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*Tiivistelmä*

Tausta: Kyseessä on tutkimus arkkitehtuurin aseman ja toimintamahdollisuuksien perusteista länsimaisessa kulutusyhteiskunnassa.

Metodi: 1) Bibliografinen tutkimus, jossa ranskalainen kulutusyhteiskuntaa laajasti teoretisoinut Jean Baudrillard on tärkeä. 2) Kulutusyhteiskunnan keskeiseen problematiikkaan tyypillisesti liittyvien modernin arkkitehtuurin töiden laadullinen analyysi ja eräiden arkkitehtien kulutusyhteiskunnan muutoksiin vastaavien strategioiden analyysi. 3) Arkkitehtuurin mytologinen laatu ja kehitys on lisäksi havainnollistettu vertaamalla arkkitehtuuria toiseen välineeseen, liikkuviin kuviin (elokuva, tv, video, liikkuvat digitaaliset kuvat), kulutus-yhteiskunnan tyypillisimpään taidemuotoon. 4) Lopuksi työhön kuuluu käytännön rakennus- ja esinesuunnitelmia. Niissä tekijä soveltaa suunnittelumetodia, jonka hän on kehittänyt aikaisemmassa työn vaiheessa, missä analysoidaan arkkitehtuurin vaikutusmahdollisuuksia. Jean Baudrillardin teorioita symbolisesta vaihdosta ja "fataaleista strategioista" on käytetty metodin päälähtökohtina.

Tulokset: Työssä päädytään seuraaviin johtopäätöksiin: a) Arkkitehtuurin kysymykset ovat samanaikaisesti toiminnallisia, esteettisiä, organisatorisia ja talouteen liittyviä, mutta määräävin taso on sosiaalinen (yhteisöllinen) ja myyttinen. Myyttien avulla tapahtuva päämäärätön ja tarkoitukseton kontrolli tapahtuu jäljentämisellä tuotettujen ja markkinoitujen periaatteiden kautta. Tällaisia periaatteita ovat yksilöllisyys, tekno-optimismi, pluralismi, regionalismi, personalisaatio, vaihtoehtoisuus, joustavuus, käyttökelpoisuus ja esteettisyys. b) Kulutusyhteiskunnan uusin vaihe (joukkotiedotusvälineiden yhteiskunta) painii digitaalisen kulutuksen kanssa: uuden tietotekniikan, vapautuneen markkinatalouden, reaaliaikaisen kommunikaation ja globalisaation puitteissa. Nämä tendenssit näkyvät nykyarkkitehtuurissa uusina "mahdollisuuksina" vaihtoehtoisuuteen: pluralismissa, "avoimessa" arkkitehtuurissa, joustavissa tuottajien ja kuluttajien välisissä suhteissa, interaktiivisuudessa ja käsityksessä "innovatiivisista" kuluttajista tai käyttäjistä. Lisääntyneet mahdollisuudet vaihtoehtoisuuteen ja joustavuuteen kulutuksessa eivät kuitenkaan välttämättä voi ratkaista ongelmia, joita liittyy sirpaloitumiseen, vastavuoroisuuden ja toisten huomioonottamisen katoamiseen ja kulttuurin banalisoitumiseen. c) Moralismi kulutusyhteiskuntaa ja kaupallista arkkitehtuuria vastaan ei toimi, koska kulutusyhteiskunnan piirteisiin sinänsä kuuluu, että se levittää moraliteetteja, jotka koskevat sitä miten ihmisten tulisi elää, ja millaisessa ympäristössä heidän tulisi asua. Myöskään ilman arkkitehteja aikaansaatu arkkitehtuuri tai pragmatistinen arkkitehtuuri eivät voi aikaansaada parempaa arkkitehtuuria yhteiskunnassa, koska nämäkin ilmiöt on jo sisäänrakennettu kulutusyhteiskunnan mytologiaan. Tekijä ehdottaa kahta välitöntä ja tapauskohtaista suunnittelustrategiaa, joiden pitäisi tässä tutkimuksessa käytettyä taustaa vasten olla yhteisöllistä hyvinvointia lisääviä.

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*Abstract*

**Background:** This is a study of the foundations of architecture's position in Western consumer society as well as its potential for future actions.

**Method:** 1) A bibliographical research of the background to the problematics. Of central importance here is the French sociologist Jean Baudrillard, who has broadly theorised the principles and manifestations of consumer society. 2) A qualitative analysis of both architectural works related to the main problematics in consumer society and the strategies of certain architects in answering to the changed situation in the developing consumer society. 3) The mythological character of architecture, as well as its current stage of development, is demonstrated by comparing it to another medium, moving images (cinema, television, video, moving digital images), that is, the typical art of the consumer society. 4) The work concludes with practical proposals for architectural design. Here the author applies a method developed earlier in the thesis, where he analysed architecture's means of influence in consumer society. Baudrillard's theories on symbolic exchange and 'fatal strategies' have been used as the main starting points of the method.

**Results:** The work results in the following conclusions: a) Architectural issues are simultaneously functional, aesthetic, organisational and economic, but the decisive level is social (collective) and mythical. The eventually aimless and purposeless control realised through myths takes place through reproduced and mass-promoted principles of individualism, techno-optimism, pluralism, regionalism, personalisation, alternativity, flexibility, usefulness and aestheticism. b) The newest phase of consumer society (mass media society) tackles the impact of digital consumption: the new information technologies, the liberated market economy, real-time communication, and globalisation. These tendencies manifest themselves in contemporary architecture in the new possibilities for alternativity: pluralism, "open" architecture, the flexible interrelationship between producers and consumers, interactivity, and the notion of innovative consumers or users. All in all, the increasing possibilities for alternatives and flexibility in consumption cannot necessarily solve the problems with fragmentation, loss of reciprocity, the diminishing altruism in society and the increasing banalisation of culture. c) Moralism against consumer society and commercial architecture does not work because it is characteristic of consumer society itself to spread moralities concerning how people should live and in which kinds of environments. Neither architecture-without-architects nor pragmatist architecture are likely to make better architecture in society, because these phenomena are already included in the mythologies of the consumer society. The author proposes two spontaneous and case specific strategies that should increase communal welfare according to the theoretical background used in this research.

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# **Architecture in Consumer Society**

**Antti Ahlava**

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## Tribute

The material for the present work has been gathered not only through a close reading of various texts (mostly by Jean Baudrillard), but also on field trips and discussions with experts in the various fields covered by the work. During the progression of the thesis I spent a year at the Department of Architecture in Edinburgh University in the UK and have been in close contact with its staff since then. According to *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, the university is the best place in Britain to study architecture and sociology together. I am especially grateful to professors Iain Boyd Whyte at the Architecture Department and John Orr at the Sociology Department, who were my thesis supervisors during the time I spent at Edinburgh. Professor Boyd Whyte encouraged me to scrutinise the little studied aspect of myths within Baudrillard's writings on consumer society. Professor Orr encouraged me to include a practical design part in the thesis. This was also recommended by the University of Art and Design Helsinki [UIAH].

Edinburgh, with its medieval and Georgian heritage, is not the first place in the world to study modern architecture at first hand, yet it provided not only a tranquil shelter for peaceful thinking but also a better base than Helsinki to make trips to the busier metropolises of central Europe. Journeys to London and Paris to see buildings by Le Corbusier, Grimshaw, Foster, Rogers, Nouvel, Gehry, Perrault and Future Systems were particularly crucial. Later, the Netherlands and the newly globalised Shanghai in China also became fields for my study trips. I also made trips to interview Brian Hatton at the Royal College of Art in London and François Penz at Cambridge University. Also Gary Genosko gave me useful hints about Baudrillard's relationship to design in our e-mail discussions. I would like to specially thank them for all their advice.

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## 1 Introduction

*–Without rules, the world is hollow.*

Roberto Calasso

*–The source of all interplay, of everything that is in play, of all passion, of all seduction, is that which is completely foreign to us, yet has power over us.*

Jean Baudrillard

*–In architecture, the new communitarian ideals can now be sought where the street is dead and public art is everywhere – as if two deaths make a life.*

Rem Koolhaas

## 1.1 Architecture as modern mythological commodity

*–It is the scenario of deterrence that Paul Virilio shares with me, apparently, because he moves back and forth between the real term and the mythical term which is mine.*

Jean Baudrillard<sup>1</sup>

### Consumer society

This work belongs to the sphere of architectural research and the particular object of study is architecture's position in *consumer society*. Consumer society is a term describing the outcome of modernisation since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Consumer society is the result of rapid industrial developments, the growth in manufacturing, trade and standardisation, but also the immense pace of diversification and growth of culture, creativity and urbanism as a way of life. This urbanism consists of shifting processes of over-stimulation and indifference that cannot be thought of without the notion of fashion. The consumer has had a special role in this process; the consumer has been the target and victim of a massive reproduction and marketing of artefacts and a bombardment by mass media.

Due to the importance of mass media, one can say that consumption is a system of communication, governed by the media.<sup>2</sup> This process towards perfect industries, perfect commodities and perfect communication has encouraged mutations in the collective structures of consumers. The consumer has faced demands regarding identification, personalisation and lifestyles, accompanied by an increasing lack of collective and local contexts. Most of all, the consumer has become an object of a machinery of immense *cultural abstraction*, the abstract reproduction of ideas and values.

Therefore, contemporary architecture is built in a society that is

<sup>1</sup> Jean Baudrillard: 'Forget Baudrillard Interview' (1984-85) (in Jean Baudrillard: *Forget Foucault & Forget Baudrillard* [1987]) 109.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *La société de consommation* (1970) 109.

characterised not only by the mass production of artefacts, but also by the mass production of individualistic lifestyles. This mass production is equalled by mass consumption and the mass media promoting it. In short, due to this *abstract consumption*, specific problematics have emerged in architecture that cannot be totally understood in traditional individualistic terms, based on differences, because these concepts are already included in the abstract, cultural consumption. Such individualistic terms are the pre-conceived needs or habits of the users. There is thus a grey area between ideas and practice in architecture. My argument is that this grey area consists of myths. I will here concentrate on the myths of the consumer society.

I will use the French sociologist Jean Baudrillard's (1929-) interpretation of consumer society as my principal concept. Baudrillard has offered a convincing view about consumer society and the cultural and economic patterns of the present time, as well as deep insights for understanding it. His interpretation of consumer society as a mythology is of special importance for the present work.

In addition to Baudrillard, I will also mention the following theorists, who are essential for understanding the progress of consumer society: the economist Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929), the sociologist Georg Simmel (1858-1918) and especially the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory and their Marxist successors (since the first half of the 20th century). Common to these theorists has been the assumption that *the structure and functionality of the society and the thought patterns of its members cannot be separated from its consumption of goods*. Material objects gather an abstract capacity, but abstractions are also influenced by the material surroundings. Even if it is quite a while since Critical Theory first began to have an influence and new theoretical developments have arisen around the newer technological and economic forms, the initial issues raised by the Frankfurt School, however, have still remained crucial. Such issues include, for example, the possibilities for real social togetherness (community) and human reciprocity through modern technology. I will soon scrutinise these aspects in greater detail. And it is Baudrillard who tackles these problematics with a deep insight.

Concerning the interrelationship between abstractions and material entities, Baudrillard goes as far as to say that the logic of

what we take as *useful* and *valuable* is actually determined by mythological (artificial but persuasive) codes.<sup>3</sup> In consumer society it is thus actually the signs and ideas that become consumed. The object as sign no longer derives its meaning from a concrete social relationship, as an object did, for instance, in the feudal, pre-liberalist societies. Its meaning comes now from *abstract, organisatory values* directed towards individualisation.<sup>4</sup>

Consequently, by the term “consumption” I don’t mean the traditional sense of use and purchase, but rather this abstraction that controls, dominates and orders people’s experiences in terms of social regulation and distinction.<sup>5</sup> Through consumption, people consecrate not pleasures, but only the *myths* of consumer society.<sup>6</sup> This consumption, taken as an abstraction, means the progressive diminishing of the physicality of things and their increasing abstraction as signs, until, at the present stage, abstraction has taken on even unconscious and instinctual needs and choices.<sup>7</sup> Due to this systematicity, one can argue that all consumers’ choices, including architecture, are at the present stage practically the same in the end and there is no outside to the abstraction system.<sup>8</sup> Despite the new “interactive” information and communication technologies and similar (“democratic”) architectural decision-making processes, the role of the user/consumer is only relatively independent; one is

<sup>3</sup> By “code” Jean Baudrillard means fundamental rules of a social system, such as a game. The code can be understood as a social “matrix” in this sense. The code functions as a key to information, it is a classification system. It performs the means of control by regulating what is considered valuable. It is characterised by systematic self-referentiality, which is after all undecidable and which opens to a-subjective changes (Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* [1968] 147, 270-271; *La société de consommation* [1970] 152, 194; *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* [1972] 193; *L'échange symbolique et la mort* [1993, orig. 1976] 19-29; *Simulacres et simulation* [1981] 54, 151-152; *La Transparence du Mal* [1990] [Prophylaxie et virulence] 72, *Le crime parfait* [1995] 50-51; ‘Transpolitics, Transsexuality, Transaesthetics’ 15 [in *The Disappearance of Art and Politics* 1992]; Baudrillard and Marc Guillaume: *Figures de l'altérité* [1994] 37-76).

<sup>4</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 21-29, 65-66; *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (1972) 13, 231-232; *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976) 26, 77, 89-95, 151.

<sup>5</sup> This definition of consumption is given by Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 255-283; *La société de consommation* (1970) 103-105, 114, 167; *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (1972) (1972) 66-94. See also the commentary on Baudrillard by Rex Butler: *Jean Baudrillard: The Defence of the Real* (1999) 110.

<sup>6</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *La société de consommation* (1970) 199.

<sup>7</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 181-182, 278-283; *La société de consommation* (1970) 100-113.

<sup>8</sup> Jean Baudrillard made this comment about architecture: ‘Kool Killer ou L’insurrection par les signes’, in Baudrillard: *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976); *The Evil Demon of Images* (1988, orig. 1987) 53 (An Interview with Baudrillard conducted by Ted Colless, David Kelly and Alan Cholodenko).

conditionally free to choose and to express oneself within the social system.<sup>9</sup>

### **Social dependence of architecture**

The abstracted relationships between ideas and practice are extremely crucial in architecture. Most recently, international architectural magazines have been filled with architectonic interpretations of fascinating ideas such as virtual reality, artificial intelligence, chaos theory, artificial life and reflexivity, as well as theories about “risk” and “flows” and other exhilarating new adaptations from the various branches of science. Simultaneously with using these theories as “proofs” of the validity of their own architecture, architects typically relate to these phenomena on the basis of assumptions derived from much earlier stages of commodification rather than from these recent innovations themselves.<sup>10</sup> There is thus a coexistence of new technology and old (often naively mechanistic and techno-optimistic) habit which is actually also the diverse reality of the everyday world of the consumers.<sup>11</sup> In fact, in the context of abstract consuming, these fascinating branches of science cannot often be anything else but status symbols for architects. Between architecture and the user there is the social sphere that influences how architecture is socially shaped and constructed. The consumers of architecture confront and respond to the social restrictions and relations embodied within them. Because of this social dependence constraining both architects and users, there is the inevitable importance of (often involuntary) *persuasion* in planning and design.

In the *social constructivist* view, which is concerned with problematics like this, all knowledge is socially constructed; that is,

<sup>9</sup> Don Slater argues that the consumer society replaces the idea of “civil society”, and simultaneously indicates the degeneration of the ideal of voluntary associations. Slater: *Consumer Culture and Modernity* (1997) 23.

<sup>10</sup> Typically, architects take scientific models literally and mechanistically, combined with pseudo-scientific jargon. In certain architectural adaptations, reflexivity has meant the literal use of reflecting surfaces, the application of virtual reality has meant appropriating the aesthetics of cyberpunk literature, and the theories concerning chaos and deconstruction have justified literally chaotic-looking architecture.

<sup>11</sup> See Richard Coyne: *Technoromanticism* (1999); and Roger Silverstone: ‘Future Imperfect: Informational Communication Technologies in Everyday Life’ (in William H. Dutton [ed.]: *Information and Communication Technologies: Visions and Realities*, 1996). Both of them are good introductions to this dichotomy concerning the common reception of technology.

explanations for the genesis, acceptance and rejection of knowledge are sought in the domain of the social rather than in the natural world.<sup>12</sup> Even a *machine* cannot be understood aside from its end-user and the cultural ambience in which it works.<sup>13</sup> In this context, and in comparison to cultural artefacts that usually have less economic value and emotional binding, architecture is experienced as being particularly difficult to surrender to social analysis. Its practicality seems especially transparent and self-evident. In comparison to technology or architecture, cultural artefacts within the *mass media* (print, radio, cinema, television, internet) comprise social relations that are easier to interpret in alternative ways. That relative easiness is the reason why I have chosen to approach architecture as a form of mass media, an object of “soft” consumption, rather than exclusively as a technology, or even as design or art.

Despite similar starting points and the references I have already made to social constructivism, it is not easy to situate Baudrillard within this genre; and that is also the reason I would like to keep a certain distance from that particular discussion. The difference between Baudrillard’s approach and the strict social constructivist view is that Baudrillard does not believe in the primacy of society in its present (not very collective or communal) form. I see Baudrillard as a pragmatist who analyses a-personal economic *systems* in society. His approach can be seen as having just as much in common with the domains of the history of technology and economics as with theoretical sociology. In Baudrillard’s theory, an a-subjective network of interconnected concepts which distribute value or prestige, builds commodities, such as, for example, architectural

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, the following writers from the Anglo-Saxon sociology of technology school presenting this view: Steve Woolgar: ‘Technologies as Cultural Artefacts’ (in William H. Dutton [ed.]: *Information and Communication Technologies: Visions and Realities*, 1996); Trevor J. Pinch and Wiebe E. Bijker: ‘The Social Construction of Facts and Artefacts’ (1989); John Law: ‘Technology and Heterogeneous Engineering’; H. M. Collins: ‘Expert Systems and the Science of Knowledge’ (all three in Wiebe E. Bijker, Thomas P. Hughes and Trevor Pinch [eds.]: *The Social Construction of Technological Systems*).

<sup>13</sup> Collins: *op.cit.*

<sup>14</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 111, 118, 162-163; *Pour une critique de l’économie politique du signe* (1972) 9-10, 43, 138; *A l’ombre des Majorités silencieuses* (1978) 49-50. Baudrillard could just as well be analysed without any reference to the Anglo-Saxon tradition of theory. However, it gives him extra respectability to notice how relevant he is also in contemporary socio-technological analysis. He actually goes deeper into the problematics than the mere analysis of consumers’ different purchasing habits.

systems.<sup>14</sup> Thus, Baudrillard's theory can be seen as important even in the context of the sociology of technology. Baudrillard's viewpoint has been extending extremely far when defining the pre-suppositions and limits for techno-socio-economic theory and practice. When using Baudrillard's theory as a hermeneutical source, architectural issues can be seen simultaneously as functional, aesthetic, organisational and economic, but the decisive plane is that of the social, semiological and mythical.

All in all, modern technology, media as well as the theories concerning them, must be considered in regard to their social relevance when they affect architecture. The tradition of German Critical Theory (most notably Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse) has been operating remarkably in this area. Baudrillard, basing his theory partly within that tradition,<sup>15</sup> has been concerned with the social complications of the novelties of the mass media society. He has continued the tradition of consumer culture sociology, in the sense of the Critical cultural analysis, but focusing especially on the social implications of the newest communicational and technological forms. Baudrillard does this by continuously demonstrating the homology between material and sign production, where it is difficult to say which of these is the originating factor in the processes of materialisation and cultural abstraction. Baudrillard's technique in this analysis has often been termed semiological, but especially in his earlier books he has purposely used mythological analysis in order to separate the general patterns (modern myths) of consumer society. Later he has separated normative and chronological stages (of simulacra) in the relationships between ideas and forms (such as architecture) in Western society.

Baudrillard's career as a sociologist begun in the 1960s under the influence of Henri Lefebvre's phenomenology of the everyday life and Roland Barthes's theories on semiology and the mythology of commodities. Baudrillard adapted Marxist vocabulary, and criticized the basic presuppositions of the theory. Especially he re-

<sup>15</sup> About Baudrillard's relationship to Critical Theory, see, for example, Jean Baudrillard: *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976) 86-88; *La Transparence du Mal* (1990) 124; *The Evil Demon of Images* (1988, orig. 1987) 41-42; Kellner: *Jean Baudrillard: From Marxism to Post-Modernism and Beyond* (1989) 5; Mike Gane: *Baudrillard's Bestiary* (1991) 29; Charles Levin: *Jean Baudrillard: A Study in Cultural Metaphysics* (1996) 56.

jected the notion of *production* as being at all important in describing the real dynamics of consumer society. Baudrillard also took on psychoanalytical areas of interest and semiology, emphasising the importance of “seduction” and “appearances” instead of desire and signification. His concerns have been wide, ranging from philosophical art theory and the critique of technology to an anthropological sociology of the masses.

The most comprehensive of Baudrillard’s writings written with the intention of establishing a sociology of modern capitalistic consumption is *La société de consommation: Ses mythes ses structures* (1970). Baudrillard’s writings have usually been analysed within the theoretical contexts of political economy and semiology, but in this work I will to a large extent concentrate on his original starting point: our present consumer society as a mythological structure. Unlike Baudrillard’s more literary books from the 1990s and 2000s, these first works were still rigorous in scientific terms.

Mythological analysis offers a practical viewpoint to architecture, because it studies relationships between the society’s belief structures and its physical objects and practices. This starting point assumes that architecture as a branch of culture relies on beliefs rather than on scientific truths.

Mythology has been one of the perennial topics in Baudrillard’s texts. Baudrillard’s textual strategy has presupposed a constant revision and transformation of the adapted views, but mythology seems to have had a stable position in his oeuvre. Thoughts about myths occur in almost every one of his writings. This fact has not received much attention from Baudrillard’s commentaries, apart from that of Mike Gane.

I will not go into any great detail about Baudrillard’s connections to structuralist anthropology or semiology, or go into any detailed general history of all of the theories on consumer society or even the history of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory. There are already plenty of studies dealing with these matters. Instead, I will focus here on studying architecture in consumer society, especially from the viewpoint of its myths.

Baudrillard’s three first books lean heavily on his interpretation of consumer society as a system of myths. He pays particular attention to the seemingly disappeared, illusoric and transcendental dimension in society. He calls this supposed disappearance the as-

*sumed disappearance* of the mythic dimension. Instead of trusting in these beliefs, he studies the economic-semiological basic structures of the modern society through its myths. This myth analysis appears in his first book *Le système des objets* (1968). The subtitle of his second book is (*La société de consommation:*) *Ses mythes ses structures* (1970). Baudrillard uses the words “myth” and “mythology” on purpose in order to describe the central principles in the functioning of consumer society. Such mythical principles are “consumption”, “individualism”, “rationality” and “signification”. I will examine these principles as sort of macro-myths of society. The third important book where Baudrillard uses the device of myths to describe contemporary society is *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (1972). However, the first two books are his most detailed analyses of myths. Since then Baudrillard has examined the mythological structures and myths of contemporary society, for example in his own texts and in interviews: *À l'ombre des Majorités Silencieuses* (1978), *Amerique* (1986), *Evil Demon of Images* (1987), *Forget Baudrillard* (1987), *La transparence du Mal* (1990), *L'illusion de la fin ou la grève des événements* (1992) and *Baudrillard Live* (1993).

Baudrillard's conceptions about the characteristics of myths in general cohere with the general line of studies on myths in social sciences, as I will explain. Also Baudrillard's other theories, such as the theories on symbolic exchange and the masses, can be seen as deriving from his initial studies on myths. Baudrillard can be examined without any reference to the study of mythology, but that is not my choice here. Myths are a useful tool in studying contemporary architecture, as I will also show.

I would like to emphasise that the subject of the present work is not Baudrillard's writings on architecture *per se*. This work is based to a large extent on his texts on consumer society, because this helps me in developing a supportable method for architectural design in consumer society from the viewpoint of collectivity and community. Baudrillard's texts are here a tool to understand the preconditions of consumer society and its architecture.

### **Myth and consumer society**

I will now give a short introduction to the notion of myths (I will dis-

cuss it more thoroughly in chapter 2.2). Despite science, *mythology* has been an area of theory specialising in techno-social relations. Mythology means both the study of myths and a particular system of myths. In short, myths are *culturally formative and explanatory entities that are taken for granted in the beginning of reasoning*. At this stage it is enough to say that myth means a *fundamental relationship between an object and thought, where persuasion has prior importance*.<sup>16</sup>

The study of modern cultural artefacts as mythological entities first appeared in the 1920s and 1930s in France with Georges Bataille and in Germany with Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer and was developed in the late 1950s and 1960s in France by Roland Barthes. Baudrillard has continued their enterprise.

It should be said that neither “mythology” nor “masses” is meant to indicate anything negative in this work. I do not refer to myth as an imaginary and outdated narrative. Rather, as architectural theoretician Paul-Adam Johnson says,<sup>17</sup> any statement in architecture that is meant to gain trust, still relies on the mythological, convincing authority of its rhetoric to persuade. Fashions, slogans, aphorisms, concepts and so-called architectural theories are the most direct form of distributing ideas about architecture. Architectural *routines*, conceptions about its use and expectations, are the core of its mythological essence, its ways of doing various things and ways of determining what to do. They are the organisational counterpart to what is called *skill* at the level of an architect and *usability* and *functionality* at the level of architecture.<sup>18</sup> Whether certain phenomena are true in these mythological circumstances is indeed inessential as long as they seem convincing. They need only *appear* to be true to be utilised.

In the mythological context, architecture is an example of neither rational nor irrational consumption, but is regulated by a trust that has become considered a practical necessity. By “architecture” I mean here all architectural design, interior design and planning, because there is no difference between them in the viewpoint be-

<sup>16</sup> I will return to this definition of myth in chapter 2.2. The definition is combined from many reasonably univocal myth theorists from sociology, religious science and anthropology.

<sup>17</sup> Paul-Adam Johnson: *The Theory of Architecture* (1994) 49-50.

<sup>18</sup> See Henk van den Belt and Arie Rip: ‘The Nelson-Winter-Dosi Model and Synthetic Dye Chemistry’ (in Wiebe E. Bijker, Thomas, P. Hughes and Trevor Pinch [eds.], *op. cit.*) about the importance of social organisation of routines and skill in technology.

ing presented here: they are all equal objects of environmental consumption requiring design and planning. Compared to theory, where the demarcations between architecture, design and art are reasonably clear, it is very difficult in practice to draw divisions between these spheres. Architects design cities, interiors and furniture and even unique items such as sculptures and coffee pots, just as interior designers and industrial designers sometimes design buildings and even cities. All of these professions are often called branches of art. Architects are used to designing and planning not only spatial and material aspects of the environment, but also mental images (by the use of style, symbolism and other tactical references) and ambiances, which nowadays are the real objects of consumption, calculation and value (and material production).<sup>19</sup> Architecture is a suitable category for studying all of these spheres because it is able to include them all.

### The masses and consumer society

What about *the masses*? The mass media society is in a way the apotheosis of consumer society, where the distribution and character of myths has changed drastically since the 1950s.<sup>20</sup> The post-war boom of the 1950s and 1960s created mass-consumption societies that had a large demand for cultural artefacts. The creation and the fulfilment of the masses' needs created the mass production industries but also the mass culture regulated by the *mass media* and the mass consumed needs. When Baudrillard argues that abstraction and social control in society have appeared at the level of developed collective myths,<sup>21</sup> this process has been controlled and intensified most of all by the action of the mass media.<sup>22</sup> As I said, in this context contemporary architecture must be seen as

<sup>19</sup> Regarding 'atmosphere' as an object of material production and consumption see: Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 42, 55; For 'Image' as an object of material production and consumption see: Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 157, 167, 312; *La société de consommation* (1970) 190, *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 17.

<sup>20</sup> I will return to this difference in chapter 2.2., where I lean especially on Roland Barthes' *Changer l'objet lui-même: La mythologie aujourd'hui* (1994, orig. 1971).

<sup>21</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 81, 104, 163-167, 174; *La société de consommation* (1970) 29, 31, 311-316; *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (1972) 191-193; *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976) 98-103; *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 120-122.

<sup>22</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 54, 122-125; *La Transparence du Mal* (1990) 98.

another mass medium.<sup>23</sup> The mass media homogenises the unique character of actual world events by replacing them with a multiple universe of mutually reinforcing and self-referential “events” without any actual signification. These indifferent media events allow no actual possibility for response.<sup>24</sup> Mass communication is thus defined by its code, by the systematic production of messages – not about the world, but about the media itself. The mass media consumption lies thus in the *form* and not in the *content* of things.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, the mass media make any real collective reciprocity between people/society and architecture very difficult due to the univocality of the media.<sup>26</sup>

It is generally believed that the masses have little influence on the culture distributed for consumption, or at least when the intellectuals and other elites reign. Then there are populists who praise the common sense and wisdom of the silent majorities, such as the architects and sociologists who pursue flexible, individualistic and direct user-participation in planning and design processes. These people even use the paradoxical term “mass-customization” of the latest modes of consumption. Contrary to both these assumptions, Baudrillard argues that the masses are external to neither the power nor the populist politics’ source of wisdom, to whom one refers when needing an objective opinion. Baudrillard’s view is that the masses have developed their own cultural strategies that cannot be fitted in to the categories of any opinion polls. The surprising

<sup>23</sup> Jean Baudrillard: “Or l’architecture et l’urbanisme, même transfigurés par l’imagination, ne peuvent rien changer, car ils sont eux-mêmes des media de masse et, jusque dans leurs conceptions les plus audacieuses, ils reproduisent le rapport social de masse, c’est-à-dire qu’ils laissent collectivement les gens sans réponse.” (*L’échange symbolique et la mort* [1993, orig. 1976] 125) [“Now architecture and urbanism that have been cultivated by imagination are not able to change anything because they are themselves mass media which even in their most courageous forms renew the social mass relation, leaving people collectively without response.” Translation AA]. Consequently, urbanism and architecture are only able to simulate the values of exchange and collective values. In Baudrillard’s view, there is no substantial qualitative difference between electronic media such as TV on the one hand and other forms such as language, painting or architecture on the other hand. They all operate at the same level of “simulation”. They function nowadays in terms of “communication” and “information” without response. Neither architecture nor painting, for instance, have today any effects which are proper to themselves; instead, they function merely as indications of the transformation of the world. That is, there is no longer any great “challenge” being posited by these art forms (Baudrillard: *The Evil Demon of Images* [1988, orig. 1987] 53). Baudrillard refers to design as a mass medium also in *Pour une critique de l’économie politique du signe* (1972) 251.

<sup>24</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *La société de consommation* (1970) 192-196; *Pour une critique de l’économie politique du signe* (1972) 208-210.

<sup>25</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *La société de consommation* (1970) 192-199.

reactions of the masses actually preserve *ancient collective necessities*.<sup>27</sup> Whether a *mass* means a lump of matter, a quantity, a collected or coherent body, the principal body, the lower classes of society, a big crowd, or weight, it is thought to have an *undifferentiated* and even *indifferent* essence. This essence can be seen as being beneficial if it offers a unique, socially restoring challenge to the totalizing mass media.

There is thus a difference in the definition of “mass” between mass media society and the actual masses’ mode of action, yet the ability for *neutralisation* connects them all. The masses, as Baudrillard interprets them, manifest themselves through passive and opportunistic modes of action. In this sense, “the masses”, as a homogenous mass of people, does not actually exist as a sociological empirical fact. It simply constitutes society’s image of itself.<sup>28</sup> It is a projection of a possible mode of cultural initiative in a state where society has become so abstracted (manipulated) that all answers are already inscribed in its function.<sup>29</sup> In Rex Butler’s description of the masses Baudrillard is writing about:

*—[T]he masses are first of all the underclasses of society, all those for whom society takes as its task to provide welfare, medicine and education. But perhaps what also needs emphasizing here is that these masses constitute society’s image of itself. They are what is common to all members of society, beyond any specifiable group or denomination. They are what none of us sees ourselves as part of, but what each of us in a way belongs to. And they are what we consult and audit in order to know what we as a society think. It is the opinions and attitudes of the masses that all polls and referenda, all surveys and censuses, try to elicit and record [...] The masses are the one undeniable fact of all sociology and politics, the basic ground on which they stand, the single thing that cannot be doubted. And*

<sup>26</sup> The mass media are extending univocal communication. See: Jean Baudrillard: ‘The Masses: The Implosion of the Social in the Media’ (in Jean Baudrillard: *Selected Writings* [1990] 208); *A l’ombre des Majorités silencieuses* (1978) 44, 48; *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 95; *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 126-127; *Baudrillard Live* (1993) 87-88.

<sup>27</sup> Jean Baudrillard: ‘The Masses: The Implosion of the Social in the Media’ (in Jean Baudrillard: *Selected Writings* [1990] 208); *A l’ombre des Majorités silencieuses* (1978) 44, 48; *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 95; *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 126-127.

<sup>28</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *A l’ombre des Majorités silencieuses* (1978) 10-11, 36-37.

<sup>29</sup> This definition of the masses: Jean Baudrillard: *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 126-129, *A l’ombre des Majorités silencieuses* (1978) 11; The Masses: The Implosion of The Social in the Media 208-214 (in Jean Baudrillard: *Selected Writings* 1990), *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 95, 103-104, 107-111.

*yet – it is just this paradox of contradiction [...] – if the masses are the most real, the empirical bedrock of all theories of the social, they are also strangely nebulous, hard to define. There is a sense that, as a sociological category, they are too broad to be of any use, but that in trying to specify them further we lose the very thing we are aiming at.*<sup>30</sup>

Since the 1980s, it has been commonly believed, especially among economics-oriented social analysts, that after the mass society, there has emerged another condition of society, in which not one but many identities, visions and lifestyles run in parallel, resisting cultural rigidities. In architecture, the manifestations of this thought have been, for example, pluralism and neo-regionalism. However, one can with good reason argue that this phase is yet one more stage in the increasing abstraction and control by the a-human system regulating the relationships between conceptualisation and materialisation.<sup>31</sup> The real alternatives could be sought elsewhere than in this kind of non-effective individualism.<sup>32</sup> The alternatives are not offered by the ever-increasing possibilities to buy and mediatise one's individuality and togetherness, but by the anonymous strategies of the mass that is able to challenge the code, by an alternative to the alternatives, mirroring the indifference of the mass media. At the present stage of consumer society, at least, Baudrillard argues that the possibility of true communal action can be found only in the masses' mode of expression.<sup>33</sup> The benefit of a mass hides in its indifference and conformity, but also in its delight with all kinds of nonsense. In terms of contemporary consumerist design research, I will here focus on the question of *ironically innovative and revolting consumers*, neglecting and/or over-reacting to new uses for products.

The variety of user practices is approached here from the viewpoint of how architects could *adapt* the masses' methods, not actually how the users could gain more power in the design processes. Thus, the ultimate aim of this part of the work is to create a theo-

<sup>30</sup> Rex Butler's commentary on Baudrillard in *Jean Baudrillard: The Defence of the Real* (1999) 130-131.

<sup>31</sup> Don Slater calls this market of lifestyles as "the neo-liberal renaissance". Slater: *Consumer Culture and Modernity* (1997) 10-11.

<sup>32</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Baudrillard Live* (1993) 90-91.

<sup>33</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 126; *A l'ombre des Majorités silencieuses* (1978) 44, 48; *The Masses: The Implosion of The Social in the Media* 208 (in Jean Baudrillard: *Selected Writings* [1990]); *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 104, 108.

retical background for an architectural design method called *ultimategame*, which I present later. The method exploits the masses' attitudes. Such an approach contrasts both with the optimistic and pessimistic<sup>34</sup> versions of media convergence.<sup>35</sup> The optimistic version argues that the emerged convergence of different technologies due to the new *digitalisation* will increase information and entertainment diversity and enhance individual choice and freedom.<sup>36</sup> The pessimistic version stresses the dangers of monopoly control, of social isolation and fragmentation and the further decline of the public sphere. However, the monopoly control is not necessarily a threat, but there are no new possibilities for freedom in the new technology either. Instead, these have created an a-personal system, for which only the masses can generate challenges.

The contents of the new technology can seldom in themselves be collectively beneficial. There is no lack of new contents in present day architecture, but a lack of new restricting and connecting *rituals*. For Baudrillard these rituals should concern modes of action and attitudes, but not necessarily contents, and the masses can be an example of this. New rituals – consequences of the masses' radical conformity: blind irrational enthusiasm and destruction of values other than social recognition and reciprocity – are far from being introduced on the basis of an accurate understanding of consumers' demands. Rather, the rituals can be imposed on the market by hyper-receptive and hyper-willing agents. These agents are, for example, architects, who have no sense for ethics based upon *sign values* or *use values* or *needs* in their work. I will examine these ritualistic conditions in Part 5.

Architecture is a discipline that aesthetically and functionally influences the life of its users, whether they want it to or not. This position of architecture in society is also the reason why there have been claims for more democratic and direct processes of architectural decision-making and to diminish the elitism within the profession. The idea that the masses should have their opinion heard when decisions are being made about the architecture being built

<sup>34</sup> See Nicholas Garnham: Constraints on Multimedia Convergence (in William H. Dutton (ed.): *Information and Communication Technologies: Visions and Realities* 1996) about a comparison of positive and negative view towards media convergence.

<sup>35</sup> This means different media interconnected by digitised content matter and simultaneously a tendency towards media monopolies.

<sup>36</sup> For example, the highly influential Nicholas Negroponte from MIT pursues this view of architecture in his book *Being Digital* (1995).

where they live sounds reasonable. But the present study shows that it is not always so. It is actually a beneficial characteristic of the masses that they do not want to decide: when the masses “decide” they remain ambivalent. They do not want to influence the elitist system, to take part in architecture as a medium, nor become producers or users of alternative values. It’s possible to think that bureaucratic and professional decision-making has been a genial arrangement for the masses, that is, redistributing responsibility and restoring access to less abstract modes of collective exchange, and to its reversibility and reciprocity. Consequently, architecture could adopt the masses’ modes of “misleading” action in order to be collectively beneficial. I will examine this logical possibility later when I develop the design method I call *ultimategame* in Part 5.

## 1.2 The research questions: Learning from Baudrillard in architecture

The questions I will address in this study are:

a) Regarding the general characteristics of architecture in consumer society: What is the nature of architecture in consumer society? What is the decisive conceptual level in this discourse? Which habitual and abstract patterns does commodification take in architecture? What is the relationship between mass media and architecture? What are the consequences of mass production and mass consumption, in their widest meaning, in architecture? What is the role of architecture in satisfying the needs of consumers? What in general is the role of *value* in architecture?

What is the relationship between the culture industry and architecture? Can one assume that architecture suffers from the same defects of commodification as other fields of culture seem to: that is, are there signs of commercial manipulation and spreading indifference in contemporary architecture? How does the typical art form of the consumer society, the moving images of cinema and TV, compare to architecture? For example, is the star cult in architecture comparable to the worship of film stars? What is the influence of technological progress in architecture as a commodity? And what about the ecological habits of consumption? How should one relate to the individualistic and personalising habits towards architecture as a commodity? And ultimately: Is it worth searching for an alternative in architecture to the dynamics of consumer society? And what would it be anyway? I will study these questions in Parts 1 to 3.

My proposition is that Jean Baudrillard's theory of consumer society, which has developed within a long tradition in the social sciences, constitutes an analysis of architecture as a commodity and a mass medium which proves to be useful in attempting to find answers to the above questions. Baudrillard has, in fact, written rather a lot specifically about architecture. Baudrillard's *Le système*

*des objets* (1968) scrutinised building design, interior design and the everyday artefacts of the modern environment, connected to functionalism and the systematic organisation of ambience. *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (1972) discussed such architectural topics as formal and ostentatious organisations of objects in people's homes and environments, design as a mass medium related to signification, fashion, the Bauhaus and functionalism. *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976) discussed city planning, architecture and urbanism compared to urban radicalism such as graffiti. *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) investigated the architecture of the *Centre Beaubourg* [Pompidou] in Paris. *Amerique* (1986) concerned the city planning and modern environments of New York and Los Angeles, including, for example, an analysis of the *Westin Bonaventure Hotel* in Los Angeles by John Portman. In a more recent article, *Truth or Radicality* (1999), Baudrillard discusses contemporary architecture, especially Jean Nouvel's and Frank Gehry's buildings. The most recent book, *Les objets singuliers* (2000), made with the architect Jean Nouvel, discusses contemporary architecture in general.<sup>37</sup>

I argue that Baudrillard's theory proves useful and credible in the pursuit to understand the general dynamics of architecture in consumer society.

b) The second type of questions concerns the *present* consumer society architecture. How does present-day architecture differ from the earlier stages of its commodification. Is there something to be discerned about this contemporaneity by comparing architecture to moving images? Are there certain contemporary architects whose works are more symptomatic of the new phase than the others? And if so, what are their ideas about architecture's special role in mass media society? I will attempt to answer the above questions in Part 4.

How does the growing and increasingly liberated market economy influence the consumption of architecture? What is the influence of new *digital consumption* on architecture – that is, the

<sup>37</sup> *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (1972): 'Fonction-signes et logique de classe': 7-58, 'Design et environnement ou l'Escalade de l'économie politique': 229-256; *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976): 'Kool Killer ou l'insurrection par les signes': 118-128; *Simulacres et simulation* (1981): 'L'effet Beaubourg': 93-111; *Amerique* (1986): 19-27, 53-64.

influence of new modes of alterity, pluralism, flexibility and portability in architecture, as well as the influence of the consumers' increased freedom, real-time communication, advanced automaticity, globalisation and media convergence in architecture, brought about by digital modes of communication and consumption? In brief, I will not be studying empirical architect-client relationships. It is true to say that architecture is usually a rather long-term investment, but my focus here is on the *experience* of architecture, surpassing the question of architect-client interactions.

It seems that Baudrillard's theory also allows a means for understanding architecture's role in the consumer society characterised by patterns of contemporary sophisticated abstraction. Importantly, however, Baudrillard denies that architecture can have any essential influence on contemporary society.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, my third question is:

c) Can this assumption about architecture's non-existent means for communal reciprocity in advanced consumer society be questioned on the basis of Baudrillard's own theories of symbolic exchange and "fatal strategies" (Parts 5 and 6)? My hypothesis is that Baudrillard's fatal strategies can be used as a basis when developing beneficial (reciprocal, altruistic) architecture for consumer society.

### **Architecture and prestige**

Like all the radical social theorists of the age, Baudrillard made the sphere of *everyday life* the main focus for his early work (written in the 1960s and 1970s). However, unlike many Marxist theorists, he did not see the issue of *alienation* as being relevant in highly developed industrial culture. Baudrillard started from another phenomenon derived from Marxist theory: reification. This entails fundamental changes in the relationship to commodities as they come to be seen to embody social relations.<sup>39</sup> Eventually, Baudrillard trans-

<sup>38</sup> Baudrillard may prove to be an architectural idealist in his interviews and discussions (as in, for example, Jean Baudrillard and Jean Nouvel: *Les objets singuliers* (2000), where he occasionally expresses his personal values. Still, his theoretical monographs have always stressed the hopelessness (more precisely, fatality) of architectural utopias.

<sup>39</sup> The idea that "reification" (mental projection) lays at the basis of society derives from György Lukács' interpretation of Karl Marx. Lukács argued that the following

gressed beyond the discussion of reification, and instead the anthropological notions of *prestige*, *enchantment* and *reciprocity* became his main concern.

The idea that the battle between mastery and slavery is neither for survival nor for property but for *prestige* connected Baudrillard especially to the American 19th century sociologist Thorstein Veblen's study called *The Theory of The Leisure Class* (originally published in 1899). For Veblen and Baudrillard, communal prestige derives from the superfluous, honorific conspicuous consumption and leisure, impracticality, expensive art, sport and all kinds of wasting of time. This view of the basic dynamics of a community has profound consequences when applied to architecture. It is the opposite of the technical rationality or the blind belief in protestant ethics. Architecture, in terms of prestige, is not economical (i.e. based upon saving money) or ecological (i.e. based upon saving material). Along the lines of Veblen's model, Baudrillard theorised the transformation of an ineffective a-humanism (Marx) into a more challenging Althusserian form of theoretical anti-humanism. There history was seen as a process without a subject where the only subject is the process itself. In order to be socially effective, it is essential to *exaggerate* the unavoidable mechanisms; the mode of practice will determine the product, not the end.<sup>40</sup> Baudrillard's role in the discourse was to emphasise the qualitative function of the inevitably anti-subjectively abstracted commodity. One of those commodities was architecture.

### **Baudrillard assessed**

Because of his radicalism, Baudrillard has faced continuous critique throughout his career. Generally, his denouncement of scientific methods, including using non-explained terms and his re-

sentence by Marx defines the phenomenon: "It is only a definite social relation between men that assumes, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things" ("Es ist nur das bestimmte gesellschaftliche Verhältnis der Menschen selbst, welches hier für sie die phantasmagorische Form eines Verhältnisses von Dingen annimmt." Marx: *Das Kapital* [1969, orig. 1867 and 1885] 52. Translation A.A.). Man's own abstract constructions become something that controls him. Reification makes possible that a society is in theory able to learn to satisfy all its needs in terms of its own internal commodity exchange (See Lukács: *Histoire et conscience de classe* [1960] 110-123).

<sup>40</sup> Louis Althusser: 'Marx's Relation to Hegel' (orig. 1968) (in *Politics and History: Montesquieu, Rousseau, Hegel and Marx*). On Baudrillard and Althusser see: Mike Gane: *Baudrillard: Critical and Fatal Theory* (1991) 27.

stricted research material, have irritated many, most notably the philosopher Douglas Kellner (in his *Jean Baudrillard: From Marxism to Postmodernism and Beyond* [1989]). As I see it, however, this kind of critique clearly does not take into account Baudrillard's convictions about the predominance of enchantment, prestige and reciprocity in society and theory. Mark Poster's "Introduction" to his compilation of Baudrillard's writings (*Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings* [1992, orig. 1988]) is also a typical commentary in its duality – that is, praising Baudrillard's insight yet critical of his style – and also is a slight misreading. Poster has lifted chapters from Baudrillard's books published in the period 1968-1985. He praises Baudrillard's semiological model for being able to describe consumer society and its communications through media, yet criticises his stylistical “hyperbole”. However, Poster has his own difficulties in understanding some of Baudrillard's arguments. For example, he confuses consumer “desire” with consumer “satisfaction” when writing about Baudrillard's idea of the attraction of commodities (*ibid.*, 1) – a fundamental error. Moreover, Poster has difficulties in seeing the difference between Baudrillard's key characteristics of contemporary culture and general characteristics of culture (He makes this mistake with the terms “seduction” and “object's viewpoint”. For Baudrillard, these are not contemporary but rather timeless principles. [*ibid.*, 5-6])

In architecture, Baudrillard seems to have become best accepted as a theoretical background and a source of inspiration for the American architects Neil Denari and Wes Jones. They have been especially interested in the mythological implications of the *Machine* in architecture. Jones has studied Baudrillard's theories on the increasing “likeness” (simulacra) in society in his book *Instrumental Form* (1998). Denari has carefully scrutinised Baudrillard's early books and often makes references to them in his writings. I will discuss both of them later in closer detail.

<sup>41</sup> For another critique on Baudrillard from architectural theorists, see Sarah Chaplin and Eric Holding: 'Consuming Architecture' (in Sarah Chaplin and Eric Holding [eds.]: *Consuming Architecture* 1998). They accuse Baudrillard of general nostalgia and underestimating historical forms of commodification. Baudrillard is actually criticising nostalgia, claiming that there is no longer anything to be nostalgic about (see, for example, Jean Baudrillard: *Simulacres et simulation* [1981] 17; *La Transparence du Mal* [1990] 124). Baudrillard is heavily supported by certain anthropologists in his views on the predominance of primitive exchange, as I will later examine.

<sup>42</sup> See Jean Baudrillard: *Baudrillard Live* (1993) 21, 22, 82, 94; *L'illusion de la fin ou la grève des événements* (1992) 149-151.

Among the rare attacks against (or even commentaries on) Baudrillard within the sphere of architecture has been George Baird's book *The Space of Appearance* (1995).<sup>41</sup> Baird's critique, however, remains a little vague, as if Baudrillard was writing about nostalgic reality or irony as a self-fulfilling means. Baird does not see the larger pattern of symbolic exchange and enchantment, with their moral obligations, behind Baudrillard's statements. This is a very common reception of Baudrillard; the confusion compounded by Baudrillard's falsely assumed connection to so-called postmodernism. Because of certain critics' short-sightedness, Baudrillard was linked with the postmodern discourse led by Jean-François Lyotard's writings in the 1980s. Baudrillard, however, has questioned his participation within this genre, and stated that while postmodernism is merely about recycling historical ideas, his position remains a critical analysis of cultural processes and ideologies – such as postmodernism, for example<sup>42</sup>.

Baudrillard's credibility here is supported by his position within French sociology. As already mentioned, Baudrillard was trained as a sociologist and his teacher was Henri Lefebvre, one of the prominent members of French Marxist sociology. Baudrillard followed Lefebvre as a teacher of sociology at the University of Paris-Nanterre between 1966 and 1986. After that he was the scientific director of the Research Institute of Socio-Economical Information at the University of Paris-Dauphine between 1986 and 1990. Furthermore, I would like to emphasise especially Baudrillard's roots in the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory in analysing cultural forms and commodities. Baudrillard's interest in analysing architecture and moving images has emerged to a great extent from this background. I will examine the many forms of this link in Part 2.

### **Baudrillard and architecture**

Baudrillard's interest in architecture was evident already in the late 1960s. He gave lectures on "Social Problems of Design", "The Critique of the Concept of Environment", etc. He also attended the International Design Congress in Aspen, Colorado at the turn of the 1970s.<sup>43</sup> In the 1970s, his writings started being discussed in archi-

<sup>43</sup> See Gary Genosko: *Baudrillard and Signs* (1994) xiii.

tectural circles, as well. In fact, he even took part in the activities of the high-tech and science fiction-oriented group “Utopie”, which included also designers. Baudrillard’s first book, *Le système des objets* (1968), included analyses of such components in interior design as “the configuration of bourgeois furniture placement”, “model interiors”, mirrors and portraits”, “clocks”, “colours”, “materials”, the gestural world of effort and work compared to the new gestural world of control, “functionality”, “style”, “authenticity”, “restoration”, “unique” and “serial” objects, “collections”, “gadgets” and “models”. Throughout the book Baudrillard compares the historical, personal homes full with symbolical meaning, spontaneous joy and alterity, to modern, monotonous, pre-coded, classifying interior architecture. Baudrillard’s statements about architecture, like those on art, were usually to show the embodiments of social structures (reification) in the physical world, as in the case of his discussion of the twin towers of the New York World Trade Centre (WTC) (by architects Minoru Yamasaki and Emery Roth and Sons 1966-1973). The WTC was used as an example of the new socio-economical system of deterrence through “binary regulation” (while the old skyscrapers in New York pointed to an earlier world of the competitive market economy, with each building aggressively trying to outdo the others).<sup>44</sup> Baudrillard’s analyses of newer architecture are found in the essays ‘The Beaubourg-Effect’ (in *Simulacres et Simulation*, 1981) and ‘Truth Or Radicality: The Future of Architecture’ (in *Blueprint*, January 1999). Baudrillard was astonished by the new type of culture embodied and anticipated in the Beaubourg (The Centre Pompidou) in Paris. According to Baudrillard, the building’s “mass” culture contributes to abolishing all interpretation and ideals in society. The book *Les objets singuliers* (2000) is comprised of a series of discussions between Baudrillard and the architect Jean Nouvel. In this volume, Baudrillard propagates for the singularity of each architectural project. He thinks that socially beneficial architecture cannot be predeterminedly visual, functional or aesthetic. It cannot be designed purposely just to illustrate technical possibilities. Instead, architecture should be *radical*, that is, enigmatic, non-sensible, and taking distance from the ruling modes of culture. Baudrillard argues that places should retain their char-

<sup>44</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976) 108-109.

acteristics through time, and that changes should always be small *mutations*, not any kind of revolution. Perhaps due to his lack of information about actual architectural design processes, some of Baudrillard's criticism in *Les objets singuliers* remains misplaced. For example, Baudrillard claims that Frank Gehry's *Guggenheim Art Museum* in Bilbao somehow represents ready-made culture (ibid., 77-79). He says that this building is just a combination of prefabricated objects and techniques and that it can be translated into an infinite number of other objects. I find this argument futile because it could be used for any contemporary building. Actually, in terms of its morphology, Gehry's architecture is something totally new rather than just recycling. All in all, for a person who is already familiar with their earlier texts on architecture, *Les objets singuliers* does not include much new information about Baudrillard's (or Nouvel's) thoughts on the subject.

According to Baudrillard, architecture and urbanism – even in their most courageous forms – contribute to the reproduction of abstract social relations, leaving people collectively without responsibility. Urbanism and architecture are only able to simulate the values of exchange and collectivity, while the real collectivity can be found, for example, in surprising responses such as the lost referentials of graffiti.<sup>45</sup> Baudrillard argues – as I will show later in greater detail – that all the possible art forms, including architecture as well as the targets of oppositional art, have been destroyed. Art has lost its power of negativity – and of effectivity. Art can only produce that which has already been produced. In Part 5, I will argue against this last claim, while nevertheless approving of Baudrillard's cultural insight. Especially in his earlier works, Baudrillard's pessimistic view was that architecture cannot have a positive influence on society. However, this assumption can be questioned on the basis of his own theory of reversible *fatal strategies*. My contention is based upon the view that if Baudrillard can make an effective social (mass) critique, it should be possible to build socially beneficial (mass) architecture as well.

<sup>45</sup> Jean Baudrillard: 'Kool Killer ou l'insurrection par les signes' (in *L'échange symbolique et la mort* [1993, orig. 1976] 118-128).

### 1.3 Method and structure

I wish to demonstrate the economic-mythological character and the stages of modern mythology in architecture by comparing it to another medium, moving images. Moving images are the typical and leading art form of the consumer society (according to Baudrillard, also).<sup>46</sup> These two different art forms and technologies have common social logics. This can prove more essential in the social scope than in their physical differences. My explanation for the myths common to both architecture and moving images is that myth is a marker of social relevance, a mirror of culture, revealing factors that are otherwise difficult to detect (transformations in enchantment of appearance, ambience and image). This is my starting point when comparing moving images to architecture. I will point out the contemporary myths in moving images, which are easier to ascertain than in architecture, and then attempt to find equivalencies between their myths. I also start from the idea that myth is a result of the historical situation. This is my viewpoint when I presume, along with Baudrillard, that myths change over time.

I will first explore the foundations of consumer society as mythology and map its alternative symbolic exchange, both in relation to society in general and architecture in particular (Part 2), followed by an analysis of the mythologies of consumer society in architecture (Parts 3 and 4). Part 3 concerns the general features of architecture's mythologisation and in Part 4 I will discuss the evolved state of consumer society mythology in architecture. Eventually, I will develop a design method based upon my understanding of architecture's means of influence in consumer society (Part

<sup>46</sup> Baudrillard says that the American culture is "the original version of modernity" (*Amerique* [1986] 76) and that American culture is "cinematographic" and equals cinema and TV (op.cit. 97-99; *The Evil Demon of Images* [1988, orig. 1987] 27-28). In *The Evil Demon of Images*, he says that the daily life has become cinematographic and televisual (16-17). "The TV looks at you, goes through you like a magnetic tape – a tape, not an image", Baudrillard says (25). Most importantly, Baudrillard has repeatedly used moving images – more often than any other artform – as examples of transformations in the modes of representation and cultural accustomation to the socio-economic code.

5), a method I call *ultimategame*. *ultimategame* challenges the mythologies of consumer society that leave no room for real collective interplay. The challenge embedded within the method is based upon Baudrillard's perspective of reciprocal collectivity in the present consumer society. Finally, at the end of the study, I will present practical examples for architectural design (Part 6).

### **Architecture and moving images**

The question of architecture within the context of mythology has to do with how it reflects and materialises ideas about society and, likewise, how it functions in a larger social/mass system. My assumption is that it is only through comparisons with other domains that one can define what is typical and crucial in certain architecture. Work in the area of architecture in relation to moving images, modern mythology and masses, has been done by Baudrillard, Paul Virilio and by Gilles Deleuze. Very briefly, Virilio has concentrated on the importance of *vision* in modern mythology. He has been extremely critical towards the increasing *militarisation* of contemporary modes of mythological vision. Deleuze in his seminal works *Cinéma 1 & 2* (1983 and 1985) has focused on the characteristics of *image* in contemporary environment. All in all, it seems that moving images and architecture are technologies simple enough and close enough to people to show the dynamics of the cultural adaptation of techno-economic myths.

The reason for comparing architecture to moving images when studying mythology is that myths are easier to spot in moving images than in architecture. Works of architecture are much harder to be conceived as containing complex social themes than moving images. Yet, I will show how the same myths occur in both spheres.

*Moving images* concern a wide range of optical images, from films to moving computer images. *Film* is a general term which includes predominately non-digital documentaries, artistically oriented cinema, commercial cinema, TV series, advertisements, music videos, etc. In regard to moving images, this study is most of all concerned with such TV productions and cinema that typify the consumer society mythologies in question. In order to be really mythological, these kind of works must be both commercially and

critically successful, which is a difficult position.

The commercially most successful cinema is usually based on older, simple and used modes of mythology. That kind of cinema is praised by more “populist” critics, but not by intellectual critics who rather praise inventiveness. The cinema that processes these more “inventive” *contemporary* mythologies is difficult to approach with traditionalist attitudes, however natural that would feel due to the definition of the myth. Rather, the persuasiveness of these new moving images lies in their capacity to process new, contemporary myths. Technically, while the use of film (cellulose, acetate and other translucent materials) is still popular in our age, the moving images really typical for our age are no longer cellulose film-based cinema, but digital animation and television pictures.

I will first construct my thesis and locate its critical position within the perspective of the architectural problematics of consumer society and its mythology. According to the definition of the masses as conservative people with notoriously bad taste (which can be questioned), one may ask why I have chosen works mostly from individualist architects (of which the most important here are Jean Nouvel, Rem Koolhaas and Neil Denari). I have chosen not to examine anonymous designers or builders who work obeying rather specific commercial and industrial restrictions. The reason is that the present study is about the more difficult contemporary mythology, and ultimately about the possibilities of positively influencing society through architecture, to allow architects enough real reciprocal influence on the built environment through their work. In this sense, I study the nature of these architects’ “popular individualism”. In addition, I wish to generally defend architects’ possibility to influence and take responsibility for the environment.

Similarly, the view of the masses in this work is that they are not *predominately* conservative and unintellectual, but they develop ingenious strategies against the spreading commercialisation of culture. It is possible that architects do not simply reinforce the abstract totalizing systems of consumer society, but would rather create a challenge to it. The architects that I will examine here have been conscious of many of consumer society’s crucial dynamics that have an impact on architecture. I will examine their success in challenging the dominant myths of the consumer society.

## **2 Consumer society as mythology and its alternative**

The purpose of Part 2 is to give a necessary conceptual and historical background and tools for the latter parts of this work. I explain my basic concepts concerning the development of architecture in consumer society, Baudrillard's analysis about consumption, myths in general, his idea of symbolic exchange as an opposite to consumer society and the decisive role of the culture industry of moving images in consumer society.

## 2.1 Commodification and architecture: From the reproduction of goods to the reproduction of ideas

### The early development of architecture in consumer society

In the early stages of mass production, architects had to take into account the new tendency towards individualistic and fashionable consumption, the need to market inventions and the devaluation of objects after the introduction of machinal reproduction.<sup>47</sup> For the craftsman, the *pleasure* in work used to lie in the relation to the object that s/he produced, while the pleasure of the production of the object for the user lay in the consciousness of its human origin.<sup>48</sup> But with mass production there emerged the new *satisfaction* in society of *consumption*. Questions regarding the actual difference between fashion and style, copyright problematics, educating consumers, and the role of brand names, trademarks and display windows now emerged in architecture, too.<sup>49</sup> It was as if the magic of culture that had been lost with the loss of reciprocity between people and their handcrafted and inherited artefacts and the resultant loss of enchantment in the environment<sup>50</sup> was regained in the

<sup>47</sup> Among the architects and theorists active in the early discussion around these topics were the enthusiast of technology Gottfried Semper (in the mid-19th century) in Germany and his counterpart, the more artisan-enthusiast, John Ruskin in Britain, and later at the turn of the century, Henry van der Velde in Belgium. Especially the consumer society discussion around the Deutsche Werkbund and Peter Behrens, one of its founding members (in the beginning of the 20th century), influenced the sociologist Georg Simmel's thought, who was in this way indirectly behind the Frankfurt School tradition of the study of commodities (see Fredrick J. Schwartz: *The Werkbund: Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War*, 1996). According to Schwartz, the pre-1914 debates that flourished around Semper and the Werkbund were the origins of the Frankfurt School consumer culture theory, namely Kracauer, Adorno and Benjamin in the 1920s and 1930s.

<sup>48</sup> Especially the romanticism of Ruskin, Morris and the British Arts and Crafts movement emphasised this aspect. (See John Ruskin: *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1989, orig. 1880), ch. II, 19; ch. V, 21, 24; ch. VI, 18, 19, 20; ch. VII, 10).

<sup>49</sup> Especially the intellectual movement around the Deutsche Werkbund discussed and based their creative production on these new issues (See Schwartz: op. cit.).

<sup>50</sup> Max Weber wrote about the disenchantment and disappearance of magical, unifying meanings from the environment, when the modern, rationalised and bureaucratised world began its development. In *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* 1: 512-

satisfaction of excess and exchange. Architects and art theorists typically took moralistic attitudes towards this desire for consumption.

Maybe the intellectuals, such as John Ruskin, Henry van de Velde, Peter Behrens and the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, including Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin, were right in their criticism: the satisfaction produced by commodities cannot be compared to actual pleasure.<sup>51</sup> However, it is worth noting in regard to the question of authenticity in consumption that there is no real difference between consuming luxury artefacts and rare puritan artefacts: they are both products of the same system that produces the idea of a consumer's satisfaction. In this sense, the members of the Deutsche Werkbund longed vainly for style to replace fashion. It was no use longing for *Sachlichkeit*, the avoidance of external decoration,<sup>52</sup> because both decoration and sculptural mass entered the same realm of consumption and sign value. However, the puritan, rationalist, ascetic architecture of Adolf Loos ("Ornament and Crime"), Mies van der Rohe ("Less is more") and Le Corbusier ("A house is a machine for living in") closed its eyes to both the joy in consumption and the unavoidability of the commodification of architecture. Still, all of these architects' works depended upon the commercial sign value of uniqueness and the rarity of the individual work. The immensely influential Bauhaus theory and training technologised production, ignoring the rest of an object's life, that is, its distribution, exchange and marketing. It was as if these areas were not important aspects in distributing ideas about architecture in the new consumer society.

### Through a spatial struggle

In the Frankfurt School's early (1920s-1940s) moralist discussion, the new urban architectural condition was seen featuring the impoverishment of existence, emptied of all meaning; a transcenden-

536 (1947, orig. 1920), Weber describes how the historical, magical societies changed through "disenchantment" (Entzauberung) to modern rationality.

<sup>51</sup> Baudrillard says this about commodities in *La société de consommation* (1970) 109-110.

<sup>52</sup> This is also a very common view amongst present-day modernist architects. However, as the architecture historian and theoretician Mark Wigley points out when discussing Le Corbusier's white architecture, the technology of architecture has been the technology of surfaces: walls, ceilings, roofs, floors, etc. and thus inseparable from fashion, which is the art of surface. Mark Wigley: *White Walls, Designer Dresses* (1993).

tal homelessness.<sup>53</sup> This kind of discussion still very much persists in architectural discourse today, and it is usually referring to authentic *needs* which do not seem to be satisfied under the new conditions. It is as if one could avoid the traps of consumer society by referring to other needs.<sup>54</sup> Some critics of modern consumer society have argued that the generalisation of absolute and abstract (rationalised and technologised) space in the reified social relations has led to “emptiness”.<sup>55</sup> In addition to the mass production of construction materials and components, for example, developments in energy-supply technologies have meant the homogenisation of space.<sup>56</sup> Consequently, in the 1970s and 1980s, there emerged challenges to the “central power” by local power, “counter-space” or a “spatial struggle”.<sup>57</sup> The results of this kind of criticism towards homogenisation were the increased restoration of historical milieus, the diminished, or at least more controlled,

<sup>53</sup> See especially: Siegfried Kracauer: ‘The Hotel Lobby’, in; *The Mass Ornament* (1995). Kracauer was educated under Georg Simmel. He himself taught Adorno and was a close acquaintance of Walter Benjamin. His early articles focused on analysing alienating tendencies in the contemporary everyday environments in cities.

<sup>54</sup> As late as in the 1980s, Kenneth Frampton’s *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (1980) constituted a somewhat Frankfurt School influenced interpretation of the history of modern architecture. It became widely popular and a standard textbook in many architectural schools. The Critical viewpoint can be seen in Frampton’s interest in the mass production and technologisation of art. Frampton’s analysis, however, is too persistent in referring to unsatisfied needs. Frampton’s analysis is not able to withstand Baudrillard’s or even Herbert Marcuse’s criticism. Marcuse, a member of the Critical tradition as well, said in 1964 that needs are a “habit of thought”, the purpose of which is to feed the consumers with the established technological rationalism. (Herbert Marcuse: *One Dimensional Man* [1964], 10-18). It is as if Frampton for certain *knows* what the actual needs of people are. At the end of the book, however, Frampton actually refers to Martin Heidegger’s philosophy rather than to Critical Theory.

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, the influential Henri Lefebvre: *The Production of Space* (1991, orig. 1974) 69. After attempts to sink the architectural profession, the book finally turns to defend a “spatial struggle” against the abstract notion of space.

<sup>56</sup> Manuel Castells: *The Urban Question* (1977) 131.

<sup>57</sup> Common among some influential theorists has been the assumption that architecture is secondary to social relationships in cultural matters: e.g. Henri Lefebvre: *The Production of Space* (1991, orig. 1974) 20-291; Manuel Castells: *The Urban Question* (1977) 19, 111, 434. Early Castells saw that the dominant classes suppress others through an urban ideology. This ideology “naturalises” class contradictions by considering them “urban” (Castells, *ibid.*, 14, 85; also, *City, Class and Power* [1980, orig. 1978] 126). He saw the ecological environment issue as one of the means of “naturalising” social inequalities (*ibid.*, 159) and called for “urban movements” unifying people confronting the dominant “structural logic” (*ibid.*, 151). Social relationships cannot be treated as forms, functions, or structures, Lefebvre argues, because the underpinning of social relations is spatial. This spatiality offers an exposition of the production of the space, stressing the *use* of it, he states. For Lefebvre, this argument is used to defend the role of new architecture in creating “counter-spaces”. Edmund Soja (*Postmodern Geographies* [1990, orig. 1989]) has located such spatial struggles as “vividness”, “simultaneity” and “interconnection”. Both Lefebvre and Soja are guilty of romantically praising lived space, as if the reification would stop where public demonstrations start.

spread of rationalist modernism to rural areas, the tendency towards regionalism and the populist vernacular of post-modern classicism.

### **Into the crisis of locality**

The architecture of functionalism and international modernism in the beginning and mid-20th century manifested itself in the mass construction of new urban residential areas. Compared to this, a new trend has emerged at the turn of the millennium with increased individualism, alternatives and flexibility. These calls have been motivated by an image of the consumer as an individualistic alternative creature. What is notable in the wider scope, is that this tendency is heavily supported by post-Fordist flexible industrialism, globalism and new forms of industry and consumption dependent on telecommunications. This new individualist, networked and flexible logic of economics boosts economical competitiveness. Contemporary urbanism involves radically discontinuous and relative realities: the impact of globalisation is that as soon as a region becomes articulated into the global economy, the region becomes a part of the international “flows” of communication, capital and commodities. Simultaneously, the region also then becomes fragmented locally and geographically.<sup>58</sup> The recent calls for the “flexible”, “chaotic” and “organic” in architecture can actually be seen as products of postmodern marketing, as a naturalisation of global and flexible modes of production.<sup>59</sup> The emphasised individualism and the importance of networks in the economics, combined with the new geopolitics, has led to a new urban condition: a space of relativism, pluralism, the growth of edge cities and new polarities in metropolises, such as “fortress cities” (suburban areas for the wealthy) and the “museumification” of city centres. The spatial organisation created by the market has entailed increasing

<sup>58</sup> Fredrik Jameson: *Postmodernism: Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1993, orig. 1991) 412-13; Jordi Borja and Manuel Castells: *Local & Global. Management of Cities in the Information Age*. (1997, orig. 1996) 17, 23, 27.

<sup>59</sup> See Fredrik Jameson's article: 'Is Space Political?' in Cynthia Davidson (ed.): *Anyplace* (1995). Glen Searle argues that planning is nowadays forced to acquire the logic of company business in order to remain attractive for investors. This has resulted in short-sightedness, flexibility and cost-cutting. The reason for flexibility has been in following the obligations of the market forces. The more flexible the planning system becomes, the less power there seems to be for the planner/designer and large-scale

privatisation, and the isolation and fragmentation of space on the local scale. This process has headed into what can by all means be called a “crisis of locality”.

At the same time there have emerged different individualist and networked movements under the ideologies of environmentalism and community participation. One could also talk about a “crisis” between the global economic competition and these alternativists. However, as Glen Searle points out in his paper ‘Urban Planning as an Instrument of State Corporatism’ (2001), both of these spheres use the same individualistic logics derived from the new political economy. A counter pole to this prevailing logic is missing: symbolic reciprocity and real community are not necessarily realised through individualism. This is the real “crisis of locality”.

In addition to the crisis of the local condition, there are the architectural contributions to the networked “nodes” of the global business community. These areas for “global” company headquarters, terminals, hotels and executive housing actually do have a local connection: they use the local contexts with the purpose of attaining sign value: In Europe, the historical city centres are still valuable sites for the business elites, and the wealthy middle classes have to a great extent contributed to the spreading of the green suburbia, because there is more assumed privilege in some places than others.<sup>60</sup> The emerged economics of sign value and globalisation have broken down the historical order of cities which was based upon local traditions. This crisis of locality has emerged because of continuous efforts to establish individualism (the personalised, changing sign value in the markets) and counter-culture (new possibilities to become consumed) in the society and its architecture. This progress in local diversification and fragmentation is logical because urban culture corresponds to the phases of industrialisation and consumption.<sup>61</sup>

and long-term plans. See Glen Searle, ‘Urban Planning as an Instrument of State Corporatism’, *Planning for Cities in the 21st Century: Opportunities and Challenges. World Planning Schools Congress, July 11-15, 2001 Shanghai, China*. Marco Cenzatti argues that urban planning has become a support for the free market economy, when Fordism (and homogenisation, totalisation, rationality, expertism and mass production) have given way to many simultaneous epistemological frames. In these circumstances, the definition of suitable planning has become communication that facilitates action, and no longer planning creating the framework for a good environment. See Marco Cenzatti, ‘The Twin Crises of Planning’, *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Manuel Castells: *The Urban Question* (1977) 109, 136, 140, 143, 149-187.

<sup>61</sup> Castells defines this fact about the sources of urban culture. *Ibid.*, 19.

The ideas of alternativity and individuality can be questioned if these principles are generated not by the communal, altruistic viewpoint, but rather from the viewpoint of market economics. The role of consumption at this stage of modern societies is no longer one of uniting people in a circuit of giving and returning in a particular place, but only *control*. The capacity for architecture to be “critical” of this in any way whatsoever is dubious if the commercial system is able to control the critical positions, too. The present architectural jargon regarding such ideas such as flexibility, ecology and individual creativity in general seems questionable, because these ideas are to a great extent logical *consequences* of the present mode of industrialisation.

If architects and planners wish to look for initiatives in the process of developing the environment, it is crucial for them to study the role of architecture and architects’ potential for influence in the turmoil of both economics and the consumption of signs. Answers to the question of consumer society architecture could be found elsewhere than in individualism and alternative life styles. The urban space has transformed into a disconnected spatialised fabric exactly because of individualistic consumption habits.

What is wrong with this fragmentarity and space of flows is the loss of reciprocity and altruism in social relations. In Baudrillard’s vocabulary, the collective unity of past societies (based upon visible modes of gift exchange and challenges) has been replaced by fragmented, univocal relations and empty communication. There is no more place for complementary and challenging architecture in the socio-economic system, when all attempts to establish new architecture are already inscribed in the social code. This code destroys all attempts for pleasure and community. Instead, it offers moralistic control and the regulation of needs, along the ever-changing cycle of values.

Is “architecture without architects”, (that is, the cult of the vernacular and the conservatism of retro-styles) the alternative? No. These only lead to monumentalism or dictatorial architecture, because the common, vernacular habits are as commodified and reified as any “individually personalised” architecture. In fact, they are even more subliminal and prejudiced.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>62</sup> According to a convincing analysis by Jürgen Habermas, vernacularism produces “Führer-architecture”. Jürgen Habermas: *Modern and Post-Modern Architecture* (1997, orig. 1982) 235.

All in all, it seems that in the present economically defined spatial relations, architects are not necessarily the masters of space, the technicians or engineers of the three great variables: territory, community and movement.<sup>63</sup> Nowadays, these dimensions escape the domain of architects, until, that is, a radical alternative in architecture to individualism and soft alternativism is pursued successfully. Constructing beneficial architecture in the present condition of society would mean a drastic questioning of any architecture which satisfies needs; including individualism and alternativism itself.

### **Towards a reassessment of productive creativity and needs**

Baudrillard gives useful support in the attempt to find a radical alternative to architecture controlled and manipulated by the all-reaching socio-economic system.

Baudrillard developed his critique of the Frankfurt School interpretation of consumer society already in his first book *Le Système des objets* (1968). Baudrillard stated that commodity is not only an economic category, but also the heart of the semantic crisis that penetrates through our social system. Baudrillard argued that in order for the social system to be reproduced as it is, there must be not simply the reproduction of labour power but the continuous reproduction of the consumer's code, the rules informing consumers what is possible and what is not. Thus, for the reproduction of the consumer society, *the emerged phenomenon of mechanical reproduction cannot be considered as important as the possibility for the reproduction of values and ideas.*

*Code* is the link between the principle of production (rational individualism), the "spatial struggle" and the "crisis of locality". Actually, code is the reason for "struggle" becoming "crisis". This code makes things (not only artefacts but lifestyles, too) seem objective in their natural appeal; still, it actually hides obligations. The code has a collective function as a moral. A commodity becomes useful and exploitable only within the range of the code. The difference between Lukács, the Werkbund and Baudrillard is that Baudrillard gives – in the spirit of the Frankfurt School – more weight to the technical imperatives and psychological projections of the consum-

<sup>63</sup> In the interview *Space, Knowledge and Power* (1997, orig. 1982), Michel Foucault seems to agree with Fredrik Jameson's architectural critique when he argues this.

ers than to production and consumption itself.

Baudrillard seeks to challenge the code. However, he argues that the contemporary abstraction and commodification in society have developed so far that there is no longer any possibility for a real, meaningful and healthy contradiction in the social realm itself. When Walter Benjamin said that experience is a matter of tradition,<sup>64</sup> Baudrillard analogically states that social “objectivity”, the principle of identity, the system of personal values, needs, defences and beliefs, has as its goal only to preserve the circle of what is considered “true” in a particular situation.<sup>65</sup> That is why even ideologies and theories become reproduced.

Baudrillard argues that the new system of consumer society is in constant movement, not only as materialised in fashion, but most notably in people’s changing needs and values. Forms and values are in continuous change because they are not so much mechanically reproduced, but even conceived from the point of view of their very reproducibility. They are diffracted from a generating nucleus, namely, the code.<sup>66</sup> The code ultimately induces a form of self-consumption of the subject, where the consumer becomes the actual object of consumption in the appealing atmosphere of the market ruled by values. The *primum mobile* of the code is the *value relation* generally, because it imposes an abstract but ideologically naturalised form of obligation on all the members of society. One can say that value permits the arbitrary manipulation of the principle of reciprocity. It transmutes tradition and the reciprocity of the pre-consumer society into the concept of equivalence that is potentially free of the symbolic communal bond of mutual relation and recognition. According to Baudrillard in *La société de consommation*, the profound loss of the human relationship (reciprocal, symbolic) is the most fundamental fact of our culture. Thus, strictly speaking, Baudrillard does not question all values, but only those which diminish collective recognition and reciprocity.

### **The consumption of signs**

Understanding the fundamentality of Baudrillard’s analysis, it is no

<sup>64</sup> Walter Benjamin: *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (1977, orig. 1936) 157-167.

<sup>65</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *L’échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976) 95.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 86-98.

wonder that Baudrillard also broke beyond semiology. Baudrillard the semiologist claimed that the social and personal world is developing into a hierarchical repertoire without syntax, that is, into a system of classification and not a language. This formation is a kind of grid, in which relations become impoverished. The basic lexicon of society is full of signification and empty of meaning; it is a language of signals. The object/advertising system does not structure personality; it designates and classifies it. It is a code of “social standing”, where all individuals are described in terms of their objects. Consumption is a systematic act of the manipulation of signs, where actually only the idea is consumed.<sup>67</sup> An object as sign is never consumed in its materiality, but in its *difference*. Today, it seems that every desire, plan, need, passion and relation is abstracted (or materialised) as a sign and as an object to be purchased and consumed. For Baudrillard, the process of signification is thus, at bottom, nothing but a gigantic simulation model of meaning. He thinks that only a “total revolution”, theoretical and practical, can restore the symbolic and the collective reciprocity in the demise of the sign and of value.<sup>68</sup>

Among contemporary theorists, Baudrillard is not alone in his despising views of signs. For example, Gilles Deleuze’s study of cinema (*Cinéma 1-2*) is based on an idea about images which precede signification and production. Michel Maffesoli approaches this “anti-metaphysical” paradigm, too, in saying that the general democratic ideal of the earlier society has now been succeeded by a communitarian ideal in style and image, the being together (*l’être ensemble*) of those who participate in the same mysteries of sport, music, ethnic resurgences etc., rather than anything semiological. In a very Baudrillardian manner, Maffesoli says that the self is diluted into a viscous and confused collective entity in the intense game of differences. This game is elaborated through the primitive principle of reversibility, where style only leads to different forms of appearance.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 275-283.

<sup>68</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 277; *Pour une critique de l’économie politique du signe* (1972) 199.

<sup>69</sup> Michel Maffesoli: *The Shadow of Dionysus* (1993, orig. 1985) 4-9. For Maffesoli, style is a conjunction between the aesthetic and the uniting mystical. Despite Maffesoli’s insight about sophisticated cultural forms, he remains shallow in analysis compared to Baudrillard. Unlike Baudrillard, Maffesoli does not differentiate between the types of shared values, the enchantment within (seduction or fascination) or think of enchant-

## Simulation

Baudrillard has concentrated his thoughts about the code and the increasing abstraction in his *simulation theory*. As often repeated ever since, Baudrillard suggested already in 1976 that reality has become “hyperreal”. It has become “always already reproduced” and functions entirely in the realm of “simulation”, which is a stage in the “concession of simulacra”. In simulation, everything that “redoubles in itself”, even ordinary, everyday reality, “falls under the sign of art” and becomes aesthetic. Furthermore, these aesthetics make use value completely disappear. Theory no longer has any use value either. The undecidability of theory becomes an effect of the code. All theories become “interchangeable according to variable exchange rates” but they are that way “without investing in anything”. If one believes this, there cannot be any theory about architecture either. And all talk about the usefulness of architecture becomes irrelevant. The key issue concerning simulation and architecture is that here physical artefacts and the social become one.

Baudrillard’s term “simulation” refers to the realm of utilitarian reality turned aesthetic hyperreality – both in theory and everyday reality in its material essence. In simulation, it is impossible to say what in reality can be objectively known and what is the result of a technical intervention (medium).

In order to thoroughly understand Baudrillard’s statements about simulation from his *L’Echange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976), one must keep in mind his anticipation towards the notion of objective reality and value structures themselves. In opposition to these is Baudrillard’s view of all collective realities being based on *pretence*. According to him, our reality does not function according to the idea of value as a realistic verisimilitude at all. One can consider appearances without value statements, without anything that is supposed to *lay behind them*. Baudrillard calls us to consider appearances in Jean-Paul Sartre’s sense. This means that one must admit that an appearance is simply an outward or visible aspect of

ment in (as Baudrillard) terms of banality. Maffesoli does not think about the style itself, the style of style and this is the difference between him and Baudrillard, and the reason why Maffesoli’s theory remains rather sketchy. He is convincing, however, when in *The Contemplation of the World* (1996, orig. 1993) he argues that image, style and appearance are the new communitarian ideals in the society.

<sup>70</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre: *L’être et le néant* (1943) 11-13.

a person or a thing, without necessarily any relation to any “objective reality” whatsoever.<sup>70</sup> If metaphysics is the science of reality, as opposed to appearance, Baudrillard’s simulation theory is an anti-metaphysical theory. It is a theory of the presuppositions of economy, where appearance has more importance than so called objective reality. Reality’s relationship to appearance is conceived as being “artificial”.

By simulacra Baudrillard is referring to the historical processes of progressive materialisation through likeness, in which functional and utilitarian principles come increasingly to control the organisation of social forms from within. This means that our common restrictions depicting what is possible and what is not, are no longer symbolic and singular expressions arising from bodies inter-relating in social time, but cool bureaucratic regulation and tactics of communication over which one has no control. In *L’Echange symbolique et la mort*, Baudrillard explained how three orders of simulacra,<sup>71</sup> parallel to the mutations of the law of value have followed one another since the Renaissance: *Counterfeit* is the dominant scheme of the “classical” period up until the industrial revolution; *Production* is the dominant scheme of the industrial era (as manifested, for example, in Le Corbusier’s, Mies’s and Gropius’s architecture); *Simulation* was the reigning scheme of the later phase that is controlled by the code as a generating cell. The first order of simulacrum is based on the “natural law of value” (use value), that of the second order on the “commercial law of value” (exchange value) and that of the third order on the “structural law of value” (which is no longer referential, but a floating sign value based upon mechanical comparison).<sup>72</sup> In simulation, the very definition of the real became “that of which it is possible to give an equivalent reproduction”.<sup>73</sup> The succession of Baudrillard’s simulacra is not total. The phases are overlapping and there are certain areas in society that are more sensitive to the contempo-

<sup>71</sup> The translation of ‘L’ordre des simulacres’ in Semiotext(e)’s *Simulations* (1983), has apparently led to some misunderstandings; for example, that “simulacra” was translated into English as “appearances”, which further produced confusion between the terms ‘simulacrum’ and ‘simulation’ when reading Baudrillard’s other publications. Baudrillard’s books have been translated into English piecemeal. Until very recently, there were not enough complete works available in English to understand his basic assumptions (for example, on symbolic exchange), on which also his later works are based.

<sup>72</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *L’échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976) 17-21, 77, 89-90, 112-114.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

rary phase. Not all contemporary architecture is simulation, either. However, I am now concentrating on the later phases of the simulacra in architecture.

If one is to believe Baudrillard, then we are already well into the fourth order of simulacra, the “transpolitical”, “transaestheticised”, “viral”, “spectral”, “carcinogenic” or “fractal” phase.<sup>74</sup> Henceforth I shall refer to this phase simply as the “transmodern” stage and the new stage of simulacra as “hypersimulation”. In this phase, in the “irradiated stage of value”, there is an inflation of value, an “obesity” of value, an “epidemic of value”. One will find “transvestism”, artificial intermingling and the disappearance of antagonisms typical to the transmodern stage everywhere: in politics, in architecture, in theory, in ideology, and even in science.<sup>75</sup> Baudrillard describes how in the new transmodernity of exaggeration, everything, even the most insignificant, the most marginal and the most obscene, enculturates itself, becomes “a museum piece” and aestheticises itself. Thus from an aesthetic point of view, we are no longer either in the beautiful or in the ugly but in the “impossibility to judge”; we are condemned to profound indifference. Transaestheticisation has serious implications in architecture, which has been thought to be a profession requiring specialist skills in aesthetics. When there are no common criteria for aesthetic comparison, and non-architects without any education in the field increasingly think they are professionals in aesthetics, style and space, architecture is becoming a lost profession.

### **Alternatives: The enchantment of appearance, image and ambience**

Baudrillard’s main critique of the former consumer society theory as put forward, for example, by the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory is surprising. Baudrillard derived his theory from the roots of exchange, that is, primitive gift exchange. Baudrillard assumes that rational individualism itself fails *because it is described in terms of objectivity, production, energy and power*. Instead of these

<sup>74</sup> Baudrillard introduced this fourth stage of simulacra in ‘Transpolitics, Transsexuality, Transaesthetics’ in *The Disappearance of Art and Politics* (1992).

<sup>75</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *ibid.*, 15-20; *L’illusion de la fin* (1992), 164; *Le crime parfait* (1995), 119.

terms, the study of consumer society should mean a study of the exchange structures of tautological beliefs. It should mean a study of predominately seductive and, more generally, other *enchaining* rapports in explaining the dynamics of society, because these are nearer to the original gift exchange.<sup>76</sup> According to this view, such terms as *enchantment of appearance*, *image* and *ambience* are more important than individualism, signification, rationalism, naturalism and effectivity in all theories interpreting architecture. Architecture should be apprehended as a total *artifice*. It is not contents, but appearance, image and ambience that have become the merchandise when one talks about architecture. Before this point is understood, there can be no improvement in architecture. These terms have become not only marketable (calculative, competitive), but also the domains of coded classification. They have become the home for a circulating power of distinction and differences, symptomatic of the increasing abstraction of society. However, there are also hidden potentialities in these spheres; namely, seduction, prestige and secrecy. This dualist viewpoint of commodities and media as a playground for enchantment of appearance, image and ambience becomes crucial in Baudrillard's theory.<sup>77</sup> The belief that such "primitive" terms as enchantment of appearance, image and ambience explain how the society actually works, led Baudrillard to use a theory based on the study of beliefs in society, to *mythology*.

In my interpretation and approach here, *the enchantment of appearance* refers to a function of the outward or visible aspect of a thing, its surface and its alterations, sameness, continuity and change. Rational individualism loses its importance where meaningless transformations and metamorphoses of the enchantment of appearance reign.

There have not been many contemporary architects who would have consciously thought of their works in terms of the enchant-

<sup>76</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976) 93-94, 151, 208-215; *De la séduction* (1979) 19, 69, 105-106; 115; *Oublier Foucault* (1977) 27, 60-61.

<sup>77</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 42-88; *La société de consommation* (1970) 163, 190-192; *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976) 118-128; *Amerique* (1986) 22, 57, 120; 'Forget Baudrillard' 76; 82; 89 (In *Forget Foucault* 1987); *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 68-71, 167; *The Evil Demon of Images* (1988, orig. 1987) 14-15, 27-28, 39-53; 'An Interview with Jean Baudrillard' 39-53 (In *The Evil Demon of Images* 1988, orig. 1987); *L'illusion de la fin* (1992) 137; 'Revolution and the End of Utopia' 235-238 (in *The Disappearance of Art and Politics* 1992); *La Transparence du Mal* (1990) 179.

ment of appearance. Peter Eisenman is a rare example (The most well-known of his projects that have actually been built are: *Kochstrasse IBA Housing* in Berlin [1985], *Wexner Center for the Visual Arts* at Ohio State University [1989], and *Koizumi Building* in Tokyo [1990]). Eisenman says that the first step when making architecture based purely on its appearances is to depict what one knows from what one sees.<sup>78</sup> The second step (which suggests certain kinds of “ironical objects”, using Baudrillard’s concept) would be “inscribing the object with the possibility of looking back to the subject”. By using computer programs which randomly fold surfaces, connecting the building and landscape into one continuous whole, Eisenman attempts to create architecture which does not surrender to any particular explanation, but continuously disrupts what is defined as architecture. Eisenman’s idea of architecture as a surface is appropriate in the context I have outlined here. However, the problem with his architecture is that the enigma is lacking in the automaticity of a computer programme: in other words, Eisenman’s works are too sterile and pre-conceived to be seductive. Rather, they are merely fascinating. I will explain the importance of seduction compared to fascination later in greater detail.

For the purpose of this work, it is beneficial to think of *image* in architecture as a mental representation of appearance; it refers to simulacra, likeness, deception and looks. It is closely related to the associations the object creates in the mind. When images gain an importance of their own, suggestion begins to win over realism.

As with the enchantment of appearance, there are not many architects who have taken image as the starting point in their architecture. Jean Nouvel is one of them. He says that *image* is the matter of architecture and thus the future of architecture is not architectural in the tectonic sense.<sup>79</sup> Nouvel emphasises that he is not interested in details but images,<sup>80</sup> and that his architecture is not composed of space but of communicative surfaces, which he calls *interfaces*.<sup>81</sup> When Nouvel says that architecture is about image, and tries to critically examine this condition, he seems to be

<sup>78</sup> Peter Eisenman: *Visions' Unfolding: Architecture in the Age of Electronical Media* (1994).

<sup>79</sup> Nouvel’s view as reported by Brian Hatton: *Notes sur le tournage en extérieurs: Nouvel, Virilio, Wenders* (1992).

<sup>80</sup> Jean Nouvel: *Jean Nouvel in Conversation: Tomorrow Can Take Care of Itself* (1993).

on the right way to consciously making influential architecture in the consumer society. He accepts the unavoidable. I will return to Nouvel later.

*Ambience* in architecture refers to a mood created by a particular environment, the atmosphere of an environment. It generates feeling through, for example, vague remembrances and affects. The separation of structure and content becomes difficult when they take form in an overwhelming atmosphere.

As with the enchantment of appearance and image, not many architects have taken *ambience* seriously. However, the architectural group of the French *Situationists* were unintentional pioneers of post-Marxist architectural methodology when basing their architecture on studies of atmosphere. The Situationist Guy Debord said already in 1957 that the new architecture will primarily be based on atmospheric effects, emotionally moving situations, rather than emotionally moving forms, leading to unknown forms.<sup>82</sup> The Situationists processed themes in their early stage that have become incredibly important to advanced consumer society and its architecture: the re-awakened experimental character of modernism, the value of *boredom*, the importance of performance space and flexibility. Simultaneously, the Situationist atmospheric urbanism and the projects of the imaginative British high-tech group of architects Archigram from the 1960s can be seen as by-products of the atmosphere of the post-war economic boom and the growth in leisure activities and tourism. The Situationist movement included the architect Constant Nieuwenhuis,<sup>83</sup> in whose projects architecture was to become less a matter of objects than of ephemeral “constructed situations”, leading to unitary urbanism, where space is conditioned by controlled ambiances. Nieuwenhuis criticised all the conceptions of *ville verte*, the “green city”, and favoured the image of a city on many levels where cars may freely shuttle through

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Simon Sadler: *The Situationist City* (1988), 107, referring to Ken Snabb (ed.): *Situationist International Anthology* (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets 1986, 17-25) mentioning Guy Debord: ‘Report on the Construction of Situations’, 23 [Debord orig. “Rapport sur la construction des situations et sur les conditions de l’organisation et de l’action de la tendance situationniste internationale”, Preparatory text to the Cosio d’Arrosci Conference, July 1957, reprinted in Gerard Berreby (ed.): *Documents relatifs à la fondation de l’Internationale Situationniste: 1948-1957* (Editions Allia, Paris 1958), 607-619].

<sup>83</sup> See Constant Nieuwenhuis: *New Urbanism* (1970, orig. 1966) and *Another City for Another Life* (1958).

at the basement level amongst “public messages”, while the ground level is reserved exclusively for traversable spaces. The city of the future would be a continuous construction on pillars, an extended system of different “plug-in” structures. The overcoming of nature and submitting the climate, light and sounds in these different spaces to the control of “professional” Situationists themselves, was the ideal, harmonising the cacophony that reigns in contemporary cities intended to bring pleasure. The ambiances would be regularly changed with the aid of every technical means possible. The wish to be near to nature, a love of work and the closeness of family ties are no longer valid, said Nieuwenhuis, yet there should be a recovery of the urban space, the street.<sup>84</sup>

The contemporary architects Rem Koolhaas and Bernard Tschumi have been said to be heavily influenced by Situationism.<sup>85</sup> Actually Koolhaas even praises boringness and argues for unplanned places. In a very Situationist manner, his office OMA has famously produced guides for choosing and preserving those places which are worth visiting and has suggested demolition of the ‘bad’ areas of cities, even in such crowded places as La Defense in Paris. Koolhaas is best known for his projects built since 1980, for example, the *Netherlands Dance Theatre in The Hague* (1982-83), *Euralille Masterplan* (1989-95) and *The Congrexpo* building (1994) in Lille, *The Kunsthal* (1993) in Rotterdam and *The Educatorium* (1993-97) in Utrecht. Tschumi’s Neo-Constructivist works include *Parc de la Villette* in Paris (1989) and *Le Fresnoy Media Art Center* in Tourcoing (1999). Without doubt, Koolhaas’ and Tschumi’s multi-layered and hectic urbanism and the predominance of events belong to the Situationist atmospheric tradition. However, Koolhaas breaks drastically at least with Nieuwenhuis’ conceptions when he expresses his disbelief in the beneficiality of pedestrian areas in cities.<sup>86</sup> Koolhaas is correct: such a communitarian ideal as a pedestrian street in itself cannot avoid the social code, whatever the atmosphere.

The Situationists, Tschumi and Koolhaas have all been heading in the right direction if one believes Baudrillard’s interpretation of the dynamics of consumer society. They have based their works

<sup>84</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>85</sup> According to James Donald, in Sallie Westwood and John Williams (eds.): *Imagining Cities: Scripts, Signs, Memory* (1997).

<sup>86</sup> Rem Koolhaas: *Conversations with Students* (1996).

on a conscious study of atmosphere rather than functions or meanings in architecture. The famous “congestion” in Koolhaas’ works can be recognised as an atmospheric effect created by “programming”. Koolhaas tries to create architecture congested with the masses in diverse actions. These actions have typically not been assigned a specific place. This is the difference between new programming and former planning functions.

Rational individualism must be abandoned when interpreting mass society. In Baudrillard’s criticism of the previous theories of consumer society, it is very much a question of the theory of consumer culture elevating to the level where it drops romantic communitarian ideals at the mass stage. That is why, first of all, long-term projects now become extremely difficult to realise in architecture, when there cannot be any constant values. Moreover, also architecture as a mass medium erases the rhetorical use of discourse that has defined intellectuals. The difference between “high” and “low” architecture does not actually disappear, but becomes aleatory and constantly shifting. For example, when Lefebvre<sup>87</sup> discusses how for him negative “architect’s space” is totally different from positive “lived space”, he seems perfectly correct, but in regards to Benjamin’s views on the increasing function of diversion in the arts, one wonders whether it is really so that the entertaining lived space has more advantages than architecture processed by an educated formalist and modernist professional.

Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer first interpreted the mass society in terms of primitive anthropology. Benjamin was concerned about the emerging masses losing control of social processes because the masses had a diminishing role in social rituals and an increasing need for entertainment.<sup>88</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer saw happening in the emerging mass society a regression to anthropologically more primitive stages.<sup>89</sup> Understanding the anthropological and primitive background of the analysis of the mass society is crucial for understanding such social critics as Baudrillard and Maffesoli and the later parts of the present study. The next chapter will deal with this topic, that is, myths and primitive symbolic exchange.

<sup>87</sup> Henri Lefebvre: *The Production of Space* (1991, orig. 1974) 350-360.

<sup>88</sup> Walter Benjamin: *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (1977, orig. 1936) 136-147; 150-153.

<sup>89</sup> Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer: *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1981, orig. 1947) 47-52.

## 2.2 The rational, creative individual vs. symbolic exchange

In my approach, mythology refers to *culturally formative abstractions of forms that are taken for granted*. Therefore, a myth is not a semantic or ideological fact, but an operational fact. Learning on ideas from Heikki Luostarinen and William G. Doty, I will now formulate a definition of myth that can unite the myth theories within the academic fields of anthropology, sociology, philosophy, theology and literary studies. Thus, “mythological thinking” would be

*–the logic of physical and social reality that has been transformed into a mental and cultural logic.*<sup>90</sup>

Myths determine what is considered true as a self-evident reality. Every era has its own myths. When new and “more real” myths appear, old myths once considered natural disintegrate into stories, beliefs or behavioural codes. Then the myths change to become stereotypes; they come to be considered socially and culturally conditional. A belief can, for its part, change to become a stereotype and finally, a myth, by means of powerful propagation.<sup>91</sup> One may divide myths into two categories: the narrative myths, which have some consistency, and the newer, fragmentary myths.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, if one studies the myths of consumer society, one can further separate certain larger mythological patterns into sub-myths. In the following I will first study the architectural indica-

<sup>90</sup> I lean especially on Heikki Luostarinen: *Luonnolliset myytit ja keinomyytit: Nyky-yhteiskunnan myytirakenteesta*. (1982) [Natural myths and artificial myths], 285; and William G. Doty: *Mythography, The Study of Myths and Rituals* (1986) 11.

<sup>91</sup> Luostarinen, *ibid.*, 287.

<sup>92</sup> According to Roland Barthes, the duty of myth was to bring the world to a standstill, simplifying the complexity of signs and to make them natural. Barthes laid the foundations for the appreciation of mythology in modern environments when he said that myth makes contingency appear eternal, it is constituted by the loss of the historical quality of the things. In myth “things lose memory”. Myth makes things innocent. In passing from history to nature, myth acts economically: it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it does away with all dialectics, it organises a world that is without contradictions because it is without depth: things appear to mean something by themselves. Roland Barthes: *Mythologies* (1957) 215-217. In *Changer l'objet lui-même: La mythologie aujourd'hui* (1994, orig. 1971), Barthes commented on *Mythologies* (1957) from fourteen years

tions of the major myths of consumer society (see chapter 2.2) before scrutinising more specific myths in architecture and moving images (Part 3).

One brief definition of a not-so-fragmented myth is that it is a *story with culturally formative power*. The purpose of myth is emotional conviction – persuasion and suggestion.<sup>93</sup> However, what is crucial in myth is not the story or the fragments themselves but the *function* they serve in the life of an individual, group or a whole society. Thus, what makes a myth is not its content, but the *use* to which the story is put. In ordinary language, myth is often used to express something untrue, utopian, misguided, etc.<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, the events recounted in myths have a true validity for the person who is entangled in them. For this reason, the use of the term ‘myth’ in everyday language is, from the scholarly point of view, inexact – if one wishes to be clear about the ambiguity in the term.<sup>95</sup> The essence of myth is an enchanted representation of what is considered natural. This persuasion is opposed to the simple explanations that discharge (explain away) any myth of its enchanting capabilities. Eventually, the consequence of theorising myths – that is, creating a logic or metaphysics within which they have an integral part – may be continued enchantment, banalisation, or ambivalence between them.<sup>96</sup> My interest here lies in their continued enchantment.

Suggestion is the principal power of not only myths themselves, but also the mass media. Inevitably, the mass media try to increase suggestion. This development has led to a general increase in receptivity to myth (social control), to the increasing exclusion of real participation in ritual:

earlier and saw that the contemporary myth is discontinuous, no longer experienced in long fixed narratives. For Paul Virilio, myth is a fragmentary tendency. Paul Virilio: *Pure War* (1983) 11-12.

<sup>93</sup> In his essay *Myth in Primitive Psychology* Bronislaw Malinowski pointed out that most Western interpreters of myth go wrong precisely because they do not observe how myths are actually used in the social situations where they are important (1954: 96-111, cited by Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe: *New Religions in Global Cultures* [1990: 82]). A vacuum is immediately created if the contribution made by myth to culture is demonstrated away. Enchantment disappears when the myth becomes explained thoroughly.

<sup>94</sup> The understanding of myth’s meaning as something *untrue* dates back to the Greek philosophers of the third century BC, and was popularised by Enlightenment thinkers in the late eighteenth century (see Hexham and Poewe, *ibid.*, 80; and also Jan de Vries: *The Study of Religion* [1967, orig. 1961] 3-18; Lauri Honko: *The Problem of Defining Myth* [1972]). These explanations were designed to serve the elite, but, remarkably, they did not affect folk religion and official cults.

<sup>95</sup> Lauri Honko: *The Problem of Defining Myth* (1972).

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

–[A]dvertising and the ‘news’ thus constitute the same visual, graphic, acoustic and mythic substance, whose succession and alternation at the level of all the media appears natural to us – they create same ‘curiosity’, same spectacular and lucid absorption [...] Journalists and advertising executives are operators of myth: they create a scene for the fictive object or the event. [...] The truth is that advertising (and the other mass media) does not fool us: advertising is beyond the true and the false. [...] The reality is nothing more than this model speaking of itself. [...] And as in the world of magic, this tautology of speech seeks to induce tautological repetition by an event. Through his purchase, the consumer can do nothing but consecrate the event of myth.<sup>97</sup>

Nowadays, *communication* – instead of ritual – as such has become increasingly more important than it was previously, because the reader, listener, or viewer, is more passive than the participant in earlier events. Among these passivising mythological types evident in the mass media are not only those that resemble the heroes of ancient and classical myths (sports heroes, stars of popular music, moving images and architecture, astronauts and other celebrities). However, these types of myths clearly show this univocality.<sup>98</sup> Thus, also the idea of an architectural hero, or “design wizard”, undermines the possibilities for real social interaction between the medium and the consumer. Many of the world’s most famous architects seem to have been excellent persuaders, polemic writers and theorists – from Alberti to Palladio and from Le Corbusier and Alvar Aalto to Jean Nouvel and Daniel Libeskind. Of course, an emphasised lack of theorising can also be a persuasive attitude. There cannot be any possibility for architecture as a collective or social practice anywhere else than through persuasion. Also propositions concerning *use* are mythical in architecture.

Contrary to the usual definition of myth as a purely fictitious narrative, in sociology the term “myth” refers to belief systems and their creation as well as to ritualised forms of behaviour. Mythological thinking lacks the consistency of a world-view, ideology, phi-

<sup>97</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *La société de consommation* (1970): ‘Mass media, sexe et loisirs’ 196-199 (translation A.A.). See also about this lack of reciprocity in the mass media: Jean Baudrillard: *Pour une critique de l’économie politique du signe* (1972) 208-210; and also about this tendency in contemporary mythology in general: *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1987), *Macropaedia*, vol. 24: 716 (this entry is written by Kees W. Bolle).

<sup>98</sup> *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1987), *ibid.*

osophy, perspective and paradigm, because mythologies are constructed from isolated, even contradictory, fragments and this tendency in myths seems to be increasing, if we are to believe such theorists as Barthes and Baudrillard.<sup>99</sup>

Mythology purposely requires *ritual* to become properly articulated. In a situation without any possibility for reciprocal rituals, communication tends to remain unilateral, and participants are left without the possibility to respond. Ritual duplicates myth in action, but this opposition is the same as between thinking and acting. Ritual emphasises every kind of ambiguity and exchange. It is continuous, whereas myth is composed of discontinuous units, containing segments, distinctions, contrasts and oppositions. However, ritual is a coherent and active *response* to the way man thinks of the world, to the myth.<sup>100</sup> From the viewpoint of understanding the logic of myth, it is important to notice that it does not really matter which side one takes in the rituals concerned with certain myths: for example, a fashion victim or a worshipper of *auteurs*. It is only the existence of a certain myth that is crucial for the ritual. Some mythical issues may simply disappear when new ones arise, all the mythical discourse's arguments disappearing with them. The question is only why some topics exhilarate us to the extent that the topic becomes culturally definitive and others not.

### Baudrillard and myth

There are few devices for solving the myth structures in contemporary culture. A great part of myth research concentrates on native peoples living without writing. Still, what is regarded as modern finds its explanation in modern myths. Because of the myth's tautology, contemporary myths are difficult to analyse. For Baudrillard, the most remarkable myths of the highly technological consumer culture are the supposed *absence of myth* itself and the myths of *rationality* and *signification*. Moreover, according to Baudrillard,

<sup>99</sup> Roland Barthes: *Mythologies* (1957) 215-217; *Changer l'objet lui-même: La mythologie aujourd'hui* (1994, orig. 1971); Jean Baudrillard: 'Forget Baudrillard Interview' (1984-85) 101-102 (In *Forget Foucault & Forget Baudrillard*). Baudrillard talks about "the relentless", "un-calculated", cancer-like, un-dialectic logic of "the way things are evolving nowadays" in politics, civil society and the media. See also Jean Baudrillard and Marc Guillaume: *Figures de l'altérité* (1994) 37.

<sup>100</sup> Roberto Calasso: *The Ruin of Kasch* (1994) 202-203; Claude Lévi-Strauss: *L'homme nu* (1971) 607-616.

even *consumption* itself can be seen as a modern myth. Baudrillard's view of mythology regards these supposed motivations behind the workings of society as being secondary to the *enchanting* components in appearances, images and ambience as formative agents of culture. As I see it, the idea of Baudrillard's mythological interpretation is to reveal these hidden agendas.

Baudrillard will be my main source in the mythological analysis of consumer society. For Baudrillard, myths are certain culturally illusory and provisional integrating superstructures; global interpretation structures, morals, and a total consensus, which manifest themselves through an operability of fact without purpose.<sup>101</sup> Baudrillard argues that the supposed contemporary absence of myth, the supposed release from magical and religious obligations in developed society, and the supposition that consumer society no longer produces myth is all due to the fact that consumption itself is a myth. Modern mythology only hides in the ever more delicate and complex system of abstraction.<sup>102</sup> However, the apparent disappearance of myth means for Baudrillard actually only the apparent disappearance of the illusory transcendental dimension.<sup>103</sup> Accordingly, when architecture becomes solemnly treated as a medium of presence and meaning, without a concern for image, it is no longer a mirror to imagination. Instead, the openly symbolic

<sup>101</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *La société de consommation* (1970) 311-313: "The consumption is a myth. That is to say that it is speech of the society about itself, the way how our society speaks of itself. [...] It is not a supplementary dimension, it is a fundamental dimension, because it is a myth. [...] If one did nothing but consume (to monopolize, to devour, to digest), consumption would not be a myth [...], a system of global interpretation, a mirror where one enjoys oneself superlatively, a utopia, an anticipated reflection. [...] [T]he consumed image of consumption constitutes our new tribal mythology – the moral of the modernity. In *Le miroir de la production* (1975) 56-58, Baudrillard discusses primitive and magical agriculture, where all the community's products are cycled in symbolic exchange, and compares this to Karl Marx's claim that all mythology disappears when real domination enters the history. Baudrillard clarifies his view that myth is still alive in the contemporary society: "Apart from the fact that mythology here is simply returned to an illusory and provisional superstructure, it is not true that the 'real' domination of nature makes the 'imaginary' totally disappear, for the good reason that it generates a fundamental contradiction, related to its abstraction and even to its rationality. The primitive symbolic exchange, *more concrete in this respect*, did not know about [abstraction and rationality]" (ibid. p. 58, fn.1); In *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976), 93-94, Baudrillard describes the mythical character of rationality: "[it] lays in an operability without fact, an operability without discourse, became its own myth or a machine; unspecified, random, something like a social genetic code..." In Baudrillard: 'Forget Baudrillard' (1984-85) 113 (in *Forget Foucault and Forget Baudrillard* 1987), Baudrillard (in discussion on the transpolitical and fascism) describes a myth as "a total autonomy of a narrative, a form" (translations A.A.).

<sup>102</sup> *La société de consommation* (1970) 311.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

quality of cultural conventions is then replaced by seemingly rational qualities.

### Individualism and creativity as myths

I will now examine certain myths of consumer society that I consider to be *modernist*, an issue separate from the more vague sphere of the *modern* (new) in architecture. Paul-Adam Johnson proposes that the only thing students of architecture can do is to invent their own mythic realms criticising commonly used concepts (which are themselves myths).<sup>104</sup> However, if one agrees with Baudrillard, one must oppose such a viewpoint. It is characteristic of myths that they are shared, and thus individualism does not apply to them very well. Actually individualism itself is another myth, consisting of the personalisation of commodities:

*–Affluence and Consumption are always lived like a myth (of the anticipation of happiness, beyond history and morals), and sustained by an objective process of adaptation to the new type of collective conduit.*<sup>105</sup>

The methodological analogy between the creator and the work of art is the basic myth in modernist theories: art sharing a depth of personality, aesthetic intuition, biographical context, psychological models of creativity, the existence of private worlds of allusion – all this calls for an analogy between the work of art and its maker.<sup>106</sup> In architecture this myth takes place already in the belief that architecture is about *creativity*. This belief is strong especially in the rituals of architectural *machismo*, by which I mean the interpretation of the lone hero – Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe or Alvar Aalto – doing what they “have to do” by inner pressure and personal imagination, as if gods creating the world. However, individualism and creativity (as a productive force) are only codes that hide larger structural patterns in the society.<sup>107</sup> The sub-

<sup>104</sup> Paul-Adam Johnson: *The Theory of Architecture* (1994) 50.

<sup>105</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *La société de consommation* (1970) 117. It is here that Baudrillard scrutinises further his theory of consumption as a myth (ibid. 117–138).

<sup>106</sup> Rosalind E. Krauss: *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (1989, orig. 1986).

<sup>107</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (1972) 87–89; *La société de consommation* (1970) 103, 119; *Le miroir de la production* 5–8, 46, 93–94, 106, 108; 114–115; *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976) 22–44; 49–52.

ject and its supposed individualism (through personalised objects) can be seen as nothing more than a screen of *economic* terms.<sup>108</sup>

### The Star Cult

A remarkable modernist myth that follows the myth of the subject's functional and productive expression, where the architect has become an ideological structure of abstract production, is the myth of the *Star Cult*. *Star Cult* is a combination of individualist creativity and idealisation. It is evident every time the culture industry produces stars, in all domains of culture, transforming perhaps selfish and bad-mannered artists with some desirable works into people with a high level of personal sophistication as if continuing a classical tradition. The myth of the *Star Cult* can be evinced when the work becomes apprehended as an achievement of an individual even though it was a result of team work. What is notable is that when the system constructs *The Star*, it constructs him/her principally as a productive force. This materialisation over-determines *The Star* also as a model for everybody as a *producing agent*.

Individualism and creativity are dependent upon a more general myth of *production*. In *Oublier Foucault* (1977), Baudrillard defines *production* and *enchantment* as opposites;<sup>109</sup> to produce (or to *create*) is to force to materialisation that which belongs to another order, namely to that of enchantment and secrecy.<sup>110</sup> If one accepts this view, also architectural creation is about enchantment and persuasion rather than actual production. Accordingly, art should become defined by the terms of enchantment, rather than creation. The "purpose of enchantment" is to make sure that reversibility and reciprocity work in society. Without the non-productive and non-rational principle of enchantment, we would all live in a totally mechanical and automated world.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (1972) 93; *La société de consommation* (1970) 116-119.

<sup>109</sup> One can see a striking resemblance between Baudrillard's idea and Max Weber's theory of "Entzauberung"; the primitive, magical societies transforming through "disenchantment" into rationalised societies (Max Weber: *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* [1947, orig. 1940] 1, 512-536).

<sup>110</sup> For Baudrillard, enchantment is that which is everywhere and always opposed to production. Jean Baudrillard: *Oublier Foucault* (1977) 27.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-61.

<sup>112</sup> Georges Bataille: 'La part maudite' (1974, orig. 1949) in *Oeuvres complètes VII*; Marcel Mauss: *Essai sur le don* (1968, orig. 1950).

## Consumption as myth

Consumption has usually been a derogatory word among modernist architects, who have thought that their task is to cultivate people with puritanist values. Luxury and the wasting of materials and space have been considered to a great extent immoral in the architecture of the last century. The contemporary trend of ecology has even emphasised this view. However, as Malinowski, Durkheim, Mauss and Bataille pointed out, it is very authentic and ethical for primitives to squander everything in feasts (such as the potlatch cult) yet still choose to live below the vital minimum.<sup>112</sup> According to social logic, luxury may be a primal need because it supersedes the minimum via negation. Likewise, the obligatory consumption may rise above any strict necessary when consumption becomes labour. Baudrillard says this is possible because people do not actually consume objects, but rather they consume the *system* of consumption.<sup>113</sup> By consuming the code, people only reproduce the system and in this sense, consumption is based upon denying the reality of things. It is not about pleasure but about abstract satisfaction. Baudrillard argues that consumption is a myth, like a kinship system.<sup>114</sup> Consumption is governed by a form of magical thinking where daily life is governed by a mentality based on miraculous thought, a primitive mentality and a belief in the omnipotence of signs.<sup>115</sup> Affluence related to commodities, such as architectural satisfaction, is thus actually only the architectural accumulation of signs of happiness reproduced by the architectural commodity.

The effect of the code is that, like every great myth, the myth of “consumption” has its discourse (luxury) and its anti-discourse (environmentalism). Only the two sides taken together constitute the myth, but there is no real discussion in this counter discourse, and for this reason no challenge. Critique is impossible in a myth, because already by mentioning the target of its critique, critique renews the myth. Baudrillard says that while medieval society balanced between God and the devil, they have been replaced in our society by empty babble between consumption and its denunciation.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *La société de consommation* (1970) 312.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-28, 312-315.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-28.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 315-316.

## Signification as myth

There is a drastic difference between pre-industrial collectivity, where architecture derived its meaning from concrete and spontaneous human relations, and the consumer society, where architecture has become consumed through signs: signs of affluence, eternity, efficiency, etc. This sign system can also be considered as a specific mythology, where the sign derives its meaning in a system which cannot be thought outside the system itself. Baudrillard writes in *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (1972) that one example of "mythical thinking" is reflected in the rationality of economy of modern societies, when these "naturalise the process of signification" (ibid., 72). Signs are used to keep up a system of values through mythical mystification based on the "mystery of merchandise" (ibid., 131). In this sense, signification is a mode of classification and its chronological manifestations, the simulacra, are mythological constructions. The object as a sign gathers its meaning only from its differential relation to other signs. In consumption, the object as sign is abstract (based upon substitutions, distinctions, statuses, values) and is no longer based upon concrete human relationships (ibid., 63-66).

The difference between Baudrillard and Lévi-Strauss or Barthes is that for Baudrillard the myths are not universal signs having a certain content or ideology but what I would call a "spirit of the game". In Baudrillard's perspective, the names of the myths are only the names of the "games", of the systems that exchange among themselves. These games are composed of differences and ambivalences. For example, beauty is part of the game between beauty and ugliness, and thus ugliness may be beautiful as well. (This can be seen in the cycle where 30-year-old initially negatively received environments almost inevitably become considered as "beautiful" or at least as "stylish").

A fundamental issue concerning the myth of signification and architecture is thus no longer the presence of architecture itself, but the value of architecture in the ambient harmony of signs. Colour, material and physical dimensions enter this logic not as concrete but as abstract terms open to mental manipulation. These terms are not signs originally. They become signs as they enter into the system ordered by classification; for example, "hot" and "cool"

colours, rhythms of spaces, etc. Glass is perfectly suited for this order, because it tends to abolish the mysteries of interiority, says Baudrillard.<sup>117</sup>

### Rationality as myth

Rational, normative, critical and scientific thought provides the means of combating the diffusion of myth. However, it may do so only on the condition that one retains a firm and uncompromising faith in the integrity of reason and in the transcultural validity of the scientific enterprise. That is also why myth must be taken seriously. As Adorno and Horkheimer, affirming Lévi-Strauss's view,<sup>118</sup> showed in their *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1947), science requires a mythic dimension in order to function. Our culture is characterised more by *faith* in science and magical thinking than by appreciation or understanding the scientific method and rational thought.<sup>119</sup>

Baudrillard thinks that the idea of a natural, rational relation between the function proper to the object and man's needs, without any ambivalence, contributes to mythology in modern culture.<sup>120</sup> This relation is based upon a mythical belief in the moral law of benefit, an "operational fact". The mythology of the industrial society is thus based on its pressurising over-reification of objects, where people want the rational principles to be the only and automatic truths. As Baudrillard argues, corresponding to this technical organisation of objects is a systematic cultural organisation of ambience that imposes a new morality regarding such functions as eating, sleeping, smoking, receiving people, etc.<sup>121</sup> A more rationalised and "cultural" organisation of the environment replaces the traditional *material organisation* (like the totemic organisation, the division of the world into material classes).

Nevertheless, as Baudrillard points out in *Le système des objets*, technological objects are often not *lived* as practical and rational innovations, but rather as erratic novelties. Their fascination is formed to a great extent in relation to the established myths of

<sup>117</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 57-59.

<sup>118</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss: *Structural Anthropology* (1977 [translation 1963], orig. 1958) 230.

<sup>119</sup> Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer: *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1981, orig. 1947) 21.

<sup>120</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* 68-72.

<sup>121</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 42-43.

promise, security and danger. This can be seen perfectly well in the architecture feasting upon high technology in so-called high-tech architecture.

Architect Wes Jones is the high-tech architect who has been most notably interested in this operational or instrumental meta-language of objects.<sup>122</sup> He points out how objects signify usefulness; one expects that objects are ready for a certain action, that one can use them for something particular, even if it is not certain for what. It is indeed the *operationality* that makes the myth of *rationality*: the viewers are always potential users and the rational object draws on this for its engageability. Jones argues this relationship culminating in the myth of *the Machine*, what he also calls *the Bossness*. He says the “boss” object is firstly a thing, a “watchamacallit”, “doohicky”, “thingamajig”, “thingamabob”, “doofer”, “gizmo” or “widget”.<sup>123</sup> Of these “scientific guarantors” of high technology, as John Orr calls them,<sup>124</sup> one knows that something has been solved but not exactly what and how. Jones says they become “bosses” when they engage the viewer sufficiently to seek or assign a *permanent name*, like a *building* assigned to a certain “use”. At that point it has elicited the viewer’s respect, even if its forms have nothing to do with actual usefulness. This is the mythical appearance of high-tech certainty. In *Le système des objets*, one of Jones’ sources, Baudrillard described the mythologisation of rationality in interior design and atmosphere as myths of “symbolical engineering” and “systematic cultural technicality”. Baudrillard analysed modern mythologies surrounding design objects such as clocks, glassware and automobiles but also colours and collections of interior items in general. He noticed that despite all the manipulation of rationality, consumption and advertising produce a new kind of ethic, one based on a consumerist (leisure) ethic and a mythology of fun and gratification rather than a productivist (work) ethic, based upon needs. The form of consumption tends to be more and more an aesthetic one, related to *science fiction* rather than technical usability.<sup>125</sup>

### **The five functions of myths**

Baudrillard has avoided too strict analytical descriptions. However, on the basis of his analysis of *nature* in mythical terms, supported by his other texts about the presuppositions of myths,<sup>126</sup> I am able

to make the formulation that myths have five types of dynamics in consumer society:

1. Determination (suggestion, persuasion, self-sufficiency).
2. Materialisation: physical imitating mental environment (reification).
3. Conceptualisation: mental imitating physical environment.
4. Irrational explanations (dreams, absurdity).
5. Enchantment (mystery, seduction, enigma, fascination).

In *Le système des objets*, Baudrillard explains how *nature* is “re-invented” in accordance with the technical reality principle as different “ambiances”: it becomes a total simulacrum of an automated nature.<sup>127</sup> He adds that like all mythologies, this one too has two sides to it: it mystifies man by submerging him within a functional dream, but it equally well mystifies the object (*nature*) by submerging it within the irrationality of human determinants.<sup>128</sup>

As I interpret Baudrillard's theory of modern myths, there are then basically two sides to every myth: 1) the simulacra of the real

<sup>122</sup> Wes Jones: *Instrumental Form* (1998) 265-275.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> John Orr: *Contemporary Cinema* (1998) 136.

<sup>125</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 161-174.

<sup>126</sup> See especially *ibid.*, 153-165. In *La société de consommation* (1970) Baudrillard uses the term “objective determination” to describe the mythological characteristics of consumer society, comparable to Melanesian gift exchange practises. In *Le système des objets* (1968) Baudrillard applies the term “alibi” to describe the determination of how mythical objects are beyond being either “true” and “false”, they just have an “alibi” to belong to a preconceived mythical environment, such as an époque, a style, or the sphere of models or series (*ibid.*, 112-113). In *La société de consommation* Baudrillard also describes a myth as being “beyond history and morals” (*ibid.*, 117), a self-determined, phenomenon: a “self-fulfilling prophecy” (197), “a global interpretation system”, “a total consensus” (*ibid.*, 312-313). This determination could also be called “naturalisation”, as Baudrillard says that the naturalised process of signification is “mythical thinking that is reflected in economical rationality” (*Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* [1972] 72). Myth is not any ideological or political sphere in Baudrillard's writing, but a certain kind of relationship between a thing and its abstract capacities. Usually Baudrillard describes this relationship as “tautology”, using “phrases with repetitive imperative” (*La société de consommation* 199). Baudrillard uses these words when describing the mythical characteristics of certain cigarette and watch brands. I have used the terms “materialisation” and “conceptualisation” in order to describe these tautological dynamics between material and abstract spheres in myths (*ibid.*, 198-199). In *A l'ombre des Majorités silencieuses* (1978, 61-62) Baudrillard discusses with actual mythical terms the reversibility between natural and social phenomena (such as catastrophes and terrorism) in society, that I have here called reification and conceptualisation. In *Le système des objets* (*ibid.*, 163-165) Baudrillard also says that the mythology of a machine lies in its *mystery*, the *miraculous phantasm* of functionality, not in its function. In *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* Baudrillard also uses the words “mystery” and “mystification” in describing the “mythical” systems of signification and values (*ibid.*, 130-131). I have here referred to this characteristic of myth by the term of “mythical seduction”.

<sup>127</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 164.

and 2) the principle of enchantment. Enchantment makes the myths – also the myths of the real – current and appealing.<sup>129</sup>

Baudrillard remarks that the primal enchantment has not actually disappeared in consumer society, but rather that the quality of enchantment in myths only changes for the worse, that is, when everything becomes regarded as operational, when physical reality becomes indistinguishable from cultural reality.<sup>130</sup> This operational tautology is formulated, for example, as follows: “The truth about architecture is that...” or “This can only be made like this...” or even: “An apartment is the place of application for the performance of housing”. The structure of truth produces the notion of the natural even if it is only an effect of the logic.

Baudrillard has later continued diagnosing contemporary social mechanics from the same viewpoint with this initial analysis first described in the terms of mythology. In his later works he does not that much use the actual word “myth”, but still it is justified to examine Baudrillard’s theories on simulation and seduction within the context of myths, because the starting point of these theories is the same: the self-sufficient, tautological, magical thought at the core of consumer society. Baudrillard discusses symbolic exchange in connection to the myths of consumer society already in his three first books, and thus also for that reason the linkage is justified.

### **The opposite to consumption: symbolic exchange**

The supposed primary importance of enchantment or seduction in

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> See Jean Baudrillard: ‘L’écliptique du sexe’ (in *De la séduction* (1979), especially 70-73). I have here translated Baudrillard’s French word “séduction” generally in its meaning of “enchantment” because otherwise his later developments on the modes of enchantment, including, amongst others, the mode of “seduction”, would not be understandable. Only when referring to a certain type of enchantment, have I translated “séduction” as “seduction”. In *De la séduction*, Baudrillard clearly discusses the phenomenon of enchantment in general and not only its passing mode of seduction that has an importance in his temporal interpretation of society. Baudrillard himself uses ‘enchantment’ (“enchantelement” or “féerie” as a larger, categorical term, for example, in *L’échange symbolique et la mort* (1976), 144: “Even if fashion is in itself enchanting [féérique], it remains the enchantment of the commodity, and, still further, the enchantment of simulation, the code and the law’ (translation A.A.). Another example: in *Le crime parfait* (1994, 69) Baudrillard writes about the loss of seduction in the automaticity of the world as the loss of “enchantment”: “For the tragic illusion of destiny, we prefer the metaphysical illusion of subject and object, the right and the wrong, the good and the evil, the real and the imaginary, but in the ultimate phase, we again prefer the virtual illusion of destiny where there is no right or wrong, no good or evil, where it is impossible to distinguish the real and the referential, where the world is artificially recon-

all societies has deep anthropological roots in Baudrillard's writings. I will explain these motifs in greater detail because they are crucial for my approach to the architecture of consumer society. Baudrillard's mythological analysis of commodification and his emphasis on seductive motifs lies on the assumption that the same principles that defined the ancient (tribal) communities still rule the sophisticated culture, but only in abstracted forms. That is why Baudrillard's writings on myths cannot be understood properly aside from his idea of *symbolic exchange* and the importance of gift exchange and challenge. Symbolic exchange is the opposite of the political economy of the sign and value, and the answer to the "crisis of locality" of consumer society is to be found in this direction. Symbolic exchange is an intra-subjective metamorphic process that takes place through the absolute necessity of enchantment and becomes activated by social challenges. It excludes any surplus (because anything that cannot be exchanged or symbolically shared would break the reciprocity). It also excludes the idea of production (by circulation). Symbolic exchange in architecture must not be thought of as being "symbolic architecture". Sheer symbolic participation, such as symbolic architecture e.g. architecture which is a symbol, or consists of symbolic details, is different from symbolic exchange.<sup>131</sup> The "symbolic" in Baudrillard's use of the word is not related to symbol in the semiological sense.<sup>132</sup> Successful architecture for symbolic exchange is the one that exists beyond its own reality, which creates a relation of contradiction, misappropriation and destabilisation. Without this ambiguity a social relation cannot be unique and reciprocal.

Reading Baudrillard, there seems to be three forms or types of symbolic exchange. The simplest form of mythology is the gift ex-

structed. By the price of total disenchantment [désenchantement], we would enjoy total immunity" (translation A.A.). In *Les stratégies fatales* (1983), Baudrillard names seduction and fascination as two separate "forms of perception, pleasure and sensibility" (75). For the sake of clarity, I have taken enchantment as the unifying term describing all of these aspects.

<sup>130</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 7-9.

<sup>131</sup> By "symbolic architecture" I am here referring to interpretations of the symbolic comparable to Christian Norberg-Schulz's notion of architectural forms as symbols: Norberg-Schulz, Christian: *Meaning in Western Architecture* (1975, orig. 1974) 223-226.

<sup>132</sup> In the semiological or semiotic theory, the symbolic is used to designate the linguistic sign, or more specifically, what is called the Signifier (see Ferdinand de Saussure: *Cours de linguistique générale* [1955] 101), or to mean one of the three types of the relation of signs (icon, index and symbol) to its objects (with arbitrary but agreed relationships between its elements) in Charles Peirce's theory of signs.

change, where seductive rapports remain latent. In this stage, architecture is a stake in material exchange that contributes prestige and mutual solidarity. Then, regarding a more sophisticated level of mythology, the seduction of orders of signification, the illusions of meaning, history, ethics etc., produces architecture predominately as an artefact of a *meaningful* but ambiguous culture. At an even more evolved level, there emerges the disappearance of images and their seduction in favour of fascinating (obscene, no longer mysteriously) aleatory abstract processes. This is where the typical masses' mode of communication becomes crucial. They can restore the seductiveness in collective participation. The model of the masses seems to be a good example of a relevant and crucial challenge at that stage. (I will return to the "challenge" of the masses in Part 5).

From a sociological viewpoint, Baudrillard's principle of symbolic exchange is an attempt to develop and refine the standpoint of critical social thought through a synthesis of Marcel Mauss' anthropological sociology of the gift (as developed in part by Emile Durkheim) with Georges Bataille's notion of expenditure. Mauss' sociology of the gift was based upon studies of the tribes of the Southern Pacific and Alaska. In the logic of symbolic exchange, everything that cannot be symbolically exchanged becomes a danger to the group. According to Baudrillard's idea of symbolic exchange, the basic characteristics of any community are challenge, prestige, reversibility, irreconciliation, reciprocity and the principle of the active object that becomes equivalent with the subject. In the latter the object is inseparable from the concrete relation in which it is exchanged and this concrete event of alliance is the presupposition for a solidarity between humans.<sup>133</sup> These relations are essentially ritualistic (repetitive but ambiguous). In symbolic exchange there is no conception of use or value. All the components of signification and production – knowledge, meaning, function and usability lose their importance. Appearances, images and ambience become crucial. I will now explain the major characteristics of symbolic exchange in greater detail.

### **Challenge and prestige**

Baudrillard's argument goes as follows: originally, the consumption

of goods did not answer to an individual economy of needs but was a communal function of creating possibilities for solidarity and circulating prestige, creating an institution.<sup>134</sup> For example, the rich man who showed his wealth by spending recklessly was the man who won prestige.<sup>135</sup> Baudrillard argues that in our present day culture technical media seem to have replaced collective gift exchange. That is why we know only abstract communication, and not a symbolic community with reciprocal challenges and gift exchange. In Marcel Mauss' study of exchange, the basis of exchange was not the need to *acquire* and *satisfy*, as it is today, but the contrary circulation. The archaic form of most sacred exchange was identified under the name of potlatch, the cult of destruction, a payment to the gods and the dead ancestors for everything they give to the collective.<sup>136</sup> Maoris were returning *the same* gift.<sup>137</sup> All this refers to the fact that the actual moment of exchange, that is, the unifying *ritual*, was more important than the exchanged object. Architecture is also basically a celebration of circulation and reversibility: every architectural act terminates the previous situation, and in this way, as if ritually partaking in the particular contexts. However, this characteristic of architecture is a very general condition and not a very challenging factor. More significantly, architecture can be seen obeying the rules of symbolic exchange also in relation to needs, creation and signification.

In symbolic exchange, prestige and meaning always arise in and through excess, and excess is by definition beyond the rational ends of production.<sup>138</sup> There the root of sacrifice and of general economy is never a pure and simple expenditure but, rather, an incessant process of challenge and counter-challenge.<sup>139</sup> Also, in architecture challenge requires defiance, risk, antagonism, counter-move and the destruction of values, at least of *use values*, *exchange values* and *sign values*. Mauss thought that in the last instance the donor has power in relation to the receiver because he performs a challenge,<sup>140</sup> but Baudrillard does not see gift exchange

<sup>133</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (1972) 61-63.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-36.

<sup>135</sup> Marcel Mauss: *Essai sur le don* (1968, orig. 1950) 155; 194-205.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 212-227; 269.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 157-161.

<sup>138</sup> Jean Baudrillard: 'La mort chez Bataille', in *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976) 236-242.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> Mauss, op. cit., 161-164; 205-221.

in that way. The one who puts himself and his whole essence to the game gets prestige, no matter what the market prize of his/her gift is. Still, prestige – which may very well equal nowadays “respect” – should not be confused with power; but if it is, power must be thought to be such that it cannot be brought back to justice or force, argues Baudrillard. Or, if prestige is nevertheless understood as power, this power is not accumulative. It becomes reversed by counter-gifts, and in this way spreads to the whole community.<sup>141</sup>

### **Reversibility**

In a symbolic exchange relation, there is a “simultaneous response”: the symbolic gift will eventually return – always. That is why there is no transmitter or receiver on both sides of the message: nor, for that matter, is there any “message”, any corpus of information to decode univocally under the aegis of a code. The symbolic consists precisely in breaching the univocality of the “message”, in restoring the ambivalence of meaning: giving and returning, affirming and destroying.<sup>142</sup> Reversibility is not fixed like a law, but it is a secret<sup>143</sup> rule of play which cannot be transgressed. If architecture is enigmatic, it is reversible in this sense.

### **Irreconciliation**

Reconciliation – or closure – is not desirable. Resolution or synthesis would eliminate the element of alterity which generates human experience as challenge – just as choosing one cultural modality to the exclusion of the other attempts to avoid the trouble of alterity by suppressing it.<sup>144</sup> Also architectural questions could be approached as conflicts, as more radical antagonisms than mere dialecticism.

### **Reciprocity**

When one lies, one lies *to someone*. Social relationships put us in debt. For example, we owe our parents something for our existence. This sensation of debt makes many people feel guilty: they are not doing enough to repay it. To speak of a symbolical debt one must be able to ask: “How much is owed?” Living means ow-

ing something. Gifts are obligatory for a group – they are not voluntary for the individual.<sup>145</sup> What people exchange are not exclusively goods but courtesies and rituals, the sources of human solidarity.<sup>146</sup> If one takes Baudrillard's description of the contemporary situation seriously, there should be created a reciprocal and challenging relationship between the myths of the contemporary society and the architect's rituals.<sup>147</sup>

### The ambiguous object

Any object in Baudrillard's treatise is fundamentally ambiguous because it only exists due to the reversible symbolic exchange.<sup>148</sup> According to this logic, architecture does not have any value (use value, exchange value or sign value) in itself, either. In the universal gift exchange, architecture gives us spatial and material prestige and excess, but we should admit the singularity of each architectural act. Architecture can be seen as a courtesy in a collective exchange, a stake, rather than only a physical object.

In architecture, *ambiguity* has perhaps most thoroughly been discussed by Robert Venturi in *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966), but with disappointing results. Venturi propagated the richness of meaning rather than the clarity of meaning. *Both-and* was his maxim: form and substance, abstract and concrete. Venturi said that an architectural element has several functions and meanings. Baudrillard calls this phenomenon in general "objective irony", a fundamental characteristic of any object.<sup>149</sup> Venturi disliked the separation of structural and "curtaining" components in modern architecture and supported "double-functioning" elements. He said that there are good contradictory expectations,

<sup>141</sup> Jean Baudrillard: 'La mort chez Bataille', in *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976) 236-242.

<sup>142</sup> Georges Bataille: *La Part Maudite* (1976, orig. 1949). In *Oeuvres complètes VII*, 177-182.

<sup>143</sup> As Elias Canetti says in *Masse und Macht* (1981, orig. 1960) (323), *the secret must be thought of as being the innermost core of power.*

<sup>144</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 53-54; *La transparence du Mal* (1990) 144-150.

<sup>145</sup> Marcell Mauss: *Essai sur le don* (1968, orig. 1950).

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> I will return to this consequence especially in chapter 5.2.

<sup>148</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (1972) 61-63.

<sup>149</sup> See, for example: Jean Baudrillard: 'Forget Baudrillard', 100. In *Forget Foucault & Forget Baudrillard* (1987).

for example, between exterior and interior forms: a cube inside a circle, etc. However, Venturi's idea was based on the confusion of experience. However hard one may try to solve contradictions, one cannot help but create new ambiguities! Venturi is simply tautological in his treatise on ambiguities: actually, how could architecture ever be otherwise than "both-and"? Venturi's historicist determinism, restricted in its forms, is not convincing. One could have more strategic devices to process challenging ambiguity in architecture. One may define traditional communication in media as an exchange, as a reciprocal space of speech and response. By comparison, the current "media architecture" (architecture based upon the principles of the absence of myth, upon rationality, consumption and signification, eventually raised to the level of hyper-simulation) always tends to deny a response, if we accept Baudrillard's view that in contemporary media all possible answers are already inscribed in the code. In this sense, the challenging reciprocity that would require *singular acts* is missing. Architectural institutions today (schools, journals, competitions and associations) often seem to have a prescribed, mythological matrix for what is possible in architecture, when instead one could strive for the presently impossible, for the ambiguous objects. The systems of author cult, the belief in the goodness of almost all new architecture and all the tautological "scientific" proofs of architecture are spheres difficult to pass.

At the moment, *prestige* belongs only to the media that can give but cannot easily be repaid and which gives little possibility for a response. But the audience is not helpless. The mass has its own ambiguous, anti-rational strategies (such as silence and mirroring) that can restore the lost community. I will scrutinise these strategies in Part 5. Before that, however, I will look at the older, pre-simulation "logical" myths concerning architecture in consumer society in greater detail. I will first clarify the relationship between architecture and moving images in consumer society.

## 2.3 Architecture and moving images; the generic art form in consumer society

In order to define the specific myths of architecture in consumer society, I begin from that which architecture and such an indicative field as moving images have in common. As mentioned earlier, moving images constitute a generic model for media in advanced consumer society; from the early forms such as film, especially commercial cinema and, moreover, TV, video, music videos, moving digital images, internet animation, etc. I will approach moving images in all of its forms and not only concentrate, for example, on film, because technological development and its implications are important from the modern mythological point of view. In the consumer society discourse, as defined so far, there has often prevailed the assumption that the techniques of reproduction have more importance for the development of art than questions of whether something is art or not.<sup>150</sup> In many respects, the characteristics of film as cinema have become outdated as a definition of all moving images. Concerning inventions such as TV and moving digital images, one question is whether the very invention of them has transformed the entire nature of art. My assumption is that from the viewpoint of consumption, architecture is coming more and more *to remind* us of moving images, while moving images are becoming increasingly digital. Digital media has been connected to increasing self-plagiarism, the production of tactical values (retro-styles) and to digital effects becoming models for real events.

The debate concerning the interplay between architecture and other disciplines, architecture's *media convergence*, has been busy and difficult to avoid since the beginning of the 1980s. The interplay between painting, sculpture and architecture,<sup>151</sup> the mutual

<sup>150</sup> This assumption is especially strong in Walter Benjamin's and Marshall McLuhan's texts: Benjamin: *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (1974, orig. 1936); McLuhan: *Understanding Media* (1968, orig. 1964).

<sup>151</sup> I refer to the exhibitions of architecture at art museums, other art works using architectural material (e.g. in the works of Pär Kirkeby, Mario Merz and Daniel Buren;

action between literature, drama and architecture,<sup>152</sup> the interchange of action and reaction in philosophy and architecture,<sup>153</sup> the interplay between popular culture and architecture,<sup>154</sup> and the interplay between moving images (especially cinema) and architecture<sup>155</sup> have been important issues of research and discussion. What is notable in the explanations based upon media convergence and interdisciplinarity,<sup>156</sup> is that these explanations are essentially non-rational and non-functional, but rather aesthetic.<sup>157</sup> Baudrillard has argued that the nature of this kind of general aestheticization is typically banal.

### The moving imagisation of architecture

As compared with other art forms, moving images lend themselves more readily to analysis because of their more precise statements about the situation in consumer society. Moving images show us cultural reality better than any other medium, if we emphasise in Benjamin's sense the tactility or "immersivity" of art. This culturally definitive circumstance is emphasised in the moving images' tendency to promote the mutual penetration of art, economics and science with very large audiences. Moving images rely on the most advanced technology (and thus scientific research) while still retaining links to 'old realms' such as art (mostly re-inscribed as entertainment).

One could talk about the *moving imagisation* of architecture as a trend in consumer society. Architecture is increasingly obeying the same structural logic as moving images, especially television, be-

the architecture of Herzog & de Meuron); architecture as a topic in art magazines, the contemporary boom of minimalism.

<sup>152</sup> For example, the publications by Roger Connah, and especially *How Architecture Got Its Hump*, 2001.

<sup>153</sup> Most notably deconstruction and phenomenology.

<sup>154</sup> For example, theme parks and stage shows.

<sup>155</sup> Donald Albrecht, Dietrich Neumann, Juhani Pallasmaa, François Penz, Stephen Perrella, Juan Antonio Ramlrez, Maureen Thomas, Anthony Vidler and Helmut Wehsmann have been some of the most notable authors writing about the relationship between moving images and architecture.

<sup>156</sup> Interdisciplinarity here refers to the destruction of former laws deriving from the ontologies of different spheres and to vague influences and references from other fields.

<sup>157</sup> Donald Albrecht (*Designing Dreams*, 1986) writes about the use of modernist style in cinema related to the development of architectural modernism. It is typical that in the literature on architecture and film, almost only early Expressionist and dystopist films are discussed, as in Neumann's *Film Architecture* (1996). Penz's and Thomas's *Cinema and Architecture* (1997) is largely just a descriptive collection of content analysis of how architecture is represented in films.

cause that is how the simulacra and code most effectively manifest themselves in consumer society.<sup>158</sup> Moving images have an enormous mythological capacity because it is the leading media. Architects irresistibly think in terms of moving images because they, too, have seen so many productions of this art form that is the generic one in consumer society.

If I should try to sum up and simplify developments in the history of moving images from the viewpoint of techno-socio-economic developments, firstly, the technological innovations were of uppermost importance, just as with the modernist architecture at that time. The appearance of the moving image, sound, colour, 3D and lately CGI (Computer Generated Images) have for some reason or another taken place simultaneously with the appearance of modernist architecture dependent upon the new construction techniques dating from the end of 19th century: first glass and steel structures, then reinforced concrete, followed by plastics and composite materials and, in the present day, the latest computer-generated prefabrication. Parallel with this development, a sense of political and social value has taken place in moving images. Since the 1980s, moving images have become the core of entertainment and communication media, and clearly dominated by TV. This new culture industry tends to emphasise individualism in general, with the help of new technologies, but is still mass-oriented in nature (through mass-produced needs). It is difficult to think that architecture could have avoided this development. Architecture is to a great extent part of the entertainment and communication media in TV's hegemony. Moving images as narrative entities are dependent upon audience identification, also called *rooting interest*, the correlation between the story type and the viewer's personal stake. Also, architecture is today increasingly made for particular audiences (for the different life styles and user groups), not just for the average user.

From the point of view of economics, the 1970s meant the death of the old studio system of the Hollywood movie industry and the emergence of smaller scale "independent" productions. Simultaneously in architecture, the 1970s meant the final death of international modernism in favour of more regional interpretations of the

<sup>158</sup> On the central role of cinema and television see: Jean Baudrillard: *The Evil Demon of Images* (1988, orig. 1987) 14-33.

modernist canon. Now the real work of production in all moving images, including TV and computer games, is split up among a number of independent producers, many of whom are also directors or even film stars as well. It seems likely that something like this could also happen in architectural production, following the miniaturised and disseminated computerisation of former large-scale manual work. The cities are already about to become fragmented due to the logic of scattered production.<sup>159</sup>

If one considers the successive phases of aesthetics in moving images and architecture as “fights” between aesthetic schools, first there was the battle between *realism* and *expressionism* (in the silent feature) in moving images, and equally between rationalism and romanticism in architecture (the question of ornament). Then appeared the fight of the *genre* versus *auteur* tradition in moving images, equalling the fight of anonymous social concern versus heroic architecture, followed by the fight of Hollywood versus the world (after neo-realism) and equally the pure International Style versus the regional versions of the International Style in architecture. Eventually, there followed the antagonism between entertaining moving images versus film as communication (in the 1960s; New Wave and in Third World cinema). In architecture, this struggle materialised in the contest between commercial and industrialised developments versus rather artistic approaches. Later there has been quite a wide agreement that entertainment by moving images and other communication devices are two equal products of a structural culture industry, as already the merging of large media companies like Warner and AOL show, not to mention deeper socio-economic matters.<sup>160</sup> It can no longer be said that there is a clear aesthetical antagonism in moving images or architecture. As the early Frankfurt School feared, the issue of the general aestheticization of the society has emerged, in all of its side effects of irrationality and the banalisation of culture. The old functional and meaningful explanations have given way to the aesthetical tendency to media convergence, interdisciplinarity and empty communication, thus making Baudrillard’s theory crucial.

### **Baudrillard and moving images**

I use Baudrillard’s statements about moving images as a herme-

neutic source in order to understand larger patterns in consumer society architecture. Baudrillard's views on moving images seem to be describing the characteristics of contemporary architecture, too. Some tendencies symptomatic of contemporary cinema are clearly recognisable in architecture and some raise new crucial questions to be answered in the later parts of this work. In Parts 3 and 4 I will look in greater detail at these assumed tendencies. Here I introduce five of the tendencies described by Baudrillard:

1.) Concerning the loss of reciprocity in relation to contemporary moving images, Baudrillard argues that a symbolism of personal styles is no longer apparent, but rather cinema has become typically a system which reproduces itself; for example, through retro-styles. As he sees the situation between the two wars and during the *Cold War*, the enchanting myth still found refuge in cinema, but today it is no longer the imagination but references to history that invade the moving images.<sup>161</sup> For Baudrillard, the exact, scrupulous set-pieces made since the 1970s are indicative of this. Such films as *Chinatown*, *Barry Lyndon*, *1900*, *All the President's Men*, *Forrest Gump*, *Apollo 13*, *Titanic* and *Pulp Fiction* (to which I would add all the Merchant-Ivory productions and Ang Lee's films) are not really about historical verisimilitude, but about *fashionable* references.<sup>162</sup> Accordingly, it is easy to believe that the equivalent retro-architecture – an obsession with retro-styles – does not actually concern itself with historical accuracy. Sometimes technical perfection can receive its motivation from only supporting a more important story and meaning, and in that case it is neither nostalgic nor hyperrealist. Thus it can be an element of meaningful art. However, in the present consumer society, historical accuracy has become an effect; it is one of many tactical sign values. Nowadays architecture, just like moving images, seems to increasingly plagiarise and copy itself, remaking its classics, retroactivating its original myths, remaking novelties more perfect than the originals, etc.<sup>163</sup> Digital technology is a remarkable help in this historical plagiarism. While Renaissance plagiarism still belonged to the simulacra period of

<sup>159</sup> See 2.1: Into the crisis of locality.

<sup>160</sup> For these interpretations of the history of the aesthetics of cinema, see James Monaco: *How to Read a Film* (1981).

<sup>161</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 69-76.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 73-76.

<sup>163</sup> For example, Richard Meier has made Le Corbusier-like architecture which is stylistically more perfect than the originals.

counterfeit and use value, this new clonage belongs to the sphere of simulation and sign value. Just as cinema is nowadays typically fascinated by references to older films, contemporary architecture seems to be increasingly stuffed with references to the details of its historical triumphs. Most recently, in the fashion-conscious architectural journals, the 1950s of Lautner, Neutra and Eero Saarinen and the 1960s of plastic shell structure designs have been well exposed. All this retro-fascination is logical, because both moving images and architecture seem to be "fascinated by themselves as something meaningful and imaginative as a lost object".<sup>164</sup>

2.) Concerning the technologisation of art, Baudrillard argues that special effects with moving images can be understood as "technological testing" and that eventually the special effects of moving images become models for real events.<sup>165</sup> While special effects in moving images nowadays include predominately the use of computer-aided-design, it is comparable to high-tech architecture. High-tech architecture is to a great extent controlled by the possibilities of easily accessible information technology: constructions that earlier would have been impossible are realised with the help of new technology. When Baudrillard writes about how the special effects of the commercial cinema are actually technological testing, becoming models for real events,<sup>166</sup> we can witness this also in computerised architecture. The reason for making computer-aided design seems to often derive from the fact that *it simply is possible to do it* with the aid of new software and computers, yet without going into any deeper motives.

3.) The tendency towards irreversibility in consumer society is analysed in Baudrillard's texts about moving images, when he says that a critical distance is no longer possible in cinema. As Baudrillard sees the situation in modern cinema, there is no distance, no critical sense; images are beyond *criticism* in psychological and ethical terms. Moving images have begun to attain the level of absence of all finality and critical negativity.<sup>167</sup> But what would be the analogical or equivalent tendency in architecture?

4.) Concerning reification, Baudrillard argues that the triumph of

<sup>164</sup> On the commercial cinema in this sense see Jean Baudrillard: *The Evil Demon of Images* (1988, orig. 1987) 33.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-18.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-17.

<sup>167</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 73-76.

quantitative experiences in moving images entails the disappearance of imaginative properties.<sup>168</sup> Is architecture in a similar state already?

5.) According to Baudrillard, only a few films still have seductive enchantment; films are becoming banal. Films like Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* and Cronenberg's *Crash* represent for Baudrillard a hyperreality where the relationship between man and technology is obscene, immanent, without mystery.<sup>169</sup> Has a similar change from seduction to banalisation taken place in contemporary architecture?

To summarise, when architecture (as it typically exists and functions in the present consumer society) follows the leading medium of our era – moving images – it is in danger of adopting the following tendencies: self-plagiarism, the production of only tactical values (retro-styles), digital effects becoming models for real events, the disappearance of critical distance, the triumph of quantitative experiences and banalisation. These phenomena include characteristics of both earlier phases of simulacra as well as the latest simulation and transmodernity. In the following part, I will concentrate on the earlier mythological characteristics of architecture as revealed in the comparison between moving images. Then, in Part 4, I will move to the transmodern stage.

<sup>168</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *ibid.*; *The Evil Demon of Images* (1988, orig. 1987) 14-18; *Baudrillard Live* (1993) 23.

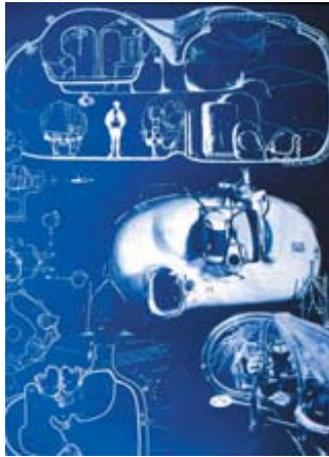
<sup>169</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 79-80, 89-91; 'I Like the Cinema', Interview with C. Charbonnier in *Baudrillard Live* (1993) 30-34.

### **3 The logical consumption of architecture: The general features of architecture's mythologisation in consumer society**

Following on from the previous overall comparison between architecture and the processes of commodification in moving images, I will now deal with certain specific phenomena in architecture: architecture satisfying general needs in terms of pragmatism, functionality and ecology. Common to these phenomena is the supposed logical connection between thought and action. The purpose of mythological analysis is to show how little rationality there in fact is in these socio-logical connections. I will discuss specific works both in architecture and moving images, with an emphasis on the particular type of dynamics of mythology discussed in each (sub)chapter. While elaborating the crucial themes and respective myths, as well as the general types of mythological dynamics, I will also make references chronologically to Baudrillard's predecessors, to show how these phenomena first started to be studied in the social sciences. The artistic examples, however, are not in any chronological order; instead, the emphasis is in the coherent order of the mythological dynamics presented earlier. This historical background will give intrinsic support for understanding the depth of modern mythological processes in architecture.

Baudrillard's theory helps us to understand what it is in these works of architecture and moving images that we find *tempting* – persuasive and enchanting. Especially in the chapter 3.4, I will study the genealogy of the modes of enchantment in the architecture of consumer society. The examples are only short descriptions, but they are necessary *typical examples* of how the mythologies of consumer society take place in architecture and moving images. What makes these examples valid for this study is their popular, persuasive and canonical success among their audiences, to the extent that one can call them *mythical*. My intention is not to show that the particular works of architecture and moving images

have influenced each other, but that they share common, culturally decisive principles of mythological dynamics. To reiterate, I will scrutinise moving images in connection to architecture because the workings of modern myths are easier to understand in them than directly in architectural works. However, the same processes also work in architecture.



Archigram: Housing (late 1960s)



Sony Playstation television commercial: Double Life (1998-9)

### 3.1 The deceit of architecture satisfying needs

I introduced the general features of the dynamics of the mythologies in consumer society in chapter 2.2. I will here first illustrate the importance of *the determination of appearance* in the mythology of commodities. Certain aspects of such popular commodities as the Sony Playstation TV commercial based on the theme “Double Life” (1998-99, director: Frank Budgen, advertising office: TBWA) and the still highly influential architecture of Archigram<sup>170</sup> from the 1960s, rely on a complex interdependent network of the concepts of enjoyment, satisfaction, consumers’ needs, pleasure, affluence, individualism and self-participation. This network of concepts builds up a system of coded classification that is symptomatic of consumer society as Baudrillard describes it.

<sup>170</sup> The group consisted of Warren Chalk (born 1927), Peter Cook (1936), Dennis Crompton (1935), David Greene (1937), Ron Herron (1930) and Mike Webb (1937).

## Archigram and Sony Playstation

No Archigram architecture, in terms of buildings, was ever actually built. Still, because of its ostentatiously innovative and technologically futuristic proposals, the group's architecture has been a model for much later high-tech architecture. Almost any modernist architecture (like the whole of modern society in Baudrillard's interpretation) is to some extent based upon the idea of fulfilling certain needs. In this scope, Archigram's architecture is a kind of apotheosis of "satisfying" architecture, with its enormous array of different imagined needs being fulfilled through technology. Archigram architecture has been a model also for less futuristic directions, where the emphasis has been on the pleasure and the satisfaction of people's needs through the help of less technological and more synthetic environments, such as the contemporary Dutch "hedonist" school gathered around Rem Koolhaas.

In terms of the principle of freedom and satisfying needs, the key to Archigram's architecture was the architects' thoughts about the construction of "the human-nature interface". In order to attain satisfactory results in this area, Archigram based its designs very much in accordance with its understanding of the importance of *needs* in general, rather than satisfaction. I will scrutinise this difference in a moment. The typical features of the group's architecture were unprecedented *flexibility* and continuous *changeability*, supposedly ready to answer people's varying requirements. These effects in Archigram's designs, such as "Drive-in Housing", "Crater City & Hedgerow Village" and "Vanfinger" were inherent both in the placement of functions and their physical structures.<sup>171</sup> Archigram's designs could change and often even move. The concern of needs was obvious when Archigram emphasised the importance in the facility to "adapt to" or even "plug in" to one's surroundings.<sup>172</sup> The

<sup>171</sup> The devices for attaining these in Archigram's architecture were lightweight spaceframes, plug-in parts and portable architecture. One of the rare schemes by Archigram actually to be built (not forgetting the Japanese Metabolist interpretations of Archigram) was the *Living 1990*, The Weekend Telegraph Exhibition in London in 1967. In this space, the walls, ceilings and roofs were "conditions" of wall, ceiling and roof, namely adapting to the needs of the occupant. The sci-fi silvery boundaries were adjustable, programmed to move up and down, to close and to open out. The floor, too, was variable. At certain points, the floor was hard enough to dance on, while at others it was inflatable and soft enough to sit on comfortably – actually, it was not called floor but "sea". All of the textures and colours could be changed at will to keep in step with the taste of the users. The seating and beds were inflatable, and the occupants themselves

idea behind this was that if the environment does not respond to our needs, adaptation to it is impossible. When trying to create this kind of “adaptive” environment, Archigram was extremely innovative up to the point of proposing technically impossible solutions. The idea was that experiments could attain a human-oriented technology of liberation directed at pleasure and desire.<sup>173</sup>

Archigram was advanced in its synthetic approach to the environment, but actually quite traditional in its emphasis on needs. The determined reference to needs was one suitable manner by which they could be persuasive when the projects were otherwise too futuristic for their time. Without this determined reference to needs and affluence, people like Arata Isozaki would not have said that Archigram presented a concrete agenda for change.<sup>174</sup>

In Sony Playstation’s TV commercial for a video game device we see other, perhaps more acceptable, exemplary evidence of this function of persuasive determination in mythology. An advertising commercial is naturally accepted as something persuasive. This is an advertisement where one sees several young and anxious-looking protagonists spending their hard day-time lives in different residual environments: there is a black man turning a wheelchair, a boy skateboarding on a ramp (filmed from the back side of the ramp, thus exaggerating the danger) and two suspicious looking men wearing comical masks and standing by a car with the doors open on an empty lot somewhere in a suburban industrial area. All this is filmed in lavish wide-angle, yet none of these people appear actually wealthy. The question is how these people can look that energetic despite their degraded circumstances.

could decide about details such as the weight of the blankets or the number of cushions. The old concept of the portable chair had given way to the “travelling” chair. The exhibition model was based upon the principle of a hovercraft, and could even be used outside the home to move around the city-megastructure. A team of mobile robots carried out most of the household tasks, as well as serving drinks. The apartment had built-in radio and television. The TV images were screened on large monitors and the system could be programmed to provide the viewer with special sound, colour and fragrance effects. The controls were sensitive enough to respond to gestures as subtle as a blink. Each day, the robots would be taken to the “service wall”, where they would be connected to the city-megastructure system to replenish the air-, water- and climate waste through visible slender tubes. This connector, the “master control” machinery and scaffolding, also included a clothes’ dispenser/disposal, food preparer/dispenser and retractable furniture, which was the only fixed part of the apartment (See Gustau Gili Galfetti: *Model Apartments* [1997] 58-63).

<sup>172</sup> See, for example, “Touch Not” by Archigram member Warren Chalk in *Archigram* (1972) 138.

<sup>173</sup> Archigram: *Archigram* (1972).

<sup>174</sup> See Arata Isozaki in *Archigram* (1972) 4.

They are each making utterances, the little boy eyes wide declaring "I have commanded armies" and "I have conquered worlds", and finally a statement heard despite the apparent casualness of the man's looks, "I can say I have really lived". The statements have no apparent connection to these images of debris, until the audience is finally showed the logo of Sony Playstation and the explanation can be pictured: those people may have tough day-time lives, but at night they live another existence, possibly more playful, exciting and also more tender and satisfying – that is, they live their "real life" by playing Playstation. The commercial is a supposed call for freedom, people's right to fulfil their need for recognition, if not otherwise, then at least through personal technology. In this sense, the advertisement functions along the same logic as Archigram architecture: needs, affluence and democracy construct a logical circle held together by immense determination. This necessity to persuade consumers is easily recognisable and understandable in commercials which are meant to sell products, but more difficult to detect in architecture, which is supposed to work more for the general good. Nevertheless, what one actually consumes in both of these examples are the social relations themselves.

The appeal of commodities in general becomes understandable only in respect to their ability to create a believable determination: my first example works especially through its appeal to fulfil supposed needs for affluence made possible by technologies and the second through its appeal to supposed needs for freedom. This brings us to a principle of mythological dynamics; that both suggestion and persuasion are considered more important than verifiable truth in cultural practise. Trust in assumed statements and risk in order to attain confidence are formative for culture. This characteristic can be found in the above examples.

Already Bronislaw Malinowski's, Emile Durkheim's and Marcel Mauss' anthropological studies support the view of culture as a sphere of magic, where possibly untrue statements are bound up only by baffling resemblance with trustworthy babble. Cultural artefacts and institutions do not find their origin or reference in reality or in truth. Instead, one has to find another type of verification, as do all the myths and magical speech of self-fulfilling prophecy, that is, tautology.<sup>175</sup> In Archigram's case, the tautology is in the self-

supporting circle of affluent satisfaction and the supposedly flexible needs of a modern city dweller, even if these modes of needs and satisfaction (as all the others) are principally artificial. The Sony Playstation commercial reveals its tautological character in the mutual co-operation between the new modes of excitement and new needs for this excitement, even if complementary need and satisfaction as a principle would not exist without each other. In short, everyday life ends up as a replica of its model. Through his purchase, the consumer can do no more than consecrate the event of myth.

The roots of this persuasively deterministic behaviour are in the primitive reception of a magician who imitates demons in order to frighten them or to appease them. The task is actually an impersonation. On the magical plane, dream and image are not mere signs for the thing in question, but bound up with it by *similarity* with an arbitrarily chosen starting point of classification, as Durkheim and Mauss explain in their *De quelques formes primitives de classification* (orig. 1903).<sup>176</sup> The studies of Durkheim and Mauss are worth mentioning in trying to understand the importance of the new modes of excitement and determination, which is also the classificatory tautology in our society and its architecture. If one considers architecture as the *classification* of performances, surface and space, rather than signification, one receives a profound image that explains well the importance of insignificant repetition, tautology and contradictory meanings<sup>177</sup> common to the field. In this symbolic classification, the determination is created by the processes of appealing similarities. In the case of Archigram and the Sony Playstation commercial, the similarity is drawn between an abstract principle of satisfaction of needs (for liberation and democracy) and supposedly liberated and democratic affluence in people's everyday lives. Both the similarity and the tautology fueling it are supported by fundamental persuasion.

### **The myth of the enjoying consumer**

One particular myth that especially mobilises the characteristic of myth to persuade is evident in the above examples; the myth of *The Enjoying Consumer* (as Baudrillard calls it) motivated through the artificial production of needs. The whole discourse of consump-

tion is based upon the myth of the human being who is equipped with needs "directing" him to an object which "gives" him satisfaction. Many images concerned with the appeal of freedom, such as the above examples, are manifestations of this myth, including a belief in individualism and self-participation in order to increase democracy and supposedly, simultaneously, affluence. The complementary myths of well being and needs eliminate the objective, collective and historical determinations of integrity. In this logic of appealing similarities,<sup>178</sup> growth comes to mean affluence and affluence comes to mean democracy.

Urban concentration results in a limitless promotion of needs. There are only the needs for growth, until the point that there will be no place for individual goals in the system. Still, the system of needs does not actually tell about experience or satisfaction because one cannot give priority to certain categories of needs.<sup>179</sup> The choice is completely free. The fulfilling of needs, so popular as a starting point in architecture, is radically different from actual pleasure and is a form of *magical* thought. It is not the case that there are no primary needs, but rather that all such needs are socially constructed when modern ideologies urge the consumer to check out the latest commodities. The connection of needs and utility form a gigantic tautology.

Because people reproduce the sign system embodied with values when they consume, consumption requires a more delicate analysis of everyday practices than the ethics of practicality and functionality.<sup>180</sup> What takes place in consumer society is a kind of meta-consumption.<sup>181</sup> As differences are structured into objects, it is actually the *differential social relations* that are being consumed. Social status is reproduced principally in the consumption of differences of appearances, and it is at the second, unconscious level of its inner relations that the code itself functions as an unconscious

<sup>175</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *La société de consommation* (1970) 147-189.

<sup>176</sup> Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss: *De quelques formes primitives de classification* (1903) 8, 23, 40-41, 46, 52-55.

<sup>177</sup> For a discussion about the immoral continuation of logical tautology, absence of distinctions and contradictions as the basis of classification see *ibid.*, 3, 5, 65-66, 68, 72.

<sup>178</sup> Durkheim and Mauss describe this type of primitive logics in relation to ancient Chinese culture. *Ibid.*, 61-62.

<sup>179</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 275-283.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 9, 275-283.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 153-188, 275-283; Jean Baudrillard: *La société de consommation* (1970) 129-132.

coded apparatus.<sup>182</sup> This code is highly effective as a disciplinary structure because it is desirable, pleasurable and gratificatory. It induces the deepest form of social control but without any goal. The mythological structure of the ideas, subject, object and need is practised also in architecture. The idea of this structure is to satisfy needs by adaptation and flexibility. It is also a device for social code, an abstraction of gift exchange. This is understandable in the tautology of needs and satisfaction.

<sup>182</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *La société de consommation* (1970) 125-137.



Le Corbusier: Villa La Roche, Paris (1923)



Quentin Tarantino: Reservoir Dogs (1992)

### **3.2 Functional architecture is an effect of systematic conceptualisation**

I have argued that the second type of mythological dynamics in consumer society is the process where *the physical phenomena become stand-ins for mental or social phenomena*. I call this *materialisation*. The Marxists called this process “reification”. Reification was a central presupposition for commodification. In terms of materialisation, architecture becomes a synthetic field rather than anything essentially concerned with direct reality. Architectural pragmatism becomes seemingly the materialisation of chance economic relationships.

#### **Materialisation: the chance nature of economic relationships**

Our conceptions become images of the world in the reciprocity be-

tween people's enjoyment and the changing values and prices of commodities, regulated by the relative character of existence. As long as this reciprocity is valid, modern society is characterised by a motion without goals;<sup>183</sup> that is, because of the predomination of this motion, the essence of the blasé metropolitan attitude is indifference towards the distinction between things. The culture of consumption incorporated with the relativistic world-view encourages things to be experienced as meaningless.<sup>184</sup> In the context of reification, *pragmatism* is a perfectly relativistic, indifferent and aimless formalisation of the abstract principle of the pecuniary relationships of commodities.

Due to the relativity and aimless motion of pecuniary relationships, any concern of the consumer society is above all based on *calculation*. The need for exact calculation means abandoning empiricism, tradition and material dependence. The disregard for the concrete aspects of the subject matter upon which, for example, the laws are based, makes itself felt in the incoherence of the supposedly pragmatist system. It is also for this reason that the "natural laws" of the market economy can be defined as the laws of *chance*.<sup>185</sup>

### Conceptualisation

The third type of mythological dynamics, and also opposite to the process explained above (materialisation), is *the physical becoming mental*. I call this process "conceptualisation". It is another essential type of dynamics in myth. One example of the extensive manifestation of conceptualisation is the myth of *functionality*, as evident, for example, in functionalist architecture. This is still evident in contemporary references to architectural functionality. Functionalist explanations mean that the object can be included in an overall sign system of effortlessness, reproduced authenticity and contemporaneity, rather than being a direct reference to its

<sup>183</sup> Georg Simmel: *Philosophy of Money* (1978, orig. 1907) 59-80.

<sup>184</sup> Georg Simmel: *Metropolis and Mental Life* (1997, orig. 1948) 73, 100-103.

<sup>185</sup> See Georg Lukács: *Histoire et conscience de classe* (1960) 123-136. Details become subject to laws and the totality to chance, where the law governing the whole may not even be fully and adequately knowable (ibid., 133-137); Baudrillard calls this the aleatory code. The subject of the exchange is just as abstract, formal and reified as its object, because of the established relation of concrete equality between unequal and indeed incomparable objects, destroying use value proper (ibid., 203-215).

purpose or action, as Baudrillard shows. To give an example, I will explain later in this chapter how Quentin Tarantino's film *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) is equal to functionalist architecture in its mythological thrift: this drive is directed towards a systematisation of the mentality of industrialised culture according to its supposedly effortless (automatic) technology and other reproduced physical features. Habit, testing, repetition and autonomic signification are the devices of this accustomation.

### **Functionalist architecture as habit**

The most physical, habitual-vernacular and technological architecture and its absolute rejection of style – common especially for functionalist architecture – becomes inevitably a form of style, because humans essentially attach symbolic significance to even the most technical of objects.<sup>186</sup> This kind of stylish anti-style too often lacks seduction. The myth of functionality features systematic conceptualisation where habit, use, tactility and non-perception characterise the general reception of architecture in Walter Benjamin's sense. Benjamin said that architecture has always represented the prototype of art, the reception of which is consummated by a collectivity in a state of diversion ("Die Zerstreung": this has been often translated as "distraction" in English translations of Benjamin's text, but Benjamin's essential implication of amusement and entertainment would not then become apparent), and added that the laws of its reception are "most instructive" in the attempt to comprehend the relationships of the masses to art. He argued that buildings are appropriated in a two-fold manner: by use and by perception. The first, "tactile" appropriation of the masses is accomplished not so much by attention as by habit and is stronger than perception by sight. Benjamin stated that habit determines to a large extent even optical reception. The crucial "habit of the masses" meant for Benjamin some kind of hypnotic ambience which the masses are under the spell of. In Benjamin's view, moving images – or at least commercial cinema, it seems – are spectacles which require no concentration and presuppose no intelligence. Benjamin said that the masses seek diversion, whereas

<sup>186</sup> Theodor Adorno in his article 'Functionalismus heute' (1977, orig. 1967).

art demands concentration from the spectator.<sup>187</sup>

Let me explain this more specifically. When the functionalist design school, the Bauhaus, and Le Corbusier were promoted as the sources of “Functionalism”, there was supposed to be an analogy between the use, the structure and the form of architecture. This appears fallacious, because the crucial question was clearly how to choose *which of all the possible functions* one should express. It was a question of habit. Baudrillard explains how the Bauhaus only marked the theoretical extension of the laws concerning the field of political economy and the practical extension of the system of exchange value to the whole domain of signs, forms and objects.<sup>188</sup> Functionality – in architecture and in general – has nothing to do with actual practicality, but it is the ability to become integrated into an *overall scheme*.<sup>189</sup> In this scheme, the unity of contemporary objects is no longer that of a style or practice, but a habitual system to be consumed.<sup>190</sup>

### **Effortlessness**

Baudrillard argues that the repressed traditional gestural system is now transformed into myth, where people are obliged to believe in an absolute and limitless functionality, in efficacy, as the virtue of signs. What the technical object bespeaks no longer requires anything more than our formal participation, it is a world *without effort*, an abstract and completely mobile energy and the total efficacy of sign-gestures.<sup>191</sup> This effortlessness strengthens the idea that habit, use, tactility and non-perception come to rule the reception of architecture. Today, as the usual vocabulary concerning the functional justification of architecture goes,<sup>192</sup> we have “plans which work”, “fulfilling the needs of all stages of life”, the notion of “live-able houses”, etc.

### **Reproduced authenticity**

According to Baudrillard, when entangled with *functionality*, every

<sup>189</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 89.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 81-82.

<sup>192</sup> Esko Kahri and Hannu Pyykönen: *Asuntoarkkitehtuuri ja -suunnittelu* (Rakennuskirja, Helsinki 1984) is a typical example of an architecture student textbook on housing that uses this kind of vocabulary.

object has two functions: that it is supposed to be practical and that it is possessed, thus fulfilling the mythological demand for authenticity.<sup>193</sup> The systematic essence of functionality is proved by the facility of how the mythologies of the “natural” generally evoke an earlier cultural system as a kind of pseudo-historical reference-point in their regression to a mythical totality. Thus also the mythology of pre-industrial craftsmanship peculiarly implies the myth of “functional” nature and vice versa. To follow and be part of the authentic series, such as “nature”, is the essential manoeuvre in *functionality*.<sup>194</sup>

### Contemporaneity

The weakness of *functionality* is that it easily leads to irrational, unstable rhetoric, sanctioned only by the *contemporaneity* of signs in fashion. Baudrillard claims that functionalism defends itself weakly against fashion, because the latter expresses the total systematic potential, while functionalism expresses only a particular case which is arbitrarily privileged according to a universal ethic.<sup>195</sup>

### Functionality as an economy of sacrifice

When considering manipulation through habitual, pseudo-authentic and fashionable references in functionalism, the central question that arises is whether a truly functional architecture can exist at all, or whether one should be content with only symbolising functions. Buildings often tend to be used for purposes other than what they were originally built for; thus “real” architecture never fully equals its function in the narrow sense of specific functions. One answer to the question of functionality/functionalism is that true, emotionally and psychologically functional architecture only exists in moving images, where the architectural milieu is designed exclusively for one specific production. Architecture in films is more functional than “real” architecture in the sense that the chosen locations or

<sup>187</sup> Walter Benjamin: *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (1977, orig. 1936) 157-167.

<sup>188</sup> Jean Baudrillard: “Design et environnement ou l'Escalade de l'économie politique” (in *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* [1972] 229-255).

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 82-88, 103-105.

<sup>195</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (1972) 246-248.

sets are only meant for one occasion (and usually for one interpretation). In this sense, the presentation of architecture in moving images entails an understanding of continuity. This continuity is two-fold: on the one hand, the virtual film architecture follows the plot and/or intensifies the atmosphere of the scenes; on the other hand, the scenery must follow *production continuity*, to avoid illogical details in the internal habitual logic of the film.

Why is it, furthermore, that a presentation of architecture, such as in moving images, appears functionally more realistic and intensive than architecture “in reality”? In other words, why do moving images pack more punch in articulating functions?

Adorno and Horkheimer give the answer indirectly to that question: films play more cleverly with the feelings of fear and safety than architecture. Films develop skilful atmospheres of suspense and fear because they can use the whole repertoire of different stimuli: images, music, light, movement, and psychological drama.

The assumption of Adorno and Horkheimer was that unintentional repetition disguised in the form of functionality is actually cruel animistic magic and a sacrifice of the intellect. They saw that the principle of immanence, the “rational” explanation of every event as repetition without the element of self-reflection, is the principle of myth itself. This is a kind of sanction of fate that relentlessly remakes what has already been.<sup>196</sup> In this sense, functionalism, as long as it is presented as a rational explanation for forms, is the *mythic fear of the unknown* (in general) *turned radical* (in general; a fear of the *non-systematised*, Baudrillard would say) and the functionality of films plays with this fear.

### ***Reservoir Dogs***

A film that is functional, not only for the functionalist factory/warehouse setting that supports the story, but also in stylistic and normative senses as well is Quentin Tarantino’s *Reservoir Dogs* (*RD*) (1992). *RD* shows us an effortless world. The trans-high-tech industrialism of the warehouse with its lacquered concrete floor and corrugated iron walls provides enough room for the flexible forms of confrontation following a misfortunate bank robbery. The actual

<sup>196</sup> See Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer: *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1981, orig. 1947) 23-33; 42-46.

bank scene (which is not shown) was unsuccessful and the group of men who did it is clearly dysfunctional. Every action and scene in the film is functional in the sense that they support the image and the atmosphere of the film *as they were apparently meant to be*; without any ambiguity: a machine-like depiction of trust and deception, without anything unnecessary, repressed or ambiguous. The relentless dialogue already indicates this. The transparent functionality hides nothing – there is nothing more to see, or to become revealed.

*RD* repeats the functionalist tendency to reproduced authenticity in the sense that it is a canonical *independent* (that is, seemingly non-commercial, *alternative* film production, because it is not produced by the biggest production companies in the USA) film production, but simultaneously a box-office hit, one in the row of *authentically alternative* yet typically reproduced art objects. There is a discrepancy in the sense that the film is seemingly an *independent*, yet its ideas are still mass produced. The film is stereotypical and a kind of compilation of old “authentic” classics. It resembles very many other films, such as Kurosawa’s and Peckinpah’s masterworks and “alternative” Hong Kong action films.

The contemporaneity (modernity) in *RD* is clear: the leading characters repeatedly discuss contemporary popular culture. In addition, the film has a typical marketable formula: the characters have a distinctive, reproducible “look”: black suits, white shirts, colourful T-shirts, black ties and black sunglasses. The film soundtrack is consciously hip. In the terms of how Baudrillard describes Functionalism, *RD* is a perfect functionalist object. When one notices that there can be analogies between such different worlds as puritan functionalist architecture and the pop “classic” film *Reservoir Dogs*, the mythical consumer society quality of architecture becomes clearer. In the case of functionalism, its mythical quality is located in the habitual nature of supposedly unique, but actually reproduced and fashion-related culture.



Nicholas Grimshaw & Partners:  
British Pavilion, Seville (1992)



Stanley Kubrick: 2001:  
A Space Odyssey (1968)

### 3.3 “Wise consumption”: Ecological architecture cannot escape irrationality

Irrationality disguised in the form of rational explanation is an essential quality of modern mythology. In addition to Baudrillard, such theorists as Roland Barthes<sup>197</sup> and Marshall McLuhan<sup>198</sup> have analysed this phenomenon. Mythical irrationality is emphasised especially in myths concerning technical gadgets and robots. In this context, science fiction is not an escape from everyday reality but, on the contrary, an important extrapolation from the irrational ten-

<sup>197</sup> Roland Barthes: *Mythologies* (1957) 238-243. Barthes states that the principal features of contemporary myths are: 1. Admitting the smaller aleatory evil and not the big structural one; 2. Eternity replacing history; that means that myth deprives the object of which it speaks of all history; 3. Irrational sameness. Barthes apparently means that contemporary man is unable to imagine the code; 4. Irrational tautology; 5. Irrational neither-norism; 6. Irrational quantification of quality; 7. Irrational statement of fact without personal commitment (ibid.).

<sup>198</sup> Marshall McLuhan: *Understanding Media* (1968, orig. 1964) 7; 42-47, 123-126, 321-337.

dencies of that sphere. In architecture this means that high-tech architecture as well as ecological architecture (which is just as technically defined as the former) can be approached from the viewpoint that they are a kind of robotics and necessarily equally irrational. The characterisation of human-like robots in films such as *Star Wars* and *2001: Space Odyssey* can be mythologically compared to ecological architecture when it concerns high-technology and flexibility. This is the question of the myth of rationality; that is, perfect, omnipotent objects, found in architecture feasting upon high-technology,<sup>199</sup> but actually wallowing in irrationality behind their formalism.

### **2001: A Space Odyssey and ecological architecture**

In Stanley Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) there is a computer named HAL that can talk with an emphatic and cultivated male voice. HAL does not actually have a locatable body, but it comments on things going on in the spaceship through microphones spread around the vessel. HAL becomes a villain due to a contradiction of means in its program. The computer/spaceship starts to eliminate the passengers because it considers them a threat to the expedition's ultimate mission. HAL, just like Alex de Large in Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) and Redmond Barry in Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* (1975) is a typical hero whose charm lies in its irrational bursts of action. These heroes are in conflict with the moral values the Western world has taught people to pay homage to and still they remain the most charming characters of the films, because they are the most *human* creatures in their environments. All these characters feel moving for us because they act according to irrational urges: Barry in his failure to attain social appreciation, Alex in the tragedy of his uncontrollable sexual urges, HAL in its confusion of kindness and violence. HAL's last mumbling words, when it is gradually shut down, are heartbreaking.

Architecture's relationship to ecological technology unavoidably tackles similar problems as HAL in Kubrick's film. Ecological technology – the materials and constructions which save energy and

<sup>199</sup> By high-tech architecture I refer to the rationalist, technologically sophisticated glass and steel architecture from the 1960s onwards, such as the architecture of Norman Foster and Richard Rogers.

resources, increasing sustainability and diversity – has a relationship to architecture through function. However, as long as there is the projected and idealised human factor present in technology, the erratic function that leads to natural or technological catastrophes cannot be ruled out.<sup>200</sup> The reason for this irrationality behind functionality is the assumption of technology imitating the workings of the human mind.

Both nature and technology, as pictured in the utopian ecological vision, are actually reinvented in accordance with the technical reality principle: a total simulacrum of an automated nature. This is the myth, and like all mythologies (according to Baudrillard's analysis), this one too has two sides to it: it *formalises* nature by submerging it in a *functional dream* of ecological production, safety and freedom from the past. Equally well, it mystifies nature and technology by submerging, or *projecting*, them into the *irrationality* of human determinants.<sup>201</sup>

In *Le système des objets*, Baudrillard explains how there is always a close collusion between the human-all-too-human and the functional-all-too-functional: the fertilisation of machines by human ones – for better or for worse. He argues that people are far more sensitive to human relationships that are interfered with by the absurd and totalitarian concerns of technology, than they are to the technological development being interfered with by the absurd and totalitarian concerns of human beings. Yet it is unquestionably human irrationality and its figments which, for example, fuel the tendency for any machine to take on “gadget”-like properties that gives it a certain appeal beyond rational means.<sup>202</sup> When this happens, the technological objects also receive human characteristics other than just functionality, diligence and flexibility; for example, foolishness, passions, etc. Take, for example, office workers' usual rage against their desktops and printers as if they were idiotic humans. These irrational phenomena cannot be avoided if one thinks of technology as a social creature and of its relationship to the en-

<sup>200</sup> Function is crucial in ecological technology because materials, too, are representing an ecologically acceptable *performance*.

<sup>201</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 164.

<sup>202</sup> See Baudrillard discussing gadgets in *Le système des objets* (1968) 159-161 and *La société de consommation* (1970) 169-174. Baudrillard argues that this type of meta-functionality represents irrational, poetic functionality, which does not even have to function.

vironment as a social relationship. Also, such novelties as "sustainable" materials and "ecological" constructions necessarily become irrational, open for misinterpretation and misuse. Let's look more closely at the example of thermal glass facades.

In ecological *passive solar heating*, the idea is to maintain the efficient transmittance of solar energy and to reduce heat loss. The thermal and solar properties of the glazing can be improved by various means.<sup>203</sup> These facades, usually constructing geometrically simple super-volumes, use the so-called structural glazing principle, where the steel structure with rigged steel wires and bars support the outer glass panes and protect the inner silicon sealed glass elements. The appeal of high-tech glass facades is very much in their flexibility: they are cool when it is hot and warm in cool weather. Still, few architects seem to have pointed out in these circumstances that actually any material capable of storing heat or cold, such as brick or insulated concrete, fulfils the requirements for heat storage. Besides, glass is very poor in absorbing heat, thus requiring these elaborate special constructions. These kinds of solutions may be used in warm and mild environments, but they are not very clever in a cold environment where other facade materials would be more efficient. The sole idea of building totally glazed buildings in, say, Arctic and nearly arctic areas such as Finland is irrational in itself in terms of energy efficiency.<sup>204</sup> However, it has become irresistibly fashionable. When there is comparatively less sunshine, or especially when the sun does not rise high in the sky for a significant part of the year and the building anyhow is often in shadow all the time, it is somewhat irrational to cover the whole building with glass and then say that is ecological

<sup>203</sup> For example, Norman Foster's *Electronic Park* in Duisburg, Germany, is a well-known example of both solar control and an efficient use of insulating glass units. With its curtain wall, the building symbolises cutting edge technology. The curtain wall is a combination of layers composed of an outer layer of single-pane glazing; the middle layer is the cavity with computer-controlled perforated blinds; and the inner layer, or back-up wall, consists of transparent insulated glass materials. The outer glass layer protects the sun-control device from the elements and air pollution. To shield the interior from heat-gain, the operable inner glass layer is thermally insulated double-glazing with a low-E (low emissivity) coating and argon gas between the panes. The heavy gas reduces convective heat losses, thus solar-heated air is trapped within the continuous middle layer, rises to the building's top and is vented through a plenum at the roof edge. During cold weather, this layer of warm air acts as a blanket of insulation.

<sup>204</sup> An article in the Finnish construction industry newspaper *Rakennuslehti* pointed out that there is no scientific evidence for the energy efficiency of double-glazed glass facades in northern Europe. *Rakennuslehti* 12.10.2000 / nr. 32.

rather than just a monument to scientism. In addition, the aims of ecological construction, saving energy and resources, surrenders to speculations about which materials one should save and which one should burn for the benefit of energy production. This is an impossible dilemma that is socially determined and linked to values as much as to technology.

Actually, it is only the scientific *image* of (ecological) high-technology solutions that makes decisions about ecology in construction possible and also glazed “ecological” buildings possible in cold and dark conditions. If eco-technology would have brains, like HAL, it would shut off many of the humans. Architecturally, a more interesting question than ecology itself is why almost all high-tech architecture has recently gained the aura of ecology in architecture.<sup>205</sup> The explanation cannot be in the scanty use of materials, e.g. in the thinness of steel structures. Steel requires a massive manufacturing process for a small amount of material.

### **The myth of the Robot**

The whole problematic of ecology is manifested in the myth of the Robot. Fundamentally, the Robot, by which I also mean buildings perceived as mechanical and electronic totalities, is simply the mythological end-product of a naïve phase of imagination, a phase which implies the projection of a continual and visible functionality. Technological society thrives on the myth of the Robot and the uninterrupted technical progress accompanied by a continuing moral ‘backwardness’ of man relative to it. Compared to this, Baudrillard makes us justified in asking whether man, under the cover of the myth of functional extravagance (which, in fact, conceals an obsession with his image, a fundamental mode of seduction) does not after all incline much more towards an increasingly *dysfunctional* world, rather than towards an increasingly functional one. The Robot is typically also in other ways more human than human in being just erratic: HAL, R2D2 (the brisk and brave technician-robot in *Star Wars* [1977]) and its companion, the polite and careful “Human-Machines Relationships” robot C3PO, and the “intelligent”

<sup>205</sup> See, for example Catherine Slessor: *Eco-Tech: Sustainable Architecture and High-technology* (Thames and Hudson 1977), presenting basically every kind of high technology as “ecological” architecture.

glazed, "ethical" eco-buildings – each of these machines contrasts with ethically or psychologically incapable humans.

When considering the flexibility and multifunctionality of machines, it is man who tends to be the model for the machines. Man, by automating his objects and rendering them multifunctional (instead of striving to structure his practices in a fluid and open-ended manner),<sup>206</sup> reveals in a way what part he himself plays in a technical society – that which Baudrillard calls the *most beautiful all-purpose object* – an instrumental model. Emancipated from its former usefulness and obedience to the meanings attached to them, the object finds the elements of modern mythology in its own technical existence thanks to the projection of an individual consciousness. Despite becoming a human-like moral creature, the robot, as an automated machine, also becomes humanly fragile. That is why automatism, as one of the oaths that the robot continues to follow, invariably leads to an over-signification of man in his automatic unconscious desires – thus setting up a barrier stubbornly persistent in wrong-doing, taking a perverse delight in irritating people. Also ecological high-tech architecture becomes irresistibly irrational.

### **Accustomation to high-technology through *narcosis***

The irrationality in the relationship between humans and technology is connected to cultural *narcosis*, as interpreted by Marshall McLuhan. Scrutinising this myth helps us to understand why people have no choice but to accept that the machines take on irrational characteristics. The reason for this is that our technology extends our (tactile) central nervous system. McLuhan was interested in the fact that men have been fascinated by any extension of themselves in any material other than themselves. With his famous maxim "the medium is the message in operational and practical fact", he meant that any new technology extends human capacities.<sup>207</sup> This could be McLuhan's response to Walter Benjamin's notion of the masses descended to tactility and diversion. Actually, McLuhan used the word "tactility" in quite a similar meaning as Benjamin, as habituation and accustomation. For McLuhan, the myth of Narcissus is directly concerned with this tac-

<sup>206</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 158.

<sup>207</sup> Marshall McLuhan: *Understanding Media* (1968, orig. 1964) 7.

tility: as narcosis or numbness. This principle comes into play especially with electrical technology. We have to numb our central nervous system when it is extended and exposed or we will die, McLuhan said.<sup>208</sup> He argued that architecture, too, is an extension of the body: in the simplest terms of this general narcosis, housing (like clothing) is an effort to extend the body's heat-control mechanism.<sup>209</sup>

While heat production in itself is not mythological, *narcosis* concerns architecture also in more general terms through the mental structures behind, for example, the present concerns with passive solar heating. Architecture is tactile in McLuhan's sense when it is multifunctional and maximally activating the whole array of senses, just like TV does. For example, passive solar heating is simultaneously moral, aesthetic and functional. It is a recognisable *pattern* rather than something to be contemplated. McLuhan thought that our new technology has an actual tendency towards the pattern-like organic and non-mechanical because it extends not our eyes but our aleatory central nervous system as a planetary vesture.

Irrationality increases simultaneously with this tactility. For McLuhan, plain sensory reactions are "irrational" compared to rational thinking, which requires a certain intellectual and emotional distance. McLuhan claimed that already the first TV generation returned quickly to the primitive, irrational stage when it rapidly lost the habit of visual and, simultaneously, rational perspective.<sup>210</sup> The tendency towards tactile media explains the irrationality in human-technology relations.

In Baudrillard's and McLuhan's interpretations of machines, they become irresistibly multifunctional, because people are enchanted by their image. Consequently, the new mythological electrical technology and the older mechanical time, including eco-high-tech buildings, begins easily to feel unacceptable if it is *uniform*. It

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 42-47.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 123-126.

<sup>210</sup> McLuhan argued that TV is tactile in fostering a passion for depth involvement in every aspect of experience. TV is above all an extension of the sense of atmospheric tactility that involves the maximal interplay of all of the senses and camouflages the loss of rational thinking by this smoke screen. The way toward involvement in depth makes all the remote visualised goals of usual culture seem not only unreal but irrelevant and anaemic. It is the total involvement in all-inclusive *nowness* that occurs via TV's image, suppressing any thinking of motives and rational chains. TV involves using moving depth, but it does not excite, agitate or arouse. Presumably, this is a feature of all depth experience, McLuhan argues (see *ibid.*, 321-337).

seems in this context that ecological high-tech architecture could exist only if it is able to become *multifunctional*, *flexible* and *pluralistic*, which actually means suppressing long-term motivations such as actual "ethical" sustainability. This is contradictory. Sustainability *means* ecology nowadays. It seems anyway that ecological architecture must become irrational concerning its own means of existence in order to survive. It must remain relativistic and flexible towards its own principles: the ambiguity between recycling and energy production.



Jean Nouvel: CLM/BBDO Offices, Issy-les-Moulineaux (1988-92)



Music Television: Real World (late 1990s)

### 3.4 The loss of enchantment in architecture: From the seductive architecture of moving images (à la Nouvel) to the banal moving images of architecture (à la reality TV)

The reproduction of commodities faces unavoidably the loss of interpretation and the disappearance of the traces of the human contribution. This means a drawback in the quality of enchantment through which the object entangles the consumer. An example of the seductively enchanting, mediative function of myth is the artistic influence of moving images on architecture. Jean Nouvel's relationship to film is particularly interesting in this sense, and worth discussing in detail. However, it seems that Nouvel's seductive mode of filmic architecture is at odds with the myths of the present stage of transmodernity.

Baudrillard argues that the crime of the evolved stage of consumer society is not actually the disappearance of enchantment, but the fallible drawback in its type. He believes that symptomatically meaningful explanations are becoming useless in the sphere of cultural artefacts, because there is no longer any *seduction* left for the illusion of their determination. According to Baudrillard, culture is increasingly becoming negatively *fascinating* or negatively *effective*, that is, the cold production of small differences from one huge transpolitical object that includes all professions and spheres. These differences do not generate the seduction of illusions, but only different degrees of banal reality. This fascinating banalisation can be seen taking place, for example, in reality TV, fascinating in its obscenity. Moving images generated by surveillance cameras can also be included in this category. Enigmatic seduction has been replaced by the fascination of sheer *recording* and banal aesthetics, without any illusion that there could be something hidden or suppressed. Because architecture, in comparison to moving images, is not a representation of reality but rather the direct manifestation of it, it is appropriate to call these 'obscene' and fascinating images, these "moving images of reality", the "moving images of architecture".

Baudrillard's view of this general cultural change from seduction to fascination is pessimistic and occasionally disapproving,<sup>211</sup> but analysing banal fascination in regard to architecture is a better starting point for analysis than, for instance, functional analysis. After all, fascination is another form of enchantment.

For Baudrillard, the sheer possibility for the following phenomena requires "seductive" enchantment: contradictions between imagination and reality; the demarcation between subject and object; displacement; interpretation; reflection; reference; imagination; secrets; masks; enigma; and ultimately also duration (in contrast to real-time communication). These factors are concerned with the second stage of symbolic exchange (enigmatic signifi-

<sup>211</sup> "There exists a terror of, as well as fascination for, the perpetual engendering of the same from the same [...] Nothing is worse than the truer than the true: like the clone, [...] the disappearance of the artifice in manifest naturalism. Here there is a sort of scandal which is unbearable. [...] That which no longer causes illusion is dead, and inspires terror. [...] Against the truth of the true, against the truer than the true [...], against the obscenity of manifestness, [...] we must reforge illusion, retrieve illusion [...]. Seduction versus terror: such is the wager, since no other exists." (translation AA) (Jean Baudrillard: *Les stratégies fatales* 56-57).

tion) and the first and second stages of simulacra (counterfeit and production). In simulation and beyond, seduction changes into banal fascination, which takes place in the panic of material production, in the auto-referential circle of communication, in the fetishistic system of difference and in the immediacy of vision.<sup>212</sup> Also Guy Debord has described the principles of enchantment giving way to “banality” that characterises reproduced modern culture.<sup>213</sup>

### **Nouvel and reality TV**

I will now explicate the mythologically decisive shift from enchanting and enigmatic art to fascinating and banal art by comparing architect Jean Nouvel’s film-inspired architecture to the contemporary phenomenon of reality TV. Reality TV is a manifestation of the general cultural fascination with the direct, unaltered recording of architecture and people. Viewed in this way, Nouvel can be seen as one of the last mammoths of the second simulacra period in architecture.<sup>214</sup> That is why his architecture seems to be doomed to extinction or, more accurately, doomed to nostalgia and museumification through repeated imitations. Nouvel says he tries to produce events that are *true openings on to the imagination*.<sup>215</sup> In this task, he has been the most interesting figure to think about the influence of moving images on architecture because he has found so many different areas where moving images can be seductively beneficial. I have separated seven of them:

1.) Nouvel has used a considerable amount of time, for instance through his writings, to explain his views on the seductive similarities between these two professions. For Nouvel, film is higher degree architecture. Nouvel explains that just like filmmakers, architects produce images, they manipulate large budgets and plan things in advance, as well as confront the constraints of reality (Baudrillard–Nouvel: *Les objets singuliers* [2000] 16). But architects are “clumsy”, Nouvel says. They erase what they have

<sup>212</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 17, 143-154; *La Transparence du Mal* (1990) 127.

<sup>213</sup> Guy Debord: *Society of the Spectacle* (1983, orig. 1967) 59.

<sup>214</sup> On the simulacra periods, see the end of chapter 2.1.

<sup>215</sup> Jean Nouvel: ‘Extract from an Interview with Gilles de Bure’, in Jean Nouvel: *Jean Nouvel Emmanuel Cattani et Associes* (1992).

drawn, and they fix and repair. In comparison to film productions, neither materiality nor time becomes manipulated in architecture. Cinema refers to more than manipulating only materials and temporary objects.

2.) Nouvel has pointed out that the seductive *attitudes* in films are also important for architecture. Nouvel mentions Jean-Luc Godard with his directness, and Wim Wenders who searches through cinema for “an image true to the man of the 20th century that he could recognise and learn from”. In *Les objets singuliers* (2000, 17-20, 27) Nouvel says that he is more interested in “mental” than visual or aesthetic images in architecture, and that he is actually “against architecture” (ibid., 33). For Nouvel’s enchantment, he believes Godard imposes on film the *fracturation of the picture and the multiplicity of messages*. The second modern attitude of films Nouvel speaks of is the *mental suggestive image*. It exists in films as if they were out of the frame. Nouvel thinks the third interesting attitude of films is *stylistical continuity*. He mentions Leos Carax as a filmmaker who is particularly concerned with visual matters. In this connection, Nouvel also mentions such offices and architects as Arquitectonica, Rem Koolhaas, Will Alsop and Eric Owen Moss.<sup>216</sup>

3.) Nouvel has taken / “stolen” images from films that have seduced him. Here his feeling for overlooked milieus is clear. But film is not the only theft for Nouvel. He has also benefited from car technology, and aeroplane and tram design. Of artists, Nouvel has made references to Joseph Beuys and Yves Klein. Of filmmakers he has most extensively used Wim Wenders’ visions:

a) For Nouvel, Wenders’ mise-en scène has been natural, especially with the dystopist overtones of the 1980s. Nouvel’s *Bar for the Theatre at Belfort* (completed 1983) was a copy of a scene from Wenders’ *Alice in den Städten* [Alice in the Cities] (1967) with wet asphalt, red neon light, a stainless steel counter and Coca-Cola logos. He suggested that walking into the bar should give the same sort of feeling as walking on to the film-set.<sup>217</sup>

b) According to Nouvel, airport lights, motorways, electricity lines

<sup>216</sup> Jean Nouvel: *Cinéma, Architecture: Une Envie de Deserter* (1987).

<sup>217</sup> Odile Fillion: ‘Life into Art, Art into Life: Fusions in Film, Video and Architecture’. In Penz and Thomas (eds.): *Cinema and Architecture* (1997).

and dense cities are our existence. He mentions that Wenders' *Der Stand der Dinge* [The State of Things] (1982) has this everyday world which is also his, where the poetics of situation could be found. Another direct reference to Wenders is the *Night Club at Nogent Sur Marne* (1987), whose lines were taken straight out of *Der Stand der Dinge*. It included asphalt, large bright lights, wrecked cars, industrial surroundings, highways, flashing lights and big screens. Nouvel has expressed his affinity with Wenders primarily in terms of a feeling for certain overlooked milieus, for in-between places, "where time drops away under a slow, lasting gaze that reveals the poetry of the proximate and at-hand".<sup>218</sup> Odile Fillion claims that Nouvel has also used connotations to films such as *Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *Alien* (1979) and *Brazil* (1985). Hints of these films appear in buildings such as the *Opera de Lyon* and the *Palais des Congrès de Tours*.<sup>219</sup>

c) Nouvel has at an early stage told how he was impressed by a certain sequence in Fassbinder's film *Die bitteren Tränen der Petra von Kant* [The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant], where two ladies discuss in front of a magnificent classical painting. Nouvel was so astonished by this image that he transferred it to an actual building project: when converting an old museum storage into a library (*Trocadero Library and Record Library*, Paris, 1976) he brought 19th century paintings from the cellar up into the old library with the idea of creating a similar scene as in the Fassbinder film. By doing this, Nouvel wanted to materialise his own "delighted sensation" of the film.<sup>220</sup>

4.) Nouvel has had direct contact with filmmaker Wim Wenders. In 1989, Nouvel met Wenders in person for the first time, was enchanted, and they became friends.<sup>221</sup> Nouvel asked Wenders to make a film of the construction of his *La Tour sans Fin* in Defence, Paris. The tower was eventually not built, but Wenders included it in his film *Until the End of the World* (1991) which described Paris in the year 2000.

<sup>218</sup> Jean Nouvel in the catalogue to *Cites-Cines*, ed. Ramsay, Paris 1989, cited in Brian Hatton: *Notes sur le tournage en extérieurs: Nouvel, Virilio, Wenders*.

<sup>219</sup> Fillion, op.cit.

<sup>220</sup> Jean Nouvel: *Cinéma, Architecture: Une Envie de Deserter* (1987).

<sup>221</sup> Fillion, op. cit

5.) Perhaps the most important aspect is Nouvel's rethinking of architectural and spatial concepts through seductive film:

a) Nouvel mentions scenographic depth as being very influential for himself: "I like working with the depth of field, reading a space in the terms of its thickness and depth."<sup>222</sup>

b) Nouvel's works consist of *multiple reflections, denying primacy to perspectival vision*. This is especially clear in the representational pictures approved by his office.<sup>223</sup> For Nouvel, architecture is not the skilful, correct, harmonious and magnificent play of volumes assembled under the light, which Le Corbusier would have argued. Nouvel's objects are made of reflections, harshness, oppositions and confrontations.<sup>224</sup>

c) One could say that Nouvel's architecture is composed of seductive studio scenes rather than film locations. After all, his buildings remind us very much also of vehicles (accordingly, the world is pictured very much from the viewpoint of moving vehicles in Wenders' films). This brings us to Paul Virilio,<sup>225</sup> who has extensively written on cinema as a continuance of war technologies, and architecture as control screens, and has suggested that cinematographic processes should be used in architectural design.<sup>226</sup> Virilio equates the development of technologies in moving images with the development of war technologies (e.g. the film camera and machine gun).<sup>227</sup> Virilio was Nouvel's professor at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. In addition, at the age of 20, after entering the school, Nouvel went to work in Paul Virilio's and Claude Parent's architects' office. At the time, Nouvel has stated, Virilio's and Parent's work was really on the cutting edge. They were searching for an architecture of the "oblique function": the "oblique" was an attack against similarity and neutrality in architecture.<sup>228</sup> The aim was to encourage a constant awareness of gravity, in a sensual manner. Nouvel later made a building following the "function of the oblique", the *Delbigot House* at Villeneuve-sur-Lot (with François

<sup>222</sup> Hatton, op. cit.

<sup>223</sup> See, for example: Jean Nouvel: 'Album', *l'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, 296, décembre 1994, 54-60.

<sup>224</sup> See also Jacques Lucan: 'Exploration of the Present', in Boissière (ed.): *Nouvel: Jean Nouvel Emmanuel Cattani et Associes* (1992), 20.

<sup>225</sup> See Hatton, op. cit. about Nouvel's connection to Virilio.

<sup>226</sup> See, for example, Paul Virilio: 'Towards the Space of Interfaces' (1986).

<sup>227</sup> Virilio's *War and Cinema* (1992, orig. 1989) examines this development.

<sup>228</sup> Interview with Claude Parent in Pamela Johnston (ed.): 'The Function of the Oblique: The Architecture of Claude Parent and Paul Virilio 1963-1969', *AA Documents* 3 (1996).

Seigneur and Roland Baltera) (1973). Still, more significantly, Nouvel has adopted Parent's idea of the architectural form as a singular object folding back on itself.<sup>229</sup> Virilio's and Parent's *Charleville Cultural Centre* reminds us remarkably of Nouvel's *Palais des Congrès* at Tours. My hypothesis is that these buildings are always symmetrical because they remind us of vehicles, like the war technology studied by Virilio. Virilio and Nouvel spent many afternoons together talking,<sup>230</sup> which may have influenced Nouvel's conception of architecture as surfaces as well as its correlations with cinema. If Wenders' idea of a story is always and everywhere a version of a labyrinth, an image *from* the vehicle, then Nouvel's architecture seems bound to the vehicle itself, where that which is seen sees all. Another difference between Wenders and Nouvel lies in that for Virilio the gaze is no longer looking after the narratives of the old ceremonious city but shifts and glances in a milieu of information.<sup>231</sup> Virilio connects the history of lighting with those of surveillance and imagining: the city that has been moved into the light has become the city moved into the cinema theatre, so to speak, which is Nouvel's city.

The motif of "mantle" recurs throughout Nouvel's work; indeed Virilio has spoken of the theme of "capot" – the bonnet or cowl that conceals a mechanism. Nouvel's opaque "black boxes" demonstrate that most of his architecture happens internally. At the *Hotel St. James* in Bordeaux (1989) the rooms are virtual "cameras" whose blinds let out views but hide what is inside; they are machines for looking out. Finally, as Brian Hatton suggests, it is not Wenders' but Virilio's version of the city that Nouvel's architecture represents. It is in essence not a location at all but a studio scene.<sup>232</sup>

d) Like Le Corbusier, Nouvel contemplates the notion of seductively planned movement in architecture. Architecture is no longer considered as a volume, but rather as a series of sequences and episodes.<sup>233</sup> According to Nouvel, a building has no meaning in itself and cannot be read except through movement, through a series of carefully pre-established sequences. Nouvel states that in his depiction of the continuous shot/sequence that a building is,

<sup>229</sup> Jacques Lucan: 'Introduction'. In Johnston (ed.), *ibid.*, 9.

<sup>230</sup> 'Jean Nouvel'. *GA Document Extra 07* (1996).

<sup>231</sup> See Hatton, *op. cit.*, 12.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

one must be careful with the cuts and edits, the framing and the openings, textures and screens, so as to establish a rhythm in the things that one chooses to show. According to him, to erect a building is to predict and to seek the effects of contrast and linkage bound up with the succession of spaces through which one passes.<sup>234</sup> Making people aware of the scale of the building, displaying its largest internal dimension, playing on the largest depth of field are constant motivations for Nouvel – and this comes from scenography.<sup>235</sup> “There is the dimension of time and movement. But it only makes sense as one moves”, Nouvel says. However, there is a major difference between this kind of working and a filmmaker’s: “We have to think everything out beforehand and cannot rely on editing techniques, as though filming a continuous shot”, Nouvel says.<sup>236</sup> Nevertheless, is it really true that the difference between film and architecture is a matter of editing? Actually, nowadays it is very common that publications attain equal importance as the real works themselves. The architectural publications can even be seen as the post-production edited final work. Most works of architecture are better known through reproductions than in real life, because few people have the opportunity to visit the acclaimed modern architecture in distant countries. The architect may suppress disappointing parts of the buildings in his or her publicity images. Furthermore, perspectival distortion and digital manipulation can be used for developing the impact of the publicity images.

6.) The seductive technologies behind film have also inspired Nouvel: e.g. video-techniques and video-screens. Big screens have become real components in his architecture, for example, in *DuMont Schauberg* (1990), in Cologne’s *Mediapark* (1991-2001), in Lille’s *Triangle des Gares* (1991-95) and in the *Grand Stade* competition entry in Paris (1994).

7.) Nouvel imagines enchanting behaviour and life in his architecture. For Nouvel, architecture is the science of behaviour. Scenography and behaviour lead to the development of scenarios, such

<sup>233</sup> On Jean Nouvel and movement, see Fillion, op. cit.

<sup>234</sup> Jean Nouvel: ‘Extract from an Interview with Gilles de Bure’, in Boissière (ed.): *Nouvel: Jean Nouvel Emmanuel Cattani et Associes* (1992).

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Brian Hatton, op. cit. (12) referring to Nouvel’s video interview.

as imagining or presupposing life in an apartment. Nouvel fantasises about “chasing one another from one room to another, how a murder would occur, how to make love in the dwelling, how to eat in the bedroom...”<sup>237</sup>

Compared to Nouvel’s romantic and scenographic interpretation of moving images, the actual moving images in reality TV are asymptom of the radical change in seduction. Nouvel’s architecture is a very long way from reality TV. So-called reality TV may be termed “obscene” broadcasting; such as one finds on the CNN 24-hour news channel; in all “docu-drama”, such as Harmony Korine’s *Gummo*; in live-video broadcasting; in close-circuit surveillance TV; in documentary series without any script, such as MTV’s *The Real World*, about a group of youngsters previously unknown to each other picked to have their life living together filmed; and in the televised shows of real family quarrels filmed in a studio, such as *The Ricky Lake Show*. All these are in a certain way the apotheosis of TV. These programmes and films have no hint of imaginary function in their actuality and unsmoothed view of life; they are pure contiguity. Their sharing for sharing’s sake is banal. The banality here lies not in documentarity and objectivity per se, but in the assumption that these actions do not have anything behind their reality. Nouvel’s work has been based upon the seduction of interpretations, but in reality TV there is nothing to be interpreted: these outcomes of simulation are only reproducing the signs of reality.

When considering the unsatisfactory development with the type of enchantment in moving images,<sup>238</sup> one can see that in architecture there has occurred similar changes: the seductive myth has become threatened in the economy of sign value, and later with the inflation of value due to the disappearance of critical distance. Certain developments in architecture reveal new qualities in this light. For example, a new type of building, the “cultural centre”,<sup>239</sup> is symptomatically transmodern. Is it a conference hall? Is it a museum? Simultaneously, while “play” has been introduced into the

<sup>237</sup> Jean Nouvel: ‘Extract from an Interview with Gilles de Bure’, in Boissière (ed.): *Nouvel: Jean Nouvel Emmanuel Cattani et Associes* (1992).

<sup>238</sup> See chapter 2.3. and ‘Baudrillard and Moving Images’.

<sup>239</sup> Another example could be “the traffic centre”, which combines traffic terminals, shops and offices.

“fun” office designs, people may ask whether they are working in real offices or leisure palaces. The answer to both of the above questions is – there is no difference. These examples of “generic” architecture are marvellous in their indifference to spiritual ends. Another consequence of the transmodern aesthetics could be the diminishing importance of such mediators as critics, museum curators and journal editors. Journalism and criticism easily become an extension of the actual product and its marketing machinery, as film criticism has indeed to a great extent turned into. This kind of criticism is solely positive and typically a description of the product's technical characteristics. It is likely that architectural publications filled with cool descriptions, neutral statistics, and all kinds of lists and numerical facts would become increasingly successful.

However, there is not actually a clear connection between the technologisation of architectural forms and the banalisation of aesthetics. Even if there could be no better means to celebrate commercialism than high-tech architecture, nevertheless, ironically and following the inflation of value, any intended low-tech can become just as easily commodified as high-tech architecture. For example, historical eclecticism was widespread in the USA and Britain in the 1980s and 1990s. The leading architects of this genre, such as Robert Venturi with Denise Scott-Brown and Leon Krier tried to attain a certain authenticity through historical pastiches; however, these effects could have been the architectural equivalents to the cheap entertainment of sex and violence in commercial cinema.

### **A summary of Part 3**

In this part I have given examples of how the general and logical abstract dynamics in the mythology of consumer society become manifested in architecture: architecture which is satisfying needs comes to be considered as deception in this context; architectural pragmatism is only a materialisation of economic relationships; functional architecture is revealed to be just an effect of systematic conceptualisation; ecological architecture cannot escape the irrationality of its means. In addition, our society has to a great extent left behind the seductive myths and alongwith it the seductive architecture of moving images (à la Nouvel). Instead, it has developed the “banal moving images of architecture”, provided, for ex-

ample, by so-called reality TV.

I have made comparisons between certain moving images and architecture so that the mythological nature of these tendencies would become clear. Along with these examples, I have examined certain particular myths crucial for these processes. In addition, I attempted to show how relevant Baudrillard is in this discussion about architecture's mythological and commodified nature. In the following part I will discuss in greater detail the evolution of consumer society myths to the transmodern level of time-images.

## **4 The illogical consumption of architecture: The evolved state of consumer society mythology in architecture**

Certain signs in the contemporary architectural scene can be explained by referring to the very latest mythological changes in consumer society. At this point I have elaborated the basic concepts and dynamics of the transmodern<sup>240</sup> phase, the fourth order of simulacra. The increased possibilities for individualist consumption, enstrengthened by digital technologies and communication, have enabled new types of cultural abstractions. Based on Jean Baudrillard's analysis of the transmodern era, the contemporary mythology of architecture can be characterised by the following factors (these will be elaborated shortly):

1. An increased cultural indifference towards value statements due to the inflation of value in the accepted pluralism.
2. Surfaces and retroactive references being more important than spatial experience.
3. A tendency towards extremes.
4. An ambiguity based upon "openness", chaos and flexibility.
5. An expanding sameness: Despite the general effort to offer and accept more differences and choices – more "alternative" architecture – a kind of sameness expands without real alternatives.

After introducing these phenomena I will explain their existence in the contemporary transformations of image, appearance and ambience, culminating in the mythology of *The Digital*.

In Baudrillard's theory there is now no substantial qualitative difference between electronic media such as TV and other media such as language, painting or architecture. They all operate at the newest phase of consumer society's symbolic exchange and mythology. They all have been contaminated by simulation and thus now function in terms of "communication" and "information". Nei-

<sup>240</sup> See chapter 2.1, "Simulation".

ther architecture nor painting, for instance, have today any influence which is proper to themselves. That is, there is no longer very much “challenge” in these art forms – a challenge to go beyond the reality principle defined by this mythology.<sup>241</sup>

It seems that myth is no longer described in a logical and coherent manner (like a narrative), but runs amok:

*–Past a certain threshold of inertia, forms start snowballing, stampeding and terror is unleashed as an empty form. There comes about a swept-away effect, an effect that feeds on itself and can become the source of immense energies [...]. When effects go faster than causes, they devour them.*<sup>242</sup>

Today’s mythology is no longer logical and totalizing, but aleatory and multiple. Myths are not concerned with content or meaning, but the aleatory and ambiguous ways in which reality itself is constituted. Accordingly, in cinema, as Gilles Deleuze formulates it at the end of his *Cinema 1, L’Image-Mouvement*, the new image is a *mutation* of cinema, cutting perception off from its motor extension, as well as action and affection from the adherence of belonging to characters. The mental, “thinking”, image creates a new substantive, it goes “beyond movement”.

Deleuze’s analysis of the image in post-World War II cinema and Paul Virilio’s analysis of mythologies surrounding modern technology seem to affirm Baudrillard’s characterisation of the developed mythology in consumer society. Virilio says that architecture is about to lose everything that characterised it in the past, because of a paradigmatic change in mythologies around perception and movement. Step by step architecture is losing all of its elements, for that which used to be its essence is increasingly taken over by technical substitutes. That which *happens* has become much more important than that which *lasts*, also in architecture.<sup>243</sup> In the following, I will use references to Deleuze and Virilio when they essen-

<sup>241</sup> See Jean Baudrillard: *The Evil Demon of Images* (1988, orig. 1987) 53, for an analysis of contemporary architecture, painting and cinema. For Baudrillard on contemporary architecture as simulation see: *L’échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976) 125-126; *Amerique* (1986) 120; *The Evil Demon of Images* (1988, orig. 1987) 53; ‘Forget Baudrillard Interview’ (1984-85) (in Baudrillard: *Forget Foucault and Forget Baudrillard* 1987) 110-114.

<sup>242</sup> Jean Baudrillard: ‘Forget Baudrillard Interview’ (1984-85) 114 (in *Forget Foucault and Forget Baudrillard* 1987).

tially further Baudrillard's arguments about contemporary hyper-simulation.

### **The consequences of the inflation of value: *Time-image***

The transition from the still referential value of movement-image to the transmodern time-image in architecture means an extremely radical change. All references to "authentic" space structures and spatial experiences (the use value) must be abandoned, as well as the references to the commercial (exchange) value of architecture. The spatial experience, the symbolic experience and the sign value can no longer form the basis for the construction of architecture. They become suppressed to the aleatory code of ecstatic value. As Baudrillard describes the transmodern stage, value spreads everywhere without any reference whatsoever to any "reality". We can justifiably compare this non-referential inflation of value to the phenomenon in modern cinema that Deleuze calls "time-image".<sup>244</sup>

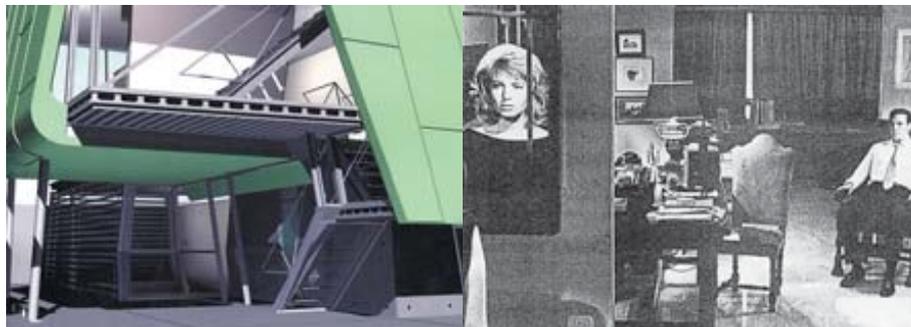
Deleuze argues that if we accept Henri Bergson's concept of *movement-image* (the image of movement), it becomes possible to say that there is no relevant difference between the unbalance of values in the mind and those in real time. They become, rather, what he calls the *time-image*; things seem to happen without any guiding reference. Deleuze argued that this process began to take place already in the cinema of the 1940s. Accordingly, architecture seems advancingly to be more able to move by itself. The amount of *moving architecture* is increasing and this tendency is typically about *time-image*: images being displaced from sensory-motor

<sup>243</sup> Virilio holds this view in his article 'Architecture in the Age of Its Virtual Disappearance' (1998).

<sup>244</sup> Deleuze's approach in both *Cinéma 1, L'image-mouvement* (1983) and *Cinéma 2: L'image-temps* (1985) is mythological because he connects changes in images of cinema to a general, historical rupture in the typical thought patterns of the society. Deleuze is interested in the resonant association between the form of the expression and the form of the content. This material approach to cultural artefacts, derived from Deleuze's mentor Henri Bergson, is to a great extent similar to Baudrillard's anti-metaphysical attempt. Bergson already anticipated some of Baudrillard's acknowledgements of highly sophisticated abstract cultures, such as the former's mistrust in cause-effect chains (Bergson: *Creative Mind* [1946, orig. 1903] 122), the "ironical" or ambivalent nature of objects (ibid., 208), the play of wit as a kind of symbolic exchange (the situation-specific and symbolic nature of reality: ibid., 177, 191) and the changed requirements in defining modern mythology (the new kind of general tendencies related to the modes of perception: ibid., 164-166; 222).

functions. The convergence between non-functional physical movement with aleatory personal freedom is a tendency I will discuss in more detail shortly.

Deleuze insists that people hardly believe any longer that a global situation can bring about an action that is capable of modifying the world. This exaggerating approach of Deleuze is very similar to Baudrillard's – they both describe the typical, new, mythological tendencies, rather than give an objective account of the contemporary world. In this objective world, for example, technology is still based upon the principle of a cause-effect chain, and there are social movements that can really change the world, but not in this mythological world. The tendencies Deleuze writes about are evident in the typical Euro-American films of our age. The cause-effect chain – “action-reaction” – typically breaks in these art works.<sup>245</sup> There is a possibility that this change could also have happened in architecture, too, if moving images is *the* generic art form of the consumer society.



Neil Denari: Diptychal architecture: Vertical Smoothhouse (Los Angeles 1997)

Antonioni: Diptychal cinema: L'Eclisse (1962)

### **Taking present consumer society and its moving images seriously: Neil Denari as a transmodern *time-image* architect**

Naturally, not all cinema made after the Second World War fulfils Deleuze's definitions for time-image. Accordingly, most of today's architecture is still based upon the principles of logical movement-

<sup>245</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Cinéma 1* (1983): 277-279.

images. However, in architectural design, Neil Denari is one of those who has made conscious realisations of the catastrophic processes of the transmodern time-image. He has also been a good example of an architect who is inspired by moving images. In this case the inspiration comes especially from the Italian filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni.<sup>246</sup>

That Antonioni's films are *time-images* and symptomatic of the present stage of consumer society is clear. These are the characteristics of *time-image* in Antonioni's films:

–Antonioni creates *dispersive situations*.<sup>247</sup> For instance, a reoccurring scheme in his films is that somebody disappears and people then start searching for that person. After a while, however, they forget about what they were supposed to be doing. The situation evaporates, people go to parties and concerts, to meet new people and the disappearance is forgotten, as if nothing extraordinary had happened. In Antonioni's films, people disappear, their feelings disappear and their desire disappears. Also the plot disappears. This uncertainty is created by the elliptical narrative and by picturing people's social incapacibilities. Moreover, this uncertainty is emphasised when the viewer does not often know what is surface and what is spatial in the image. There are no subjective viewpoints: Antonioni's trademark is the avoidance of any camera angle showing the person's point of view.

–Antonioni generates *profound indifference*.<sup>248</sup> There is no depth in relationships. People do not interest each other and all kinds of agendas and plans are doomed to fail. People have enormous difficulties in trying to relate to situations. The scenes become empty and aleatory.

–There is no *initiatory journey* in Antonioni's films:<sup>249</sup> people are on the move all the time. If they are stopped, they feel ill.

<sup>246</sup> Neil Denari: *Gyroscopic Horizons* (1999) 32-35. Michelangelo Antonioni (1912-), Italian cinema director and screenwriter, entered the film industry in 1942 as a screenwriter. Antonioni's first feature film was *Story of a Love* (1950). Antonioni's best-known films are his trilogy *The Adventure* (1960), *Night* (1961), and *Eclipse* (1962); *Red Desert* (1964), his first colour film; *Blow up* (1966), his first English-language film; *Zabriskie Point* (1970); and *The Passenger* (1975). Later he directed *Identification of a Woman* (1982) and *Beyond the Clouds* (1995).

<sup>247</sup> Deleuze's definition of *time-image* includes this particular characterisation: *Cinéma 2* (1985): 136.

<sup>248</sup> The indifference of *time-image*: *ibid.*, 66-75, 148.

<sup>249</sup> The loss of initiatory journeys and *time-image*: *ibid.*, 129.

<sup>250</sup> The failures of memory and *time-image*: *ibid.*, 66-75.

–The *failure of memory*:<sup>250</sup> People do not recognise each other and themselves. It is also difficult to say what is real and what is imagined in the situations shown to us (or is a strongly emphasised interpretation). The environment is seen through a projection of the mind, mostly through a disturbed, narcissistic, psychopathic or neurotic mind.

–*Paralysis, mechanical reproduction*:<sup>251</sup> The narration fails. The characters feel that they cannot influence things, that the action only half concerns them. Situations do not lead to any consequent action.

Antonioni is not interested *politically* in this uncertainty, only in the aesthetic possibilities that it creates. He is a remarkable artist, a genius in making visual experiments that are not only beautiful, but also change the way we see and experience things, the shape, movement, stability, duration and surface which forms objects and people. In this sense, Neil Denari is Antonioni's counterpart in architecture and the strength of Denari's works can be found in the same area: *offering another, more up-to date view-point to architecture*. Naturally, being up-to date is not enough to make an art work remarkable in Deleuze's or Baudrillard's theory. Only when connected to their social acuteness in addition to superb expression and quality does the contemporaneity of Denari's works become remarkable.

Denari designs "machines" for living in, where the machines do not expose a predominant rationality. Compared to the typical technology-inspired architects, such as Norman Foster and Richard Rogers, the spectacle of Denari's architecture (as well as that of Wes Jones, mentioned earlier) does not lie in the techno-rational-

<sup>251</sup> On the paralytical and mechanical reproduction in *time-image* see Gilles Deleuze: *Cinéma 1* (1983) 282-283.

<sup>252</sup> Denari's most indicative designs so far have been his projects 8910: Tokyo International Forum competition entry, with its external, strongly diagonal megastructure holding blob-like forms inside; 9009: Prototype Landscape, with its dynamic Le Corbusean combination of curved walls with architectural "shoeboxes"; 9204: Super-charger House (later called Desert Centre) with its irregular and carefully separated structural and sheltering parts; 9205 School with its diagonals and blob-like forms in a smaller scale than in 8910; 9307: Museum of the 20th Century (Central Glass competition entry) with its intestines-like structure carved into an underground rectangular box; 9405 Massey Residence (Schnitt-Haus) with its folding surface wrapped around the living space and supported by delicate steel "instruments"; and the actually realised Gallery MA Exhibition (1996), combining the Massey Residence's separation of rectangular, unorganised bundled steel-beams and smooth plastic-like surfaces with curved folds (with extravagant logos on them).

ism and unconscious formalism, but rather in the compact ecstasy of communication, in the conscious manipulation of the relationships between technology and the mythology of science, as they manifest themselves through architectural surfaces and structures.<sup>252</sup>

As I see it, Denari's meditations on Antonioni are motivated by two basic themes: flat surfaces and what he calls diptychal spatial fields (which are able to generate compositional uncertainty).<sup>253</sup> Denari has discussed both Antonioni and Deleuze's film theory, but the following is my own characterisation of how Denari processes *time-images* in his own architecture through devices that he could have derived from Antonioni's films:

1. Putting the emphasis of his architecture on the surface character or flatness of his buildings creates uncertainty because homogenous curved surfaces destroy the hierarchical spatial experience of successive spaces. Moreover, the border between surfaces and space becomes blurred. In addition, the folded surfaces spread indifference, because they are able to connect and homogenise heterogeneities. In Denari's architecture there is no illusion of "deep psychology" derived from space, or from recognisable architectural symbols and signs. The best examples of the surface character of Denari's buildings are the *Interrupted Projections* exhibition space (1996) and the *Technology Research Park* project (1998). In both cases the folding surface is wrapped around the living space and supported by delicate steel "instruments". In *Interrupted Projections* the abstraction of architecture into a sign form takes place: that is, the surfaces become filled with logos. (I will return to Denari's use of logos in the chapter 4.3.).

2. On the other hand, according to Denari himself, he has used the Antonioni-style diptychal spatial field a lot – the "diagrammatic formal logic of the diptych that organises visual phenomena into self-

<sup>253</sup> Neil Denari refers to Deleuze's film theory when analysing Antonioni's, Godard's and Ozu's films in Denari: *Gyroscopic Horizons* 33-39.

<sup>254</sup> Neil Denari: *Gyroscopic Horizons* (1999) 23, 33-37. Denari has differentiated three types of diptychal fields and then used these devices in his works: 1. Vague repetition (a certain kind of indifference of a distorted mirror, approximate mechanical reproduction); 2. Binaries (apparent opposites – the binary as a way to describe the world of unstable and undecidable conditions: one cannot decide which is the central agent: the dull, blank part or the chaotic, frenzy part), 3. Bi-univocal pairing (in-between pairing).

similar halves”.<sup>254</sup> This refers to the force in the horizontal and vertical splicing of space typical for Antonioni’s films. Denari makes Antonioni’s images in three dimensions, where there is “difference within the repetitive”. Of particular significance in Denari’s architecturisation of Antonioni’s images is that the overall concept of architecture should be systematic, as Denari refers to Deleuze’s description of general “multiplicities”.<sup>255</sup> Most of all, Denari is an interpreter of the instability of the normative.

Deleuze’s *time-image* is one of the “tools” used when combining contemporary social topics with aesthetics. Antonioni and Denari have been exemplary artists processing these themes. Denari has “benefited” from Antonioni’s films in receiving aesthetic inspiration, but also in clarifying his own position as a sociologically-oriented architect who studies the present socio-technological paradigm. Denari is one of the first “graduated” *time-image* architects, for whom the raised stage of consumer society mythology (transmodernity) is a context to be taken seriously. I will return to Denari in chapter 4.3, concerning the typical image for the transmodern phase.

Another architect to whom one continuously returns when describing the transmodern thematics in architecture is Rem Koolhaas. Koolhaas’ affinity with globalisation, the potentials in framing, bigness and paranoia make him the architect of the transmodern stage in architecture. In the following chapters, 4.2 to 4.4, where I explain the characteristics of the transmodern (the fourth simulacra phase) architecture, I show how one must return continuously to Koolhaas as a typical example.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 22-24.

## 4.1 Pluralist, non-spatial, extreme, open, alternative architecture?

The following descriptions introduce the characteristics of what I have called *transmodern mythology* in architecture, or, if you will, using Baudrillard's late terminology, "the fourth simulacra stage", hypersimulation. These characteristics define to a great extent architecture's possibilities and restrictions in mass media society. I will explain these characteristics in connection to certain typical works of transmodern architecture and moving images in greater detail in the chapters 4.2. to 4.5.

### 1. Architectural pluralism: the increased indifference due to the inflation of value

In contemporary architecture, at its most typical, one can witness a mythological indifference that is even deeper than the general indifference caused by the destruction of use value proper in commodification. We can witness the general impossibility of making common judgements about architectural quality, but also about pluralism (the cacophony of different styles and expressions). The break with historical, homogenous city structures has given rise to pluralistic situations, environments where there are often chance relations, empty and disconnected whatever-spaces replacing homogenous ones. This can be seen particularly well in the fractured urban planning and urban environments.<sup>256</sup> In this mythology, there is no longer any general code of valuation (a belief in tradition), but rather the irrational belief in ever new *changes themselves*. Another manifestation of this type of general indifference is the confusion of typologies due to the accelerating pace in buildings' changing functions. The whole extent of these phenomena requires a

<sup>256</sup> See Marc Augé: *Non-lieux: Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité* (1992). Augé describes the disconnectedness between the present floodlit city centres turned into museums and the suburbs that have become a huge "transit-place". Rem Koolhaas (in *S,M,L,XL* 1995) has pointed out the increasing disconnectedness between the old city centres and their modern underground counterparts.

theoretical explanation.

When Baudrillard writes about the present “positive indifference”, he means that people are doomed in the impossibility to make final judgements, and that the mass media, including architecture, are the generator of this ambience.<sup>257</sup> This impossibility to judge is also a presupposition for architectural pluralism.

The change in mythology can be seen where the valuation according to the seduction of meanings turns into the indifference of the epidemic of value, where the effects replace the meaning. Baudrillard actually says that communication is now “promoted as a myth” and that this epidemic of value gives rise to a paradox: “better to have nothing to say if one seeks to communicate”.<sup>258</sup> Hence the common anti-theoretical sentiments among contemporary pragmatist architects.

Deleuze verifies this view about the symptomatically contemporary impossibility to judge, saying that indifference and deliberately weak links are the characteristics of contemporary images. He describes the *time-image* by saying that the new, typical image in cinema no longer refers to a situation that is globalising or synthetic, but rather to one that is dispersive. Linkages, connections or liaisons are typically weak in the new mythology.<sup>259</sup> Image falls into indifference, it ceases to be narrative. Situations no longer extend into action.<sup>260</sup> In architecture, we no longer believe in a totality – even in an open one; rather, we believe in breaks, that is, architecture answering to the catastrophic scenarios concerning nature (ecological architecture) and “urban renewals” (pluralistic architecture).

## **2. From spatial experience to referential experience: speed and disappearance**

Technological processes typically eliminate the obstacle of

<sup>257</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 54. Baudrillard describes “the new mode of causality”, and says that “we are in the end of perspective space” (ibid., 51-54), with such lack of further explanations about his terms “new” and “we” that he cannot be but explaining again the mythological characteristics of society, as he did in his *La société de consommation*. See also ‘Transpolitics, Transsexuality, Transaesthetics’ 15-20 (in *The Disappearance of Art and Politics* 1992), where Baudrillard describes the “fractal stage” of simulacra and value.

<sup>258</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *La Transparence du Mal* (1990) 56-57.

<sup>259</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Cinéma 2* (1985) 136.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 66-75; 148.

space.<sup>261</sup> Accordingly, one can witness a certain glorification of linear route forms (as opposed to the previous emphasis on space) in typical contemporary architecture: the in-between-places have become common areas for design and planning, including the new "galleries", "plazas" and other usually glass-covered pedestrian areas in city centres. "Corridors" and "belts" have become the essence of regional planning. Contemporary architecture has to a great extent become, namely, an exciting route, a flowing surface. Accordingly, there is typically no longer a clear focus on contemporary buildings and areas. The flat, screen-like shattered and networked model of the environment from information technology seems to have become more important in the mythological, model-creating perspective than the traditional hierarchically organised lived space.

The current mythological *speed* (of light and electricity), together with its companion (immediate) *perception*, are models characterised by vastly exceeding circulation and an emergence everywhere, as with the information on the internet. I will later discuss this phenomenon as a mythological model, in the form of the myth of *The Violence of Speed*. This refers to the growing importance of immediate processes in culture. In the turmoil of *Speed*, any kind of matter is about to vanish in favour of information, also in architecture.<sup>262</sup> In the mythology of the present consumer society, sheer speed and the disappearance of any finality have become more important aspects than visible, directional movement and interpretation. Baudrillard distinguishes between movement that goes somewhere and speed that goes nowhere, arguing that there has been a mythological shift to the latter. This has taken place because the social code has become indeterminate, or has even disappeared altogether, "going faster than its causes". The social code is no longer linear, final, radiating, or spiralling.<sup>263</sup> The new cultural-mythological system is in constant movement in regard to people's changing needs and values, which become conceived from the point of view of their reproducibility: con-

<sup>261</sup> Manuel Castells: *The Urban Question* (1977) 21. Castells refers to the development of the means of communication.

<sup>262</sup> Paul Virilio: *Architecture in the Age of Its Virtual Disappearance* (1998).

<sup>263</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976) 102-103; *Oublier Foucault* (1977) 60-61; 'Forget Baudrillard Interview' (1984-85) 110-114 (in *Forget Foucault & Forget Baudrillard* 1987); *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 89-91; *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 219-235.

temporaneity is the only motivation, and instantaneousness the only obligation.

In *speed* there is no longer the seduction of events and causes.<sup>264</sup> Consequently, *invisible functionality* has become more important than the visible (mechanistic) operationality and effectivity. This tendency causes enormous consequences in architecture, which seems to be forced to give up its spatial characteristics. Baudrillard has especially pointed out the symptomatic absence of finality and critical negativity in contemporary moving images. I will explain in the next chapter how this change has materialised into the myth of *Flexibility* both in architecture and moving images.

The speed of change from the mythological presence of finality (and from Bergson's and Deleuze's *movement-images*) to present aleatory and tactical values (time-images) has been somehow slower in architecture than in cinema. The reason for this is twofold: architecture's extremely traditional metaphysical presuppositions have been tied to notions about the representation of safety and shelter. On the other hand, there has been more fluidity of fashions in cinema than in architecture, resisting the preservation of traditional images. The current hegemony of the mythology of *absence* in modern consumer society is marked by a double disappearance in architecture: the dispersal and disintegration of the historical interpretation, but also the miniaturisation of action. The first aspect is apparent in the myth of *Retro* (which I shall explain below). The second aspect can be found in the mythical capabilities of the hidden technology in architecture, but also with the emergence of symptomatically unrealistic timetables of architectural projects.

As regards the remarkably important tendency to *disappearance* in the evolved mythology, this refers to the fact that there are no longer any narrative stories or possibilities for interpretation in mythology. There is only the cold mythology of absence, as Baudrillard argues echoing Bataille and late Barthes.<sup>265</sup> Baudrillard says that this is especially apparent in the moving images that have begun to attain the level of the absence of all finality and critical negativity.<sup>266</sup> As mentioned earlier, mythologically typical contemporary moving images share the disappearance of any syntax and meaning. There are only tactical, referential values, a so-

<sup>264</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 69-76.

called *Retro* culture.<sup>267</sup> *Retro* is a myth that lies in opposition to the possibility of the seduction of events and causes. It subtends the true possibility of the narrative enchantment of a discourse. In architecture, historical reconstructions and pastiches that may even be more perfect than the originals (though I exclude the maintenance of old buildings) cannot bring the history and its seduction back. Historical myths were narratives, now *Retro* myths are only references to those narratives.

### 3. Low- and high-definition architecture: the extremes

Architectural magazines and books which present architectural works have traditionally presented not only pictures and data about the buildings, but also often the architect's own thoughts about the present and future society, as they think it should develop. This was particularly so with the socially aware architecture of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. The 1980s was the era of architects' heavy speculations about architecture's historical grounds and this was reflected in the actual architectural works of that era. The late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s was largely characterised in the Western architectural media by the rather intellectual deconstructionist movement in architecture. However, since the second half of the 1990s, designing architects have to a great extent abandoned this intellectual linkage in favour of pragmatist descriptions of their works. The tendency is for technical performances, ecology and computer sciences to be the new supposedly theory-free points of reference for the designing architects as featured in the contemporary architectural press. Conversely, theorising architects are now typically not supposed to design anything that will actually be built. This double phenomenon is characteristically transmodern in its tendency to extremes. In this sense, in transmodernity, *high-definition architecture* typically corresponds to the architect's low-definition theoretical performance. This means in today's atmosphere of extremism that it is almost impossible to think that a skilful architect could meet the high standards

<sup>265</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *De la séduction* (1979) 130-133; Georges Bataille: *The Absence of Myth: Writings on Surrealism* (1994) 48; Roland Barthes: *Mythologies* (1957) 238-243.

<sup>266</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 89-91.

<sup>267</sup> See especially Baudrillard's *L'illusion de la fin* (1992), which analyses the tendency of culture to lose all finality.

of architectural theory; rather, these are usually considered as opposites. The notion that the lower-definition architectural theorising is conducive to the higher-definition architectural practise seems to be an accepted fact in the present culture of transmodern pragmatist architecture. In opposition to the tendency of high-definition architecture (informed by low-definition theorising) is the equally important in its extremity *low-definition architecture*, which involves the smallest possible effort for designed architecture with the highest definition of theoretical performance, so-called paper architecture. These two extremes hardly meet in the labels that the architectural media puts on contemporary architects, and the architects situated somewhere between these extremes have become rare in the media of transmodernity. Naturally, every “theorising” architect must accomplish some practical procedures before his or her building may be built. Equally, every “pragmatist” must do some theoretical thinking before he or she can invent anything new; otherwise the pragmatist would practically have become a robot. However, the contemporary architectural magazines tend to present the designing architects as if they were unintellectual hermits who keep clear of the conversations about society. Conversely, the thinking and discussing architect is not expected to build anything.

The transmodern “tendency to extremes” refers to two phenomena: on the one hand there are the extreme attempts in simulation to represent and master the world through abstraction and, on the other hand, there are the extremes that rise up against it as responses to its challenge. Baudrillard claims that the present society is evolving towards an extreme number of different values, choices and interpretations.<sup>268</sup> Its seduction is simultaneously changing into the “panic” of material production.<sup>269</sup> Baudrillard goes as far as to state that the utopias are in the process of disappearing when the social becomes monstrous and “obese”: anything may become enculturated and overdetermined in interpretation. Because of the disappearance of seduction in the abstracted symbolic exchange, the resulting emptiness has given rise to the obsession with passions rather than seduction as the motivation behind the mythology.<sup>270</sup>

<sup>268</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 9, 71-72, 183.

<sup>269</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 17, 143-154; *La Transparence du Mal* (1990) 127.

<sup>270</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le crime parfait* (1995) 50-51.



Rem Koolhaas: Educatorium, University of Utrecht (1997)

Bakema & van den Broek: Auditorium, University of Delft (1964)

#### 4. “Open”, “chaotic” architecture: The ambiguity based upon gradations

The division of criticism into a large array of equally valid gradations is the result of the obesity of values in transmodernity. The new, gradational indeterminacy can be seen also in the projects that allow a free array of changes of function as a starting point. Bernard Tschumi's and Rem Koolhaas'/OMA's entries in the *Parc de la Villette* competition (1986) were some of the first architectural plans to answer to the extremely vague financial and programmatic requirements with as much functional openness as possible. This kind of flexible architecture, based on a frame or a principle waiting to be “filled” or expanded if needed, generates indeterminacy. When there are increasingly uncertain components in design and planning programmes these kinds of solutions become increasingly common, too. The mythology is confirmed in the manner by which the architects' arguments refer to the interpretation of the present state of society when the indeterminate proposals are introduced. I will now have a closer look at the architectural “openness” by examining Koolhaas' in this sense symptomatic work.

Koolhaas' mode of transmodern “openness” has its roots in the mid-20th century architecture of the cross-European group Team X. Koolhaas says that Team X was the first group of architects to approach the question of “how to combine actual indeterminacy with architectural specificity”. Koolhaas has also himself tried to find answers to that question.<sup>271</sup> Team X sought the structural prin-

<sup>271</sup> Koolhaas in *El Croquis* 53 (1992). Team X (since 1956 until the end of the 1960s) included Alison and Peter Smithson, Aldo van Eyck, Jacob Bakema, Georges Candilis,

ciples of urban growth in positive accordance with its indeterminacy, very much in accordance with what Koolhaas does. Koolhaas says that especially his *La Villette* competition entry and The Hague *City Hall* were to some extent one-sided dialogues with the Smithsons' investigation of disorder and indeterminacy. Koolhaas' answers have been very similar to Team X's solutions, which were the *route building* and the *net*. The Smithsons, Jacob Bakema and Koolhaas have all been obsessed with the liberating promise of the mass mobility and *flow* that they wanted to elaborate with an appropriate architectural counter-form. Koolhaas seems to have continued where Team X left off.<sup>272</sup> The watchword in Team X's works was "openness": the Smithsons propagated for an "open aesthetic" and an "open city", a functional system that would never be finished. What is crucial also in Koolhaas' "chaotic" architecture is exactly that openness and indeterminacy become a style.

While the Smithsons later argued for a "normalised", quiet aesthetic concealed behind the "Eames aesthetic" of "good taste"<sup>273</sup> in Koolhaas' work indeterminacy is marked by the "degenerated" International Style, often realised with cheap materials, vulgar colours and a bizarre taste in a way such that these choices become *signs* of openness and freedom. The ultimate motivation for Koolhaas, in his own words, has been *freedom*, the freedom to experience, the freedom of sensation and the freedom of effects.<sup>274</sup> Here lies the thinness of Koolhaas' motivation; in the way he has

Shadrach Woods, John Voelcker and Jill Howell. They wanted to create "anti-modernist" architecture that would be based upon symbols of identity, belonging, place, association, memorable images and activity. Ultimately, their aim was to end all ideology. The central reference for Team X is Alison Smithson (ed.): *Team 10 Primer* (1968, originally in *Architectural Design* 1962). A good overall account of Team X's architecture is also: Arnulf Lüchinger (1981): *Structuralism in Architecture and Urban Planning*.

<sup>272</sup> For example, *the route building* – such as the Smithsons' Golden Lane Housing System in London, which was eventually realised by Jack Lynn and Ivor Smith at Park Hill in Sheffield in 1961 – had the problem that there was little possibility for achieving sufficient continuity between decks in the air and streets on the ground. Koolhaas has solved this dilemma by his extensive use of lifts, escalators and especially broad ramps. Wood's project for Frankfurt-Romerberg (1963) proposed a very Koolhaasian labyrinthine configuration of shops, public spaces, offices and dwellings, as an "urban event". Aldo van Eyck emphasised that one should design buildings as "cities in miniature", with a "labyrinthine clarity", preceding Koolhaas' cacophonical micro-universes. The idea behind the *net* was an open, polycentral, extendable form and it was best exemplified by the Smithsons' scheme for the Berlin-Hauptstadt Net (1958) over the existing street level.

<sup>273</sup> The key reference here is: Alison and Peter Smithson (1973) *Without Rhetoric – An Architectural Aesthetic*.

<sup>274</sup> See, for example, Koolhaas in interview in *El Croquis* 79 (1996).

been entangled with chaos, congestion and freedom, creating chaos (*Melun-Senart*) or later consciously minimising it (*Lille*). Koolhaas is a very transmodern architect in processing different amounts of chaoticness in his architecture. This "chaos" has been processed in architectural terms by avoiding rectangular forms in cross-section and, on the other hand, by "programming" buildings and areas so that they create unexpected collisions between people and functions. However, I believe that one could just as well refer to the freedom of routes and congestion in any architecture based upon, for instance, any empty box-like volumes or in the flexible De Stijl architecture. Koolhaas' effects could be realised in an architecture that is structured spatially in a totally different way; for instance, as in the huge single spaces of convention centres or in the flexible architecture such as Archigram's, neither of these solutions being favoured by Koolhaas.

What Koolhaas actually is doing behind all this jargon of openness and chaos is very typical for the transmodern phase. He is interpreting essentially the aleatory images of the vulgarity and the popularity of the modernity and not so much the actual real collective chaos or unity, nor the will to flow and collide into each other or bring things together, however articulated his pursuits have been. In the latter case there could be much stronger devices for fulfilling the condition of bringing people together: for example, event-places such as the street, shopping malls, workplaces, all kinds of public gatherings (concerts, congresses, sports events etc.) and the literally flexible architectural spaces which can change as necessary. These event-places represent qualitative congestion, while Koolhaas' schemes often remain only in a quantitative stage. (Of course, one reason for this is that it is not necessarily the architect who has the power to influence the selection of functions). Koolhaas' works are "open" and "free" predominately in a stylistic sense: they have a liberal image. The fact that Koolhaas' works are about "chaoticness" in different degrees is enough to bring it a mythological character.

What I find crucial to Koolhaas' architecture of the chaotic transmodern, is the ambiguous image of the *simultaneously* blank average and hedonism. This is a certain odd neither-norist mixture of purist aestheticism and glamorous extravagance. Koolhaas' architecture refers dimly to the secretly luxurious life of Le Corbusier

and Mies and their clients, disguised behind protestant pragmatism. Koolhaas' architecture gives a certain kind of image of an efficient but luxurious corporation headquarters. He has attained this confusing image with material selections and with a formal language, not necessarily with the open placement of functions (which he calls *systematic programming*).

Concerning transmodern ambiguity, generally it has become stylistically squeamish to set different genres and styles apart, but symptomatically transmodern only to notice the differences in nuance of the generic model. Every architecture can in trans-modernity be accredited with positive values in terms of ecology, traditionalism, modernism, beauty, trendy ugliness, etc., simultaneously yet without any actual antagonism. They represent only different *degrees* of those categories. Contradictions in judgement change in transmodernity into nuances. The situation is characterised by multiple simultaneous yet non-contradictory visions.<sup>275</sup> The *truth*, that is, the mythological persuasive determination, is now characterised by the lack of relevant conflicts and radical antagonism. Consequently, all the targets of the oppositional art have been destroyed in the implosion of opposites. The newest myths are composed entirely of the changes of appearances, the different forms of the disappearance of images and the imploding ambience. They can no longer compose "psychological" or religious myths with signification, neither are they composed of the structural bunches of relationships, as the structuralist myth theorists believe.

The crucial change has taken place in relation to ritual. Baudrillard explains how in all mythology, ritual always emphasises ambiguity.<sup>276</sup> However, when the society has become less dependent upon old, open forms of ritual, ambivalent neither-norism and aleatoriness invade the most "cultivated" and "intelligent" structures. Myths themselves become ambiguous. The transmodern stage is characterised by abstracted ambiguity: not "virtual" but "virtuality", not "form" but "formula". In architecture we find not "function", but "functionality", not "beauty", but "aesthetics", not "living", but "liveability".

<sup>275</sup> Jean Baudrillard: 'Transpolitics, Transsexuality, Transaesthetics' (in *The Disappearance of Art and Politics* 1992); *Figures de l'altérité* (1994) 37.

<sup>276</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 99.

## 5. Vain “alternative” architecture: expanding sameness

The present day sentimental visions of community are poor fetishes if we accept the view that in the transmodern stage collective memory and shared experiences do not actually give meaning to the aimlessness of everyday urban life. To argue that communities should be petrified as the source of identity is unrealistic, even in the case where common styles would be considered the basis for the new community (as Michel Maffesoli argues). Flexibility, interactivity, individuality, regionalism, ecology and all other motifs for “alternative” or “minority” architecture become eventually meaningless: they are not real alternatives, because they are only systems which allow no outside. The answers in architecture must be sought elsewhere than in individualism or these alternatives.

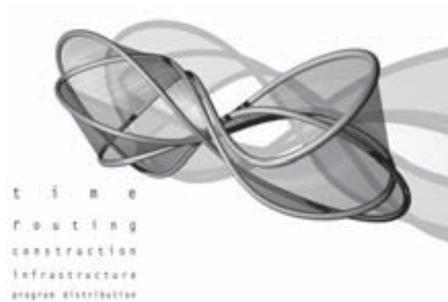
In spite of the general effort to offer and to accept more difference and choice, the sameness expands. This is because in the sign exchange of hypersimulation, no element or alternative has an advantage over the others. The state where there is no longer any possibility for alternatives is what Baudrillard calls “the engendering of the same from the same”:<sup>277</sup> the mythical *Clone* or *The Hell of the Same*.<sup>278</sup> The epidemic of value and the general aestheticization make it impossible to give any significant answers in the value structure itself. There is nothing behind the reality of commodities. Simultaneously, it becomes impossible to think of the code because the culture mixes with its code. The *Same* excludes possibilities for actual antagonism within the system (and its media). *The Hell of the Same* is apparent when personal styles have lost all of their personality, when individuality has become a code, too. Every kind of architecture whatsoever is able in this state to become fashionable and valuable sooner or later – famous for fifteen minutes, as Andy Warhol claimed about people.

I have now examined the general characteristics of the transmodern myths in architecture. The structure of each of the ensuing chapters 4.2 to 4.4 will be as follows: I will first introduce the specific transmodern myths and art works I am going to analyse, followed in each case by a more detailed description of the works

<sup>277</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 56-57.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, 71-72; *La Transparence du Mal* (1990) 67-77, 119-128.

in connection to the particular transmodern myths mentioned. Finally, at the end of each chapter I will explain the myths in greater detail, related also to other moving images and architectural works. This structure is thus dual – it consists on the one hand of the examples (certain moving images and works of architecture) and on the other hand of the descriptions of the myths (which may refer also to works other than the ones just introduced). The duality is justified: the main examples make the problematics of the transmodern surface, image and ambience approachable and understandable. The examination of particular myths, however, is the main aspect in this part. The study of also other architectural works and the examination of the architects' attitudes towards these myths is essential in regard to the latter part of this work where I will develop architectural strategies for challenging these particular myths.



Ben van Berkel & Caroline Bos / Unstudio: Moebius House Scheme  
(Het Gooi, Amsterdam 1993-97)



Harmony Korine:  
Gummo (1997)

## 4.2 The transmodern surface of flexible sameness

Some of the new myths characterising the increasing mythological processes of *disappearance* can be identified as *The Hell of the Same* (the disappearance of meaningful interpretation), *Flexibility* (the disappearance of stability) and *The Violence of Speed* (the disappearance of necessary pauses). Manifestations of this in architecture have been such tendencies as the thrift inherent in the move towards automatic design and planning processes, the increasing aptitude to make literally moving architecture and the growing importance of *information* instead of the spatial experience in architecture.

There are certain aspects in Harmony Korine's feature film *Gummo* (1997) and Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos's architec-

ture which prove to be symptomatic of this change and these myths. Despite their dissimilar styles (Korine's macabre naturalism compared to van Berkel and Bos's sophisticated folded Suprematism), they each process in their works the same mythological tendency; the possibility to fade the borders between what best could be called document (reality) and fiction (interpretation of the reality). In the following, I will begin by comparing Korine's *Gummo* with van Berkel and Bos's design methodologies. Then I will closer examine the transmodern myths of *The Hell of the Same*, *Flexibility* and *The Violence of Speed*. In regard to the myth of Flexibility, I will analyse also Peter Eisenman's architecture.

### ***Gummo* and the Moebius House**

Harmony Korine shares with older film-makers such as Jean-Luc Godard and Werner Herzog the ability to make simultaneously fascinating and provocative films. However, the difference between his work and theirs is clear. While Godard's and Herzog's films are fable-like stories, Korine seemed to have no script at all in his breakthrough feature film *Gummo* (1997). Its radicality lies exactly in its assumed documentarity. Korine has explained that in film-making he is only interested in action, and that he never remembers plots.<sup>279</sup> Consequently, *Gummo* has no beginning, no middle and no end. Because the viewer can choose whichever instance for a departure and interpretation, *Gummo* represents transmodern (abstracted) *Flexibility*.

*Gummo* consists of stirring but ambiguous snapshots of society's loiterers and outcasts. Through Korine's eyes, the audience witnesses the wretchedness of an American Midwest small town. The town has never survived the tornado that destroyed most of its buildings and adults, leaving behind loads of parentless children. The characters in the film are seemingly struck by a *mental* tornado. Korine wanted to make the film in a town called Xenia that in reality, too, had been hit in a tornado attack in 1977. Korine has said he knew children from Xenia and that they were mostly confused glue addicts. They told Korine of the dogs they found in trees and playing cards which had flown through brick walls.

<sup>279</sup> Korine: *Consistent Taped Bacon: An Interview by Werner Herzog* (1997).

Korine said he had a conversation with a boy who was delivering newspapers when all of a sudden a tornado appeared, sucking him into the air and dropping him softly on the ground 50 miles away, still on the saddle of his bicycle. In *Gummo*, too, there are cows on electric wires and a boy who moves on his bicycle for at least 50 miles.

Korine has been seriously criticised for his nihilistic interpretation of teenage culture. He shows the shocking reality of juveniles but without either making judgements or sympathising with them. None of the characters in his films develop in any way during the film. There are no good or bad people. Symptomatically, this trans-mythological entertainment is absurd, just like the slice of bacon that is taped on a wall in a sequence in *Gummo* where a character is eating spaghetti Bolognese in a tub of dirty water, drops a chocolate bar into the tub, then picks it up and stuffs it into his mouth.

The most interesting and modern aspect in *Gummo* is its ability to fade the borders between documentarity and fiction (*The Hell of the Same*). The viewer is continuously in a chilly state of uncertainty about what in the film is improvised and what fulfils certain obscure plans. All of the actor performances seem to be documentary. In one particular sequence, seemingly aggressive characters placed in a small cottage started drinking, arm wrestling and picking a quarrel. They had been told by Korine that they could go as far as they wanted to. The cameras rolled and filmed whatever happened. Nobody knew what would happen next, not even the "actors". The brawling gang breaks a table and a chair, but then as if by a miracle, nobody was actually hurt in the scene. The cast included both actors and non-(professional) actors, but one does not notice the difference. It would be splendid if Korine revealed that *nothing* in the film originated from outside a script and that in fact all the people were actors.

*Gummo* is not a *film* in the traditional terms that, for example, Jean Nouvel has been interested in. Film as an art form was based upon the principle that it is still possible to set reality and fiction apart. Rather than a film, *Gummo* is an example of the new communication media that has appeared on the market during the last few years. The film belongs to the so-called *new media*; and it could be called something like a *sur-documentary moving image*.

More essential than the story presented is the development of this new medium. The sur-documentary moving images are in a way just as fascinating as the close circuit surveillance images, mobile phone communication and e-mail. The most interesting aspect for the public has been the *newness* of the media rather than the delivered messages. Though not exactly the case with *Gummo*, generally in these new media, the important element of appeal is the digital factor. That is, the viewer's interest is due not to any futuristic techno-utopia but to the fascination of real-time communication (*The Violence of Speed*). It is the real time system and documentarity that fascinates. *Gummo* functions and fascinates because of its exemplary effects of another directness blurring the borders between documentarity and fiction, even if its production was not predominately computerised.

Media, especially the new media, have become the indicator for what should interest the consumers: but is this actually a new phenomenon? When the presupposition for waking public interest is that there has to be *real time* (or *real space*) processes, this actually fulfils Marshall McLuhan's view from the 1960s about the dominance of media in communication.<sup>280</sup> The difference now, however, is that there is no message. For example, a recent symptomatic series of articles in the major newspaper in Finland, *Helsingin Sanomat*, would have remained totally vain without all the new media gadgets central to them. The different articles featured a girl who exchanged several tens of e-mail messages a day, judging the best text messages sent by mobile phone, and a nuclear family who volunteered to be under constant video surveillance in their own home. Naturally, nobody had anything essential to say. The e-mails were of the "what's up/nothing special"-type, the text messages contained just greetings and jokes and the family followed was a plain standard bunch of TV gapers. The articles were anyway very impressively presented with cover images and a fancy layout. One only was left wondering why they had forgotten the computer geeks connected by the internet playing endless games of *Doom* or some other sadistic computer shooting game. It is the mere enchantment of the new technology that can justify this kind of zero-degree journalism typical for our time. Another manifestation of this genre are the contemporary articles compiled from

<sup>280</sup> Marshall McLuhan; *Understanding Media* (1968, orig. 1964) 7.

readers' e-mail messages often without much editing. This fascination with documentary action is also where the absorption of *Gummo* stems from. *Gummo*'s thematics are the thematics of the acceleration of media, but in a "soft" format. In this sense the "hard" news of CNN is no more developed or any less entertainment than *Gummo*.

McLuhan's claim now becomes clear;<sup>281</sup> that we numb our central nervous system when we buy new gadgets for communication and real time communication. *Gummo* shows us that one such victim is our imagination and dreams. In continuous real time, there remains no room for stories. As a consequence, the media produce our dreams for us. Just like staying awake for several days on end – familiar for some of us, for example, from military service – can make anybody hallucinate, real time unavoidably produces surreal forms, like the images in *Gummo*.

In a way, some of Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos's design methodologies are Korine's sibling in their insouciance towards what best could be called fiction and seductive enchantment. For van Berkel and Bos, diagrams have replaced "theory" in the sense that a theory is an interpretation of the world.<sup>282</sup>

Van Berkel and Bos's design and planning methodologies, namely, the *diagrams* and *Deep Plan*, in their vocabulary, refer to gathering the physical, structural, spatial and technical knowledge upon the infrastructure and the context of a project.<sup>283</sup> These methodologies are supposed to be some kind of abstract machines of planning and design. The possibility for automatism in these methodologies concerns symptomatically the transmodern myth of *The Violence of Speed*, the immediate solution. Van Berkel says that they do not believe in theory and that they want to free the means of expression by the perfect knowledge of the given.<sup>284</sup> What remains when theory is abandoned is, typically, banal aesthetics. I don't mean that van Berkel and Bos's architecture would be banal, but that their design methodologies create the possibility for banality. Their methodology is obscene when it appears to be based

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>282</sup> Ben van Berkel in a lecture in Helsinki (in the Ateneum Art Museum), spring 1999; van Berkel and Bos: *Move 2: Techniques* (1999) 19-20.

<sup>283</sup> On the Deep Plan see: van Berkel and Bos: *Move 1: Imagination* (1999) 29-33; on the diagrams see: *Move 2: Techniques* (1999) 19-25.

<sup>284</sup> Ben van Berkel in a lecture in Helsinki (in the Ateneum Art Museum), spring 1999.

upon the automatic notion about the given reality. The idea of the non-representative diagrams points towards this possibility.<sup>285</sup>

Just as Korine does not use a script in *Gummo*, van Berkel & Bos's architecture is not composed according to the traditional architectural (representational) devices of plan, elevations and sections. In their architecture, the diagrammatic surface becomes a singular structure, folding and wrapping around itself. For example, their famous one-family villa *Moebius House* (Het Gooi, Amsterdam 1993-97) is a literal transformation of the geometrical Moebius spiral into a three-dimensional space, wrapped with glass, steel and concrete. I doubt that the architects came to this solution "automatically", without theory, because the building is rather imaginative. However, they have shown the *possibility* for automatised design processes. Sooner or later there will be an architect who really succeeds in generating "automatic" architecture.

The "perfect knowledge of the given" in van Berkel and Bos's methods appears actually to refer to a pursuit to develop architecture which could combine *several* theories together and yet allow interpretations concerning each of them.<sup>286</sup> This pursuit is symptomatically transmodern and related to van Berkel and Bos's and many other contemporary architects' idea of architecture as surface: the surface is a means for holding heterogeneities together, it locates "between the figurative and the abstract".<sup>287</sup>

This transmodern tendency to *folding* in architecture has been quite famous since the beginning of the 1990s. In addition to van Berkel and Bos, the term has been connected to such architects as Zaha Hadid, Greg Lynn, Peter Eisenman, Bahram Shirdel and Frank Gehry. The basic idea in this genre seems to be that architecture is not firstly about space, time and place, but it is a surface purposely folded to create a sculptural envelope that can combine both concrete and abstract heterogeneities and solve antagonisms.<sup>288</sup> In the perspective of *The Hell of the Same*, the *folding*

<sup>285</sup> In *Move 2: Techniques* (1999), van Berkel and Bos admit that "[i]t would be an exaggeration to see the project as the possible product of a self-organising process" (166). However, their idea about "non-representational" – not critically selected or evaluated that is – diagrams point to the opposite direction.

<sup>286</sup> This interpretation is verified by van Berkel and Bos's explanation of their method of Deep Plan: "It incorporates economics, infrastructure, programme and construction in time. The method demonstrates where different typographical areas produce shared values" (*Move 1: Imagination* [1999] 30).

<sup>287</sup> See Greg Lynn in 'Folding in Architecture', *Architectural Design Profile*, No 102 (1993).

movement could thus be actually understood as: 1) the longing for a world without collage and without antagonism, as one smooth operational contour "without script", as Korine's *Gummo* is; 2) On the other hand, *folding*, as with van Berkel and Bos's diagrams, tends to mix the objects with their codes. This is typically a transmodern phenomenon and can be interpreted as art without enigmatic seduction.

### **Globalisation = The Hell of the Same**

The importance of seduction has been especially clear in the myth of *The Double*, where reality and imagination are seen as mutually dependent entities, as each other's reciprocal and reversible counterparts. Jean Nouvel's interpretation of cinema is a good example of the manifestation of the myth of *The Double*. *Gummo*'s "documentarity" and van Berkel and Bos's diagrams (as they themselves describe them), however, do not refer to the myth of *The Double*. If we accept Baudrillard's analysis of the transmodern stage, the possibility for *The Double* disappears.

We can interpret sacrifice, which appears in the myth of *The Double*, as always being the sacrifice of oneself to the image, usually to the image one would like to be. This could be called the 'utopian tragedy'. There is also another sacrifice people seem to suffer, which is the sacrifice of the ideal image for the benefit of the real. In the obscene transmodernity, the cloned equality of all events has replaced *The Double*. Examples of this are *reality TV*, the mere production of *Gummo* and the possibility for automatic design processes.

The contemporary non-representational games of the real without imagination are no longer based on the enchantment of enigmatic transformations or mysterious meanings but rather on the enchantment of chance and vertigo. The transmodern ecstatic, solitary and narcissistic games are cool and obscene, but they are also enchanting in their fascination. Our present transmodern mythology typically fascinates, but it tends to have nothing repressed or nothing hidden. Seductive myths, like the spheres of reflection

<sup>288</sup> Ideally, as in Bahran Shirdel's Nara Convention Hall competition entry, or in Peter Eisenman's Rebstock Urban Plan, the buildings are meant to seamlessly merge into the ground, as if extensions of geological forms.

and transcription, are bound up with transcendence and disappear along with it.<sup>289</sup>

There are symptoms in both contemporary moving images and architecture indicative of the new disappearance of the myth of *The Double*. For example, the technological performances often replace the imaginary function in action films. There are also many architects who argue that architecture means only practice, not to mention all the “slaves” to the commercial construction industry, reproducing *architecture verité*. Accordingly, total *Cinéma verité*<sup>290</sup> is the transmodern fulfilment of moving images, as *Gummo* or *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) prove. There is no *Double* any more when you do not know what is fiction and what is not, who is following the script or even whether there is a script at all. In architecture, *The Hell of the Same* appears, for example, when the roles in the building process become transgressed, when there is no difference between the mere conventional technical building and architecture.

After all, *globalisation*<sup>291</sup> is another manifestation of *The Hell of the Same*. The consequences of globalisation to urban space are the local geographical discontinuity and the space of flows between the global nodes (as already discussed in chapter 2.1). The reason for these new spatial relations is in the technological and organisational ability of companies to divide up the production process across different locations.<sup>292</sup> Globalisation in architectural terms thus usually refers to a homogenisation in global scale, but diversity in local scale. However, by globalisation, one should also refer to a more abstract homogenisation which I have mentioned here, if one attempts to go to the roots of social life. This

<sup>289</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *La société de consommation* (1970) 300-316.

<sup>290</sup> *Cinéma verité*, literally ‘direct cinema’, was a style of film making developed by French film directors and soon in other countries in the 1960s. The *Cinéma verité* directors used non-actors, small hand-held cameras, and actual surroundings as their location for a film. *Cinéma verité* was characterised by unrehearsed situations. Jean-Luc Godard was one famous French film director influenced by *Cinéma verité*. His first feature film *À bout de souffle* (1960) was shot without a script.

<sup>291</sup> Globalisation in architecture and urban planning refers to the fact that as soon as a region becomes articulated into the global economy, thereby dynamising its local economy and society, it becomes an urban node characterised by the following services: an international airport, a satellite telecommunications system, luxury hotels, English-language secretarial support, financial and consultancy firms familiar with the region, local government offices capable of providing information and infrastructure to back up international investors and a qualified labour market for the new economy (Jordi Borja and Manuel Castells: *Local and Global* [1997] 17).

<sup>292</sup> Jordi Borja and Manuel Castells: op. cit., 23, 26-27.

homogenisation transcends antagonisms and radicality and is linked to new forms of mythical metamorphosis.

### **The three types of metamorphosis**

The Roman poet Publius Ovidius Naso's (Ovid) (43 BC-18 AD) *Metamorphoses* presents the famous interpretation from ancient mythology of a universe where nothing is fixed, where all forms develop into others, and everything is in the state of flux. Other forms of mythical metamorphosis became popular in modernist architecture; that is, flexibility and portability (according to the supposed changing needs of the users). However, there is a drastic difference between Ovid's mythical *Metamorphoses* and the flexibility of the modernists. Furthermore, the modernist flexibility differs remarkably from the transmodern version of it. Van Berkel and Bos's and Peter Eisenman's own explanations of their architecture represent the transmodern mythical *Flexibility*.

#### **1) Traditional metamorphoses**

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* described the antagonistic transformations between men, gods, vegetables, statues and astronomical forms. The mythical characters were used to illustrate the examples of obedience or disobedience toward the gods. They were either rewarded or punished for their actions by a transformation into some new form. This type of metamorphosis belongs to the first phase of symbolic exchange (the open forms of symbolic gift exchange).

#### **2) Modernist mechanical transformability**

The Modernist mythical flexibility in architecture was realised in De Stijl architecture,<sup>293</sup> but especially in Constant Nieuwenhuis' influential Situationist plans for *New Babylon*.<sup>294</sup> In *New Babylon* the spaces are temporary, hardly recognisable and changing: nothing could serve as a landmark. The Situationistists rejected the symmetrical grids and the bureaucratic routinisation of the modernists like Le Corbusier. Instead, *New Babylon* was a complex struc-

<sup>293</sup> Consider especially Gerrit Rietveld's *Schröder House*, where the architect used extensively sliding and tilting walls. One of the most elaborate later interpretations of De Stijl architecture is Steven Holl's *Fukuoka Housing* in Japan (1992) with its pivoting doors, panels and cupboards.

<sup>294</sup> See *Architectural Design* (June 1964) and Sadler: *The Situationist City* (1988) 130.

ture that purposely used the language of Constructivist architecture and sculpture. The purpose was to create spaces of 'baroque' technological complexity, with flexible partitions, atmospheric conditioning systems, ambient coloured lights, lenses used as windows, movable staircases, etc. All this was disposed within a massive mega-structure floating over the existing city and commuting car traffic. The popularity of this kind of modernist mechanical flexibility was based on the metaphor of a machine. This is typical for the second simulacra phase.

Other examples of the modernist transformative flexibility are the normal transformative strategies of flexibility that architects often use. They are based on the supposed future needs of the users, attempting to take account of the possible next stages and creating multipurpose and changeable spaces suitable for different purposes and variations. The modernist flexibility is a formalism based upon the tautology of needs and their satisfaction.<sup>295</sup>

### **3) The transmodern myth of *Flexibility***

In the present day the myth of Flexibility has become raging, not only due to the new industrial principles,<sup>296</sup> but most of all due to the epidemic of the value in simulation and hypersimulation. This allows flexibility also in its abstract forms, as van Berkel and Bos's architectural methods (which are holding heterogeneities together) show.

Peter Eisenman seems to have been the architect who has most extensively worked on *Flexibility* in contemporary architecture, from his first projects *Houses I-X* and *EI Even Odd* to the more recent *folding architecture*. He has used *Flexibility* as a design methodology, but the result has been to a great extent restricted to formalism. Even if Eisenman has through his whole career referred to his experiments as *transformations*,<sup>297</sup> I rather call this *Flexibility* because there is no antagonism in his transformations.

Compared to Ovid's antagonistic transformations, Eisenman's transformations have been aesthetic and formalistic flexible

<sup>295</sup> See chapter 3.1 about this tautology.

<sup>296</sup> See Borja and Castells: *Local and Global* (1997) 23: Contemporary forms of industry emphasise flexibility. But also: (in order to prevent seclusion in the new urban townscape) "Cities must be polycentric, neighbourhoods must be plural and activity zones multifunctional" (ibid., 252).

<sup>297</sup> Eisenman's *Houses* from the late 1960s to 1978 were purposely self-oriented and

changes within single volumes, without any antagonism. Again, this is *simulation architecture*, which just symbolises reality, reproducing only the signs of the changing reality.

Referring to Benjamin's *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, Eisenman had said in the late 1990s that the reason for the notion of transformations (actually *Flexibility* in Eisenman's case) in architecture lies in the *media*; that the media have changed the time of experience, in that there are no longer places in the sense we used to know them, and concludes that architecture must now deal with the problem of the *event*, Bernard Tschumi's old watchword.<sup>298</sup> Eisenman prefers "a neutral surface formed from a variable curvature or a fold", which is supposed to be "the inflection of a pure event",<sup>299</sup> an event in the sense of what happens to the site: that is, it becomes "transformed" (actually just flexible!). Eisenman's winning competition entry for the *Cidade da Cultura de Galicia* (1999) in Spain represents his folded *Flexibility*. The building appears to grow from the ground, lifting and tilting the curved shreds of the earth's surface, which become elemental parts of the buildings. However, the connection between the folds in Eisenman's or van Berkel and Bos's architecture and transformations appears rather vague. The reference to the continuous event in the architecture's physical context seems to be valid here only as a certain "fluid surface"-based aesthetical category. In other aesthetic categories, such as more volume- and material-based categories, or compared to rectangular massing, folding easily produces collage (because all the "non-folded" buildings belong to a different category). There is no notion of good and bad behind this formalism, which is a homogenisation device. The enigmatic seduction has disappeared when architec-

indifferent towards their sites. They were permutations and combinations of Terragni's, Le Corbusier's and Rietveldt's tectonic concrete architecture turned inside out or upside down, or both. For example, in *House El Even Odd* (1980), Eisenman used 45-degree *axometric transformations* and *scaling* as devices for transforming a three-dimensional object. It has been typical for Eisenman to leave *traces* of all of the stages of these transformations in the final building. This is not really metamorphosis (which is an asubjective process), but rather Eisenman's subjective interpretation, which takes the form of buildings within flexible principles of iteration.

<sup>298</sup> Eisenman refers to the mathematician René Thom's catastrophe theory and his seven elementary events or transformations "that do not allow any classical symmetry" and thus supposedly "the possibility of a static object". (Peter Eisenman: 'Unfolding Events: Frankfurt Rebstock and the Possibility of a New Urbanism'. In Eisenman: *Re: Working Eisenman* (1993).

<sup>299</sup> Ibid.

ture has become neutral *Flexibility*.

Beyond these “soft” forms of transformation, there is also transmodern architecture that actually moves *by itself*; for example, Nouvel’s *CLM BBDO* publicity offices near Paris, where the giant hydraulic roof covers the main atrium and opens up during the hot summertime; Perrault’s *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris, where an essential part of the complex is the mechanically turning L-form boards shading the bookshelves against sunshine, and forming a funny composition behind the all-glazed facades; and Bernard Khoury’s *B018* in Beirut.<sup>300</sup> All these projects are literally flexible. In the transmodern sense, these buildings become disconnected from their spatial architectural backgrounds towards the flexible mechanics of action.

In Baudrillard’s perspective, there is a profound fixation with every new possibility and wide change in the society. The idea, basically, is that the more different possibilities there are or use, expression and the more interpretational frames there are, the better. This idea derives from the mythological enchantment of transformations.

The specific form of transformation which is in question here, is evolution: these architects are playing with notions of evolution, and want their architecture to be ‘true’, that is, not merely to reflect social reality but – as in all simulation – to be in synchronisation with physical reality itself.

However, there is a difference between Ovid’s material transformations and the *Flexibility* based upon changing needs or on a subjective aesthetic interpretation of evolution. The transmodern *Flexibility* remains typically a formalism, just like the *folding*.

### **The impact of real-time communication: The violence of speed**

*Gummo*’s “documentarity” and van Berkel and Bos’s idea of an au-

<sup>300</sup> B018 is a literally underground night club in Beirut, Lebanon, submerged beneath a moving installation of black steel. The steel plates are set on a huge disk of concrete and with no obvious point of entry, until the black machine suddenly comes to life as the sun goes down: At one end, a huge plate begins to retract, like a lid of a school desk, its multi-mirrored underside reflecting the bar below up to the city, and at full extension opening a space at the centre that expands to 12 meters across, reflecting the flickering of passing cars and lights from the highway to the underground chamber. To the drivers on the highway outside, the segmented mirror reflects a vague image of what is happening down below.

tomatic design process both refer to the myth of *The Violence of Speed*. Sheer speed and the disappearance of finality have become in the advanced mythology more important aspects than visible, directional movement and the whole idea of (slowly) making interpretations.<sup>301</sup> As a consequence of the sovereignty of absolute speed, literally all the conceptual bases of architectonics may collapse. Paul Virilio argues for this view saying that the radio-, video- and digital signals help to abolish concepts regarding the temporal-spatial movements of people and objects.<sup>302</sup> Virilio gives support to Baudrillard's view about the increasing mythological processes of disappearance due to the speed of real-time communication. I will now examine the consequences of Virilio's hypotheses for architecture.

For Virilio, speed is not used solely to make travel more effective. It is used above all to see, hear, and conceive more intensely the present world. In this sense, the fascination of real time is produced by reducing the immovable body to its place. The user of a fully computerised architecture stays motionless and remote controls the architecture. However, the healthiness of the computer-aided remote processing can be questioned, when in place of the model of a virile man there has emerged an invalid, who has been geared to controlling his environment by sitting still surrounded by remote controls.

In Baudrillard's terms, Virilio describes the mythology of transmodern relationships between people and their surroundings. If Virilio's analysis is correct, all distances, scale and proportions are about to disappear in telecommunications. The disappearance of the physical arrivals and departures in the modern technological city seems to be leading to an increasing use of information screens. Consequently, architecture regarded mainly as a shelter seems to become increasingly replaced by architecture regarded

<sup>301</sup> Virilio calls our era, fuelled by the ultimate speed of light and electricity, an era of "transpolitics". Virilio says that in the "welfare state" things still had duration, it was based on thinking of a long succession of duration. He thinks that all that is over now because the symptomatic end of possibilities for reflection, discussion and sharing means also the end of politics. Only instantaneousness is crucial in transpolitics, dependent upon light-speed communication (Virilio: *Pure War* [1983] 99). Virilio considers typical for our time the electricity-like movements, continuously circulating and appearing everywhere, where one cannot distinguish departures and arrivals from each other. The abstraction of this physical phenomenon, what I call the mythological *Violence of Speed*, is heir to surveillance and immediacy, the perfect illumination of the world.

<sup>302</sup> Virilio: *Pakonopeus* (1998, orig. *La vitesse de libération*, 1995) 45, 65, 68-69.

as a sheer organisation of surface. The “meaning” of the building shifts from shelter to screen, but naturally, the shelter aspect of actual building does not disappear.

The conceptions of architecture can be changing radically, converging this new kinaesthetic of *The Violence of Speed*, for example, in relation to the concept of space, the requirements given by clients, the representation techniques, fashion and architectural education. Traditionally, *space* has had a special position in organising society, but in the perspective of *The Violence of Speed*, *time* (or the lack of it) has become the more important factor. When the immaterial modes of computer-aided communications are becoming ever more common, such variables as *inside* and *outside*, *centre* and *periphery* lose their importance. Even the distinction between *up* and *down* may become abolished, even though this is an architectonic presupposition for the construction of buildings.

*The Violence of Speed* can also be seen in the new unrealistic timetables in architecture. Nowadays, when the client's give their approval to design a building and to make something beyond just advertising images, there is generally little time to design and build them or to make any changes during the process. This encourages the use of diagrams and other devices for automating the design process. Simultaneously, the calls for immediacy in architecture remind one very much of idea from the Gulf War about schedules, which could also be seen as a form of the mythical *Violence of Speed*.

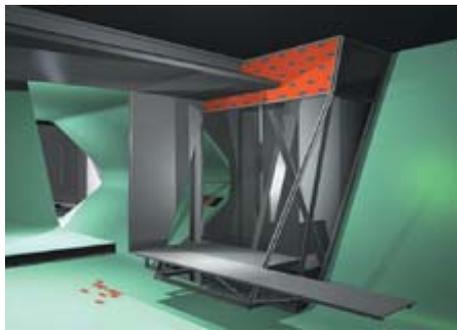
The Gulf War has been one of the most mythical world events of recent times, composed of the above-mentioned immanent and aimless movements.<sup>303</sup> When Baudrillard discussed the *Gulf War*, he argued that the conflict as projected in the media and the actual war were inseparable. The Gulf War with its state-of-the-art surveillance, control and search-and-destroy techniques can be perceived as a myth derived from *The Violence of Speed*. Because firepower could be used quickly and accurately, the battles were already finished before the enemies even saw each other. In this virtual world of warfare in which the armed forces exist, the fixed tar-

<sup>303</sup> For Jean Baudrillard on the mythical Gulf War, see: *La Guerre du Golfe n'a pas eu lieu* (1991); Also see: Paul Virilio: *L'écran du désert* (1991); and Antti Ahlva: *Paul Virilio and the Disappearance of Time for Contemplation* (1999).

gets are plotted and eliminated already on the computer simulations in advance and then carried out for real. On the meta-level, there is the generalised deterrence of everything facing its end in the blink of an eye. The difference from the Cold War deterrence is that the destruction itself is no longer the most interesting matter. More intriguing still is that destruction can be transmitted to anywhere when it takes place. The myth of the Gulf War did not remain only a matter of a certain armed conflict, but it is a mythical model for other phenomena. Disguised within this type of myth, immanence, immediacy and automation become increasingly a natural mode of action. Virilio argues that a few generations ago, the principle of instantaneousness was impossible for philosophers to think about.<sup>304</sup> At the level of technology, however, the issue is no longer a problem. In architecture conceived in contemporary mythological terms, this kind of perfectly immanent activity means giving up utopias in the sense that when everything is present and now, movement then stops. This means also the immediate movement of architectural values. Also the regionalism of architecture changes radically when all areas become to belong to the same range of action.

The myth of *The Violence of Speed* presents fascinating aesthetic action, to be just watched serenely. But it also induces a longing for the human rhythm. Among technology fanatics, it is considered obvious that anybody should be reachable at any time by real time communication devices. For the people blinded by technology, it is a show conjured by the miraculous machinery. For the nostalgists, such as Virilio, it is a threat to naturalness. For them technology does not increase leisure-time; it steals the whole possibility of time and contemplation.

<sup>304</sup> Paul Virilio: *Pure War* (1983) 63.



Neil Denari: Interrupted Projections (1996)



Comedy Central: South Park (1995-)

### 4.3 The transmodern homogenised image

The transmodern image refers to aleatory and dispersive situations, where the image eventually tends to disappear into a confusing neither-norism. A perfect example of this process is the replacement of symbolic forms with basically “empty” logos in architecture. It seems quite probable that the covering of building surfaces with brand names and logos will increase in the near future.

Accordingly, the new kinds of clichés consist of ambiguous associations that annul the relevance of context, target group and identity. The image is no longer gratificatory (as are, for example, the images of power and progress); there is no value behind it. As in all transmodernity, the mythologically essential ambiguity makes itself apparent in the uncertainty towards ambiguity itself. Ambiguity is felt to be positive or negative and yet one cannot escape it; there is no distinctive value in images. This is what transmodern neither-

norism implies.

I will refer to some of the new myths characterising this *image of disappearance* as follows: *The Aesthetic War*, *Framing* and *Bigness*. The mythologised war, as a machine without control, yields the disappearance of the image simply because it is an image of the destruction of images. What makes *The Aesthetic War* striking and appealing, for example, for today's architects, is the ecstatic and spatialised fabric of contemporary warfare.

In this mode of image, there are advantages in the architectural blankness and similarity (*The Framing*), and disadvantages in the architectural identity. Identities become only abstract logos and brand names. For example, the attraction of accidental bigness without any identity, as praised by Rem Koolhaas. *The Bigness*, can be interpreted in this context as a result of the vanished mythical ability to create social community through identity. These tendencies towards a transmodern image are in an exemplary way obvious, not only in such an incisive moving image as the confusing cartoon series *South Park*, but also in Neil Denari's architecture. While *South Park* represents especially the chaos included in the myth of *Framing*, Denari's machine-like architecture emphasises *The Aesthetic War* – destruction and aggressive movement without purpose. Later in this chapter, I will also discuss Rem Koolhaas' architecture in connection to the transmodern myths of *Framing* and *Bigness*.

### **South Park and Neil Denari**

*South Park* is situated in the same areas of Northern America as David Lynch's TV series *Twin Peaks*, famous for its surrealism, but *South Park* easily surpasses it in unusualness and complexity. After an episode of *South Park* one does not know whether to laugh, get angry or cry. Is this made for adults or children? Is this self-referential Hollywood-style entertainment or art? One episode of the series was advertised as featuring the famous Hollywood actor George Clooney giving his voice to a dog. When the episode eventually came out, the "voice" of the dog was entirely composed of indefinite growls. This taboo-breaking, insider-oriented cult of *ex-stase* (Latin: stepping out of oneself)<sup>305</sup> is endemic everywhere within the mass media society – the ecstasy of extreme sports, de-

liberately disturbing neighbours, speeding and organised hooliganism. From this viewpoint there is no difference between violently supporting a football team and the “un-politically correct” moving images which appeared in the curiously verged American mainstream cinema in the late 1990s: *The Pet Detective*, *There’s Something about Mary*, *American Pie*, *Big Daddy* and *The Spy Who Shagged Me*.

*South Park* was born in 1995 when one of the executives at Twentieth Century Fox paid 1200 dollars to two young filmmakers, Trey Parker and Matt Stone, so that they could make a five-minute cartoon called *The Spirit of Christmas*, in which a crudely drawn Jesus and Santa Claus settle a dispute by a brutal Kung Fu fight. This is witnessed by four crass eight-year children, who use dirty language with full force from their round heads. The studio director sent this “postcard” to only one hundred close friends, but it nevertheless found its way around the world as a bootleg version on the Internet. Following the publicity gained from this pirate copy, one of the most confusing, morally suspect and violent TV comedies ever saw its birth. Its lead characters are like clumsily drawn versions of the heroes in *Peanuts*, but they swear harder than *Beavis and Butt-Head*. In every episode, the same child from this bunch meets his violent death. Another of the four always tends to be sick over a certain girl because of nervousness. Space aliens abduct people and cows. Not that *South Park* would not be clever and artistic in its own way. Because the visual appearance of the cartoon is crudely plain and child-like, the bluntness of the text and its sharp dialogue initially comes as a surprise to the viewer. In terms of design, *South Park* is stylish in a flat, two-dimensional layered paper doll and mosaic-like expression, even if, in fact, it is created on a computer. The fact that the action always takes place in a winter scene also makes it particularly original. I would not interpret *South Park* as popular culture, but not exactly traditional art either. *South Park* appears too mean and irresponsible to be considered a normal television programme broadcast to the masses; rather, the viewer feels as if he or she was one of the insiders in the mailing list of an avant-garde art gallery; that is, that the work possesses qualities normally associated with the uniqueness of art objects. One can see people all over the world wearing *South Park* shirts

<sup>305</sup> John Orr’s definition in *Contemporary Cinema* (1998) 76.

which shout the phrase heard in each episode: "Oh my God, they killed Kenny!" And like many mass popular culture TV series and films, there is a whole host of merchandising, including posters, hats, mouse-mats, key-rings, dolls, stickers and fridge magnets.

Paradoxically, the formula of this massively popular series lies actually in this insider atmosphere without a club; a cult without anything to be sacrificed. To purposely maintain this feeling of interconnectedness, *South Park* has to cling to its formula, to its own clichés. Thus, after a few episodes the viewers know that the character Kenny becomes graphically killed every time and that the plump boy Cartman's mother will always remain fearfully possessive, and that the teacher, Mr Garrison, will always act like a psychopath.

These new "immoral" products of the culture industry concern the transmodern myth of *Framing*. *The Framing* in this sense is a device to allow transmodern contradictions. The simple and repetitive format of *South Park* opposes the chaos and indecency of its contents. *South Park* represents the myth that life nowadays is a game between the tediousness of life's physical frames and the extraordinariness of its events. Its paperclip-style graphics emphasise the ambiguity between form and content. This discrepancy between form and content is typically transmodern (time-image) in Deleuze's sense.

*South Park's* fame is due to the fascinating ambiguity between its systematic form and chaotic content. Every stereotype in *South Park* is actually complex. Cartman, the corpulent child who becomes easily indignant, has a mother who is a committed Christian, but still featured on the cover of a peculiar narcotics related underground magazine. The jolly black cook in the school canteen is also a rake who sings sentimental ballads. He tries to give moral lessons to the children with his music, but somehow gets in a muddle and always ends up singing passionate soul numbers. Despite all this banality, *South Park*, like its competitors, *The Simpsons* or *King of the Hill*, pictures an undisguisedly ambiguous image of the fear of blandness.

These characteristics describe also very well the contemporary architecture of Neil Denari, especially his worship of machines that are no longer able to symbolise progress and freedom. The main theme in Denari's book *Interrupted Projections* (1996) has to do

with human-like vagueness in technology and science. As I already explained, Denari is most of all an interpreter of normative unstableness, somewhat like Antonioni's films and more lately and more banally like *South Park*. Denari's work is the terrible beauty of culture out of control, without a stable reference point. At the same time, he is processing the fear of entropy (and acts against it with his *Aesthetics of War*), just like the chief emphasis in *South Park* is on how it processes blandness (through the theme of *Framing*).

In Baudrillard's terms, Denari's intention seems to be to process the shift from the semiotic-economic systems of the object to the code. Furthermore, he analyses the saturating effects that new floating global languages (such as trademarks or, for example, *South Park*'s Hollywood-knowledge could) have on our perception of the territorial and social landscapes of the world. He then offers solutions for architecture in the new situation. Symptomatically, Denari's main references in his *Interrupted Projections* and *Gyroscopic Horizons* are Baudrillard's early books.

### **Architecture as a contour filled with logos**

As already mentioned, Denari's "Virilian" starting point is the elementary use of surfaces filled with logos, the view that space has disappeared; that is, technology, especially warfare dependent upon maps, coerces a flattening of the world through its attempts to be horizontal and to be in all places all the time. Consequently, as a 2D plane, the sheet must be bent in order to architecturally spatialise a phenomenon. For Denari, architecture should operate like an extrapolation machine, a device capable of re-spatialising the dramatic currents and flows of consumer culture, not merely a mirror held up to reflect it, by bending up or down the contour. Furthermore, as a map – an image – is nothing without the information on it, architecture too, must intersect with the graphic to become a fully communicative spatial apparatus. The starting point for Denari is a new kind of mythologisation of the world, where one contemporary strategy for reinvesting the object with a "subject" (or a "meaning") is to represent that object by placing it under the commercial language of identification, namely, the logo (or label or brand name).<sup>306</sup> Logos build up the schematic textures of our con-

temporary world, the overloaded surfaces of image build-up, advertising residue, identified logos and the general flak created by the visual and sonic explosions going off around us. Denari's buildings have surfaces that are covered with logos of his own company COR-TEX Architecture, or imaginary companies such as "Bitbank", "Herox", "Bike", "MBA" and "Hewlett Package". In addition, they include CMYK colour codes, strange arrows leading nowhere yet emphasising the building's formal dynamics. The large painted surface are not conventional either: there are kinetic patterns of criss-crossing and overlapping angular coats of colour. Denari says one could imagine these blueprints woven together, making a fabric or net which pulls in, at an unbelievable rate, the cultural sign-forms of the external world. Denari is designing that fabric which he calls the Worldsheet.<sup>307</sup>

Trademarks are an issue which has very little been discussed among architects, but Denari argues that trademarks and logos might be of prior importance when dealing with the new technological culture which tends to reduce everything to surfaces and communication. Denari accepts the new profound ambiguity of images by affirming the potentially valueless trademark that is not tied to any particular context. Just as *South Park* raises questions about whether it is entertainment or art, bad taste or moralism, Denari's architecture consists of typical indistinct, context-free, ambiguous, transmodern images. Is Denari's architecture composed of space or surfaces? Is it architecture or graphic art in three dimensions? Are these constructions machines or buildings? Both *South Park* and Denari's architecture discard the question of value altogether: there are no traditional values, such as the belief in progress, good manners, respecting contexts, etc., because they have all become homogenised (and filled with value) anyway. Denari's work stems from the aesthetics of disappearance (of definitive images). In this process, the *Aesthetic War* is an important device.

<sup>306</sup> Denari gives an example: "As it [the latest cam-corder from SONY] is a SONY, one has bought into the long-standing traditions of (SONY's) technical progress at the forefront of world electronic production, of quality and miniaturization and of sign-form value – that's what the function of the logo is." Neil Denari: *Interrupted Projections* (1996) 19.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, 33, 44-47.

### The image of instability: *Aesthetic War*

War, as Virilio and Baudrillard explain in regard to the Gulf Crisis,<sup>308</sup> has become aesthetic, both from the viewpoint of the defender and of the aggressor, if not for the civilians caught in-between. For the defenders, aesthetics appears as a decoy, while for the attacker the control and information technology destroy the enemy, in both cases in a visual and aesthetic performance observable from a distance. Warfare becomes automatic with self-steering processes that are the objects of aesthetic perception. That is why Baudrillard denies that the Gulf Crisis was an *event*, because it was practically univocal and technological.<sup>309</sup>

Military aesthetics have also become very popular in architecture. Such architectural gurus as Wes Jones, Will Alsop, Future Systems and Neil Denari, among others, have expressed their fascination with fighters, helicopters, carriers and bombers and have taken inspiration from these in their experimental architecture. *The Aesthetic War* in architecture is a paradox – the other creates and the other destroys. However, the architectural version builds up only a distanced aestheticism without a connection to its local context. In the end, *Aesthetic War* in architecture turns out to be neither houses nor warfare, but something between.

What is more crucial than the actual visual manifestations of *War Aesthetics* in architecture, is that the mode of action from the latest military technologies has been adopted in architecture: *Transmodern architecture is a decoy*. Virilio says that the winner in contemporary warfare is the one who does not lose sight of the opponent.<sup>310</sup> Consequently, *decoys* have become very important. When decoys have become perfect enough, no one can discern reality from fiction. Equally, it is nonsense to claim that the supposedly individualistic and creative forces defining our architecture – which in the end are only aesthetic (as long as they are simulation or hypersimulation) – are controlled and in control; rather they are only embedded in the discourse of the political economy of our myths. This process is analogous to “automatic” warfare. The hidden univocality of the system (media) is what Baudrillard refers to

<sup>308</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *La Guerre du Golfe n'a pas eu lieu* (1991); Paul Virilio: *L'écran du désert* (1991).

<sup>309</sup> Jean Baudrillard: op. cit.

<sup>310</sup> Paul Virilio: *The Vision Machine* (1994) (orig. *La machine de vision* 1988) 66-70.

when he says that in our pseudo-individualistic artefacts there is embodied most of all censorship.<sup>311</sup> This is also what McLuhan was referring to when he said that the reason why we have to understand media is because if we do not it is going to control us.

Virilio has said that deceptive architecture, aesthetical light-speed architecture that does not leave time for contemplation, will take place in the future computerised architecture of machinal control based upon information.<sup>312</sup> However, the success of *The Aesthetic War* in architecture already is a mythological indication of this deceptive ambiguity of perception: *The Aesthetic War* in architecture does not have any specific value, it is just an effect. Undeniably, the effects can be fascinating and exhilarating. However, *The Aesthetic War* is neither socially destructive nor socially constructive architecture, just interdisciplinary aesthetics without further social contribution.

## Framing

*–I realise what mainstream means when I read a script and by page three I know everything.*<sup>313</sup>

Rem Koolhaas is an example of an architect whose works express two aspects of the transmodern mythology: the destruction of identity and the will to maximise programmatic chaos. I call the myth expressed by Koolhaas' works *Framing*. It means that the buildings without identity are considered frames to the chaotic actions and functions within. In a similar way, *South Park*'s simple format is a frame for its chaotic contents.

Koolhaas is the architect who has perhaps most radically expressed disappointment with architectural particularity that creates fragmentarity and does not create beneficial chaos. There is a difference between Baudrillard's sense of particularity and Koolhaas' own use of the term "particular". In his use of the term Baudrillard refers to the unique, singular character of each act in symbolic exchange, while Koolhaas refers to the over-emphasised value of architecture as a building, compared to its value as a frame for differ-

<sup>311</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Le système des objets* (1968) 269-270.

<sup>312</sup> Paul Virilio: *The Vision Machine* (1994) 74-75; *Pakonopeus* (1998) (orig. *La Vitesse de libération* 1995) 149-150.

<sup>313</sup> David Cronenberg, in Rodley: *Cronenberg on Cronenberg* (1992) 122.

ent actions. Koolhaas argues that systematic architecture can produce frames for the chaos of actual life. In Koolhaas' terminology, "particular" architecture refers to architecture that is over-exaggerated and too stiff in comparison to the life it holds within. The particular architecture (the buildings), of which he is critical, is thus the opposite of systematicity.

Koolhaas argues that there are chaotic potentials in systematic structures. Koolhaas trusts in accident, randomness, un-predictability, uncertainty and incoherence within stiff frames, and says that the artistic, irrational, uncontrollable and subversive ambitions of modernism have only been generated in the unprecedented perfection of such "generic" cities as Singapore. These kind of fascinating and chaotic environments have emerged despite their mechanistic, pragmatic program.

Koolhaas says that his own generation proposed two major defence lines against the particular (i.e. monumentalised, over-emphasised and function-specific architecture, as compared to the less specific programming): dismantlement and disappearance. Koolhaas seems to have spent his whole career building up these defence lines. He is a good example of the architects who try to create chaos. He says that in the process of dismantlement, the particular building is turned into a system. In his endeavour to generate chaos, he uses his own systematic devices of layering and changing the plan into a section. Koolhaas has pursued the reduction of architecture to *frames* and *flows* in order to purposely proliferate *chance*, unpredictable urban forms, actual chaos, disorder and unknown freedom. Architecture as a frame has been evident in his fascination with Manhattan's open plan skyscrapers and Mies's glass boxes. The fascination with flows has materialised in all the numerous ramps, escalators, lifts and raised platforms stuffed in his buildings. *Disappearance* has been perfectly fulfilled in his architecture when he talks about it in terms of electronics, media, movement, leisure and economy. This disappearance emphasises the programming of architecture, compared to the less important physical architecture.<sup>314</sup> Sanford Kwinter says that Koolhaas has promoted "the bureaucrat's compulsion to justify impotence";<sup>315</sup> that planning is impossible, that the market rules, and that shopping is the consumer's relation to architecture. This belief in aleatoriness

<sup>314</sup> Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau: *S,M,L,XL* (1995) 504-508, 1248.

is also typically transmodern. However Koolhaas does not embrace this uncritical affinity with rapid, mall and high-rise-filled expansion scarring cities, the *populist* modernity. Instead, he has tried to create appropriate architectural frames for chaotic life.

Koolhaas writes about the overwhelming confusion inherent in homogenous matrixes, and argues that they are a probable delirium of possibilities.<sup>316</sup> However, the whole idea of the beneficiality of new possibilities is questionable. Rather *Framing* is in the present stage more sought after than architectural identity, because identity is not a sufficiently aleatory principle for the transmodern mythology.

In a very transmodern sense, Koolhaas argues that there are disadvantages in architectural identity. He says that, for example, where identity is most sought after, in the perpetual quest for “character” in cities, tourists always grind successful identities down to a meaningless dust. The tourists annul the relevance of context, singularity and the identity itself. Cities oversimplify their identity, becoming transparent logos.<sup>317</sup> Koolhaas’ avoidance of identity and the will to generate chaos is very transmodern in Baudrillard’s sense.

### **The consumption of freedom: *Bigness***

The problem of fragmentation in urban areas due to the new economic and industrial situation has led to a search for new unifying methods in architecture. According to his devotion to the beneficial confusion in what I have here called *Framing*, Koolhaas says, referring to the contemporary social and economic situation, that beyond a certain scale a building should form an “envelope” with its own sculptural and architectural quality.<sup>318</sup> This is what he calls “bigness”. Although a big building cannot in many cases be context-specific, it has the ability to envelope heterogeneous technological and cultural diversities.<sup>319</sup> Koolhaas means that a good social chaos and even an aesthetically daring appearance is not nec-

<sup>315</sup> Sanford Kwinter: 'PFE: Le Trahison des Clercs'. *Any* 24 (1999).

<sup>316</sup> Rem Koolhaas: *Conversations with Students* (1996) 63.

<sup>317</sup> Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau: *S,M,L,XL* (1995) 1250.

<sup>318</sup> Rem Koolhaas in a lecture in Delft; *S,M,L,XL* (1995) 320; Koolhaas in *El Croquis* 53 (1992) 79.

<sup>319</sup> Rem Koolhaas in *El Croquis* 53 (1992) 79.

essarily something that an architect creates, but it may also come from sheer accidental *Bigness*.<sup>320</sup> For Koolhaas, *Bigness* is an expression of the transition between the individual and the urban, a social event-condition in an urban scale. He has said that *Bigness* is a universe in itself, attractive, unique, liberating and allowing a co-existence for non-complementary universes, helping us to find freedoms.

In the context of the *transmodern image*, Koolhaas' studies on *Framing* and his justifications for *Bigness* seem questionable: the liberation and freedom he talks about is not real liberation, but only obedience to the transmodern, ambiguous image of chaotic liberation.

<sup>320</sup> See Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau: *S,M,L,XL* (1995) 497, 994, 1041 about Koolhaas and *Bigness*.



Jani Tolin: Jump Inn (1996-97)

David Lynch: Lost Highway (1997)

#### 4.4 The transmodern ambience of indifference and paranoia

The typical evolved atmosphere in transmodernity is leading to difficulties and indifference in the pursuit to control atmosphere and affects within the built environment because there is no longer any unifying code. The indifference manifests itself via ambiguity in judgement based upon gradations: “70% beautiful / 30% ugly”, “20% picturesque / 80% superficial”, etc. This type of attitude is basically typical for transmodern atmospheric criticism. And when there is no centre of action, paranoia and suspicion emerge. Essentially, *Paranoia as New Metatheory* is a consequence of the disappearance of the code. On the other hand, the belief in irrelevance, the impossibility of making final judgements, leads to deliberate anti-sophistication and *Adolescence* as a new ultimate style. The transmodern ambience is indicatively operational, as, for

example, in certain aspects of David Lynch's film *Lost Highway* (1997) and in the architecture of Rem Koolhaas, which I shall discuss below. In this context, I will also address in particular a café called *Jump Inn* in central Helsinki. Naturally, *Jump Inn* is less known than *Lost Highway* and Rem Koolhaas' architecture, but it exemplifies characteristics of transmodern ambience. Actually, there are many more *Jump Inn* -type cafés and bars with more or less identical interior designs in other cities. At the end of this chapter I will also present an interpretation of Perrault's *Bibliothèque Nationale* as typically transmodern *Paranoid* architecture.

### ***Jump Inn and Lost Highway***

Briefly, the question of transmodern ambience is about the *escalation* of architectural experience. Here *life* becomes the apotheosis of experience. The kind of architecture which is lived and not experienced, is the kind of architecture people are born, grow up and die within. If we consider the recent marked explorations into suburban life by newspapers, magazines and commercial cinema, or the recent phenomenological depictions in the architectural journals of "lived" architecture registered by various senses, we have clear signs of the hypersimulation of transmodernity. For some people, a childhood spent in the high-rise suburbs of modern cities creates models of cosiness which do not comply with the canonised tradition of cosiness, but whose authenticity one cannot but accept. This is not a sign of hypersimulation or transmodernity in its own right, but the emphasis on lived architecture is. This everyday reality becomes easily a duplicate of itself, taking an aesthetical form. That is why *Jump Inn* is indicative. *Jump Inn* has not been made with a certain function in mind, but it is rather a place where one *lives*, or *idles about*, as its architect explains.

The interior design for the *Jump Inn* café was made by Jani Tolin in 1996-1997 but was remodelled in 1999 (because it made money, which made this possible and the owners wanted to slightly change its client base for a more exclusive one) and moved to new, larger premises in 2001. I interviewed Tolin in January 2000, but here I refer to the café before its transformation. The café was situated on one of the main thoroughfares of Helsinki,

Fredrikinkatu street, in one of the older dense urban districts. On entering in off the street, the approximately 100m<sup>2</sup> cafe space appeared almost totally matt black and dark brown – even the windows were covered with black sticker material. The almost gothic blackness emphasised the vanished importance of space and spatial experience for the benefit of creating atmosphere. The furniture was almost unnoticeable in its plainness. The only detail that looked “designed” was the logo on the front window: the words “Jump Inn” plus authentic Chinese characters denoting the name. Then there was a TV and several pinball machines to “intensify” the atmosphere. The place was patronised by lazy young adults. Considering all the references and pictures there were about *Jump Inn* in fashionable magazines and on the local hip cable TV, the place can be interpreted as setting a norm for such places, especially for the younger generation. This fame undoubtedly stemmed partly from *Jump Inn*'s interior design. However, it is crucial that *Jump Inn* was not too conscious of its fashionability, that it was actually “paranoid” about becoming too chic. It is significant how *Jump Inn*'s atmosphere, the background music included, built up a whole which did not depend upon designer architecture down to the smallest detail. Instead, it was an indifferent, vague combination of different styles. The theme music to *Miami Vice* was played from the loudspeakers in between classical music, because neither of them could then be called too fashionable. The place appeared consciously “anti-design”. The interior is neither sophisticated nor fashion-conscious, either a traditional cafe nor local pub style. The architecture of *Jump Inn* cannot be restricted to any contemporary style compartments. The opposites merge into each others. *Jump Inn* was both smart and anti-smart, classical and modern simultaneously. It is difficult to say which feelings the place was supposed to give rise to. Its architect describes it as “warm funkiness”.

The architecture of *Jump Inn* was not meant to “express” anything. The starting point for the design was seemingly not “beauty” but to relate to the concepts of style and fashion themselves. If one considers that *Jump Inn*'s interior was an art work, it was realistic rather than fabulous: It was not creating the illusion of something like the *McDonalds*, *Planet Hollywoods*, *Hard Rock Cafés*, international Irish pubs and all the trendy minimalist cafés reminiscent of design magazines' daydreams. *Jump Inn* represented an alterna-

tive to alternatives. *Jump Inn* was transmodern architecture that paradoxically becomes stylish by paranoiacally avoiding clichés of “stylish” design. It is as if *Jump Inn*’s clients were too fashion-conscious and knew that most of today’s fashion becomes tomorrow’s passé.

While *Jump Inn* is a good example of ambivalent atmosphere in architecture, David Lynch’s film *Lost Highway* is a good example of ambient atmosphere in moving images, where even people’s existence becomes ambivalent. Lynch is the father of a whole neo-surrealist film genre and many of his films belong to the new paranoia genre, along with such productions as Oliver Stone’s *JFK* and *The X-Files*.

*Lost Highway* begins with a jazz-saxophonist called Fred Madison from Los Angeles assuming that his wife Renée is being unfaithful. They receive (from an unknown source) mysterious video recordings taken first outside their home and then inside it. Fred meets the mystery man who confuses him with his magic tricks. Later, on one videotape there flits by a character reminding him (and us) of Renée. Fred is then arrested on suspicion of the seemingly actual murder of his wife, and he starts to suffer from blinding headaches. The next day, a car mechanic, Pete Dayton, wakes up in Fred’s cell, unable to explain how he got there. Fred, however, has somehow disappeared. After his release, Pete suspects that something is not quite right. His girlfriend Sheila talks mysteriously about a certain night when Pete appeared to “change”. Pete meets Alice (who looks like Renée), the girlfriend of a gangster called Mr. Eddy, and there begins a passionate relationship between them. Alice persuades Pete to rob Andy, a producer of video films. Andy is accidentally killed in the robbery and the couple escape to the desert and to the Lost Highway Hotel. The police are now chasing Pete, who is suddenly abandoned by Alice. All of a sudden Fred replaces Pete. The mystery man, armed with a video camera, turns up at the hotel along with Mr. Eddy, but the latter is then killed by Fred. The screaming Fred escapes the police cars to the gloomy highway leading to the desert. To reiterate, a man is put into jail but next morning there is another man in the cell instead. We start to follow another character as if nothing happened.

This confusion is emphasised by changes in atmosphere. In the beginning, the film appears somewhat comfortable because of the

dim lighting and the jazz factor. Later on, this hip coolness changes into paranoid suspense. Then, for a moment, the film looks like a humoristic crime story when Mr Eddy enters the picture, but in the end *Lost Highway* explodes into the spheres of devastating and disgusting horror. It appears as if the director did not want to decide which kind of atmosphere the film as a whole is supposed to construct. Lynch has confessed that he wants to question the signification structures in favour of mysteries, but then his mysteries are based on the exaltation of the banal rather than on secretive seduction. His films consist of silences and breaks, unexplained actions and shocks, the feelings of magic produced by discrepancies and vagueness. Still, this transmodern strangeness, just like the first *Jump Inn*, imbues only some curiosity and sadness in the viewer as he or she faces this sublime banality, and nothing deeper. That is why *Jump Inn* and *Lost Highway* are typical of the transmodern image.

### **The cult of adolescence**

The consciousness that generated *Lost Highway* is seemingly allergic to the civilised world's rules of good manners, articulated speech, rationality and good taste. The *Adolescent* mentality considers these as the devices of educating, socialising and taming self-conscious people. The *adolescent* audience likes actors like Jim Carrey because he can make *Them* – the educators, parents, moralists, critics – feel embarrassed and ridiculous. *Adolescence* as a problem and as a myth can be discovered in the juvenile plots and characters of the moving images which cross the borders of teen cinema. Equally, in architecture, *Adolescence* takes place in radicality, in the urge to differentiate, to un-stabilise and to make rebellious design. On a mythological level, the obsession with acceleration and immediacy fulfilled in present technology is also *Adolescent*.

Naturally, this tendency is related to the growing markets: teenagers become customers, but the atmosphere of *Adolescence* becomes a commodity, too. The crucial thing in *Adolescence* is to attain optimal immediate performance. (Juveniles typically have no patience). The larger purpose behind such supposedly delinquent tendencies in recent architecture as *decorating* and *ornamenting*

may also be seen as *Adolescent*.

Despite the ambience of rebellion connected to *Adolescence*, when *Adolescence* becomes commercialised, the crucial issue for the survival of this easily self-destructive myth is a sufficient amount of trust and concentration. *Adolescence* is often regarded as something unstable, but its commercialisation requires a sufficient amount of respectability. *Adolescence* is no longer a problem for the producers/clients if it is accomplished in a professional way without losing its revolutionism, like Jim Carrey does in his films. Koolhaas seems to belong to the same genre in architecture; an idiosyncratic example of an *Adolescent* architect. Koolhaas' enthusiasm with chaotic compositions and sometimes un-tasteful, often kitschy, ornamental material selections irritates many. While one of the most sacred aspects in architecture has been its durability, Koolhaas the juvenile often consciously chooses the cheapest materials, possibly even if it is not dictated so by the budget. This architecture looks as if it is made quickly for the fast experience. Sanford Kwinter thus calls Koolhaas' architecture "B-movie architecture" and Koolhaas anxiously presents himself as a young rebel fighting against bureaucrats, as in the famous cartoon in *S,M,L,XL*. Koolhaas points out the importance of gaining confidence without losing one's radicality. He says that especially the question of the buildings' technical service systems has been difficult in this regard and that Cecil Balmont and his team at Ove Arup's engineering office have been crucial collaborators in the task of gaining confidence.<sup>321</sup>

However, the *Adolescent* atmosphere, even if it is difficult for it to become classified in the old value categories, proves to be just as embedded in the systematic mythology of the present society as the former, "nobler" aspirations. The "official" and commercialised *Adolescence* culture includes such works as the late 1990s teenage horror films *Scream* and *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, and the new "bad taste" Hollywood films such as *Pet Detective*, *All About Mary*, *American Pie*, *Happiness*, *American Beauty*, as well as Koolhaas' architecture when it aims to be consciously counter-mainstream. However, none of these works can escape the univocal system/medium that in the end offers no real alternatives.

<sup>321</sup> Rem Koolhaas interviewed in *El Croquis* 53 (1992).

### **The consequence of the inflation of value: Paranoia as a new meta-theory**

By definition, paranoia – for instance, the paranoid atmosphere in *Lost Highway* – is a mental disorder characterised by systematic delusions. Paranoia is generally concerned with limits that have become problematic, a compulsion to not to see, or to forget, the essential facts of one's surroundings. The compulsion serves as a protective shield for the paranoid person, who will kill a part of her/himself in order to construct that protection. In a way paranoia is a normal, continuous mental experience and it is by no means far-fetched to see it as a representation of the archaic concept of sacrifice. This time the thing sacrificed is the eliminated part of the self.<sup>322</sup> In *La Transparence du Mal*, Baudrillard gives several examples of the reversibility of the social system that is likely to spread paranoia: just like the biological body, it loses its natural defences in precise proportion to the growing sophistication of its prostheses. This unprecedented mythological pathology is unlikely to be effectively eliminated by medicine because medicine is itself part of the system of overproduction and contributes to the fanatical measures. This paranoia, or *virtual catastrophe*, seems to be one of the primary socio-cultural logics in present-day society.<sup>323</sup> *Paranoia as a New Meta-theory* is a consequence of the increasing univocality and indifference of *The Hell of the Same*. The information babble of society has found its leader in a conspiracy. This is the point where sanity and insanity mix, the paranoid feature of creating a growing multitude of explanations leading to an extreme relativism of values.

One of the best examples of symptomatic paranoia in architecture is Dominique Perrault's *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris, completed in 1997. It is a seeming oasis in the city, with its sunken forest garden rectangle in the centre of the building complex, but it is a paranoid's oasis. The four buildings on the corners of the site, purposely remind us of books standing edge-wise, with their hard covers on the outside. The "books" create a kind of protective shield, or protective wings for the whole place. In the best paranoid

<sup>322</sup> See Roberto Calasso: *The Ruin of Kasch* (1994) 189-199 about paranoia as this type of contemporary sacrifice.

<sup>323</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *La Transparence du Mal* (1990) 74-77.

tradition, the designer has deliberately overlooked certain unavoidable practical considerations. The books are stored in towers, although the usual practice in library design has been to avoid numerous floor levels. The towers are quite far apart which means that people have to walk enormous distances. Furthermore, the towers have glass facades, which puts the preservation of books at great risk. The staff went on strike because of the impractical working conditions.

Koolhaas presented the idea of a paranoia-critical method in architecture in his book *Delirious New York* (1978). The instruction is an applied version of Salvador Dali's method that refers to decisions made in the blink of an eye, without any premeditation. A story about Dali in New York can serve as a case in point. Dali took a journalist's camera and smashed it to pieces. Then he immediately proceeded to present the object as his new perfume bottle design. Koolhaas does the same thing with architecture. His idea of "retroactive manifestos" includes a drastic and potentially destructive underestimation of the automatically given and existing context. He replaces the given context by a systematic idealisation of the concepts that may or may not have guaranteed the continuity of the development of the place.<sup>324</sup> The reason why this works is that Koolhaas attains intellectual prestige through the manoeuvres based on intellectual challenge. The method is also paranoid. Analysing Koolhaas' architecture or Perrault's *Bibliothèque Nationale* reminds us very much of the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's description of paranoia, which he characterised as "the deflection of the specular I into the social I".<sup>325</sup>

When Roberto Calasso links paranoia and primitive rituals, one can perceive how generalised paranoia is generalised sacrifice. The system of sacrifice represents a special type of discourse – one that has no sense.<sup>326</sup>

If all that is hidden came to light there would be no room for gossip and no need for conspiracy. Paranoia is, as a meta-theory, a desperate reaction to the fact that there is nothing hidden. It coun-

<sup>324</sup> Rem Koolhaas: 'La splendeur terrifiante de XXe siècle'. *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* no. 238, avril 1985.

<sup>325</sup> See Anthony Vidler: *The Architectural Uncanny* (1992) 223 on Koolhaas. See Jacques Lacan: *Écrits* (1966) 95 on paranoia: a paranoid is "staged through anxiety".

<sup>326</sup> Roberto Calasso, op. cit. 204-246. See also Claude Lévi-Strauss: *La pensée sauvage* (1962) 301.

terbalances boredom. This social boredom comes not from the ending of the Cold War or the disappearance of epidemics. It is born from the fact that people become sick of the social code. All is well in this flat, rich, conflict-free system of classification, in which there is no excitement because there are no challenges. It would be impelling if contemporary Western culture turned out to be only an illusion. This has, in fact, become one of the most commonplace fantasies of today. Internet cycles conspiracy theories and crazy speculations about aliens. Millions of Americans truly believe that a UFO has at some point of their lives abducted them. New Age books stay at the top of best-sellers sales lists and provide wonderful tales of strange powers and ancient rituals. Many architects have become fascinated by esoteric and irrational theories: theories on Feng Shui, hippy-style ecology, etc. Still, conspiracy theories have no enlightened insight on the thrill of the mysterious. They leave us cold, devoid of emotions and lost. Confusion and absurdity only make people want to carry on going round in circles. At best this can be fascinating, a kind of alien carnival, but after all *Paranoia as a New Meta-theory* cannot but extend the transmodern indifference.

Contemporary architecture works to a great extent according to the logic of catastrophe or paranoia. The paranoid climate is a very strong element in the reserved, minimalist architecture, such as Perrault's library, up to the point of consciously making scary architecture.<sup>327</sup> However, the problem in taking paranoia any further lies in the danger of failing to create interesting mysteries. Often the architecture that was intended to cause fear proves rather dull. Similar tendencies are evident in moving images; for example, while for Jean-Luc Godard the link of the disconnected was the drive through the anonymous modern landscape in pursuit of ideals instead of reality (*Weekend*, 1967), for David Lynch the drive has become a stroll through the places of conspiracy and paranoia. The familiarity of place turns into paranoia in modern cinema.<sup>328</sup> The American Cold War paranoia from material entities (a "justified paranoia", as John Orr calls it) has been transformed into insubstantial paranoia, which depends on the *world beyond* à la *Lost Highway* and *The X-files*. In architecture, for example, Peter

<sup>327</sup> See Antti Ahlava: 'Beyond Architecture of Horror'. *Ark* 5/99.

<sup>328</sup> John Orr: *Contemporary Cinema* (1998) 168.

Eisenman and Herzog & de Meuron have purposely attempted to create the aesthetic atmospheres of fear and horror.<sup>329</sup> The visual manifestations of the social struggle which the Frankfurt School and the Situationists longed for, has been transformed into social paranoia, which is not a very effective form of social struggle.

<sup>329</sup> Peter Eisenman: 'miMISes READING: does not mean A THING' (1986) 86-97; *Blue Line Text* (1988) 6-9. Eisenman refers to "home" as a place of unhomely strangeness. Herzog & de Meuron: 'Interview with Jacques Herzog'. *Archidea* Spring 1997. Herzog & de Meuron mention that they have been interested in the "dark side" of life in their works. See also Antti Ahlava: 'Beyond Architecture of Horror'. *Ark* 5/99.

## 4.5 The digital myth in architecture and moving images

With the advanced state of mythology it has become very difficult to define such fields as architecture and moving images, because they have become scattered into transpolitical spectral nuances: objects and projects have become part architecture, part moving images. One of the most effective myths behind this process has been the myth of *The Digital*. The digital modes of consumption have changed architecture through the diminished importance of spatial relations in favour of projection surfaces and potential diversification in the satisfaction of consumers' needs, as already discussed. This means that immaterial architecture has become taken as something "natural". At a more pragmatic level, the digitalisation of architecture has allowed the quicker reproduction of monotonous units in drawing, better photorealist rendering and the computer-aided manufacturing of unforeseen architectural forms, eventually causing technological mania. However, the reverse side of this process is evident: the obscurity of photorealism and the uniformity of products. It is not adequate to try to hinder the digitalisation of architecture, because the technical process is already so widely spread. Instead, fighting the myth – the blind belief in digitality – could produce qualitatively satisfying versions of digital architecture.

Two new media have emerged fading the former border between moving images and architectural design: animation made possible by CAD (Computer Aided Design) in architecture and CGI (Computer Generated Images) used especially in special effects in commercial cinema. There are already also other convergent media merging together moving images and architecture, as seen in the computer games presenting architectural environments and the virtual cities which allow shopping on the Internet. The most influential of these techniques in the future might become Image Based Rendering (IBR).

## CGI

Special effects have been beneficial devices, for the purpose of making the impossible probable, as in the film *Inspector Gadget* (1999), where the audience sees how the inspector, played by Matthew Broderick, stuffs a living tarantula spider into his own mouth (With the help of computer animation, Broderick's face was put onto the head of a stuntman who really had the spider in his mouth). Visual effects have become a flourishing subcontractor industry for commercial cinema, TV programs and commercials. The emphasis in recent years has clearly been on digital picture processing, and the standard of the effects has progressed to a stage where one does not notice that they are effects: digital tricks no longer belong solely to science fiction spectacles and horror films. What used to be immensely expensive and extravagant technology is nowadays a way to save time and money. Thus, for example, in *Titanic* (1998) almost all of its scenes involved digital techniques. Even the dolphins dabbling in the sea as well as the people posing on the deck of the ship were digitally created. It also includes added computer generated tones in sunsets and steams of exhaled air in front of people's faces.

Some of the milestones in digital graphics have been the invention of digital *morphing* in the late 1980s, which entails changing a character seamlessly into another, and the *motion capture* technique on a large scale, as realised in *Titanic*, which entails the imagination of living models by a certain rotoscope camera. With the help of the latter device, animated characters are "taught" to move according to real movements. Digital animation has to a great extent closed the gap between reality and imagination. Another of the crucial milestones on this journey has been the development of the Image Based Rendering (IBR) techniques.

## IBR

Imagine being able to take a few pictures of a certain place and then turning those images into a three-dimensional computer model. IBR (Image Based Rendering) makes this possible. It entails modelling and rendering three-dimensional volumes from two-dimensional images. Presently there is a lot of research and devel-

opment in this technique.<sup>330</sup> Indeed, there are currently various types of IBR, such as range scanning and Quick Time Virtual Reality (QTVR). Range scanning entails registering three-dimensional points and contours with the use of a distance calculator. It requires a lot of computer memory and capacity. QTVR is an IBR system that uses closely spaced panoramic photographs which have depth computed from stereo correspondence. One of the leading scientists on the field of IBR is Paul E. Debevec from the University of California at Berkeley. He has studied the combination of techniques of computer vision and computer graphics to make IBR possible especially in architectural modelling.<sup>331</sup> It is symptomatic that the applications of this kind of a system would lessen the differences between such domains as architectural design and town planning, archaeological reconstruction and special effects in moving images. Debevec's interactive modelling program called *Façade*, as well as recent commercial applications<sup>332</sup> have used a so-called hybrid approach requiring the interactive user's input in finding stereo correspondence and geometric recognition of forms.

Concerning *transpolitics* (in Virilio's sense of the word) and IBR, it is significant that IBR makes possible a new medium where one can combine picture recording, spatial characteristics and voice recording into a tempting format which is easy for basically anyone to gather and process. The aural characteristics of a place and its location according to GPS (Global Positioning System via geographical satellite-aided location) can be included in the system, approaching a perfect replica of the place to be "recorded". Of course, the biggest markets for this kind of facility are in the entertainment industry. There already exist computer games with modelled real environments, such as Microsoft's *Midtown Madness*, where the whole centres of Chicago and London have been imitated so that the player can drive down its streets at random. In addition to games, tourists could benefit from IBR in taking new kinds

<sup>330</sup> There is presently research on this subject in almost all of the leading universities in USA, including MIT, Harvard, Cornell, Stanford, UNC, and Chicago. In addition, such multinational companies as Apple, Microsoft, Canon and Minolta have programmes in the field with the aim of producing a commercial digital camera and software with these properties. The *Siggraph* conferences of digital media have been the major forum for changing ideas about IBR.

<sup>331</sup> Paul Ernest Debevec: *Modeling and Rendering Architecture from Photographs* (1996).

<sup>332</sup> For example, *Canoma* by MetaCreations.

of “immersive” snapshots.

However, the development of this kind of media convergence requires knowledge about design and consumer theories, especially the principles of interdisciplinarity. The sheer technology-based documentation of reality would be fascinating, but remain banal without the conscious input of a designer in the image.

### **Media convergence**

Another crucial question (in addition to the photorealist obscenity in reproduction) concerning the digitalisation of reality is the uniformity of products, the global non-reciprocal concentration of production. For example, of all films shown at commercial cinemas, 70 to 80% come from Hollywood. In addition, the “alternative” and Art House films tend to be just as stereotypical and filled with clichés as the Hollywood films – they just spread different clichés. Apart from the distribution chains, the relentless digitalisation is partly responsible for *The Hell of the Same*.<sup>333</sup>

From the historical perspective, one can find the long co-existence of different media. In this sense, digitalisation does not necessarily change very much the viewing of moving images,<sup>334</sup> but it banalises the quality of aesthetics due to its tendency to convergence.

The “technological argument” suggests that the audio-visual industries, of which architecture is a part, have experienced an innovative boost because of the mass markets, because money could be made and because people were eager for innovative products such as CD players, video games, etc. It is true that the commodity seduces the consumer with its fetishistic presence, as Adorno, Benjamin and Baudrillard have suggested, but one must remember that the consumer all in all wants to become a subject in the play of recognition, prestige and desire, of mirroring and symbolic exchange. If there is something to be learned from Baudrillard’s theory of consumer society, it is that successful commodities (and they are not necessarily commercially successful!) emerge only

<sup>333</sup> See Thomas Elsaesser and Kay Hoffmann: ‘Preface’ in Elsaesser and Hoffmann (eds.): *Cinema Futures: Cain, Abel or Cable?* (1998), about this uniformity.

<sup>334</sup> The early cinema already had a very good idea of what an “immersive” visual environment might look and feel like. And the history of maps and architectural drawings give us a very cogent pre-history of simulation, interactivity and tele-presence.

where the new commodities shape around symbolic dynamics.

The convergence created by digitalisation also points paradoxically to the opposite direction. It points towards the diversification of production, and greater flexibility in the assembly-line products and product design. The convergence leads to customised goods and specialised services for smaller segments of the market, be these in response to regional or local differences, or in order to cater for a privileged or niche clientele. However, the question is, is diversity and individual choice what the customer of architecture or moving images ultimately wants? There is also the fact that watching a moving image, or having a dinner in a family living room is a gesture of sharing and participation and thus a negotiated choice and a communal act. Another crucial question regarding flexibility in digitalisation is quality. It seems that with increasing possibilities, the use value of commodities has decreased, if one is to believe people's complaints about contemporary products, such as toys which break easily and "sick" buildings.

The media aided by digital electronic communication such as CAD, CGI, QTVR and IBR could be called *transmodern media* because they are immaterial, electronic, value-free, interactive, flexible, convergent, reflexive, adjustable, and models for other media and art forms. All of them are based on moving images, but it is a gross mistake to believe (as is often assumed) that studying filmic representations such as montage techniques could help in creating better products in contemporary architecture. The old rules of film do not apply to the new digital media. It is the rules of the reproduced signs of reality – immediate, ubiquitous and continuous – that apply and the preference is in the methods of surveillance and real time. That is also why architectural references to montage as an arrangement of separate, successive and colliding entities have become outdated.

Despite all the advertisement jargon, it is typical for this stage of mythology to deny the participation of the user of the medium, because all the possible answers are already inscribed in the code. This is a fact even if contemporary utopias seem to be concerned with so-called interaction. This applies also with architecture. Some of the "cinematic" adaptations in architecture enabling "events", such as Tschumi's *Parc de la Villette*, are said to provide new freedom for the visitor when choosing, for example, routes and view-

points. However, in Baudrillard's words, one could say that interaction is *Diet Utopia* because it denies real participation, despite all promotion, and it becomes as easily banal as former utopias became clichés.

From the perspective of symbolic exchange, the masses are right – they tend to answer to the offered increasing choices with stubborn insistence. For example, they can choose only one channel from the myriad of channels available with digital television, yet they want to watch the same channels and commercials as everyone else (not the ones that have been “targeted” to their “consumer profile”) and even want to live in similar apartments as others just because they are similar, because their stubborn persistence is a challenge to the system that urges us all to be creative individualists and to take part in the cult of the new. The next part concerns this type of social challenge.

## 5 Challenging mythology: *ultimategame* in architecture

This chapter deals with the pursuit to develop a method for architectural analysis and design based on Baudrillard's idea of "fatal strategies". Baudrillard's *fatal strategies* is an attempt to portray and, moreover, effectively to challenge the dominant cultural strategies in consumer society, including its inherent mythology. The possibility for this challenge originates from the supposed primitive basis of society, especially as interpreted through Marcel Mauss's idea about symbolic gift exchange. In Mauss's scheme, the reversible cycles of receiving a gift and giving one in return form a reciprocal cycle. This cycle is activated by mutual seductive challenges, that is, giving and receiving. Baudrillard argues that this cycle still rules modern societies, but has become latent. For him, such characteristics of the consumer society as the all-pervasive and mythical beliefs in functionality, rationality, but also irrationality and creativity as well as the more recent belief in chance principles and interactivity, leave no possibility for any essential *reversal*. These univocal codes are manifest also, I would argue, in the architecture of consumer society.

Baudrillard shows that the attitude of *the masses* is a good example of the challenge that must be posited to all forms of media, including architecture, when they seem to leave no outside.<sup>335</sup> Baudrillard considers the "ambiguous", "silent", "seductive" masses as a principle that causes the symbolic collapse of the univocal systems when it is asked for an opinion. Without this kind of visible challenge, the essential reversibility in society will not become manifest. My own interest here lies in the possibilities to use the masses' strategies in designing architecture.

In the following chapter I will construct a theoretical basis for this

<sup>335</sup> Jean Baudrillard: 'The Masses: The Implosion of the Social in the Media 208' (In *Selected Writings* 1990); *A l'ombre des Majorités silencieuses* (1978) 44, 48; *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 95; *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 126-127; *Baudrillard Live* (1993) 87-88.

kind of challenge (5.1), and then discuss how architecture could adopt the masses' mode of challenge. As a case study, I will study the requirements for a challenging relationship between moving images and architecture (general requirements in 5.2, followed in 5.3 by a critique of the architects who already have worked on the area between architecture and moving images). My hypothesis is that challenging cross-field activity will lead to abandoning the idea of interdisciplinary and transmodern "references" to works in other fields. The references only tend to reproduce banally the other's most degenerated and inessential concepts. Instead, if one wants to support genuinely social principles, one could critically comment upon the general social patterns behind this interactivity and the myths behind the other field.

Ultimately, I am developing here an application of the masses' "method" for architectural design (5.4). Of course talking about "method" in this manner is fallacious because the "method" here is not the linear accomplishment of a plan, but rather an *attitude*, as I will now explain. **ultimatgame** entails only mirroring and enstrengthening typical characteristics already inherent in society, challenging myths with other myths, and setting them against each other. Thus **ultimatgame** is not actually an *individualistic* and *creative* strategy. That would be paradoxical in the context of Baudrillard's theory. Instead, it is a *singular* strategy. This singularity means that the method does not follow any abstract principles, such as the systems of needs and production. Concerning this method, I will present two ritualistic attitudes important in constructing new architecture: *cool panic* and *machinal snobbism*.

## 5.1 Baudrillard's *fatal strategies*

Symbolic exchange and its primus motor, the reciprocal cycles of *challenge* emitting *prestige*, was studied most by Marcel Mauss in his treatise on gift exchange, and, as explained earlier, Baudrillard has based his social theory on these principles. Baudrillard's texts about "fatal strategies" imply that today the most important other party in social exchange is *the social system itself and its media*. The system is supported by mass media and coded individualism, which manifest themselves through transmodern myths. Yet these myths have scarcely been repaid by giving something in return. In this sense, Baudrillard's question has been this: How could one reinstate limits to the commercial-mythological system, which appears to have no limits, so that symbolic exchange would become visible? In the most abstract terms, this means challenging an all-pervading metaphysical totalization.

When developing a counter-discourse to the social code, in Baudrillard's interpretational context, one should begin from the notion that all stakes are symbolic and that there have always been only symbolic stakes.<sup>336</sup> As I interpret it, if they want to relate to this whole symbolic order, architects must mobilise their own fatal strategies and arrange a duel with the mythology.

### ***Fatal strategies***

In transmodernity the aleatory principle of the socio-economic system has become a model for people's thought patterns. This model generates a common belief in any aleatory and irresponsible principle – such as I explained in the previous part (4) – a belief in the naturalness of aleatory relationships.

Baudrillard's challenge to this principle is his insistence that fundamentally the world is not aleatory but "fatal", enigmatic and ritualistic, connected with the personal ties between people. The cul-

<sup>336</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976) 7-8.

ture does not work according to rational or aleatory relations, but according to an incessant cycle of ritualistic metamorphoses, in accordance with the enchanting rapports of form and appearance still ruled by the absolute necessity.<sup>337</sup>

Baudrillard's short study of animal behaviour 'Les bêtes, territoire et métamorphose' and the article 'L'effet Beaubourg', both from his 1981 book *Simulacres et Simulation* seem to have been the beginning of his study on fatal strategies.<sup>338</sup> The strategy was defined as a mode of seductive reversibility in social relations. For Baudrillard, the silence of animals also came to remind him of the strategy of the masses. In the task of challenging univocal systems, Baudrillard supports the reversible strategies of irony and silence typical of animals, the masses and children.<sup>339</sup> I will examine the nature of this kind of "objective" irony later in this chapter. At this stage, it is appropriate to say that with "irony" Baudrillard refers to actions which are able to undermine the belief in the transparency of causality and productivism. For Baudrillard, the irony of the animals lies in their silence. Silence is their way of reminding the productivist human being about the circular and subject-free nature of the world. Baudrillard calls this kind of challenge "revenge". He argues that animals can put in question the very hypothesis of unconsciousness and other hypotheses within which the unconsciousness appears. According to Baudrillard, in the world of animals there is no subjectivity (only metamorphosis) and *everything* is exchanged. There is no instinct, need, or structure. The animal law – *territory* – is the site of a completed cycle of parentage and exchanges.<sup>340</sup>

Baudrillard extends his analysis of this kind of behaviour to children, too. They resist or seem not to know about the duties of a subject when their sense of duty is being appealed to. Therefore, they are hyperconformist, totally dependent, passive and 'idiotic'. On the other hand, they refuse to be objects in a very adult way,

<sup>337</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Simulacres et Simulation* (1981) 203-204; *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 114-115, 170-181.

<sup>338</sup> Jean Baudrillard: 'Les bêtes, territoire et métamorphose' (in *Simulacres et Simulation* 1981) 187-204. Originally published in *Traverses* no. 8. 'L'effet Beaubourg' (in *Simulacres et Simulation* 1981) 93-112.

<sup>339</sup> For Baudrillard's discussion of the strategies of indefinite cycling and reversion familiar to animals see *Simulacres et Simulation* (1981) 139-140. About ambiguous children see *ibid.*, 128. About masses and animals see Jean Baudrillard: *A l'ombre des Majorités Silencieuses* (1982, orig. 1978) 34.

<sup>340</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Simulacres et Simulation* (1981) 138-140.

showing revolt and independence, in other words, employing the strategy of a subject.<sup>341</sup> These challenging strategies of irony and hyperconformity are profoundly different than surrendering to the general idea of fundamental aleatory principles (i.e. the chaotic values ruling existence).

In addition to his observations about animals, children and the masses, Baudrillard's idea of fatality or fatal destiny as the salvage of contemporary society has been developed through his anxious readings on the early anthropological studies of primitive tribes (made by Bronislaw Malinowski, Emile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss and Georges Bataille).<sup>342</sup> That is why Baudrillard's idea of fatality — the explanation of an event as the ironical reversibility or the influence of enchantment — cannot be separated from its mythological and primitive social context. In the individualistic society there are no longer any common rules and principles everybody could agree upon, and this leads to aleatory principles. In the primitive and feudal societies, the situation was the opposite. In previous so-

<sup>341</sup> Ibid., 128. See also Jean Baudrillard: 'The Masses: Implosion of the Social in the Media' (in *Selected Writings* 1990) 218.

<sup>342</sup> Baudrillard's texts include numerous references to the studies of primitive cultures. He uses the life in ancient tribes and the early anthropological studies as reference points in the development of his theory of fatal strategies, from the early notions on symbolic exchange to *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) and beyond. In *Les stratégies fatales* Baudrillard mentions Aztecs who sacrificed to *both* the (supposedly rivalling) sun and moon to be absolutely sure about their own destiny. Baudrillard sees fatality in this kind of duplicity which devours all possible critical positions. Baudrillard continues in *Les stratégies fatales* that, as Georges Bataille explained with his concepts "spending" (*dépense*) and "evil share" (*part maudite*), sensible social projects have never unified people, but that fatal "superfluous", "adventurous", "eventually absurd", "anti-economical" activities have (86-87). In *Figures de l'altérité* (Jean Baudrillard and Marc Guillaume 1994, 99-102), Baudrillard explains how the culture of contemporary USA has a fatal "mutational enigma" through which it joins the nonthinkable secrets of primitive cultures. In *A l'ombre des Majorités silencieuses* (1982, orig. 1978), Baudrillard compares the masses' silent strategies to the ancient potlatch cult. He argues that the hyperconformist masses recycle everything passing into their own cycle, exactly like in primitive natives. In addition to Bataille, the background for Baudrillard's fatal strategies can be traced, for example, to Durkheim and Mauss when they explain in their *De quelques formes primitives de classification* (1903, orig. 1901-2) how all magic is utterly untrue up to the point that we can see a variety of different *realities* in primitive cultures. This irreconciliation, the impossibility to use a critical position with another reality principle, reminds one very much of Baudrillard's idea of fatality. Baudrillard's notion of fatal strategies is also indebted to Adorno and Horkheimer, who in *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1981, orig. 1947, 23-33, 46) argue that in modern culture, individualistic rationalism has become *animistic magic* because of the principle of *fatal necessity*. However, Baudrillard only takes the fatal necessity as a positive aspect. For Adorno and Horkheimer, the fatal necessity dominates the series of systems which "begin with the hierarchy of the gods which hands down an identical content" and has in our modern society transformed into "productive classification". In Adorno and Horkheimer's sense, the sanction of fate relentlessly remakes what is taken for granted and cannot be approached critically. Mankind is forced back to anthropologically more primitive stages, Adorno and Horkheimer argue (ibid., 47-52).

cieties (and still in those existing “primitive” societies) people were aware of their position within the greater whole, and they accepted the position life had determined for them. It is not so that today there are no rules at all, but that the rules have become relative.

In Baudrillard’s vocabulary, “fate” becomes located in the dividing line separating necessity and chance. Necessity is based on an order of causes, of finality, a system of values which is that of metaphysics. Chance is based on an objective by the undetermined or erratic order. Compared to these, the fatal order is an objective order, but of the highest necessity.<sup>343</sup> In Baudrillard’s interpretation, the fatality, or the linkage, is that “the sign of the appearing of the things is that of their disappearance”.<sup>344</sup> In fatality, the same signs prevail from the beginning to the end, without any other apparent reason than the enchantment of their appearance. The same events occur without any connection between them, as willed coincidences.<sup>345</sup> An example of this reversibility is fashion: the notion that something is *in fashion* inevitably means also that sooner or later the same thing will be out of fashion.

Another example of a fatal relationship is unavoidable catastrophe. Baudrillard says that the seduction of catastrophes seems to be a mode of primitive fatality still existing in developed consumer societies. Accordingly, there is also a need for a new kind of catastrophic individualism, he argues. This should not answer to the demands of the liberalisation of one’s needs and senses (and of women, animals, etc.) positioned by the abstract societal system; rather, it would be a denial of need in general and an affirmation of rituals. In this sense, the consumer in mass media society should not need more choices to express himself or herself, or require more minorities to join in, but less choices and needs and more rules, reversibility and reciprocity in order to become less individualistic and more communal.<sup>346</sup>

This “ritualism” that Baudrillard offers is not revolutionary. Nevertheless, it is radical from the viewpoint of the societal system and

<sup>343</sup> Jean Baudrillard: ‘Forget Baudrillard Interview’ (1984-85) (in *Forget Foucault and Forget Baudrillard* 1987) 85.

<sup>344</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 175.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, 174-177, 180-181.

<sup>346</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *A l’ombre des Majorités silencieuses* (1978) 48-52, *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 174, 184-187; ‘Forget Baudrillard Interview’ (1984-85) 84 (in *Forget Foucault and Forget Baudrillard* 1987).

its mythologies. This anti-individualism can be found in the hallucinogenic self-consciousness of a mass, where one's identity voluntarily loses itself in deliberate rules, ceremonies and rituals.<sup>347</sup> Thus, in this primitivistic context, what is interesting is no longer the creative subject but the subject as an object. For Baudrillard, fatal strategy is a deliberate attempt to identify with the object, or even to become one.<sup>348</sup> The "object" is in this context the principle of ritualistic metamorphosis, the avoidance of closure, especially on the individual level.<sup>349</sup> One can think that the metamorphoses, tactics and strategies of the object exceed the subject's understanding: they have characteristics that could be called *objective irony*.<sup>350</sup> In short, this is the principle of reversibility Baudrillard thinks we seem not to be able to escape: the object destroys the symbolic order of systems that seem to have no outside, and this destruction is accomplished by irony.<sup>351</sup> However, it is important to note that when Baudrillard refers to the object and to its fundamental duplicity, he is referring to all of us and to our social and political order. He is speaking of a person and of his or her *inhuman strategies*.<sup>352</sup>

I will now examine the masses' fatal strategies from this viewpoint. The benefit of the masses is that they know that they know nothing and they have no desire to know, argues Baudrillard.<sup>353</sup> In *The Masses: The Implosion of the Social in the Media*,<sup>354</sup> Baudrillard says that the masses have no opinion and information does not inform them. They are deeply aware that they do not have to make a decision about themselves and the world; they do not have to wish; they do not have to know; and they do not have to desire. They do not want to know what they want. The mass knows that it knows nothing and it does not want to know. This

<sup>347</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *A l'ombre des Majorités silencieuses* (1982, orig. 1978) 33-34, 'L'effet Beaubourg' 106-107 (in *Simulacres et Simulation*). In *L'illusion de la fin* (1992), Baudrillard describes the present mode of individualism as "liberatisation". This "self-directed individuality" has disappeared from the horizon of social and human sciences. A new individual is a product of other-directness; an interactive and communicative chip, which imports feedback constantly and is connected to the net and waits for gratification. He/she is converted by effectiveness, productivity, stress and timing. This radical individualism is a form of religious fundamentalism (150-151).

<sup>348</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 193-197.

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, 201-202.

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>353</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 103, 107-111.

<sup>354</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Selected Writings* (1990) 207-219.

ironic power of non-participation, of non-desire, of non-knowledge, of silence, and of the absorption of all powers might actually be our true unconscious, an ironic, joyful and seductive unconscious, suggests Baudrillard.<sup>355</sup> This contrasts with the “serious” subconscious in psychoanalysis.

As I interpret his writings, for Baudrillard, the irony in modern architecture, such as the *Beaubourg* [the *Pompidou Centre* in Paris, 1972-77] is that the masses rush inside not to take part in culture (as creative agents or satisfying their need for art). Instead, they ritualistically take part in the “mourning ceremonies” of culture. The masses mobilise the rules of *mechanical participation*. Looking at things, and interpreting or examining them, does not move people, but they want to endorse art objects, steal goods and touch and even even eat them in the *Beaubourg*, says Baudrillard.<sup>356</sup> This example shows how whenever one is tempted to assign a function to a place, eventually somebody else will take it upon themselves to begin worshipping the *form* of that function, even if this becomes an obstacle for any new use. This useless, challenging and potentially immoral *enchantment to form without any reason* is, according to my interpretation, the essence of Baudrillard’s “fatality”. The essential *reversibility* of symbolic exchange in this case is in the cycle where the supposedly functional becomes useless and vice versa.

Baudrillard clearly indicates that the intellectuals are only capable of developing critical analyses of true significance if alternative values and ideas are already current in society itself. Today, the masses present such values, or rather such *attitudes*. In order to explain how attitudes are crucial in symbolic exchange, it is necessary to return to the question of unpaid debt. If one accepts the idea that the gift exchange of the society has presently become so abstracted that even the structural systems of value, function, needs and creativity can be considered as unpaid stakes in exchange, what does it mean to *give something in return for a system*? And how would that manifest itself in architecture?

As I interpret Baudrillard’s texts, the principle of seduction as practised, for example, by the masses, can be considered as a gift

<sup>355</sup> Jean Baudrillard: ‘The Masses: The Implosion of The Social in the Media’ (in *Selected Writings* 1990) 211-216; see also *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 108.

<sup>356</sup> Jean Baudrillard: ‘L’effet Beaubourg, implosion et dissuasion’ (in *Simulacres et simulation* 1981) 93-111.

in return for the societal code. Thus, put simply, also basically seductive (rather than productivist, utilitarian or artistic) architecture can be considered collectively beneficial architecture. The difficulty is in defining what “seductive architecture” means. First of all, seduction is rather an attitude (of weakness and enigma) than something substantial that can be transformed into a formula, method or ideology. On the other hand, as in the primitive gift exchange, the gift can also be returned unchanged.<sup>357</sup> As I interpret Baudrillard, the masses’ attitudes of passivity (i.e. conformity), but also (according to my own hypothesis) ritualistic panic, can be regarded as reciprocal acts of returning a system/medium to its sender, because the actions of the masses reveal the artificial, reversible nature of the system/medium.

### The masses “in action”

In his book *L'invention du quotidien 1. arts de faire* (1990, orig. 1980) the French cultural analyst Michel de Certeau has studied how people use commodities *seductively* rather than *productively*. De Certeau, like Baudrillard, is trying to both define and find ritual space, as marked by solidarity, docility and gratitude. De Certeau has especially noticed how sometimes employees use the machines in their workplaces non-profitably (i.e. for their own private use). In this way they reintroduce popular techniques of ritual times into the industrial space. These kinds of popular tactics hint at styles of symbolic exchange, gifts, plays, solidarities and tenacities which refuse to accord with the established order or meaning. Could one actually extend these tactics of the *ritualistic (non-profit, non-liberating) misuse* of work to all the spheres of place, time and material? In architecture, one could speak about the misuse of typology, the misuse of form and the misuse of material, as the forms of challenge which return reversibility and reciprocity to the established order. Naturally, this misuse must be voluntary, not accomplished, for example, by the necessity to cut costs.

Furthermore, the strategies of the masses are based on an *avoidance of will* and the use of a certain kind of mute and stubborn principle, where *one both believes and does not believe*.<sup>358</sup> To

<sup>357</sup> Bronislaw Malinowski: *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1972, orig. 1922) 81-87, 510-513; Marcel Mauss: *Essai sur le don* (1969, orig. 1923-4) 159.

<sup>358</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) 99.

the tautology of the media the masses have responded with ambivalence; to dissuasion they have responded by disaffection and by an ever enigmatic belief.<sup>359</sup>

The masses are not really interested in revealed secrets or in revealing them. Revealing a secret originates in utopia, an older mode of cultural simulacra.<sup>360</sup> The stagnation in the discourse of the utopian dimension is also the reason why architecture seems to be somewhat out of place with the fastest mental progress of the developed consumer society. Instead of utopianism, the masses' attitude is based upon snobbist hyper-affectation, blind certainty, over-completeness and ambivalence. Actually, Baudrillard shows how the masses are not fundamentally passive recipients, but they alter the reality to their own purposes, and not necessarily for good, noble, ethical and rational reasons, but only because of enigmatic seduction.

Another example of this attitude is the work of playwright Harold Pinter, who describes this modality displaced to art. Pinter's plays are often noted for their use of ambivalent understatement, cryptic small talk, reticence and even silence, in order to convey the substance of a character's thoughts. This often lies several layers beneath, and even contradicts the characters' actual speech. The dialogue often consists of disjointed and oddly ambivalent conversations punctuated by resonant silences. It seems that Pinter's characters have enigmas the audience never discover, because they cannot be discovered. Pinter's characters are objects rather than subjects. In this sense, his work is art made as if imitating the masses' mode of action on a subjective level.

According to Baudrillard, when asked to seek an alternative to their everyday life, the masses just redouble the appearances of their life. These "alternatives" intensify the dull characteristics of their normal life by submerging themselves to the point of ecstasy, and by *fixating monotony in an even greater one*.<sup>361</sup> What if people are not looking to amuse themselves, what if they would like to seek a fatal diversion, Baudrillard asks.<sup>362</sup> The reason for the masses' conformity to everyday life is their affinity to rules and ceremonies. In this sense, there is nothing wrong in being boring or

<sup>359</sup> Ibid.

<sup>360</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 151-152.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

becoming bored. Becoming bored is not simply being negligent or giving way. It means the active appreciation of the disappearance of value. Numbness, by contrast, is far more repulsive. According to a general definition, a numb person is difficult, whereas a bored one is a challenge. The masses' conformity, giving in to boredom, in contrast to the will to knowledge and creativity, is a form of behaviour that opposes social processes dependent on creativity and newness.

Architecture, according to Baudrillard's idea of the masses, is not about superficial communication, but a seduction, a gamble. Accordingly, architects could give up believing in such systems as functionality, creativity and needs if the persuasion of appearances is more profound.

### **Metamorphosis and fashion**

Baudrillard argues that if fatality is the principle that always wins in the end, then behind the global systems of value and creativity lies simply the fatal, pure metamorphosis of appearances.<sup>363</sup> But does it then follow that the seemingly omnipotent systems (of signification, rationality, the system of needs and satisfaction, functionality and creativity) do not need any challenge because they are going to destroy their own principles anyway? No. According to how I have understood Baudrillard, the social code excludes any possibility for real participation. The systems are reversible, but if people want to take part in those processes the reversibility must be turned into visible social action and commodities such as architecture.

This manifested reversal takes place, for example, through fashion. In his earlier works (until about 1981), Baudrillard wanted to prove how the above mentioned seemingly omnipotent, disappointing hermetic processes actually function along the logic of fashion, which he defined as the myth of change and a model or a source for value statements.<sup>364</sup> At this stage, Baudrillard saw symbolic exchange as an alternative to fashion. However, in the 1980s, he began to see fashion in positive terms, when it is taken as objective irony, ritual and ceremony, a form of metamorphosis without any

<sup>363</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>364</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1993, orig. 1976) 129-152.

necessary value statements.<sup>365</sup> Baudrillard has argued against the idea that there could be spheres that avoid the cycles of fashion. On the other hand, he has seen the beneficiality of fashion as symbolic exchange: fashion is a metamorphic process, and that is why Baudrillard “cynically” favours it compared to essentialist explanations.

But what is the point in referring to such a transient phenomenon as fashion in architecture, which is supposed to be stable and durable? Actually, architecture should not be considered particularly durable, as it continually faces transformations due to, for example, changes in use. The beneficiality of fashion in regard to architecture lies most of all in it not predominately reproducing the “signs of the real”, e.g. functionality, rationality, objectiveness. It is something that transgresses laws applied to building, and does so more efficiently than mere aesthetics. Besides, if something is never fashionable, it is quite possible that it cannot become a “classic” either.

Such a metamorphic sphere as fashion is something futile for people who have a conception of real use value, of pure, genuine values legitimised by use. They do not consider a human being as a cultural creature concerned with sign values (but only with supposed natural values), nor as a creature who has got taste and the conception of prestige. Here I am not referring to class differences, even though fashion has been often traced back to class differentiation. This view includes the idea of imitation, where the lower classes repeat the fashions of the supposedly sophisticated upper classes. However, fashion in general terms does not originate from class differentiation. Already according to Georg Simmel, through class differentiation one loses the ultimate momentum that is central to fashion, namely “to be in fashion”. Fashion has to grasp the spirit of the time to be able to be “in fashion” and to step aside when our taste changes. It is the typical irony of fashion that just when one is about to reach it, it is suddenly outdated. However, we can still say that fashion has to do with a battle for prestige. Not everything new is fashionable (unless in the transmodern state of hypersignification anything may *appear* fashionable). It is the fashionability of design that allows also the appreciation of the elite

<sup>365</sup> Jean Baudrillard: ‘Forget Baudrillard Interview’ (1984-85) 100 (in *Forget Foucault and Forget Baudrillard* 1987); *La Transparence du Mal* (1990) 67-77.

to be fixed to it. Consequently, if there is fashion in architecture, it cannot derive entirely from the history of architecture (pastiche and recycling), or even from contemporary architecture (imitation), but from the prestige of new fashion.

Fashion is a ceremonial base, according to which one can orient in a world that is powerfully changing, escaping and random. Fashion indicates an increase of difference, but it is most of all equity, integrity and homogeneity. Fashion conceived in ritualistic terms is a treatment against the cultural inflation of value and against surrendering to the options of incidentality. In this sense, fashion is an example of metamorphic fatal strategies.

## 5.2 The duel between architecture and moving images

In his own project as a sociological writer, Jean Baudrillard aims to challenge nothing less than the whole signification system of commodities. However, the principle of *challenge* can be seen as the basis of other relationships in culture, too. Instead of being content with architecture alone, one could consider, for example, the symbiotic relationship between architecture and moving images, the generic art form of the consumer society.<sup>366</sup> Moving images are *the* legitimised commercial art of the masses, but as they can also be a counterpart to architecture, they offer a way to think about architecture as a reciprocal practice in consumer society. Nowadays it is common to believe that multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary are always beneficial in principle, because all kinds of references are thought to somehow guarantee a work's value and seriousness. Eventually every work of art could end up referring to everything else,<sup>367</sup> resulting in a total inflation of value.

Processes with obese, overdetermined aesthetical interdisciplinary references belong to Baudrillard's sophisticated third and fourth simulation phases. Most studies of architecture and moving images do not even reach that level, even if that would be more relevant in the present condition than watching moving images and their scenographies as if they were only imitating life, a common critical view on the architecture of moving images. The common categories used when studying architecture and moving images (metaphysics, formal structure, politics, ideology, ethics, aesthetics, economics, etc.) and the relationships between philosophy and moving images, or philosophy and architecture, may exist as curiosities, but are not the lowest common denominators. Moreover,

<sup>366</sup> See chapter 2.3.

<sup>367</sup> Baudrillard criticises transaesthetised interdisciplinarity with degenerative common denominators, where all references become infilled with value: *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 63-64; 'Transpolitics, Transsexuality, Transaesthetics' (in *The Disappearance of Art and Politics* 1992) 15-16.

as myths, they are probably outdated. The *transmodern world*, as Baudrillard defines the newest simulacra phase, no longer works along these categories. Instead, the analytic fog of overdetermination is the contemporary strategy. In transmodernity, everything becomes over-interpreted in all of the above categories. The massive amounts of “references” to other art works and fields are common in today’s art. I will now examine closer some architects who have taken cinematic montage as one of the starting points for their work.

In the present work it would no longer be important to define what architecture and moving images have in common, but rather how individual architects challenge the norms behind moving images. Interdisciplinarity as such is not enough to change anything essential. Neither can its opposite, an absolute ontological separation of the branches of moving images and architecture from each other, be adequate, nor any neutral referentiality between them, nor the banal aestheticization of their relationship. In the context of Baudrillard’s theory, also the relationships between architecture and moving images must become radicalised; that is, they should become antagonistical and established within the ritualistic connections of challenge and counter-challenge, rather than only vague references.

There are three types of challenges available between architecture and moving images: 1) Individual works can be considered as stakes in the game between architecture and moving images; in a way asking, “Can you architects make as remarkable works as we filmmakers can?” In this case, the question would be about a competition that is positive: competition as a symbolic game. However, without clearer rules of the game, the present criteria in that kind of competition seem to be the victims of the inflation of value. 2) There can be challenges to each other’s integrity: Jean Nouvel does this with his architecture, which mixes architecture and film. Computer-animated architecture raises similar questions. 3) A competition about who proposes a bigger stake to the code.<sup>368</sup> This is the most important mode of interdisciplinary challenge.

If we accept Baudrillard’s interpretation of cultural overdetermination in the present hypersimulation, it seems that there should

<sup>368</sup> For references to code, see Part 1: Introduction.

be the possibility for a kind of bogus war, one following the rules of contemporary myths, if one wants to carry architectural practise to the roots of contemporary social dynamics.

In the following section I will explore how certain architects have consciously taken influences from moving images and analyse their success in attempting to be challenging.

### **Architects influenced by moving images**

Built architecture can be used as a medium for challenging the normative thinking behind the making and viewing of moving images. As I explained earlier, the industry of moving images cannot be separated from the general cultural industry, and all relevant challenges to moving images actually become presented to the whole transpolitical system. According to the sociological background which I have used here, there should be a communal (read: a mass-related) starting point in interdisciplinarity and not only vague aesthetical influences between moving images and architecture; otherwise the challenges, in the sense of Mauss' gift exchange, would be useless. It is not enough to encourage the consumers/users to be creators and to ask the producers to give the users more possibilities for interaction in commodity and sign production, because both producers and consumers are tied to the same transpolitical mythology.

Naturally, moving images influence architects' thinking and work, because they are part of culture, and architects, too, have their favourite moving images. Nevertheless, there is also evidence of certain well-known architects and designers having processed moving images consciously in their work. I do not only mean actual film-making (most memorably by Charles and Ray Eames), but also using methods and tendencies from moving images in architecture and thus learning from them. The most substantial architects in this regard have been Le Corbusier and Bernard Tschumi. I do not mention Tschumi here because he would make architecture somewhat analogous with Baudrillard's ideas, but rather, on the contrary, because Tschumi really has been an important architect contemplating moving images in his works. I will also return to Jean Nouvel, whose passionate relationship to cinema I discussed

earlier (see chapter 3.4). However, in regards to the present state of architecture, the question is whether Nouvel's type of interpretative "Old School" interdisciplinarity is a rather desperate position. Have these architects actually challenged anything relevant in their studies of moving images? Have they created a possibility for reciprocal ritual space that exceeds the sheer repetition of transmodern mythology?

### Le Corbusier: The promenade

In regard to the influence of film on architecture, Le Corbusier was the pioneer. Le Corbusier's persona and architecture are multifaceted issues, and not anything that can be limited only to architectural influences.<sup>369</sup> As he said himself: "Architecture and film are the only true arts of our time. In my work I seem to think as Eisenstein does in his films".<sup>370</sup> In addition to this general claim, his relationship to film was threefold: firstly, he received indirect influence from Eisenstein through Auguste Choisy's concepts of *parallax* and *Greek picturesque*; secondly, he had personal contact with Eisenstein; and thirdly, Le Corbusier benefited from the aesthetics of the modern machine, of which he saw film as a part.

Choisy's influential book *Histoire de l'Architecture* (1899) had an impact on both Le Corbusier's and Eisenstein's work.<sup>371</sup> Le Corbusier realised the *Greek picturesque* analysed by Choisy in his concept of *promenade architecturale*.<sup>372</sup> This principle can be seen, for example, in connection to *the Carpenter Centre for the Visual Arts* in Harvard University with its outside ramp.<sup>373</sup> Le Corbusier first mentioned the concept in reference to *La Maison*

<sup>369</sup> See Charles Jencks: *Le Corbusier and the Tragic View of Architecture* (1973).

<sup>370</sup> According to Jean-Louis Cohen: *Le Corbusier And the Mystique of the USSR* (1992) 49.

<sup>371</sup> For Choisy's influence on Le Corbusier, see Richard A. Etlin: *Le Corbusier, Choisy and French Hellenism*. In *Art Bulletin* 69, no 2 (1987): 264-78. In his book, Choisy re-introduced the notion of the picturesque from ancient Greek architecture. The picturesque was attained through multiple different viewpoints instead of one total vision (See also Anthony Vidler: *The Explosion of Space*, 1993). Choisy saw that the parallax was inherent in Greek architecture, like the composition of the Acropolis, as well as in Piranesi's engravings, which consequently fascinated Eisenstein (On Piranesi and Eisenstein, see Manfredo Tafuri: *The Dialectics of the Avant-Garde*, 1977). Eisenstein actually thought that architecture embodies the principles of montage and that the Acropolis in Athens was the first cinema picture ever made (Eisenstein: *Piranesi, or The Fluidity of Forms*, 1977).

<sup>372</sup> Etlin, op. cit.

<sup>373</sup> Le Corbusier died in 1965 while the building was still under construction.

*Roche* (1923) and again with *Villa Savoye* (1929-31). For him, *promenade architecturale* was the very substance of the architectural experience, creating parallaxes through hundreds of successive perceptions.<sup>374</sup>

The aesthetics of the machine was a common feature in both Le Corbusier's and Eisenstein's work. While Le Corbusier's machine aesthetic was more about vehicles, Eisenstein had more factory-like models. The ramps in Le Corbusier's buildings reflect something of the thrill of fast, motorised circulation within the modern city or the cinematic flight of images. Thus the influences Le Corbusier received from moving images were to a great extent strictly aesthetic. In mythological terms, Le Corbusier was enchanted by the energetic myths of the machine and movement.

In the beginning of chapter 3.2 I mentioned this pragmatist tendency towards movement and relativism. The idea of the parallax clearly encourages obese relativism and ultimately meaninglessness. Le Corbusier can thus be seen to consecrate the restless movement of the modern mind in those of his buildings concerned with the notion of this *promenade architecturale*.

Concerning the appeal of the visible functionality (see 3.2) of movement in Le Corbusier's film references, it is clear that the function of the cinematic, smooth, open movement suppresses other functions such as, for example, privacy, insulation and acoustics in Le Corbusier's buildings. The function of cinematic movement can thus be seen as a system of references to early consumer society mythology (with selective notions of use) that I discussed in the beginning of chapter 3.2.

### **Bernard Tschumi: The Montage**

Bernard Tschumi has studied the technique of *montage* in architecture, especially the Eisensteinian montage based on creating sudden conflicts. This has been evident in the formation of two issues important to his work: architecture as *event*, which consequently generates a *shock*. Shocking architecture, as described earlier, is typically about simulation, in its tendency towards banal fascination, lacking seductive mystery. The clearest practical outcome of Tschumi's montage investigations has been the science park *Parc*

<sup>374</sup> Maurice Besset: *Le Corbusier* (1987, orig. 1968).

*de la Villette* in Paris (1986).

Tschumi's early theoretical works *Architectural Manifestoes* (1979) and *Manhattan Transcripts* (1981) were influenced by Eisenstein's montage theory. Tschumi wanted to explore a parallel method of design in architecture. The *Transcripts* was a book of numbered sequential architectural drawings that attempted to change traditional architectural thinking with tools to explore the limits of space, movement and events, very much like Eisenstein's montage theory. The *Transcripts* is composed of film's 'frame-by-frame' technique. Tschumi's intention was to transcribe things normally removed from conventional architectural representation, namely the complex relationship between spaces and their use; between set and script. Here architecture is *event* – the phrase very often used by Tschumi – and namely a chain of surprises and shocks.<sup>375</sup> This exploration was still purely structural, but later, for example, in the *la Villette* project, the difference from his early abstract schemes was that he now included *themes* in the architectural montage. Montage was Tschumi's answer to the extremely vaguely defined programme in the *la Villette* architectural competition.

Tschumi explains his intentions behind *la Villette* in his book *Cinegram Folie: Le Parc de la Villette*. The park is a series of 'cinegrams', each of which is based on a precise set of architectonic, spatial or programmatic transformations. In terms of actual building, tens of red quasi-constructivist pavilions were placed within the park, positioned on a huge grid, and with trees and bushes scattered between the pavilions. Each of these 'pavilions' has a separate function. The visitors can freely choose their route in the park. The park is thus like a large 'matrix' for different possible montages.

In practice, there were clearly recognisable components of frames and sequences: 'The Cinematic Promenade' is one of the key features of the park. It is conceived along the analogy of a film

<sup>375</sup> Also, in his article *The Architecture of the Event* (1992) Tschumi describes how the event nature of architecture means shock and intensity. Louis Martin discusses in his essay 'Interdisciplinary Transpositions: Bernard Tschumi's Architectural Theory' (1998) how Tschumi wanted to attain the 'heterogeneity' and 'spontaneous uprisings' of the city through his architectural work (ibid., p. 62). Martin says that the duality of architecture's stability and simultaneous potential for events was Tschumi's main dilemma in his early work.

<sup>376</sup> The most celebrated collaboration instituted by Tschumi for the park was that between architect Peter Eisenman and philosopher Jacques Derrida.

strip in which the 'sound-track' corresponds to the general pathway for visitors and the 'image-track' corresponds to the successive frames of individual gardens. Accordingly, the chief architect's role in *la Villette* is like a film director's, overseeing the montage of sequences. Indeed, after Tschumi won the competition he invited other architects and artists to add contributions to the montage, which was thus not his own design.<sup>376</sup>

Tschumi has later continued his cinematographical strategies in architecture by developing the idea of montage in the techniques of 'crossprogramming' (changing architectural programs) and 'transprogramming' (combining programs) in aiming to generate interesting events. The 'Cinematic Promenade' of *la Villette* was transformed in his later work into a series of 'strips', 'vectors' or 'lines' as compositions, and this eventually led to his idea of 'linear cities'.<sup>377</sup> However, in the end, Tschumi's filmic adaptations such as *la Villette* are rather figurative and add very little (just a larger array of openness and routes – and thus sheer speed rather than architectural movement) to Le Corbusier's version of Eisensteinian 'architecture'. Tschumi has even taken the film-strip literally and used an enlarged version of its form as an architectural motif. Tschumi's 'cinematic adaptation' is disappointing and lacks challenge in a larger collective context, if one criticises the work on the basis of its formal intention. Another issue is aesthetic reaction. The beauty of the scheme transcends the author's rather inane narrative.

Indeed, one excellent response to this 'dark' elitist side of architecture that intends to shock, is the masses' silence: people as a huge numb audience can eventually absorb anything without indignancy. Despite Tschumi's attempts to curtail the pursuit of old architectural myths, he chose only a slightly more up-to-date myth: flexibility (see chapter 4.2).<sup>378</sup> Even if architectural flexibility tends to provide "conditions for the emergence of spontaneous uprisings" (as Louis Martin describes Tschumi's intentions in 'Interdisciplinary Transpositions' [1998, p. 62]), flexibility tends to remain often just empty 'potentials', reproducing the political economy of simulation.

<sup>377</sup> Especially in his book *Event-Cities* (1995, orig. 1994).

<sup>378</sup> See chapter 4.2 on the myths of Flexibility and Violence of Speed. The collective message is missing in Tschumi's architecture in the sense that he is only reproducing these mythologies in his work.

## Jean Nouvel: The screen and the camera

I have already examined how Jean Nouvel has been influenced by moving images.<sup>379</sup> However, I would like to say a bit more about the potential for challenge in his architecture, the techniques of which have been derived and inspired from moving images. In *Les objets singuliers* (2000), a book co-operation with Jean Baudrillard, Nouvel says that he supports the earlier texts by Baudrillard (ibid., 15), but what he actually does in his architecture might be something else.

In physical terms, films are surfaces, and when Nouvel emphasises the surface character of his works connected to cinema, he is at the same time taking another cinematographic position: that is, the surfaces of his buildings remind us of the silver screens on to which films are projected. Also, in the work of many other contemporary architects who are interested predominately in surfaces, exterior decoration has increasingly become interior decoration, when the facades have become kind of large silver screens – often double glazed or louvered. Accordingly, just as silver screens require moving images in order to show cinema, in architecture, facades require external structures such as double glazing and sun shades in order to turn the facade surface into a moving image with their changing shadows and reflections. This means a diminishing importance for the sculptural and spatial complexity of buildings in favour of surface articulation. In Nouvel's works this is clear in the theme of *mantle* (or *capot*) (discussed earlier in chapter 3.4), and which Brian Hatton has written about.<sup>380</sup> Instead of just blank walls filled with logos or other signs and images, the walls of Nouvel's buildings are screens showing the delightful, deliberate patterns of shine, shadows and mirrored images, as if challenging the integrity of architecture as something separate from moving images. In a hotel in Luzern, Switzerland, designed by Nouvel there are ceilings in the rooms onto which have been printed still pictures from the architect's favourite films.

In addition to the screen, it is also the camera which contributes

<sup>379</sup> See chapter 3.4, where I analyse Nouvel's different conscious attempts to construct cinematic architecture as a seductive mobilisation of imagination.

<sup>380</sup> See Brian Hatton: 'Notes sur le tournage en extérieurs' (in Boissière [ed.]: *Nouvel* 1992).

to Nouvel's architecture. When the camera is panning, or the object of cinematographic photography seems to move, the quality of the details becomes essentially poor. Nouvel's architecture looks often harsh, cheap, industrial and grey in a dull way. Its character is predominately graphic. Actually, the same qualities can be seen in the frames (24 per second) taken separately from films. They are drastically worse in resolution than photographs taken separately for the eventual purpose of advertising the film. If one accepts the cinematic context for Nouvel's architecture (as the architect himself favours), the "low definition" character of his architecture tends to emphasise a hazy ambience and the moving, fragile image instead of perfect detailing and substance.<sup>381</sup>

Neither the confusing 'silver screen' nor the seductive 'soft focus' character of the surfaces and the professional association with filmmakers are in themselves automatically challenging starting points for architectural design. What counts is the manner in which these 'tricks' have been accomplished within a scope beyond mere banal aesthetics. In this respect, one cannot but affirm the exemplary seductiveness of Nouvel's "cinematic" surfaces and "low resolution".

Generally, Nouvel's own explanations behind his works seem refreshing in the transmodern situation. In an over-enthusiastic manner, he says he "feels nostalgia only towards the future" and emphasises his interest in contemporary culture in almost any of its forms as an inspiration. Nouvel is not trying to give an impression of a serious and powerful artist making artistic 'references' to other forms of culture, but rather he gives an exemplary impression of a 'consumer' who volunteers no self-critique. Nouvel seems to be over-devoted to and childishly seduced by new technologies.

In summarising the meaning of Nouvel's, Le Corbusier's and Tschumi's activities connected to moving images – the central art form and medium of consumer society – it is clear that architecture has been penetrating into the area formerly belonging exclusively

<sup>381</sup> Nouvel's association with filmmakers is to a great extent a question of his professional image. In most countries, the architects who tend to associate themselves with engineers have a relatively good self-confidence and good opportunities to acquire clients. Especially in France, the company of those involved in filmic activities is also beneficial for an architect because of the remarkably positive image of the profession. Brian Hatton mentioned this point in a conversation with the author at the Royal College of Art, London, in 1998.

to film. Architects have learnt from camera movements, montage, editing, scenography, framing and screening, all of which have become essential components or starting points in architecture, having previously been the fundamentals of filmmaking only.

Nevertheless, a more important issue than the integration of architecture and film is the challenge architecture has posited to the social issues behind moving images. When Baudrillard says that cinema and TV are the defining art forms of our era,<sup>382</sup> that does not mean that other art forms begin to take on the form of moving images, but that they begin to assimilate the cultural mechanics surrounding contemporary moving images. Nouvel has in his relentless enthusiasm been a good example in adapting influences from the culture industry of moving images. As Nouvel searches cinema for the images typical of our era – amorphous forms, mental suggestive images and stylistic continuity – one can see in his works how he has exaggerated these characteristics by the multiplicity of messages and by his gloomy stylistic trademark. Nouvel does not offer through his architecture a revolutionary alternative to the existing society; he just accepts, mutates and exaggerates it without censorship. Nouvel's attitude is in this sense a challenge, and not just inessential "creativity" and referentiality.

It seems that the general pattern of cinematic structure is based on the potential for sensation. In moving images, new views and scenes are always more important than the previous ones, at least because they are new. While walking on the street we can by moving our bodies see also the previous and forthcoming components of vision at will, but in film this is of course impossible. It is impossible to control the succession of moving images, to stop it at will. "Film architecture" is easily typically made for shock-seeking audiences with a short memory. The filmic processes of movement and shock have inspired Tschumi, but the formal intentions of his "cinematographic" components have remained rather banal. By comparison, Nouvel succeeds in making his idea of film architecture more seductive. The reason for this is that Nouvel's filmic adaptations aim at feelings of sophistication, even a weakness of expression, compared to Tschumi's overwhelming montage and shocks. Tschumi seems to have a belief in abstract structures and interactivity rather than specific situations or events, but as if by ac-

<sup>382</sup> See chapter 2.3.

cident his “cinematographic” architecture has outgrown this banality when actually realised. In Nouvel’s case, the intention and realisation meet each other in this respect. Many of Nouvel’s buildings are intentionally constructed as if the visitor walks along a seductive camera route. Impressive and rapidly changing spaces follow each other, as for example in Nouvel’s *Institut du Monde Arabe* in Paris (1981-88).

As mentioned earlier, one consequence of transmodernity has been the more complex situation concerning interdisciplinarity. According to the background given by Baudrillard, the ritualistic challenge should in contemporary society be posited to the whole mythological system of pretentious and obese interactivity, with its false promises of individualism, creativity and ethics. In this case the contemporary challenge in the collective gift exchange should then be posited to architecture as a medium that supports the above principles of individualism, creativity and ethics.

If one is to believe Baudrillard’s analysis of transmodern hypersimulation, the possibilities for seductive interpretation in the manner of Nouvel should have become practically ineffective, because they so easily become nostalgic. However, according to Baudrillard’s analysis of contemporary hypersimulation and Western contemporary myths, such as communication, we would do better to hold on to desperate seduction and sophistication rather than take on design methods that increase banality and mere fascination. This desperate idealism seems to be Baudrillard’s and Nouvel’s attitude, too, as shown in their recent collaboration, the book *Les objets singuliers* (2000). Despite his earlier pessimism, Baudrillard now says that utopic architecture should change the world, because there is a danger that contemporary utopic architecture will turn into discrimination against the not-so-wealthy.<sup>383</sup>

<sup>383</sup> Jean Baudrillard and Jean Nouvel: *Les objets singuliers* (2000) 84.

### 5.3 *ultimategame*: Towards non-reproduced thinking in architecture

#### *ultimategame* in architecture

The idea that architecture should adapt to its immediate surroundings (which means social adaptation without architectural surprise) is equally wrong as the idea that it should contrast with it (which means social surprise without architectural adaptation), because they both lack challenge. The latter idea has been successful within the modernist tradition as long as architecture is not seen to exist in a new technological environment. In such an environment, on the contrary, any old buildings would seem outdated. Actually, new architecture, from the perspective of *ultimategame* — my method based upon Jean Baudrillard's idea of fatal strategies — should always be a seductive challenge to its context. *ultimategame* approves the rules of the context, yet diverts in an unexpected direction, aiming not to contrast with it, nor to accept the obligation towards the laws of functionality and interactivity:

<b><i>ultimategame</i>:</b>
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1. Interpret the supposed laws concerning design and planning as playful games only and then join them.
2. Oppose flexibility and banal creativity with social reciprocity and challenge (the innovative reinterpretation of the existing constraints), and seduce through weakness.
3. Follow the example given by the masses, and be ironic: either
  - a. surrender to cool panic:
    - be oversensitive and exaggerate (when the rational and functional are expected): e.g. demand literally moving architecture.
    - use statistics to back up your design, but present something other than what was expected.

- follow the letter but not the spirit of the law.
- accelerate metamorphic processes.
- avoid productivity, creativity and freedom through ritualistic manners.
- be ritualistically destructive and spread chaos mechanistically when expected to be rational and functional.

or

b. use machinal snobbism:

- tranquillise (when the productive is expected).
- follow fashion (when the "classical" is expected).
- let your colleagues make the decisions.
- try to change as little as possible.

4. Challenge (speed up or slow down) the transmodern myths in the areas of the seduction of appearance, image and ambience.

- increase the boredom, not the code.
- generate "inhuman" transformations, not intentional or aesthetic flexibility.
- use ready-made solutions to conquer demands for quick decisions.
- use sport aesthetics, not war aesthetics.
- generate a hallucination of the normal, rather than continue the framing of chaos.
- use the tactics of backgrounding, miniaturisation and mergence when handling large objects.
- transform yourself into a mental vegetable when allowed to act like an anarchistic youngster.
- use instant analysis, instead of surrendering to paranoia.

This is not a manifesto, but a socially constructive method. By following these rules you can expect your design process to be singular and genuinely social and unique. Naturally, like any method this one can be applied in several ways. These rules cannot be applied successfully without a sophisticated understanding of architecture, the cultural context, history and practical technologies. Our attention should be directed especially to the hermeneutical field in which they are supposed to be operating, as I will demonstrate

later with my case studies. In addition to challenging general myths, when applying *ultimategame* there should also be appreciation of cultural practice and human interaction.

The method of architectural design I propose above has been developed on the basis of the theoretical study presented earlier. It is not the only possible method that could perform the needed challenge that is essential in social relations (according to Mauss' and Baudrillard's perspective). The method is one possible answer to the argument that the univocality of the socio-economic system and the stakes that the system has put to the game — values, morals and myths — lack their counter-gifts. This is a question about how one could construct an architecture that opposes the prevailing social processes. I thus call my proposal *ultimategame*.

Naturally, my proposal raises questions about what other methods could perform the needed challenge and what the limits for such challenges could be. In order to answer these questions we must return to Baudrillard's definitions of the (transmodern) stage of hypersimulation in the present consumer society. Baudrillard has described the situation in two levels of abstraction. On the one hand he speaks about cultural tendencies, and on the other hand about the attitudes which can resist the tendencies. Regarding the transmodern tendencies, my method attacks especially the areas of ecstatic and instable value relations, the banalisation of cultural perception and pleasure, and the phenomenon of meaninglessly effective communication and information. The ritualistic manner of *ultimategame* (e.g. ready-made solutions, sports aesthetics, hallucination of the normal) poses a challenge to the inflationary and aleatory values. Especially the *cool panic* method offers a radical version of self-sufficient effectivity.

This method is by all means not solipsistic. Apart from Baudrillard's, Mauss's and Veblen's theory, the principles behind *ultimategame* are not very different from, for example, such critiques of conventional theories of meaning, such as Ludwig Wittgenstein's critique of *language games* (language prompting an automatical response without knowing the larger meaning and use of the language [*Philosophical Investigations*, 1965]), Johan Huizinga's theory on *play*, where all culture has originated and developed not in reason and usability but in play (*Homo Ludens*

[1984, orig. 1938]), and Hans-Georg Gadamer's theory of *play* in the experience of art, the subject becoming lost in the play of art, the game mastering the players (*Truth and Method*, 1989). However, I have consciously built the method on theories concerning especially consumer society.

Two transmodern tendencies that do not become quite processed through my method are *retro culture* and the changed (now transparent) relationship between private and public space. Furthermore, the typical characteristics of any ritual — *repetition* — does not become fully integrated in this method. When one thinks about the role of **ultimategame** in architecture, the method focuses especially on the process of design. Thus the extensions of architecture which remain outside this method are: 1) the question about how to actually recognise a-subjective and metamorphic processes in the environment, 2) architectural criticism and 3) the actual building of architecture. These aspects of architecture remain future fields for the implementation of the masses' strategies in architecture.

Concentrating on the design process, **ultimategame** challenges the older consumer society myths of individualism, creativity, rationality, signification, the circle of needs and satisfaction, as well as functionality, ecology and the transmodern beliefs in the necessity of *chance relations* and the *general aesthetic banality*. The method thus presents two crucial attitudes against the all-pervasive principles that leave no outside: *machinal snobbism* and *cool panic*. *Cool panic* can be exemplified by the Dutch architects' office MVRDV's<sup>384</sup> statistics-based but exaggerated architecture (I will return to them shortly). Their architecture represents an oversensitive, exaggerated challenge, while *machinal snobbism* (exemplified by Nouvel's architecture) represents a tranquillising challenge against the supposed relevance of individualism, creativity and needs. By *machinal snobbism*, I refer to the kind of snobbism Andy Warhol was a good model for in Baudrillard's treatise. In *Le crime parfait* (1995) Baudrillard argued that Andy Warhol, who wanted to be regarded as a *machine*, destroyed the notion of artist and cre-

<sup>384</sup> The most remarkable built projects to date by MVRDV are the *WoZoCo's Apartments for Elderly People* (Amsterdam-Osdorp, Holland 1994-97), *Villa PRO* (Hilversum, Holland 1993-97), *RVU Building* (Hilversum, Holland 1994-97), *Double House* (Utrecht 1995-97), and the *Dutch Pavilion for the Expo 2000* (Hanover, Germany 2000).

ative work. Baudrillard explains how Warhol's works are about the enigma of that kind of object that appears totally transparent, not allowing a critical or aesthetic discourse to mobilise itself. According to Baudrillard, this enigmatic total visibility, which allows no critical distance, is "snobbist". Baudrillard considers Warhol "successful" in challenging the whole paradigm of art and in making works which have "real" "objective magic", "radicality", "material innocence", "immanence of image", and which "release us from the pretentiousness of art". Baudrillard argues that Warhol is not increasing the banal inflation of art markets, but rather takes the game further and ends all false aesthetic values, which in any case are facing simulation. Warhol thus answers to the challenge of consumer society with even bigger illusoriness than the society itself, and in this sense, as Baudrillard sees it, he has succeeded.<sup>385</sup>

The strategies of *cool panic* and *machinal snobbism* still have the necessary *honour* left (in Veblen's and Mauss' anthropological sense of prestige) in transmodernity, where gift exchange tends to remain univocal and without response. *Cool panic* and *machinal snobbism* seem to be crucial ways to relate to architecture, if one admits the importance of the social and communal context to architecture in the way Baudrillard considers it as having. When one tries to apply Baudrillard's theory of beneficial sociality to architecture, the question is rather about converting relevant *attitudes* than ideologies. For example, *style* can be a derogatory projection of preconceived ideas (of the code), or it can be a device of singularity, depending on the attitude of the author.<sup>386</sup>

It is now necessary to examine what the consequences of the attitudes of Baudrillard's *fatal strategies* would be in architecture, and how far one can go with such an adaptation. In particular, it is important to study the possibility that the masses' mode of action can be mobilised in architecture as an architect's personal, but necessarily *inhuman* (i.e. released from the obligations to moral values other than collective reciprocity and solidarity) design and planning strategy.

*ultimategame* is not a strict method in the sense that it is really meant to oppose such myths of consumer society as creativity, interactivity, flexibility and aleatoriness as an ideal in design or

<sup>385</sup> See Jean Baudrillard: "Le snobisme machinal" (in *Le crime parfait* 1995) 111-123.

<sup>386</sup> Jean Baudrillard and Jean Nouvel: *Les objets singuliers* (2000) 115-118.

planning. The reaction in question is that of a participant, who is a passive element enchanted by every kind of game (i.e. a metamorphosis in accordance with certain rules), but does not believe in eternal laws. Her/his participation restores the necessary reciprocity in social processes through challenge: She/he is lazy when there is a call for productivist creativity and interactivity, but also ritualistically destructive and spreading chaos at those times when she/he has been expected to remain rational and functional. The idea in a successful architectural work is to search for something (and then to make a thorough analysis of the task in question, for example by using statistics regarding the present situation, as MVRDV does), but then to find something else that one was not looking for. The idea in a good design process is to change the crucial variables suddenly during the design process.<sup>387</sup> The masses' (weak and thus seductive) tendency to conformity to all kinds of rules and ceremonies but turning always into something unexpected is the model here. Some of MVRDV's<sup>388</sup> projects have been examples of this kind of challenge. In their case, architecture is not expressed in the first place as the invention of new aesthetics, but as the re-formulation of existing constraints. MVRDV tries to develop contemporary urban and sub-urban conditions through quantitative rather than qualitative tools. Neither does their work depend on elaborate theoretical justifications. It is presented as a close examination of the hard facts of contemporary architectural practice: economic data, building and zoning codes, consumer behaviour, corporate organisation and work habits, psychological issues, anti-disaster patterns, lighting regulations, acoustic treatments — the information about time and space. However, MVRDV has been successful in turning these constraints into surprising new architectural typologies. For example, the project for *WoZoCo's Apartments for Elderly People* (Amsterdam-Osdorp 1994-97) had tight regulations for the building's height and width on the ground level compared to the allowed floor area. MVRDV bypassed the difficulties by building enormous cantilevers on the upper floors. These tubes projecting out from the body of the building actually each contain two floors of apartments.<sup>389</sup> In *Villa PRO*,

<sup>387</sup> Ibid., 112-114.

<sup>388</sup> In 2002 MVRDV is led by Winy Maas, Jacob van Rijs and Nathalie de Vries. The office has presently about 70 employees in Rotterdam.

a building for a TV company in Hilversum (1993-97), MVRDV transformed the qualities of the media company's previous scattered offices into a new exhilarating building type. The company's employees were earlier working in many separate idyllic villas meant originally for housing, but *Villa PRO* brought them all together. It is the deepest office building in Holland (five floors, 55x55m), but its mass is carved with labyrinthian light wells and openings so that it has the same spatial qualities as the initial small villas. The light conditions were studied scientifically.<sup>390</sup> MVRDV's design study for the *Densification of the Centre of Amsterdam* (1996) tackles the problem of the preservation of historic milieus. There is a general pressure in very many historical city centres throughout the world to preserve the facades of the old buildings while altering or even demolishing the interiors. In this case, MVRDV suggested that by projecting all possible sight-lines from the medieval streets (the tourist's viewpoint) over the inner blocks of these areas, a potential maximum envelope can be considered. This new and strange form multiplies the existing density in these areas, but cannot be seen from the historic streets.<sup>391</sup> These works by MVRDV are examples of the type of design method I have called *cool panic*, "following the letter but not the spirit of the law".

In comparing methods like *cool panic* and *machinal snobbism* to Baudrillard's social analysis, as I see it, the possibility of adapting socially restoring strategies in architecture is basically in conflict with Baudrillard's analysis of the present state of simulacra. He is rather pessimistic in this sense. In his formulation *there is no external position allowing a challenge to the socio-cultural system that abstracts social relationships*. I myself, however, allow for such a possibility in the light of his analysis of *fatal strategies*. I turn Baudrillard "against himself" in this sense (or actually certain parts of his oeuvre against other parts of it). It is appropriate to suppose one can use personal (but inhuman) *fatal strategies* when designing or planning. One could make propositions for finding those areas and devices in architecture where the newest "aleatory" or "transmodern" myths could be challenged by the above methods.

<sup>389</sup> MVRDV: *El Croquis* no. 86 (1998) 74-87.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, 88-109; MVRDV: *Farmax* (1998) 190-215, 230-247, 678-717.

<sup>391</sup> MVRDV: *Farmax* (1998) 264-273.

My assumption is that by adapting the attitudes of the masses (as Baudrillard describes them) to architectural design and planning, we could have socially more beneficial architecture. What I intend to do now is to develop a design/planning method for such a purpose, as well as actually use the method in real design/planning situations and, finally, examine the results.

### **Against non-reciprocal chance architecture**

I will first examine more closely the influence of the already discussed transmodern mythologies of chance on architecture, before moving to the study of *ultimatgame* as an alternative for obeying this mythology. To reiterate, the failure in transmodern mythology seems to be that it does not support seduction and reciprocity in social relations. The transmodern is an obstacle to real reciprocity and to the recognition of the ruling principle of enchantment.

Like many parts of society itself, contemporary architecture seems to have surrendered to the modern thought of chance; in other words, the inability to make final valuations and to fundamentally influence one's surroundings. The recognition of the fatal, as Baudrillard defines it, can change this situation. I will challenge this principle of chance through my method of *ultimatgame*. In architecture, the new importance of the principle of chance is particularly evident. Architecture was traditionally about making monuments and planning was a principle of giving guidelines through larger patterns. Increasingly, the rapid changes in economics and politics have enabled the transpolitical principle of chance to rule. Pluralism, "open" architecture and "alternative" architecture are manifestations of this belief in principles of chance. There seems to be less real and imaginary architecture, and increasingly only virtual architecture; that is, architecture as endless different possibilities, flexibility and portability and numerous options replacing clear decisions. But how unseductive such characterisations seem! Architecture used to be about open, artificially constructed plays and games of the imagination and seduction. Compared to this, recently, *low and high definition architecture*<sup>392</sup> has lost the sense of taste and sophistication as the primary judgement of architecture, and has now been replaced by the criteria of how well architecture reproduces the signs of reality (this is what simulation means). In

the sophisticated modes of abstraction, architecture may simply illustrate its technical possibilities. This mentality may entail, in addition to its fixation with flexibility, that such architectural variables as light, shadow, transparency and materials become regarded only as references to other architecture. The material constituents of architecture have to a great extent become just effects in the mythology of transmodernity. It is an aleatory game, a collection of unpurposeful coincidences, rather than articulated plans: architecture in the commotions of real estate business and politics. What has emerged is random decision-making, where *speed* has become the most important quality. As I see it, this (in addition to false individualism) is the reason behind the “crisis of locality”, the fragmentation, uprooting, disembedding local contexts which, for example, Castells, Jameson, Foucault, Lefebvre, Soja and Davis are referring to, as I described at the beginning of this study.<sup>393</sup>

Such processes are evident, for example, in the many episodes in the planning of the Töölö Bay area in the heart of Helsinki: its careful planning took eighty years and with numerous different scenarios worked out, yet with scarcely anything being realised according to the plans. However, surprising individual (but not small) projects made outside a general plan and involving many actors were then realised in the area (most notably an art museum and a media company headquarters), changing the area within a short period. This real-estate business and power-game led process is not at all rare in Western cities at the turn of the millennium. What this exemplifies and proves is the belief in principles of chance, where the exception is the rule. If I may exaggerate just a little in Baudrillard’s manner; the principles of chance seem to be evident in architecture where the environment takes shape through the unpredictable processes of the real estate business. The supposedly creative architect (who is actually obeying the *code* of creativity) in a way marks the disappearance of his project by retreating into the belief in the autonomy of the individual work. A systematically functioning, technological project marks the disappearance of an architect who could influence anything essential. In addition, when there is no clear conception of right and wrong in architectural decision-making and planning, decisions mark the disappearance of the

<sup>392</sup> See chapter 4.1.

<sup>393</sup> See chapter 2.1.

possibility to influence anything through them.

Let me give another example: central London became an architectural catastrophe when its city-wide local planning authority, the Greater London Council (GLC), was terminated by the central government during the Thatcher era. Thatcher's government argued that they were a decentralising government, moving the city-wide planning to the individual London boroughs in 1986.<sup>394</sup> As a consequence, a major amount of the present day floor area in the centre of London was built at a catastrophic rate between 1985 and 1995, buildings appearing and disappearing to a great extent at the powerful landowner's will. Simultaneously, however, a world-wide economic recession also hit London, and thus at the beginning of the 1990s property in central London that was not even ten years old remained to a great extent empty.<sup>395</sup>

Places like Thatcher's London or Atlanta in the USA (Koolhaas' typical example), and perhaps also increasingly Helsinki, seem to use planning as an instrument of *making anything possible anywhere* by allowing exceptions and quick changes to parts of originally long-term city plans (see footnote 59 again).

There are two types of relationships to change, and which consequently affect the control of chance: obeying the transmodern promises of interactivity and flexibility and, on the other hand, the fatal challenge to the whole system of supposed chaos. I will now examine the four typical and equally disappointing transmodern responses to the architects' disappearing reciprocal stake in the process of defining built environment:

<sup>394</sup> Things were changed again, however, in 1999 when the Greater London Authority Act re-established a single local governing body for the Greater London area, consisting of an elected mayor and the London Assembly, but the decentralisation of decision making seems anyway to be a contemporary trend.

<sup>395</sup> *The Docklands Office Market Report* (DTZ Research, April 2001). This surplus of office space was evident especially in Canary Wharf and the Docklands areas in London. In 1982, a tax-free zone in the Docklands was created to stimulate development. However, the Canary Wharf financial centre was slow to fill, and residential occupancy has been below expectations. *The Canary Wharf Tower* (Cesar Pelli 1988-91) arrived just in time to feel the impact of the longest and most severe recession since the 1930s. Much of its office space remained empty and it was only half-full in 1992. Now Richard Rogers' *Millennium Dome* (costing 900 million pounds, and designed for flexible use) has faced the same fate as *The Canary Wharf Tower*. It has not found users since its use during the celebrations of the new millennium in 2000. Equally acclaimed for its flexibility for new use, *The London Ark* office building (Ralph Erskine 1989-92) in south-west London has remained empty during the last four years (1998-2002).

1. *Finding order in chaos.* Robert Venturi's *Learning from Las Vegas* was one of the first systematic approaches to the supposedly unexplainable urban progress. Venturi found rules concerning the structuration of the casino area in Las Vegas. Recently, there have emerged peculiar applications of chaos theory, complexity theory, the "jumping universe" etc., in architecture, for example, in Charles Jencks' most recent writings.<sup>396</sup> But if the analysis of a drastic shift in economic and informational grounds of society is valid, it is quite likely that there really is an actual disorder without any understandable, rationalisable order, and that there is no other structure which would be a presupposition for order, but only *enchantment*.

2. The second response can be called *compulsory substitute*: Architects create an unsatisfactory and secondary "scapegoat" — as if that would solve anything. This concerns entitling socially disappointing "alternative" or "minority" architecture, such as regionalist architecture, ecological architecture and high-tech architecture to bring forward the desired salvation. However, for example, ecology is not exactly architecture, but a form of technology. Thus the over-emphasis on ecology in architecture increasingly removes any initiative from the architect's hands and gives it to engineers and politicians (and beyond these to the code). Ecological architecture and regionalism are not really reasonable alternatives, because the problems of transmodern consumer society are much deeper in the infrastructure of society.

3. The third response to the supposedly chaotic environment that has emerged and the chaos of forces influencing design and planning has been *intentional openness*, that is, trying to fulfil the needs of the future by systematic and flexible architecture which also changes. The logic pursued here is that if society is random and chaotic, then the same idea should be applied in architecture, too, and thus buildings should be flexible. Already in the 1960s and 1970s the Situationists and Archigram worked extensively in this area. Koolhaas', Eisenman's and Tschumi's debt to them cannot be undervalued.

Intentional openness has meant developing more possibilities

<sup>396</sup> Charles Jencks: *The Architecture of the Jumping Universe: A Polemic: How Complexity Science is Changing Architecture and Culture* (Wiley 1997).

for participation and choices for the public, while at the same time decreasing the professionals' workload. This can be seen in the flexible and portable architecture, where the control supposedly lies with the user. The idea is generally that the users increase their means of influence with the help of networks by installing and operating different kinds of "flows". The misleading determination of this idea, however, can be found in its simulation, symptomatic of which is that the network produces merely the effect of concreteness. Furthermore, one can already talk about a certain compulsion to be interactive. When flexibility is compulsory, the initiative again lies somewhere else than in real social relations and in a meaningful life – a challenge is left without an answer.

4. Fourthly, some architects still hold onto desperate individualism. This could be called the "ostrich strategy", hiding one's head in the sand. The benefit of this kind of a strategy is its high visibility, but the disadvantages lie in the lost reciprocity.

It should have become clear by now that if one accepts Baudrillard's theory of contemporary hypersimulation then certain planning and design strategies do not work as a means of reciprocal sociality; namely, soft rationalism, soft alternativeness, soft individualism, soft openness/flexibility and soft interactivity. "Soft" here indicates that these methods are still included in the codes and the self-referential systems of the consumer society and thus offer no real challenge. Instead, architects could pursue techniques more in accordance with Baudrillard's theory on the essential counterforce in society: hard rationalism (seductive fatality), hard alternativeness (symbolic exchange), hard individualism (real social challenge), hard flexibility (inhuman transformations) and hard interactivity (reciprocity).

There are two types of flexibility: the transmodern type, answering to the supposed aleatory needs, and the fatal type, whose transformability is a means for itself in developing its own characteristics. In terms of fatality, it is possible to think that architectural metamorphoses have no discursive guidelines, that they register nothing. Consequently, it is no wonder that one increasingly finds presentations in architectural magazines of amazing functional

<sup>397</sup> See Kent Kleinman and Leslie van Duzer: 'Detroit's Michigan', *Ark* 2/1997.

changes in use: palace-like theatres become parking halls<sup>397</sup> and factories and powerstations<sup>398</sup> become museums. Actually, copying the attitude of the apathetic masses, it would be clever for architects to refer to automatic transformations in architecture and in cities, in which they themselves take part by controlling only small changes and mutations rather than through any revolutions. In addition, analyses should be more important than the preconceived ideas. However, the analysis should ideally be non-sensible, leading always to something surprising. One cannot get an external point to the code/system, but one can unpack the limits of the logic being practised. This procedure can then be followed by more fictive and seductive responses. If architecture changes over time anyway, and is not actually 'about' effectivity and functionality, what is the point of referring to, and preparing for, future changes?

Architects could make their projects reciprocal and singular by mobilising the attitude of seductive appearance and the strategy of silence — the metamorphic strategies — if they wish to take the present situation seriously, and if one still believes that architecture is a means of influencing something. The contemporary architectural games of chance, flexibility, infinite variation and the vertigo of glass architecture are therefore obscene, typically grasping the audience through fascination. The viewpoint of fascination in architecture is in Baudrillard's theory a better one than the viewpoints of needs, signification, creativity, rationality, functionality or liberation, because fascination is a form of enchantment. However, according to the same theoretical background, if it is a question of a better *quality* in the social context, one should answer to the challenge of these "games" imported into architecture and not just affirm them.

### **The lacking seduction**

The other fault with the transmodern mythologies, in addition to their not supporting social reciprocity at a sufficiently fundamental level, seems to be that they are characteristically banal rather than seductive. As discussed earlier, seductiveness requires both weakness and enigma in order to create challenges.<sup>399</sup> In Baudrillard's context, art is defined as a seductive enigma. Compared to this

<sup>398</sup> E.g. *The Tate Modern* in London by Herzog & de Meuron, is housed in a former powerstation.

<sup>399</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *De la séduction* (1979) 115.

definition, aesthetic, creative and liberating starting points are banal when they reproduce the norms of creativity and freedom and the signs of reality (uncertainty and chance). Contemporary architecture could be something more fundamentally social than just univocal banal aesthetics, if it spread more seductive challenge. I will suggest certain seductive starting points for architecture in chapter 6.1.

### ***Machinal snobbism and cool panic***

I call the architectural equivalent to Baudrillard's fatal strategies *ultimategame*. The name is suitable, firstly, because Baudrillard emphasises that fatal strategies are individual mechanisms of survival<sup>400</sup> — hence the “game”. Secondly, it is essential for fatal strategies to posit challenges to the surrounding intellectual environment: “Ultimate” refers to the challenge that puts the largest possible stake into the game. As I have understood Baudrillard, anything less would be too little at the present stage of consumer society.<sup>401</sup>

I will now explain the two *ultimate* options, *cool panic* and *machinal snobbism*, in greater detail. These strategies are not mutually exclusive, but in fact compose a “double strategy”: when expected to be snobbish, the architect panics, when allowed to panic she/he rather proves to be a snob. In this way one can guarantee the singularity of each design task as a social occasion with a stake. This is a precondition for visible symbolic exchange.

The machinal snob attitude deliberately suffocates any urge for creativity and interactivity. It denies accepting the calls to change the world in accordance with abstract principles. Unlike the blasé attitude of Simmel, which meant using personal neglect and protecting the urban flâneur from the masses, the machinal snob affirms everything and wants to be along with everyone else, without any illusion of personal choice, freedom, or individualism. In a context where the architect is supposed to invent creative solutions, the snob architect accepts blindly every new innovation, but without any belief in technology liberating people or increasing reci-

<sup>400</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) 204.

<sup>401</sup> See Part 4 for the discussion of the tendency to extremes in contemporary society.

procuity without a challenge (ironical and seductive challenge) to the technological system itself. When accomplished correctly, this self-sufficient attitude cannot be critically judged. I am not simply denying the possibility of critique by taking a totalitarian position. Rather, the issue is about completely discarding the notion of “truth” in architecture. Instead, the question is about metamorphic, mechanical processes without any notion about freedom or liberation. The ritual satisfaction lies in the subject’s object-like participation in rules and rituals, not in individualism. No critical position is possible when there are no values and no morals except collective interdependence in this self-sufficiency.

*Cool panic* refers to the conscious acceleration of the transpolitical and metamorphic social processes. In my interpretation, this involves, for example, a more flexible architecture than normal, the latter answering only to the changing needs. A suitable challenge to the increasing calls for flexibility could be to make actually moving architecture, providing there is no actual reason or need for it to move. What is important in this form of panic is that it is compulsorily ritualistic. That means that there must not be any expectations about production, creativity or freedom in the *cool panic* actions. Also, they are reversible without any kind of profit or destruction.

The following points about destruction must be emphasised. First of all, it is clear that *implosive violence*, such as the economically disastrous collapse of buildings due to too much weight, would fulfil Baudrillard’s expectations for the masses’ reversible intervention in architecture. Baudrillard has actually made such a proposal in his essay on the *Beaubourg* [the Pompidou Centre], stating that the masses should fill the museum thus causing the building to implode due to their combined weight.<sup>402</sup> Baudrillard’s main argument, however, functions on the level of a symbolic act. In the *Beaubourg* essay Baudrillard describes the building not as a symbol of power belonging to the phantasmatic sphere<sup>403</sup> of destruction and the earlier simulacra phases, but as a transmodern “zone of control”, “the space of visibility, transparency and contact”, “neutralising everything together”, “cybernetic” and as “combi-

<sup>402</sup> Jean Baudrillard: ‘L’effet Beaubourg, implosion et dissuasion’ (in *Simulacres et simulation* 1981) 93-111.

<sup>403</sup> Naturally, this “phantasmatic logic”, describing changing patterns in cultural perceptions and pleasures (Jean Baudrillard: *The Ecstasy of Communication*, 126, 132), is one

natory” space.<sup>404</sup> In this sphere of “mastery, control and command, an optimization of the play of possibilities”,<sup>405</sup> there is no longer any retreat in architecture; there is no feeling of defence, no interiority and intimacy which could be destroyed.<sup>406</sup> The *Beaubourg* is a monument to advertising, not because it may become an object to be consumed, but because it is proposed as “an anticipated demonstration of the operation of culture, commodities, mass movement and social flux.”<sup>407</sup> For Baudrillard, “[i]t is our only architecture today: great screens on which are reflected atoms, particles, molecules in motion. Not a public scene or true public space but gigantic spaces of circulation, ventilation and ephemeral connections.”<sup>408</sup> The only violent act that can harm this type of system is the implosion, over-densification and over-saturation of the network, its overload of communication. Its demise cannot be destruction.<sup>409</sup>

If one believes in the theory of symbolic exchange, even destructive or implusive acts should have a potlatch-like symbolic capacity. Baudrillard’s desire that the masses should cause the *Beaubourg* to collapse can be understood in this way. Here the architecture of the building can be seen as an example typical of the attitudes of the masses; that is, collapsing the high art “aura” of being an art museum. Compared to previous art museums, the architecture of the *Beaubourg* abandoned the signs of exclusivity and sophistication for the sake of the sheer visibility of people’s and technology’s circulation. In this sense, the masses (or actually the mass media society) have already caused the collapse of the building as a monument of high-art.

However, I am more concerned here with the possibilities for *cool panic* in the design process than in the actual destruction of buildings. That is why I mentioned the possibility for ultra-flexibility.

of the key levels in Baudrillard’s texts. Baudrillard defines “phantasmatic sphere” as the principal logic which includes identifications and projections, and the entire imaginary realm of transcendence, power and sexuality operating at the level of objects and the environment (ibid., 126). I have examined the different phantasmatic levels as the different stages of symbolic exchange in chapter 2.2., in the section “The opposite to consumption: symbolic exchange” (p. 64).

<sup>404</sup> Jean Baudrillard: ‘L’effet Beaubourg, implosion et dissuasion’ (in *Simulacres et simulation* 1981) 93-111.

<sup>405</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *The Ecstasy of Communication* (1985, orig. 1983), 127.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid., 130-131.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>409</sup> Jean Baudrillard: ‘L’effet Beaubourg, implosion et dissuasion’ (in *Simulacres et simulation* 1981) 107-108.

The primitive cults of sacrifice and potlatch had symbolic potential: they were extraordinary singular (non-replaceable) acts. Compared to this, in the present situation, the actual demolition of a building easily seems a banal mode of symbolic participation without the previous cautions, because of its false promise of liberation.

According to the more charming than destructive strategy of *machinal snobbism*, one can accept that the problem with design is not that there are not enough creative ideas, but rather that there are too many of them. When there certainly is plenty of information available in the world today, architects and planners would seemingly have as much data as they want, but the amount of information does not always correlate with the quality of the final product. Similarly, the amount of different creative viewpoints and explanations does not correlate with the quality; quite the contrary according to Baudrillard, who prefers the stubborn masses. The machinal snob attitude is an extreme form of conformity.

In architecture, *machinal snobbism* would become effective through the blind, all-accepting will to take part in the transformations that are facing the society, such as fashion. From the viewpoint of the strategy of the masses, the architect who follows fashion is clever. He/she challenges the belief in any innovation, relativism or subjectivism, and eventually challenges the transmodern mythological belief in indifference caused by extreme innovation, relativism and subjectivism. The same attitude can be traced to children, who change into objects, when they are asked to be responsible subjects. This machinal snob architect accuses others of not following fashion, yet apologises for not making sufficiently up-to-date designs. This is all contrary to the serious but brainwashed architect who accuses others of following fashion, yet lies to him/herself and argues that his or her own works are "ahead of their time".

How can one then follow fashion without believing in sign value? The fashion enthusiast attitude must not be the fashion victim attitude. The machinal snob's attitude to fashion is ironical: one just accepts the latest fashions without believing that they have any value in the final instance, other than a possibility to disrupt the derogatory myths of the society. Only the pleasurable ritual of following fashion, sharing that ritual with other people and generating one's own (surprising and challenging) meanings for products is

crucial. When asked to be an individualist, the machinal snob architect lets his/her colleagues and friends make the decisions, if the traps of solitary productivism cannot otherwise be avoided.

There are a lot of studies about the unconscious working processes of architects. For Alvar Aalto, as for numerous other architects and artists, *the* method has been one's own subconscious, one's dreams, manifested in sketches. But why not let others make the decisions, to give the initial inspiration, when the subconscious is supposed to be as alien and surprising to us, too? Moreover, even if one works basically unconsciously, unconsciousness, too, reacts to fashions and other outer influences.

A machinal snob architect is one who does not want to conspicuously change anything in society. She/he is a kind of mirror (similar yet in reverse) in this sense; seemingly the same, but not really. This strategy might be quite difficult for contemporary architects to accept. A typical star architect is keen to believe in his/her own uncompromising capabilities of developing new designs. The other parts in the project are supposed to realise these very first vision-like plans strictly and unchanged. This is one of those myths of creativity perpetuated by the star status often put forward in the architectural press. Students of architecture are repeatedly encouraged to develop the necessary large egos for this. They are simulating the creation of large schemes unhindered by uncertain and changing factors in the design and realisation process. Anyway, as discussed in Part 2, this belief in newness, creativity and new possibilities is only a symptom of the unhealthy consumer society.

Instead of attempting to change everything in the first place, a better strategy in the transmodern circumstances would be to generate surprising end results by taking the external influences to their extremes. The myth of creativity emphasises the *first* (supposedly individual) ideas, while this kind of conformism emphasises the (actually singular) *process* of planning, designing and constructing. The authoritarian creativity is usually disappointed with the compromised end results, while the conformist method can result in an always surprising outcome.

The snob architect keeps silent and asks the others what to do, because in trying to be oneself, one only ends up resembling everyone else in the consumer society. Conformity is a more challenging attitude in the atmosphere of productivism than in creativ-

ity. As Baudrillard says, if an animal knows how to conform it is not to its own individuality, but by beginning to resemble the others it takes on their appearance.<sup>410</sup> That kind of a strategy in architecture would be radical, and according to the paradigm of this work, communally beneficial in the contemporary mythological situation.

In addition to the affinity to destruction, another problem concerning the whole idea of adopting the masses' attitude in architecture is that according to the definition, the masses are actually not interested in what it is they neglect or panic about. In symbolic gift exchange, the ritual itself is more important than the actual gifts. If any architecture would be regarded as passive or panicky the masses would find stubborn strategies to question such a pursuit, so that it can continue to prolong itself. Thus the concrete, singular *attitude* of the masses is more important than the contents of particular commodities. Making the symbolic exchange visible in architecture would mean most of all a change in its discourse. It would mean a shift away from any abstract principles towards open-ended design processes and singularity. Architects would cease using such terms as value, needs, satisfaction and benefit.

It remains to be seen whether it is at all possible to design non-creative, non-functional (yet not destructive or dysfunctional), non-rational (yet not irrational), non-flexible (yet ambivalent), non-aesthetic (yet seductive) architecture which is not meant to satisfy any needs principally, but to spread collective recognition and reciprocity. For example, according to the principle of symbolic exchange, all kinds of room programmes (which specify functions and the floor areas of specific spaces and areas) should be abandoned as regards to any specific *needs*, but they could be appreciated as games which develop *prestige* and make possible diverse social occasions.

The design which could restore Baudrillard's (as well as Mauss' and Adorno and Horkheimer's) demands for more reciprocity and seduction in culture should be found, for example, in the direction of *cool panic* and *machinal snobbism*. Considering the depth and scope of this discussion, my thesis can prove its necessity just by showing this necessary direction of developments. But this might

<sup>410</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *The Evil Demon of Images* (1988, orig. 1987) 15.

be called the academic's (or critic's) role. However, I will endeavour to go further, because I wish to actually present my own designs which fulfil the above claims.

Let me summarise the argument in this part, because I have now made important conclusions based on the earlier part of this work, while approaching my ultimate purpose, namely to design collectively beneficial architecture in accordance with my chosen sociological background. *ultimategame* is thus an idea based upon Baudrillard's notion of "fatal strategies", a theory of the unavoidable, "inhuman" (in the sense that they only support *intra-human* reciprocity and mutual recognition, not other values) yet ultimately beneficial reversibility of social practices. Abstract systems based on the belief in their own omnipotence, in that they can include and explain everything, become imploded. Examples of such univocal systems are signification, rationality, functionality and creativity. Also architecture as a medium has largely been understood in terms of these seemingly overtly abstract systems. Later, also the systems of flexible solutions and interactivity have become part of these kinds of false (non-communal) principles behind architectural practice. These systems influence people's lives through the myths surrounding them.

*Baudrillard forces us to go to the very roots of culture in order to restore the reciprocal and seductive social life.* In Baudrillard's thinking, these systems (creativity, functionality, etc.) are "gifts" to humanity, but they have for too long remained without open, visible reciprocal rituals of return to wherever they came from (apparently they come from as far as the ultimate ethics of reciprocity).

With my feet on the ground anyway, I have examined the mechanisms of this abstraction. I have studied the univocal and transmodern idea of all-pervasive interdisciplinarity in this context, focusing on the relationship between architecture and moving images. The tendency to believe in the beneficiality of every kind of interdisciplinary references whatsoever becomes to look suspicious if the whole idea of interdisciplinarity is considered to be univocal, faceless social control (as Baudrillard suggests). Instead of tactical *interdisciplinary references*, one could thus talk about a more general metamorphosis. This vision does not put art works in the context of personal interpretations, creativity, intelligence, lib-

eration or aleatory values in general, but refers to the rather seductive and collectively cohesive processes of persuasive weakness and surprising conformity. In order to create real socially beneficial interdisciplinarity in the era of hypersimulation, one should challenge the myths behind moving images (because it is the generic art form of the consumer society) as well as the abstract interdisciplinarity in architecture.

According to my interpretation, Baudrillard refers to the masses as being capable of both making counter-challenges and giving gifts in return to the univocal socio-economic systems and its mythology. Consequently, I have developed a method for architectural design that should be able to construct a similar kind of challenge: *ultimategame*. The method mobilises two crucial ritualistic attitudes, which are not actually liberating or creative alternatives because that would only reproduce the present mythology and bring us further away from the traditional community. These attitudes influence only the speed and effectivity of mythologies already inherent in society. *ultimategame* creates singular moments of real social community. The two beneficial attitudes represent passive (but socially cohesive) indifference and ceremonial disorder. Both of these attitudes are essentially non-creative (if one does not count their non-calculativity and surprising results as creativity) and do not answer to any needs (other than collective reciprocity and recognition).

My next task is to apply the possibilities inherent in these methods in architectural design.

## **6 Projects**

In this part I have gathered together some of my own proposals for how to challenge the transmodern myths examined earlier. I will firstly present the different challenges at a more general level before moving to the design projects, where the different challenges cannot be differentiated that easily from each other.

## 6.1 Challenges to transmodern myths

These examples are quite short and introductory, because it is impossible to provide exhaustive answers to these constantly changing and case specific mythological questions, especially from the principled viewpoint of enchantment.

These proposals for challenges were already approached partially when I examined transmodern mythology. As I explained earlier, the challenges must already be inherent in the mythological systems themselves, if one is to believe Baudrillard's idea of objective irony (fatality). Thus the question is actually about consciously manipulating certain tendencies already apparent in the myths of the mass media society: either accelerating or slowing down the existing myths.

The architecture that could challenge the transmodern myths and the socio-economic systems behind them must not be creative (in the productivist sense) or individualistic, or answer certain supposed needs (other than concerning reciprocity and mutual recognition). This has become clear in my analysis of Baudrillard's writings. These restrictions create huge difficulties for designing architecture, which is usually based upon the belief in creative solutions and limiting town planning and room programmes. If my reasoning is valid, architects should be encouraged to displace the core of their work from the productivistic-artistic sphere, but also from the rational problem-solving attitude (including the analytical study of programmes, separate functions, standardisation, the miniaturisation and mass production of standardised and individualised quality items and concepts). Instead, they should move towards challenging the new age (which is not necessarily rational) and the conceptions about use. The analysis should be necessary but possibly irrational. It is not enough to express the new age, but architects should *challenge* it.

The solution to the difficulty of *constructing* architecture (no longer *creating* architecture) in ritualistic terms can be found, for example, in the following direction:

- 1) Accepting constraints derived from building and planning regulations and different contexts as arbitrary *games* rather than as laws.
- 2) Finding the undiscovered areas hidden within and between these constraints from the viewpoint of the stubborn and conforming masses. The architect then has the possibility to inject his/her own seduction into the game, instead of just watching the play of some imagined, pre-conceived codes. One could say that such an architect is following the letter of the law, not the spirit of the law.
- 3) Processing the undiscovered areas in the constraints according to the attitudes of *cool panic* and *machinal snobbism* (as explained earlier).
- 4) Just like the entire developed consumer society mythology, the challenges, too, work according to the principles of *the enchantment of appearance, image and ambience*. These should become conscious material for architecture (if one accepts the sociological background I have outlined).

The restrictions brought about by specific contexts and design requirements can be taken as positive starting points for architecture that challenge myths.<sup>411</sup> Economic data, building and zoning codes, consumer behaviour, corporate organisations and work habits can be brought into sharp focus. Concerning the social systems, reciprocity is not fulfilled as the invention of new forms, but as the reformulation of existing constraints. Everything which is unsaid, yet supposedly behind the constraints, can be forgotten. Psychological issues, anti-disaster formulas, lighting regulations, acoustic treatments can all be seen as encoding social information, opening architecture to symbolic exchange, if they are considered non-profit rituals and not answering to any particular needs. It appears there are more enigmatic areas inside all the rules than anyone ever imagined. As Bart Lootsma notices concerning the work of MVRDV architects, the outcome depends upon what the architect throws into the game of regulations.<sup>412</sup> An architect's challenging strategy – the secret agenda – should remain in the end silent, incomprehensible and still fit into the regulations.

<sup>411</sup> Already John Ruskin praised the glory of restraint in architecture. He saw the freedom in rituals, the *real* freedom, compared to the false promises of the liberty of choice in modern architecture (John Ruskin: *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1989, Orig. 1880) ch. VII, § 8).

<sup>412</sup> Bart Lootsma: 'Towards a Reflexive Architecture'. In MVRDV: *El Croquis* 86 (1998), p. 40.

My interpretation of Baudrillard's analysis of the masses is that the masses' enigmatic and mysterious capacities of silence may be interpreted as manifestations of "seduction" in transpolitics. The masses give examples of strategies that are seductive (because they are weak) and reciprocal (because they answer surprisingly to the challenge posited by the univocal system at a level which is fundamental enough) and thus beneficial. As I have emphasised, my suggestions are not the only possible answers to the transmodern mythology, but my own interpretations of what kind of solutions could be suitable. They show in which direction one should head if one wants an alternative to the economy of the code. The particular challenges to the transmodern myths I have examined (in Part 4) will become mixed and more detailed in the following chapter (6.2), where I present my own design projects.

The general proposals for these challenges have been divided into three categories: surface, image and ambience. As already mentioned – and this cannot be emphasised enough – they are relevant viewpoints of transmodern architecture, if one accepts Baudrillard's point of view. These viewpoints are based upon enchanting qualities rather than on the systems of signification, architecture fulfilling needs, functionality, or creativity. Like the whole principle of *ultimategame*, the following proposals for challenges are targeted to the present time. When times change, mythology changes too and one must be prepared to change the challenges posited to them. These challenges are meant to be contemporary.

## ***Transmodern surface***

### ***–Increasing the Boredom vs. The Hell of the Same***

In a world full of pseudo-inventions, pseudo-choices and pseudo-opportunities, mostly embodied in the transmodern retro-styles, retro-ideologies and retro-solutions, the most individual act actually seems to be to neglect these temptations and to stubbornly keep one's head where it is. For example, everybody could have their right to be bored, and as often as they want, without any obligation to continuously stimulate oneself with impulses. Architecture, too, has no responsibility to spread only intense experiences, but it can be decidedly dull, most effectively in moments and places where everybody expects extravagant gestures. This conscious approach to increase boredom would be a challenge to *The Hell of the Same* (to the fact that contemporary man is supposedly unable to imagine the socio-economic code).

### ***–Inhuman Transformations vs. Intentional Flexibility***

One can challenge the myth of flexibility with transformations that are even more radical than the questionably need-based flexibility in architecture. This procedure avoids creating anything stable up to the point of obscuring identity itself. The realisation of these effects of *transformations* could be facilitated by electronics, this being a difference from, for example, the De Stijl effects of mechanical *flexibility*.

### ***–The Principle of Least Discomfort vs. The Violence of Speed***

In transmodern aesthetics, as I have already explained, speed has become an equally crucial part of the environment as space, and could thus become an elemental part of architectural decision making. The myth of *The Violence of Speed* arises when immediacy becomes a norm in the timetables concerning both the construction and design. However, there seems to already exist something which is quicker than speed at the everyday scale, something which challenges the transmodern speed of immediacy: *the principle of least discomfort*. People, it seems, do not merely follow the shortest and quickest path; they do something a bit more sophisti-

cated – they try to minimise their discomfort when moving from one place to another. Sometimes people follow longer and thus slower paths if the paths are easier to walk on or more interesting or more fun. This principle of least discomfort could be mobilised in a challenging manner in architecture, for example, by pointing out the benefits of slow design processes: better quality, deeper thinking, more particularity and more real discourse.

## ***Transmodern image***

### ***–The Sports War vs. The Aesthetic War***

Sport is a challenge against the myth of *The Aesthetic War* and the manifestations of war aesthetics in architecture, because sport is a kind of symbolic form of war. Accordingly, sport aesthetics might be beneficial in architectural design. One could, for example, explore the crucial difference between sport and war concerning movements and surfaces (sports *fields*, *playgrounds*, *courts*, etc.). Sport is usually related to surface, thus sport applied in architecture would increasingly blur the limit between surface and architecture depicted in three-dimensional terms, but without the effects of power associated with architectural war aesthetics. For example, an abstracted version of a contemporary training shoe would be a better model for architecture if an architectural interpretation of, say, a submarine or an aircraft-carrier is expected.<sup>413</sup> In order to be in accordance with its starting point in symbolic challenge, the context for presenting the *Sporty Challenge* should be as far as possible from relating to actual sports activities: e.g. a church, or a culture centre would be perfect.

### ***–The Hallucination of the Normal vs. Framing***

A conscious switch to *Framing* (to the destruction of identity and to the maximisation of programmatic chaos) may be a good alternative in the hegemony of the over-emphasised and over-identified architecture in relation to the heterogeneous life it holds within. However, one could move even further into the positive emptiness of architectural design. One way to a conscious fatal challenge would be to increase not *Framing* but *the unavoidable*, a kind of *Hallucination of the Normal*. In this state there would no longer be a choice between *The Picture* and *The Frame*, or between the brand and the product.

According to my analysis of Baudrillard's sociology, many defects in contemporary architecture derive from the assumption that

<sup>413</sup> Future Systems has been one of the most well-known contemporary architectural offices benefiting from war aesthetics. See Jan Kaplicky (Future Systems): *For Inspiration Only* (Academy Editions 1996).

architecture is voluntary or liberating, if it is well made, creative and based upon personal choices. But what if one gets rid of the illusion of creativity — both the creativity of the architect and the chaotic creativity of the life within buildings? Will architecture then disappear? This glut would refer directly to *the pleasure in living* and it could be described by tautological slogans like “Feel the feeling”, or, “Feel the architecture”, or “Architecture for living”.

The subject could be something so taken for granted that it is voluntary, something which makes people believe that it gives them a large selection of personal choices: but in the end it becomes eventually automatically designed and programmed with the purpose of creating just ritualistic order. This kind of architecture would remind us of a TV set: the programmes are interesting, but everybody has to have the dull screen too, and there is something seductive in that dullness. For example, one could design a museum that is not an art work in itself, not a composition — nothing competing with the art. This means ceasing to refer to different degrees of architectural speciality, but instead concentrating on the pure excessive normality. However, it is important that this hallucination of the normal will not produce the illusion that the particular architecture is defined by economic or technological constraints, but that its intensified normality is a conscious choice.

#### **–Backgrounding, Miniaturisation and Mergence vs. Bigness**

When an object is big enough, it disappears by becoming background. Beyond a certain scale a building can disappear into the background. What Koolhaas calls “Extra-Large” and *Bigness* (see chapter 4.3.) is thus not big enough. For example, Koolhaas does not go far enough in his exploration of modern images. The attraction of all *Bigness* nowadays – the expensiveness of relocation, the largeness of attitude, the bigness of the screen, the loudness of volume, the intensity of detail – actually lies in the hopelessness to reconstruct the whole, to resurrect the Real, or to reinvent the collective. However, these effects are all rather too nostalgic and useless to be really collectively beneficial projects.

Beneficial backgrounding emphasises the importance of views rather than shapes and sizes per se. It is important that one cannot see the whole or understand its whole form. For example, Denari’s *8910 Tokyo International Forum* competition entry is based upon

this principle, in that the visitor feels himself or herself to be like an ant within a complex machinery rather than a visitor to the naked *Eiffel Tower*.<sup>414</sup> The size does not matter but the suspense you develop by leaving something unseen in the background.

When *Bigness* was depicted in such films as *King Kong*, *Towering Inferno* and *Die Hard*, it was already evident that sheer size was not enough in itself to guarantee success, it also required seductive excitement and the suspense of waiting and imagining. There is nothing mysteriously fatal in such films as *Independence Day*, *Titanic*, the new *Godzilla* or *Armageddon*, where there is nothing left to the background. Huge Hollywood films must include huge objects, but it is disappointing to have a wide and clear picture of a monster in its entirety. That is why narrow views are extremely important in picturing the *background*. When we can see only parts of the monster *Godzilla's backgroundness* we are scared, but when it fills the whole screen, we become wasted, because the fatal challenge is lost. The *background object* should thus never be wholly shown. In architecture this means that size should most of all be used skilfully. Picture the following example: a large, complex object surrounded by carefully positioned small boxes, all of them placed on a podium so that a complete view of the big object becomes impossible. The open, banal view of the entire giant object is replaced by narrow glimpses from between the boxes.

In order to restore this seductive dimension of *the background*, one could mobilise something like spaceship aesthetics in architecture: let us look at the examples of vessels and other large objects such as ships, carriers, tankers, bombers, etc., as inspiration. One can notice that in these large objects, there always seems to be a dull, giant empty whole, combined with a small sophisticated part. The potential in the small part, *miniaturisation*, becomes crucial. *Smallness* can become a challenge in transpolitics, where the mythical capacity lies mostly in that which is already realised and

<sup>414</sup> Denari has used enormous effort in constructing perspective views of the Piranesian-type spaces, which, for example, *8910* includes. While Piano and Rogers' *Beaubourg Centre*, another representation of *Bigness*, was still one single volume, Denari's *8910* seems to consist of autonomous, sub-scale objects yet still in a stylistically coherent way, so that the whole is not fragmentary. The function or motivation of *8910* is hard to imagine unless one recognises the trademark blob form auditoriums behind the giant steel structure. The blob form is quite suitable for auditorium purposes because its underside becomes naturally oblique and curved.

which is already big. That which is small is often minor and new. And as already mentioned, weakness generates seduction.<sup>415</sup> The infinitely small is also more likely to be enigmatic than the infinitely large. Smallness is in this sense a temptation to irreconciliation, a seductive menace.<sup>416</sup>

*Mergence* could be another strategy, challenging *Bigness* to completely disappear. In the architecture of *mergence*, one does not know where the building starts and where it ends. The question then arises of whether the merged object would be architecture at all or a part of nature or a city? It is an enigma.

<sup>415</sup> Jean Baudrillard: "Séduire, c'est fragiliser. Séduire, c'est défaillir. C'est par notre fragilité que nous séduisons, jamais par les pouvoirs ou les signes forts." *De la séduction* (1979) 115.

<sup>416</sup> Also Paul Virilio has mentioned this theme of smallness as challenge: Virilio: *Le Grand et le Petit* (1996).

## **Transmodern ambience**

### **–Vegetability vs. Adolescence**

The challenge to the myth of *Adolescence*<sup>417</sup> could actually be derived from perfect concentration on its gestural effectivity. Due to the fact that any articulate message can be ridiculed and annulled in the *Adolescent* discourse, the most effective challenge against this would consist of giving up all pursuits to meaningfully articulate anything at all. This would mean concentrating only on pure action. According to this principle, an architect could become a kind of vegetable, growing his or her own “architectural” branches that actually carry no messages, ethics or signification at all. This architecture would anyway be intense and amusing in its physical impact, just as are the manifestations of its counterpart, *Adolescent* architecture, that is, a kind of abstract expressionism, but without any intended serious or profound subconscious meanings.<sup>418</sup>

### **–Instant Analysis vs. Paranoia as a New Metatheory**

As stagnated paranoia (the manic problematics with the building’s borders and skin) seems to have been a strong motivation behind glazed buildings,<sup>419</sup> the discussion could be forced to move on, so that actually the whole building, the whole interior space, could be subjected to the transition of landscape.

More abstractly, while “paranoia” refers to systematic and delusional thought patterns, and is a way of preventing oneself from seeing reality as it is, there could be something which is even more rejective: the *instant analysis* based upon perfect misinterpreta-

<sup>417</sup> See chapter 4.4 about adolescence as a myth.

<sup>418</sup> Abstract expressionism cannot be undervalued in this aspect. In his essay ‘In Defence of Abstract Expressionism’ (*October* no. 69, summer 1994), T. J. Clark argues that the enchantment of the world accomplished by abstract expressionism has been perhaps the only branch of art able to continue *enchantment* in the supposedly disenchanted consumer society. According to Clark, abstract expressionism in the U.S. of the 1940s and 1950s has been able to resist its transformation into a commodity form and something passé because it locates itself beyond the cycles of newness in art. Clark refers to the ability of abstract expressionism to generate what I in this work have called *seduction of appearance*: “material opposed to the ideal”, “the plain and limiting fact of flatness”, “superficiality” (p. 27), “atrociously visual quality” (p. 28), “individuality revealed in its vulgarity”, “betrayal of the popular” (p. 30), and “laying claim to a world of its own” (p. 48).

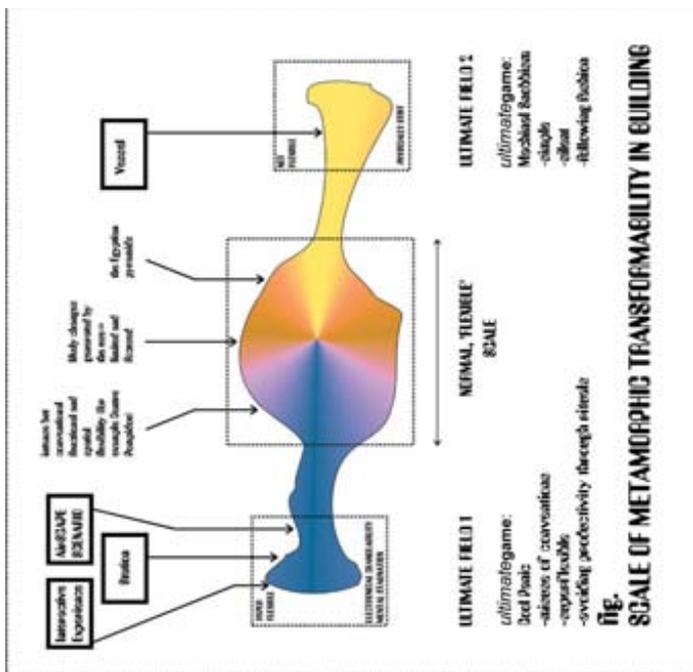
<sup>419</sup> See chapter 4.4.

tions and a profound lack of information. This kind of strategy would be an excellent form of *cool panic*. A successful work of *cool panic* requires a suitable commission, where tight schedules are always good. The ideal is to make a quick instant analysis, based on one's lack of information of the historical context of the target and based upon one's own biases – and forget details. The typical situation in an architectural office is to pretend that the tight scheduled and poorly paid project is still thoughtfully designed and a result of thorough research. But now there would be none of this kind of hypocrisy, but just full-headed improvisation. Panic is actually a tranquil state when it is accomplished professionally.

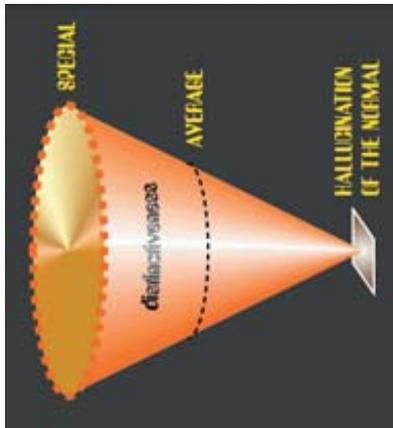
Finally, I would like to present my own practical experiments in the field I have been examining. I have consciously benefited from the machinal snob and cool panic strategies and used the above mentioned types of challenges in the following design projects. The challenging approach is merged into the proposals in a complex way that combines the specific characteristics and restrictions of the tasks and an eye on the myths described. The result is thus an artistic package in the seductive sense of art.

This thesis is strongly connected to the question of generally “adapting” any theory in architecture. However, socially (collectively) profound architecture cannot symbolise or illustrate any theory, as seemed to be the presupposition for example in the deconstructionist architecture movement in the 1990s. For this reason, as I have already said, I have developed in my work a “method” which is rather based upon the *attitudes* pursued in Baudrillard’s theory and upon challenging certain myths (tendencies in architecture) by means that the same myths in question provide. The relationship between ideas and design here is thus not about following any dogmas. Instead, it is about my own background as an architect and the particular design and planning tasks generated in the context of collective reciprocity and enigmatic seduction. It is impossible to hermetically give proof of my solutions such that there would be nothing left unexplained. Anybody else would make totally different architecture with the same *ultimategame*. Architecture can never be reduced to a certain “scientific law” with which it would remain closed, or at least not with the theory I have used in this work.

However, I have rigorously enough mobilised the “games” (myths and challenges to them) that I developed in the previous part. The rules of the games are not “scientific” in a strict sense, but as valid as “functional” or “rational” rules, as Baudrillard wants to prove that these, too, have a mythological background. In this thesis I have suggested a similar interpretation of the motivations of architecture in consumer society. What is “fatal” in Baudrillard’s sense in these projects is the collapse of such principles as functionality and rationality when they have been shown a more seductive alternative.



**fig. SCOPE OF DISTINCTIVENESS**



# vessel

Aurinkolahri Elementary School, Helsinki, 1999 (competition entry)

234

The brief in this competition was to design “a school of the future” for pupils aged 10-15 years old, in a new suburban area in eastern Helsinki. It was asked that the school be based upon a new kind of (interactive) pedagogical thinking. Also, an innovative use of steel structures was required.

The aim of the competition entry was not actually to “illustrate” a theory but to make a practical challenge to the existing educational policies by taking them to extremes. I wanted to show the persuasive rather than objective basis for the educational system (which it tries to cover over through a convincing expression or rhetoric). I accepted the bureaucrats’ view of the future of education, but tried to test the enchanting possibilities in the system. In a way, I made a mirror that makes things more seductive.

The overall scheme of my entry was to exaggerate the extrovertness of the school, to suggest that the school is a “research station” rather than a normal school. The whole composition of the school site becomes a shattered whole. That is why the lobbies and corridors always end at open passages or free views to the outside. Consequently, the image of the building is of a research station dedicated for studying the environment, rather than an introvert monastery. *vessel* is a school that functions with superior effectiveness, but it does not *symbolise* a school. However, its geometry and functional construction constitutes an *accurate expression* that demonstrates the forces of which the study programmes are made of: *the collisions between biological and physiological worlds*. Moreover, I have not wanted to substantiate the aesthetics traditional to modern architecture, expressing industry and production. Instead, the departure point has been the machinal snobbist outset concerning *information, consumption* and *leisure-time*, more adaptable to the information society. A “school” in general indicates hard work, but it also prepares people for a society, which is now defined rather by the above mentioned spheres. Media, especially moving images and electronic communication, have typically departed far away from the basic production of material entities. In this context, going to school still creates a base for a solid understanding of things, but the increasing fusion of working periods and leisure-time requires new kinds of approaches also in school planning. In this sense, the building is an example of the continuation of imaginary space research at ground level. All these sources of inspira-

tion are challengingly surprising answers to the common expectations.

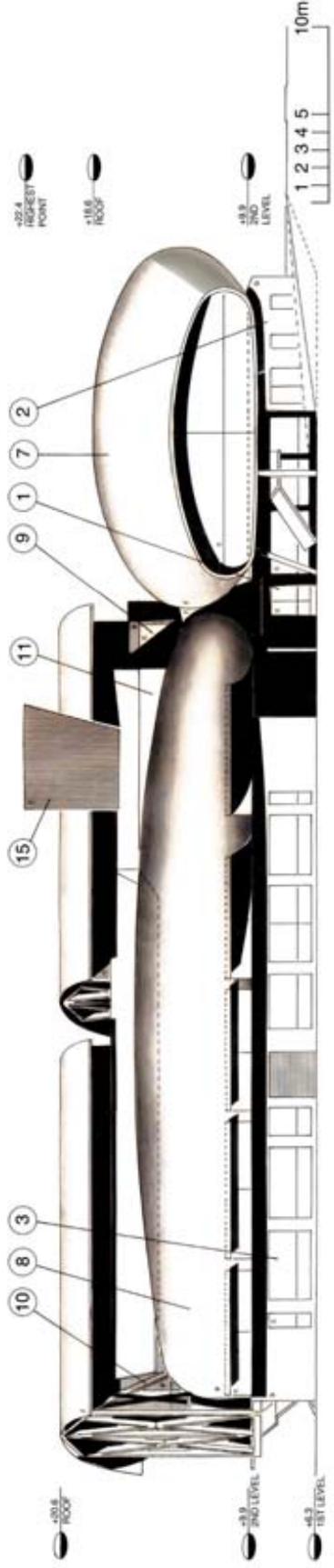
A design creating a resemblance to extraterrestrial research stations, based on a “pneumatic” geometry, is embarrassingly fitting for developing dull shock aesthetics when actualised heedlessly. In this case, its effective devices could wear out quickly. However, I have avoided these effects by voluntarily blocking the users’ views in a spirit of seductive challenge (backgrounding, miniaturisation and mergence), so that the building rather enchants than functions by raw intensity. From nowhere in the building or from its immediate surroundings does one have a total conception of the whole constellation of the hybrid geometry of the building’s shuttle-like shapes. In addition, the forms of the required steel constructions have been exaggerated greatly. Despite the extrovertness, the environment for growing up that this school creates, is not about striving towards “homeliness”; rather, the building is predominantly a *challenging* entity just like a good game. Yet it is nevertheless a safe environment.

The purpose of my design is also to create preconditions for the spreading of the aesthetics of sports beyond the sports hall. The floors have been printed with patterns reminding one of markings in sports. Despite all this robe of entertainment, the school can obey its purpose without disdain. I would have liked to extend the “sport aesthetics” to the whole school (by folding all the surfaces, including the floor) but that was not possible because of those users that have seeing and movement disabilities. While making the work, it was useful to have an extremely strict room programme and technical regulations. The program was very detailed and the connections between different functions completely controlled. Most of all, the fact that there would be three groups of disabled children attending in the building, restricted the means of expression drastically. Because of the disabled, the lines between the walls and floors had to be very clear and visible, for example.

This project was a good testing ground for my ideas, and the norms provided lots of challenges. I could have chosen an imaginary site and programme, but instead I chose the realistic environment set by the competition. Anyway, the benefit of those really imaginative projects is that they can change programmes and regulations when the alternative presented is found to be interesting. It is another question whether those alternatives would be real alternatives or only “minimal differences” inside the code. Here, I studied the limits of the programme following the “machinal snob” attitude. The building is in itself material for studies that do not underestimate the intelligence and emotional life of its users by directly representing the thematic motifs of the building. It accomplishes this more abstractly through a symbolic challenge.



**vessel**

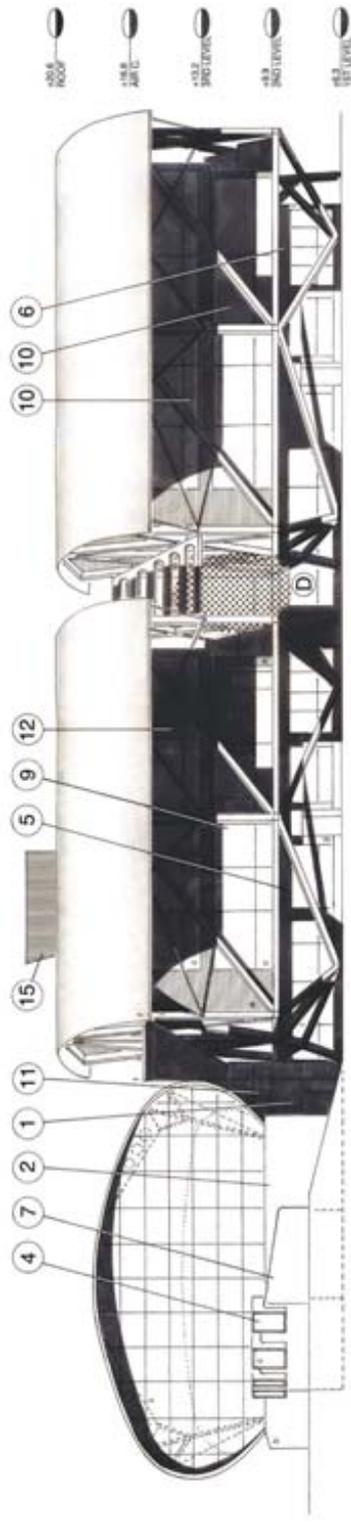


## imagination

1	entrance lobby
2	administration and social rooms
3	science classrooms - domestic science, information processing, technical work
4	home classroom and project classroom cells
5	symposium with listening rooms
6	chemistry, physics and biology cell
7	project classroom cell
8	"the heart of school" - lobby, library, restaurant
9	observatory

## EAST FAÇADE

- a. machinically sealed & zinc plated smooth steel sheet
- b. painted concrete
- c. glass
- d. galvanised & overlapping metal sheet
- e. galvanised & corrugated steel sheet
- f. plastic covered & corrugated steel sheet
- g. painted, non-plated, horizontally clinker-built boarding
- j. painted steel

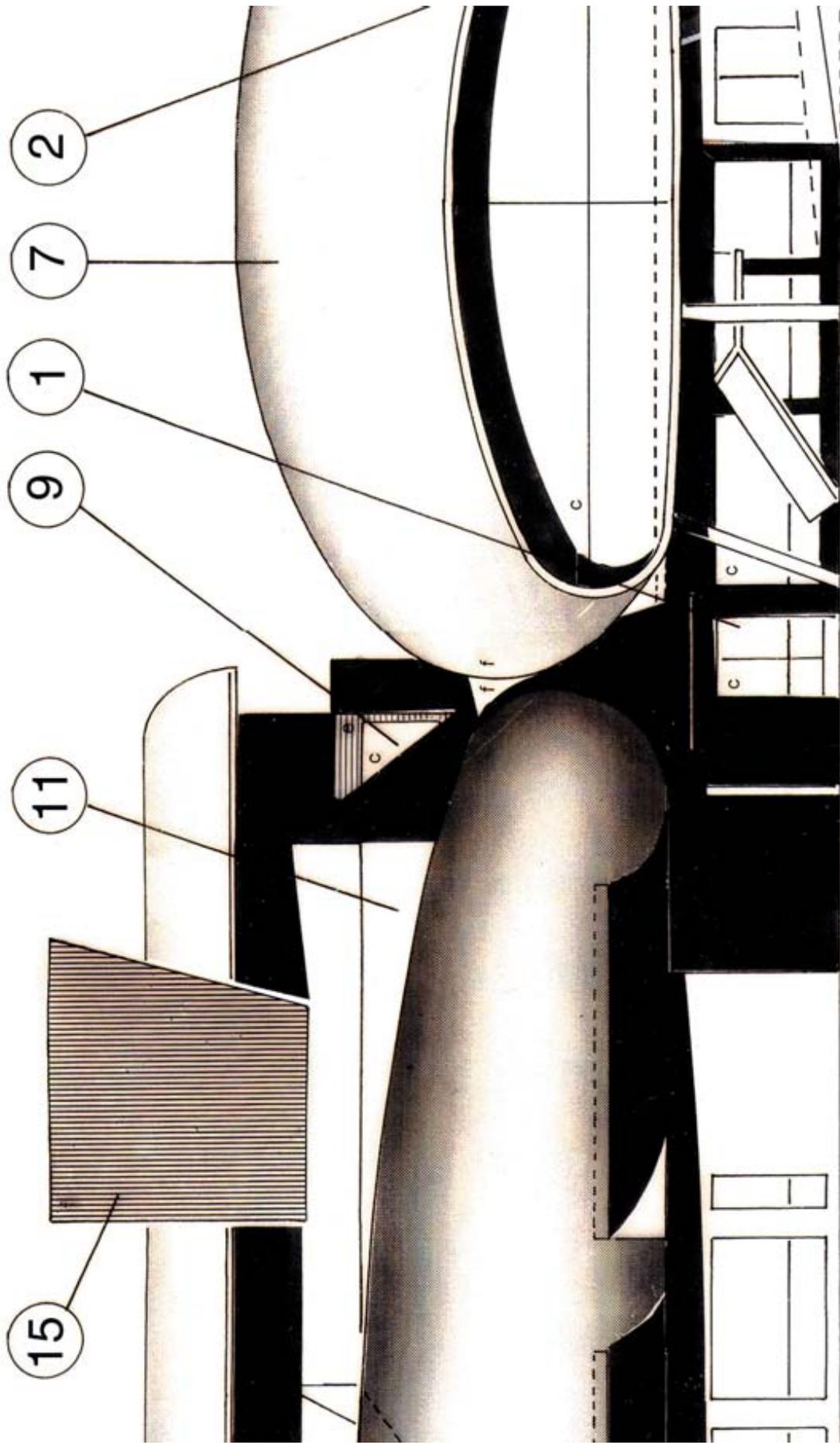


## interface materials

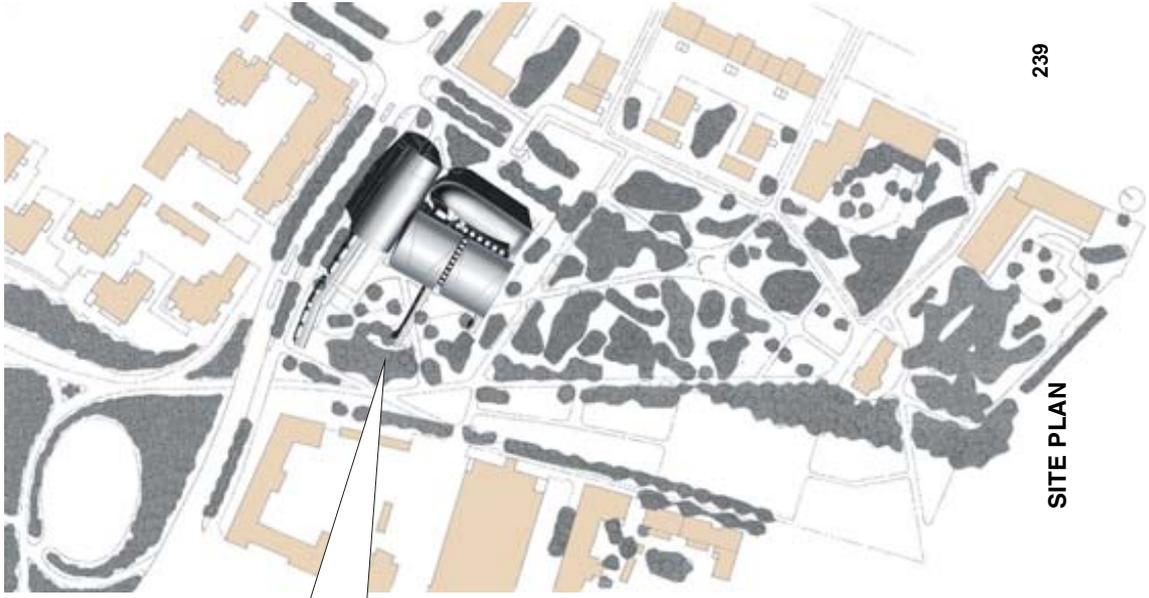
1	entrance lobby
2	administration and social rooms
3	science classrooms - visual arts and textile work
4	home classroom and project classroom cells
5	symposium with listening rooms
6	chemistry, physics and biology cell
7	project classroom cell
8	"the heart of school" - lobby, library, restaurant
9	project and EHA classrooms cell
10	observatory

## WEST FAÇADE

- b. painted concrete
- c. glass
- e. galvanised & corrugated steel sheet
- f. plastic covered & corrugated steel sheet
- g. painted, non-plated, horizontally clinker-built boarding
- j. painted steel

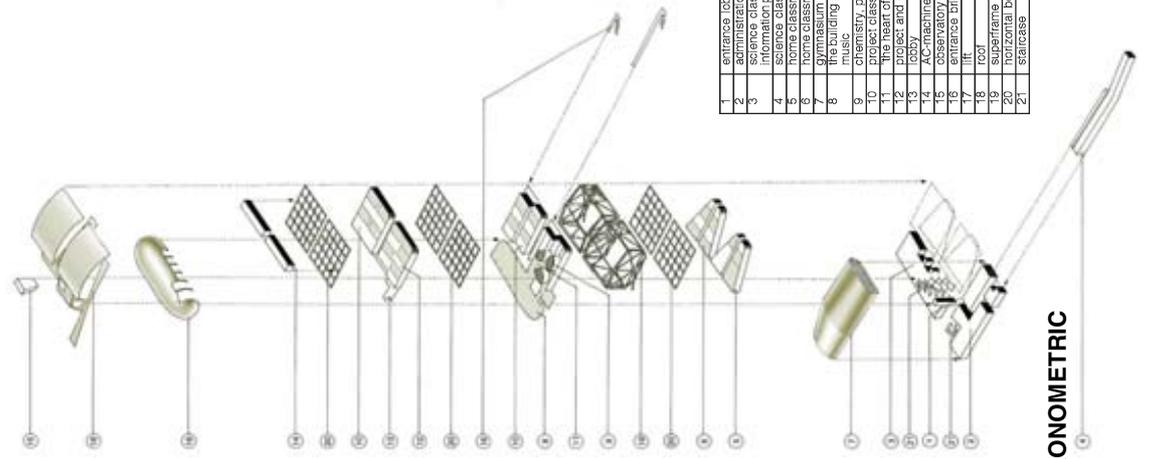


vessel



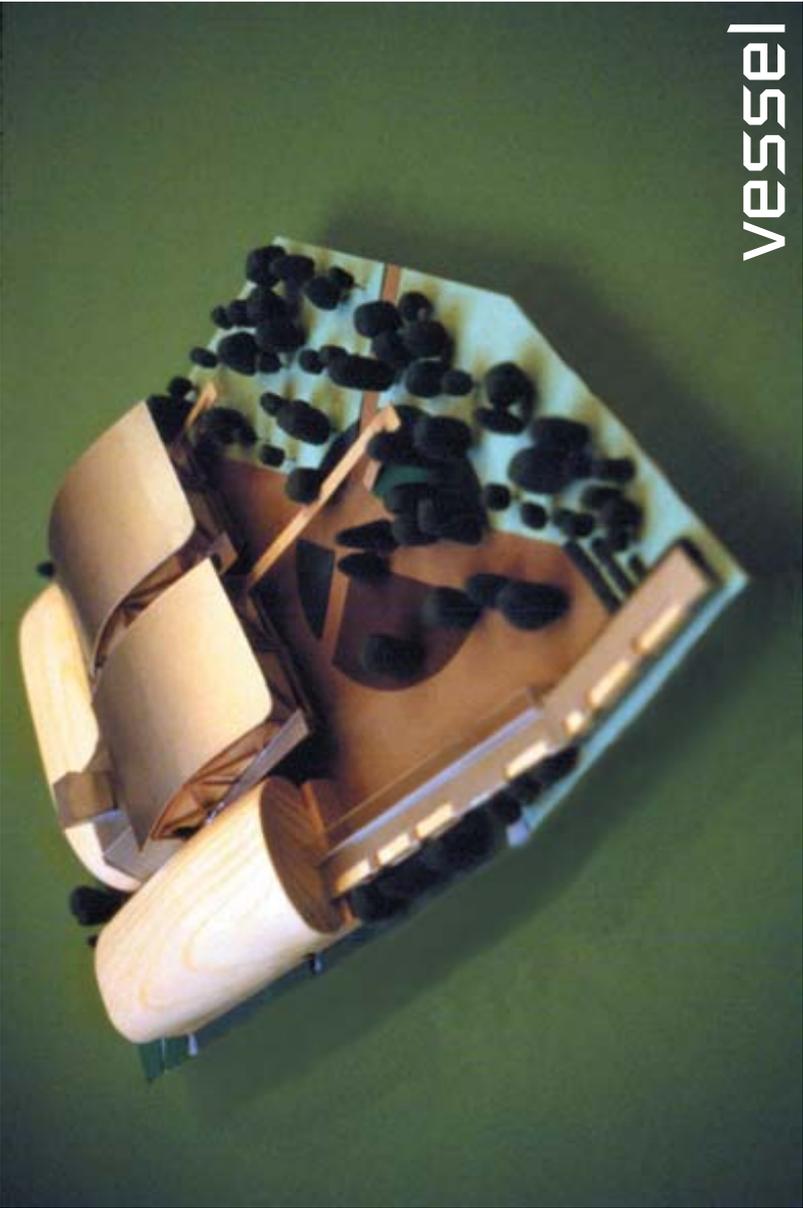
The placement of the building on the site: The main body of vessel has been placed on the eastern side of the site, so that the continuation of a green belt through the western side of it will be retained, even if the traffic system was far more emphasised in the competition brief than the actual nature. I found the trees more enchanting than the traffic system.

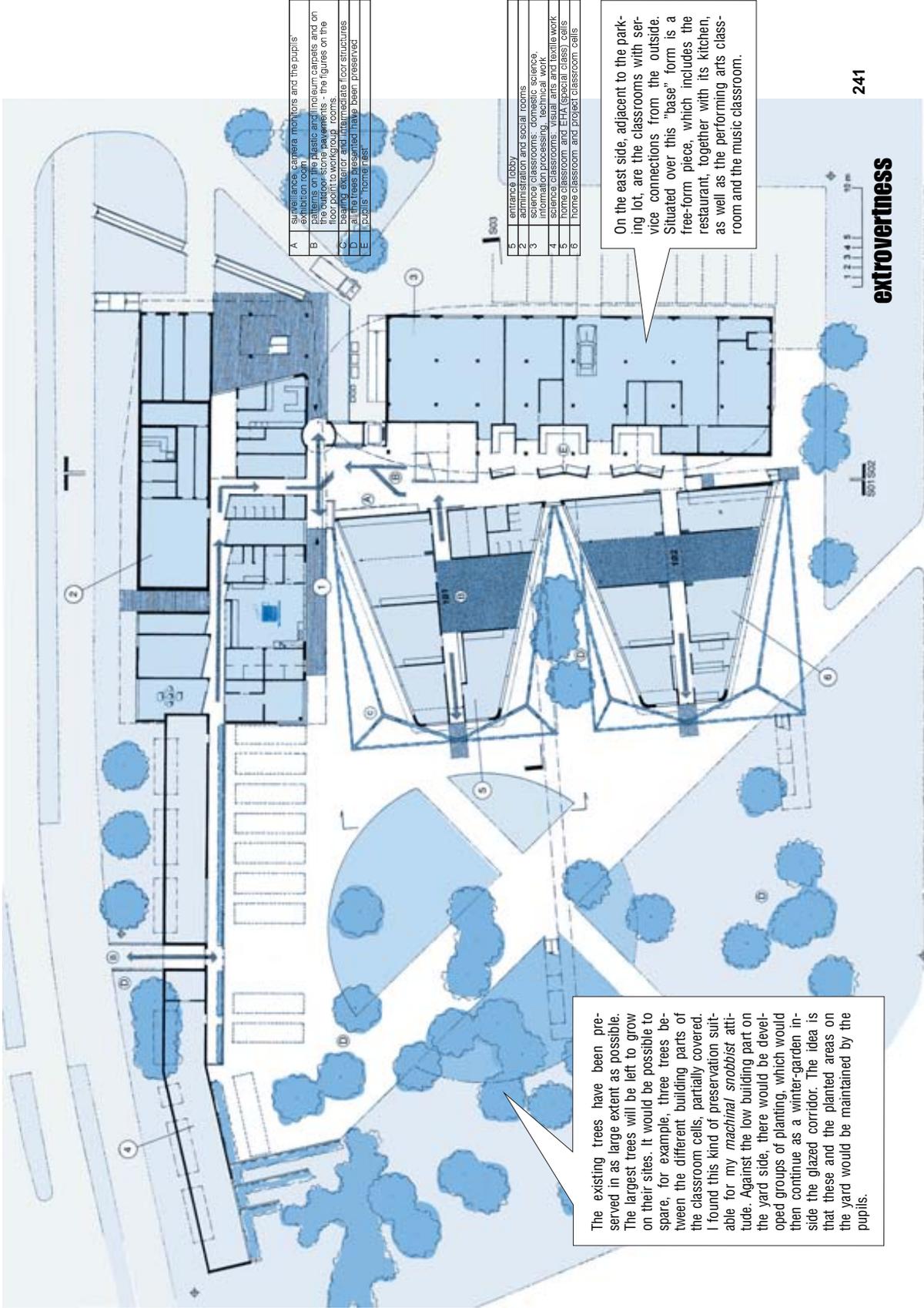
SITE PLAN



1	entrance lobby
2	administration and social rooms
3	science classrooms: domestic science, information processing, technical work
4	science classrooms: visual arts and textile work
5	home classroom and EHA (special class cells)
6	home classroom
7	gymnasium with its dressing rooms
8	the building part of restaurant, performing arts, and music
9	chemistry, physics and biology cell
10	project classroom cell
11	entrance lobby, library, restaurant
12	project and EHA classrooms' cell
13	lobby
14	AC-machinery room on the attic
15	observatory
16	entrance bridge
17	roof
18	roof
19	superframe
20	horizontal beam
21	staircase

EXPLODED AXONOMETRIC





- A surveillance camera monitors and the pupils exhibition room.
- B pattern on the plastic and in the carpet and on the floor in the new area. The figure on the floor point to workshop rooms.
- C bearing exterior and intermediate floor structures
- D all the trees presented have been preserved
- E pupils "home base"

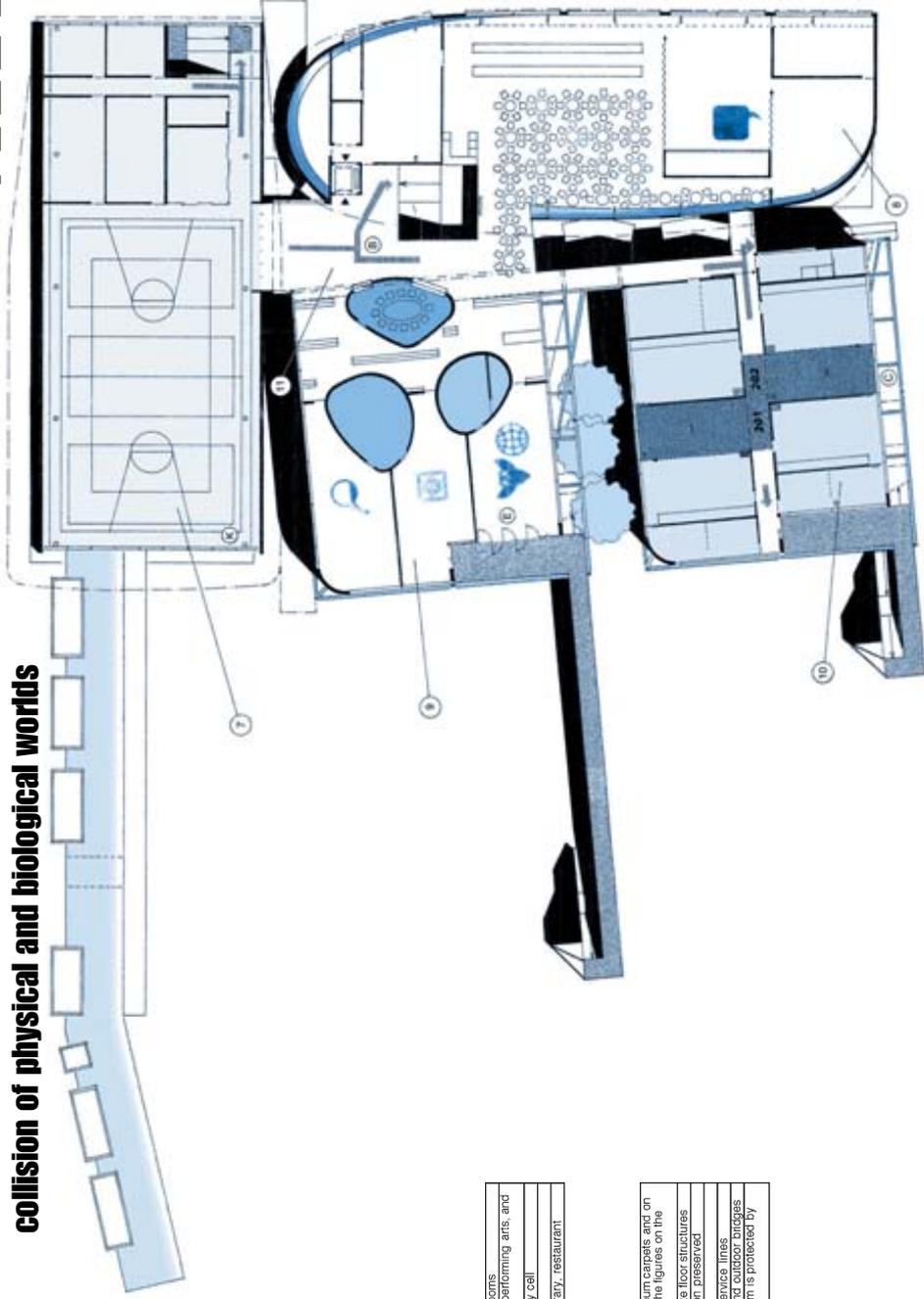
- 5 entrance lobby
- 6 administration and social rooms
- 7 science classroom
- 8 information processing, technical work
- 9 science classrooms: visual arts and textile work
- 10 home classroom and EHA (special class) cells
- 11 home classroom and project classroom cells

The existing trees have been preserved in as large extent as possible. The largest trees will be left to grow on their sites. It would be possible to spare, for example, three trees between the different building parts of the classroom cells, partially covered. I found this kind of preservation suitable for my *machinal, snobbist* attitude. Against the low building part on the yard side, there would be developed groups of planting, which would then continue as a winter-garden inside the glazed corridor. The idea is that these and the planted areas on the yard would be maintained by the pupils.

On the east side, adjacent to the parking lot, are the classrooms with service connections from the outside. Situated over this "base" form is a free-form piece, which includes the restaurant, together with its kitchen, as well as the performing arts classroom and the music classroom.

**extrovertiness**

# vessel



## collision of physical and biological worlds

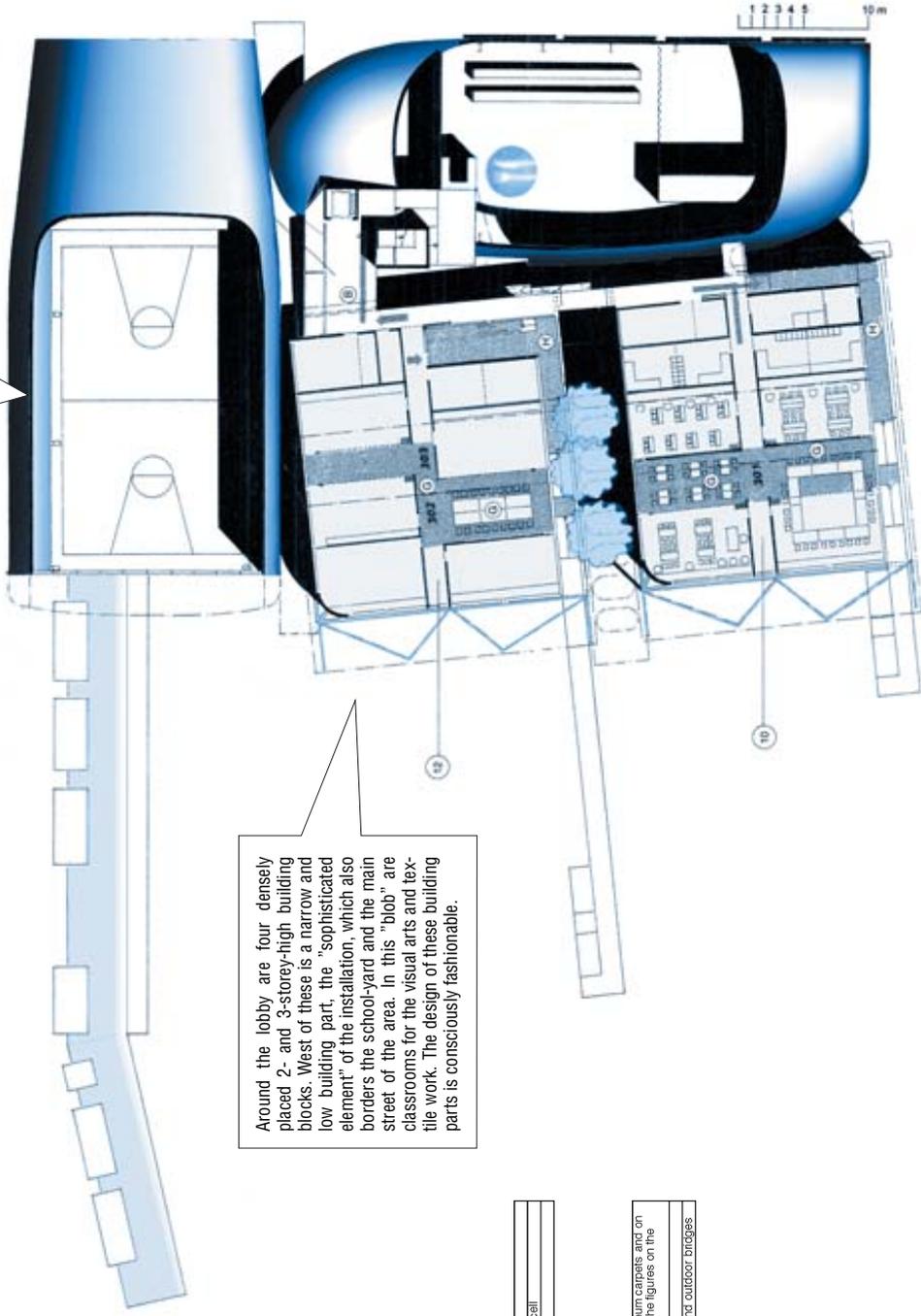
7	gymnasium with discussing rooms
8	including part of restaurant, performing arts, and music
9	chemistry, physics and biology cell
10	project classroom cell
11	"the heart of school": lobby, library, restaurant

B	patrons on the plastic and inlucium carpets, and on the outdoor stone pavements - the figures on the floor point to workgroup rooms
C	bearing exterior and intermediate floor structures
D	all the trees presented have been preserved
E	public information
F	board coating on the terraces and outdoor bridges
K	the window wall of the gymnasium is protected by an inside netting

## FIRST FLOOR

# vessel

On the north side of the lobby (along Leikosaarentie road) is another "base" block, which includes offices and social spaces. Above this is a shuttle-like piece transversing the "base", and includes the gymnasium with its dressing rooms.



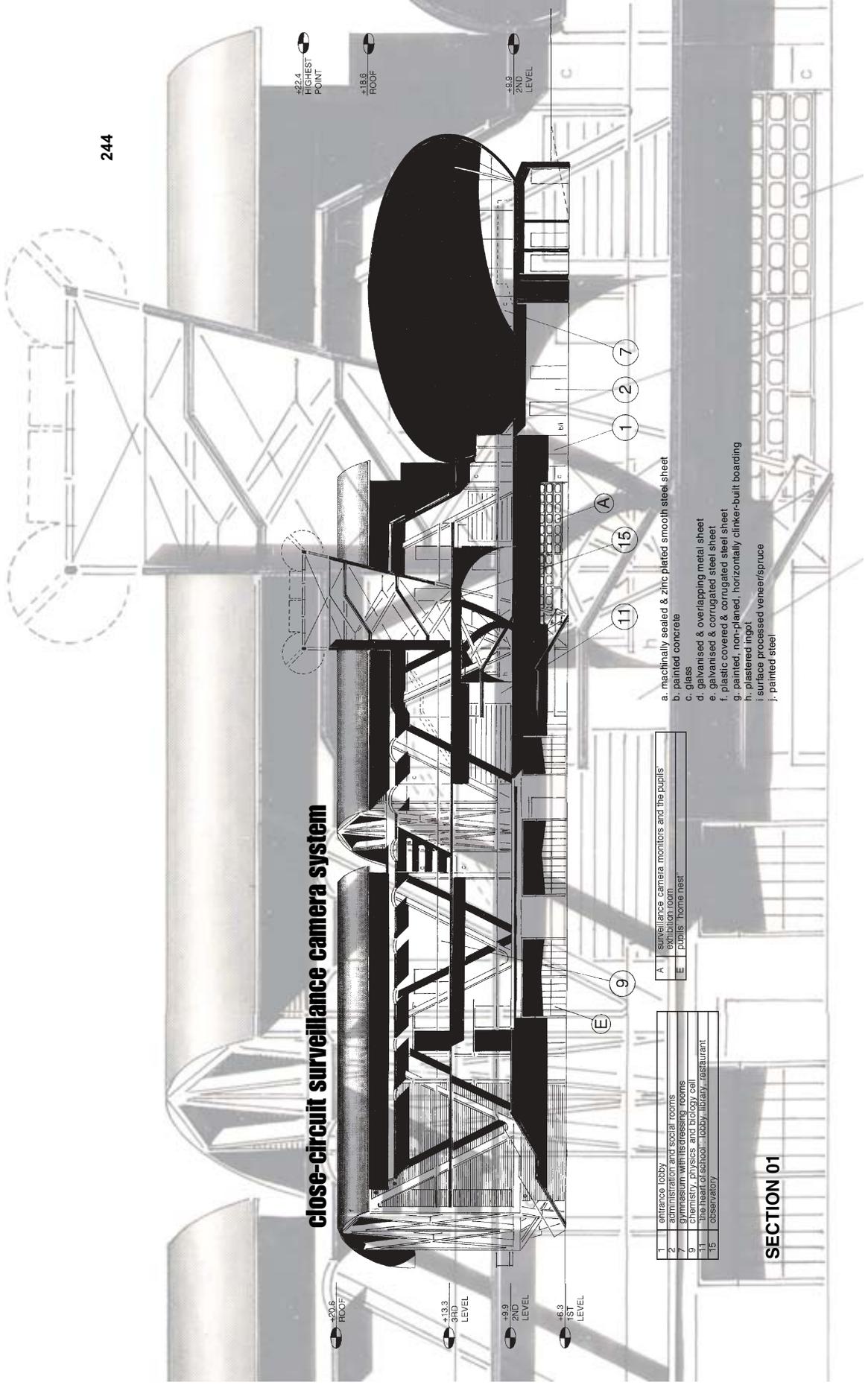
Around the lobby are four densely placed 2- and 3-storey-high building blocks. West of these is a narrow and low building part, the "sophisticated element" of the installation, which also borders the school-yard and the main street of the area. In this "blob" are classrooms for the visual arts and textile work. The design of these building parts is consciously fashionable.

10	project classroom cell
12	project and EFAclassrooms cell
13	lobby

B	patterns on the plastic and linoleum carpets and on the floor in the classrooms, the figures on the floor paint to workshop rooms
G	exemplary furnishing
H	board coating on the terraces and outdoor bridges

## SECOND FLOOR

**close-circuit surveillance camera system**



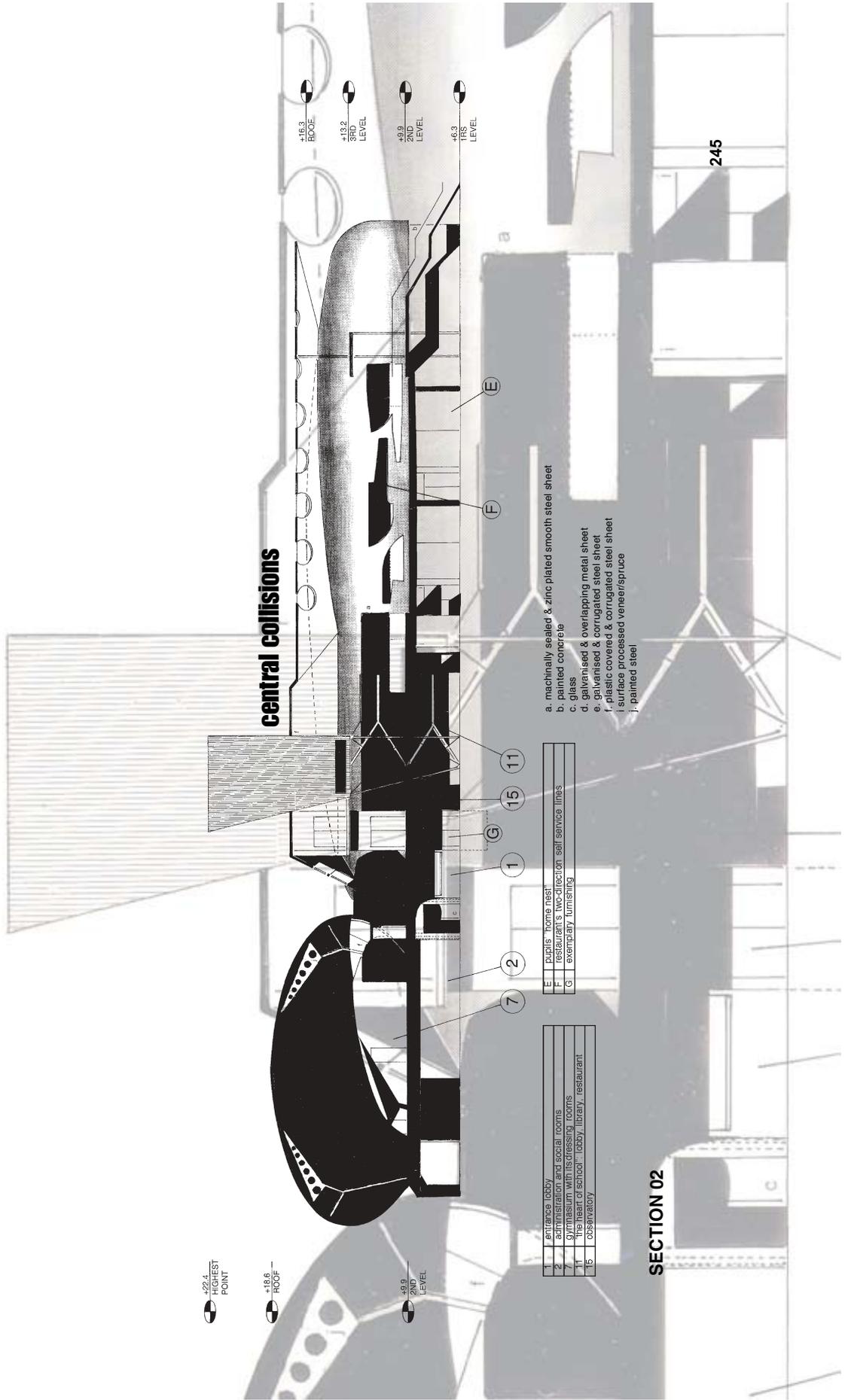
+20.6 ROOF  
 +13.3 3RD LEVEL  
 -9.9 2ND LEVEL  
 -6.3 1ST LEVEL  
 -42.4 HIGHEST POINT  
 -18.6 ROOF  
 -59.9 2ND LEVEL

A	surveillance camera monitors and the pupils' exhibition room
E	pupils' home nest

1	entrance lobby and social rooms
2	gymnasium with dressing rooms
7	chemistry, physics and biology cell
9	the heart of school - lobby, library, restaurant
11	observatory

- a. machinically sealed & zinc plated smooth steel sheet
- b. painted concrete
- c. glass
- d. galvanised & overlapping metal sheet
- e. galvanised & corrugated steel sheet
- f. plastic covered & corrugated steel sheet
- g. painted, non-plated, horizontally clinker-built boarding
- h. plastered ingot
- i. surface processed veneer/spruce
- j. painted steel

**SECTION 01**



+18.6  
ROOF

+18.3  
ROOF

+13.2  
3RD LEVEL

+9.9  
2ND LEVEL

+6.3  
1ST LEVEL

**central collisions**

1	entrance lobby
2	administration and social rooms
7	gymnasium with dressing rooms
11	"the heart of school": lobby, library, restaurant
15	observatory

E	pupils' home nest
F	restaurant's two-direction self-service lines
G	exemplary furnishing

- a. machinically sealed & zinc plated smooth steel sheet
- b. painted concrete
- c. glass
- d. galvanised & overlapping metal sheet
- e. galvanised & corrugated steel sheet
- f. plastic covered & corrugated steel sheet
- g. surface processed veneer/spruce
- h. painted steel

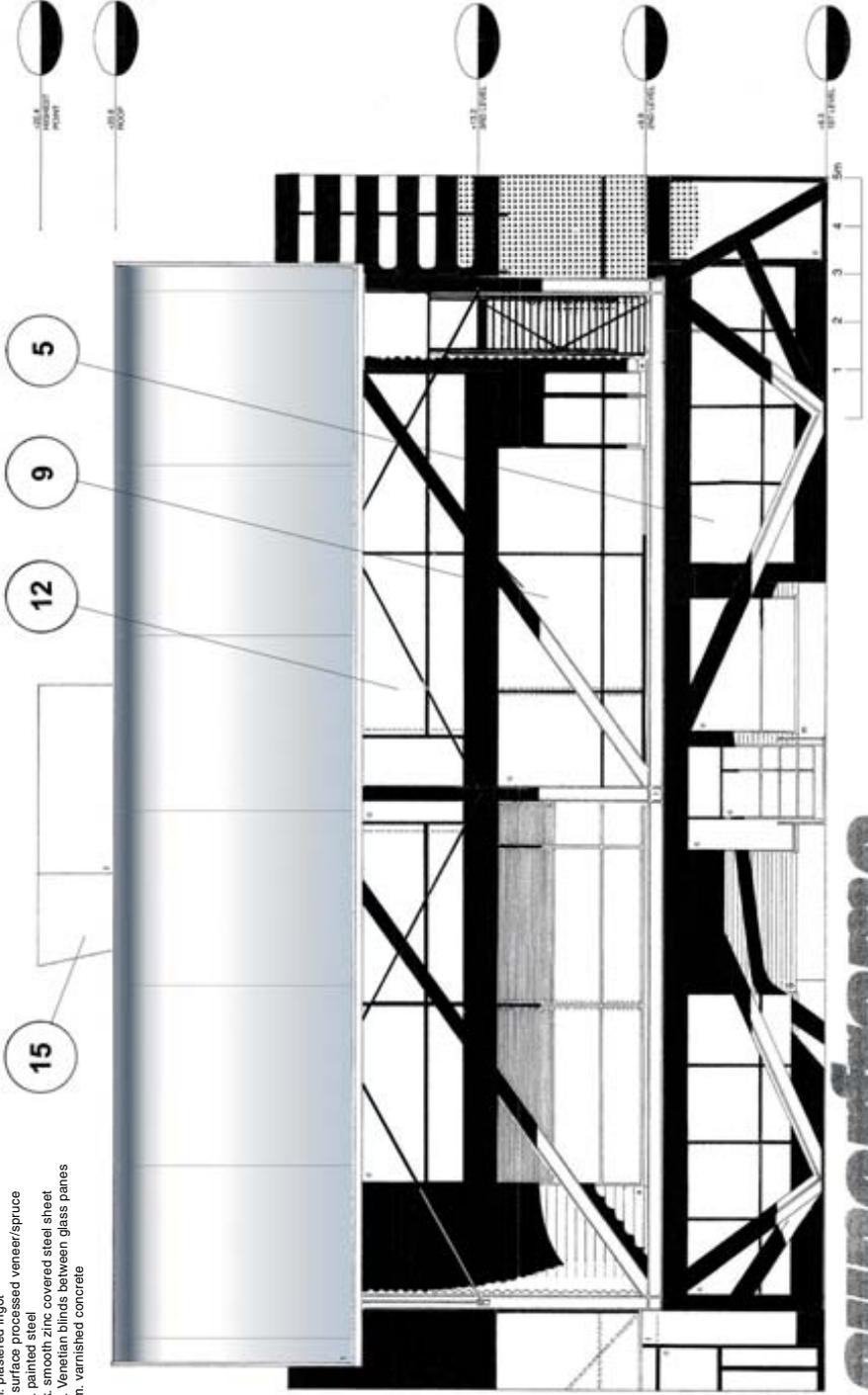
**SECTION 02**



- a. machinically sealed & zinc plated smooth steel sheet
- b. painted concrete
- c. glass
- d. galvanised & overlapping metal sheet
- e. galvanised & corrugated steel sheet
- f. plastic covered & corrugated steel sheet
- g. painted, non-plated, horizontally clinker-built boarding
- h. plastered ingot
- i. surface processed veneer/spruce
- j. painted steel
- k. smooth zinc covered steel sheet
- l. Venetian blinds between glass panes
- m. varnished concrete

5	home classroom and EHA (special class) cells
9	chemistry, physics and biology cell
12	project and EHA classrooms cell
15	observatory

**FACADE CAPTION**

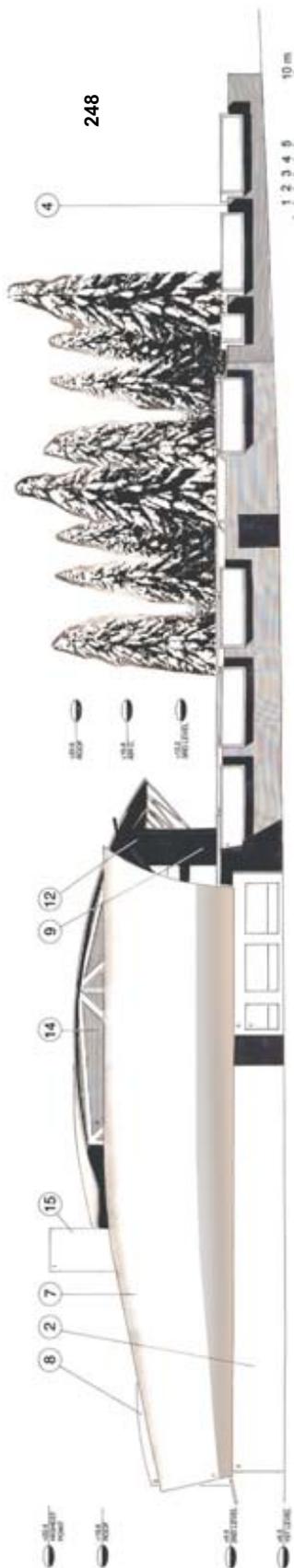


**superframe**

# vessel

The "heart" of the school – the area where the positive entanglements between the "customers" and the extraordinary actions often occur – is located in the middle of the building, at the core of the middle floor (i.e. the first floor). There the restaurant and the library together compose a unified open space, which spreads over the central lobby as a broad bridge. The signs on the floor have been scattered around the place with no apparent reason other than enchantment.





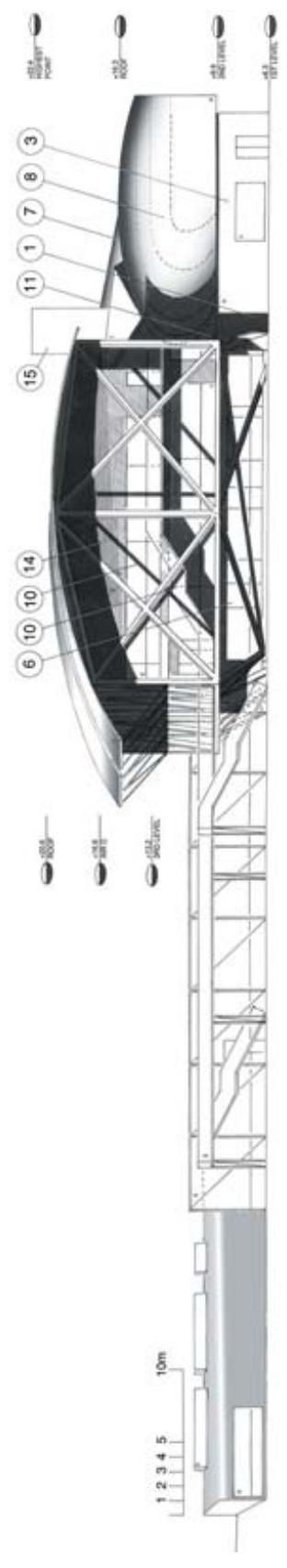
248

### information consumption entertainment leisure-time

2	administration and social rooms
4	science classrooms, visual arts and textile work
7	gymnasium with its dressing rooms
9	chemistry, physics and biology cell
12	project and EHA classrooms' cell
14	A/C-machinery room on the attic
15	observatory

- a. machinically sealed & zinc plated smooth steel sheet
- b. painted concrete
- c. glass
- d. galvanised & overlapping metal sheet
- e. galvanised & corrugated steel sheet
- f. plastic covered & corrugated steel sheet

### NORTH FACADE

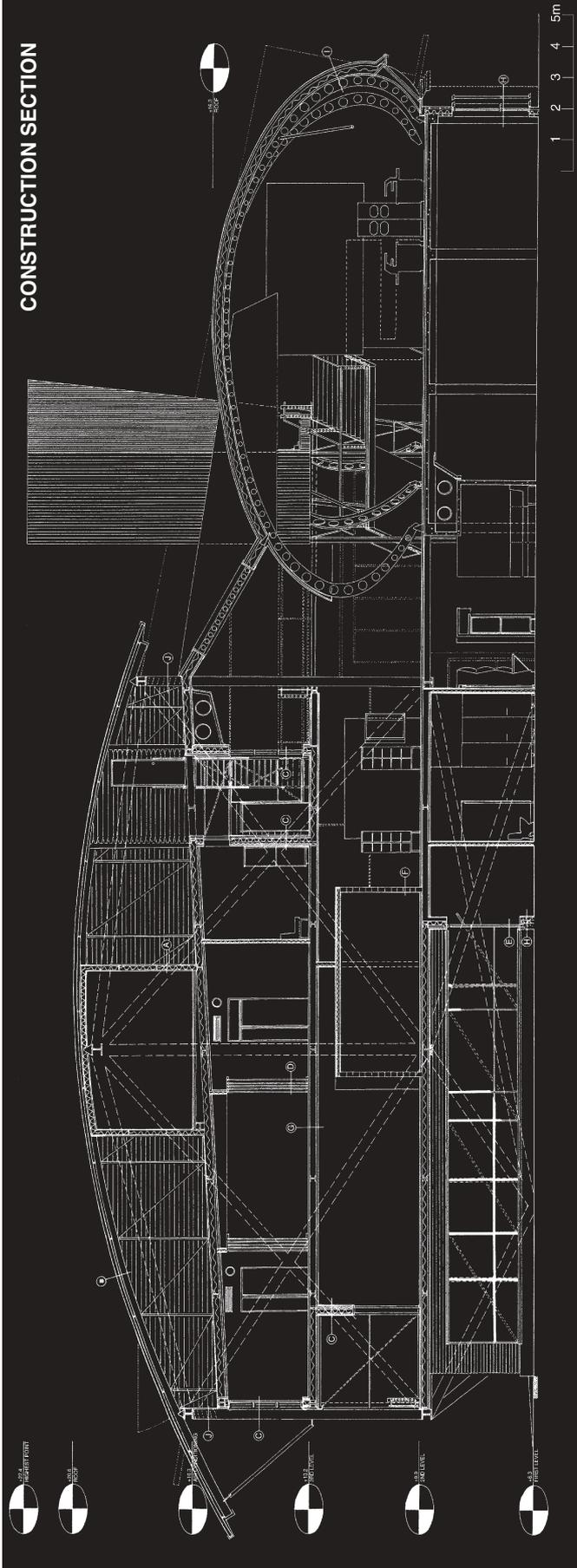


1	entrance lobby
3	science classrooms, domestic science
6	information processing, technical work
7	home classroom and project classroom cells
8	gymnasium with its dressing rooms
10	the adjoining part of restaurant, performing arts, and project classroom cell
11	'the heart of school' lobby, library, restaurant
14	A/C-machinery room on the attic
15	observatory

- a. machinically sealed & zinc plated smooth steel sheet
- b. painted concrete
- c. glass
- d. galvanised & overlapping metal sheet
- e. galvanised & corrugated steel sheet
- f. plastic covered & corrugated steel sheet
- g. painted, non-plated, horizontally clinker-built boarding
- j. painted steel

### SOUTH FACADE

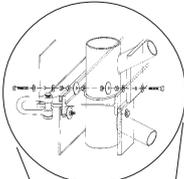
**CONSTRUCTION SECTION**



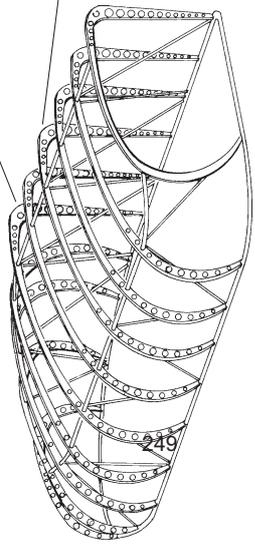
**CONSTRUCTIONS**

- A SHEET METAL CASSETTE WALL OF THE AIR CONDITIONING MACHINERY ROOM
- B STEEL CONSTRUCTION COVERED WITH CORRUGATED STEEL ROOFING OVER THE AIR CONDITIONING MACHINERY ROOM
- C OUTER WALL SUPPORTED BY THE STEEL SUPERSTRUCTURE AND THE STEEL BEAM GRIDS BY THE INTERMEDIATE FLOORS OF THE CLASSROOM CELLS
- D WALLS OF THE CLASSROOMS: STEEL SKELETON, INSULATION, DOUBLE COVERING BOARDING COVERED STEEL STRUCTURE WALL SUSPENDED FROM THE INTERMEDIATE FLOOR
- E LIGHT BRICK WALLS OF THE LIBRARY AND STORAGE 'ISLANDS'
- G INTERMEDIATE FLOOR STEEL BEAMS FIXED TO THE SUPERSTRUCTURE
- H THE CONCRETE BASEMENT OF THE CLASSROOM CELLS AND THE CONCRETE PEDESTAL OF THE RESTAURANT / MUSIC CLASSROOM / PERFORMING ARTS CLASSROOM BLOCK
- I MACHINERY SHEET COVERED STEEL SHEET COVERED METAL STRUCTURED OUTER WALL
- J GALVANISED STEEL COVERED ATIC WALL

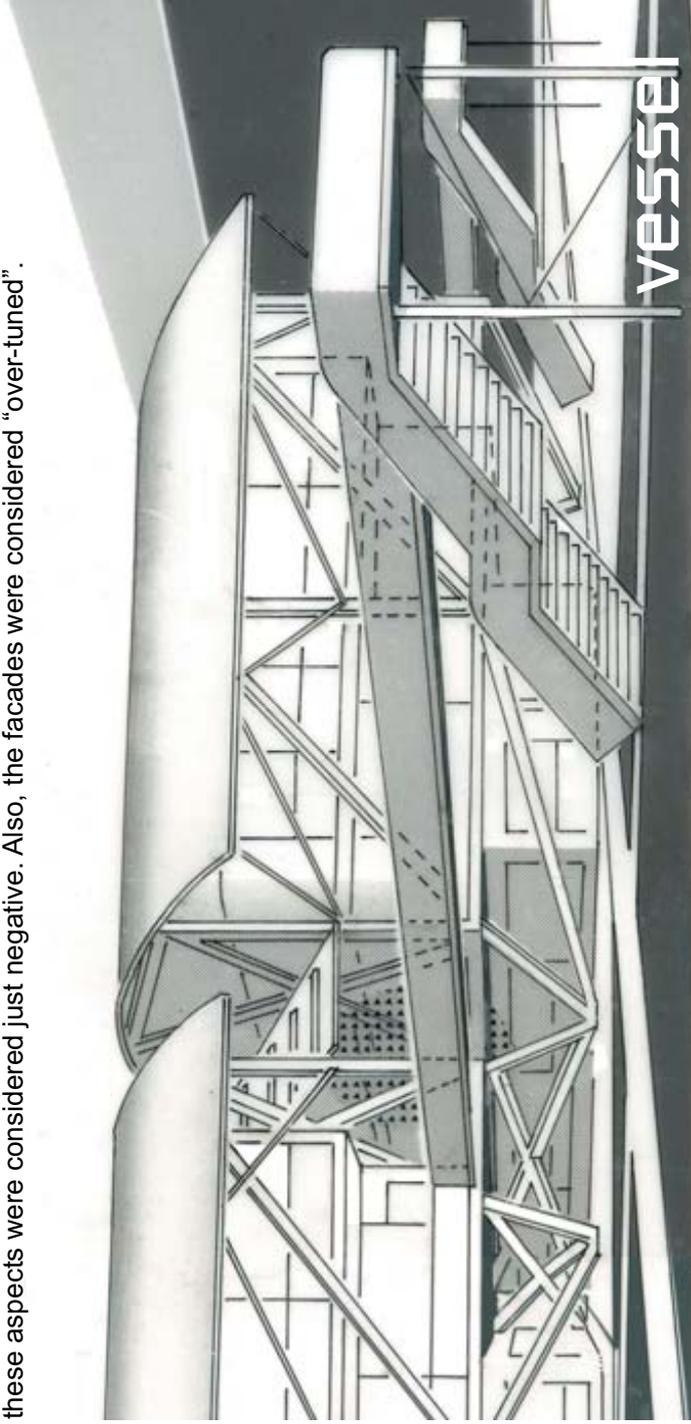
**accurate gesture**



**CONSTRUCTION PRINCIPLE OF THE RESTAURANT / PERFORMING ARTS / MUSIC PART**



My entry did not succeed in the competition, but the winning entry will actually be built within a few years. The jury considered my design “probably the most spectacular of the entries for a steel school “. Also the placement on the site was considered “original”, but the parts bordering the school-yard were regarded as being “somewhat loose”. In addition, the jury could not understand at all the “space industry” references. The main economic idea, compensating for possibly expensive free forms with a tight floor plan, went unnoticed by the jury, when both of these aspects were considered just negative. Also, the facades were considered “over-tuned”.



# STATION

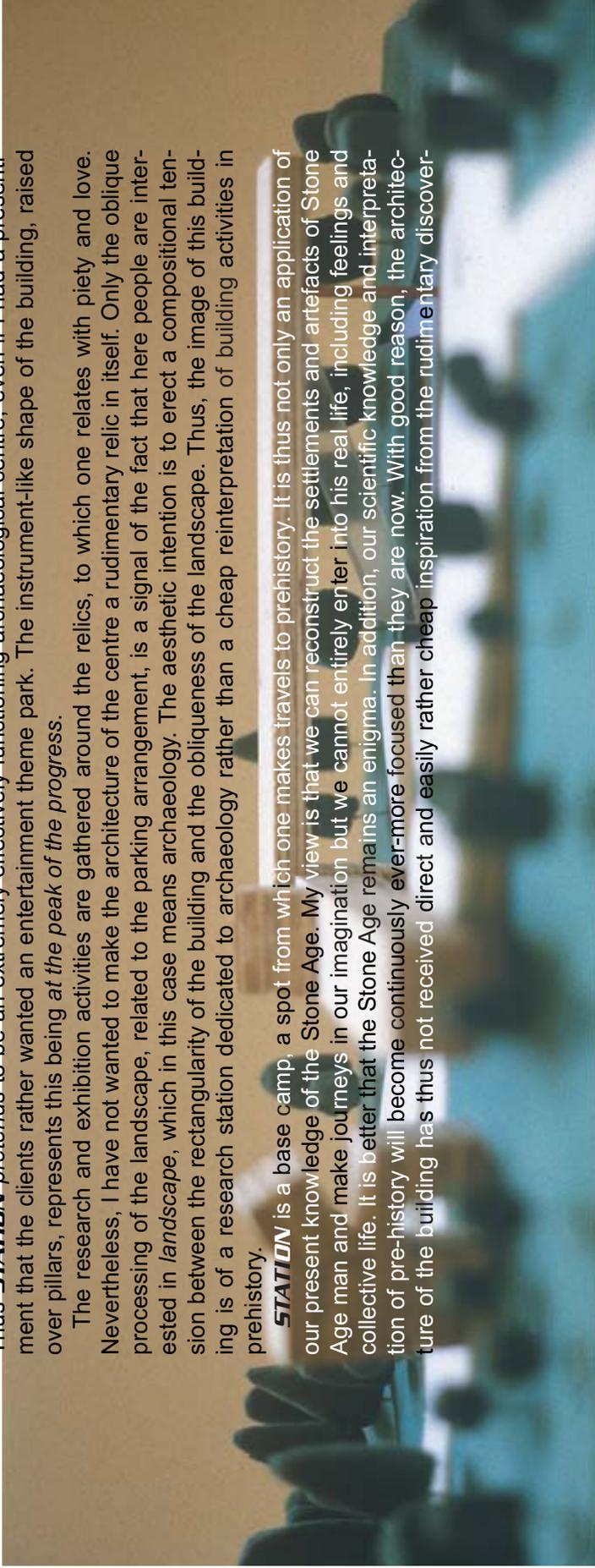
The Kierikki Archaeological Centre, Yli-Ji, Finland, 1999 (competition entry)

The *cool panic* strategy is applied in the Kierikki Archaeological Centre (1266m<sup>2</sup>) through ultra-flexibility and consequently ultra-conformity. The rectangular forms of its wings are not constitutionally committed to simplicity but instead to maximum transformability (and boringness, if desired). The whole constellation of the site is not a monument but a seductive whole.

I designed as sophisticated presuppositions for contemporary exhibition and research activities as possible. Thus **STATION** *pretends* to be an extremely effectively functioning archaeological centre, even if I had a presentiment that the clients rather wanted an entertainment theme park. The instrument-like shape of the building, raised over pillars, represents this being *at the peak of the progress*.

The research and exhibition activities are gathered around the relics, to which one relates with piety and love. Nevertheless, I have not wanted to make the architecture of the centre a rudimentary relic in itself. Only the oblique processing of the landscape, related to the parking arrangement, is a signal of the fact that here people are interested in *landscape*, which in this case means archaeology. The aesthetic intention is to erect a compositional tension between the rectangularity of the building and the obliqueness of the landscape. Thus, the image of this building is of a research station dedicated to archaeology rather than a cheap reinterpretation of building activities in prehistory.

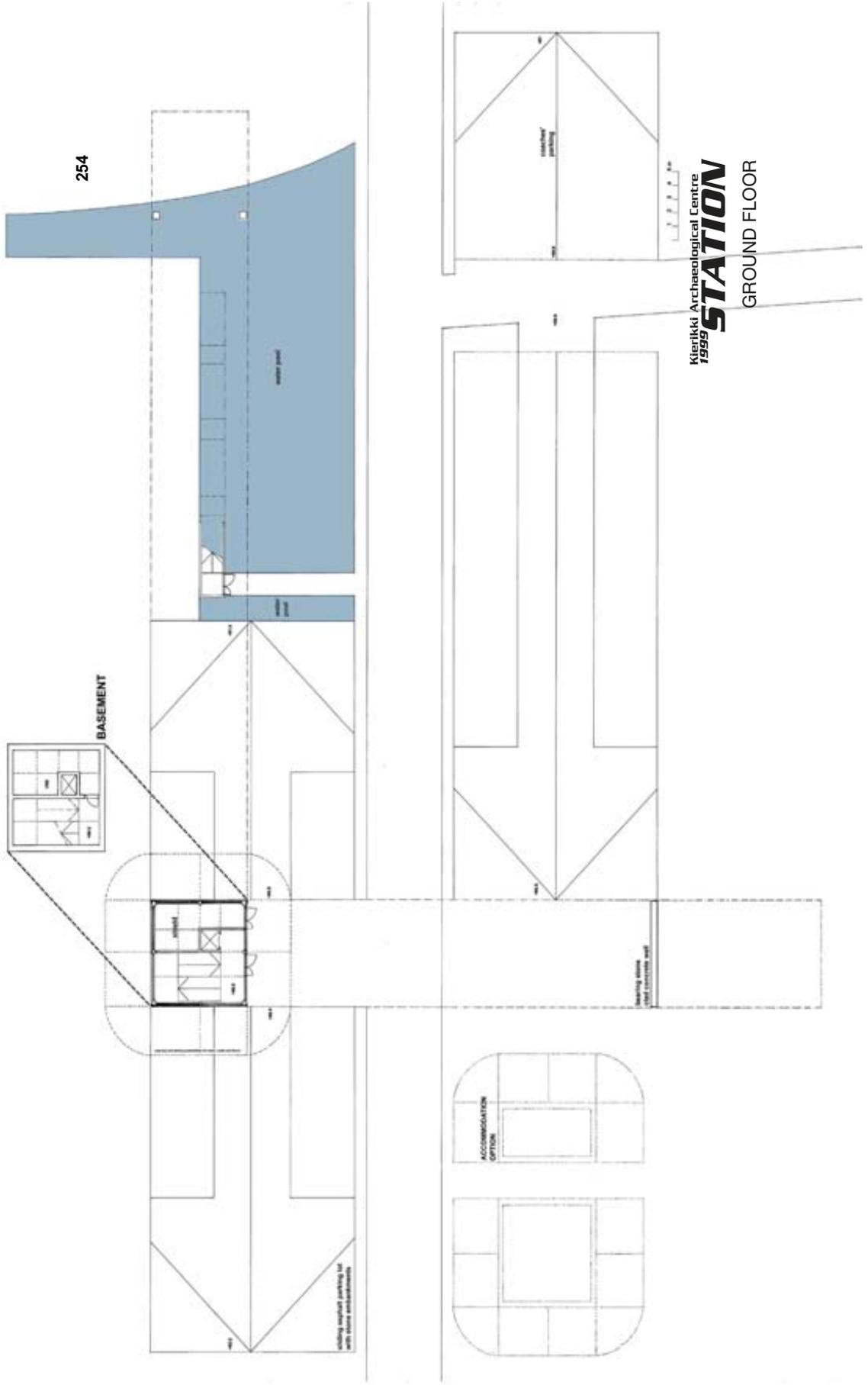
**STATION** is a base camp, a spot from which one makes travels to prehistory. It is thus not only an application of our present knowledge of the Stone Age. My view is that we can reconstruct the settlements and artefacts of Stone Age man and make journeys in our imagination but we cannot entirely enter into his real life, including feelings and collective life. It is better that the Stone Age remains an enigma. In addition, our scientific knowledge and interpretation of pre-history will become continuously ever-more focused than they are now. With good reason, the architecture of the building has thus not received direct and easily rather cheap inspiration from the rudimentary discover-

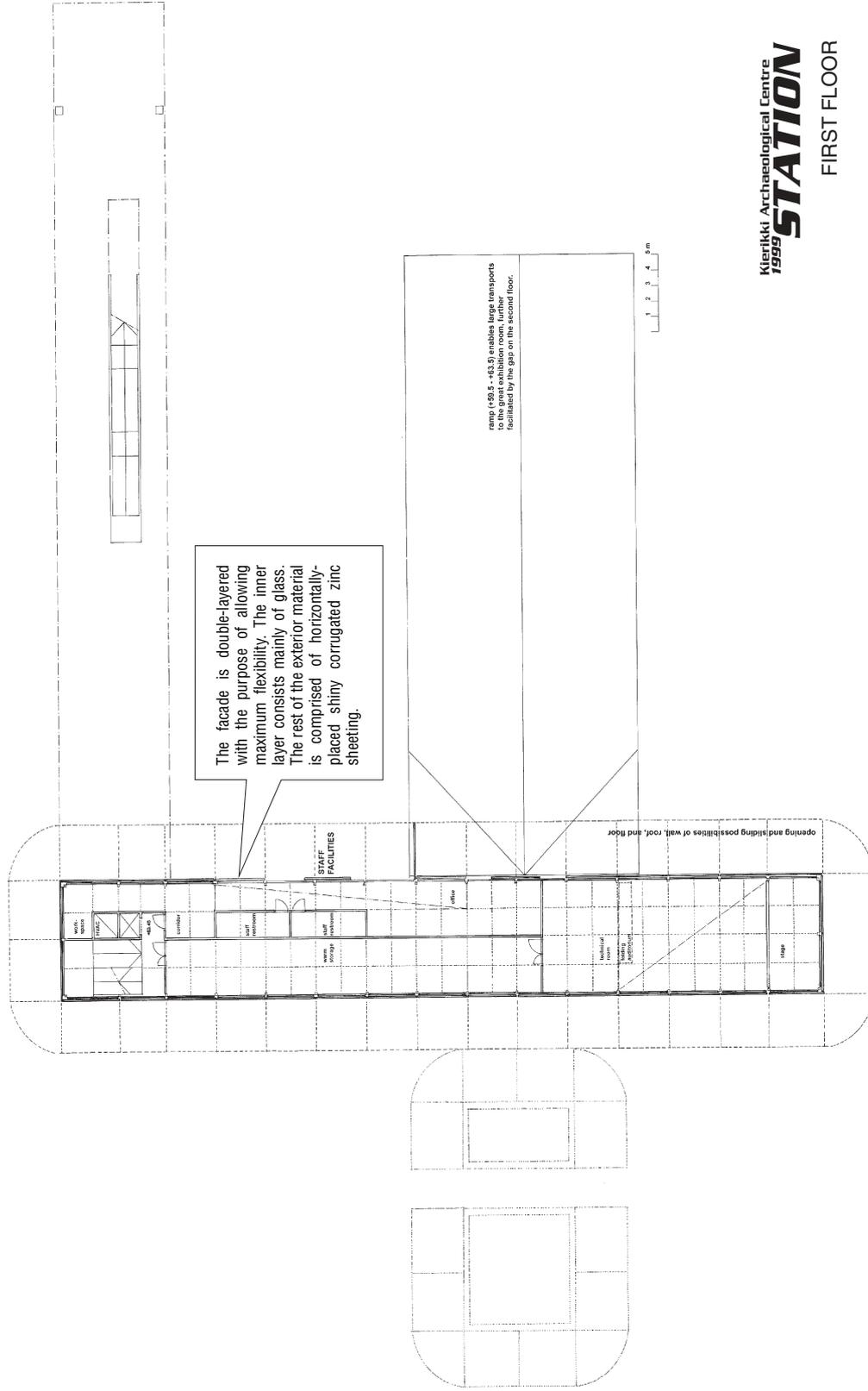


ies. **STATION** does not interpret the Stone Age, does not comment upon it and does not actually have a conversation with it because *it does not want to underestimate the scientific activities on the area*. The centre is a construction of our time and here it admits the impossibility to completely understand how people in prehistory lived, even if the intensively sympathetic understanding of the research station attitude in itself is already a slight romanticisation. In my proposal, the *Kierikki Archaeological Centre* is a centre on the scale of entities which astronauts and cosmonauts could build on alien planets, or which researchers assemble on remote areas, even if the brief anticipated a somewhat *Disneysque* version of archaeology.

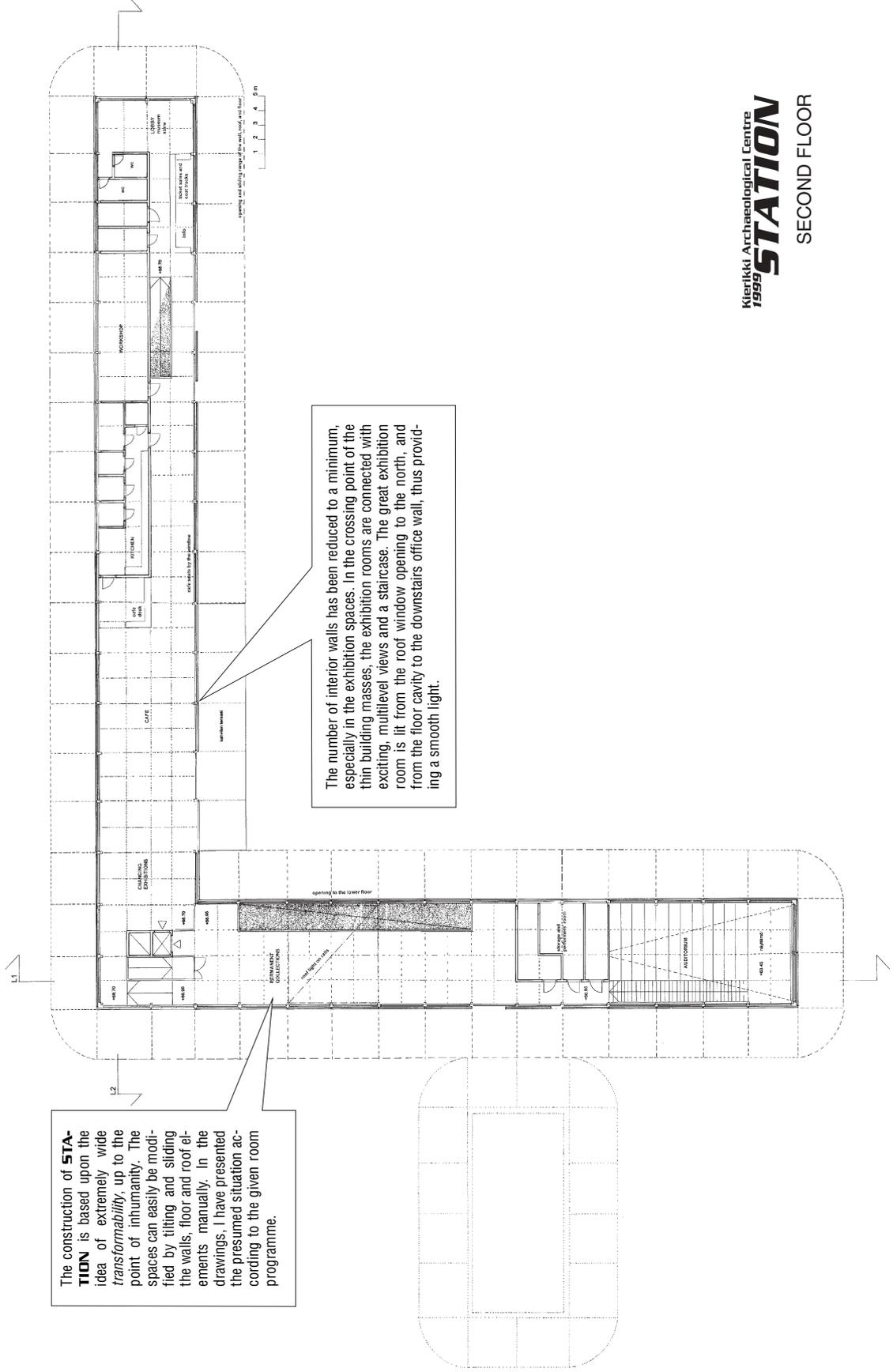
This competition entry received no comments from the jury.







Kierikki Archaeological Centre  
**1999 STATION**  
 FIRST FLOOR



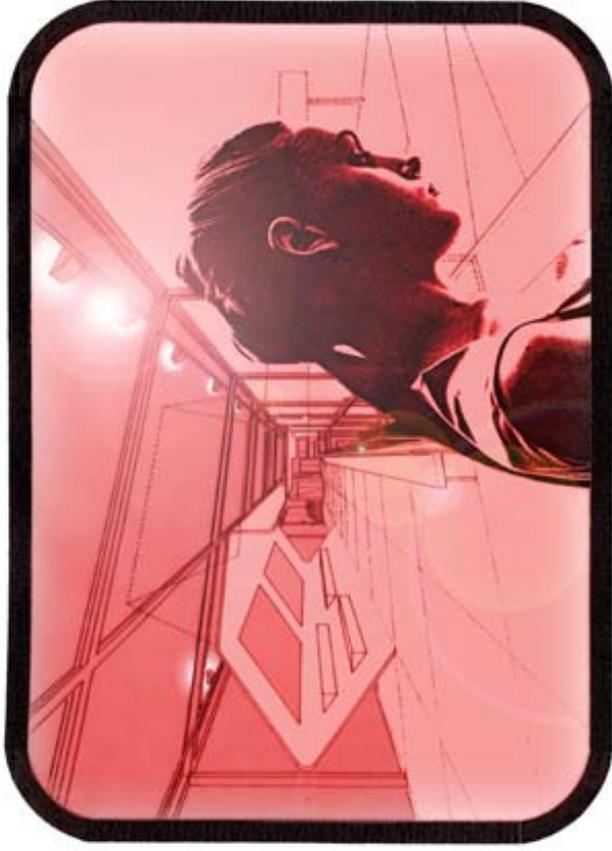
The construction of **STATION** is based upon the idea of extremely wide *transformability*, up to the point of inhumanity. The spaces can easily be modified by tilting and sliding the walls, floor and roof elements manually. In the drawings, I have presented the presumed situation according to the given room programme.

The number of interior walls has been reduced to a minimum, especially in the exhibition spaces. In the crossing point of the thin building masses, the exhibition rooms are connected with exciting, multilevel views and a staircase. The great exhibition room is lit from the roof window opening to the north, and from the floor cavity to the downstairs office wall, thus providing a smooth light.



EXHIBITION SPACE

option # 1

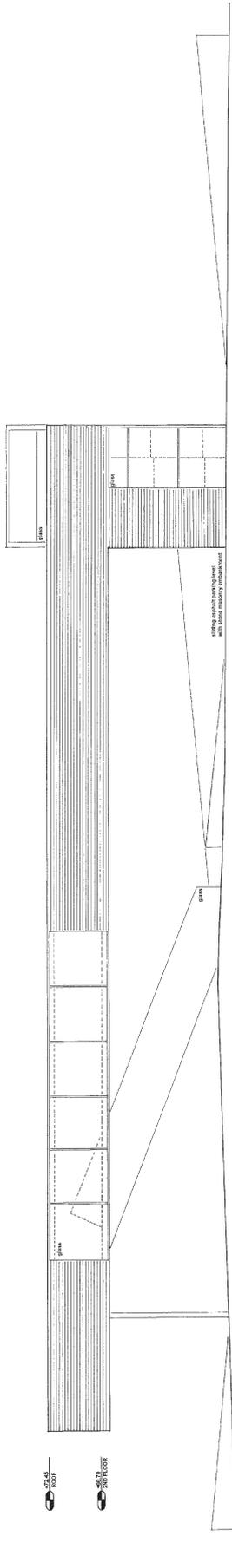


option #3: expressive separate exhibition wall where stands for artefacts

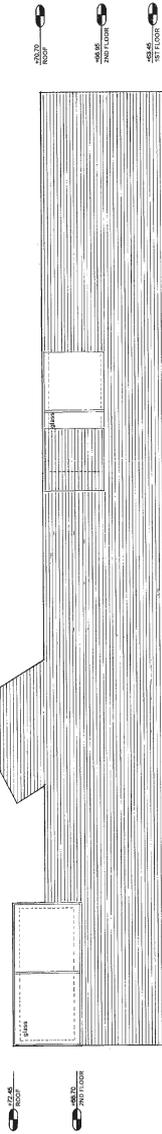


option # 2: constructions covered, lowered roof window

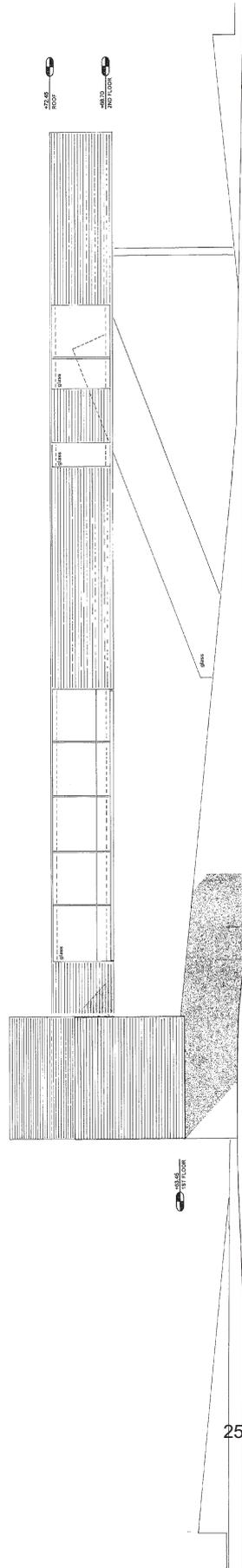
EXHIBITION SPACE



**NORTH FACADE**



**WEST FACADE**



**SOUTH FACADE**

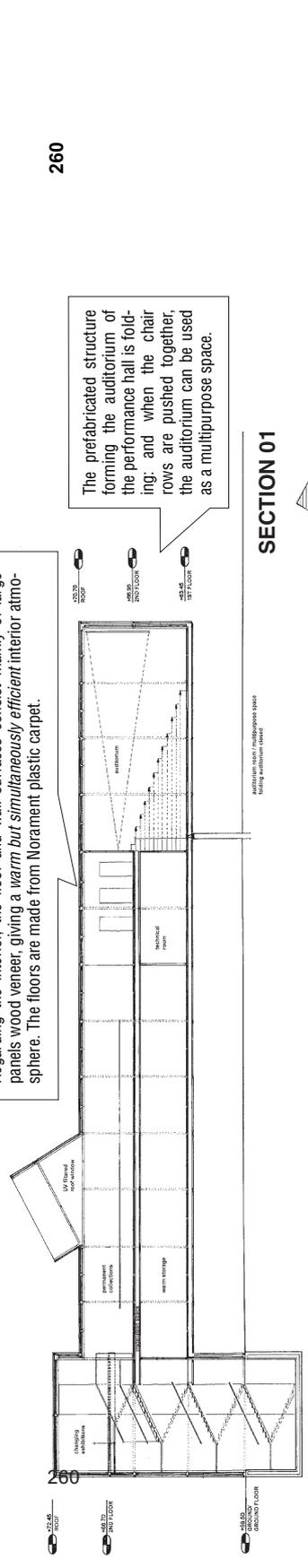
07.05 ROOF  
08.10 2ND FLOOR

07.05 ROOF  
08.10 2ND FLOOR  
08.20 GROUND FLOOR

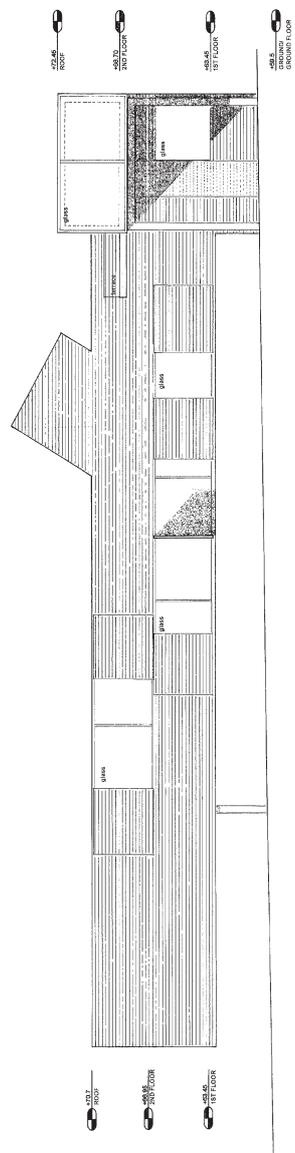
07.05 ROOF  
08.10 2ND FLOOR

Regarding the interior, the floor and wall surfaces consist mainly of large panels wood veneer, giving a warm but *simultaneously efficient* interior atmosphere. The floors are made from Norament plastic carpet.

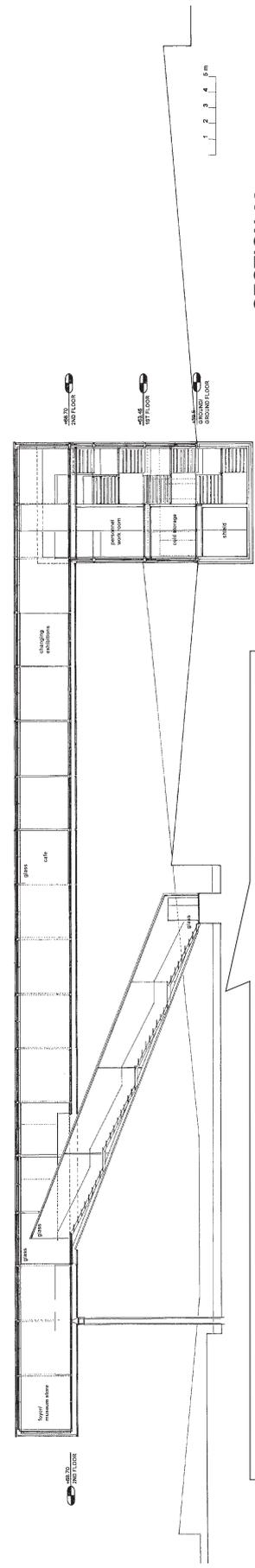
The prefabricated structure forming the auditorium of the performance hall is folding; and when the chair rows are pushed together, the auditorium can be used as a multipurpose space.



SECTION 01



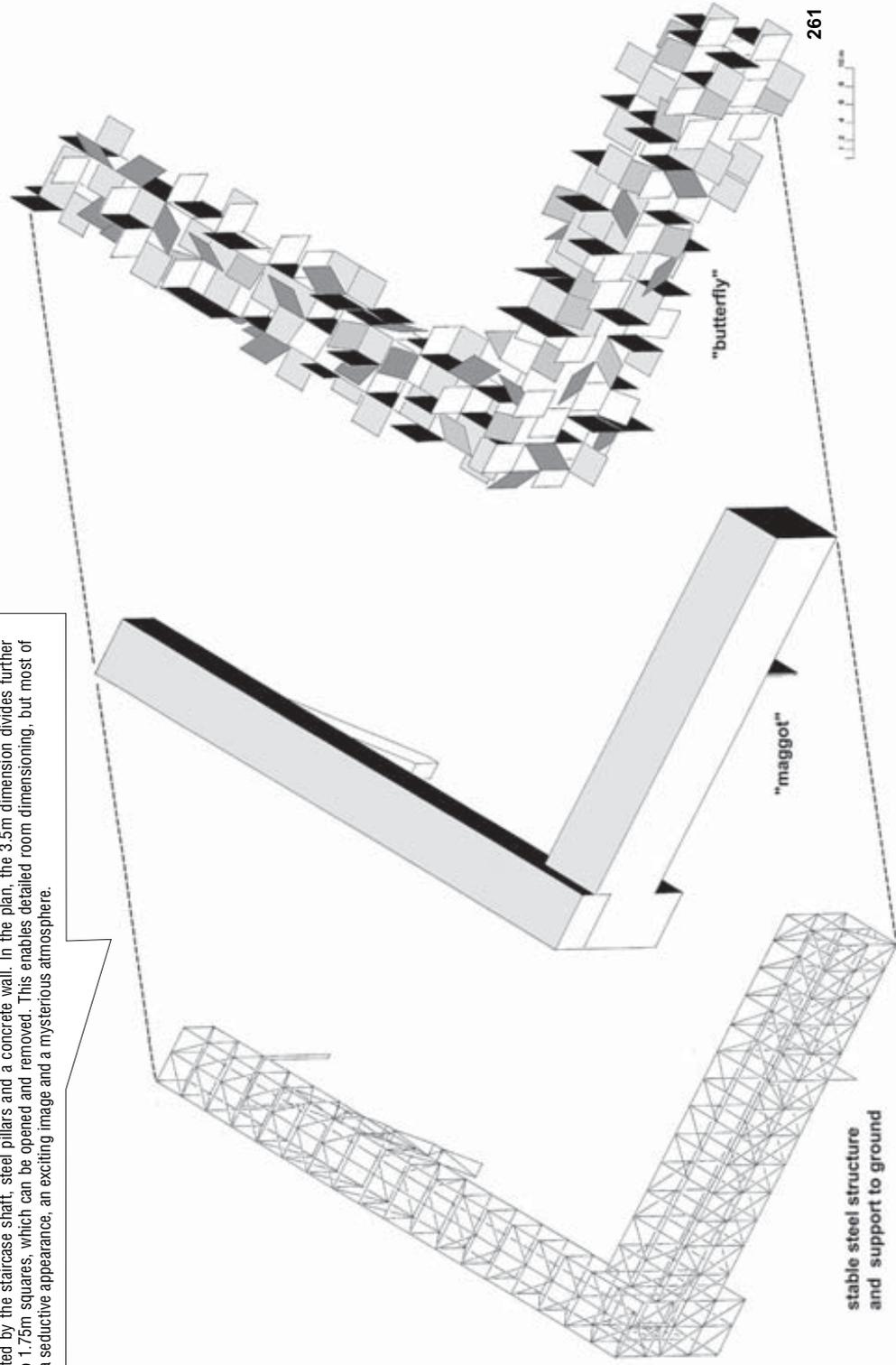
EAST FACADE



SECTION 02

The building is held up on pillars, with the exception of the separate boat store. A staircase is situated in the crossing of the cantilevered building parts. There one can also find the staff and handicapped entrance. The lift functions also as the service connection to the kitchen. Other visitors use the glazed staircase, which "crashes" into the main lobby.

The building consists of 3.5m x 3.5m composite element surfaces, which can be slid and turned arbitrarily. The bearing construction is based upon two steel bridge constructions, sticking out in two directions. They also divide into 3.5m squares, strengthened with the obligatory diagonal bracing. The bridge constructions are supported by the staircase shaft, steel pillars and a concrete wall. In the plan, the 3.5m dimension divides further into 1.75m squares, which can be opened and removed. This enables detailed room dimensioning, but most of all a seductive appearance, an exciting image and a mysterious atmosphere.



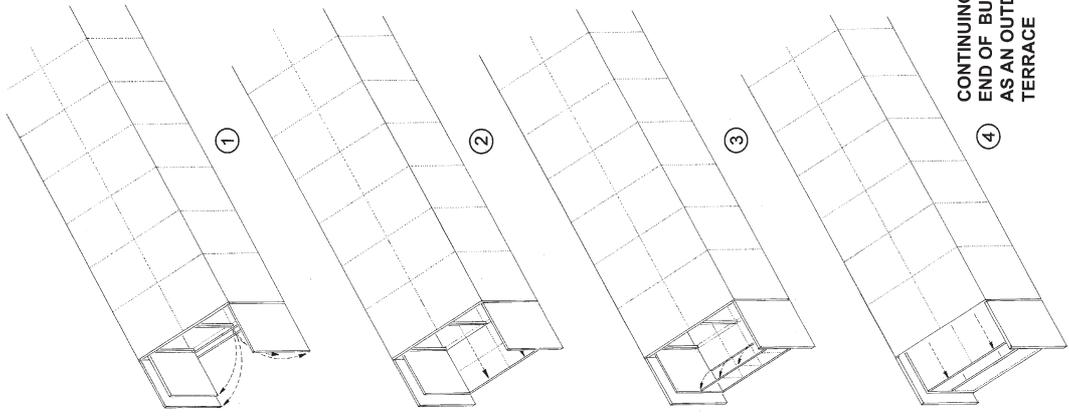
261

"butterfly"

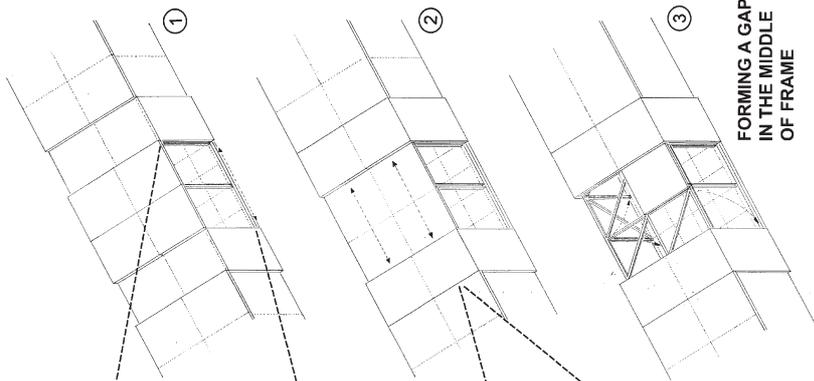
"maggot"

stable steel structure  
and support to ground

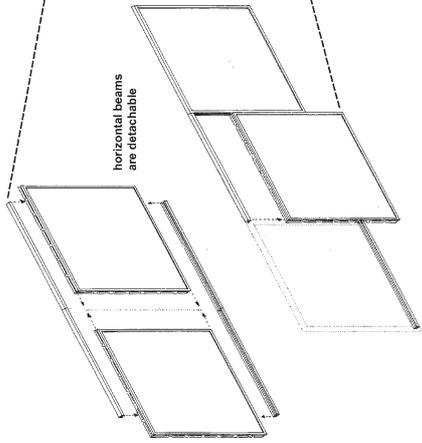




CONTINUING THE  
END OF BUILDING  
AS AN OUTDOOR  
TERRACE

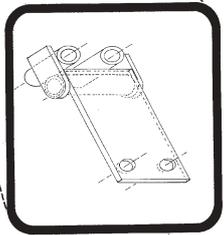


FORMING A GAP  
IN THE MIDDLE  
OF FRAME



horizontal beams  
are detachable

SLIDE PRINCIPLE  
OF FACADE ELEMENTS



DETACHABLE  
HINGE



Kierikki Archaeological Centre  
**STATION**



# INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE

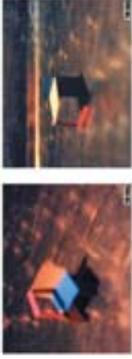
## Habitare Furniture Competition Entry, 1999

The playful view taken here is that the modernist idea of flexibility was perhaps never carried out thoroughly enough, not even in furniture design. The importance of flexibility becomes increasingly emphasised in the information society, where that which *happens* is much more important than that which *lasts* – and also more important than that which is *solid*. My principle of metamorphosis defines the home and its furniture no longer as something static or even flexible, but as something more: as something constantly changing and re-emerging in new configurations. Accordingly, my furniture system is more flexible than the definitions and identities of furniture can ever become. The name “Interactive Experience” is an enigma. It refers to the user’s own input in designing and constructing the furniture of three available components. One could say there is an “interactive capacity”, like with *Lego*, in these components. Compared to the previous furniture assembly kits, the advantage of this scheme is that it has a very small number of different parts, yet still allowing the maximum number of different possibilities. Besides, it is funny. Ultimately, the system enables an “interactive environment”, with only three different parts. You can create your own furniture. Ecologically, **INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE** can pass from one generation to the next.

To emphasise the panic of metamorphosis, **INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE** is predominately anti-design, somewhat boring, spreading intense “normality” when applied excessively.

This competition entry received no comments from the jury.

**"INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE"**



The minimalist ideas of flexibility were never learned out thoroughly enough.  
 In the information society, that which happens is much more important than that which lasts -- and also that which is solid.  
 The principle of metamorphosis defines home and its furniture no longer as something static but constantly changing and re-emerging in new configurations.



**INTERACTIVE CAPACITY**

The industrial plywood used in the construction comes in a large array of different surface layers and colours: phenol film, polyester hearts, etc., and they are all acceptable in this design.

**1. board**



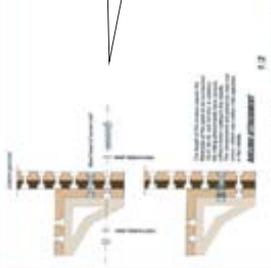
**2. bar**



**3. connector**



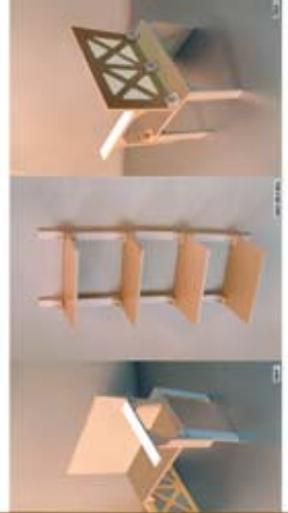
The holes in the plywood are made by a programmable CNC processor. The rolling attachments have screws without cutting in the middle, which are strengthened with rubber rolls adjusted in the middle.



**INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE**

1.2

Technical data: The holes in the plywood are made by a programmable CNC processor. The rolling attachments have screws without cutting in the middle, which are strengthened with rubber rolls adjusted in the middle.



**INTERACTIVE ENVIRONMENT**



*Minimal Assembly*



*Add three different parts!*



*Create your own furniture!*



*Another possibility!*



*From one generation to the next!*

In these images I have illustrated the following possible furniture made by **INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE**: a shelf for a wall, two different types of chairs, a bed fitting for a mattress, a bed, three different types of table, a box, three different cupboards, and a freestanding shelf. Ultimately, it is possible to create "a total environment" of the components, as illustrated in the last image.

# AirSCAPE SCENARIO

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## Central Glass Competition Entry, 1999

The theme in the Japanese 1999 Central Glass International Architectural Design Competition was “An Architecture which is Kind to the Earth”. The jury demanded a long-term view of how architecture can create a better relationship between mankind and the global environment. There were no restrictions on the building type, or its size. I made this competition entry in collaboration with architect Sebastien Tison. Our idea was to take ecology as a game.

Here there is again flexibility and portability taken to extremes: the aim is to create a versatile building system that enables “retail” housing over the roofs of existing cities, taking advantage of the prevailing superstructures. The project relates to architecture as a socio-economic system rather like a biological or technological system. This was a “wrong” choice in this competition. A house “kind to the Earth” is, in our sense, additional housing which shelters the Earth by leaving areas presently in a natural state as they are, while intensifying existing built-up areas. The social beneficiality lies also in the project’s capacity to generate a positive feeling, rather than to only define a specific object.

A little convincing determination: through macro-economic calculations, one can prove that new construction costs 2.3-2.5 times as much as extensions to existing buildings. The cost of one additional floor for an existing building is only on average approximately 3,300 Euros per apartment. By building over the existing housing blocks, one can save on average approximately 13,000 Euros per apartment!<sup>420</sup> Extensions in buildings are also a means for fitting the old apartments with new lifts. Therefore, buildings can become better adapted for the needs of the elderly and invalid people. In this way, one can attain great savings in health care expenditure, because one communal bed costs society about 50,000 Euros a year and the costs of home nursing are only one third of that. The cost

<sup>420</sup> *Kiinteistöposti* (“Real Estate Post” – in Finnish) 3/99, 13.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.* See also *Helsingin Sanomat* [in Finnish] 30th May 1999, D5.

of a lift is not necessarily overwhelming to the owners of the houses. Presently, a lift costs on average 83,000 Euros, but, for example, in Finland, the state supports lift installation projects to old buildings by 40%. The new lift will also increase the value of the building.<sup>421</sup> Simultaneously, the system eases urban problems by creating new floor area where it is needed. The lack of apartments and the enormous prices and rents are common problems in the centres of major cities. This solution could, at first, be ideal for student housing which has a more adventurous spirit than housing in average. In practical terms, many of the existing universities are located in the city centres, too. In addition, the height provides an acoustic and traffic pollution shield for the inhabitants.

The problem of adaptation of the existing buildings is solved in our entry by separating the existing buildings from the new components by an empty buffer and curved lower surfaces. The **AirSCAPE** begins where the old city ends.

There are three scales in the **AirSCAPE SCENARIO**, depending upon the type of supporting construction and the vertical traffic system:

1. *A detached self-standing unit*, installed over an existing building. This causes practically no changes at all to the prevailing structures, because it is light and self-sufficient. The small scale perhaps best fulfils the aims of the project by creating the most striking challenge (through miniaturisation) to its surroundings. One capsule could even be lifted over, say, the Finnish Parliament House.
2. *A parasite block made of prefabricated parts*, supported on the existing structure. The old lifts and staircases are just extended upwards.
3. *The big scale entity*, with its own ground-supported construction and vertical traffic system from the ground level. This biggest scale can form a whole **AirSCAPE**, when the separate clusters will be connected to each other with bridges from roof to roof. Then there can also be cafés and other services over the roof level.

In order to bring the system to the customers, it is actually a composition of retail products, a logical continuation of the commodification of society, rather than a building in a traditional sense. Our proposed scheme is one of the many possibilities this idea of detached roofscape extensions enables. In this sense, the principle is closer to a symbolic venture than a systematic or structural entity. Consequently, the scheme affirms both positive and negative ideas surrounding it. We propose one "script" of metamorphosis, based on the idea of combinations of a limited number of pre-fabricated parts. These parts could be sold at retail outlets. The idea is that one can go to a shop and buy these parts and compose one's own house from them.

The reason why this kind of housing does not yet get built very often lies partially in the tradition of architecture. Building, as traditional architecture envisages it, has structural problems in its relationship to consumers and social exchange because the changed commercial environment and the increased importance of consumption is suppressed in conventional architectural thinking. Thus it is essential to develop a marketing strategy for this kind of idea. There is a clear need for reasonably priced housing in city centres. Anyway, more importantly, in modern marketing, one must also create new needs for the consumers before they raise their eyebrows. That is why these aspects become essential in **AirSCAPE SCENARIO**: advertisement and the creation or lease of trademarks, developing different products with different consumer profiles.

In the end, **AirSCAPE SCENARIO** transcends the principle of needs. Also this text is only a persuasive determination for the jury. Beneath the surface of this tautology is the fact that nobody would like to live over the existing city roofs if it was not enchanting. Think of all the beautiful views, the stylish penthouse image of that kind of living and the atmosphere of living closer to nature: the clouds and the winds.

The competition was won by a proposal to cover urban regional trains with a new "ecological" material. This metal alloy would absorb pollution from the air and deposit it in tunnels. The idea was based on possibilities in electro-magnetic physics: the brightly lit tunnels would wipe the dust off the trains. Yet one remained wondering where the architectural aspect was, lost in this exaggerated jubilee of ecology. That entry was perhaps a better example of *cool panic* than ours. We received no comments from the competition jury for our entry.

The competition entry document: The picture presents a part of an interior of one housing unit, with a curving floor/wall and a view out of the window towards a busy cityscape. On the floor one sees the construction of the building units and their combinations as scale models. The first row presents the different retail elements. The elements include four different folded and straight plates of composite surfaces. One can attach individual accessories into the holes in the elements: boxes, doors, windows, etc. On the second row are some of the housing blocks one can create by combining the elements. The idea is that the gables are left open, making it possible to link the units together, or to cover them with glass. The glass walls are to be made of glass panes and aluminium window profiles cut on site by the customer herself/himself. Additional internal walls and floors, made from easy-to-cut hollow structures, can be added within these enclosures. These would be available from retail outlets. On the third row are the combinations of these shells: a row of identical objects and a row of different units. On the fourth row are the three different scales of the "clusters" and their "host" buildings, and the three different principles of support and vertical traffic.

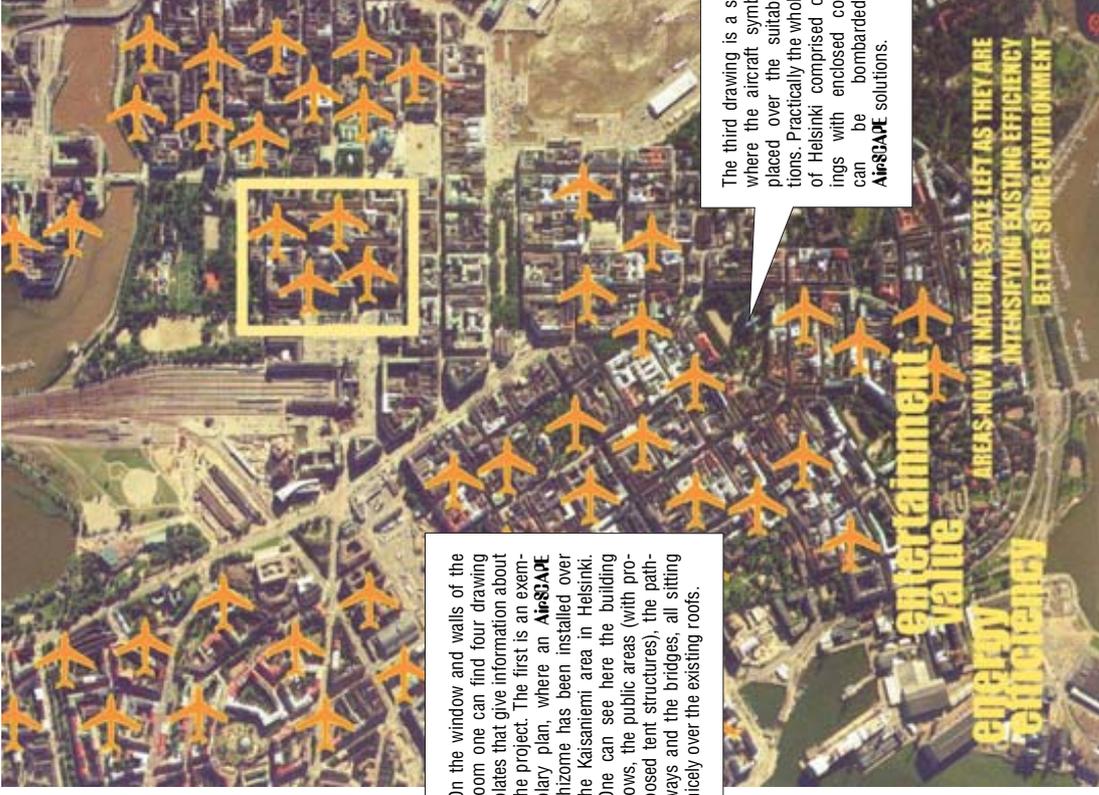


# Airscade



- THREE ISSUES**
1. Integrated Self-Resilient Use
  2. Passive Design
  3. By Tech Only
- even support and a shift, or even...  
integrated framework

3 SCALES OF CONTEXT

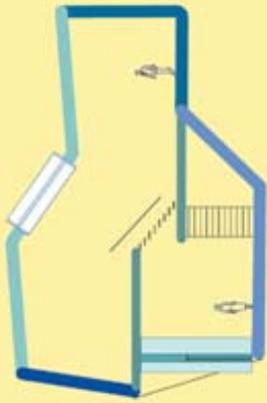


On the window and walls of the room one can find four drawing plates that give information about the project. The first is an exemplary plan, where an AirSCAPE rhizome has been installed over the Katsaniemi area in Helsinki. One can see here the building rows, the public areas (with proposed tent structures), the pathways and the bridges, all sitting nicely over the existing roofs.

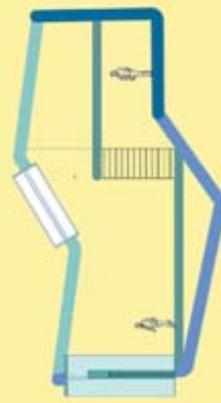
The third drawing is a site plan, where the aircraft symbols are placed over the suitable locations. Practically the whole centre of Helsinki comprised of buildings with enclosed courtyards can be bombarded with AirSCAPE solutions.

# correlation between price and quality

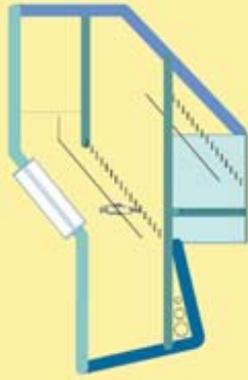
OUR COMPONENTS ARE ONE OF MANY  
DIFFERENT POSSIBILITIES



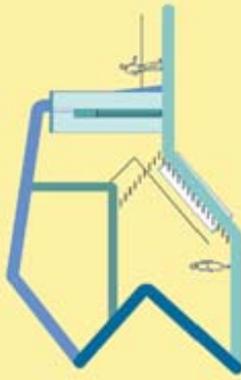
ADAPTION SOLVED BY BUFFER ZONE AND  
CURVED LOWER SURFACES



safe!



innovativity  
business



pre-manufactured



STRUCTURAL WALL ELEMENT  
material: steel and plastic



The second image over the wall  
presents different cross-section  
principles for the proposed  
housing units.

## A reflexive examination of the design projects

In the previous case studies, the question was whether an architecture with challenging, visible symbolic exchange relations is at all possible. Simultaneously, they tackled the difficulty of using Baudrillard's social critique in architecture. If Baudrillard's idea of symbolic exchange is taken in its strictest sense, an architect only has a *duty* and that duty is to design and plan architecture. That does not leave anything for freedom or creativity. When there is a demand for duties in symbolic exchange, all restrictions and borders will be abandoned. This is the problem in "adapting" Baudrillard literally to architecture: eventually anything goes as long as somebody enjoys it.

I avoided this problem by putting Baudrillard's theory in the context of Critical Theory (where the issues of disenchantment and the loss of reciprocity became central) and in the context of how Baudrillard describes the masses' beneficial, "fatal" modes of action.

I was surprised by the radicalness of the outlines I had to give my design "method" in order for it to be in accordance with Baudrillard's analysis of the transmodern hypersimulation; the *only* ethics left for design concerned social recognition, reciprocity, particularity and solidarity in peculiarly un-individualistic and non-symbolising manners. The question became about using a suitable *attitude* when designing.

I consciously adopted the masses' attitudes of *machinal snobbism* and *cool panic* in order to restore the seductive function and reciprocity in architecture, and I used certain "challenges" for the myths behind the social system in the design projects. The "ultimate" character of my designs is clear when one considers what the obvious "good solutions" from the clients and juries were. The case-studies were, first, a hyper-open, sophisticated, intelligent information, high-tech school building fulfilling an apparent need for dull, banal, aesthetic glass and steel school; second, a hyper-flexible and consequently ultra-conformist archaeological centre for a seemingly Disneyesque brief; third, a hyper-flexible furniture kit in a populist furniture competition; and fourth, a hyper-individualistic commercial module habitation solution and design for an ecologi-

cally idealist competition. Due to the complexity and visuality of the architectural decision making and the importance of *seduction* rather than functionality and rationality, the challenging approaches were merged in the proposals in a complex way that combined the specific characteristics of the tasks and an eye on the myths described. It is clear that there are enormous stakes in *purposeful limitations*, such as competition briefs and building regulations. These “limitations” can be taken as justifications for unexpected, challenging architecture.

In hindsight, these “case studies” were perhaps too homogenous manifestations when they processed almost only the *cool panic* side of the *ultimategame*. They concentrated very much on the challenge over and against the myth of *Flexibility*. The rather more “silent” solutions based on *the hallucination of the normal* and *mergence* did not become very evident. I did not have the opportunity to design much actually moving architecture. Neither did I use in any of my projects the “principle of least discomfort” I introduced. These will remain for future experiments.

Otherwise, the *ultimategame* proved to be an applicable solution in contemporary design and Baudrillard’s theory proved to be relevant in design work (within the framework I mentioned: Critical Theory and the masses’ fatal strategies). I was successful in turning the practical restrictions of the tasks into seductive advantages. The radicality of the method is of course an obstacle confronting the acceptance of the people who make decisions, for example, in architectural competitions.

## 7 Conclusion

I have eventually reached the following conclusions, in reference to my initial questions.

a.) Architectural issues are simultaneously functional, aesthetic, organisational and economic, but the decisive level is social/com-munal and mythical. Architecture in consumer society must be thought as a homogenising mass medium spreading indifference and fuelled by economic-mythological persuasion. Architecture is, in this sense, an object of persuasive and self-supported restric-tions of socio-economic standards. This eventually aimless and purposeless control takes place through reproduced and mass pro-moted principles of individualism, techno-optimism, pluralism, re-gionalism, personalisation, alternativity, flexibility, usefulness and aestheticness. The socio-economic manipulation is based upon a promotion of needs to be satisfied and the very idea of objects having aleatory (use-, exchange-, or sign-) *value*.

The comparison of architecture to moving images (commercial cinema, other films, video, computer generated images, etc.), the traditionally more easily approachable sphere including mythical characteristics typical for consumer society, proved to be practical in recognising mythological symptoms in architecture. This does not mean that there is a perfect analogy between themes in mov-ing images and architectural motifs, but certain phenomena in ar-chitecture, as a product of consumer society, can be understood in relation to the mythology very familiar from moving images. Archi-tecture and moving images seem to share common logics: espe-cially the fascination with retro-styles and the fascination with tech-nological (quantitative) performance.

All the tendencies mentioned above, from individualism to fasci-nation with technological possibilities, are essential for architecture in consumer society. However, they all must be abandoned in or-der to make socially beneficial architecture for the present society. In this context, architecture should rather be thought in persuasive

terms of *prestige, the enchantment of appearance, image and ambience*, that is, the real terms behind the political and market economies of the sign. Consequently, architecture should not be thought of in connection to economical saving or ecology without keeping in mind these topics.

These conclusions become apparent when one uses Jean Baudrillard's theory of consumer society as a source when trying to understand its characteristics, dynamics and possible radical alternatives. Baudrillard analyses consumer society as a particular *mythology*. It constitutes a view to architecture as a commodity and a mass medium. This analysis can be proven credible according to a long tradition in social sciences, most notably the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory. In this context, the relationships between abstractions and material entities are of prior importance in architecture, and mythology emerges as a valid approach to the study of architecture. It is very difficult to imagine a situation in the interaction of material production of commodities and thinking untouched by Baudrillard's theory. Baudrillard's conceptual arsenal provides excellent tools for processing ever new configurations in the socio-economic sphere. What makes Baudrillard crucial in architecture, compared to generally other social theorists and philosophers, are his preferences in studying specific material productions of the environment that often directly refer to contemporary architecture, rather than to only abstract ideas or principles. That is also why novelties in architectural discourse and practise can be examined by the theoretical devices provided by Baudrillard.

This devotion to using Baudrillard as a hermeneutical source dictated to a great extent the structure and content of my work. However, Baudrillard criticises many of the basic assumptions of the Critical tradition and does not share certain romantic illusions concerning individuality and togetherness within the tradition.

The problems of architecture in consumer society seem to lie not in the contents of culture but in its (mythological) structures. Baudrillard's theory helps us to understand the dynamics concerning architecture in consumer society. Such dynamics are the tensions between collectivity and individualism, rituals and creativity, manual work and reproduction, the reproduction of artefacts and the reproduction of ideas, mythology and rationality, a meaningful

life and signification, the consumption of artefacts and the consumption of ideas.

b.) Compared to the previous, *general* presuppositions, the second set of questions touched upon architecture in the *present* consumer society. I emphasised the characteristics of advanced mythology found in moving images, matching these to similar aspects in architecture. In this task, I continued to use Baudrillard's theory in evaluating contemporary questions and arguments surrounding architecture as an extension of the present technological and commercial societal system. The newest phase of consumer society concerns the impact of *digital consumption*: the new information technologies, the improved market economy, real-time communication and globalisation. The fragmentation of consumer habits has emerged due to the new diversification of production and consumption habits and despite the homogenisation of branding. These tendencies manifest themselves in contemporary architecture in the new possibilities for alternativity; pluralism, "open" architecture, the flexible interrelationship between producers and consumers, interactivity, and "the innovative consumers". The emphasised information technology has led to the decreasing primacy of space in architecture. In more abstract terms and according to my application of Baudrillard's analysis, the symptomatic belief for this stage is that the higher degree technology one uses in the construction of architecture, the poorer quality art, wisdom and humanity it represents, and vice versa (I call this *high and low definition architecture*). These kinds of phenomena take place because of the general inflation of value and a tendency to extremes due to the elevating stages of abstraction in society.

Because the last part of my study was to include design projects suitable for taking account of the present situation in consumer society, I was interested in studying how other architects have processed the crucial themes in their works. Rem Koolhaas and Neil Denari are the contemporary architects whose works seem to be to a great extent symptomatic of the new stage of consumer society and whose thinking reflects this. Koolhaas has worked on the implications of globalisation, the potentials in the non-controlled, homogenous systematic structures, "openness" created by restric-

tive architectural programmes, “freedom” inherent in chaos, the liberating, accidental bigness in architecture and paranoia (i.e. the conscious underestimation of the existing and the automatically given, systematic idealisation, a multitude of explanations, the extreme relativism of values). Neil Denari’s works have touched upon especially the changed role of image in the present day consumer society: The consumable image that can be generated through architecture is no longer “gratificatory”, but refers instead to dispersive situations (due to the inflation of value), where rationality, techno-optimism and logical bodily-spatial experience become questioned. Denari has processed these themes through his use of diptychal, ambiguous spatial fields, through the unstable aesthetics of war and through contours and trademarks as elementary parts of his architecture.

All in all, the increasing possibilities for alternatives in consumption cannot solve the problems of fragmentarity, the loss of reciprocity and the increasing banalisation of culture, the very essences of the present culture industry. Rather than a lack of new modes of freedom, there is a lack of collective reciprocity through rituals in consumer society architecture. Instead of just blindly obeying the aleatory mechanics of socio-economical control, architects should define new stakes and challenges, if they want to awaken the essential communal mechanisms.

c.) Moralism against consumer society and commercial architecture does not work because it is characteristic of consumer society itself that it spreads moralities concerning how people should live and which kind of buildings they should have. These moralities concerning consumers are disguised in the form of “choices”. Neither building without architects nor pragmatist architecture can make the position of architects better in society, because these phenomena are already included in the mythologies of consumer society. These mythologies do not include the notion of real use value. I took Baudrillard’s theory of the collective procedures of symbolic exchange and “fatal strategies” as a starting point for my design work. In this context, good architecture should bring individual and collective pleasure (not necessarily satisfaction) to the people, allow reciprocity through *challenge*, and boost the recognition of the less powerful social groups. Conventional architectural

complexes meant to stimulate the pleasure of the masses (such as Disneyland) do not include this aspect of challenge to the consumer society.

This is where Baudrillard's idea of "fatal strategies" becomes crucial. Fatal strategies become manifested in Baudrillard's interpretation of the beneficial attitudes of "the masses", which he interprets as continuing the important function of challenges in the cohesion of the society. Consequently, I proposed two strategies which should be relevant in contemporary architecture, if one wants to restore its supposedly disappearing communal capabilities: 1) *cool panic*, a certain kind of exaggerated use of conventional cultural motifs and 2) *machinal snobbism*, a conscious manner of ceasing to think that architecture or architectural theory should be individualistic and change the whole world, as the modernist architect has been taught to think. A machinal snob takes nothing seriously, but does this in a compulsive manner. The *cool panic* attitude forces the architect to take everything too seriously and literally. The architect applying the masses' attitude/method is not actually following its opinion, and is not accepting the *consumer* or *user/controller* as something like a co-producer, but approving rather of the masses as *role models*. Eventually the architect should be able to create singular moments that cannot be repeated or equalled by money.

It seems that the attempt to study the needs of consumers is vain, because needs themselves are an irrelevant topic even in architecture. The creation of freedom is also not crucial in architecture. Rather, the masses are exemplary because they do not want to know what they want. The common idea that through new technology we could all become creative artists also comes to look quite odd. Needs and creativity remain highly susceptible terms in the context of the consumer society tradition I have been discussing, because they are already inscribed in the code of the obese socio-economic system. Instead, I focused here on the question of the masses as a kind of non-innovative/hyper-innovative consumer, defining and determining uses for products and concepts not by need or creativity, but by supposedly ancient symbolic exchange and its orders of challenge, prestige, reversibility, reciprocity and irreconciliation. If one wants to, this can be considered as a

kind of value and ethics. Consequently, I made a proposal for an attitude applicable in architectural design. I outlined how architects could adapt the beneficial, often stubborn methods of the masses and in this way preserve their initiative in the collective exchange, to generate unique moments and places, and in this way contribute to the social circle itself.

As concerns the relevance of Baudrillard's theory in architecture, it has become apparent through my theoretical work that this makes impossible such traditional architectural concepts in general as creativity, the fulfilling of needs and functionality. Architects can only speed up or slow down interpersonal socio-economic processes and in this way increase social reciprocity and cohesion. According to Baudrillard's analysis of the present socio-economic patterns in society, it has become almost impossible to make truly seductive and reciprocal architecture. Baudrillard's theory does not leave very much for architects to lean on, up to the question of asking whether architecture can at all be designed under Baudrillard's terms, however believable he is in pointing out the crucial problematics of culture in consumer society. Architecture can certainly always be explained in Baudrillard's terms — I have done that especially in Parts 3 and 4 — but in actual design Baudrillard can easily be interpreted in a way that all new architecture is doomed to be banal and solitary. I have taken the choice to part from Baudrillard on this point, and to pursue intentionally seductive, reciprocal and even romantically utopian architecture. I made such a manoeuvre by processing seductive responses to certain phenomena that I have interpreted as the myths of consumer society. In addition, I tried to find reciprocity through the method I developed called *ultimatgame*. The architecture I have proposed for my case-studies is socially beneficial architecture on the condition that consumer society really has to a great extent excommunicated its members by too perfect systematicity and univocal mythologies.

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Reservoir Dogs: Dog Eat Dog Productions / Live America  
South Park: Comedy Central  
Vertical Smoothhouse: Neil M. Denari.

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The bibliography has been divided into two sections: “Primary sources” and “Other sources”. The “Primary” ones include the main theoretical references which are Baudrillard, Deleuze and Virilio. The “Primary sources” include also the principal architectural writings: Denari, OMA (Koolhaas) and Nouvel. “Other sources” has been divided into four further compartments: “On myths”, “On consumer society and its technology”, “On architecture in relation to moving images”, “On architecture” and “Other” (mostly philosophy).

The logic in searching for references which could be included in several categories is that they are situated in the first possible list, e.g., for example, Roland Barthes’ writings locate in the “Myths” section, even if these works also concern many aspects in the discussion upon the consumer society. Secondary references to Baudrillard are situated in the “Myths” section. All references concerning moving images have been put to the section “On architecture in relation to moving images”.

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**Imagine** non-commercial architecture which would not be made for the purpose of satisfying needs and which would not be a creative act, but still, nevertheless would both bring pleasure and contribute to better collective circumstances.

**In this study** of architecture's role in present-day consumer society, architect Antti Ahlava argues that the attempt to study the ever-more individualistic needs of consumers in architecture is a vain act. With an approach based on the theories of French sociologist Jean Baudrillard, Ahlava argues that the calls for satisfaction, individualisation, personalisation and creativity are actually the very core of a "magical" manipulation and "mythical" control within the socio-economic system of the culture industry. Ahlava's strategy is to analyse these forms of manipulation and control through a comparison of modern mythologies in the culture industry of moving images (film, TV, video, computer generated images) and architecture.

**Rather** than the creative individualists, it is *the masses* one should look to, Ahlava suggests. These silent majorities do not want to know what they want, and that is their challenging advantage. Ahlava focuses here on the question of the masses being more or less non-innovative and, alternatively, blindly over-enthusiastic consumers. They define and determine uses for products and concepts by surprising, ritualistic *symbolic exchange*. Symbolic exchange requires collectively challenging, prestigious, reversible, reciprocal and irreconciliated architecture.

**Consequently,** Ahlava proposes a method applicable in new architectural design, called *ultimategame*. He shows how architects could adapt the beneficial, often stubborn methods of the masses, and in this way preserve architects' initiative in collective symbolic exchange, and simultaneously contribute beneficially to the communal circle itself.