden/dp/0465026567]

e. Hier-*ar*-che: literally meaning an established order of joints. See a. above.

f. e.g. medieval French Christian monastic outer parlour, reception room, quarantine, airlock, cat flap etc.

g. e.g. gentlemen's club, withdrawing room, service corridor, private salon, captain's cabin, royal privy chamber etc.

h. *Hegemony*. Def.: The maintenance of an incumbent power through the subjugation of its members and elimination of otherness, i.e. the disassembly of social groups that do not conform with its political cosmology, which otherwise includes and structures the entire socio-political universe. "In this sense, it is importantly about the ways in which the ruling class establishes and maintains its domination. The ability to impose a definition of the situation, to set the terms in which events are understood and issues discussed, to formulate ideals and define morality is an essential part of this process. Hegemony involves persuasion of the greater part of the population, particularly through the media, and the organisation of social institutions in ways that appear "natural," "ordinary," "normal." The state, through punishment for non-conformity, is crucially involved in this negotiation and enforcement". [See:: *Gramsci's Prison Notebooks* in, R. Connell. Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics (Sydney: Allen and Unwin. 1987), p.107]. Non-hegemonic is then the absence/opposite of this.

i. Cant. Def: The private language of the underworld: [http://www.dictionary.com/browse/cant?s=t]

j. e.g. opium dens, marijuana joints, brothels, squats, speakeasies etc. i.e. shady joints.

k. As the condition of absolute, non-hegemonic, heterotopia underwrites these categories, they each intersect, overlap, and consume one another (e.g. Karl Popper's paradox of tolerance in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 1945: the failure of participation etc.)

l. Because to say otherwise is to think that the whole has a greater claim on existence, or is somehow more real, than its parts, which are themselves made up of parts etc. which exist even less. So who cares about atoms or

Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!... **Fuck.**

What now...?!

---

string theory? Seriously, think about it. The Whole (W) is 1, and each of its n parts are 1. So W < n and n = n+1:
[https://youtube.com/watch?v=AJprenbVvBY][13:30-14:35]
Morton, T. (2017). *Subsendence*. e-flux #85:
[http://e-flux.com/journal/85/156375/subscendence/]

[m.] i.e. *His creature*: The curious namelessness of the creature and subsequent metonymic transfer of his creators name (and book title) to identify him in popular culture (i.e. Frankenstein = his creature), is itself a joint that brings together a set of complementary themes central to both the novel and this essay: 1. Origins: all origin stories are reducible to the question, "do we come from one or from many?", in this instance, is Frankenstein the product of his creator, his parts, or himself?; 2. Deferment: as an assembly of joined joints (i.e. meat) the limits and location of Frankenstein's identity is in doubt. What is essential to him? What is supplementary? Could he be more? "...something joined is something that is at once itself, not itself, and something else"; 3. Organic growth: if existence is "autonomous, automatic, luxurious, profligate, [and] unintentional" it is also unnameable; 4. Assimilation: Frankenstein is an unfolding process of assimilation and therefore equal not to himself but to the process of consumption that he is himself consumed by, i.e. n = n+1.

[n.] *Organic growth* as it is understood in business is a great demonstration of the popular misunderstanding of this term, and subsequent neutralisation of the concept of *organic.*

[o.] Otomo, K. and Hashimoto, I. (1988). *Akira* [Animated film]. Tokyo: Toho. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQT4qB-RFjk][1:35 – 7:30]

Para.22 Well, like Laugier[57], we could put Frank[58] back in his box. **Primitive Hut anyone?** In as much as the architecture constitutes the literal construction of the environment[59], it is also the documentation a growing awareness that there never really was a background to begin with[60]. In attempting to provide architecture with the pre-political status of a natural object[61], Laugier is insisting that, despite its obvious subject producing affects, the creature (i.e. architecture) *really is* just a "*joint of joints*": cuts of meat on the bone, assembled in the shape of language but nevertheless unable to speak. The primitive hut is always a desperate attempt to return architecture to the background. However, in precisely the same way that pulpits demonstrate the contingency of

---

[57] See: Laugier, M.-A. (1755). *Essai sur l'architecture.* (Wolfgang, & A. Herrmann, Trans.) Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1977:
> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Primitive_Hut]
> [https://www.google.co.nz/search?q=primitive+hut&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjHqOWe3d]
> [3WAhWCbbwKHXgXCE8Q_AUICigB&biw=1200&bih=652]
> [https://www.dezeen.com/2016/11/28/indoor-treehouse-bureau-spectacular-laugier-primitive-hut/]
> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uwtu_DARM9I]
> [http://www.sanrocco.info/magazine/what-s-wrong-with-the-primitive-hut]

[58] i.e. Frankenstein('s creature) > Jack (in the box) > the trickster > the devil etc:
> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZ5hbzyln7A]

[59] Throughout its history, architecture has been often referred to as the 'background art'. This is, of course, a contradiction in terms.

[60] Semper's *The Four Elements of Architecture* (1851) for instance, illustrates the considerable increase in the environmentality of architectural thinking – the shift from natural (i.e. immanent) *origins* to complex, manufactured, preindustrial *elements* (ceramics, weaving, carpentry, and earthworks) – that had occurred since Laugier's *Essay* publication almost a century earlier.

[61] Which is distinct from the readymade which demonstrates the always already political character of any object.

the sermons they support[62], or a lectern the inherent failure of communication itself[63], all such reductionist rhetoric[64] is rather a demonstration its antithesis: that, as the 'background art', architecture "is not just in our face, it literally [and troublingly] is our face…"[65/66] So, the opposite then? If we can't go back[67], can we go forward? **But *where is the avant-garde…*?**

---

[62] If the message was immanent it would not require communication.

[63] If communication was absolute is would not require any aids.

[64] i.e. the many softer versions of Laugier's thesis that, stopping one step short of 'nature', try and reduce architecture to one or more of any number of always already overlapping categories [building (strict architectonics), function (modernism), language (postmodernism), programme (Koolhaas), form (Eisenman), experience (phenomenology), presence (iconicity), exchange value (neoliberalism) etc.], but always fail to contain its essential supplementarily.

[65] Morton, T. (2013). *Hyperobjects*. USA: University of Minnesota Press. p.130: [http://massivelyinvisibleobjects.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/ 04/Hyperobjects.pdf]

[66] Nevertheless, the seductive (and comforting) idea of architecture as "essentially natural" continues even today in the (not so distant) discourses of architectural phenomenology and emergence theory, both of which hide a primitive hut at their core.

[67] Because the origin is neither what or where we thought it was…

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

How is Architecture

Para.23   **LAST SEEN:** *MOMA,* **30ᵗʰ of August 1988...** Speaking about his
and Philip Johnson's *Deconstructivist Architecture* exhibition at MOMA
in 2013[68], Mark Wigley is quick to reaffirm his original intention of the
show as an *end point*[69]; a means of elevating "*important work*" that had
been going on (i.e. canonising it), so that those involved might be able
to move on[70], and the vitality of the "*underground scene*" restored by
clearing space for a new generation of ideas[71]. However, reflecting on

---

[68] Wigley, M. (2013). *Deconstructivism: Retrospective Views and Actuality* [Panel discussion]. Retrieved 2017, from The Museum of Modern Art:

   [https://www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/videos/255/]

[69] "The point [of the show] was not for the future of the work, or for the future of the architects in the show, but the future of the discourse. In fact, for me it was a historical exhibition, and I said so repeatedly at the time. The idea was to use The Museum of Modern Art, being the museum of record, to document some work of the previous ten years, and as I repeatedly insisted: so that a new generation could then step in, but without marking that this reflection had occurred it made it difficult for the next work to be produce – whether by other people of by the very same architects."

   [https://www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/videos/255/]

   [19:30-20:15]

[70] "I've come to think that only Daniel Libeskind thought that the show was about the future, and still seems to be designing for the show..."

   [https://www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/videos/255/]

   [20:15-20:30]

This may be true, but the numerous negative delineations Wigley used to describe deconstructivism at the time: non-ism, non-style, no-group, non-rhetoric and neither new or conservative etc. (Mitasova, 2015, p. 76), hint at a parallel story: the Decon show was Wigley's own field-entering strategic manoeuvre[a]. More than simply, "a show [that] used a group of architects to make a [j]oint, [or a group of architects] that used [a] show make their own [j]oints" (Wigley, 2013, 21:50-22:30)[1], Wigley used everyone involved (i.e. the architects, Johnson, MOMA) to join his obscurity to his omnipresence.

   With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear to see the sense of discomfort Wigley is trying to establish with this evasive terminology is emblematic of his subsequent career. His particular interpretation of certain work waiting "in the

underground scene, the clubs" (Wigley, 2013, 1:10:10)[1] at the exact moment he was presented with the opportunity to enter the main stage – work that might otherwise have been neglected as an aberration, or like the organic parametricism of yesteryear, was entirely consistent with the tools and historical moment of the day (that is, a purely formal investigation of what has not yet been done but is nonetheless possible[b] – Kant's 'reason for no reason'[c]) – was an act of literal literary deconstruction upon the field; a wedge of contradiction driven into a hairline crack in the surface of 20th century avant-garde discourse; the trace of a case of mistaken identity: building for argument, structure for structuralism, gravity for God… ~~de~~construction for deconstruction; the first revelation of an always already groove, or essential *queerness,* at the heart of our field; *historical mo[ve]ment '' ft. Dj. Wigley* now on repeat at Club Critical.

There several ironies hiding within these observations. The first is of *comparison*, and pertains to Wigley's criticism of Libeskind. The second is of *mistaken identity*, and marks Wigley's key insight and subsequent contribution to the field. And the third of *reaction*, a twisted loop in which Wigley accidentally forecloses the very space he makes available:

The most transparent of these ironies is his repeated grilling of Libeskind's own repetition as "the only one [in the show] who seems to have been confused […], who thought that reflection upon architecture was a form of architecture itself, [or] that a moment of critical thinking was actually the arrival of a new style, [and] uses the exact same geometry for the horror of the murder of six million people as for selling products in a supermarket" (Mitasova, 2015, p. 76). But if deconstruction is a *style* of critical thinking, and Wigley an architect as he claims, what is his practice if not the confusion of these categories [critical thinking and architecture; the structure of discourse and the structure of design]? Furthermore, cannot Wigley's own career be described as the rigours and increasingly sophisticated rehearsal of the *geometric* operations of another (Derrida) in ever more performative and *disturbing* ways?[d]

Derrida entered architectural discourse in 1984 with the publication of *The End of The Classical* by Peter Eisenman. However, it was Bernard Tschumi who was responsible for making the introduction that would lead to the essay, and their collaborative design for an unbuilt component of Tschumi's *Parc de la Villette* (1985). This interaction, described as an "adhesion [or] double parasitic laziness" (Kipnis & Leeser, 1997, p. 110) by the formalist (Eisenman), and the anti-formalist[e] (Derrida), respectively, lasted less than a year, but would nevertheless "influence architectural discourse for a decade" (Coyne, 2011, p. 5)

as practitioners across Europe and America took up the debate following the rapid the diffusion of Derrida's ideas[f].

That this debate largely focused on either the relevance of *Deconstruction™* to architecture, or the merits of particular buildings notionally agreed as pertaining to the trademark, suggests an even more ambivalent origin story than the one retrospectively painted by Kipnis and Eisenman in *Chora L Works* (Kipnis & Leeser, 1997):

Act.1. Deconstructive-like thinking had been going on architecture since at least the publication of Venturi and Scott-Brown's book *Complexity and Contradiction* in 1966[g];

Act.2. The avant-garde architecture of the mid to late 80s was an uncomplicated reaction to dominance of postmodernism in the previous decade[h] and would have continued as it did without Derrida, whose presence was more of an exercise in *legitimation* that "*explained, justified, and contextualised this work rather than inspired it*" (Coyne, 2011, p. 39);

Act.3. Even those most intimately involved (including Derrida himself[i]) failed to recognise the immanent potential of deconstruction dormant *within* architecture, instead fumbling through a catalogue of impotent misadventures that sought to represent the supposed *character*, or worse yet *principles*, of deconstruction in richly (i.e. highly contrived) semiotic architectonics[j] – the content and form of the book *Chora L Works* (Kipnis & Leeser, 1997) being a case in point.

The exception to this is of course Wigley[k] who, while far from being the 'evil genius' behind the 'Decon' show (Sorkin, 1991, pp. 254-259), nevertheless perceived the doubly deconstructive potential latent within nominally 'deconstructionist' work[l], and was, at the invitation of Johnson, responsible for the show's rhetorical redirection away from the sadistic architectonic gymnastics captured in the shutter shock of Violated Perfection[m] and towards the slower moving geometric operations occurring within the discourse that had produced this moment of architectural astigmatism, in particular, the devastating effect the spectre/trace of the Russian avant-garde within generic Modernism which was used "to make a point about the relationship between structure, ornament [and function] that was understood to be a kind of poison pill to every single brand of postmodernism"[n] (Wigley 2013,). In doing so, he made a conceptual leap from the exposition of deconstruction as a style, to the application of deconstruction to the discourse of changing styles. Wigley's insight then – his field-entering strategic manoeuvre – is his ironic observation that the history of architectonics is (like the history of metaphysics, or language

in general) a form of symbolic logic[o] and thus subject to (rather than symbolic of) deconstruction[p]. BOOM.

Falling for architecture's cover story again[q] in 1986, Derrida identified four foundations of architectural discourse which any properly deconstructive treatment must unsettle[r] (dwelling, origin, completeness, and improvement) before concluding that any architecture that did so would also cease to be architecture. Considered alongside his expressed concern for health and safety, human enjoyment, and user expectations in the *Choral Works* transcripts (Coyne, 2011, p.54-57) – as well as his invitation for Eisenman to reflect also on other matters pertinent to architecture like poverty, social housing, and homelessness – we can see his own case of mistaken identity in which individual and collective human needs are understood as ritual inscriptions upon the architectural body that both give it meaning and limit free play. A truly free (i.e. deconstructed?) architecture would therefore have neither purpose nor meaning and as such cease to be architecture. This false conclusion arises from Derrida's failure to reconcile architecture as the representation of a[n ideal] thing, with architecture as a [necessary] thing in itself – a failure he shares with all the dialectical deliriums of Modernism (authenticity, functionality, efficiency etc.) that Wigley takes such delight in exposing, revealing as he does so, that rather than impossible (Derrida) or reductively synthetic (Modernist), the reconciliation of representation and presence is achieved only through the anxious habitation of the [no]space between them; the space of paranoid critical conjecture from which all reality producing fictions emerge.

a. "It was a historical show, not in the sense of making a historical argument, but in the sense of making a strategic documentation about the work of an immediately preceding [generation]. At the same time as being historical in this sense, it was also about reviving the very idea of the Avant-garde impulse, it was of course defending the Avant-garde. You could say something like there was a thinking of history itself, or at least of the historical impulse: [that is] the thought that the historical impulse can be used as an Avant-garde tool. And of course, I insist that it is almost always used that way." (Wigley, Deconstructivism: Retrospective Views and Actuality, Panel discussion, 2013) [20:30-21:50]

b. A negatively defined act of difference for its own sake that traverses a vector perpendicular the boundaries of normative practice using underexploited ready-to-hand conceptual and material technologies, or, more theoretically, the idea that avant-garde practices aspire to a form of 'negative dialectics' (Adorno, Negative Dialectics 1966, Thompson, P. *The*

Frankfurt school, part 2: Negative dialectics, in The Guardian 2013. London: Guardian Media Group), i.e. that they attempt to refute the claim that *progress* consists of the repeated synthesis of apparent opposites and subsequent loss of historic difference within some future whole… nevertheless, as a form of Romanticism, whose essence is consumerism (i.e. the act of the contemplation of [the contemplation of, the contemplation of, the contemplation of etc.] another act), the *terrorism* of the avant-garde, its 'reason without reason', is always itself consumed – i.e. strategically redeployed by the market as a lure to direct and control psycho-social flows and libidinal desire – the case in point being 'consumerism' itself which began life as an early Romantic avant-garde practice – Balzac's "*gastronomy of the eye*" or De Quincey's *Opium Eater*; various forms of conscientious objection to bourgeois society that merged the vast interior of Hegel's 'Beautiful Soul' with artistic subjectivity, giving birth to the idea of the *outsider* (as opposed to outcast), i.e. *avant-garde practice itself*… thus producing a new (the first) image of radical aesthetics that the very same artists were themselves consuming and through which they would become, almost immediately, "*voluntary prisoners of The Strip…*"* (Koolhaas, *Exodus*, 1972) (Brock, *Six Canonical Projects*, 2015): The radical aesthetics of revolutionary Russia (191X's Constructivism) becomes the representational tropes of the marketable *image* of conscientious objection (198X's Deconstructivist architecture), becomes the highly diluted architectural and graphic language of the privatisation of the final frontier (201X's Apple, Minecraft, Google, Microsoft Windows10 etc.), in ummmm exactly 100 years.

* Breton writes: "The simplest Surrealist act consists of dashing down into the street, pistol in hand, and firing blindly, as fast as you can pull the trigger, into the crowd. Anyone who, at least once in his life, has not dreamed of thus putting an end to the petty system of debasement and cretinisation in effect has a well-defined place in that crowd, with his belly at barrel level" (Breton & Seaver, 1969, p. 125). Suspended between rhetorical flourish and matter of fact, this quote highlights Surrealism's self-conscious struggle to reconcile its radical break from the 'ideology of continuity' with the inescapable tendency of even the most 'radical' radicalism to move toward the continuous and the familiar whenever it expresses itself in form (such as gunshots, that are merely extensions of pre-existing political strategies). Considered alongside his own commentary that "[his] intention [was] not to recommend it above any

other [Surrealist act] because it is [the] simple[st]", demonstrates the group's questioning (or rather, malaise of consumerist contemplation) of revolutionary violence as a political strategy (Eburne, 2008, p. 6)... window shopping becomes revolutionary violence becomes window shopping...

c.   A hyperbolic synopsis of Kant's rigorous separation of aesthetics from teleology in his *Critique of Judgement* (Kant, 1790), which suggests that the progressive (teleological) politics of the avant-garde has little to do with its radical aesthetics which are simply appear complementary by virtue of their shared profanity.

d.   *Colour Blindness in Modern Architecture* (1996) [covering ideas he had been working through since the late 1980s which culminated in the book *White Walls and Designer Dresses* (1995)], *The Strange Time of The Sketch* (1997) [on the contemporary work of Enric Miralles], *Utzon's Wings* (2011) [on Jorn Utzon's hands], and *Pipeless Dreams* (2013) [about the life and work of Buckminster Fuller], illustrate Wigley's unique development of deconstruction in architectural discourse over a thirty-year period.

e.   "*Deconstruction is anti-form, anti-hierarchy, anti-structure*" (Kipnis & Leeser, 1997, p. 125).

f.   First via a series of notes, letters, drawings, and articles produced by Eisenman and Derrida throughout 1985 (which would be later compiled and published in a book, *Chora L Works in 1997*), then Johnson and Wigley's *Decon* show in '88, *Deconstruction: Omnibus Volume* in '89, and finally Deconstruction: A student Guide in '91. (Coyne, 2011, p. 45).

g.   Even as early as 1991 Broadbent and Glusberg's book, *Deconstruction: A Student Guide*, raises the question of "whether architecture actually needs Deconstruction, bearing in mind that various challenging, deconstructive, practical, and argumentative strategies were already in play among avant-garde architects" (Coyne, 2011, p. 39) who, like Price, Venturi, Tschumi, and Eisenman, were introducing a wide range of novel concepts (including opposition, ambiguity, disruption, disjunction, incompleteness, absurdity, and corruption) in response to the combined forces of scientific rationalism (systems theory, cybernetics and nascent CAD), historicism (Giedion, Frampton etc. which promoted the idea that architecture somehow reflects, distils, or reveals the spirit of the time), phenomenology (Heidegger via Frampton and Schultz etc.), and Structuralism (which was championed by Alexander, and Jenks, and was surveyed in the widely disseminated *Meaning in Architecture* (1969) by Jenks and Baird) without any knowledge of Derrida's philosophy: "For quite independently – or so it

seems – [Venturi and Scott-Brown] and Derrida were thinking on equivalent lines: of 'both-and', 'undecidables', and 'transparency' and how undesirable it was. And whilst his approach may seem to be, and actually is, chaotic, Derrida's 'deconstruction' is at least sustained" (Broadbent & Glusberg, 1991, p. 64).

To these observations I would add Dali – who wrote upon arriving in New York in 1934 "...my experiences continued only to systematically give lie to the stereotype of the modern and mechanical city that the aestheticians of the European avant-garde, the politicians of the aseptic beauty of functionalism had tried to impose upon us as the example of anti-artistic virginity. No, New York was not a modern city, for having been so at the beginning, before any other city, had now on the contrary already had a horror of this or perhaps had never been..." (Dali, 1963) – and Koolhaas – whose numerous lectures at the *Architectural Association* in London and *Institute* in New York throughout the mid 1970s, culminating in his book, *Delirious New York* (Koolhaas, 1978), demonstrate an un[self]conscious discursive architectonic of reverse deconstruction he called (after Dali) the *Paranoid Critical Method*.

h. As observed by Paul Goldberg in his New York Times review: "The reason that architectural fashion has begun to focus on this narrow sphere of inquiry right now is not mysterious: its concerns are precisely the ones that the last few years have ignored. The post-modern architecture that has commanded the stage in recent years has celebrated the conventional, or at least the mannered interpretation of the conventional, and its major practitioners have done little to [pursue] the perception of pure form and space. Deconstructivism is then part a reaction [...] against post-modernism's priorities, and [part] against the astonishing extent to which post-modernism has trickled down into the architectural mainstream. Indeed, to the avant-garde in architecture, the most irritating thing about post-modernism is the completeness with which it has ceased being a force for change and has become instead an accepted approach in the commercial world" (Goldberg, 1988):
[http://www.nytimes.com/1988/06/26/arts/architecture-view-theories-as-thebuilding-blocks-for-a-new-style.html?pagewanted=all&mcu bz= 0]

i. Who designed a *rupturing element* (Kipnis and Leeser, 1997, p.90) that "[signified] the concert and multiple choral, the chora of Choral Work."

j. (J.Derrida, in J.Kipnis and T.Leeser, 1997, p. 185) in his collaboration with Eisenman.

j. "Perhaps, in architecture, this is the result of staring into the void for too long: it has resulted in a private religious language of self-denial." C.Jenks, 1989, *The Pleasure of Absence*, in *Deconstruction: Omnibus Volume* (A.Papadakis, C.Cooke, and A.Benjamin, Eds.). London: Academy Editions. p.131.

k. And to some extent Jenks, whose observation that "[the] real deconstructionist architecture of variety and humour has yet to exist" (Jenks, 1989, p. 131) begins to take on the preternatural quality of a spell or incantation that conjured forth Wigley's ensuing career.

l. If true, Wigley's claim to have insisted from the beginning that "there is no architecture of deconstruction", and that in place of this impossibility the show consisted of "the kind of architecture you would be interested in if you were interested in deconstruction" (Wigley, 2013), hints at his appreciation of the crucially speculative paranoid critical and performative nature of deconstruction; that it is itself formless; that it operates in the play between a thing (considered as a collection of other things), and itself (considered as a whole); that deconstruction is n = n+1.

m. *Violated Perfection: The Meaning of The Architectural Fragment*, was an exhibition idea for conceived by the then exhibition managers at the University of Illinois, Chicago, Paul Florian and Stephen Wierzbowski in 1984, when they observed a novel yet widespread architectural obsession with fragmentation and instability "*torn between history and technology*" (Sorkin, 1991, p. 254). Their original idea was for a survey show of 40 to 50 projects that would give comprehensive depiction of this crucial development. After acquiring plenty of interest from prospective exhibitors but little in the way of financial support (a number of applications to the National Endowment for the Arts were rejected) they enlisted the help of Aaron Betsky, a young architect who was working in Frank Gehry's Los Angeles office. In lieu of Betsky's similar failure to attract either a sponsor or venue on the West Coast he cut book deal with Rizzoli which he later mentioned to Johnson over lunch at the Four Seasons... and the rest is history (Sorkin, 1991, p. 254).

n. "The unstated enemy was unambiguously 'Post-Modernism'. The show focused on a kind of ghost of the Russian Avant-garde lurking within generic Modernism. To make appoint about the relationship between structure and ornament. A point about structure and ornament that was

the intervening twenty-five years, he notes the absence of this generation, or at least the absence of their presence in the particular space that the show helped make available[72], further speculating that, since at least the opening of the 'Decon Show' in 1988, and likely long

understood to be a kind of poison pill to every single brand of postmodernism: a multipurpose drug taken to be active across the entire range of Post-Modernist discourse which was at that time thoroughly academic in the old sense." Wigley, M. (2013). Deconstructivism: Respective Views and Actuality [Panel Discussion]. New York: Moma: [https://www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/videos/255/] [21:10-21:50]

o. A 'dodgy joint' possessing its own unknown knowns (transcendental signifiers, phallogocentric dialectics, irreconcilable aporias etc.).

p. See: Morton, Thinking Ecology: The Mesh, the Strange Stranger, and the Beautiful Soul, 2010 [http://www.academia.edu/934516/Thinking_Ecology_The_Mesh_the_Strange_Stranger_and_the_Beautiful_Soul]

q. That it is, in his own terms, "the last fortress of metaphysics" (Kipnis & Leeser, 1997), or more generally, that it regards only those important matters of political representation and practical necessity to which it can either submit or subvert within the limited scope of strict architectonics: "We cannot avoid metaphors… just as we cannot avoid buildings." (Kipnis & Leeser, 1997)

r. 1. The primary importance of the home, the dwelling, and the hearth; 2. Nostalgia for the origin; 3. Adherence to the 'fine arts' though the pursuit of beauty, harmony, and completeness; 4. The idea that architecture is heading somewhere, that it is about improvement and the service of humankind (Derrida, 1986) (Coyne, 2011, pp. 59-60).

[72] The final irony… the problem for Wigley… is deconstruction itself… that unlike Dali and preKoolhaas Koolhaas, we now inhabit an intellectual world in which the self-digesting ouroboros like logic of footnote 71b is well understood… is the new normal, and instantiates one of any number of (self)critical roadblocks to avant-garde architectural practice that emerge from a contemporary miasma of deconstructive doubt with the predictability of Newton's Second Law of Motion; Every good idea gets the deconstruction it deserves. "Like a dark cloud brooding off the edge of some ellipsis…" (Morton, 2013), deconstruction haunts the space of the avant-garde…

before then, architectural culture has been subject to the increasing assimilation of normative values – which have themselves been moving increasingly towards neoliberal (i.e. free-market based) tropes of success such as certain forms of aggression[73], autonomy, genius, technophilia, "iconicity"[74], and scale[75] – producing an open cohort of architects "who from the very beginning of their thinking, project their work in a very sophisticated way to the maximum distance: big books, big magazines…"[76], and of course…

---

[73] "Every artist has their own way of dealing with their critics, but it seems that architect Frank Gehry's is more direct than most. When asked at a press conference how he felt about people calling his buildings a 'spectacle', he stared silently for a few moments before raising his middle finger. He then went on to rant about how 98 per cent of the world's buildings are 'pure shit' saying the designers had 'no sense of design, no respect for humanity or for anything else'." (Chris Pleasance, in The Daily Mail, 2014):
    [http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2806758/Architect-Frank-Gehry-gives-middle-finger-Spanish-journalist-unleashes-rant-99-cent-world-s-building-pure-sh-t.html]
[74] Bernard Tschumi's description of the dominant theme in contemporary architecture, which I take here to include an over-emphasis on marketability, brand development, and image etc. See: Tschumi, B. (2013). *Deconstructivism: Retrospective Views and Actuality* [Panel discussion]. Museum of Modern Art:
    [https://www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/videos/255/]
    [1:02:30-1:04:00; 1:09:00-1:09:50]
[75] A set of characteristics largely intersecting with 'Hegemonic masculinity'
[76] Wigley, M. (2013). *Deconstructivism: Retrospective Views and Actuality* [Panel discussion]. Museum of Modern Art:
    [https://www.moma.org/explore/ multimedia/videos/255/][1:09:45]

BIG

buildings[77].

Para.24   That the causes for this trend lie mostly beyond the field of architecture – 'post-political' neoliberalism, the economics of efficiency, increasing middle-class precarity, globalisation etc. – is evidence of an important joint between it and them, articulating itself somewhere upstream of the mise-en-scène that has historically supported the avant-garde: an asymmetrical fulcrum that leverages the lack of both any absolute *a priori* criteria for the evaluation of architectural outcomes, or a (meaningful[78]) monopoly over the deployment of 'architectural' activity

---

[77] As even a cursory glance at the final submissions coming out of literally ANY architecture school.

[78] The legal right to call oneself an architect these days feels like more of a curse than advantage, signifying not only the large investment made by a person in acquiring skills (and qualifications) that are conventionally unrecognised and undervalued, but also the tacit affiliation to a defunct class system and associated image of quixotic fantasy (of which this *windmill-chasing*[a] thesis is no doubt the perfect case and point…).

[a]   "We're sometimes asked, "what does Chasing Windmills mean?"[b] To us, it's a journey with an open heart. It's about chasing an ideal bigger than yourself; it's about remaining an optimist even in the face of cynicism; it's about striving to live up to heroic visions of what we can be, what our children can be, and what our world can be."

to redirect the (psychic and financial) energy of field elsewhere. This normalisation of the field, and the asymmetry that produces it, is consistent with hegemony[79]. However, in this case, power emanates from the immanent aesthetics of industrial capitalism[80], rather than a discrete and identifiable ruling class[81]. Wigley's reflections are a silent lament of the power of unchecked capitalism to gradually destroy or assimilate (i.e. neutralise) all pre-capitalist social formations; all subsequent groups (the avant-garde and financial/political elite alike) are therefore products *of* the system and equally subjugated by it[82].

[https://www.chasingwindmillskids.com/about/]

[b.] '*Chasing windmills*' is an example of a mixed metaphor: 1. 'Chasing rainbows': going after or seeking something nearly impossible to obtain (origin unknown); and 2. 'Tilting at windmills': fighting imaginary enemies or confronting imaginary problems. (origin: Don Quixote).

[79] In this case the deep econo-political ideology of industrial capitalism, rather than a discrete and identifiable ruling class. Here I tend toward the less conspiratorial idea that capitalism destroys all previous classes and social groups; all subsequent formations are therefore the product of the system and equally subordinate to it, whatever their particular privileges. This is our creature.

[80] Once in play, the appearance of capitalism tends towards an immanent space that organises the contingencies it contains (rather than the opposite; a set of intentional objects produced by some conceptual machine, i.e. Art).

[81] So, like… yeah. Too much…? Here's a video of a hamster eating mini pancakes. LOVE IT! Great pre-capitalist soundtrack too:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSEPHq_7pHc]

[82] A. Curtis, 2011, Three-part documentary, *All Watched Over By Machines Of Loving Grace*, BBC UK, "is a series of films about how this culture itself has been colonised by the machines it has built. The series explores and connects some of the myriad ways in which the emergence of cybernetics—a mechanistic perspective of the natural world that emerged in the 1970s along with computer technologies—intersects with various historical events and visa-versa. The series variously details the interplay between the [the aesthetics of mechanisation] and the catastrophic consequences it has in the real world."[a]

Para.24 **This is our Monster**. The great "unknown known"[83]. A *doubly automatic* autopilot[84] that recognises the tacit threat of architecture's own monstrous double articulation: both a structurally integral joint in the political economy[85/86], *and* a site of heterotopic alterity that is not

---

Curtis suggests that our present deep retreat into technophilia is the consequence of the undeniable failure of "all past political dreams to change the word for the better", and consequent anaesthetising desire to believe we have no control over our destiny (which is basically the rhetorical WMD at the heart of neoliberal propaganda), or at least let go if the steering wheel; 'good design' is then a form of 'prosthetic detachment' that respectively confirms or enables these complementary drives. This thesis goes one step further, suggesting instead that technophilia is itself a fundamentally 'organic' fantasy (as in "autonomous, automatic, luxurious, profligate, unintentional and ambient" i.e. 'natural'); the product of a 12000-year-old retweet called agrilogistics, and that our combined flip-floppy use of concepts like 'destiny', 'complexity' and 'uncontrollability' constitute an opaque rime that hides our real intensions from ourselves – to develop a conceptual autopilot so convincing we actually forget we are on an aeroplane... and thus absolve ourselves for any feelings of responsibility for its effects.

a.   [https://thoughtmaybe.com/all-watched-over-by-machines-of-loving-grace/]

[83] Something we don't know that we know ...or don't want too: deeply repressed knowledge:
    [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Unknown_Known]

[84] i.e. A cultural navigation algorithm whose automation has the appearance of imminence, autopoiesis; self-starting, inevitable, 'natural'.

[85] i.e. The necessity of building, infrastructure, urban design, and planning, and the tight correlation between these levers and the key [neoliberal] measures of "efficiency" and growth.

[86] "What is at stake in architecture is of course, not only metaphysics, religion in its discursive form, but also politics, the teaching institutions, the economy, the culture. The negotiations between an architect [...] and all the powers which prevent you from building, this negotiation is precisely the place where deconstruction as architecture, or as an architecture, could take place..."[a]
(Derrida, 1985 in Kipnis and Leeser, 1997, p. 106)

a.   Here Derrida confirms the structural importance of architecture to the socio-political economy, and comes close to the realisation of architecture's

just a 'joint-in-itself' (architectonically, economically, symbolically), but is also an **endless and profligate**[87] **proliferation of *dodgy joints*** in all senses of the word. NoMoreGaps™... Architecture is a field of necessarily suppressed queerness at the heart of the hegemony[88]

.   .   .

'true nature' as a necessarily repressed site of non-hegemonic heterotopic jointing, but nevertheless falls for architecture's own cover story a final time in 1991 declaring, "What makes architectural deconstruction more affirmative, consequential, and effective than deconstruction in discourse is that it encounters and must overcome the most effective resistance – cultural, political, social, economic, financial, material, architectural...thus architecture, and for similar reasons the law, are the ultimate test of deconstruction" (Kipnis, 1991 in Kipnis and Leeser, 1997, p. 167). Such a statement can only be produced by a gaze that still sees architecture as a potential agent of deconstruction rather than a reality producing fiction whose very means of production is deconstruction itself. As Dali, Wigley, and Koolhaas have shown, architecture is deconstruction inside out: deconstruction as a creative (as opposed to critical) act.

[87] i.e. metonymic... zeugmatic...

[88]   *Queerness* is probably not a central theme of this thesis.
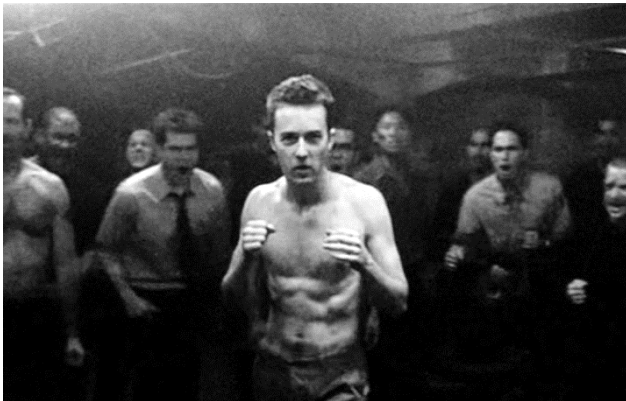
89

89 Still from *Fight Club* (1999), David Fincher Dir. Los Angeles: 20th Century Fox. The depressed unnamed narrator faces off with his alter ego, Tyler Durden... i.e. himself.

Bibliography:

Austrin, J. L. (1962). *How To Do THings With Words.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Breton, A., & Seaver, R. (1969). *Manifestos of Surrealism.* USA: University of Michigan Press.

Broadbent, G., & Glusberg, J. (1991). *Deconstruction: A Student Guide.* London: Academy Press.

Colomina, B. (2010). *Architecture PhD.* Retrieved August 9, 2017, from YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oml_XGyMpnk

Coyne, R. (2011, February 26). *Architecture as the last fortress.* Retrieved 2017, from Reflections on Technology, Media & Culture: https://richardcoyne.com/2011/02/26/architecture-as-the-last-fortress/

Coyne, R. (2011). *Derrida for Architects.* London: Routledge.

Dali, S. (1930). *La Femme Vissible.* Paris: Editions Surréalistes.

Dali, S. (1935). *The Conquest of The irrational.* USA: Taschen, 2003.

Dali, S. (1963). *Diary of a Genius.* Deicide Press, 2017.

Deleuze, G. (1992). Postscript on Societies of Control. *October, 59*, 3-7.

Derrida, J. (1986). *Pion de Folie: Maintenant L'Archtecture in Rethinking Architecture: A reader in Cultural Theory.* London: Routledge.

Eburne, J. (2008). *Surrealism and the Art of Crime.* USA: Cornell University Press.

Evans, R. (1997). *The Projective Cast: Architecture and Its Three Geometries.* USA: MIT Press, 2000.

Goldberg, P. (1988). *ARCHITECTURE VIEW; Theories as the Building Blocks for a New Style.* Retrieved 2017, from New York Times: http://www.nytimes.com/1988/06/26/arts/architecture-view-theories-as-the-building-blocks-for-a-new-style.html?pagewanted=all&mcubz= 0

Hayes, T. (1983, March 21). *Hope At Storage Technology.* Retrieved 2017, from NewYork Times: http://www.nytimes.com/1983/03/21/business/hope-at-storage-technology.html

Jenks, C. (1989). *The Pleasure of Absence in Deconstruction: Omnibus Volume.* (A.Papadakis, C.Cooke, & A.Benjamin, Eds.) London: Academy Editions.

Kerr, S. (2013, September 13). *Three Minute Theory: What are Societies of Control?* Retrieved 2017, from YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onZ1U4jKJdk

Kipnis, J., & Leeser, T. (Eds.). (1997). *Chora L Works.* New York: Monacelli Press.

Koolhaas, R. (1976). *Salvador Dali, The Paranoid Critical Method, Le Corbusier, New York.* Retrieved 2017, from YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCt1BwWE2gA

Koolhaas, R. (1978). *Delirious New York.* UK: Oxford University Press.

Leonard, A. (2013, September 13). *Bleeding Edge: Thomas Pynchon goes truther.* Retrieved 2017, from Salon: https://www.salon.com/2013/09/11/bleeding_edge_thomas_pynchon_goes_truther/

Mitasova, M. (2015). *Oxymoron and Pleonasm Conversation on American Critical: Conversations on American Critical and Projective Theory of Architecture.* Barcelona: Actar.

Morton, T. (2009). *Ecology Without Nature.* USA: Harvard University Press.

Morton, T. (2013). *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World.* Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Morton, T. (2016). *Dark Ecology.* New York: Colombia University Press.

Morton, T., & Obrist, H. U. (2014). *Timothy Morton & Hans Ulrich Obrist at, Extinction Marathon: Visions of the Future.* Retrieved 2017, from Dismagazine: http://dismagazine.com/disillusioned/discussion-disillusioned/68280/hans-ulrich-obrist-timothy-morton/

Petit, E. (2011). *Scaffolds of Heaven: On Stanley Tigerman.* Retrieved 2017, from YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Vj4yYsSAuU

Pynchon, T. (1973). *Gravity's Rainbow.* UK: Penguin, 1987.

Pynchon, T. (1997). *Mason & Dixon.* New York: Henry Holt and Co.

Pynchon, T. (2013). *Bleeding Edge.* London: Random House.

Rudofsky, B. (1980). *Now I Lay Me Down To Eat: Notes and Footnotes on the Lost Art of Living.* New YorK: Doubleday.

Shelley, M. (1818). *Frankenstien.* London: Penguin Classics, 2003.

Sorkin, M. (1991). *Exquisite Corpse: Writing on Buildings.* New York: Verso.

Strauss, L. (1955). *The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism.* London: Routledge (2010).

Tush, P. (2012). Dali and Paranoia. [Lecture]. The Dali Museum. Retrieved 2017, from YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pnURAFKqYc

White, L. (1961). Eilmer of Malmesbury, an Eleventh Century Aviator: A case Study of Technological Innovation. *Technology and Culture, 2*(2), 97-111.

Wigley, M. (1995). *The Emperor's New Paint in White Walls and Designer Dresses.* USA: MIT Press.

Wigley, M. (1997). *The Strange Time of The Sketch.* Retrieved 2017, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbFfcLYEnSc

Wigley, M. (2011). *Manifesto Fever in What Happend to The Architectural Manifesto? Seesion 3.* Retrieved from YouTobe: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOfffjXd2Yc

Wigley, M. (2013). *Deconstructivism: Retrospective Views and Actuality, Panel discussion.* Retrieved 2017, from Museum of Modern Art : https://www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/videos/255/

Wilde, O. (1890). *A Picture of Dorian Grey.* London: Alma Classics.

Wittkower, R. (1949). *Architecture Principles in the Age of Humanism,.* New York: W.W.Norton, 1971.

Wordsworth, W. (1787). *The Ruined Cottage.* London: Penguin Classics, 2005.