

## Timebleeds

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“The deeper an artist sinks into the time stream the more it becomes oblivion; because of this he must remain close to the temporal surfaces. Many would like to forget time altogether, because it conceals the “death principle.””

Robert Smithson

“Death is the modern issue.”

Jenny Holzer

“And in time, sitting there, the stalker finally revealed itself... The thing that had stalked me in the woods of Scratch Flat for all those years was nothing more than death. But it came to me very clearly that morning that it was not simply my own death that walked a few steps behind me; it was the full realization that my own cohort will die, that everyone whom I now know, whom I have known, and whom I will know is going to die; and that, in spite of this horrifying fact, the world, huge and momentous and indifferent, will carry on... History sends out its message in any form you choose: we are the future of the past, and the past of the future.” CT200

These ideas bear a repetition: The death principle is concealed by time and the stream of time breeds oblivion, so to avoid oblivion the artist remains close the temporal surfaces. The temporal surfaces are a veil, a curtain. “For life is at the start a chaos in which one is lost. The individual suspects this, but he is frightened at finding himself face to face with this terrible reality, and tries to cover it over with a curtain of fantasy where everything is clear.”<sup>1</sup> Karsten Harries, in “Building and the Terror of Time,” suggests that western architecture and aesthetic theory have conspired to protect the integrity of the temporal surface with a combination of several strategies--the quest for the ideal, the figural conception of the object, and the repetition of historic forms and practices.

Describing the first, Harries links beauty with the idea of transcendent perfection. Ideal beauty, which Plato describes as things “not only relatively beautiful, like other things, but...eternally and absolutely beautiful”<sup>2</sup> depends on timelessness to make it special. Much of western aesthetic theory, including architecture’s prescriptive canons, links ideal beauty to natural phenomena such as the proportions of the human body, or to the golden section, or to pure Platonic geometries. The search for things which are “eternally and absolutely beautiful” is explicitly linked to stilling, or negating, the passage of time.

Second, Harries indicts objecthood. He relies on Robert Morris’ argument about “the intimate inseparability of the experience of physical space and the ongoing immediate present. Real space is not experienced except in real time. The body is in motion, the eyes make endless movements at varying focal distances, fixing on innumerable static or moving images. Location and point of view are constantly shifting at the apex of time’s flow...Any time the object has become specific, dense, articulated, and self-contained, it has already succeeded in removing itself from space. It has only various visual aspects: from this side or that, close up or farther away.”<sup>3</sup> Thus objects deny the experience both of real space and real time<sup>4</sup> because they disallow interaction in favor of the omnipotent, omnipresent gaze.<sup>5</sup>

Looking particularly at primitive and vernacular builders, Harries finds in repetition another strategy to protect the temporal depths. “Primitive architecture invites such repetition by claiming to be itself a repetition.”<sup>6</sup> Further, the impulse toward architecture relies on the fact that we “comfort ourselves by reliving

"Among the Immortals, on the other hand, every act (and every thought) is the echo of others that preceded it in the past, with no visible beginning, or the faithful presage of others that in the future will repeat it to a vertiginous degree. There is nothing that is not as if lost in a maze of indefatigable mirrors. Nothing can happen only once, nothing is perilously precarious. The elegiacal, the serious, the ceremonial, do not hold for the Immortals. Homer and I separated at the gates of Tangier; I think we did not even say goodbye." T1115-116

"He had uttered a mad wish that he himself might remain young, and the portrait grow old; that his own beauty might be untarnished, and the face on the canvas might bear the burden of his passions and sins; that the painted image might be seared with the lines of suffering and thought, and that he might keep all the delicate bloom and loveliness of his then just conscious boyhood." DG90

"To become a spectator in one's own life is to escape the suffering of life." DG110

memories of protection. Buildings grant such comfort to the extent that they are experienced as repetitions of enclosures linked to memories of untroubled living."<sup>7</sup>

### **The Architectural Object as a Transference Object**

The use of repetition to assure one's place in an a-temporal cosmos, and the quest for ideal beauty and for definitive, dense objects, are three ways architects quell the terror of time. Freud would say all of these are attempts, in the end, to deny death. He specifically suggests that obsessive repetition, partialization (here transcribed as the identification of complete, dense objects distinct from a spatio-temporal continuum), and fetishization (here related both to notions of objecthood and ideal beauty) are operational activities which allow the neurotic to repress his fear of death.

If we assume, for the sake of argument, Freud's position that we are all neurotic,<sup>8</sup> it is not surprising to find architects subconsciously employing these strategies in an effort to keep our fear of death under control. The architectural object is seen as a transference object, the manifestation of our desire for immortality. "The transference object is then a natural fetishization for man's highest yearnings and strivings...It is a form of creative fetishism, the establishment of a locus from which our lives can draw powers they need and want."<sup>9</sup>

It is surprising, however, to find several architects using these strategies consciously, celebrating through their work the processes most of us keep well hidden. To bring a feared subconscious idea into consciousness just to deny the idea's power is, in Freudian terms, negation. "Negation is the primal act of repression; but it at the same time liberates the mind to think about the repressed under the general condition that it is denied and thus remains essentially repressed."<sup>10</sup>

Following is a discussion of the work of two architects who attempt to negate traditional ideas of time and space using mechanisms of negation/repression. In this way, the possibility of the slippage of time and space can be made conscious, since comfortable barriers, repetition, partialization, fetishization, are securely in place. And, while our (their) guard is down, these architects can (must) allow us (themselves) to slip beneath the temporal surfaces.

This, then, is a tale of twos: Two cities, Palmanova and Verona: two sets of two architects, Daniel Libeskind and Peter Eisenman by way of Richard Neutra and Rudolf Schindler; and two desires, life and death. The field of dualities argues for the re inscription of paradox, the viability of creative tension, the inevitability of uncertainty. However, the task is formidable, for the "irony of man's condition is that the deepest need is to be free of the anxiety of death and annihilation; but it is life itself which awakens it, and so we must shrink from being fully alive."<sup>11</sup>

### **Eros and Technology**

Freud observed that, to avoid acknowledging the terrifying complementarity of life and death, a complementarity that is logically self-contradictory, we use

"I only knew that I had seen perfection face to face, and that the world had become wonderful to my eyes--too wonderful perhaps, for in such mad worship there is peril, the peril of losing them, no less the peril of keeping them..."DG114

"Death (or its allusion) makes men precious and pathetic. They are moving because of their phantom condition; every act they execute may be their last; there is not a face that is not on the verge of dissolving like a face in a dream. Everything among the mortals has the value of the irretrievable and the perilous." T1115

"But the English structures were built for time. Hard work, tedious fitting jobs, long delays because of the weather did not discourage these enduring craftsmen. They had a singular idea, and that was permanence. They had the wood, they had the granite for foundations, and they were coming to stay-- or so they thought-- and so they built to last. But although the houses were built for all time, they were as mortal as their inhabitants. There is only one structure left from the seventeenth century, and of the seven houses built in the eighteenth century, only two are left standing. In most cases, these older structures were undone by fire." CT110-111

the mechanism of repression. "We protect our selves and our ideal image of ourselves by repression and similar defenses, which are essentially techniques by which we avoid becoming conscious of unpleasant or dangerous truths."<sup>12</sup> The repression of this paradox occurs in architecture as in other culture activities for "culture is in its most intimate intent a heroic denial of creatureliness."<sup>13</sup> Creatureliness, in Freudian terms, refers to anality, compromising bodily functions, fundamental physical expendability, death.<sup>14</sup> We don't have to look far to find evidence of the repression of creatureliness in architecture.

Proponents of the Modern Movement spoke ardently of cleanliness, sanitation, health, origin(ality).<sup>15</sup> Often the moral fervor of this argument was couched in terms of the coming of a new age of industrialization, and the potentials of technology to wipe out the sickness and death of 19th century cities. (Crowded, dirty cities inhabited by physically overtaxed workers were of course a product of the technology of industrialization, a connection apparently overlooked/repressed by some proponents of Machine Age architecture.) The testing of the proposal that technology can keep creatureliness (death) at bay begins with Mary Shelly's *Dr. Frankenstein*, written in 1818.

What modernist manifestos often omit is the influence of the massive destruction caused by World Wars One and Two, and the pervasiveness of death in Europe during the early part of the century. Letters written between Rudolf Schindler, who weathered the First World War in America, and Richard Neutra who served in the Austrian Army, illustrate the beginning of a subtle philosophical schism. The tone, energy and content of these excerpts demonstrates the sharp contrast between Neutra's anxiety and helplessness in Vienna and Schindler's exuberance in Chicago. The two are useful as a comparison because their relationships, their work, their lives contain a number of parallels along with significant conflicts.

Neutra to Schindler, Vienna, November 17, 1919: "I have just received your letter of August 23. You can hardly imagine how badly timed your idea of returning here seems to me. To say nothing of the material ruin here, the psychological collapse is so total that it affects even the healthiest person like a contagious disease. Your morale is probably good so you are naturally as free from fears of becoming ill as any healthy man who scarcely thinks of the possibility...I am not so much broken as deeply uprooted in my whole being. Everything in me cries for impregnation while I am surrounded by the dreariest impotence."<sup>16</sup>

Schindler to Neutra, Chicago, April 23, 1920: "The "Guiding Principles for a Ministry of Art" (published in Vienna, 1919)--is it possible that Loos wrote this? Is that all the Vienna "artists" of the new day have to offer--just a system of pointless details? How can you mint an ideology for the artist out of the bailiff's vocabulary--permit, must, should, prohibit--endlessly!" And later, "Does he (Schonberg) really believe that he can draw a free sound from any breast by means of a departmental head, national indifference, exploitation of property and inheritances, social ladders and similar old-fashioned nonsense? The "Guiding Principles" are dead but fashionable."<sup>17</sup>

"I can sympathize with everything except suffering...as the nineteenth century has gone bankrupt through an over expenditure of sympathy, I would suggest we should appeal to Science to put us straight. The advantage of the emotions is that they lead us astray and the advantage of Science is that it's not emotional. DG39-40

Both men ultimately designed houses in Los Angeles for Dr. Phillip Lovell, a writer who was a proponent of the Health Movement in the 1920's and 1930's. Schindler, while designing Lovell's beach house (1925-26), wrote a series of articles entitled "The Care of the Body" for Lovell's column in the Sunday Magazine Section of the Los Angeles Times.<sup>18</sup> These articles advocated free movement of air, functional flexibility, and lack of ornamentation, all of which related to Schindler's radical social agenda. Neutra's Lovell Health House (1929) shares more formal similarities than differences, but a different political agenda. His interests were industrial standardization and mass-production.

Whether attributable to social agendas, technological innovations, or anxiety about death, the modernist positions Schindler's and Neutra's correspondence and buildings embody has clearly undergone re-evaluation during the last 25 years. Particularly in question has been the role of modern urbanism. As Eisenman states, "For the architects of the early twentieth century, the appropriateness of the act of intervening clinically in the city's historical and natural evolution was beyond question. Supported by enormous moral impetus of social and technological necessity (which had replaced the model of natural evolution), they attempted from the stronghold of their "castle of purity" to storm the bastion of evils identified with the nineteenth-century city...The perceived failure of modern architecture to realize this utopia-either to supersede the nineteenth-century city or to mitigate its destruction after the bombings of the Second World War--became the primary condition confronting the architects of a generation which matured in the early 1960's."<sup>19</sup> Eisenman, in questioning the appropriateness of the clinical intervention (sterile, technological, scientific), sets his own program, one which eschews the distant, idealized gaze from the castle of purity, preferring instead to traverse the grounds of destruction.

"And, yet, who that knew anything about Life, would surrender the chance of remaining always young, however fantastic that chance might be, or with what fateful consequences it might be fraught?"  
DG106

Throughout this century, at an increasingly global scale made possible by mass communications and weaponry, we have wrestled with the problem of death.<sup>20</sup> In particular, the potential threat of nuclear warfare since 1945 makes the fear of death remarkably present, the anxiety it provokes remarkably intense. "This despair (man) avoids by building defenses; and these defenses allow him to feel a basic sense of self worth, of meaningfulness, of power. They allow him to feel that he controls his life and death."<sup>21</sup> Technology, which is intended to prolong life and ease the anxiety of death,<sup>22</sup> in fact throws the precarious nature of our creatureliness into sharper focus, leading to profound despair.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Symptom becomes a Strategy: The Key is No Key**

Obsessive repetition, fetishization, and partialization are symptoms of the neurotic's desire to keep the fear of death from overwhelming him. But they also represent an attempt to embrace life. "We can see that the symptom is an attempt to live, an attempt to unblock action and keep the world safe. The fear of life and death is encapsulated in the symptom...We might say that the symptom itself represents the locus of the performance of heroism...We immediately recognize this as the same creative dynamic that the person uses in transference, when he fuses all the terror and majesty of creation in the transference object."<sup>24</sup> In the work of Eisenman and Libeskind, the symptom becomes a strategy, and obsessive repetition, fetishization, and partialization act to dislodge

"To get back one's youth one has merely to repeat one's follies."  
DG41

architecture from its repressive role in denying death.

Libeskind uses machines, symbols of technology, to invert the repressions machines repress. This idea of inversion, using the mental energy inherent in the structure of the situation to release the repression to itself is almost topological. John Lilly describes such a situation within a computer game:

"The stone walls of New England are veritable New World cathedrals, built over time, to stand against time, and constructed with the care and the grace--one might even say love--that would go into some spiritual monuments. It is not surprising, given the nature of these pragmatic yeomen, that these monuments served to mark property lines and to keep in sheep and cows." CT113

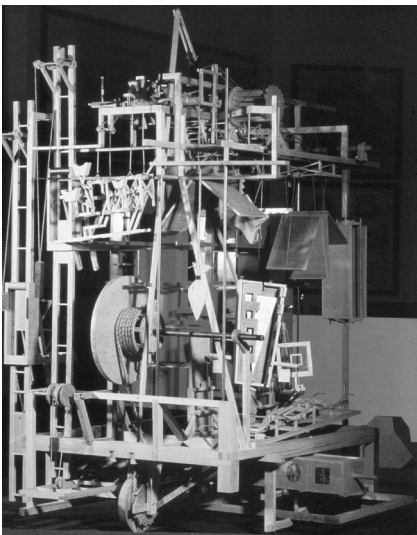
"In the multidimensional cognitional and visual space the rooms were now manipulated without the necessity of the key in the lock. Using the transitional concept that the lock is a hole in the door through which one can exert an effort for a topological transformation, one can turn the room into another topological form other than a closed box. The room was in effect turned inside out through the hole...leaving the contents outside and the room now a collapsed balloon. Most of the rooms which before had appeared as strong rooms with big, powerful walls, doors, and locks now ended up as empty balloons. These operations were all filed...under the title, "the key is no key."<sup>25</sup>

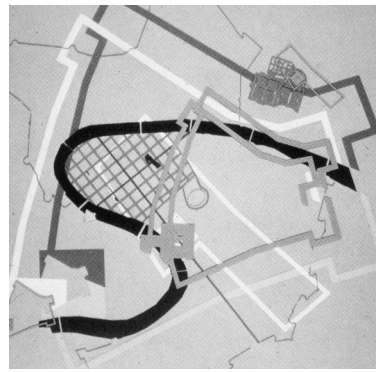
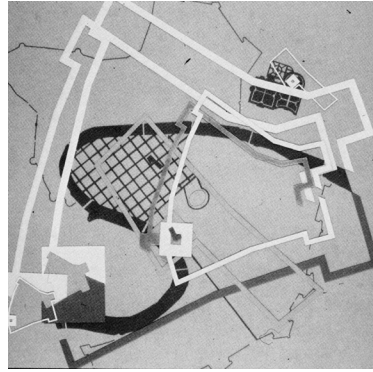
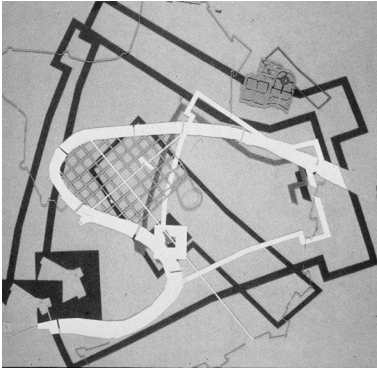
Using technology (machines) as fetish objects, Libeskind attempts to invert the room of our repressions, our fear of life and death, our fixation with permanence at the expense of experience, of control at the expense of change, through the keyhole of our own neuroses. He describes the circularity of his strategy, "When Time itself is rendered meaningless by reversing its irreversible presence, then the practice of Architecture becomes the false pleading the case of reconciliation."<sup>26</sup>

### **Control and Registration**

The purpose of repressive symptoms is to gain control over fear and uncertainty. Just as a settler marks out territory, building fences to keep wild animals out and domestic animals in, to add a measure of certainty to his future, to control his fate, modern man marks out intellectual or artistic territory. We live in "a mythic hero-system in which people serve in order to earn a feeling of primary value, of cosmic specialness, of ultimate usefulness of creation, of unshakable meaning. They earn this feeling by carving out a place in nature, by building an edifice that reflects human value; a temple, a cathedral, a totem pole, a skyscraper, a family that spans three generations. The hope and the belief is that the things man creates in society are of lasting worth and meaning, that they outlive or outshine death and decay, that man and his products count."<sup>27</sup>

The relationship between value, property, counting and control is explicit. Control comes from the Latin word *contrarotatus*, which means a register, as in cash register, register of deeds. *Contrarotatus* itself is made of the prefix *contra*, meaning against, and *rotatus*, meaning rotation. Control is against rotation. A mechanism to stop rotation, of days, months, years, would indeed be valuable to a person who fears the end of his own time.





"Tonupasqua in particular had a way of stating this that I used to find far more meaningful than her verbal expressions. "We have been here," she would say, and then she would drop her words and roll her right hand over and over in a circular pattern, extending her arm outward as she did so. The gesture was time. It said that there is no time; that time goes backward on occasion, forward on others; that it stalls out; that it skips around in a circle to catch you from behind; it is not now, or then, or to come; it simply is." CT38

"The explanation is obvious: The Garden of Forking Paths is an incomplete, but not false, image of the universe as Ts'ui Pen conceived it. In contrast to Newton and Schopenhauer, your ancestor did not believe in a uniform, absolute time. He believed in an infinite series of times, in a growing, dizzying net of divergent, convergent and parallel times. This network of times which approached one another, forked, broke off, or were unaware of one another for centuries, embraces all possibilities of time..." GFP28

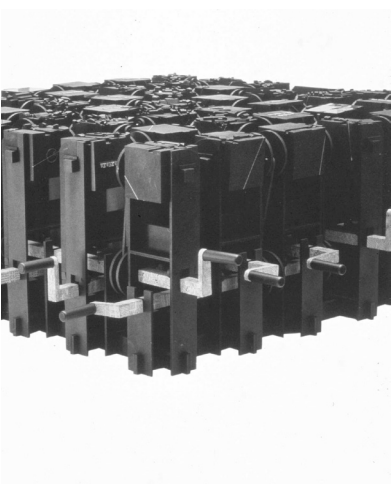
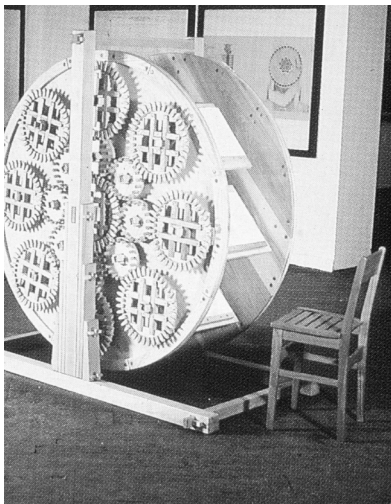
Register is a word with special meaning in the context of this discussion. In the Romeo and Juliet project, Eisenman describes the process of registering three glasses inscribed with information about the city of Verona. (There are three sites, Juliet's house, the church where the couple was married, Juliet's tomb; three geographic features, the cardo and decumanus, the grid, the Adige River; and three self-similar scale changes per glass.) Each of the three superpositions of these glasses registers a different active presence, relating to the sequence of the Romeo and Juliet narrative as told by Shakespeare. The active presence (the glass on top) brings into focus a particular time in the story. The interesting aspect of this process, however, is that the glasses can be shifted in any order, so that any active presence can occur at any time. No time is privileged. Thus, Eisenman's process of registration does stop rotation, but only temporarily, and in an undetermined sequence.

Libeskind seeks to unsettle linearity too. To use the Reading Machine, the reader rotates a huge wheel, cranking a handle to turn a system of gears. As the machine rotates, one text drops into view over the top, another falls away from below. Libeskind says "I placed the books in the wheel so that comparisons could be easily made. And in being easily made they could also reveal the tautological nature of the architectural text at its end...which means that it says the same thing at the end as it said in the beginning because the beginning was its end already. In short, a chamber of revolutions."<sup>28</sup> For Libeskind, the Reading Machine denies linearity, as do the three machines which are conceived as a temporal unity, expressed historically for emphasis only. "The three machines propose a fundamental recollection of the historical vicissitude, in particular of western architecture. They constitute a single piece of equipment and are mutually interdependent. Each is a starting point for the other."<sup>29</sup>

### **Fetishization**

For both Libeskind and Eisenman, the celebration of the impossibility of objecthood is embedded in highly articulated, fetishized objects. The creative energy that will never find outlet in the making of building embodying these ideas is instead poured into the production of objects denying their own futures. Libeskind: "I think the objects in architecture are only residues of something which is truly important: the participatory experience (the emblem of reality which goes into their making). You could say that everything we have

“Romance lives by repetition, and repetition converts an appetite into an art. Besides, each time that one loves is the only time one has ever loved. Difference of object does not alter singleness of passion. It merely intensifies it. We can have in life but one great experience at best, and the secret of life is to reproduce that experience as often as possible.” DG197



“The native people, as Nompenekit made clear to me, did not think of themselves as separate from the bears or trees of the forests. That was not the view of the English. The American land--sixteenth and early seventeenth century propaganda literature notwithstanding--was to them a wasteland to be subdued and Christianized.” CT113-114

is that kind of residue. It is the experience that I would like to retrieve, not the object.”<sup>30</sup> While Eisenman’s inscriptions (complex, articulated, beautifully crafted drawings and models) are fetishized objects, the world they portray is not. Quite the contrary, it is a world about which Gertrude Stein’s famous statement “there is no there there” could have been made, a world of recombinant three-dimensional networks and fissures.

Libeskind’s description of the experience of making the machines indicates an intensity which lapses into the realm of the ritualistic (or the neurotic). To make the Reading Machine he and his assistants arose at dawn and worked in silence without electricity to make a complex set of gears, wheels, and books, hand printed and bound on handmade paper. To make the Writing Machine, patterned after industrial processes, Libeskind and his assistants worked from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., without thinking, relying on technique and small talk.

### Partialization

Whereas Eisenman, in Nietzsche’s words “sets life cutting into life” intellectually, Libeskind does it phenomenally. He describes in careful detail the machine (in three parts) whose purpose is to explore the end condition through its dissection of politics, kinesthetics, materiality. The play of participants’ experiences of the machines against one another destabilizes primacy. He describes the Writing Machine (embodying concepts of 20th century industrial production) as a quadripartite computer to “mirror the realm of decisions in a double of itself.”<sup>31</sup> The mechanism for this endless doubling requires the user to “rotate this handle, but to move that far diagonal cube at a different rate of rotation.”<sup>32</sup> The circuitry of this movement suggests both the mental and physical framework of the machines and of Libeskind’s explanation. It brings to mind Sol Le Witt’s expressed desire to make things which are conceptually logical and perceptually illogical.<sup>33</sup>

In Libeskind’s descriptions of the machines, number becomes very important. One machine splits into three. The Reading Machine splits into eight books revolving on a wheel made of 92 wedges and many gears. The Writing Machine splits into forty nine cubes, each containing four surfaces. Onto each of these surfaces he pins portions of the books, translated into 49 languages. “The books were cut up slowly, and very particularly because the most poignant part of architecture is to use it all up.”<sup>34</sup> By splitting, or partializing, the writing process he hopes to “engage those reading cycles and those memory wheels into a kind of securing or stocktaking which would yield unexpected results.”<sup>35</sup>

Eisenman’s partialization is of a different sort. He splits structural relationships (topographic, architectonic) against themselves. One battlement in Verona becomes three, and of the three it is no longer possible to determine which is “real” because scale and position become relative. Partialization becomes discontinuity, “that aspect of scaling which disrupts and thus criticizes the status of presence and recursivity,”<sup>36</sup> which serves both to re-petition and to partialize.

"Anything becomes a pleasure if one does it too often." DG213

"Almost instantly I understood: 'the garden of forking paths' was the chaotic novel; the phrase 'the various futures (not to all)' suggested to me the forking in time, not in space. A broad rereading of the work confirmed the theory. In all fictional works, each time a man is confronted with several alternatives, he chooses one and eliminates the others; in the fiction of Ts'ui Pen, he chooses--simultaneously--all of them. He creates, in this way, diverse futures, diverse times which themselves also proliferate and fork. Here then, is the explanation of the novel's contradictions." GFP26

"The way of paradoxes is the way of truth. To test Reality we must see it on a tight-rope. When the Verities become acrobats we can judge them." DG39

"Ts'ui Pen must have said once: I am withdrawing to write a book. And another time; I am withdrawing to construct a labyrinth. Everyone imagined two works; to no one did it occur that the book and the maze were one and the same thing." GFP25

## Repetition

We understand the word repetition to mean "to repeat" or "to say again." The mindlessness of industrial production, captured in Godfrey Regio's "Koy-anisqatsi," comes to mind, as do images of Levittown, and Laurie Anderson's description of Los Angeles, "the city that repeats itself endlessly, hoping that something will stick in its mind." However, the word bears a second look.

Re-petition is quite different from re-peat. Petition comes from the Latin *petere*, to ask, and means "a solemn, earnest request." Repetition, then, might mean "to ask again." To use constraints--movement, sound, or architectonic form--as a method of carefully questioning, allowing one to "ask again," suggest a subtle method of lifting repression, or re-invigorating paradox.

Repetition characterizes the process of ritual found in many primitive cultures, and in the work of artists such as Philip Glass, Laura Dean, and Jonathan Borofsky. Anyone who has listened to a Philip Glass concert or watched Laura Dean's spinning dances will attest to their power to provoke, to bore, to hypnotize, to irritate, to enrapture. As with Sufi dances, the process of seemingly endless repetition attempts to disengage the intellect, to open psychic space. (The irritation some concert-goers feel may be precisely an unwillingness to lose control.) Similarly, Borofsky's, incessant numbering fetishizes counting beyond reason, allowing it to become obsessive and irrational. Thus, borrowing a strategy used by non-western cultures, these artists attempt to subvert linearity and rationality from within.

For Eisenman, self-similarity and recursivity describe two strategies of repetition which, in their fetishistic intensity thwart logical assumptions. Recursivity is "the elaboration of self-same forms, for example a square, divided into four squares, each divided into four squares....Self similarity refers to analogic repetition and not to geometric mimesis usually found in an aesthetic object."<sup>37</sup> These strategies serve to transform physical properties. "Rather than an aesthetic object the object becomes a text, a structure of its own being."<sup>38</sup> Eisenman uses these and further repetitive partializations to make a text, to open the possibility of a reading which yields unexpected results.

## Paradox

Eisenman, writing about the Romeo and Juliet project, recounts one of Zeno's three famous paradoxes, the flying arrow paradox. This paradox states that an object at rest occupies a space equal to its dimensions. Since a flying arrow occupies, at any moment, a space equal to its dimensions, it must be at rest. Eisenman uses this example to undermine the value of origin, which assumes a linear time construct privileging one particular time. He says, "What distinguishes the moving arrow from the still one is that it contains where it has been and where it is going, i.e. it has a memory and an immanence that are not present to the observer of the photograph; they are essential absences. Theories of "the site" as present origin presume that the moving arrow and the still arrow are the same; they ignore the subtle but profound conditions of the presence of these absences."<sup>39</sup>

His use of paradox to suggest a restructuring of this basic concept, linearity,



is not accidental. The title of the paper, "Moving Arrows, Eros, and Other Errors," suggests paradox as an operational strategy. Eros, the life instinct, is, with its opposite Thanatos, the death instinct, a crucial paradox suggested by Freud. Life (variously described as love or sexuality) and death are the unending conflict in the human condition. "Whereas previously the program embodied the anthropocentric desire for an ideal human perfection, *Romeo and Juliet* is a program of eros, an architecture which replaces the teleology of the ideal with the openness of the text."<sup>40</sup> In contrast to the ideal, the "openness of the text" allows an imperfect conditional reading. It allows errors. It approximates life. Thus, in two ways Eisenman attempts to re-energize a condition of paradox. First, using the moving arrow paradox he attempts to unstick time by suggesting the importance of absences (memory and immanence). Because, in human terms, memory implies birth; immanence, death, he activates this binary condition. Second, invoking Eros he substitutes the openness of the text for the ideal. Other attempts in this work to create a condition of resonance through paradox include the use of *Romeo and Juliet*, themselves binary opposites, and the elaboration of the program through division, union, and the lovers' dialectical relationship, all explored both programmatically and formally.

In explaining his Reading, Writing, and Memory Machines, Libeskind also employs an architecture of paradox to negotiate between life and death. His very mode of address is paradoxical; at once oblique and direct. He suggests that architecture has entered its end time, and that "What remains for those who no longer find greatness in Architecture is either to deny it or create it."<sup>41</sup> His argument proceeds in pairs: "Fulfillment and destruction in the modern world are intertwined, and it is in that moment of suddenness, prepared by the totality of the situation, that architecture is revealed and destroyed at the same time."<sup>42</sup>

"I was struggling again with the paradox of time, the fact that some known event, such as a burial or the construction of a stone wall, occurred in this very place at some point in the past, but that because of the nature of time as we measure it, the event is all but unknowable." CT 198

The word paradox is derived from the Greek. The prefix "para" means side-by-side, the suffix "dox" comes from doxia, opinion. In modern usage the word means "a statement which is self-contradictory, and, hence, false." This understanding can be traced back to Aristotle, who said, "There is a principle in things, about which we cannot be deceived but must always, on the contrary, recognize the truth--viz., that the same thing cannot at one and the same time be and not be, or admit any other similar pair of opposites."<sup>43</sup>

### **Paradox and Parallel: Pentimento**

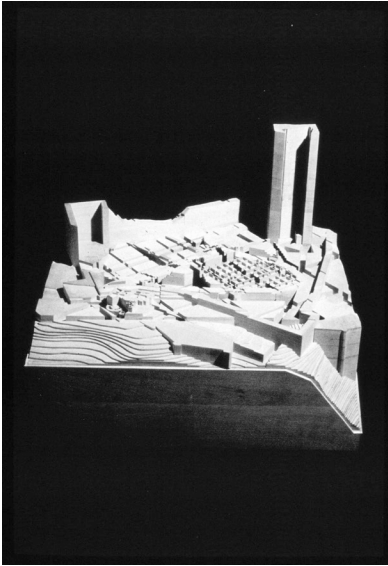
"Old paint on canvas, as it ages, sometimes becomes transparent. When that happens it is possible, in some pictures, to see the original lines: a tree will show through a woman's dress, a child makes way for a dog, a large boat is no longer on an open sea. That is called pentimento because the painter "repented," changed his mind. Perhaps it would be as well to say that the old conception, replaced by a later choice, is a way of seeing and then seeing again."<sup>44</sup>

"I think of times as linear, flowing from past, to present, to future like a river, whereas Nompenekit thinks of it as a lake or pool in which all events are contained." CT119

The assumption that, given two contradictory ideas, one must be false, is not inherent in the etymology of this word. But contradiction makes the modern man uneasy. "For life is at the start a chaos in which one is lost. The individual

suspects this, but he is frightened at finding himself face to face with this terrible reality, and tries to cover it over with a curtain of fantasy where everything is clear.”<sup>45</sup> For Eisenman, errors are a way to lift the veil of fantasy.

The difference between paradox and parallel is their suffixes. *Doxa* means opinion. *Alloios*, shortened to *llei*<sup>46</sup>, means one another. Paradox means side-by-side opinions. Parallel means side-by-side one another. The difference, then, is opinion. Eisenman’s use of registration emphasizes this difference. By calling the importance of origin a matter of opinion, he allows the paradoxical to become the parallel. A number of parallel conditions occur in the Romeo and Juliet project. “Text refers inward to its own structure. Text has the capacity for an infinite combination of previous texts into new texts: the three-dimensional experience yields open-ended readings. This introduces the possibility of error, of a text not leading to truth or a valued conclusion, but rather to a sequential tissue of misreading—errors which produce the condition for each new level of reading. Here narrative is no longer a teleology from an origin to a final goal of truth—but rather is an infinite series of infinite substitutions.”<sup>47</sup>



To achieve this reading he uses a labyrinth, located at the site of the castle of Juliet. Architectonic elements (the grid, the city, the cemetery) are superposed and become analogous to each other. Subsequent scalings complicate these relationships further, becoming, in themselves labyrinthine. (The labyrinth, embodying both circularity and linearity as a spiral progression, itself emblemizes a problematic time construct.) We also see layers of history piling up, colliding, evaporating, coagulating, making an archaeological field which represents in physical form the “infinite series of infinite substitutions” Eisenman promotes.

“It comes as no surprise to me that in the bog, in the peace of hot summer afternoons, when the highway beyond the eastern ridge is silent and the human residents of Scratch Flat have all retreated to air-conditioned rooms, or on still autumn mornings, in the faded swirls of mist, the centuries roll back and I can sense another time. After all, bogs are traditionally associated with such time warps. They are the haunts of pixies, ghosts, and dank sucking grounds which swallow horses, carriages, lost children, and anything else that wanders into their murky environs.” CT30-31

Libeskind addresses parallelism using the idea of multiplicity, in which writer Italo Calvino suggests “the least thing is seen as the center of a network of relationships that the writer cannot restrain himself from following, multiplying the details so that his descriptions and digressions become infinite. Whatever the starting point, the matter in hand spreads out and out, encompassing ever vaster horizons, and if it were permitted to go on further and further in every direction, it would end by embracing the entire universe.”<sup>48</sup> Libeskind says “I tried to make (the machine) singularly organized, revealing itself in different points of view, but really it is continuous.”<sup>49</sup> He conceived of the machine in three movements, which he specifically distinguishes from linear constructs such as history.

One of the three, the Writing Machine, might be understood as an embodiment of the whole. His description begins with an analogy to a wheel barrow. He says that many 20th century architects, Le Corbusier, Mies, Behrens, have been photographed beside wheel barrows. So, just as he made a wheel referring to medieval reading, and a puppet theater for renaissance remembering, he made a barrow, a wheel barrow, as an industrial machine. He says, “I’ve got to get next to a wheel barrow and move it...The problem with the wheel barrow is that the stuff is so suspended in it that it is hard to propel in one direction...I can show how the wheel and the barrow are engaged in a slightly more sophisticated whole: the written part both play in those pieces. Writing the book itself, by moving the barrow.”<sup>50</sup>

"More and more I find myself thinking there about time, how it drifts in from the future, how it brushes past us briefly in the present, and then drifts off again to become the past, and how none of these stages, neither past, present or future are really knowable. Presented with this dilemma, I have come in recent years to accept the primitive concept of ceremonial time, in which past, present, and future can all be perceived in a single moment, generally during some dance or sacred ritual...The Pawtucket Indians would summon it up regularly during certain periods of the year, and I have found that it is a convenient method of understanding the changes that have taken place on this particular patch of earth over the last fifteen thousand years." CT1-2

The metaphor of the wheel barrow allows several ideas to arise in parallel. A barrow is, among other things, a burial mound of prehistoric inhabitants of Great Britain. Does a wheel barrow, then, bury a wheel, with its tautological circularity, or with its centric time construct, or with its privileging of the medieval craft of making? Or does it suggest the idea of suspension, the impossibility of forward movement, linearity? The convolutions of the reading stall logical conclusions, the resulting quagmire breeds parallel outcomes.

This is perhaps his desired result, to make a machine that through its own logical structure, refutes logic and therefore linearity. "It's primitive, but Pascal made his little calculator, and Babbage made his little computer, and after all, the regular computers we have today are only based on two phases. They are two-phased computers, one and two, right? They are so-called binary, black and white, which is what makes them so schizophrenic, because you always say either yes or no to everything, never maybe. I tried to make a quadripartite computer operation, which means to mirror the realm of decisions in a double of itself."<sup>51</sup>

Libeskind's parallel machines and Eisenman's parallel scalings both allow other times to bleed through our own. As they surface, time becomes oblivion. "This is the terror: to have emerged from nothing, to have a name, consciousness of self, deep inner feeling, an excruciating inner yearning for life and self-expression--and with all this yet to die."<sup>52</sup> To make an architecture that celebrates the participatory experience, that denies historical constructs, the ideal, and objecthood, is to make an architecture that dies.

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*Illustrations of the Romeo and Juliet Project are taken from Peter Eisenman, "Moving Arrows, Eros, and Other Errors," in Precis 6: The Culture of Fragments, (New York: Rizzoli, 1987). Illustrations of The Reading, Writing, and Memory Machines are taken from Daniel Libeskind, "Architecture Intermundium," Threshold, Marco Diani and Catherine Ingraham, Ed., (New York: Rizzoli, 1988).*

*Text in sidebar is taken from the following sources, as noted in adjacent abbreviation and page number: Jorge Luis Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths" and "The Immortal," Labyrinths, Selected Stories & Other Writings, (New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1962)-- GFP and TI respectively; Lillian Hellman, Pentimento, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973)-- P; Lawrence Leshan & Henry Margenau, Einstein's Space and Van Gogh's Sky, (New York: Collier Books, 1982)-- ESVGS; John Hanson Mitchell, Ceremonial Time. Fifteen Thousand Years on One Square Mile, (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, 1984)-- CT; Oscar Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974)-- DG.*

## Endnotes

- 1 Ernest Becker, *Denial of Death*, (New York: The Free Press, 1973), pg. 47. Quotation by Jose Ortega Y Gasset.
- 2 Karsten Harries, "Building and the Terror of Time," *Perspecta 19*, MIT Press (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), pg. 63. Quotation by Plato, Philebus, 51.
- 3 Ibid., pg. 67. Quotation by Robert Morris in "The Present Tense of Space," *Art in America*, (January/February 1978), pgs. 70, 73.
- 4 Physicist Stephen Hawking describes space-time as "the four-dimensional space whose points are events." He goes on to catalogue our changing conception of the relation of space and time through history ending with the contemporary understanding in which "Space and time are now dynamic quantities: when a body moves, or a force acts, it affects the curvature of space and time--and in turn the structure of space-time affects the way in which bodies move and forces act. Space and time not only affect but also are affected by everything that happens in the universe." See Chapter Two of *A Brief History of Time*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1988). As a counterpoint to this argument, painter David Hockney says, "In one-point perspective, if you think about it, if there's a vanishing point you the viewer are not moving. Time has stopped and therefore space is fixed." See David Hockney, "Perspective," Andreas C. Papadakis, Editor, *Art & Design*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), pg. 85.
- 5 See Kenneth Frampton, "Intimations of Tactility: Excerpts from a Fragmentary Polemic," in *Architecture and Body*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1988) for a critique of the primacy of the visual and a foray into the possibilities of other sensual experiences in architecture.
- 6 Harries, pg. 62
- 7 Ibid. pg. 61.
- 8 Becker, pg. 178. The terms partialization and fetishization are described by Otto Rank and Ernest Becker, respectively, to explain that "repression is normal self-protection and creative self-restriction...The "normal" man bites off what he can chew and digest of life, and no more."
- 9 Ibid., pg. 155.
- 10 Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death. The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History*, (Middleton, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1959), pg. 321.
- 11 Becker, pg. 66.
- 12 Becker, pg.52. Quotation by Abraham Maslow.
- 13 Ibid., pg. 159.
- 14 Ibid., pg. 52.
- 15 See reference to origin in Paradox section of this paper in relation to Zeno's Flying Arrow Paradox.
- 16 Esther McCoy, *Vienna to Los Angeles: Two Journeys*, (Santa Monica Ca: Arts & Architecture Press, 1979), pg. 115.
- 17 Ibid., pg. 124.
- 18 Rudolph M. Schindler, "Care of the Body," *Assemblage*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press), pg. .
- 19 Peter Eisenman, "The Houses of Memory: The Texts of Analogy," in Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, (Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1988), pg. 4.
- 20 "Death is the modern issue." Jenny Holzer.
- 21 Becker, pg. 55.
- 22 See Arthur and Marilouise Kroker's discussion of technological extensions of the body in "Theses on the Disappearing Body in the Hyper-Modern Condition," Arthur and Marilouise Kroker, *Panic Sex in America*, ( : ).
- 23 Lacanian theorists posit a relationship between technology and mourning in the space of the Other and suggest that that technology attempts to serve as a replacement object in response to loss.
- 24 Becker, pg. 180.

- 25 Bruce Morrissette, "Topology and the Nouveau Roman," *Novel and Film*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pg. 76-77. Quotation by John Lilly.
- 26 Jeffrey Kipnis, "Though to My Knowledge a Writ has Yet to Be Issued, Nevertheless, the Case is Becoming Well-Known," *Threshold*, Marco Diani and Catherine Ingraham, Ed., (New York: Rizzoli, 1988), pg. 109. Quotation by Daniel Libeskind.
- 27 Becker, pg. 5.
- 28 Daniel Libeskind, "Architecture Intermundium," *Threshold*, Marco Diani and Catherine Ingraham, Ed., (New York: Rizzoli, 1988), pg. 117.
- 29 Ibid., pg. 115.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ibid., pg. 120.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Craig Owens cites Angus Fletcher who likens allegorical structure to obsessional neurosis and Benjamin who says that in allegory it is "common practice to pile up fragments ceaselessly, without any strict idea of a goal." Craig Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism," Brian Wallis, editor, *Art After Modernism*, (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984), pg. 207.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Peter Eisenman, "Moving Arrows, Eros, and Other Errors," in *Precis 6: The Culture of Fragments*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), pg. 141.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Ibid., pg. 142.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Libeskind, pg.
- 42 Kipnis, pg. 109, quoting Libeskind.
- 43 Aristotle, "Metaphysics," in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited by Richard McKeon, (New York: Random House, 1941), Book 11, Chapter 5, pg. 856.
- 44 Lillian Hellman, *Pentimento*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), title page.
- 45 See Endnote #2.
- 46 The frequent use of pairs of three-dimensional "L's" in Eisenman's work is an interesting coincidence within the context of the current discussion.
- 47 Eisenman, pg. 143.
- 48 Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), pg. 107.
- 49 Kipnis, pg. 111, quoting Libeskind.
- 50 Libeskind, pg. 119.
- 51 Ibid., pg. 120.
- 52 Becker, pg. 87.