XXL,

METROPOLIS AS THE OBJECT OF ARCHITECTURE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF NATURAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES

OF

THE MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

ΒY

EMRE ALTÜRK

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF

MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

IN

THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

MARCH 2004

Approval of the Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences

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ABSTRACT

XXL, METROPOLIS AS THE OBJECT OF ARCHITECTURE

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March 2004, 112 Pages

Beginning with its historical setting, architectural discourse conceived city as its ultimate object, as the ultimate extension of the composition: the largest building. It relentlessly aimed to link its "pure" object—building—to the city either by locating the two within the general processes of material production or through analogies. Yet, despite such continuity, architecture's relationship with the city was conceived as the projection of an internal economy onto the city and remained unilateral. Architecture operated from the small scale to the large scale, radiating its 'specificity' through the city via building.

It became obvious in the late 20th century that it was not the 'architectural specificity' to penetrate into modern metropolis but vice versa. Being a complex agglomeration of cultural systems—including design itself—metropolitan multiplicity resists the determination of significance of built environment through the specific codes of any institutionalized practice.

Acknowledging such a complex system of relationships, namely "metropolitan non-design," this study offers a reassessment of 'architectural design' within the contemporary 'metropolitan condition.' Departing from the disjunction(s) between the significance attributed through design and its appropriation through metropolitan non-design, work at hand aims to elaborate a new mode of 'architectural intervention' compatible with the metropolitan instability. Through a cross-examination of Rem Koolhaas's 'Delirious New York' and OMA's 'Parc de la Villette,' concepts such as 'program,' "void," "Bigness" and 'architectural scale' will be reassessed. Moreover, the goal is to replace the conception of architecture-metropolis relationship that is formulated through a duality with one that is conceived in terms of interacting, contiguous signifying structures.

Keywords: architectural specificity, architectural intervention, architectural scale, architectural program, metropolis, metropolitan condition, metropolitan nondesign, matrix, void, Bigness.

iv

ÖΖ

XXL, MİMARLIĞIN NESNESİ OLARAK METROPOL

Altürk, Emre Yüksek Lisans, Mimarlık Bölümü Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Ayşen Savaş

Mart 2004, 112 Sayfa

Mimarlık söyleminin tarihsel oluşum kurgusu kenti ulaşılabilecek en son (nihai) nesnesi, kompozisyonun en son uzantısı, en büyük bina olarak nitelendirmiştir. "Katışıksız" nesnesi olan bina ile kenti, ya ikisini de genel fiziksel üretim süreçlerinde konumlandırarak ya da birbirine benzeterek ilişkilendirmeye çalışmıştır. Fakat bu sürekliliğe karşın, mimarlığın kentle ilişkisi içsel bir tasarrufun kente yansıtılması olarak anlaşılmış ve sonuç olarak tek yönlü kalmıştır. Mimarlık 'belirliliğini' bina üzerinden kente yaymak amacı ile küçük ölçekten büyük ölçeğe doğru işlemiştir. Ancak 20. yüzyılın sonlarına doğru açıklık kazanmıştır ki, sonuçta modern metropole nüfuz edecek olan 'mimari belirlenmişlik' değil, aksine mimarlığa etki edecek olan metropolitan belirsizliktir. Tasarımı da kapsayan karmaşık bir kültürel sistemler yığını olarak metropol, yapılı çevrenin tek bir mesleğin kodları aracılığıyla anlamlandırılmasına karşı çıkmaktadır.

"Metropolitan tasarlanmamışlık" olarak adlandırılabilecek bu karmaşık ilişkiler sistemini irdeleyecek bu tez, 'mimari tasarım'ı güncel 'metropolitan durum' ile ilişkilendirerek yeniden ele alacaktır. Mimari nesnenin tasarım sürecinde yüklendiği anlamları ile metropolitan süreçlerde kazandığı anlamların çakışmazlığından yola çıkarak, metropolitan değişkenliğe uygun yeni bir 'mimari müdahale' yöntemi araştırılacaktır. Rem Koolhaas'ın 'Delirious New York' kitabı ile OMA'nın 'Parc de la Villette' projesinin beraber incelenmesi üzerinden 'program,' "boşluk," "Büyüklük" ve 'mimari ölçek' gibi kavramlar yeniden araştırılacaktır. Bir diğer amaç mimarlık-metropol ilişkisinin bir ikilik değil, etkileşim içindeki "hemhudutlu" (*contiguous*) yapılar olarak kavranmasını sağlamaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: mimari belirlilik, mimari müdahale, mimari ölçek, mimari program, metropol, metropolitan durum, metropolitan tasarlanmamışlık, matris, boşluk, Büyüklük.

vi

To My Parents, Fatma and Cemil Altürk

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my profound gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayşen Savaş for her critical stand as well as interest and guidance not only during the span of the thesis but also over the last four years.

I am also grateful to Prof. Dr. Haluk Pamir, Prof. Dr. İlhan Tekeli, Assist. Prof. Dr. Güven Arif Sargın, Dr. Ali Cengizkan and Dr. Namık Günay Erkal for their valuable suggestions and comments.

I am forever indebted to my parents who patiently supported me, and trusted in my intuitions and decisions even at the times that I doubted.

I am also thankful to all my friends for their encouragement and support at the times most needed.

I also owe a profound debt to Onur Altürk who always inspired me in ways known and unknown to him. He obstinately forced me out of any paralytic routine or pessimism.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ÖZ	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. ARCHITECTURE versus CITY	15
2.1 Episteme	15
2.2 Analogy	18
2.3 Fantasy	20
2.4 Piranesi	21
2.5 Mass	25
2.6 Early Utopias	26
2.7 Ideal City	28
2.8 Town	29
2.9 Paris	31
2.10 Paris versus New York	35
2.11 The Shift	37

2.12 Social Machine
2.13 Associatied City45
2.14 Analogous City48
2.15 Loss of Object52
3. ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN, METROPOLITAN NON-DESIGN55
3.1 Design versus Non-Design *57
3.2 Significance60
3.3 Program62
3.4 Nothingness/Void66
3.5 Specificity/Zero Degree67
3.6 Schism/Lobotomy/Grid69
3.7 Without Architecture73
3.8 Crisis75
3.9 Transition81
3.10 The Park83
3.11 Architectural Scale93
4. CONCLUSION
REFERENCES
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY112

^{*} Diana I. Agrest, "Design versus Non-Design," *Architecture from Without, Theoretical Framings for a Critical Practice*, (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991,) 30-65. First published in *Oppositions* 6, Fall 1976.

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES

2.4.1 Plans for the Campo Marzio, Rome. G. B. Piranesi. 1762	23
2.9.1 Etoile, Paris. Photograph	34
2.9.2 The Commissioners' proposal for Manhattan Grid. 1811. Plan	34
2.12.1 Vorschlag zur Citybebauung (Project for the Construction of	
a City). Ludwig Hilberseimer. 1930. Axonometric drawing	41
2.12.2 Project for the Construction of a City applied to the center of	
Berlin. Ludwig Hilberseimer. 1930. Photomontage	41
2.12.3 The Radiant City. Le Corbusier. 1933. Zoning Diagram	43
2.12.4 Plan Voisin, applied to Paris. Le Corbusier. 1925.	
Photomontage.	44
3.6.1 Cartoon from the Life Magazine, 1909	70
3.10.1 Downtown Athletic Club. Starrett, van Vleck, Hunter. 1931.	
Section	85
3.10.2 Parc de la Villette. OMA. 1982. Diagram showing the	
required area for the program and the site.	86
3.10.3 Parc de la Villette. OMA. 1982. Diagram of the layer of "the	
strips."	86
3.10.4 Parc de la Villette. OMA. 1982. Illustration. Watercolor	89

3.10.5 Parc de la Villette. OMA. 1982. Diagram of the layer of "point	
grids, or confetti."	.90
3.10.6 Parc de la Villette. OMA. 1982. Diagram of the layer of	
"access and circulation."	.92
3.10.7 Parc de la Villette. OMA. 1982. Diagram of "the final layer."	.92
3.10.8 Parc de la Villette. OMA. 1982. Superimposition of layers	.93
4.1 Hugh Ferriss. Charcoal rendering	.99

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to explore the relationship between architecture and the 'metropolitan condition' in order to investigate the potentials of their interaction. Today, due to a disbelief in the reciprocity of this relationship, it rather seems to be invalidated in the architectural discourse. Architecture, I believe, has thus been reduced to an institutionalization of styles. It is ironic that this departure has emerged mainly during the vivid criticism of Modern Architecture, in 1970's, that again presented a negation of such reciprocity.

A reassessment of two interrelated issues is crucial to study the interaction of architecture and the metropolitan condition. First one concerns the 'architectural intervention.' Architecture's relation with the metropolis is conventionally conceived as the projection of an internal economy. The significance of this projection—the material architectural product—was to be determined by this internal economy that comprises intellectual constructions, artistic desires, symbolic, economic interests formed within or translated into the architectural discourse and articulated through specific codes of design. The inevitable

disjunction of this projected economy and the metropolitan processes, renders mentioned interaction unattainable. Thus the work at hand is mainly devoted to unveil the historically constructed character of architectural intervention in order to deploy a new definition.

The second one concerns the structure of architecture. The reduction of architectural discipline to the practice of architecture prevents the development of a discursive relationship between architecture and metropolis. I absolutely do not aim to depreciate architectural profession. Rather, I believe, in order to study metropolitan condition, it is necessary to conceive architecture as a discipline with its epistemology, or better, with its history, theory, and criticism.¹ This conception acknowledges the existence of two discourses: an analytical, critical discourse, within which architectural episteme is developed, and a normative discourse, generally through which architectural practice is executed.²

With this rather reductive classification, my aim is neither to draw a clear demarcation line between theory and practice, nor to oppose them. On the contrary, throughout this study, I will try to stress the vitality of their interaction. Separation that has been made between theory and practice, and the mechanisms that enable the interaction of the two are intrinsically related with the architecture-metropolis relation. Preventing the interaction, this separation

¹ My ideas on this topic was profoundly influenced by the method course, ARCH 513 Architectural Research 1, Fall 2001, offered by Ayşen Savaş, that "considers architecture as a discipline as well as a cultural enterprise," and "starts with an assumption that architecture can be studied not only by pragmatic and formal considerations, but also by historical and theoretical interpretations."

² See Diana I. Agrest, "Introduction: The City as the Unconscious of Architecture," *Architecture From Without, Theoretical Framings for a Critical Practice*, (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991,) 1-4.

may result in a theory that never inserts itself into the contingency of the actual metropolis; never engages in a reciprocal relation. Yet, the opposite of this attitude or a misuse of the mechanisms of this interaction may result in an overlap of the theoretical and practical objects of architecture. Elimination of an ambiguity concerning the theoretical and practical aspects is vital for the goals of this study and for enabling architecture within the metropolitan condition. It is only through the articulation of practice in the light of a theory which recognizes metropolis as its object that architecture can be 'effective' within the metropolitan condition. It is this effectiveness that enables a productive interaction of architecture and metropolis on the basis of their shared physical object—at this stage be it "building." Through building they articulate and enhance each other. This understanding obviously presupposes that architecture, when it benefits from the theoretization of metropolis, may, in its turn, intervene to metropolis to instigate its conditions.

Although what I refer to as 'metropolis' and 'metropolitan condition' will be articulated throughout the study, at this point, it is necessary to make some initial remarks. I believe, metropolis is, roughly, a mutant form of habitation, where scope and pace of urban processes are radicalized, socio-cultural structure, economic and political activities are diversified and intensified. It is possible to see the deployment of the term even to the earliest urban settlements.³ However, I will use the term metropolis to refer to a condition of some specific settlements after the turn of the 20th century, in the context of profound changes in both the production and the conception of the urban

³ For instance James Mellaart claims that, not being a town or city, products of Çatal Hüyük have "a definitely metropolitan air." James Mellaart, *Çatal Hüyük: A Neolithic Town in Anatolia*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967,) 22.

agglomeration. Yet, I acknowledge that it is possible to trace the signs of a 'metropolitan condition' in certain urban landscapes as the early implications of metropolis, which was yet to come. Also, I especially stress that with the consequences of globalization, advanced informational and infrastructural networks, and above all, with the current phase of capitalist economic system, it is possible to observe a metropolitan condition in the cities that are not metropolises per se.

Although the metropolitan radicalization of the urban processes is necessarily a modern phenomenon, city has always been the ground of complex forces that transcends the limits of architecture. Yet, since its historical formation, city has always occupied a privileged position in the architectural discourse as the ultimate object, at least until the last three decades of the 20th century. In fact considering city as the object of architectural production—and not conceiving architecture as a discipline—is what prevented architectural discourse to benefit from the potentials of the theoretization of city. This is precisely due to the overlap of the theoretical and practical aspects of architecture. Differentiating these aspects, in this study, I will try to explore the architectural production and to a possible restructuring of architectural discourse.

Material architectural production has always been conditioned by the general conditions of production.⁴ This is even more valid in a metropolis. Metropolis is, by definition, the ground of antagonism or collaboration of social actors with different political and economic agendas and diverse socio-cultural

⁴ See especially introduction of Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, 3rd ed., (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1992,) 8-10.

backgrounds. Thus considering architecture in relation to metropolis and metropolitan condition is in fact relating it to "reality;" to material conditions of its physical production; and to ideology; to social and cultural mechanisms of its reception. Thus, this relation has two phases: the production and the reception of architectural object. In the first phase, architecture is limited with the means of its production, by exterior relations of power. In the second phase, program it houses, its significance, and ultimately its form or its physical existence are relentlessly questioned, interpreted and altered.

Due to these inherent complexities, metropolis is generally considered as a "chaotic existence." Yet, for the purposes of this study, it should be acknowledged that it is possible to obtain a reliable knowledge of metropolis and that knowledge can reflexively be utilized. This necessitates a departure from the readings of metropolis as a chaotic existence, for chaos refers to a state that renders deliberate intervention as useless. Altering this interpretation, my aim is not to propose a reading of metropolis as a homogenous unity. It is rather to propose an understanding of metropolis as a "heterogeneous whole," a system of "multiple realities."⁵

The conception of metropolis as a chaotic agglomeration of "incompatible fractals," arguably culminating in the 1970's, prevented the study or even the conception of it in its entirety. Along with the departure from the "meta-narrations" in the cultural sphere, it was advocated that architecture could only operate—theoretically and practically—within small fragments. Main reason of this change in the cultural sphere, as Anthony Giddens states, was the belief

⁵ See Rem Koolhaas, *S, M, L, XL*, (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1995).

that it was no longer possible to obtain a coherent epistemology, a generalisable knowledge.⁶ Giddens argues that, this belief was emerged with the radicalized and universalized "consequences of modernity," which made us feel that we are "in a universe of events we do not fully understand, and which seems in large part outside of our control" due to its discontinuities. Thus, he offers a study of these discontinuities.

The metropolitan complexity, I believe, sets the ultimate spatial example that provokes such feeling. Metropolis, offering all kinds of human activities and intercourses, in an ever-changing manner, is, by definition, discontinuous and instable. The pragmatic response of metropolis to instability is its transformation to a fragmented entity.⁷ I shall conceptualize this entity as a three dimensional grid, a matrix where each unit acts with certain autonomy. The prime element of this system (an elementary unit) acts as a utilitarian, economically efficient pigeonhole, into which any program may be installed as long as it is relevant. The programmatic manipulations that the unit undergoes do not necessarily affect the whole. This paradigm of economic optimization is relentlessly articulated by various social actors.

The reluctance to incorporate metropolis in architectural discourse today, results mainly from this seemingly "incontrollable" character. Yet, this exclusion is due to a historically constructed architectural ideology in which 'taking into control' is the only possible way of intervention. Since claims of control almost

⁶ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990,) 2-3.

⁷ Here I benefit profoundly from my projects and group discussions in some courses at METU: ARCH 401, Architectural Design 5, Fall 2000, and ARCH 505 Advanced Architectural Design Research, Spring 2002, offered by Türel Saranlı, Ayşen Savaş, Güven Arif Sargın, Kerem Yazgan, and ARCH 609 Advanced Themes in Architecture and Urban Design 1, Fall 2002, offered by Emel Aközer, Fuat Etker (group study with Mehmet Saner and A. Mucip Ürger).

always prove to be unattainable in contemporary metropolitan condition, metropolis is expelled from the architectural discourse.

Architecture's renouncement of metropolis in the late 20th century has intrinsically related reasons within and without architectural discipline. One of the external reasons concerns the position of the individual—more properly, of the subject—affected by the consequences of the radicalized modernity. These consequences put both the individual subject and the ideologically constructed architectural consciousness presupposed by the early 20th century modernism, into crisis. In the first case, the individual turns into a subject, best demonstrated by Michel Foucault in the concept of "discursive function," that observes but does not engage in the constitution of already formed, institutionalized systems of 'power' independent of herself/himself. This, in fact, would be out of the scope of this particular study if it was not for its connection and similar pattern with the latter, architecture as the subject.

It is perhaps not much controversial to claim that the architectural implications of the inherited Enlightenment idea of "domination over nature" was culminated at the turn of the century and contributed to the development of the early 20th century architectural discourse. In order to accomplish the shared ideals of modernity, a "radical architecture" emerged to engage in the reorganization of production-distribution-consumption cycles, thus the metropolis. This necessitated major shifts in the definitions of the position of the architect, and the scale and character of architectural intervention. Enmeshing architecture into the new industrial techniques of production and forging a process of its "rationalization," led to a problematization of the position of the architect in the

7

conventional sense, namely "the designer of objects." This conventional position was to be replaced by that of an "organizer."⁸

Accomplishing these ideals and engaging in the "construction of future" necessitated a reorganization of the metropolis as a "social machine." ⁹ Manfredo Tafuri argues that architecture in the early 20th century discovered that in order to succeed these objectives, besides utilizing the 'sector' of building production, it had to relate the sector to the reorganization of metropolis; bind architecture's faith with the metropolis.¹⁰ Yet, he also observes what radical architecture was not ready to accept then: 'once come within the sphere of reorganization of production in general, architecture would have to be the object and not the subject.'

This fact became clear by the 1970's. Growing capitalism gradually instrumentalized architecture. After the Second World War, the reconstruction of the war-torn European cities, utilization of industrial mass production techniques to compensate housing shortage, in fact seemed to provide the suitable circumstances for the inter-war architectural ideas to operate. On the one hand, to create a sustainable system, governments mobilized the means at hand to improve the life standards of middle/low income groups. On the other hand, growing capitalism gradually increased its effects on the individual, the "discursive function." A reassessment of the position of the human subject as less privileged *vis-à-vis* the objective world was accompanied by a similar reevaluation of the position of the architecture in relation to metropolis. This

⁸ See Manfredo Tafuri, Architecture and Utopia, Design and Capitalist Development, trans. Barbara Luigia La Penta, (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1976,) 107, 125.
⁹ Ibid., 64, 104.

¹⁰ Ibid., 100.

meant a departure from the conception of architecture as metropolis's selfproclaimed maker.

As Tafuri argues, architectural ideology on metropolis with its utopian tones, as it was formed at the beginning of the century, became an "operative mechanism," an "indirect stimulus" for the post-war reorganization.¹¹ If the strengthening relation of architecture with the modernization carried out by central bureaucratic authorities activated a crisis, I believe, Modern architecture already comprised the seeds of such crisis from the beginning in its relation with the capitalist reorganization. Tafuri observes that,

The crisis of modern architecture begins in the very moment in which its natural consignee—large industrial capital—goes beyond the fundamental ideology, putting aside the suprastructures. From that moment on architectural ideology no longer has any purpose.¹²

The belated acceptance of the position of architecture—within the capitalist reorganization as its object and not the subject—marked the end of historically constructed architectural ideology on metropolis. This new position was incompatible with an architecture that only aspires to tabula rasa, to wholesale reconstruction of the metropolis in order to reclaim its lost unity, and obsessed with predefining, taking into control.

Defining modest objectives, solely, does not solve such problem. Most obvious of such modesty is accepting the incontrollable character of metropolis and operating on architecture's "pure" object, the building. For the building is supposedly controllable and specific. In fact, due a specificity that it supposedly

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 135.

has, architecture has always been considered to coincide with the building. Thus, the architectural ideology on city historically operated from the small scale to the large scale in order to radiate its pure object's properties to the urban agglomeration. Consequently, city was to be the largest building. This led to a conception of the city as the object of architectural production—architecture as a profession. As I will study further in detail, such unilateral relationship does not exist and never did. Regardless of its scale, any architectural production in the metropolis is exposed to metropolitan condition.

Thus, any realistic and productive response to such situation should necessarily comprise an alignment of architectural intervention with the metropolitan condition. This entails a conception of architectural design compatible with metropolitan processes. For architecture's renouncement of metropolis has much to do with its claim to determine the significance of its object through the design process. However, significance of the built environment, a complex agglomeration of systems, has a necessarily dynamic character. Through its temporal dimension, this agglomeration appropriates the significance attributed in design.

Thus obviously it is necessary to study—or at least to acknowledge—the effects of this complex agglomeration of systems, namely the metropolitan culture; the one we are living in. Accordingly, I will stress the links between architecture and culture at some key points. Yet, introducing the metropolitan culture, I do not aim to define an architectural attitude projecting directly and simply from cultural conjuncture as its "logical expression" or "reflection" in the field of architecture. This has generally been the case in architectural criticism.¹³ I will rather concentrate on channels and mechanisms through which architecture relates to its contextual reality; to other cultural systems; forces that transcend the limits of architecture yet affect its production and reception; aspects outside architecture embodied in metropolis as the metropolitan condition.

It is obvious by now, in the last analysis, metropolis was expelled from the architectural discourse not so much for the external reasons, as for the internal ones. Exclusion of metropolis has much to do with the very central definitions and problems of architectural discourse, even such as the confusion concerning the difference between architecture and building. It is true that architecture is not, and never was, capable of a wholesale reorganization of the metropolis as it saw fit. Yet, I claim, renouncing metropolis due this reason is negating any difference between architecture and building. Architecture is an intellectual activity that may utilize history, theory, criticism and modes of representational discourses. This critical act—as distinct from building—is capable of conceiving metropolis as an object of study. Hence my emphasis on acknowledging the disciplinary character of architecture that necessarily precedes any study on the relation between architecture and metropolis.

In order to understand the shifting positions of the architect and architecture in relation to metropolis, and to reveal the architectural ideology on metropolis, one has to study the historical formation of architecture-city relationship. Thus in the following chapter, I will attempt to do a reading of this relationship. Yet, obviously, this will not be a historical reconstruction. Neither will I aim to come

¹³ See Diana I. Agrest, "Design versus Non-Design," *Architecture from Without*, op. cit., 30-65. First published in *Oppositions*, 6, Fall 1976.

up with the discovery of some "mythical origin," which, thorough a linear causality, could be held responsible for the contemporary issues.¹⁴ Rather, I will stress the approaches that seem relevant to understand the possible restructuring of the discourse.¹⁵ On the other hand, 'constructing' such a context for the argument, I am well aware of the other possible contexts.

Although it is hard to claim the viability of any geographical reference for the contemporary metropolitan condition, historically, metropolis necessarily has its roots in the West. Thus, there is a geographic limitation for the approaches chosen, namely, they are from Europe and North America. These approaches are ordered, albeit in a loose manner, chronologically simply because it is the most obvious way. Yet, occasionally, due to the continuity between them in terms of the position of the city, names and approaches that cannot come next to each other historically are juxtaposed.

In order to replace the historically constructed character of architectural intervention that prevailed on the architectural design, it is necessary to study mechanisms through which design relates itself to other systems and to the place where all the systems operate, namely the metropolis. Thus, the third chapter begins with such a study through Diana Agrest's article, 'Design versus Non-Design.' It is in this article, for the first time, Agrest refers to city as the

¹⁴ See Manfredo Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, trans. Pellegrino d'Acierno and Robert Connolly, (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1987,) 3-4. Also see Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972). ¹⁵ It should be noted that stressing such prominent names and approaches does not necessarily mean that I approve considering the history of architecture through solely "heroic figures" or well-known approaches. Yet, it is not much controversial to claim that these approaches exemplify a way of thinking that dominated the Western architectural discourse for a long time. Moreover, I believe, both the architectural historiography that depends on the heroic figures and the conventional architectural intervention that I aim to criticize are the products of the same mindset that presupposes an overrated omnipotence. Thus, my criticism of conventional architectural intervention also implies a criticism of mentioned conception of architectural historiography.

"unconscious of architecture." This conception also sets one of the pivotal points of this study. Elsewhere Agrest explains her intention through this conception as to place the architect in the position of a reader.¹⁶ She argues that architect as a reader is 'a detective or a psychoanalyst bringing the not readily apparent configurations and symbolic performances out.' For metropolis generates formal configurations 'with or without architecture,' it is an openended text for the architect to read. This text is beyond the "books of architecture." Architecture, thus, turns into a critical process of reading and rewriting. This, in fact, is truly the process of the reader when reading a text, as Roland Barthes would have it.

In this study, this process of critical reading-rewriting will be articulated through two interrelated works. The first—the critical reading—is Rem Koolhaas's book, 'Delirious New York,' where he analyses the formal configurations and symbolic performances generated by the metropolis *par excellence*: Manhattan. The second—the critical rewriting—is OMA's project for the Parc de la Villette, which provides fruitful insights to a productive architectural intervention on metropolis.¹⁷ For departing from the disjunction(s) between the significance attributed through design and its appropriation through metropolitan processes, in this part I will study a mode of architectural intervention compatible with the metropolitan condition. Being a major part of such significance, the program also will be reassessed. For architectural program in the conventional sense—that precedes any architectural production and claims to be its ultimate

¹⁶ Diana I. Agrest, "Interview with Mario Gandelsonas," *Agrest and Gandelsonas: Works*, ed. Diana I. Agrest, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995,) 19-29.

¹⁷ OMA, Office for Metropolitan Architecture, is a Rotterdam based international firm founded in London in 1975, by two architect/painter couples: Rem Koolhaas, Madelon Vriesendorp, Elias and Zoé Zenghelis.

objective—needs to gain a dynamic character compatible with the metropolitan processes. To do this, I will investigate the potentials offered by "void"—another concept coined by Koolhaas.

Moreover, also the 'scale' is intrinsically related with both the architecturemetropolis relationship and the architectural intervention. "Architectural scale" conventionally refers to a set of scales up to 1:500. Consequently, it is presupposed that work of architecture and its relationship with its immediate surrounding can be generated and represented within this set. Thus, this set beyond setting standards for the representation—imposes a field of intervention for architecture. This may bring about two risks. First, confining practical architectural intervention within this set may preclude benefiting the potentials that larger scales have to offer. Second, such confinement may lead to a similar confinement of architectural thought within the limits of the lot. Both would sever architecture's relation with the metropolitan condition. Thus, lastly, in relation to the mode of architectural intervention deployed in the project for Parc de la Villette, I will question the viability of the conventional architectural scale. This discussion will, in fact, conclude my argument and precede the conclusion, which should be read as an epilogue.

CHAPTER 2

ARCHITECTURE versus CITY

It is in the early 15th century that one begins to trace the initial signs of location of city as the object of architectural production. This was mainly due to two interrelated developments: early indications of the disciplinary formation of architecture and the epistemological shift in the field of representation, namely studies on the fundamental rules of perspective. Architecture as a profession was already established before this period. Yet, in the early Renaissance, architects began to be deemed as high-level specialists no longer dependent on the medieval guilds.¹⁸ They gradually became independent agents capable of practicing wherever they were commissioned.

2.1 Episteme

Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446) had a central position both in the structural changes taking place in architecture and the studies on fundamental rules of perspective. Brunelleschi defined the position of the architect as an artist-

¹⁸ Leonardo Benevolo, *The History of the City*, trans. Geoffrey Culverwell, (Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1980,) 500.

intellectual, solely participating in the design process yet not acting in the realization of the building as a part of the workforce.¹⁹ The major task of the architect, for him, was to project the work to be realized in detail by means of drawings and models before the construction started. It is in this period that one begins to observe the traces of the established codes of design more obvious than ever before. For instance, the improvement of architectural drawings and their increased importance gave way to the developments in the establishment of 'specific' representational codes. Moreover, studies on the ancient texts introduced new codes in proportion and rhythm. Thus, design process began to claim its own right as a legitimate intellectual activity.

Although it took at least another century for architects to seize this status, Brunelleschi's definition anticipates the emergence of architecture as a discipline with certain autonomy. This enabled the differentiation of architecture from straightforward professions, say that of masonry. Architecture began to construct an episteme fundamentally different from the know-how of the mason that had less to do with the intellectual creation than the perfection of an inherited context-bound technique. At the expense of a continuity between the building and the medieval architect, architecture as a discipline began to define a conscious and creative subject, who, in turn, was able to construct the city as his object.

Second development that eventually paved the way for the conception of city as the object of architectural production was the shift in the field of representation. Brunelleschi's studies on perspective anticipated the achievements of

¹⁹ Ibid., 500.

Renaissance in revolutionizing the cognition of space. With the invention of perspective, for the first time, a systematic reconstruction of the nature through human mediation became possible. In fact, it may not be too speculative to claim that this development paved the way for the domination over nature, and ultimately, for the modern motivation for the reorganization of space through human reason.

Rather than the perfection of the imitation of nature, here the groundbreaking innovation is, I believe, what, at first instance, seems to be mere a tool, namely the perspectival construction. Renaissance epistemology was based on a knowledge obtained by establishing similarities. Perspective, intermingled with this epistemology, constructed but another analogy: image was analogous to the nature. On the other hand, grid, the armature of perspectival construction, organized both the sight through the picture plane—think of Albrecht Dürer's tools for instance—and the reality—think of the imaginary grid that maps the space delineated and is always there in the painting itself through Renaissance by means of floor tiles or coffles.²⁰ With this organization of "reality," perspective adhered to a reality, grid as a means of its systematization and abstraction offered itself as a tool for the reorganization of that reality. Significance of grid will be discussed further in this study. Within the Renaissance period, this change in 'the ways of seeing,' on the other hand, led to a systematic

²⁰ Here I benefit from the discussions on utilization of perspective in Renaissance painting held by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayşen Savaş in ARCH 524 Architecture and Different Modes of Representation, Spring 2003.

²¹ See Rosalind E. Krauss, "Grids," *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1985,) 10.

conception of space. Perspective was utilized as a tool to grasp this space and its supposedly divine harmony.

2.2 Analogy

Within this conception of space, the building and the city were conceived as parts of the same systematized entity. They were analogous to each other: microcosm was analogous to macrocosm. The whole system was to be reigned by similar rules imposed by architecture to achieve a total harmony. This supposedly divine harmony was guaranteed by the transposition of bodily proportions into architecture. That is to say building was declared to be analogous to human—in fact male—body to achieve a natural perfection. This idea is recursive in various texts. It is possible to read a well-known manifestation of this continuity between man, building and ultimately the city in Leon Battista Alberti's 'Ten Book's on Architecture' where he states: "the city is like some large house, and the house in turn like some small city."²²

Alberti (1404-1472) utilizes the analogy to indicate the significance of the rooms of a house. Describing them as small buildings, he argues that each room of the house should be convenient for its use with great care, and the sum of the parts should achieve a total harmony. The circle is thus closed: the room is analogous to the house, the house is analogous to the city, and therefore the room is analogous to the city. When the analogy is interpreted in the opposite direction, however, it leads to a conception of the city as the ultimate object of architecture, the largest building.

²² Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavernor, (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1988,) 23.

The conscious location of architecture in reference to this house-city analogy is what becomes critical for this study. Although this analogy opens up the way for the conception of city as the object of architectural production, Alberti relates architecture to the house at the first instance and not to the city. Here architecture operates starting from the small scale to the larger and not vice versa. Despite the reciprocal relationship constructed by the analogy, architecture aims to domesticate the city through its "pure" object, the building. This confirms the gradual process starting from the male body reaching to the city. Thus, Alberti's work locates city against architecture, where both city and architecture operate on the 'shared object,' the building.²³ As such, he doubles the building as the object of both architecture and city. The building of the city is 'outside' architecture and it may only be transformed into an "architectural building" through 'beauty' and 'ornament.' Mario Gandelsonas argues that it is with Alberti's approach that for the first time architecture was called into being in relation to city as its 'other.'

Here beauty and ornament are operational 'filters' that define the boundaries of architecture. In other words, they set the criteria for selecting what is architectural and what is not. Alberti defines beauty as the "reasoned harmony of all the parts within a body, so that nothing may be added, taken away, or altered, but for worse."²⁴ It is obvious that city, as it was, did not fit into this description. Consequently if it was to be architectural, city had to be reconfigured—to reflect "concinnity (*concinnitas*)"—according to the rules of beauty and what did not get along had to be repressed. In fact, such an

²³ Mario Gandelsonas, "The City as the Object of Architecture," *Assemblage*, 37, 1998, 130.

²⁴ Alberti, On the Art of Building in Ten Books, op. cit., 156.

understanding prevailed on the architectural design for a long time, into the 20th century.

2.3 Fantasy

Gandelsonas relates Alberti's approach to what he calls, the 'urban fantasy,' that is "architecture's desire to domesticate the wild economic and political forces that traverse the urban body to impose an order."²⁵ This fantasy, Gandelsonas argues, fills the void left by the loss of physical reality of the building when it diverged from the design process. For claims of such a divergence are also present in Alberti's discourse. Alberti, as did Brunelleschi, claimed the end of the medieval architect-builder who worked 'with his hands' and the emergence of a new architect who works 'with his mind.' Thus he locates the architect in a position of artist-intellectual. Through this conception, Gandelsonas relates architecture's 'urban fantasy' to, what he calls, the 'artistic fantasy,' where architecture establishes its place as an artistic practice.²⁶

The notion of urban fantasy defines the relationship between architecture and the city as unattainable. In fact, it is possible to read Gandelsonas's argument as a criticism on the reasons why this relationship remained as fantasy. Through Alberti's analogy, Gandelsonas argues that the urban fantasy entails the reduction of the physical-spatial reality of city to the building, leading to a conception of city as building. Thus it crystallizes dynamic urban processes, to formal organizations, to a state of building. Architectural focus of attention, thus, shifts from the life itself to its crystallization, its set. Yet, city, the object of urban

 ²⁵ Gandelsonas, "The City as the Object of Architecture," op. cit., 130.
 ²⁶ Ibid.

fantasy, resists to be crystallized into a "totalizing order." Such codification of urban reality to formal configurations, of course, negates the present, for present is dynamic and cannot be delineated. Thus, in this construction, architecture either rebuilds the past, or projects the future, but it never inserts itself "into the contingency of the present." Here, in fact, Gandelsonas implicitly questions any architectural attitude that sees architecture as the codification of some external reality into form. It is perhaps more easy to comprehend the impossible nature of this codification when it is such a complex entity as the city which is to be codified. Thus, the concept of urban fantasy forces us to question the nature of the relationship between architectural object and what lies outside architecture, operating from the city to the building, as opposed to what is typical of architecture—from the small scale to the large scale.

2.4 Piranesi

In Renaissance, 'urban fantasy' remained as a fantasy due to pragmatic reasons. Seigniorial ruling bodies of Renaissance lacked the economic and political stability necessary to enable big projects, let alone the projects in the city.²⁷ Thus architects were able to realize their theories only in isolated buildings. Projects dealing with the city remained as intellectual exercises.

The seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries witnessed the rise of more powerful ruling bodies dominating larger territories, and finally the emergence of nation-states. Centralizing political authorities increased the feasibility of Baroque schemes of order at an urban scale. The essential character of the

²⁷ Benevolo, *The History of the City*, op. cit., 535.

Baroque urban planning, spacious arteries linking major buildings that have a symbolic value, prevailed on the European urban ideologies for a long time. This attitude is indeed in line with the previously discussed ones in its effort to attribute to the city some "architectural" properties, such as an identifiable regularity, a perspective unity, and a symbolic/social specificity. This structuring of urban agglomeration not only confirms building-city analogy, but also leads to a conception of the city as the extension of major architectural objects.

In fact, the Enlightenment ideology provided the theoretical means for a criticism of Baroque principle of organic structure. For instance, Marc-Antoine Laugier (1713-1769) conceived the city as the place of fantasy as well as regularity. He opposed to the idea that city should have an identifiable regularity, a perspective unity. He argued that although it is possible to trace/create order in small scales, city, in its entirety, was a place of confusion. Thus, his theoretical intuitions acknowledge the struggle between building and city, "demand for order and will to formlessness," which indeed was further more developed and demonstrated in Giovanni Battista Piranesi's (1720-1778) engravings.²⁸

Piranesi's *Campo Marzio* demonstrates a consciousness of the emerging position of the city *vis-à-vis* architecture, consequences of which I will be tackling with throughout this study. Engravings stress the collision of architectural fragments within the city; on the one hand affirming formal qualities and types of individual architectural fragments, on the other hand

²⁸ See Tafuri, Architecture and Utopia, op. cit., 13-16.





Figures 2.4.1 Plans for the Campo Marzio, Rome. G. B. Piranesi. 1762.

rendering the inventive effort expended on their formal definition useless by demonstrating their inorganic accumulation.²⁹

Conventionally, building-city relationship is conceived as a polarity; the former is associated with regularity, preconceived formal and symbolic structure, organic unity, intentionality, specificity and the latter with irregularity, spontaneous accumulation, dispersion, and ambiguity. This, not only determined the character and direction of architectural intervention from the building to the city, but also "the order of things." The ambitious determination to extend the qualities of the building to the city—building's prioritization against the urban agglomeration—was in fact an effort to preserve architecture's unity. Piranesi anticipates the result of the struggle between building and city that negates the unity that architecture aimed to attribute. Tafuri states that:

Architecture might make the effort to maintain its completeness and preserve itself from total destruction, but such an effort is nullified by the assemblage of architectural pieces in the city. It is in the city that these fragments are pitilessly absorbed and deprived of any autonomy, and this situation cannot be reversed by obstinately forcing the fragments to assume articulated, composite configurations.³⁰

Campo Marzio, in fact, marks the turning point for the architectural consciousness. It demonstrates that eventually it is not the properties that are conventionally attributed to architecture to prevail on the city, but vice versa. That is to say, it is the properties of the city to infiltrate into architectural discourse; that city precedes architecture; it is architecture's condition. Architecture conventionally aimed to penetrate into the city through radiating

 ²⁹ Ibid., 15. Also see Manfredo Tafuri, "The Wicked Architect': G. B. Piranesi, Heterotopia, and the Voyage," *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, op. cit., 25-54.
 ³⁰ Ibid., 14-15.
specificity from its pure object, yet it was eventually the urban in-specificity to infiltrate into architectural discourse again through their shared object, the building.

This far, architecture was not ready to accept in the 18th century. For acknowledging such a condition of building *vis-à-vis* the city meant the destruction of inherited architectural conventions. Thus, Tafuri observes that although the inherent ambiguity of the city was acknowledged in the Enlightenment architectural ideology, practical interventions of the time did not demonstrate the consciousness of the position of architectural fragment within the city.³¹ City was conceived as an agglomeration to be rationalized: "clarified" in its functions and forms, by means of introducing a structure that "radiates" its effects through the city.

2.5 Mass

From the mid 18th century onwards, consequences of industrial revolution began to act upon urban landscapes. Industrial means of production increased the amount and the diversity of goods and services dramatically. The rise of average life expectancy increased the population of, first Britain then other European and American countries.³² Also the character of the population changed due to the increase in the percentage of young people. New means of communication and transportation increased the mobilization of both the population and the goods. Together with the demand for workforce in the industrialized cities, urban population increased with an ever-accelerating pace.

³¹ Ibid., 21.

³² Benevolo, *The History of the City*, op. cit., 653.

For instance, in the course of the nineteenth century, the population of Manchester grew from 75,000 to 600,000, of London form 1,000,000 to 6,500,000, of Paris from 500,000 to 3,000,000, of New York from 33,000 to 3,500,000.³³

Most city centers were transformed into slums, where great numbers of workforce lived under uninhabitable circumstances: in great densities, without adequate light, ventilation, and sanitary facilities. In 1830's, epidemics such as tuberculoses and cholera first spread among the working classes and then affected the whole society in Britain and France. This eventually compelled the governmental bodies to introduce health reforms and legislations governing the construction and maintenance of urban agglomerations.³⁴ Studies on the life conditions of the workers, some of which were commissioned by the governments, were carried out. These investigations pointed out the necessity of a large scale planning and regulations setting standards for the street networks, and minimum hygienic and sanitary requirements.

2.6 Early Utopias

Theories on industrial city planning were triggered by the bad conditions of the existing cities. Yet, rather than concentrating on the actual cities, these plans aimed to project ideal settlements. One of the most important early 19th century utopians was Robert Owen (1771-1858). His industrial city model was in fact inspired by the actual settlement that he began to build in 1799.³⁵ This

³³ Frampton, *Modern Architecture*, op. cit., 21.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Leonardo Benevolo, *History of Modern Architecture*, trans. H. J. Landry, (Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1971,) 149.

settlement consisted of a factory equipped with modern machinery, residential units for the workers, and some educational facilities. Motivated by the success of this experiment, he began to design an ideal model. Despite his background as an industrialist, in his model the main occupation of the workers was agriculture and industry was basically complementary. The model presupposed a "commune life" for a limited population, preferably around one thousand, who were to work collectively both in agriculture and industry, sharing the basic amenities of the self-sufficient town. The main pattern of the settlement was planned to be a parallelogram with public buildings at the center, surrounded by private apartments. Apartments were to be heated and ventilated by a centralized air conditioning system, and would have no private kitchens because food were to be supplied collectively.

Another important model was that of Charles Fourier (1772-1837). This Frenchman envisaged an even more collective life for the inhabitants of his ideal self-sufficient communities, *phalanxes*, inhabiting *phalanstères*. The economy of the *phalanstères* was mainly based on agriculture and complementary light manufacturing, and the model placed a radical criticism on the industrial production and related social organization.³⁶ *Phalanxes* were to be classified as the children, adults, and the elderly, sharing the basic amenities and living in a hotel pattern.³⁷ The settlement would be built in a centric pattern: commercial and administrative town at the center, industrial town at the next ring, and agricultural town at the outermost ring. Density of the buildings would decrease from the center towards the outer rings.

³⁶ Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, op. cit., 22.

³⁷ Benevolo, *History of Modern Architecture*, op. cit., 152.

2.7 Ideal City

These models were actually motivated by a disbelief in the possibility of rehabilitating the existing industrial cities. Thus the utopians of the early 19th century envisaged ideal cities. Attempts had been made to realize these models, yet they all failed. There are several reasons for these failures. First and the foremost is the internal tension of the notion of "ideal city" that lies at the heart of "urban utopia." The notion of ideal, I believe, suggests a frozen time. Although it acknowledges a temporal dimension in which the existing shall evolve into the ideal, ideal itself has no real time, simply because it does not need to change anymore. Ideal city, thus, could be laid at once and for all. City, on the other hand, is conceived in its temporal terms as well as spatial aspects. ³⁸ It evolves through time, affecting the urban processes and relentlessly being reorganized by them. This subject will be further discussed in the next chapter.

A second reason is the intrinsic difficulty in the realization of any ideal model that negates the existing city in favor of a fresh start, for the city resists starting from scratch. At the bottom line, city is architecture's condition inasmuch as it is also architecture's "object of desire." A third reason is the presupposition of specific social formations which, although having some remote implications in the society, were not matured. A fourth reason is the underestimation of the urban economic dynamics. The city is socially organized to enable production, distribution and consumption of goods and services, with which its physical and demographic properties are closely related. Any limitation of these properties

³⁸ See Diana I. Agrest, "City as Place of Representation," *Architecture from Without*, op. cit., 35. First published in Design Quarterly, 113-114, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1980.

that is not realistic for the optimization of the economic dynamics turns the model into a failure. A fifth reason is the notion of self-sufficiency. There are degrees of self-sufficiency and these are closely related to a state of a loose equilibrium of mentioned dynamics. Arguably, the degree of self-sufficiency increases with the scale of the settlement. The only spatial organization that is close to being self-sufficient is the city. Yet, even the city has to be part of a larger, now global, network. This was also true for the 19th century. In fact, it is possible to criticize most of the urban projections conceived until the mid 20th century through these criteria.

2.8 Town

The idea of the self-sufficient community, inhabiting a synthesis of city and country, affected many others, who were motivated by a disdain of the disorder and unhealthy conditions of the 19th century industrial cities. This idea culminated around the turn of the century in the garden city movement, as formulated by Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928) in his 1898 book 'Tomorrow, a Peaceful Path to Real Reform.' Howard's garden city, with its single family houses set amid greenery, adopted Owen's ideas and the Victorian thought of keeping the privacy of family by building the city, like a settlement in country.³⁹

Howard saw that the private ownership of the land and its speculation set a pressure on the city center and increased the value of building lots. Thus, any economically inefficient utilization of the lot became intolerable. This led to congestion at the city center and the growing center pushed the countryside

³⁹ Benevolo, *History of Modern Architecture*, op. cit., 351.

away. Hence in his model, Howard presupposed the elimination of the private ownership of the building lot. This was to enable open spaces for greenery and to keep countryside in walking distance. In the garden city model, land was to be owned by a limited company. Howard eliminated strict regulations on the conduct of social life that characterized the early 19th century utopias. Thus, the model did not determine activities of the individual. Yet again, the idea of self-sufficiency envisaged a "harmonious balance" between industry and agriculture. Thus, the settlement was to be surrounded by allotments and large farms.

Howard's several attempts to realize the garden city model, and many later ones across Europe, succeeded considerably in offering an alternative settlement pattern amid greenery, leaving aside the issue of self-sufficiency. Even in the first attempts of Howard near London, space allocated for agricultural activities were less than half of what was envisaged, and gradually became a mere green buffer zone.⁴⁰ Thus, the projected "harmonious balance" and the emphasis placed on agriculture proved to be unrealizable. The settlements were inhabited by the commuters working in the city center.

As Leonardo Benevolo states, the garden city survived as more of a garden district of the city, where certain regulations ensure the character of the settlement, especially the ratio of open spaces to built areas. Yet, this idea gave rise to a school of thought in the 20th century, motivated by the criticism of the metropolitan condition, promoting the elimination of congestion through a pattern of scattered, preferably self-sufficient, districts over a large area.⁴¹

40 Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 357.

Another important ideal city model that was formed around the turn of the century was Tony Garnier's 'Industrial City.' Garnier (1869-1948) envisaged an ideal industrial city consisting of three main parts: factory area, town, and hospitals. These zones were to be laid gradually on a slope facing south: factories at the lowermost plot with an easy access to a river, town on a higher plateau, and the hospitals above the town overlooking the whole settlement. These main elements were isolated so as to permit future development and were separated by buffer zones. The whole settlement was to be managed by a public administration. This body would have the authority on land and it was to be responsible for construction activities, sanitary regulations and providing basic supplies. The main element, the residential area, was to be laid upon an elongated grid, divided up into blocks of 150x30 meters, each containing 20 houses. Regulations restricted the built area to less than half of the plot, enforced light and ventilation standards due to hygienic considerations. Many properties of Garnier's "Industrial City' were adopted by post-war models. These were the isolation of the main sectors of the city, or better say, zoning, the elimination of the private ownership of land, the creation of wide open spaces between buildings, the separation of pedestrian and traffic routes, and putting emphasis on the sanitary standards.⁴²

2.9 Paris

Despite the profusion of ideal city models, the realization of large scale urban rehabilitation projects in the 19th century was limited with one exception: Paris. The city was subjected to an unprecedented transformation under the rule of

⁴² Ibid.

Napoleon III, who adopted the economic means and systematic ends in the rebuilding of Paris.⁴³ As Kenneth Frampton argues, the transformation placed an emphasis on the significance of rapid and efficient systems of communication. After the 1850's, with the great boulevards cutting through the existing fabric to link crucial nodes, Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann (1809-1891) converted Paris into a regional city.

The main purpose of Haussmann's intervention was, as Françoise Choay argues, to transform and give unity to Parisian agglomeration.⁴⁴ The main strategy to achieve this unity was the *percements*, namely the creation of new straight boulevards through demolishing the existing fabric. Thus, whole city was regularized and partly demolished under great boulevards and spacious parks. This was complemented with the standard residential building types, the regularized façades, and the standardized street furniture.⁴⁵ Moreover, a proper fresh water and sewer system network was constructed.

None of the other European cities underwent such a profound transformation as Paris did. Yet, all experienced an effort of "rationalization" of the urban landscape, especially throughout the 19th century.⁴⁶ The street networks of European cities were regularized and expanded in order to house the growing urban population.⁴⁷ Taking any action on the city, however, became harder with the fragmentation of the economic power of the monarchic governments to individual entrepreneurs. The private enterprise accelerated the division of the

⁴³ Frampton, *Modern Architecture*, op. cit., 24.

⁴⁴ Françoise Choay, *The Modern City: Planning in the 19th Century*, (New York: George Braziller, 1969,) 16.

⁴⁵ Frampton, *Modern Architecture*, op. cit., 24.

⁴⁶ See Benevolo, *The History of the City,* op. cit.

⁴⁷ Frampton, *Modern Architecture*, op. cit., 23-28.

urban land to a fragmented entity that resisted the wholesale modernization of the city. Any large-scale intervention on city was both encouraged and limited by the proprietorial concerns of the growing urban middle class. Benevolo argues that in the context of 19th century transformations, urban lot became an asset in its own right. ⁴⁸ Rather than the building it houses, value of the lot began to be determined by its situation, scarcity, and rules or regulations it is subject to. For "buildings were no longer considered as permanent features of the landscape, but as provisional and replaceable structures."⁴⁹

This shift of priority from the building to the lot did not radically change the conception of the city in Europe at the time, as it did in America. Dominant buildings were the most important concerns in the urban modernization plans of 19th century European cities, as Leonardo Benevolo argues:

In Europe the Baroque plans were based on the idea of extending the criteria of spatial relations that regulated the composition of a building to the whole body of the town; often it was in fact a dominant building that acted as a focal point for the composition and the town or district was based on the axes of this building. This meant that the ensemble must be not only geometrically regular but also immediately comprehensible as a precise entity... American towns had the same regularity but not the sense of perspective unity; the street system was undifferentiated, the few distinctive elements—a wider street, a square or important building—simply interrupted the uniform texture, without producing any related intensification...⁵⁰

In case of European cities, architecture, again, related itself to the city on the basis of its pure object, and aimed to conceive city as the sum of its buildings or as a vast building. Conceiving the city as the ultimate building—as it is the case at least since Alberti as we have seen—coincided with the attribution of a unity

⁴⁸ Benevolo, *The History of the City*, op. cit., 734.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Benevolo, *History of Modern Architecture*, op. cit., 351.



Figure 2.9.1 Etoile, Paris. Photograph.



Figure 2.9.2 The Commissioners' proposal for Manhattan Grid. 1811. Plan.

and specificity that building considered to have had, to the city. Obviously, the building is a more sophisticated allocation of the space, for some envisaged activities, than the lot itself. It is simply because of the number of the choices that had been made in comparison to the lot, which is, at the bottom line, just a potential. Due to a specificity that it considered to have architecture was again associated with the building rather than the city. It is true that architecture has a specificity due to its operational nature. That is, it has to conform to exterior constraints and specify construction. Yet, beyond these, architecture conventionally aims to be specific to its social context, symbolic meaning, or program in a way to affect the conduct of life. This subject will be discussed further in detail in the next chapter.

2.10 Paris versus New York

Acknowledging the specificity attributed to architecture helps us to grasp the fundamental difference between the conception of the city as the sum of its buildings—or itself a vast building—and as the sum of its lots—subject to continual exploitation of their potentials. This, in fact, is similar to the difference between the conceptions of the 19th century European and American cities, say that of Paris and New York. Benevolo argues that:

The true nature of these American plans can be discovered not so much by considering the designs themselves as by the process of their application. A European immediately translates the design into *architectural terms*, as though it were a plan for a whole complex of buildings, whereas [an American] was concerned not with designing a definite complex of buildings, but only with a two-way correspondence between certain numbers and certain plots of ground. The objects and activities to be concentrated on certain particular spots were not laid down or fixed in advance, and might in fact vary continually; what was fixed was the squaring up of land according to a given pattern, and the application of certain constant number to each little square.⁵¹

Benevolo exemplifies the difference between American and European conception of the city through Camillo Sitte (1843-1903). The "vague" program realized by the parceling of new American cities as well as the whole North American terrain, was criticized by Sitte, in his influential 1889 book 'City Planning According to Artistic Principles.'

Artistically satisfactory parceling of a new section of town cannot be attempted without first having some idea as to what purpose this section will serve in the long run and what public buildings and plazas might be intended for it. Without any idea at all what buildings and plazas are to make up a part of town or what purpose it is ultimately to serve, one cannot begin either to make a distribution in keeping with the site and its conditions or to attain any measure of artistic effectiveness. ... Only in town planning is it considered reasonable to go ahead with a building plan without a definite program, and this derives from the fact that one simply does not know how any specific new district will develop. The consequence of this absence of a program is the familiar building-block system, which tells us in all bluntness: 'We could perhaps create something beautiful and useful here, but we do not know just what, so we humbly decline to deal with such a vague problem, and therefore present merely a division of the surface area so that its sale by the square foot can begin.' ... For America, Australia, and other unopened lands, the gridiron plan may for the time being still suffice. Wherever people are concerned merely with colonizing land, live only for earning money and earn money only in order to live, it may be appropriate to pack people into blocks buildings like herring in a barrel.⁵²

Benevolo, writing in late 1960's, criticizes Sitte in that he considers urban plan as an architectural plan on a larger scale, overlooking complexity brought about by that very change of scale.⁵³ This, Benevolo argues, precluded him to see that city was inherently a 'vague problem.' It is clear by now, so is architecture.

⁵¹ Ibid., 195. Italics added. Here "architecture" is definitely associated with mentioned 'specificity.'

⁵² Camillo Sitte, City Planning According to Artistic Principles, trans. George R. Collins, Christiane C. Collins, (New York: Random House, 1965,) 125-126. Italics added. ⁵³ Benevolo, *History of Modern Architecture*, op. cit., 214.

2.11 The Shift

It is not only difficult but also uninteresting to try tracking down a more or less precise date that metropolitan condition began to prevail on the urban environment. This is not only because of the vastness of the geography such condition operates on. The metropolitan acceleration of urban processes is not a fact in itself. Rather, it is due to a complex system of shifts in different spheres of life; shifts that are generally associated with modernity.

The metropolitan processes fundamentally differ from the pre-metropolitan (premodern, perhaps) organization of life. My reluctance to identify a precise date does not necessarily mean that I think such condition emerged through minor changes that can be placed in an evolutionary narrative. Rather, it is because of the period of time that those shifts took place. In this study, I locate the threshold at the outset of the 20th century. Yet I believe that we are still experiencing the metropolitan acceleration of urban processes. What is particular to our time is the dissemination of metropolitan condition. Today, through/due to the consequences of globalization—capitalist reorganization and advanced informational and infrastructural networks, the signs of the metropolitan condition that is observed in specific settlements at the early 20th century, are being radicalized and dispersed.

2.12 Social Machine⁵⁴

Architecture's involvement—at least theoretically—with the social transformation through a reorganization of the built environment was not ever

⁵⁴ See Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, op. cit., 104.

more intensified then the inter-war Europe. The "radical" architecture's claim to engage in the processes of modernization in order to attain the shared ideals of modernity involved the reorganization of metropolis as a "social machine." A collectivist social transformation was aimed to be achieved with the help of architecture. This involved betterment of life standards of the low-income groups through mass housing and more equal distribution of land and wealth. This required an effective use of the available resources and the utilization of the new production methods that are able to manufacture in great quantities meeting certain norms of quality. The enmeshing of architecture into industrial mass production methods was accompanied by a call for its "rationalization," and a redefinition of the position of the architect, scale and character of architectural intervention, as well as aesthetic norms.

The active engagement in the modernization, involved a reorganization of the production-distribution-consumption cycles, thus the metropolis—ultimate spatial productive mechanism. I will mention three attitudes aiming such reorganization, relevant for their conception of metropolis.

First of these attitudes may be exemplified in Ernst May's projects, where *Siedlung* is the primary tool for intervention. These housing projects offered a model of spatial organization with social implications. In fact, *Siedlung* was "an oasis of order," formally and socially, injected into the urban agglomeration as a part of a comprehensive plan, namely the proletarianization of a devised metropolitan structure.⁵⁵ The conception of metropolis was, in fact, again very much related to model's social undertakings. Through its spatial organization—

⁵⁵ Tafuri, Architecture and Utopia, op. cit., 116.

that is linear blocks set in greenery—*Siedlung* aimed to eradicate metropolitan congestion and diversity. It acted as a fragment: juxtaposed to the metropolis to which it was foreign. Not only because of its formal and programmatic structure, but also with the social formation it upheld—an organic community. As Tafuri observes, these housing projects set a model for the "town" against that of the metropolis; one that is close to Tönnies in its nostalgia for pre-metropolitan social structure as opposed to alienated, anonymous metropolitan crowd of Simmel.⁵⁶ Thus the *Siedlung* aspired to an unattainable hermetic structure that preserves organic character of the community within the metropolitan condition.

Second attitude may be exemplified in Ludwig Hilberseimer's writings and projects. In *Groszstadtarchitektur* appeared in 1927, Hilberseimer wrote:

The architecture of the metropolis depends essentially on the solution both of the elementary cell and the urban organism as a whole. The single room as the constituent element of the habitation will determine the form of habitation, and since the habitations in turn form the blocks, the room will become the decisive factor of urban configuration, which is architecture's true goal. Reciprocally, the planimetric structure of the city will have a substantial influence on the design of the habitation and the room.⁵⁷

Assertions of Hilberseimer truly speak of a continuity, that of "architectural object" and metropolis. Yet, I believe, rather than an analogy, this time, continuity was conceived in terms of process of architectural production. Here "building" is no longer analogous to metropolis; it is merely a chain in a continuous cycle of production that, in fact, diminishes its historically

 ⁵⁶ Ibid., 119. See Ferdinand Tönnies, Community and Society, (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988). First appeared in 1887 as *Gemeinshaft und Gesellschaft*. Also see Georg Simmel. "The Metropolis and Mental Life," *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed., trans. Kurt H. Wolff, (New York: Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1950,) 409-424.
⁵⁷ Ludwig Hilberseimer, Groszstadtarchitektur, (Stuttgart: Verlag Julius Hoffmann, 1927,) 98-100,

⁵⁷ Ludwig Hilberseimer, Groszstadtarchitektur, (Stuttgart: Verlag Julius Hoffmann, 1927,) 98-100, cited in K. Michael Hays, *Modernism and the Posthumanist Subject, The Architecture of Hannes Meyer and Ludwig Hilberseimer*, (London: The M.I.T. Press, 1992,) 173.

constructed position. It was no longer the "pure object" of architecture that is supposed to condition urban agglomeration through an extension of its properties. Rather, it was conditioned by the production of metropolis. Thus, it was no longer "the object," but the physical form of a juxtaposition of certain number of cells. These cells, as Tafuri claims, were the prime elements of the continuous—Fordist/Taylorist—production line that ultimately builds up the metropolis.⁵⁸

Because of this shift in the position of architecture, it is perhaps misleading to deploy the same terminology in a cross examination of conventional and "radical" attitudes. This is even more valid for the word 'architecture.' As understood by Hilberseimer in *Groszstadtarchitektur*, architecture was no longer necessarily the creation of unique individual buildings or formal configuration of "artistically satisfactory" urban compositions. Consequently, the architect was no longer a 'self-proclaiming producer of objects.' Rather, she/he was an agent engaging in the reorganization of production at large: a production line that ultimately produces the metropolis. The main element of this production line, 'the elementary cell,' due to its infinite reproducibility destroys the "aura" associated with the one that "work of art" underwent at the same "age of mechanical reproduction."⁵⁹ Infinite reproducibility excludes the notion of "place;"⁶⁰problematizes the inherited means of composition.

⁵⁸ See Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, op. cit., 104-124.

⁵⁹ See Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968,) 219-253. ⁶⁰ Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, op. cit., 105.



Figure 2.12.1 *Vorschlag zur Citybebauung* (Project for the Construction of a City). Ludwig Hilberseimer. 1930. Axonometric drawing.



Figure 2.12.2 Project for the Construction of a City applied to the center of Berlin. Ludwig Hilberseimer. 1930. Photomontage. The composition was to be dictated by the production line itself; by a reciprocal relationship of the cell and the metropolis. Hence the continuity from the simplest element of a daily use item that determines the features of the room, to the urban entity and supposedly vice versa. A systematic construction of reason knits all the elements to each other tightly and rigidly without tolerance to any irrationality.

A third attitude may be exemplified in Le Corbusier's 'The Radiant City' dating 1933, or in the interrelated 'The Functional City,' formed in CIAM 4.⁶¹ At the congress held in 1933, city was presented as consisted of four basic functions: dwelling, leisure, work, and transportation.⁶² Regarding dwelling, CIAM members evaluated the population densities in the historic center as too high, conditions as unhealthy, and open spaces as insufficient.⁶³ Thus, the allocation of the better sites in the city for residential zone was advocated. Also for hygienic concerns, it was proposed that buildings should not be located along transportation routes. Instead, it was advised that high apartment buildings, benefiting modern technologies, should be built with wide open green spaces between them. Regarding leisure, it was advised to clear the dense central areas to provide free spaces for recreation. Regarding work, the members of the group promoted a reorganization of office slabs and industrial zone as to

⁶¹ See Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, trans. Pamela Knight, Eleanor Levieux, Derek Coltman, (New York: Orion Press, 1967,) Le Corbusier, The City of To-morrow and Its Planning, trans. Frederick Etchells, (New York: Dover, 1987,) and Le Corbusier, The Athens Charter, trans. Anthony Eardley, (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1973.) ⁶² I will use the term 'city' instead of 'metropolis' in this and some following attitudes not to impose

my own terminology. ⁶³ Eric Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960*, (Massachusetts: The MIT Press,

^{2000,) 89-90.}



minimize commutes. The industrial zone was to be separated by means of a buffer zone to ensure favorable conditions for the residential zone. Lastly, it was

Figure 2.12.3 The Radiant City. Le Corbusier. 1933. Zoning Diagram.



Figure 2.12.4 Plan Voisin, applied to Paris. Le Corbusier. 1925. Photomontage.

endorsed to rebuild a transportation network as to adopt to modern means of transportation.

In short, in order to eliminate the "intolerable" urban disorder and to accommodate the "primordial biological and psychological necessities of the population," metropolis was to be reconstituted through the "rational" mediation of architecture. Metropolitan activities were simplified to their extremes. Metropolis was to be divided to its basic constituting elements and restructured. Any unpredictable irrationality was prevented by the structure; isolated enclaves interacting within predefined sets of relationships. Due to a "fetish for the objective," the essential metropolitan condition as I will articulate further was to be repressed.

2.13 Associatied City

After the Second World War, along with the decrease in Le Corbusier's domination on the CIAM members, a group of younger architects began to criticize inter-war 'Functional City.⁷⁶⁴ This group was later known as Team X.⁶⁵ From the moment it emerged within the CIAM group, members of Team X began to oppose to the functional city constructed on the basis of zoning. They offered, instead, to replace functional hierarchy proposed in CIAM 4, with a hierarchy of 'human associations.' Human association mainly refers to a presumably lost connection between 'place' and 'life pattern.' Revitalizing this connection seemed to be necessary to "reidentify man with his environment."

⁶⁴ See Frampton, *Modern Architecture*, op. cit., 269-279.

⁶⁵ Team X comprised J. B. Bakema, Aldo van Eyck, G. Candilis, Alison and Peter Smithson, Shadrach Woods, Giancarlo de Carlo, J. Coderch, C. Pologni, J. Soltan, S. Wewerka, R. Erskine.

Thus, Team X group claimed an 'alienation' of individual from her/his environment in the modern society, and aimed to reestablish a connection. To do this, for instance, Smithsons endorsed more phenomenological categories of House, Street, District, and City.⁶⁶

For Team X group, the most important problem of the modern city was its lack of 'comprehensibility' and 'identity.' Thus. thev aimed prioritizina comprehensibility through the clarity in spatial organization. Urban infrastructure was considered as the main tool of this organization. Consequently, city was conceived as fundamentally consisted of two main parts: a "backbone" of "definable elements," such as networks of utilities and circulation-transportation systems-infrastructure-and the "less-definable elements," which were organized around this backbone-superstructure. The former is more rational, predictable, and only open to collective intervention. The latter is open to individual intervention. Thus it is less controllable. Consequently, the former changes in a 'relatively longer period,' whereas the latter is open to rapid change.

Besides making the "whole thing work," the backbone creates "fixed points." These points enable individual's mental processes to comprehend the entirety of the organization. The notion of "fixed points" or "urban fixes" were closely related with the effort of creating a sense of 'belonging' and 'place' established by architecture through human associations.⁶⁷ In fact, such terminology implies an aspiration to a community. Members of the community were to be socialized at Smithsons' elevated streets of Golden Lane Housing Project, localized traffic-

⁶⁶ Frampton, *Modern Architecture*, op. cit., 272.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 276.

free enclaves of *Hauptstadt* scheme, Bakema's megabuildings and "neighborhood" schemes, or at Aldo van Eyck's "in-between" places."⁶⁸ It is, again, possible to observe the upholding of Tönnies, instead of Simmel.

The Second World War encumbered the positive aspirations of the early 20th century architectural discourse. Hence the members of Team X located themselves on a more realist ground. They were critical about the 'ideal city' models which dominated the architectural thought since the 15th century. As I have stressed previously, the notion of ideal necessarily precludes the conception of the city in temporal terms. Through a criticism of inter-war CIAM, the group negated tabula rasa, and structured their attitude—at least they intended—to continue from the existing city:

If you think back to the pioneer days of modern architecture you will see that Hilberseimers and the Le Corbusiers and the Gropiuses were producing Ideal Towns in the Renaissance sense, in the sense that their aesthetic was in fact the classical aesthetic, one of fixed formal organization. Now the attitude of Team X is that this is an unreal attitude towards towns, and we think that planning is a problem of going on, rather than starting with a clean sheet. We accept as a fixed fact that in every generation we can only do so much work, and we have to select the points at which our action can have the most significant effect on the total city structure, rather than try to envisage its complete reorganization, which is just wishful thinking. Our current aesthetic and ideological aims are not 'castles in the air' but rather a sort of new realism and new objectivity, a sort of radicalism about social and building matters; and (to stress again) a matter of acting in a given situation.⁶⁹

Another important point in the team's approach is their emphasis on the infrastructure. The team's conception of the city—as consisted of infrastructure and less definable elements open to continuous manipulation—provide a

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Peter Smithson, *Team X Primer*, ed. Alison Smithson, (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1968,) 85.

theoretical structure that recognizes instability. In fact, some of the projects by the team members, such as Frankfurt-Römerberg Project or Berlin Free University by Woods and Schiedhelm, instigate the complexity and instability. These projects set an example of organizational strategy that can tolerate programmatic instability and innovation. This paved the way to a crucial intellectual shift that I will study in the next chapter.

2.14 Analogous City

The younger generation in CIAM group was, of course, not the only ones moved by the unrealized objectives of the modern architecture and the afterwar climate that eventually encumbered the positive aspirations of modernity. A restructuring of the architectural discourse in the 1960's involved the repositioning of architecture in relation to metropolis. The subversion of the overrated position of the architect in the sphere of production shifted her/him to a place where she/he, once again, was forced to come to terms with the existing metropolis. For it was clear by then the scene of production was "fully occupied by the multiplicity of economic and political actors."⁷⁰

The swift growth of the metropolises in the aftermath of the war put aside the architectural projections. This, I believe, was one of the major factors that refuted architect's privileged position in the sphere of production. This entailed a reassessment of architecture's relation with capitalist reorganization. One of the possible roads to be taken was attempting a 'reading' of metropolis as a self-referential object. This was taken, albeit with radically different subject

⁷⁰ Gandelsonas, "The City as the Object of Architecture," op. cit., 132.

matters and methods, by Robert Venturi in United States and by Aldo Rossi in Europe. Venturi's 'Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture' and Rossi's 'The Architecture of the City' were published both in 1966.⁷¹

Further developed in 'Learning from Las Vegas' with Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, Venturi's position, I believe, can be summarized as the essential counter-less-is-more attitude. He promoted the iconography of the popular culture that finds its logical place in the metropolis as a generating force of architecture.⁷² Aiming to incorporate the icons of the driving forces in the society into architectural design, in fact, is in no ways surprising at times of disjunction of architectural language and culture. One may conceive the 'objecttype' of Le Corbusier in a similar perspective. It is typical of design to translate such icons through some metaphoric and metonymic operations in order to expand its formal repertories and to regenerate its significance. This, I will articulate in the next chapter. Yet, for the moment it should be noted that, although such a process is useful in forming symbolic connections, it is not capable of restructuring the discourse.

Rossi's theoretical construction is fundamentally different than Venturi's. Rossi mainly studies the persistent forms and structures of the city. Here it should also be noted that, in fact, his insistent avoidance of the term metropolis is related to the continuity of the city that he aims to demonstrate. For Rossi, this continuity was established by the persistence of forms. Metropolis is

⁷¹ See Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, 2nd edition, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1977.) See Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City,* revised American edition, ed. Aldo Rossi, Peter Eisenman, trans. Diane Ghirardo, Joan Ockman, (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1982.)

⁷² Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*, (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1977.)

necessarily associated with the radicalized consequences of modernization. This was characterized by the industrialization in the 19th century. It is now, arguably, characterized by the post-industrial transformations, namely dominance of the service sector.

Yet, Rossi undermines such ruptures in the formation of city. Regardless of the changes that productive mechanisms undergo, city's permanence in time and its continuous construction enables Rossi to argue that city is essentially the same. In other words, no distinction can be made between the ancient city and the modern one.⁷³ Architecture, coming into being with the first traces of the urban form, is inseparably connected with the continuous formation of city and civilization. Thus, Rossi conceives the city as architecture where architecture is not only the "visible image of the city and the sum of its different architectures", but "the construction of the city over time."⁷⁴ This, in fact, is a crucial shift in the architectural thought. Individual objects of architecture—'urban artifacts' rather than 'buildings'—are defined through their connection with the city. For, 'urban artifact' refers not only to the physical object, but also its geography, structure, and "connection with the general life of the city."

Rossi conceives dwelling as the major element in the composition of the city. That is why, he argues, he accepts dwelling as a category in his study, although he opposes to the functionalist classification of CIAM. The functionalist classification he negates is the one that presupposes a static cause-effect relationship between the 'urban artifact' and its function. He, on the other hand, argues that urban 'whole' can be divided into three principle functions: dwelling,

⁷³ Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, op. cit., 126.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 21.

fixed activities (stores, public and commercial buildings, universities, hospitals, schools), and circulation.⁷⁵ Here 'fixed activities' are included within the 'primary elements.' These primary elements have permanent character. Thus, monument is a primary element per se. The primary elements— permanences—play a decisive role in the constitution of the city. Hence, in Rossi's argument, city is structured around them. Thus, once more we are confronted with the conception of the city through its major elements.

Concerning these permanences, Rossi again places the emphasis on their connection with the city. They can be either "propelling" or "pathological."⁷⁶ Beyond being a spot where the history is experienced, propelling permanences contribute to the life of/in the city in an active way. That is to say, regardless of the changes in their functions, these permanences continue to function as an urban focus through sort of an 'aura of the location' that persists in time. In fact, their assuming of new functions prevents them from turning into pathological permanences. In the pathological permanences, 'past' does not assume new functions. Thus their ties with the city loosen and they cannot condition the built environment around them.

What is particularly important here is that those permanences that can tolerate instability continue to function. In fact, I believe, negating a static cause-effect relationship between the 'urban artifact' and its function does not necessarily preclude the instigation of the form-program relationship. Yet, Rossi does not bring about what enables permanences to tolerate instability. Rather, he just implies that assuming new functions is an asset for the artifact. This provides

⁷⁵ Ibid., 86.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 59.

him the ground to oppose to a functional organization that tightly knits all the elements from the building to the city. Through this, he forges his criticism against inter-war architectural ideologies that aspired to such an organic unity of the city. Rossi negates the conception of the city as an organic unity for it derives basically from a functionalist hypothesis. He criticizes this physiological explanation where form is constituted by the function.

Consequently, rather than the constitution of the unity of the city through its functional organization, Rossi argues that unity is fundamentally achieved by history, or "by the city's memory of itself." The interdependence of a building with the other buildings and the city is thus carried to a reasonable level. The programmatic 'tight' connections between the elements were thus loosened in the absence of their predefined relationship. Recognizing the fragmented character of the city may have led to an instigation of different characters that urban artifact may assume in various scales. Yet, Rossi immediately subverts such possibility through the Albertian analogy. He stresses the metaphoric relationship and constructs a continuity from the individual to the house and to the city—a giant house. He insists that the quality of the artifacts is independent of their scale.

2.15 Loss of Object

In the 1970's, due to the criticisms of the inter-war/after-war architectural discourses, and the transformations in the socio-cultural and politico-economic spheres, the architectural climate had radically changed. The positive aspirations of the Enlightenment surely still carried a certain conviction in the

52

interwar period.⁷⁷ Subversion of these aspirations, above all, affected the position of the metropolis in the architectural discourse. A realist reassessment of the role of architect in the production of metropolis marked the end of it as a positive, generative force in architecture. It was clear, by now, that architect was not the self-proclaimed-producer of metropolis; that metropolitan processes cannot be controlled, predetermined solely by architectural interventions. Thus, metropolis had to be expelled from the architectural discourse if it was to be conceived through conventional methods that were previously articulated. This, in fact, left no more than a couple of choices: engaging in a social action outside the discipline, resorting to a sort of autonomous architecture conceived as more of an art, or carrying on to practice within the enforced conditions acting with a cold-blooded professionalism.

In fact, architectural practice—conditioned by the conventional conception of metropolis—carried on the efforts of re-establishing coherence, if not homogeneity. These efforts were deployed within a wide range of approaches from the renewed frameworks of modernist tradition, to the revived pre-modern vocabularies, and to futurist phantasms of the latter day avant-gardes. Yet, it is hardly possible to claim that this attitude continued after the early 1980's, except in ever shrinking scales.

In the 1980's metropolitan condition further got complicated. For instance, making a fetish of the advanced communication technologies led to the problematization of "real space." This, for some, shifted the focus of interest from the "urbanization of real space" to the urbanization of "real time" through

⁷⁷ See Frampton, *Modern Architecture*, op. cit., 280.

the communication networks.⁷⁸ Rendering spatial position obsolete, this conception eventually negates the validity of any knowledge originated from the physical reality of urban agglomeration. On the other hand, "reality" had already became problematic through the fundamental changes in the system of signs; presumably no longer referring to real but substituting or deterring it via its "operational double."⁷⁹ This brings about the questions of relevance of entirety and reality of form. As Rem Koolhaas observes,

Our amalgamated wisdom can be easily caricatured: according to Derrida we cannot be Whole, according to Baudrillard we cannot be Real, according to Virilio we cannot be There.⁸⁰

Carrying out the architectural implications of these transformations to their extremes has its risks. In fact, such an attitude echoes the one that aimed to substitute architectural design with a pure program, with the activity schemes. Diana Agrest reminds us, for architect's power of intervening in the activity systems (she may as well have said cybernetic systems) is but an illusion, renouncing form lefts us in a position in the middle where architecture looses its object.81

⁷⁸ Paul Virilio, Open Sky, trans. Julie Rose, (London: Verso, 1997,) 9.

⁷⁹ Jean Baudrillard, Simulacra and Simulation, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 2.

 ⁸⁰ Rem Koolhaas, "What Ever Happened to Urbanism," *S, M, L, XL*, op. cit., 967. Author's italics.
⁸¹ Diana I. Agrest, "The Misfortunes of Theory," *Architecture From Without*, op. cit., 71.

CHAPTER 3

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN, METROPOLITAN NON-DESIGN

City is the arena of architectural discourse. To think of the city is to think of architecture, for the city is the limit of architecture. It is its unconscious, the place of intersection of social forces with language.⁸²

Reciprocity has hardly been a characteristic of architecture-city relationship. Beginning with its historical setting in the Renaissance, architectural discourse has always related itself to city on the basis of its "pure" object, the building. Despite the continuity at the surface, this relationship has operated as the projection of an internal economy onto the city; intellectual constructions, artistic desires, symbolic, economic interests formed within or translated into the architectural discourse.

This led to the traditional conception of city as the largest building, as the ultimate extension of the composition. In this conception architecture was to build a spatial entity from the small scale to the larger on the basis of its internal/interiorized principles. City thus became architecture's practical object,

⁸² Agrest, "City as Place of Representation," op. cit., 125-126.

leading to an illusion of omnipotence: an all-encompassing all-managing architecture.

This architectural stance against the city defines the architect as a "creative subject." Yet, the position of this subject is a highly problematic one since it aims to occupy many places at once. First, she/he is an artist/intellectual operating through an internal set of—design—codes. Second, she/he is a builder who aims to transform a part of the world using these codes along with a continuous negotiation process with the conditions of building's production. This position of the subject is similar to that of 'artistic fantasy' mentioned above as defined by Gandelsonas: the architect is neither an autonomous artist nor a kind of technician.

As Gandelsonas argues, this position of the subject is correlated with the doubling of the object that pretends to be at two places at once, namely in the design process and in the body of the actual building. Former is constructed, supposedly from scratch, in the space of representation, whereas latter lies in the actual space. Like the relationship between the two subjects, artist versus builder, relationship between these two objects is also a problematic one. During and after its realization, architectural object formed within the relatively consistent space of representation shifts into the actual space where it is relentlessly manipulated by various actors in time.

Due to the multiplicity of the social actors, imposing an internal economy onto the actual space becomes even more problematic with the expansion of scale of intervention. Urban space that always precedes the architectural object

56

resists design as a closed system through the confrontation of design with other cultural systems; forces that transcend the limits of architecture yet affect its production and reception; aspects outside architecture embodied in the city as the urban condition. Following Agrest, city and urban culture—sum of all cultural systems manifested in the city—not being products of a "creative subject," eliminates the place of the architect as such.⁸³

3.1 Design versus Non-Design⁸⁴

At this point architectural design as a closed system encounters with the urban culture and its processes, which necessitates a study of their interaction. In fact, Diana Agrest's 1976 article "Design versus Non-Design" provides an outstanding study on the subject. In this article, Agrest formulates the interaction of architecture with other cultural systems through a theoretical construction comprising "design" and "non-design," where:

... *design* is that mode by which architecture relates to cultural systems outside itself; it is a normative process and embraces not only architecture but also urban design. ... *non-design*, describes the way in which different cultural systems interrelate and give form to built world; it is not a direct product of any institutionalized design practice but rather the result of a general process of culture.

Design as a closed system has its 'specific' characteristics that differentiate it from other cultural systems. It has its specialized codes. Due to normative processing of its distinct codes design is reductive. It condenses and crystallizes general cultural notions. Culture, as Agrest articulates it, is "a

⁸³ Agrest, "Introduction: The City as the Unconscious of Architecture," op. cit., 4.

⁸⁴ Diana I. Agrest, "Design versus Non-Design," *Architecture from Without, Theoretical Framings for a Critical Practice*, (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991,) 30-65. First published in *Oppositions* 6, Fall 1976.

system of social codes that permit information to enter the public domain by means of appropriate signs." Thus, at large, it is a "hierarchy of these codes, manifested through various texts."

In this structure, design is a cultural system among many others, and not prior to them. It is relentlessly articulated by other systems through dynamic processes that ultimately affect its significance. Intensity of this articulation is not constant. Rather, it is heightened when "new economic, technical, functional, or symbolic problems force the production of new formal repertories, or the expansion and transformation of existing vocabularies." To elaborate on this interaction, it is necessary to comprehend the differences of these systems and means and mechanisms of their interaction.

Agrest articulates these differences through the notion of 'specificity' of codes. Specificity clarifies the position of codes in relation to design and other cultural systems. Agrest differentiates three types of codes that regulate the reading and the writing of 'texts' in design. First type consists of codes that are exclusive to design, such as codes determining the relationship between architectural drawings. Second type consists of codes that are shared by various systems including design, such as spatial and canonic codes. Lastly, there are codes, which are essential to one system and participate in another, yet in a transformed way. This occurs on the basis of some commonalities of two systems. For instance code of rhythm that is essential to music participates in architecture albeit after a transformation, namely from audial into visual. Specificity of a system, on the other hand, also depends on the way these

58

codes are articulated. In other words, articulation of the codes may be specific to the system whether codes are specific or not.

Acknowledging the notion of specificity helps us to comprehend the interface where interaction between design and other cultural systems occur. This interface forms the limits of architecture. Specificity maintains these limits that have certain permeability. While the codes exclusive to design, operate within its system, less specific codes link it to other systems. This necessitates the opening and closure of architectural limits. Codes of other signifying systems are translated into design by a filtering mechanism, through a process of symbolization. Agrest introduces the notions of "metaphor" and "metonymy" as the mechanisms of opening and closure. She argues that a theme may lead to another through similarity or contiguity. Former underlies the metaphor, latter underlies the metonymy. Interaction occurs through these processes:

In its relationship to other cultural systems, which is a necessary condition for the regeneration of sense, architecture takes part in a game of substitutions which thought of in terms of metaphoric and metonymic operations, explains, at the most specific level of form, the translation from extra-architectural to intra-architectural systems in a recoding which, by means of reducing meanings, maintains the limits of architecture.⁸⁵

As stated by Agrest, these operations that relate design to other systems always reduce the significance. Paradoxically, they define the limits of architecture precisely. These limits form the interface of interaction between architecture and other systems, and ultimately between architecture and metropolis as the place where all systems are manifested. Since the goal of this study is to explore the potentials of interaction of architecture and metropolitan

⁸⁵ Ibid., 39.

condition, essentially a state of 'delirium' in which all manifestations of modern life are made, this kind of interrelation proves to be useless. It represses the diversity—metropolitan condition per se.

Concerning the relationship between design and other cultural systems, Agrest posits an alternative. This alternative is "non-design" which comprises all cultural systems including design. Process of non-design liberates reading of this relationship from repression practiced by a "creative subject" through an institutionalized closed system:

In the world of non-design, that no-man's land of the symbolic, the scene of social struggle, an internal analysis of single systems is revealed as inadequate and impossible to apply. Here there is no unique producer, no subject, nor is there an established rhetorical system within a defined institutional framework. Instead there is a complex system of intertextual relationships.⁸⁶

3.2 Significance

Architectural design as a closed system is in fact a complete process in itself. It relentlessly relates itself with the culture at large for regeneration, and with the material conditions for its object's production. Yet, although it is conditioned by exterior forces, it translates these exterior inputs, processes them through certain norms and internal parameters and eventually, due to its 'operative nature,' crystallizes them into forms. For it is the allocation and articulation of space for certain envisaged activities, it attributes significance to its object, namely the built environment; includes some and excludes, or better, represses others. Yet the significance of the built environment is not static and the

⁸⁶ Ibid., 48.
articulation of it through time transcends the limits of architecture. As Kenneth Frampton reads Agrest, the changing significance of the built environment, an aleatory system of signs, "is revealed only through the process of life itself."⁸⁷ Thus, architecture's part is in fact setting the stage, or at best, opening the act before leaving the stage to other actors, to "spontaneous projection of life" onto its object.

This spontaneous projection of life, the articulation of significance through time, coincides with non-design, 'delirious,' 'carnivalesque' manifestations of all the meanings repressed in design.⁸⁸ It is indeed an 'unconscious design' stemming from the deposit of the repressed, the unconscious of architecture: the metropolis.

Yet if this process is, by definition, outside architecture and any projection of it into architectural design requires translation and reduction, is it possible to argue a productive interaction? If metropolis eventually ridicules, renders obsolete any "architectural solution," changes the course of the play no matter what the stage and opening act was about, is it still possible for architecture to contribute to the play anyway? If significance attributed by architecture at the process of production is disjunctive with the one(s) articulated through reception, what is the use of attributing it in the first place? If it is possible to provide valid answers to these questions, are they all the same for public and private, for small scale and large scale?

 ⁸⁷ Kenneth Frampton, introduction to Diana I. Agrest, "Design versus Non-Design," *Oppositions Reader*, ed. K. Michael Hays, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998,) 331.
⁸⁸ Agrest, "Design versus Non-Design," op. cit., 50.

3.3 Program

If we acknowledge that the essence of metropolitan condition is instability through time, it is obvious that program, among all the meanings that architecture attributes, is the weakest, and the most altered one. The metropolitan instability operates on the program of the built environment more than any other of its aspects. Thus, ironically, it is the most appropriate channel for architecture to relate itself to the metropolitan condition. It is obvious that this requires a different conception of functionalism than that of the 19th or the early 20th century, as an effort to predetermine metropolitan programs; disperse and isolate them to reintegrate by means of knitting all the elements tightly and rigidly through a systematic construction; an obsession to reduce their interaction to a set of predefined relationships in order to eliminate the unexpected.

If the diversity and instability are the essences of metropolitan condition (such as social and in this case programmatic), the injection of them into architectural design efficiently links both. In this way, the program, the raison d'être of architecture, may be utilized as a form generator. Yet, despite the search for a perfect linkage between form and function, or an effort to predefine interrelation of programmatic elements, this attitude involves a "simple interest in what happens."89 It is about strategies—and not definitive models—that tolerate, or better, instigate the instability of metropolitan programs. Following Rem Koolhaas, it is about strategies that "combine architectural specificity with programmatic instability."90

 ⁸⁹ Rem Koolhaas, "Elegy for the Vacant Lot," *S, M, L, XL*, op. cit., 937.
⁹⁰ Rem Koolhaas, "I Combine Architectural Specificity with Programmatic Instability," interview with Jaime Yatsuka, Telescope, 3, 1989, 7, cited in Jacques Lucan, "The Architect of Modern

Referring to Koolhaas here is, of course, not accidental. His reading of the metropolitan condition provides fruitful insights to be utilized in this study. Moreover, projects carried out by OMA exemplify an attitude grounded on the reading of the metropolis that in its turn instigates its potentials. Within the scope of this study, I shall dwell particularly on two interrelated works: the first is a book by Rem Koolhaas, Delirious New York, first published in 1978, and the second is the project for Parc de la Villette, Paris, carried out by OMA in 1982 as a competition entry.

Delirious New York is a retroactive manifesto on urbanism of Manhattan (metropolis *par excellence*): Manhattanism.⁹¹ It is a form of urbanism without an "explicit doctrine," an "overt theory." Koolhaas conceives the program of Manhattanism as to live "inside the fantasy," that is, a totally man-made world. He argues that the reason it never openly stated was that it was so ambitious to be realized.⁹² In fact the absence of a theory made this architecture, "shameless" of its utilitarianism and pragmatism, possible. In Hubert Damisch's words, "Manhattanism was unique in that it could only come into creation by renouncing all explicit enunciation, by actors refusing to adopt a discourse that ran on the contrary to the reality of their practice."⁹³ Yet, since the metropolitan condition illustrated in Delirious New York still prevails on the urban scene, the book beyond being an outstanding historical study, as Koolhaas argues, stresses the initial remarks of an explicit theory. In other words, it initiates a

⁹² Ibid., 10.

Life," *OMA-Rem Koolhaas, Architecture 1970-1990*, ed. Jacques Lucan, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991,) 38.

⁹¹ Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York, a Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*, (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1994.) First published in 1978.

⁹³ Hubert Damisch, "The Manhattan Transfer," *OMA-Rem Koolhaas, Architecture 1970-1990*, ed. Jacques Lucan, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991,) 24.

theory for Manhattanism's second coming to "transcend the island of its origins to claim its place among contemporary urbanisms."⁹⁴

The basic premise of Manhattanism is the exploitation of metropolitan condition, a congestion of diverse, instable programs. In Koolhaas's words, "Manhattan's architecture is a paradigm for the exploitation of congestion." ⁹⁵ Thus, architecture of Manhattan is conditioned by the "culture of congestion," the pivotal notion of the study, accepting "hyper-density" as "the basis for a desirable modern culture." Hyper density is deemed as "the splendor" and "the misery" of metropolis at once.

At the outset of this study, the fragmented entity of metropolis was conceptualized as a three dimensional grid, a matrix. This structure consists of units—utilitarian, economically efficient pigeonholes, which may as well be one of the slabs in a Manhattan skyscraper—acting with certain autonomy. This paradigm of economic optimization is based on the basic premise of insertion of diverse programs into pigeonholes as long as they are relevant without necessarily affecting the whole. I believe, this paradigm may as well be conceived as a 'machine' operating through/on congestion whose process is relentlessly articulated by various social actors. It is obvious now that this conceptualization owes much to Koolhaas's reading of Manhattan, where such a machine almost literally exists.

The basic pattern of Manhattan is a sheer multiplication of an elementary— 'relatively neutral,' as Koolhaas would have it—unit in three dimensions. Two

⁹⁴ Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, op. cit., 10.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

'mechanisms,' grid and elevator, beyond making the whole thing work, set a spatial continuity. Thus, Manhattan is an agglomeration of isolated units/spaces. It is this very isolation that guarantees the proper processing of the machine. Yet, "proximity and juxtaposition [of the blocks, for instance] reinforce their separate meanings," and the whole has a significance that transcends the summation of parts.⁹⁶ Through the homogenized territorial multiplication of the elementary unit, grid creates "identical and emphatically equivalent"⁹⁷ blocks; "bloated private realms that together form Manhattan's Venetian *system of solitudes*."⁹⁸ This process converts Manhattan to a dry "archipelago of blocks."

Koolhaas reveals the notion of "archipelago," an area of sea containing a group of small islands, through a design seminar/studio led by O. M. Ungers in 1976.⁹⁹ In this seminar on Berlin, Ungers launched the notion of "A Green Archipelago" that was conceived in terms of two opposite actions: "the reinforcement of those parts of the city that warranted it and the destruction of those parts that did not." Koolhaas argues that through these opposite, yet parallel, actions, metropolis would become an archipelago of "architectural islands floating in a post-architectural landscape of erasure where what was once city is now a highly charged nothingness."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 97.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 145. Author's italics. Here Koolhaas refers to the conception of New York as an allegory of Venice. This conception was utilized by many theoreticians from Peter Blake to Harvey Wiley Corbett or Manfredo Tafuri, and it obviously recalls Nietzsche's statement, "A hundred profound solitudes together constitute the city of Venice. That is its charm. A model for the man of the future."

⁹⁹ Rem Koolhaas, "Imagining Nothingness," *S, M, L, XL*, op. cit., 200. Text from 1985. Author's italics.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 201. Author's italics.

Here one should read the term "post-architectural" as 'post-traditionalarchitectural,' for as will be articulated later architectural design, when conceived in a non-conventional manner, is the primary spatial tool to charge "nothingness." What is criticized here is an architectural attitude that despite of the toleration of instable metropolitan programs, or the creation of potential for programmatic innovations, consumes those potentials in an obstinacy to attribute a static significance to the built environment. It is the kind of architecture that Koolhaas refers to when saying: "When there is nothing, everything is possible. Where there is architecture, nothing (else) is possible."¹⁰¹

3.4 Nothingness/Void

Nothingness, or *néant*, coincides here with the "void." Void is a recursive term in Koolhaas's works that, I believe, refers to space of tolerance, a component in the system that absorbs the outside effects, prevents them to damage the system. It, at least theoretically, achieves this not by reducing the significance of these effects, but by providing a place, a "free zone" where architecture imposes minimum constraints; where architecture attributes minimum significance. Thus, its significance is essentially articulated through use, or better reception—(perhaps it is not much ambitious to say) through non-design. Since little is predetermined, void provides maximum potential. It can be at any scale from a void within a building, such as the ones in the project for *Grande Bibliothéque*, to a metropolitan void, such as the ones proposed in the projects for Parc de la Villette and Universal Exposition.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 199.

Void is generated as a response to practical necessities. The parallel actions of reinforcement-destruction, or in other words reconstruction-deconstruction, suffer from a time lag, lack of financial resources, and necessary means. In other words, it is simply not reasonable in short term. Although some contemporary examples in the Far East demonstrate the traces of such a process, it is inapplicable in most cases.

Moreover, this process refers to an architecture that cannot tolerate the changing parts within its structure, thus to an impotence on the part of architecture. Multiplication of relatively neutral spaces or the strategy of void is utilized as the tolerance for the 'survival' of architecture itself. Hence Koolhaas's argument: "In such a model of urban solid and metropolitan void, the desire for stability and the need for instability are no longer incompatible."¹⁰² In this model a process of erasure forms metropolitan voids where conventional rules of architecture are suspended.¹⁰³ Koolhaas argues that it is only through such a process that inherent "tortures" of the metropolitan life-such as friction between program and containment—can be suspended.

3.5 Specificity/Zero Degree

Metropolitan solid also, in its turn, has to suspend some architectural conventions to tolerate the metropolitan instability. In this manner one may even think of repetitive slabs of the skyscraper as the voids stacked on top of

 $^{^{102}}_{103}$ lbid., 201. lbid.

each other, resulting in typical plan. Both the void and the typical plan are intrinsically related with what I call in this study as the 'architectural specificity.'

Architecture has to be specific in an operational manner. That is, it has to conform to exterior constraints as site, available resources and construction technologies, client interests, and so on. Interrelated to this, it has to specify construction; make series of choices comprising space disposition, structural system, and material properties. Yet, beyond these, architecture conventionally aims to be specific to its social context, symbolic meaning, or program in a way to affect the conduct of life. Consequently architectural design, as articulated above, always leads to reduction; vainly aims to prevent non-design. Koolhaas even argues that in this manner architecture "preempts" future.¹⁰⁴

By making the least possible architectural choices and abandoning the pretentious efforts to impose an internal architectural economy, both the void and the typical plan "postpone" and "keep open" the future. Yet, although they share a common base, void fundamentally differs from a slab in that it is essentially defined as the 'absence of building.'

Koolhaas names the typical plan as a "zero-degree architecture" that abandons any claims of uniqueness and specificity.¹⁰⁵ It negates any predetermined linkage between form and function. It is thus capable of accommodating any program due to its neutrality. Hence, Koolhaas argues that the skyscraper as a

¹⁰⁴ Rem Koolhaas, "Typical Plan," *S, M, L, XL*, op. cit., 344.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 335. Rem Koolhaas is most probably borrowing the term from Roland Barthes's 1953 book, *Le Degré Zéro de L'Ecriture*, where he articulates the 'neutral modes of writing' that efface itself in search of a purity 'in the absence of all signs' resulting in 'the Orphean dream: writer without Literature.' See Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1968).

vehicle of Manhattanism suggests that "no single specific function can be matched with a single place."¹⁰⁶ It is the realization of a 1909 scheme revealed in Delirious New York.¹⁰⁷ Koolhaas theorizes this scheme as "the ideal performance of the skyscraper" for actually it is a cartoon from a non-architectural medium, the old Life Magazine.

3.6 Schism/Lobotomy/Grid

In this—almost Habrakenian—cartoon a steel frame supports 84 slabs that all have the dimensions of the original plot.¹⁰⁸ Thus, it multiplies the original plot providing 84 new plots. In the cartoon only 5 of the slabs are seen, and they all accommodate villas of different styles. Hence Koolhaas states "each stop of the elevator opens to a different life style."¹⁰⁹ The frame only supports the lots of the houses, provides the conditions, and thus acts as an infrastructure. Yet, it does not predetermine any further. In this, it departs from the architectural conventions. It does not aim to connect the parts of the building within a single coherent scenario. On the contrary, the disconnectedness of the parts is the intelligence of the diagram. In other words, it works as long as the autonomy of the platforms is granted and exploited, for exactly in this way the frame

¹⁰⁶ Rem Koolhaas, "Life in the Metropolis' or 'The Culture of Congestion'," *Architectural Theory Since 1968*, ed. K. Michael Hays, (Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1998,) 328. First published in *Architectural Design*, 47, no. 5, August 1977.

¹⁰⁷ Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, op. cit., 82.

¹⁰⁸ "How do we pile up dwellings without sacrificing their independence? ... We must make constructions which are not in themselves dwellings or even buildings, but are capable of lifting dwellings above the ground; constructions which contain individual dwellings as a bookcase contains books, which can be removed and replaced separately; constructions which take over the task of the ground up in the air, and are permanent like streets. Without for the moment considering their appearance, I would name these constructions support structures, after their function." N.J. Habraken, *Supports: an alternative to mass housing*, (New York: Praeger, 1972,) 59.

^{59.} ¹⁰⁹ Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, op. cit., 85.



Figure 3.6.1 Cartoon from the Life Magazine, 1909.

conforms to the metropolitan instability. System works no matter any one(s) of the villas does or does not. Koolhaas names this "systematic exploitation of the deliberate disconnection between stories" as "vertical schism." ¹¹⁰ Schism negates the dependence of floors to each other. Thus, each floor becomes an autonomous pigeonhole, accommodating any program as long as it is necessary. Hence Koolhaas argues:

From now on each metropolitan lot accommodates—in theory at least an unforeseeable and unstable combination of simultaneous activities, which makes architecture less an act of foresight than before...¹¹¹

Multiplication of the original plot by the skyscraper was previously discussed by many others, but not so much for its potentials as for the controversies it entails, such as its financial ambition or its inconvenience to "architectural composition." For instance, Frank Lloyd Wright condemned the skyscraper as a "mechanical device" to multiply "by as many times as it is possible to sell over and over again the original ground area." ¹¹² Or, Emilio Cecchi has written: "The skyscraper is not a symphony of lines and masses, solid walls and openings, forces and obstacles; it is rather an arithmetical operation, an act of multiplication."¹¹³ It is obvious that conceiving the properties of the skyscraper as a sasets requires a different mindset.

There is another kind of disconnection that enables skyscraper as a vehicle of Manhattanism to tolerate the metropolitan instability. Koolhaas names this

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 105.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 85.

¹¹² Frank Lloyd Wright, "The Tyranny of the Skyscraper," *The Future of Architecture*, (New York: Horizon Press, 1953,) 153.

¹¹³ Emilio Cecchi, *America Amara*, (Florence, 1946,) 13. Cited in Benevolo, *History of Modern Architecture*, op. cit., 225.

disconnection after "lobotomy," a medical term used to describe the surgical severance of the connection between lobes of the brain, in which thought processes and emotions take place, in order to heal some mental disorders.¹¹⁴ He equates this to the "divorce between performance and appearance" in architecture, in other words, the separation of the interior and the exterior. Negating what is generally referred to as "honesty" of the façade where exterior of the building divulges the activities it accommodates; Koolhaas saves the façade of the skyscraper from the burden that it is impossible carry: revealing ever-changing interior programs. In this way, permanence, an intrinsic quality of all material architectural production, is assured by the façade, while efficiency is provided by the neutral frame of infrastructure and vertical schism through accommodating "change which is life."

If schism and lobotomy are the processes of deliberate severance of the connection between building's parts in order to tolerate metropolitan condition, I believe, 'grid' performs a similar task on a larger scale. Through the multiplication of the block, grid creates a homogenized terrain. Blocks do not form an ensemble, an organic unity. They are autonomous and equivalent parts of the undifferentiated system. The grid can be conceived as the mechanism of a horizontal schism, just as it is possible to conceive schism as a vertical grid, an extrusion forming the third dimension of the grid. Plan of Manhattan thus coincides with its section.

Considering centripetally, grid subdivides metropolitan terrain into manageable parts that make parallel actions of deconstruction-reconstruction possible.

¹¹⁴ Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, op. cit., 100.

Through these processes metropolis turns into a dry archipelago of architectural islands, or "cities within cities." In fact, this subdivision of the terrain and processes of schism and lobotomy assures the maintenance of the system by both tolerating change, that is, metropolitan instability, and enabling simultaneous existence of complementary or contradictory programs, that is, metropolitan diversity; two major assets of metropolitan condition that traverse the work of Rem Koolhaas and OMA from the early works such as 'The City of the Captive Globe' to the notions utilized in recent works such as the 'City of Exacerbated Difference.'¹¹⁵

3.7 Without Architecture

We were making sand castles. Now we swim in the sea that swept them away.¹¹⁶

The increased size of the skyscraper, the diversity of the programs it houses and the elimination of their interdependency, provide an autonomy to the skyscraper. As Rem Koolhaas stresses, this autonomy results in an insistent theme of Manhattanism: skyscraper, a mutant form of building, attempts to be a city in itself.¹¹⁷ Thus, once more we encounter with the building-city analogy. This time a single building is analogous to the city due to its comprising of diverse, instable programs that negate the necessity of being part of a single coherent scenario. There is continuity between building and metropolis to the

¹¹⁵ For the 'City of Exacerbated Difference' see Rem Koolhaas, "Pearl River Delta, Harvard Project on the City," *Mutations*, ed. Rem Koolhaas, Stefano Boeri, Sanford Kwinter, Nadia Tazi Armelle Lavalou, (Barcelona: Actar, 2000,) 309-337. Also see Rem Koolhaas, "From Lagos to Logos," *Anymore*, ed. Cynthia C. Davidson, (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2000,) 129-137. Paper presented in Anymore Conference held in Paris, June 23-25 1999.

¹¹⁶ Koolhaas, "What Ever Happened to Urbanism," *S, M, L, XL*, op. cit., 971.

¹¹⁷ Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, op. cit., 89.

extent that they are disconnected and to the extent that the parts of the building are disconnected. This analogy, then, is constructed by means of two mechanisms that homogenize the space and provide a spatial continuity while they assure disconnectedness and autonomy of the parts: grid and vertical schism.

For the first time the analogy carries a certain conviction and feasibility. Rather than operating in both directions, it had always been constructed to radiate architecture's conventional properties from the building to the urban agglomeration. Architecture, since its historical formation, always aimed to penetrate, with all its "specificities" into the city through its "pure" object. Now, it is acknowledged that, it is the city that infiltrates into architecture with all its ambiguity, multiplicity and instability, again through their shared object.

It is, of course, not the first time that the effects of the city on the individual building are acknowledged by the architectural discourse. Nor it is the first time that architecture's inevitable relation with other spheres of culture is acknowledged. Hilberseimer's urban projections were characterized by the construction of metropolis through a continuous production line. The elementary cell was the prime element of this line. Yet, in its turn, metropolis was supposed to affect the cell, thus the building, by determining the rules of the assemblage. In fact, all the projections of the "radical architecture," being the products of a devised complete reorganization, were envisaged in general terms. Plans on the large scale determined the location of the building and predefined its relationship with other elements and zones of the metropolis. Haussmann's intervention, setting another example, was carried out according to a plan that

was conceived in terms of extending the axes of the major edifices in order to give an organic, perspectival unity to the Parisian agglomeration. Although the plan was formed "architecturally," it was necessarily carried out on the "urban scale" imposing its effects on the individual buildings. The plan involved their refunctioning, reorganization or destruction, and enforced standardized floor plans that the general organization required.

Many examples may be derived from the architectural history. Yet, in most of these examples metropolis is a 'safe' one—already conceived in conventional architectural terms. In this way, architecture never inserts itself into the contingency of actual metropolis; never engages in a dynamic relationship with the other cultural systems. Excluding the metropolis, the model is consistent: architecture on a small scale and architecture on a larger scale—all defined, designed, and specific. One does not need to "humbly decline to deal with a vague problem."

3.8 Crisis

What if we simply declare that there is no crisis—redefine our relationship with the city not as its makers but as its mere subjects, as its supporters? More than ever, the city is all we have.¹¹⁸

Design, as a closed system, solely does not provide the necessary means to conceive the metropolis as the object of architectural discipline and to imagine the ways architectural object could operate as a productive structure within the metropolitan condition. Previous discussions stressed the necessity of

¹¹⁸ Koolhaas, "What Ever Happened to Urbanism," *S, M, L, XL*, op. cit., 971.

supplementary conceptive structures, additional methods of studying the potentials of architecture-metropolis relationship; conceiving the dynamic processes of production of significance and the spontaneous projection of metropolitan culture onto built environment. It is only through such structures that it is possible to conceive architecture and metropolis together, in their inevitable contiguity and interaction. For I do not believe they are necessarily of different orders. It is rather, metropolis is where all the other orders are possible.¹¹⁹ All the meanings excluded and all the systems repressed by design in its supposedly pure object are manifested in metropolis.

A theoretical construction-redefining design versus non-design-enables architectural discourse to recognize such condition. Agrest consciously avoids proposing a definitive model to translate the knowledge derived from nondesign to design in order not to close the system. Due to architecture's specificity and operational nature, any attempt to incorporate metropolis inevitably translates and reduces it. Yet, the recognition of it in the theoretical construction enables a productive dialectic. This prevents the repression of diversity and complexity in favor of coherent architectural solutions. It is this discontinuity between the bodies that proliferates interaction. Elsewhere Agrest defines a similar attitude through the notion of dispersion as opposed to unity:

The complexity, the heterogeneity that accepts contradiction as a constitutive part, must be retained in opposition to the unifying reductionism that eliminates them. Rather than closing the systemcharacteristic of architecture-this principle [of dispersion] opens it, permitting thus the articulation of many readings, signifying chains.¹²⁰

 $^{^{119}}$ Agrest, "The City as the Place of Representation," op. cit., 109. 120 Agrest, "The Misfortunes of Theory," op. cit., 76.

The recognition, and not the incorporation, of the metropolis requires a theoretical void, similar to the practical one defined by Koolhaas; a void where architecture's desire to incorporate and translate metropolis into its specific codes are restrained; multiplicity of the codes are acknowledged; where the knowledge of metropolis floats in an interactive environment as if it is observed in a computer screen. Only in such a theoretical void that it is possible to conceive open-ended structures where metropolitan multiplicity of the codes proliferates multiple readings. Such a structure is freed from the 'specter of contradiction.'¹²¹ Its parts may be articulated by various cultural systems. It is no more just an architectural representation of a solution formed through specific design codes. Rather it is a productive structure that metropolis engages in, or rather, operates on.

The void in the actual space engages in a similar process. It restrains architecture's desire to define; providing zones where metropolis proliferates the significance of the built environment through projection of life. Architecture, still, is the major spatial tool to 'charge' this void. Spatial organizational methods may be utilized in a way that they not only tolerate the metropolitan diversity and instability, but also instigate the interaction of diverse elements by operating on the programmatic interfaces; encouraging the programmatic innovation; upholding the multiple readings of heterogeneous metropolitan texts.

In this way architecture reaches through its after-life in a dynamic and productive way. Strategy of the void precludes the attribution of a static significance to the built environment. In other words, it does not aim for a work

¹²¹ See Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller, (New York: The Noonday Press, 1975,) 3.

that closes on an ultimate ("transcendental") signified. Rather it defers such a signified. Thus, precludes what Koolhaas defines as "preempting future." Here the opposition between conventional architectural methods and the strategy of the void (and methods of its spatial charge), in fact, recalls Roland Barthes's distinction between "work" and "text."¹²²

As opposed to the work that closes on an explicit/implicit signified, Barthes argues that text, deferring the signified, operates in the field of signifier. It "postpones," "keeps future open," as Koolhaas would have it. Here the signifier is not the "first stage of meaning," but the agent of a deferred action. In such a 'process,' the text, in our case architecturally charged void, ultimately becomes a 'pure—virtually empty—sign' that potentially may mean everything; a form 'in which the men [or the metropolis] put meaning, without this meaning thereby ever being finite and fixed.'¹²³ Therefore, work signifies in a fixed manner, whereas text has a multiple, heterogeneous 'process of signification.' This process necessarily calls for the practical collaboration: 'The text is experienced only in an activity of production.'¹²⁴

Initial condition of the void is that architecture attributes minimum significance to it. In semiotic terms, it denotes nothing. It may acquire infinite connotations,

 ¹²² See Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977,) 155-164.
¹²³ See Roland Barthes, "The Eiffel Tower," *Rethinking Architecture, a reader in cultural theory*,

ed. Neil Leach, (New York: Routledge, 1997,) 173. Also see Roland Barthes, "Semiology and the Urban," in, ibid., 166-171.

¹²⁴ It has to be clarified that although obviously I am well aware of such a process, here 'association' is not of interest. Associations are related to the system of the observing subject, whereas what is explored here is the signifying structure. In other words, I am not tackling with the attributions of the particular individuals to specific architectural objects which may have little to do with the object itself. Rather, collective attributions, attributions of the metropolis, are of interest here. Thus, it is the metropolis that puts infinite meanings to the metropolitan voids. In other words, it is the metropolis that metropolitan texts call for an active collaboration. On 'association' see Roland Barthes, S/Z, trans. Richard Miller, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974,) 8.

without any of these connotations being privileged, or their number finite.¹²⁵ Thus, void refers to a sort of muteness on the part of architecture, so to speak, that in turn encourages metropolis to have the last word(s).¹²⁶

Yet, beneficial as it is, our analogy is not exact. For obviously one may argue that in the case of architecture 'the last word' is always offered to the metropolis; that the positioning of material architectural product as a 'work' is problematic in the first place. The argument of this study is also parallel to this, with one—though important—addition. Our theoretical construction comprising non-design as well as design acknowledges that significance of the built environment is not a 'direct product of any institutionalized design practice but rather the result of general processes of culture,' of a 'complex system of intertextual relationships.' Thus, I obviously believe that 'the last word' belongs to the metropolis, to the metropolitan culture. Yet, this last word is not offered by the architecture. Rather it is taken, and somewhat violently, by the metropolis.

Yet, this is hardly ever acknowledged. Intelligence of the strategy of the void is that beyond accepting the inevitable, it instigates such condition. Rem Koolhaas, in his unshakable belief in efficiency, does not renounce metropolis over being deprived from the last word. Rather, he seeks for the potentials of that "loss." 'Delirious New York' is the materialization of such a search; a book on the architecture of metropolis that reaches beyond the "books of architecture." There, Rem Koolhaas probes into the dynamics of the actual metropolis, in order to engage architecture in those very dynamics. Benefiting such a reading

¹²⁵ Unlike the 'association,' 'connotation' is a correlation immanent in the text itself. Ibid.

¹²⁶ See Roland Barthes, Preface to *Barthes: Critical Essays*, trans. Richard Howard, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972,) xi.

and through a type of 'very complex love' for architecture, he tries to imagine the ways 'architecture could become more efficient' in order to prevent the reduction of the profession to the status of a 'plaything;' something 'tolerated as décor for the illusions of history and memory.'127 Hence, his admiration with the Manhattan architects such as Raymond Hood and Wallace Harrison for their direct relationship with their profession; "a pure alignment with collective forces that they could translate without any distancing tactics, with an apparent absence of second thoughts."128

This is the belated European acceptance of the position of architecture within the capitalist reorganization-as its object and not the subject. It does not, however, leads necessarily to the conception of architecture as a straightforward profession, or to a wholesale negation of architecture's intellectualization. Rem Koolhaas's "notorious" admiration for the "professional efficiency" is in fact an effort to save the reputation of architecture; an effort to imagine the ways that architecture not only creates the "sets" of everyday life, 'but also engages in the definition of its contents' dynamically.

Koolhaas's reading searches for the metropolitan manifestations of order; be them motivated by economic optimization. Is not metropolis, in the first place, the ultimate spatial mechanism, the "economic dynamo" that is organized to optimize the cycles of production-distribution-consumption? It is, at best, naïve today to consider constructing any theory on metropolis that is not "polluted" by the actual metropolis. Yet, architecture's relation with the metropolis has always

¹²⁷ See Rem Koolhaas, interview with Isabelle Menu and Frank Vermandel, *Euralille: The Making* of a New City Center Koolhaas, Nouvel, Portzamparc, Vasconti, Duthilleul, ed. Espace Croise, (Boston: Birkhauser, 1996,) 56, and Koolhaas, "Elegy for the Vacant Lot," op. cit., 937. ¹²⁸ Rem Koolhaas, "Last Apples," *S, M, L, XL*, op. cit., 665.

been unilateral; one that is between the saver and the one to be saved, between crystal clear diagrams and the pathetic mass, agglomeration. Refusing such an approach necessitates a different mind set, reading(s), strategies and terminology. Thus Koolhaas rejects the former architectural terminology that "implies one-way traffic only, from the genius to the hack, from Europe to America, from the source to the comprise." ¹²⁹ Koolhaas's goal is to enmesh architecture into metropolis; a genuinely avant-garde effort. Or rather, the goal is simply to acknowledge such position of architecture and then to instigate its potentials, as Koolhaas would have it. Such instigation aims to develop strategies where architecture operates as the agent of the new, shocking, unexpected, unpredictable, and improbable; by 'systematically exploiting all the available apparatus and all the fresh infrastructures of the age.'

3.9 Transition

The relationship between architectural object and its underlying theoretical construction depends on several codifications at different levels. Any theoretical construction requires a translation to be represented in architectural codes. Obviously this transition is highly subjective; perhaps to the degree that one begins to question the existence of that very relationship. In other words, there is no unique match between a theoretical construction and "its" architectural representation. Moreover, since architectural production is stimulated by a demand coming from outside, an architect has to process her/his theoretical background to utilize it in that specific design problem. Still, she/he may deploy only a part of this background. Also, any object formed within the space of

¹²⁹ Rem Koolhaas, "En^o/_abling Architecture," *Autonomy and Ideology: positioning an avant-garde in America*, ed. Robert E. Somol, (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997,) 296.

representation is always articulated through the process of its realization, both by the architect and the conditions and actors taking part.

Thus, one should not expect to find perfect matches between theoretical and practical works produced by the same architect.¹³⁰ Yet, in studying Rem Koolhaas's reading of metropolis in relation to OMA's proposal for Parc de la Villette I am on a relatively safe ground because Koolhaas himself explicitly relates both.¹³¹ This relationship is also strengthened by the analogy constructed between the skyscraper, through which Koolhaas articulates his reading, and the design strategy for the park.¹³² So, my study is not innovative in the sense that it explores some implicit links between two works. I only aim to show that the way architecture is related to the metropolis in these works corresponds to a shift in the historically constructed architecture-city relationship. Also the way two works are related to each other exemplifies a new approach.

¹³⁰ Rem Koolhaas agrees: "There is an enormous, deliberate, and—I think—healthy discrepancy between what I write and what I do." "From Bauhaus to Koolhaas," interview with Katrina Heron, *http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/4.07/koolhaas.html?pg=1&topic=* ¹³¹ "Upon completion of the book [Delirious New York] I decided not to be obsessed with it and

¹³¹ "Upon completion of the book [Delirious New York] I decided not to be obsessed with it and avoid, as everyone expected of me, spending all of my time trying to prove the justness of the themes underlying my projects. I was to learn rather quickly that one can only realize a part of one's ambitions and that each project was to respond to certain themes but never to all. The only exceptions were the unusual cases of la Villette or the Expo 89 which were to truly embody a definition for a new culture of congestion." Extracts from the interview with Rem Koolhaas, trans. Bert McClure, in "OMA, Office for Metropolitan Architecture," *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, 238, April 1985, 67. Also see Rem Koolhaas, "Imagining Nothingness," *OMA-Rem Koolhaas*, op. cit., 157.

^{157.} ¹³² "The program for the Parc de la Villette was a very important moment, because it allowed us to investigate the theme of congestion, for us the key ingredient of any metropolitan architecture or project. For the first time after our preoccupation with New York, we tried to imagine what congestion at the end of the 20th century in Europe could mean. The concept of this park was drawn from the American skyscraper, where a series of activities are superimposed in one single building. For the Parc de la Villette we took this model and spread it horizontally over the surface to make a park that was a catalog of 40 or 50 different activities arranged like floors, horizontally over the entire surface of the park." Rem Koolhaas, *Rem Koolhaas, Conversations with Students*, ed. Sanford Kwinter, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996,) 13-14. Lecture given at Rice School of Architecture, 21st January, 1991. See also "Elegy for the Vacant Lot," op. cit., 937.

3.10 The Park

In the attempt to absorb all its own contradictions, architectural "reasoning" applies the technique of shock to its very foundations. Individual architectural fragments push one against the other, each indifferent to jolts, while as an accumulation they demonstrate the uselessness of the inventive effort expended on their formal definition. The archeological mask of Piranesi's Campo Marzio fools no one: this is an experimental design and the city, therefore, remains an unknown. Nor is the act of designing capable of defining new constants of order. This colossal piece of *bricolage* conveys nothing but a self evident truth: irrational and rational are no longer to be mutually exclusive. Piranesi did not possess the means for translating the dynamic interrelationships of this contradiction into form. He had, therefore, to limit himself enunciating emphatically that the great new problem was that of the equilibrium of opposites, which in the city finds its appointed place: failure to resolve this problem would mean the destruction of the very concept of architecture.133

The metropolitan void proposed by OMA for Parc de la Villette provides a zone where instable metropolitan programs proliferate.¹³⁴ It does not engage in a vain effort to predetermine the significance of the environment. On the contrary, it provokes the processes of non-design by its indeterminacy. Thus, it questions the viability of design, as we know it, within the metropolitan condition. As

¹³³ Tafuri, Architecture and Utopia, op. cit., 15-16.

¹³⁴ OMA's project for Parc de la Villette is the entry for the competition held in 1982 to transform 55-hectare site, a former slaughterhouse area in the north-western Paris. Competition was intended to be one-stage, yet the jury announced nine first prize winners, who were asked to develop their proposals in a second phase. OMA's proposal was amongst the first prize winners. Parc de la Villette was built by Bernard Tschumi.

OMA's design team comprised Rem Koolhaas, Elia Zenghelis with Kees Christiaanse, Stefano de Martino, Ruurd Roorda, Ron Steiner, Jan Voorberg, Alex Wall, also Claire and Michel Corajoud (landscape consultants), Chiel van der Stelt, Hans Verlemann (model).

Program was "park for the 21st century" to include entertainment facilities (7,500 m²); cultural information center (300 m²); kiosks for small shows, games temporary exhibits (1,200 m²); discovery workshops (7,100 m²); discovery gardens (20,500 m²); green houses (10,000 m²); children's discovery spaces (11,200 m²); space for permanent exhibits (3,200 m²); theme gardens (30,500 m²); outdoor ice-skating ring (1,200 m²); playgrounds (60,000 m²); outdoor hard-surface sports facilities (10,000 m²); children's play areas (16,000 m²); bathing/water elements (10,250 m²); restaurants (5,000 m²); catering (3,300 m²); snack bars (2,000 m²); picnic areas (2,750 m²); reception zones (2,200 m²); day-care facilities (2,500 m²); urban services (500 m²); shops (300 m²); accessory rental (300 m²); market (6,000 m²); offices (500 m²); circulation (35,000 m²); maintenance (4,200 m²); fire, police, and technical services (1,000 m²); first aid (200 m²); lavatories (200 m²); parking (17,800 m²).

opposed to "design" OMA conceives the proposal as a "method that combines architectural specificity with programmatic instability."¹³⁵

Like the skyscraper, the basic premise of the proposal is the divorce between the appearance and the performance. Formal configuration of the park offers a "(relatively) stable experience," while granting efficient programmatic exploitation of the site. Dense and diverse program of the park precludes proposing a conventional "replica of nature" at the outset. Programmatic elements are accommodated in the parallel bands running across the site. These bands are analogous to the stories of a skyscraper. Thus, like the frame of a skyscraper, the layout provides the infrastructure capable of supporting different programmatic elements without over-determining them and their interrelation. Prophecy of the 1909 cartoon is thus fulfilled: granting the autonomy of the bands enables the whole to conform to metropolitan instability and to support diverse metropolitan programs.

Here the skyscraper section is applied on the site as the plan: exploiting metropolitan congestion, this time, horizontally. This, in turn, enables imposing minimum (built) architecture—the essential condition of the void. Due to different public characters of skyscraper and park, relation between programmatic bands differs from that of stories. Although the proximity of the elementary neutral cells (slabs) transforms their separate significances, their disconnectedness, resulting in a kind of autonomy, is guaranteed by the slabs of the skyscraper. The minimization of the built architecture in the park proposal,

¹³⁵ OMA, Presentation text, "Parc de la Villette," *S, M L, XL*, op. cit., 921.



Figure 3.10.1 Downtown Athletic Club. Starrett, van Vleck, Hunter. 1931. Section.



Figure 3.10.2 Parc de la Villette. OMA. 1982. Diagram showing the required area for the program and the site.



Figure 3.10.3 Parc de la Villette. OMA. 1982. Diagram of the layer of "the strips."

however, causes "pollution" of each band by its neighbors. Direction of the bands—east-west—is chosen in order to incorporate the existing buildings (Science Museum and Great Hall) and *Canal de l'Ourcq*. Yet, their orientation also provides maximum length of "borders" between programmatic elements.¹³⁶ The maximization of borderlines provokes processes of non-design by means of programmatic innovations: mutations, interferences, hybrids, events.

The pollution of the programmatic elements by each other is thus encouraged: they collide through the interfaces. As such, assembling, or rather editing, of the bands recalls the montage in the Eisensteinian sense: the collision—the conflict of opposing programmatic pieces. Koolhaas's background as a former screenwriter is occasionally linked to his architectural methods anyway. Unlike cinematic montage, here the pieces engage in a continuous collision. Moreover this process may alter due to the changes in the assigned functions of the bands.

'Initial' assignment of the functions to the bands are partly contextual partly arbitrary.¹³⁷ Since they are analogous to the typical plan, any claims of causalistic relation whatsoever between their form and the assigned functions are negated. They may support envisaged activities as well as unforeseeable ones. They are the pure signifiers. They abandon any claims of uniqueness, implying repetition and indeterminacy: "to be typical, they must be sufficiently undefined."¹³⁸ Arbitrariness of the assignment and openness to manipulations draws the focus of attention from "the end product" to the process of the

¹³⁶ Ibid., 923.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Koolhaas, "Typical Plan," op. cit., 342.

infrastructure. In fact, pictorial, childish character of the drawings that illustrate the life in the park with the envisaged activities as opposed to abstractness of the drawings of the infrastructure (layers) implies OMA's position concerning the attributions.

Upon the layer of bands a second layer is superimposed: "point grids, or confetti." In this layer the remaining area required for the program is spread over the bands with a frequency. These programmatic pieces are distributed to the site by means of point grids. Dimensions—frequency—of grids are relative to the available area of distribution (whether it will be distributed to whole site or a part of it), the area of the facility required, and the optimum number of points to be distributed. Thus, $\sqrt{(A-a)/x}$ is the formula to determine dimensions of each grid, where A, a, and x stand for the references respectively.

The superimposition of the layer of point elements further increases programmatic interface. Since the programmatic pieces are imposed on various bands, thus on various functions, they increase interaction by means of enhancing programmatic permutations and combinations: they acquire and influence the character of the "host zone." In other words, although they have an autonomous identity that 'gives a predictable provision of each facility at fixed intervals,' they also have a potential to be 'absorbed' and to 'affect their locality.'¹³⁹

¹³⁹ OMA, "Parc de la Villette," op. cit., 925.



Figure 3.10.4 Parc de la Villette. OMA. 1982. Illustration. Watercolor.



Figure 3.10.5 Parc de la Villette. OMA. 1982. Diagram of the layer of "point grids, or confetti."

Method of calculating the frequency of the grids, the formula, serves simply as a mechanism that determines the optimum locations of the points of insertion with regard to the given/formed constraints. Yet, such a method provokes the questions concerning the claim to objectivity, or to "physics envy" as Denise Scott Brown would have it. OMA's position, however, is not characterized by a search for a scientific authority. It is true that OMA searches for a rational method of tolerating and instigating the potentials of diverse metropolitan programs. Presentation of the project also follows a logical pattern comprising facts and the responses given to those facts. Abstractness of the drawings presenting the sequence of the layers also adds up. Moreover, the whole project is, in fact, a process of fragmentation and permutation. After the initial decisions concerning the method, formation of the first two layers (the main part) was transformed into a simple mathematical procedure. First the program was fragmented into constitutive activities and relatively small scale elements were separated. The rest formed the first set of activities—A₁. Then the park is fragmented into bands, forming the first set of pigeonholes—P₁. After the fragmentation, park is formed through a simple process of coupling of activities with pigeonholes: inserting A₁ into P₁ through permutation: P(43,43)=43!, where number of the bands is 43. The result could be manipulated at will due to contextual preferences. Then a similar process of permutation is applied to the relatively small scale activities (A₂) and the point grids (P₂).

Yet, the proposal aspires to efficiency, rather than objectivity. OMA does not evaluate the inputs to form an objective solution, a predetermination of reality. Rather, it devises a framework for a dynamic, perpetual pursuit for the greatest proximity of reality.¹⁴⁰ Mathematical rules and the systems are utilized to ensure structure's efficiency without necessarily negating subjectivity.

The third layer comprises the circulation routes. Upon the layer of "access and circulation" is superimposed the "final layer" consisted of the elements that are unique or too large to be located according to formulas or systems. Effective regularity and neutrality of the preceding layers forms a 'context' that increases the symbolic value of these elements.

¹⁴⁰ See Lucan, "The Architect of Modern Life," op. cit., 37.



Figure 3.10.6 Parc de la Villette. OMA. 1982. Diagram of the layer of "access and circulation."



Figure 3.10.7 Parc de la Villette. OMA. 1982. Diagram of "the final layer."



Figure 3.10.8 Parc de la Villette. OMA. 1982. Superimposition of layers.

As a 'whole,' the park operates as a framework within which diverse and unstable metropolitan programs proliferate. It is a vast 'infrastructure' in the purest sense of the term: It enables.

3.11 Architectural Scale

Over half a million square meters, site of the Parc de la Villette exceeds the traditionally set limits of "architectural scale." Such projects, which increased in number especially after 1980's, blur the institutionalized boundaries between the so-called architectural scale and urban scale. Obviously, the definition of the term, architectural scale, goes beyond the set of scales, generally from 1:1

to 1:500, used for the representation of the architectural work. Conventionally it is presupposed that, work of architecture and its relation with its surroundings can be generated and represented within this set.

Thus, beyond setting standards for the medium of representation, this set implies a field of operation for architecture. This, in turn, severs architecture's connection with the metropolis. I do not claim that there lies an absolute connection between architecture's field of operation and the exclusion of metropolis from the architectural discourse. Such an interpretation would inevitably be in accord with the conception of metropolis as architecture's practical object. Rather, I believe that confining architecture within the ever shrinking lots precludes us to benefit from some potentials of the metropolitan condition. At the bottom line, it is simply the difference between operating on the entirety of the Parc de la Villette and on one of its bands. Tolerating the metropolitan condition and instigating the program requires a framework that calls for exceeding the traditional limits of architectural intervention in favor of large scales—L, XL.

These terms have been first introduced to the architectural discourse with the publication of Small, Medium, Large, Extra Large—S, M, L, XL—in 1995. Abbreviations calling for the standardized mass production were used as the tools of criticism of architecture in every scale by Rem Koolhaas. Yet, XL, among others, was the one that architectural discussions focused on. Koolhaas has deployed the large scales to utilize metropolis as a generative force in architecture and vice versa. XL is the expansion of architecture beyond the L building to the metropolitan terrain, to the infrastructural networks, which in turn

locates and infiltrates in buildings. Consequences and potentials of metropolitan infiltration into L building, on the other hand, were theorized through the concept of "Bigness."

Although the manifesto itself—Bigness, or the problem of Large—was published in 1994, Bigness is, in fact, a latent concept in the work of Rem Koolhaas since 'Delirious New York.' The concept, obviously, was tested and appropriated through a significant part of OMA's *oeuvre*, and vice versa. Projects such as Parc de la Villette, The Hague City Hall, Zeebrugge Sea Terminal, *Grande Bibliothéque*, Lille *Grand Palais*—Congrexpo and Euralille master plan instigate the conditions of large scales, of Bigness.

Bigness was essentially raised against "deconstructivism" in order to emphasize 'the possibility of creating whole things' from the 1980's onwards.¹⁴¹ In metaphoric terms it 'emerged like a sudden iceberg from the mist of deconstructivist discourse.'¹⁴² Thus, it is a reaction to the "pessimism which prevents us from imagining things in their entirety." For Koolhaas does not consider fracturing of architecture as the legitimate way of dealing with the contemporary metropolitan complexity. He argues that complexity does not necessarily lead to fragmentation, at least in the way that deconstructivists conceive it.

In the project for Parc de la Villette, for instance, method essentially comprised fragmentation of both the park and the program, and then their coupling. Yet the intelligence of the proposal lied at the juxtaposition of formal fragments and

¹⁴¹ Koolhaas, interview with Isabelle Menu and Frank Vermandel, op. cit., 62.

¹⁴² Koolhaas, "Last Apples," op. cit., 667.

coexistence of programmatic pieces. Collision of the pieces within the charged container essentially requires a point of view that is able to imagine the system in its entirety. This implied a "unity through fragmentation;"¹⁴³ a reconstruction of the deconstructed.

Thus, Bigness is the alternative posited against the fracturing of architecture in order to tackle with the diverse, unstable metropolitan programs. It is acquired beyond certain scale.¹⁴⁴ Through its size alone, the building incorporates relatively large-scale infrastructures and diverse programs. Just like the American skyscraper, it provides relatively autonomous parts where complementary or contradictory metropolitan programs coexist. The bulk of building, piled up activities, offers both isolation and interaction. In other words, Bigness "regulates the intensities of programmatic coexistence."¹⁴⁵ Proximity and diversity of the activities provokes processes of non-design and programmatic innovation: the programmatic hybridizations, frictions, overlaps, superpositions. Thus, Koolhaas argues that Bigness is "the one architecture that engineers the unpredictable" and "sustains proliferation of events in a single container." ¹⁴⁶ Bigness redeploys the "apparatus of montage" that organizes relationships between "independent parts."

Bigness, in fact, embodies sort of a 'Building of Exacerbated Difference.' Here, of course, I am not calling back the traditional building-city analogy that survived a long way since the Renaissance: microcosm is analogous to the macrocosm. Rather, through Bigness architecture expands its field of

¹⁴³ OMA, "Parc de la Villette," op. cit., 925.

¹⁴⁴ Rem Koolhaas, "Bigness, or the problem of Large," *S, M, L, XL*, op. cit., 495.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 512. ¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 511.
intervention from the fragment to the entity, incorporating a programmatic diversity that guarantees the metropolitan condition. When the metropolis conceived as the set of processes through which programmatic elements interact, Bigness, in mathematical terms, is simply a bigger subset then usual, containing more programmatic elements and infrastructural outlets; or better, it simply 'embraces' more. Piling up the metropolitan activities, L building or XL terrain themselves become metropolitan; not necessarily analogous to metropolis, they are its subsets, parts of its system; programmatic densifications; infrastructural intensifications.

Through such accumulation, architectural object acquires a metropolitan character. This, exactly, is its potential. It enables to conceive an architecture "less exhaustive in its detail;" one that does not have to define everything.¹⁴⁷ Such an architecture would not have to "define, exclude, limit and separate from the rest" in a conventional way.¹⁴⁸ Metropolitan frameworks conceived through such architecture could charge the metropolitan terrain with potential.

 ¹⁴⁷ Koolhaas, interview with Isabelle Menu and Frank Vermandel, op. cit., 63.
¹⁴⁸ Koolhaas, "What Ever Happened to Urbanism," op. cit., 967.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

In Rem Koolhaas's 'Delirious New York' one of the images poses itself, at least so I have always thought, as 'the' image of metropolis. As the caption to Hugh Ferriss's (1889-1962) rendering Koolhaas writes: "Man inside the Ferrissian Void, the womb of Manhattanism." The metaphor is based on Ferriss's technique and medium of production which are his true intelligence: a "quasinocturnal" environment, "an artificial night that leaves all architectural incidents vague and ambiguous in a mist of charcoal particles that thickens and thins whenever necessary."¹⁴⁹ Koolhaas sees this "cosmic container," the murky "Ferrissian Void" as "a pitch black architectural womb that gives birth to the consecutive stages of the skyscraper in a sequence of sometimes overlapping pregnancies, and that promises to generate ever new ones." Thus he concludes that "Manhattanism is conceived in Ferriss's womb." I believe, through the metropolis *par excellence*, the rendering signifies all that is incident to metropolis.

¹⁴⁹ Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, op. cit., 116-117.



Figure 4.1 Hugh Ferriss. Charcoal rendering.

On the foreground of the rendering, a human figure immediately takes the attention. He obviously is yet an outsider who most probably inhabits the primitive hut. Bend towards his back; he faces the metropolis—the human creation *par excellence*. The curve of his body gives the feeling that he is taking one last deep breath before the plunge. Metropolis glows and lightens the tips of the uneven, undulating rural terrain. He is swelled with pride before the metropolis, his splendor and his misery; it offers the anonymity that ensures his individuality, yet it also is the place of institutionalization of power that subjectifies him. It promises, yet it challenges and threatens. Metropolis is the promiscuous womb that gives life to every aspect of human. Yet it is indifferent to its offsprings. Paradoxically it is 'the' place of absolute alienation.

I have absolutely no intention of attributing organic or naturalistic qualities to the metropolis. If metropolis has a paradigm, it is 'network' rather than 'organism.' And metropolis's relation with nature is consecutive rather than analogous: it replaces the nature. I rather try to emphasize the character of Ferriss's rendering, signifying a place that promises everything, that may be pregnant with anything. Yet its murky atmosphere prevents seeing in advance into future.

Such murky atmosphere also renders architecture vague and ambiguous. Metropolis, besides other things, is the accumulation of architectures. Yet it is indifferent to architectural nuances. Metropolis is both the architectural womb and the womb of architecture. It is the place of all architectures. In that sense, architecture and metropolis are not of different orders. Metropolis is just the deposit of all orders.

Architecture and metropolis are not necessarily distinct entities whose relationship is to be found/formed through some ingenious effort. They are obviously and inevitably contiguous and interacting. Metropolis conditions architecture; architecture, in its turn, engages in the production and the processes of metropolis. What usually considered as problematic is the disjunction of these two consecutive steps: architectural production and metropolitan processes. Previous discussions simply aimed to probe into the reasons of this disjunction and to question the possibilities of enabling a metropolitan architecture instead of expelling metropolis from the architectural discourse over that disjunction.

100

Spatial forms are never simple containers of social processes.¹⁵⁰ Inasmuch as they are formed and manipulated through such processes, they also affect the conduct of life. Thus the formation of built environment is never innocent, so to speak. It is ideological. In order to affect the conduct of life architecture has always aimed to project an internal economy onto metropolis: intellectual constructions, artistic desires, symbolic, economic interests formed within or translated into the architectural discourse. Yet metropolis manipulates the significance attributed to the built environment by architectural design. Metropolis is the place where all the cultural systems are manifested. Such multiplicity of codes resists the determination of environment's significance through specific codes of any institutionalized practice. Hence the disjunction.

Metropolitan non-design comprises the interrelation of these cultural systems; their spontaneous and ideological projection onto built environment, which determines its significance in a dynamic manner. Our theoretical construction offers a void where the knowledge of this "complex system of intertextual relationships" floats; where the multiplicity of codes is acknowledged. Only within such a void is it possible to conceive structures that tolerate, or rather, instigate processes of non-design. Since non-design transcends the limits of architecture, it cannot be predetermined. In other words, there cannot be a non-designer. Thus, such structures are obviously formed through design. Yet such a theoretical void enables conceiving zones where architecture's impulse to define and crystallize "ultimate," coherent solutions to given problems is limited; where architectural conventions are suspended.

¹⁵⁰ See especially David Harvey, Social Justice and the City, (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), and David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1995).

Paradigm of such structures, like the metropolis itself, is the network. They comprise interconnected, relatively autonomous parts. In the ideal case, these parts are the like the pure signifiers: they may potentially signify anything. Any program may be installed as long as it is relevant. Those programs that do not warrant are removed. The system continues to function even one of the parts temporarily fails. Thus it is able to tolerate the changing parts. For it is not a direct production of any institutionalized system but a process of many systems, it is freed from the "specter of contradiction." It is articulated by various social actors and through different cultural systems thus multiple codes. Like the metropolis itself, system aspires to a three dimensional functioning matrix that enables complex programs.

It is clear that this matrix that "offers" the infinite last words to metropolis is, by no means, a mere preference. For those last words are not offered by architecture but taken by the metropolis, such a system and the corresponding mindset become necessary for the survival of architecture. Rem Koolhaas's position is simply accepting such situation with sincerity, as OMA's proposal for Parc de la Villette clearly demonstrates.

The proposal is based on the belief in the absurdity of any effort to design a detailed park. Such a complex problematic renders conventional design methods inapplicable in the contemporary metropolitan condition:

It would be nonsense to design a detailed park. We have read the program as a suggestion, a provisional enumeration of desirable ingredients. It is not definitive: it is safe to predict that during the life of the park, the program will undergo constant change and adjustment. The more the park *works*, the more it will be in a perpetual state of revision. Its

"design" should therefore be the proposal of a method that combines architectural specificity with programmatic indeterminacy.¹⁵¹

Not surprisingly, the program began to be changed and adjusted at the course of park's construction. Thus, in such complex problems it is simply not reasonable to engage in a vein effort to design the ultimate, say, restaurant and the ultimate playground, then their ultimate relationship. For the character of the restaurant may change m times, and the playground will probably be replaced by n different consecutive activities in ten years.

The problem, then, is to construct a structure that is based on the programmatic instability; one that will tolerate modifications, replacements or substitutions:

The essence of the competition therefore becomes: how to orchestrate on a metropolitan field the most dynamic coexistence of activities x, y, and z and to generate through their mutual interference a chain reaction of new, unprecedented events; or; how to design a *social condenser*, based on horizontal congestion, the size of the park.¹⁵²

A metropolitan void comprising pure signifiers; a functioning matrix: OMA's Parc de la Villette proposal is truly a machine that charges the metropolitan terrain with potential through programmatic densifications and infrastructural intensifications. OMA is not making a fetish of indeterminacy or injecting extra uncertainty: "uncertainty is a factor which does not necessarily need to be underscored."

Koolhaas's effort is rather expended to imagine machines that instigate the spontaneous projection of life; 'delirious,' 'carnivalesque' manifestations of all

¹⁵¹ OMA, "Parc de la Villette," op. cit., 921. Italics added.

¹⁵² Ibid. Authors' italics.

the significations conventionally repressed by design. Non-design coincides with 'unconscious design.' It stems from the deposit of the repressed, the unconscious of architecture: metropolis. OMA's machine does nothing but sabotaging the "resistance" of the design—the force exerted on the unconscious to institute and to maintain "repression."

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