

**THE REPRODUCTION OF ARCHITECTURE**

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**THE REPRODUCTION OF ARCHITECTURE**  
**A COGNITIVE MAP TO TRAVERSE THE DISCIPLINE**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to develop a cognitive map of architectural reproduction to better understand it as both a medium for and the end result of disciplinary practices. To this end, the production of architectural space is understood as a form of mediation in which social relations are reproduced. This analysis is undertaken in an original manner – departing from live experiments in design workshops; using tools of Marxist cultural theory, the sociology of art, and accounts of the production of subjectivity; and focusing on the contradiction between ‘discipline’ and ‘dialectic’. The aim is to investigate possible routes for counter-hegemonic architectural practices that confront ideology and engage in politics. This cognitive map thus aims to clarify – in order to question – the traditional myths of the field and the notion of the individual architectural genius as an independent agent. To call these myths into question, we present an alternative to the narrative of the individual architect as the engine of architectural history – namely, transindividuality – and conceptualise architecture as the production of ‘things’ – understanding such objects as reifications of social relations. Restoring architecture’s dialectical relationship with the social mode of spatial production, the idea of a ‘reproduction of architecture’ reveals its triple meaning: society reproduces the discipline; the discipline reproduces society; and architecture reproduces itself by reproducing subjectivities. For this reason, architecture will be investigated in terms of its processes of estrangement and the resulting reproduction. Estrangement will be investigated in terms of its deadlocks, its discipline, and its conception of the subject. Reproduction will be investigated in terms of its *reification* (production of things), its *fetish* (the technique of hiding artifices), and its *phantasies* (narratives that justify desire). The result is a cognitive map that is conceived as a tool for traversing the myths that reproduce architecture – in the sense that it provides aesthetic perceptions of these phenomena and enables self-reflexivity for collective subjects.

## **STUDENT DECLARATION**

University of East London (UEL)

School of Architecture, Computing and Engineering

Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture

### **Declaration**

This work has not previously been accepted for any degree, and it is not being concurrently submitted for another degree.

This research is being submitted as partial fulfilment of UEL's requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture.

This thesis is the result of my own work and investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged through explicit references in the text. A full reference list is included.

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Signature:  Date: 20th June 2017

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of figures	v
List of accompanying materials	vii
Acknowledgements	x
<i>Dedication</i>	xii
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>The problem; Scope and particular universality; Fieldwork as concrete groundwork; Defining what this thesis is not about; The concept of ‘reproduction’; The meaning of the term ‘architecture’ as it is used within this thesis; The idea of a ‘cognitive mapping’ of the architectural reproduction; A map of this thesis</i>	
<b>PART 1: ARCHITECTURAL ESTRANGEMENT: discipline, dialectics and subjects</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: The architectural deadlocks: to shape or not to shape</b>	<b>26</b>
1.1. Dead ends: charity, resignation, escapism and protest	29
1.2. False dilemmas	38
1.3. The fallacy of autonomy	41
1.4. The denial of dialectics	43
1.5. The lack of reflexivity	48
1.6. The belly of the architect	50
<b>CHAPTER 2: The reproduction of architecture: mapping discipline and dialectic</b>	<b>54</b>
2.1. The reproduction of social relations	55
2.2. The conflict between discipline and dialectics	62
2.3. Discipline: a description of the field and its illusions (1) Centralities; (2) Axes of habitus; (3) Social dimensions; (4) Distinctions; (5) Illusios.	68
2.4. Dialectics: a cognitive map of architectural reproduction	84
2.5. Overcoming the subject–territory dichotomy in the map	95
2.6. One last sketch: A bird’s eye view of architectural subjectivity	102
<b>CHAPTER 3: Subject to change: beyond and beneath the architect</b>	<b>108</b>
3.1. The architect’s gap	109
3.2. <i>Intermezzo</i> : dead architects	110
3.3. Producing counternarratives	1114
3.4. Beyond agency	119
3.5. Subject to change: beneath (re)presentations	122
3.6. Beyond the individual: being becoming <i>A Copernican revolution on the principle of fundamental narcissism; the production of individuations: preindividual and transindividual; The production of transsubjectivities</i>	126
<i>Conclusions</i>	145

<b>PART 2: THE MEANS OF REPRODUCTION: reification, fetish and phantasies</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4: Disentangling reification: the social relations in architectural things</b>	<b>151</b>
4.1. Getting one thing straight: things are social relations	154
<i>Reworking things; a sure thing of all things; one thing led to another; in the least little things; the grand scheme of things</i>	
4.2. <i>Intermezzo</i> : first things first – primitive enclosures	162
4.3. A thing or two we learned from the urban enclosure of London	164
4.4. Against ‘taking things easy’	169
4.5. Getting into the swing of things	173
4.6. Putting things together: the route of fetish and desire	174
<b>CHAPTER 5: Unveiling fetish: hidden artifices and techniques of phenomena</b>	<b>177</b>
5.1. A dancing table	178
5.2. <i>Intermezzo</i> : magic blasphemies	179
5.3. The fetish of facts	183
5.4. Tracing fetish in the production of London	187
5.5. Regressions in the production of fetish	194
5.6. The techniques of phenomena: conceptualising fetish in architecture	202
<b>CHAPTER 6: Traversing phantasies: the narratives of desire in architecture</b>	<b>208</b>
6.1. The aim: traversing the phantastic character of architecture	210
6.2. <i>Intermezzo</i> : Strawberry Fields	214
6.3. Phantasies and the reproduction of ideological subjective senses	216
6.4. The prince phantasy: an architecture of the self	220
<i>(1) The Machiavellian prince; (2) the Gramscian prince; (3) the multitude; (4) the pathetikos prince; (5) the hysterical prince.</i>	
6.5. The inescapable condition of utopian phantasies: on present and absent objects of desire	232
<i>(1) Naive utopias; (2) virtual utopias; (3) u-utopias; (4) blind utopias; (5) resigned utopias</i>	
6.6. Traversing architectural phantasies	247
<i>CONCLUSION</i>	252
<i>REFERENCES</i>	261
<i>APPENDICES</i>	290

## LIST OF FIGURES

Diagram 1: Map of the thesis. Source: the author.	18
Diagram 2: Trivial and non-trivial machines. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – ideas from Von Foerster, 1972).	61
Diagram 3: Formal analysis and critical dialectics. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – ideas from Lessa, 1972).	67
Diagram 4: The multi-centrality of the field. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – ideas from Bourdieu, 1996c, and Lefebvre, 1991b)	71
Diagram 5: Centres of power in the field. Source: the author.	73
Diagram 6: The vortex momentum of the centres. Source: the author.	74
Diagram 7: Variations in food taste. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – images 9, 10 and 11 from Bourdieu, 1996b).	76
Diagram 8: Social dimensions of the field. Source: the author.	78
Diagram 9: Swinging <i>illusios</i> . Source: the author.	83
Diagram 10: Linear formal logic. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – ideas from Jameson, 2002).	85
Diagram 11: Variations of expressive causality. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – Jameson, 2002).	86
Diagram 12: <i>Clavis universalis</i> . Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – Harvey, 2010; and Kapp, 2004).	87
Diagram 13: Structural logic. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – Jameson, 2002).	88
Diagram 14: The obsessive (absent) structure. Source: the author (based on – but opposed to – Eco, 1991).	89
Diagram 15: Dialectical regulation. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – Soja, 2000; Harvey, 2010; and Jameson, 1991).	90
Diagram 16: Dialectical reproduction of space. Source: the author (based on – but an alchemy of – Harvey, 2010; and Lefebvre, 1976).	91
Diagram 17: The ideal logic of the individual. Source: the author.	96
Diagram 18: Intersubjectivity. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – Simmel, <i>in</i> Stoetzler, 2016).	97
Diagram 19: The Machiavellian subject of history – the prince. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – Machiavelli, 2008, Althusser, 2000).	98
Diagram 20: The inception of estrangement. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – Marx, 1990, Žižek, 1997).	105
Diagram 21: The unconscious iceberg. Source: the author (based on the early Freud – but not identical to the late Freud).	106
Diagram 22: The architectural unconscious. Source: the author.	107
Diagram 23: Orbit of planets before and after the Copernican revolution. Source: the author.	130
Diagram 24: Deduction, Induction, Reduction, Transduction. Source: the author (based on – but not equal to – Simondon, 2013, and Toscano, 2006).	139

Diagram 25: Ontogenesis of individuations. Source: the author (based on – but not equal to – Simondon, 2013).	141
Diagram 26: Summary of London’s Enclosure. Source: the author.	165
Diagram 27: Dislocation of Heygate Estate Residents. Source: the author (based on information from Better Elephant, 2013).	192
Diagram 28: Traversing map phantasies. Source: the author.	212
Diagram 29: Axes of the prince phantasies. Source: the author.	221
Diagram 30: Axes of utopian phantasies. Source: the author.	236
Diagram 31: Traversed pyramid: the secret passage. Source: the author.	251
Diagram 32: The research design. Source: the author.	310
Image 1: Example of a field investigation form. Source: the author.	318
Diagram 33: Public space enclosures in London. Source: the author.	323
Image 2: Film frames of enclosed spaces. Source: the author.	325
Diagram 34: Velvet ground/nest prison. Source: the author	326
Diagram 35: Tangled control. Source: the author.	327
Diagram 36: Driven spatial consumption. Source: the author.	328
Diagram 37: Hacking aesthetic. Source: the author.	343
Image 4: G. S. experiment. Source: G. S., 2012.	355
Image 5: Z. Y. experiment. Source: Z. Y., 2014.	356
Image 6: Z. Y. prototype. Source: Z. Y., 2014.	357
Image 7: Wood Street experiment 1. Source: the author.	361
Image 8: Wood Street experiment 2. Source: the author.	361
Image 9: Wood Street experiment 3. Source: the author.	362
Image 10: Wood Street experiment 4. Source: the author.	362

## LIST OF ACCOMPANYING MATERIALS

<b>Appendices</b>	<b>290</b>
<b>(1) DOCUMENTS</b>	<b>291</b>
Copy of University Research Ethics Committee Ethical Approval Information sheet and consent form Interview forms	
<b>(2) FIELDWORK I: COMMON PLACES IN LONDON</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>The context</b>	
First considerations New common places in London Background noise – urban experience and social relations	
<b>The methodology</b>	
The research design General points on the methodology Specific points on the methodology	
<b>Critical observations I: Outside Observation</b>	
First phase data Second Phase Data: 3 dimensions of the new reified experience Stake point 1: common places and the aesthetic of things	
<b>(3) FIELDWORK II: LIVE PROJECTS</b>	<b>330</b>
<b>The context</b>	
The live contradictions in architecture The workshops' choice Other debates: Summary of counterarguments in conferences	
<b>The methodology</b>	
Laboratory life and live laboratories Working hypotheses for live projects laboratory <i>Hacking</i> <i>Micro-utopia</i> Interviews	
<b>Critical observations II: Participant Observation and Observation of Participation</b>	
Hacking: experiments in urban ecology Stake point 2 Micro-utopias: the Wood Street Workshop Stake point 3 Observations of participation: a view from within Stake point 4	

**List of published materials (produced by the author in relation to and in the development of this thesis)**

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*Conference papers*

City reconfiguration: counter-architecture as hacking of objectified social relations in the urban space. In: *Autonomy reconsidered: ethics in architecture, urbanism and landscape*. Delft: Delft University of Technology, 2014. (with Karthaus, R.)

Divided spaces: outsiders as a strategy of rebellion against heteronomic structures in the city. In: CUI '14 – Rethinking the Informality – Conference Proceedings. Istanbul: Chamber of Architects of Turkey, 2014. v. 1. p. 571-582.

Micro-utopia and urban revolution: exploring a kaleidoscopic utopia in contemporary spatial production. In: 16<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Utopia Studies Society – Utopia and the End of the City, Newcastle: Newcastle University, 2015.

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## INTRODUCTION

Reproduction (of the relations of production, not just the means of production) is not simply in *society* as a *whole* but in space as a *whole*. Space, occupied by neo-capitalism, sectioned, reduced to homogeneity yet fragmented, becomes the seat of power (Lefebvre, 1976, 83).

The reproduction of architecture refers to three interrelated phenomena: architecture reproduces social relations; social relations reproduce architecture; and architecture reproduces architects' subjectivities. This research was built on fieldwork that investigated design practices attempting to deliver concrete social changes. As the research developed, a series of paradoxes and deadlocks emerged from these experiments on 'radical' architecture. Based on the stake points provided by this observation, the research built a critical theory of how architecture prevents radical transformations of social relations and ultimately reproduces the status quo. Such reproduction was revealed to result from (1) the 'reification' of architecture, (2) the disciplining of architects' labour as 'fetish' and (3) the field's replication of myths and 'phantasies'.

Per the classical Marxist critique, reification is understood as the conversion of social relations into things and vice versa. Fetish is understood as the ways in which reification is produced. As reification transforms social relations into apparently natural things, this production process – the actions – becomes incorporated into things. Thus, fetish produces an entwinement of thing and action. Therefore, fetish is both a noun and a verb; grammatically, it is *a participle present* – as we shall see later in Marx's example of a 'dancing table'. It is in this sense that fetish becomes method in architecture – it is the means by which architecture, the other and architects are objectified. Phantasies are the psychological variant of fantasies, and here, the term is used to mean the narratives that mobilise the 'desires' of architects and users, which creates the illusions of the field and prevents critical reflexivity.

This thesis is a cognitive mapping of that reproduction of architecture. As we shall develop below, Jameson (1990) defined a cognitive map as a device that helps subjects to navigate in the image they create about their relationship with the world. In this sense, the research aims to develop a cognitive map that enables subjects to reposition

themselves in relation to the reproduction of architecture – i.e., the cycle of reification, fetish and phantasy. Although this condition is inescapable, the development of such a map aims to facilitate critical and reflexive awareness. By unveiling the reification of architecture and its transindividual subjectivity and challenging its common ontology (from structure to operations), the thesis proposes that architects can better situate themselves in the field and create possible detours from this map, thereby potentially avoiding common traps.

### *The problem*

The main question of the thesis is clear-cut: why do architectural practices that aim to deliver radical social transformation fail? In short, such efforts fail because architecture reproduces not only the subjectivities of users through the products delivered but also the subjectivities of architects themselves, thus transforming the field into part of the machinery of social fetishisation.

This problematic situation arguably only relates to those who are searching for an architectural practice that delivers radical social change. Nevertheless, to realise radical social change, one would need to challenge the idea of architecture itself, not only by critiquing its products (things, objects) but also by creating awareness of the process in which its subjects are reproduced. In this sense, this thesis does not aim to define the ground zero of radical architecture; rather, it aims to improve the critical awareness of architects' positions in relation to the means of spatial production. Therefore, this cognitive map is simply a 'helpful' tool that can be used to support radical practices.

Such a tool is helpful because the current debate in the field of architecture is immersed in various false dilemmas and phantasies that produce a cascade of mystifications and illusions. The theory of architecture has become a field of hopeless disputes over style and endless exegeses of celebrated narratives. The thesis traces these false dilemmas only as a means to step outside the cacophony of such discussions and to focus on a reflexive account. In using the term 'reflexivity', we refer to a theory that can survive itself, reveal the self-references deployed by a subject, and acknowledge its own theoretical agency; in short, reflexivity is conscious of its own limits.

To confront these dilemmas, this research was conducted in an innovative set of three operations. First, concrete field research of design practice was developed. This fieldwork was approached as actual experiments. Just as a chemist combines chemicals in his laboratory to observe the reactions, we engaged in participant observations to mix different components and reveal transformations in and permanent features of the field. Second, the critical points in the field revealed by these experiments enabled us to start drawing a map of how architecture frames the subjectivities of architects. Thus, this research has drawn a cognitive map that challenges the traditional ontology of architecture and the conception of the subjects involved. Finally, this map enabled an independent critical power of the everyday reification of the profession, thereby exposing a distinctive view of the operations involved and their entanglement with social reproduction. Although this map is not a handbook for ‘how to do radical architecture’, it highlights the challenges faced along this road.

The original set of three operations was possible because instead of analysing the effects of architectural products – both things and theories – it engaged in the subjective means set in motion by architects in the process of architectural production. This relates to what Lefebvre (1967, p.370; 1971b) proposes as an ‘end’ to philosophy – a metaphilosophical approach – which is neither a philosophy outside the *praxis* nor a philosophy of *praxis*. Rather, the research aimed to overcome the duality of philosophy and *praxis*, discussing the process of production and reproduction of forms of truth. It was not concerned with a new ‘real truth’; rather it was concerned with the reality of the invention of truths – philosophy as *praxis*.

To clarify this point, the following analogy may be helpful: imagine that Foucault changed his investigation from the effects of the panoptic in modern society to an investigation of the subjectivity of Jeremy Bentham himself and the process involved in the production of such ideas. Therefore, we did not aim to propose a concept of architecture in abstract; rather, we investigated the abstractions present in the production of architecture and the engagement of supposedly neutral abstractions. In other words, we approached architecture not as an ideal (a pure object in abstraction); rather, we approached how architecture concretely reproduces abstractions into reality.

This thesis can hardly be said to solve or ameliorate the identified problem – the reproduction of architecture – as it instead unveils how the problem goes beyond any

such amelioration of concepts within the field of architecture. Nevertheless, by making the ‘problem’ larger, this thesis arguably offers a coherent and credible conclusion that enables a critical and radical approach to architecture: first and foremost, a subject must be able to position himself in the world to be conscious of his estrangement from the very means of his profession. In this sense, we will argue in due course to ‘traverse the fantasies’ of the discipline – thus, enabling self-reflexivity – rather than attempting to overcome them. Therefore, the thesis is in itself a cognitive map conceived as a tool to facilitate self-reflexivity. If one were to argue that this step lacked an impetus, the following counterargument would suffice: more important than the steps taken in the field of research are the landscape that they envision, the roads that they trace and the possibilities that they enable. There are no predicaments or prescriptions; there are only engaged processes of reflection through an independent means of investigation: live experiments subjected to dialectical reflections.

#### *Scope and particular universality*

Arguably, this thesis and the cognitive map developed here do not claim to be what is commonly understood as ‘universal’ (encompassing all building activities, times, subjects and cultures). Rather, it is based in a long tradition of critical cultural studies (e.g., Lukacs, 1971; Adorno, 1996; Williams, 1973; Lefebvre, 1967; Jameson, 2002; Harvey, 2000), which explores particular objects – things, or objectified social relations, as we shall see in Chapter 4 – and their relations with global social and economic processes.

Although we will not develop a critical history of the concept of universality here (for that, see Amaral, 2008, pp. 11-91), it is important to position our point of departure in relation to other common formulations. Therefore, we should initially delineate a critical view on the concept of universality, so as to envision how dialectics can enable the movement of thought that reveals the interconnections of concrete experience and global processes.

Classical studies of architecture based on classical epistemologies of science would believe that reason can mimic reality (as a mirror does with an object), thus producing

some type of universal truth. Epistemologies of classical criticism (e.g., Popper, 1989) would argue that reason can never reach the reality of an object (the thing-in-itself), thus proposing many variants of how the proximity of ideas and reality could be measured. Although some of these approaches propose that theories can be improved by logical refutations and revelation of which is ‘more false’, at the same time it defines reality as a categorical ‘absolute’, completely separated from any idea. Finally, negative dialectical epistemologies would argue that any ideal is confined by context (e.g., capitalism). Although it proposes that only a radical negation of everything that exists could deliver truth, at the same time it defines the efforts of the radical philosopher – and the negation he produces – as a categorical absolute (a negative ideal), even if always inaccessible in full.

By contrast, Boaventura Souza Santos (2007, p. 39) critiques this last proposal as a ‘universality of the negative’, proposing instead a ‘negative universality’: both a theory of the impossibility of a unique general theory, and a theory of the possibility of multiple general theories. He argues against what he calls the ‘monoculture’ of scientific knowledge (2007, pp. 29-32), which creates a linear time with western civilisation at the centre, a naturalisation of hierarchically produced social relations, a form of valorisation centred in mass production, and social domination based on the imposition of supposedly universal frameworks. He argues such universal knowledge only to exists by means of power, control of influence and monopoly of the means of knowledge production. Alternatively, he proposes an ecology of knowledge, where a diversity of ‘truths’ (emerging from different contexts and experiences) could interact in a dynamic process of exchange and mutual influence. Instead of framing the “Other” (the particular and the local) as a homogeneous part of a universal truth, each single form of knowledge is conceived as potentially able to produce new universalities and new conceptions of the whole.

Harvey (2000, p. 32) would go even further, proposing a generalisation of this relation between particularism and universality, place and space, local and global. For him, as workers based at factories (a place) could universalise their demands to society as a whole (the communist hypothesis), other particularisms could develop valid universal abstractions if they could expand their condition towards globalising claims. Therefore, he argues, universal claims always involve political commitments and an ethical point of view.

For Santos (2007, p.23) there is no such a thing as ‘pure science’, because science is part of a historical and cultural context in a social and technical realm of production. Therefore, he argues that ‘objectivity’ is always politically engaged. His idea of an ‘engaged objectivity’ avoids the supposition of neutrality – the assumption that the concrete subject producing knowledge was eliminated – but reinforces the possibility of objectivity – the application of rigor and methodology – and at the same time he emphasises the partiality and context of any proposal (Santos, 2007, p. 11, 57). This approach seeks to envision and enhance the political engagement of any given scientific product.

This idea of universality avoids the beliefs in both naïve neutrality and vulgar subjectivism – where any theory would be equally true. This conception of universality does not propose an immutable truth, and it does not propose a neutral relativity of any theories. Instead, the negative universality proposes that different truths create different possible realities.

Lefebvre (1967) called this possibility of ideas creating reality *poiesis*. In contrast with the ideas of *praxis* – the concrete practical experience – and *mimesis* – the ideal representations of the mind – Lefebvre argues that *poiesis* is the production of concrete experience using ideal representations. The concept of *poiesis* refers to how ideas change (social) reality, and therefore it aims to understand the foundations, the groundwork, the decisions made in the process of creating truths/reality (Lefebvre, 1967, p. 64-65). Lefebvre (2001, p. 108) argues that this process is not concealed by the limitations of ‘deduction’, ‘induction’, ‘reduction’ or ‘representation’; it is rather a process of ‘transduction’ – the formulation of a possible object departing from empirical reality but confronting it with imagination (we shall discuss more about transduction in the writings of Simondon and Toscano in section 3.6.). For Lefebvre, this creates a dialectics between (historical) subjects and (historical) objects, between ‘content’ and ‘form’. In this sense, all universalities are partialities and, inversely, all partialities can potentially create new universalities.

Furthermore, for Lefebvre (1967, 375-377), to create a new reality *poiesis* operates in the residual left untouched by current epistemologies. Lefebvre (2003b, pp. 23-44) argues that every epistemology has ‘virtualities’ and ‘blind-fields’. This means that every idea has specific (ethical) potentialities and it has specific parts of reality that

remain hidden and not articulated into potential realisation – the limits of reason. For him, *poiesis* creates reality by bringing this obscure, blind and hidden part of reality into presence. Therefore, the limits of what an epistemology sees is the source of creation of new understandings.<sup>1</sup>

In the production of our cognitive map, these ‘blind-fields’– the epistemological limits revealed by the fieldwork – played an important role. We called those ‘stake points’, because they are the points at stake in the discipline and the referencing points upon which we have drawn our map.

### *Fieldwork as concrete groundwork*

In short, this research departed from concrete experiences in architecture, investigating how the conventional and radical ideas of architecture could reveal blind spots in the architectural discipline. This enabled to reveal the points at stake in the discipline. By doing so, it was possible to investigate architecture not as an abstract ideal, but how it concretely operates. Therefore, the initial fieldwork is the concrete groundwork of the theories formulated in this thesis (i.e., the negative universal possibilities excavated by this research has its origins in the partiality of the concrete fieldwork).<sup>2</sup>

This relates to Lefebvre’s (1975b) argument that a dialectical approach can be developed only after an initial stage of formal analysis. This initial stage uses deductive analysis (the dissection of complexity into small data) and fact checking in order to approach concrete reality. But this initial step is unable to overcome the manifested contradictions of ‘realised’ reality, and therefore a second and a third step should be introduced: a regressive analysis of the contradictions identified in reality – which we present in part 1 – and a critical return to elucidate the present social configuration of spatial production – which we present in part 2. Nevertheless, to note some elements and main conclusions of the first step of fieldwork is important to situate the discussion developed in the following chapters.

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<sup>1</sup> We shall return to this point in chapter 2, when discussing the difference between analysis and dialectics and between deduction and transduction.

<sup>2</sup> This fieldwork is reported in the appendices. And an alternative way of reading this thesis is jumping from the end of this introduction to the appendices, and then returning to parts 1 and 2.

Initially, the observation and analysis of the concrete production of common spaces in a contemporary city (London) revealed that architecture is not only the enclosure of social space by means of neutral things. Instead, this production is a deeper aesthetic process that causes social relations to be seen as things. Later, by engaging in workshops aiming to intervene in these common spaces, a ‘participant observation’ then revealed how adding the ‘concept’ of hacking to the discipline cannot change the foundation of the discipline itself. Furthermore, a second workshop revealed that the idea of a ‘micro-utopia’ can only be applied to architecture if what we understand as ‘architectural things’ is completely subverted into a ‘being becoming’. Furthermore, the last workshop in the appendices was engaged in an ‘observation of participation’, which revealed that architecture not only produces objects (i.e., social relations transformed into things) but is also a triple reification process of users, architects and architecture. This survey was the starting point that enabled us to stake out reference points and mark guiding lines for the construction of a cognitive map of the reproduction of architecture.

These stake points formed the two main axes of the thesis, namely, reproduction and estrangement. Reproduction is formed by a series of shared and accepted (if not imposed) ideas that limit the potential operating range of the subject. Estrangement is the existing means of these operations, which separate concrete subjects from their means of production.

As we observed in the fieldwork, the main engine of this disciplinary reproduction is the discourses (narratives) that support the praxis. Subjects in positions of power repeatedly reinforced false dilemmas and arguments to impose a certain way of working in the studio, especially clear in the last workshop – style and ‘good design’ were ideas that repeatedly served as a way of reinforcing hierarchy and imposing choices. To further investigate the basis of these assumptions and to unveil the lack of reflexivity, we will need to dissect the unconscious phantasies involved in this process (we shall discuss this stake point in chapter 6).

These narratives were the means through which a continuous process of appropriation of authorship occurred, rendering a procedure that can be called the ‘surplus of creation’ – the fetish of architecture. In this sense, ‘cultural capital’ can operate in the same way that ‘money capital’ does – as a means of surplus extraction just as Marx (1991, pp. 283-339) described the fetish of commodity in *Capital – Volume 1*.

In surplus extraction, a given abstract concentrated power (for instance, financial capital, but in this case, cultural capital as well); one person justifies the hierarchical appropriation of another's work as if it were the result of his own enterprise. This enterprise comes to be associated with the owner of capital only by means of power relations. In turn, this hierarchy is defined by whomever has a greater concentration of (cultural) capital. As a capital holder invests in a certain activity, all the products of others' labour are considered the output of the capital holder – the 'genius'. This unwritten rule applies to the capitalist who invests in clothes factory machinery – all the t-shirts produced by said machinery are appropriated by him. The same applies in an architectural studio, where the investor in cultural capital is given credit for all the design produced therein. To dissect this 'surplus' expropriation of the creative act, we must investigate how 'fetish' operates in architecture (we shall discuss this stake point in chapter 5).

Furthermore, the fieldwork in London's privatised public spaces revealed that the objectification of architects has its origins in the reification of users and of the field of architecture, which we refer to as triple reification: of the other, the self and the field (we shall discuss this stake point in chapter 4).

In addition, to move in the direction of disrupting this process, the subject commonly conceived to producer of architecture must be repositioned. If one aims to understand how the 'genius' does not actually play the whole game but instead appropriates its products, a different understanding of the subject who actually produces architecture must emerge (this point will be developed in chapter 3).

Furthermore, in order to enable detours in this condition, the development of a map is imperative to enable the navigation in the conflicting forces of subjectivity disciplining and dialectical potential of architecture. The ways in which the discipline is imposed on architects will be mapped (in chapter 2).

Finally, the first step in this journey will be a sketching of the general landscape of the main conceptual fallacies – a sort of literature review of the 'mistakes' of the art – that supports the current estrangement of architects from their means of production (such deadlocks are mapped in chapter 1).

This initial groundwork problematised key common assumptions in the field. Therefore, to introduce the definition of some key terms and limitations of this thesis is important.

*Defining what this thesis is not about*

First, this thesis is not concerned with the ‘classical controversies’ of defining the essence of architecture nor it is concerned with revealing the small contradictions in the infinite discourses in the field. These controversies only reinforce the underlying field. Therefore, we only approach them as symptoms of the general aspects of the field, transcending the micro disputes of distinction to reveal their similarities. In this sense, we aim to produce a tool for navigating the larger landscape of the field rather than providing a 1:1 map of it.

Second, we do not seek to trace the ideology in supposed utopias or to simply unmask their ‘lies’. This research understands these ‘masks’ and ‘lies’ as distinct components in the production of architecture. In this sense, the ‘architectural facts’ are instead seen as ‘factishes’ – discourses of truth built through techniques of phenomena (we shall discuss this topic more in section 5.3.). Architecture not only intervenes in reality but also produces reality. Furthermore, it produces reality repeatedly, i.e., reproduces it.

Third, the notion of reproduction also aims to avoid the theoretical deadlock of ‘puppet appearances’ – a topic to be further addressed in chapter 1 – of many radical critiques. A very powerful notion asserts that architecture is only a reflection of the means of production, simply delivering products that mirror the dominant ideology. In this sense, society would have to be understood as an ‘enclosed system’, and architecture would be only a cog in its gears. Although relevant, a critique of system theory is not the point to be made now (we shall return to this point in chapter 2). For now, suffice it to say, in an effectively dialectical account, contradiction is part of the real. Therefore, we are witnessing neither complete stagnation nor simple ‘repetition’.

### *The concept of 'reproduction'*

In contrast to the abovementioned theories of an 'enclosed system' of architecture, the reproduction of architecture and social relations is dialectical and processual. As Henri Lefebvre argued,

There can be no reproduction of social relations either by simple inertia or by tacit renewal. Reproduction does not occur without undergoing changes. This excludes both the idea of an automatic reproductive process internal to the constituted mode of production (as system) and that of the immediate efficacy of a 'generative nucleus'. The contradictions themselves re-produce, and not without changes (Lefebvre, 1976, pp. 90-91).

In addition, the full disclosure of the concept of reproduction results in a reversal of traditional Marxism. A shift in emphasis from production to reproduction results in a shift in focus from the factory floor to the body, from the realm of work to the realm of everyday life, from the means of production to ideologies; furthermore, it moves the realisation of capital from the expropriation of labour to the mobilisation of consumption and desire.

In traditional Marxism based solely in Volume 1 of *Capital* (as argues Harvey, 2010), the means of production, the conflict over salaries, the dismal conditions of labour, and the control of the means of production were at the centre of most struggles. In that approach, if the realm of production was the means through which capitalist social relations were imposed, the realm of reproduction was a consequence. Therefore, the realm of the 'reproduction of the worker' was conceived only as the small scale of individual survival related to 'making a living' and 'getting by' – a battle already lost. Thus, the body, the self, the ideologies, the everyday and the necessities (needs and desires) were understood only as reflections of the production realm. For Harvey (2010), this undermines the whole picture of Marx's 'project', which would concern the 'realisation of capital' in the realm of reproduction in Volume 2.

As is the case with the differences between reproduction and production, the differences between repetition and reproduction are also important. The contemporary intensification of reproduction contrasts with the two common uses of the term: making again – i.e., production in large quantities over time – and imitating – i.e., representation

and ultimately simulation. Although these aspects are of fundamental importance in modern times, the intensification of reproduction takes the matter to a new level. While ‘simulation’ has the same appearance with a false essence, in the contemporary ‘intensified reproduction’ the appearances change and the essential social relations are reproduced. While ‘technical reproduction’ delivers mass production – i.e., the multiple re-presentation of the original, as in a ‘photocopy’ – in the contemporary ‘intensified reproduction’, originality functions as a means to hide the artifices of production, where a flexible mode of production makes sameness resemble diversity.

Although capitalist social relations increasingly present themselves as a continuous novelty, under their spectacular appearances lie the old hierarchies, forms of power and strategies of alienation. In this context, to reproduce is to repeatedly produce the same traps but in different guises. In addition, this reproduction is accomplished not simply by inserting timely elements into a neutral space; rather, the relations of power are imposed via the reproduction of the whole environment.

For Lefebvre,

Power, the power to maintain the relations of dependence and exploitation, does not keep to a defined ‘front’ at the strategic level, like a frontier on the map or a line of trenches on the ground. Power is everywhere: it is omnipresent, assigned to Being. It is everywhere *in space*. It is in everyday discourse and commonplace notions, as well as in police batons and armoured cars. It is in *objets d’art* as well as in missiles. It is in the diffuse preponderance of the ‘visual’, as well as in institutions such as school or parliament. It is in things as well as in signs (the signs of objects and object-signs) (Lefebvre, 1976, p. 86).

To clarify this argument, Lefebvre uses architecture as an example. He argues that ‘When architectural urban space responds to the “social commission” of developers and the authorities, it is contributing actively and openly to the reproduction of the social relations. It is programm[ing] space’ (Lefebvre, 1976, p. 88). Furthermore, Walter Benjamin (2008, pp. 36, 40), in his essay about the work of art in the age of technical reproduction, argued that architecture not only provides an object that is collectively received (through perception and only visually). Moreover, architecture is absorbed by the masses in a state of distraction, because buildings are received through use (tactilely). Through use, architecture creates habits: the ability to master certain tasks in

a state of distraction. In this way, through architecture, social relations become incorporated habits.

*The meaning of the term 'architecture' as it is used within this thesis*

Architecture is understood here not as a substance (an immutable essence or ideal) which could be traced down and defined in absolute borders; rather, it is understood as a discipline: a social practice framing ways of behaving, seeing and acting in the world. Therefore, the term refers to no distinctive boundaries and the phenomena it encompasses is dynamic, fragmented, porous, scattered, and interpenetrates different realms of social life. Similarly to Henri Lefebvre's account on the term space, what brings its use together are its social use, its accepted notion, and the way it mobilises social practice.

“In other words, we are concerned with logico-epistemological space, the space of social practice, the space occupied by sensory phenomena, including products of the imagination such as projects and projections, symbols and Utopias”. (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 11-12).

In this context, the classical definitions of architecture are meaningless for investigating the reproduction of architecture. For instance, there is no point in separating the realms of 'construction' and 'art' of architecture, whereas engineers and common people would produce bad examples in the former, and geniuses and architects would produce the latter. In any which way, there is incorporation of habits, and therefore, disciplinary reproduction of architecture.

In these terms, architecture should be viewed through its social dialectics, its disciplined practices of production and as social products that, in turn, disciplines habits. The Oxford English Dictionary defines discipline as (1) the practice of training people to – or in the case of a verb, to train someone to – obey rules or a code of behaviour, using punishment to correct disobedience; and (2) a branch of knowledge, typically one studied in higher education. Thus, investigation of architecture as a discipline relates to the two common understandings of this word, emphasising the social intertwining of both – i.e., how the knowledge of architecture is also the means through which subjects are trained to obey.

Therefore, our cognitive map of the reproduction of architecture is not concerned with an abstract, pure and universal ideal of what architecture ‘is’. Rather it concerns an investigation of the concrete experience of contemporary architecture and how it reproduces practices and subjects of architecture. It is thus a localised and particular investigation, but one that aims at a larger understanding of the production of social reality through the production of truths in a particular field of negative universalities.<sup>3</sup>

If we acknowledge that architecture is a historically produced social practice, then there is no sense in searching for the true ‘essence’ of the being of ‘architecture’. Hence, the scope of this research into architecture does not provide a ‘concept’ of what architecture ‘is’. Rather it is concerned with how specific conceptions of architecture have concrete results in the reproduction of practices socially ‘seen’ as architecture.

For those reasons, the research departed from concrete fieldwork as a starting point to trace the logico-epistemological elements set in motion in these concrete social practices and how they reproduce and reinforce social relations. In this sense, the research aims to connect the particularity of the researched practices – within and against the discipline – with the specific socially accepted universalities reproduced by them.

In this sense, although the research departs from particular examples, the object observed extends beyond their immediate context. Thus, the research does not propose an abstract universal concept of architecture, neither does it provide a complete map of all concepts in the field. Nonetheless, it was able to identify an underlying phenomenon:

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<sup>3</sup> ‘This is not a political rebellion, a substitute for social revolution, nor is it a revolt of thought, a revolt of the individual, or a revolt for freedom: it is an elemental and worldwide revolt which does not seek a theoretical foundation, but rather seeks by theoretical means to rediscover - and recognize - its own foundations. Above all it asks theory to stop barring its way in this, to stop helping conceal the underpinnings that it is at pains to uncover. Its exploratory activity is not directed towards some kind of “return to nature”, nor is it conducted under the banner of an imagined “spontaneity”. Its object is “lived experience” - an experience that has been drained of all content by the mechanisms of diversion, reduction/extrapolation, figures of speech, analogy, tautology, and so on. [...] This fact, however, can most definitely not be made into the basis of an overall definition [...] It is not simply a matter, therefore, of a theoretical critique, but also of a “turning of the world upon its head” (Marx), of an inversion of meaning, and of a subversion which “breaks the tablets of the Law” (Nietzsche). [...] How did this magic ever become possible - and how does it continue to be possible? What is the foundation of a mechanism which thus abolishes the foundations?’ (Lefebvre, 1991, pp. 201-202)

the process of reproduction of social relations by means of the discipline of architecture.<sup>4</sup>

Paradoxically, in these terms, what is socially conceived as ‘architecture’ matters precisely because it is what is being demolished. This socially conceived idea of ‘architecture’ has a social existence and therefore reproduces social habits. Although, we presented no specific conceptualisation of architecture, the critique revealed how social relations are actively reproduced by different conceptualisations of architecture. In addition, this social existence of architecture was revealed to have three dimensions – products, methods and discourses – that correspond to the three means of its reproduction – reification, fetish and phantasies. This is the reason why the expression ‘reproduction of architecture’ has a triple meaning: architecture reproduces social relations; architecture is reproduced by specific social relations; and architecture reproduces the role of the architect in society.

Finally, there is no privileged space for the discussion of high fashion architecture. This last point relates to the difference between Tafuri’s and Kracauer’s critiques of architecture (to which we shall return in detail in Chapter 3). When attempting to radically critique architectural ideology, Tafuri (1976) ultimately reinforced the main ideology of the field – that architecture is the result of individual geniuses. His critique of the history of ‘world architecture’ is a critique of the discourses and styles of European and American high-profile architects. Alternatively, Kracauer’s (1995) essays from the 1920s aim to reveal how the aesthetic act is immersed in a blind field; therefore, what it obscures is more important than what it reveals. In this sense, ‘vulgar’ architecture – such as the hotel lobby for Kracauer – can more easily reveal the process of reproduction of habits and the blind fields it creates. Later, these ‘blind fields’ and this reproduction of habits can further elucidate the critique of high-profile architecture (which is here understood simply as the ‘core’ of architectural ideology).

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<sup>4</sup> In this sense, there is no contradiction in the fact that different investigations would deliver different cognitive maps (for instance, an investigation on the reproduction of vernacular architecture would display different elements in the map). Nonetheless, the underlying process of reproduction (even if with different elements) would continue to be the operative dimension.

*The idea of a 'cognitive mapping' of the architectural reproduction*

In the 1970s, Louis Althusser and Lefebvre, among others, brought to the forefront the importance of the reproduction of relations of production in the realisation and survival of capitalism itself. This shift was not simply theoretical, as the development of neo-capitalism also brought strategies such as marketing and ideological alienation to the forefront. As we shall return to later, ideology (with its rites and rhythms) for Althusser and the everyday (with its reification and fragmentation) for Lefebvre were fundamental to the reproduction of capitalism.

Althusser (1971, p.5) argued that 'The ultimate condition of production is therefore the reproduction of the conditions of production'. He meant that two apparatuses ensured 'submission to the rules of [the] established order': a repressive state apparatus and an ideological apparatus. Architecture can be a slow form of repressive social 'violence' in many ways (see 'Rebel Architecture', 2014), but the focus here is on the subtle ways in which architectural theory becomes ideology.

For Althusser (1971, p. 165), ideology is the image that an individual has of his social condition. However, this image has a paradoxical 'material existence' precisely because it shapes the possibilities of what exists in the everyday life of a subject. This paradoxical image especially occurs through 'interpellation' (an identity mirror). Interpellations create the subject because they place the individual in a *relation to* the world and in a *position from* which he can act in the world. Interpellations occur when 'embodied' ideological instruments (an advertisement, a building and even the placement of chairs in a room) address the individual, making her/him the subject of expected social interactions correlated with institutions and discourses. Thus, embodied ideologies mould internal subjectivities. Therefore, the material condition of a mode of production has a dialectical relationship with the subject's cognitive awareness of his place in this condition. For this reason, Althusser asserts that there is no escape from ideology: 'ideology never says, "I am ideological". It is necessary to be outside ideology ... to say: I am in ideology' (Althusser, 1971, p. 175).

Fredric Jameson (1990) proposed the idea of a 'cognitive map' to investigate the relation between ideology and awareness in contemporary societies. He combined Althusser's argument that 'ideology' is the subject's representation of his own position

in the social structure with Kevin Lynch's (1960) studies of city imageability (how people build the image of a city to navigate it).

Nevertheless, Jameson questions the positivist non-dialectical and ahistorical approach of Lynch. This is especially true if one bears in mind that 'cognitive mapping' has its origins in behaviourist psychology, and is based on Edward Tolman's (1948) work with rats in a maze. Tolman's work was later developed by O'Keefe and Nadel (1978), who analysed how specific groups of neurons in the hippocampus are related to different functions, including location, orientation, and recognition of borders. It is important to note that for the Nobel laureate on this topic Edvard Moser (2014), a map is not only a representation used to retain, encode and recall the elements in a space but also an instrument for exploration that permits the development of detours and shortcuts. To allow such exploration, a cognitive map depends on its capacity to enable 'flexible behaviour' and to generate predictions (e.g., 'If you do this, that will happen').

In the same sense, Jameson's cognitive map aims to create a device not only to trace ideological images but also to enable people to take a detour from the very image that they have created of themselves in relation to the transformation of social structures. Jameson (1991) notes that due to the increasing complexity of the contemporary social structures, such maps have become imperative. His argument is that a new type of aesthetic is necessary to trace how reality is constantly being reshaped and to reveal possible rearrangements.

Toscano and Kinkle (2015) also emphasise that a cognitive map is about enhancing perception of the abstract logics of social life. For instance, they argue that the television series *Wired* is a cognitive map of the city of Baltimore. In this sense, drawing a cognitive map does not resemble the traditional methods of cartography. Cognitive mapping is not simply drawing and representing, nor it is simply conceptualising and diagramming, because it 'does not provide a method, or advance a concept; rather, it poses a problem which is at once political, economic, aesthetic and existential' (Toscano and Kinkle, 2015, 22). In this sense, concepts and diagrams are used only as heuristic instruments to make visible and problematise the abstract mechanisms of a given social condition.

Similarly, a cognitive map of architecture should be a tool of clarification. In other words, it should not simply mimic the complexity of reality; rather, it should enable subjects to navigate reality. Our specific map should clarify the interconnections, structures, dialectics, exchanges and conflicts surrounding architecture. Furthermore, it should enable subjects to visualise the dialectical interaction between architecture and society and help them understand how the subjectivity of architects is reproduced.

*A map of this thesis*

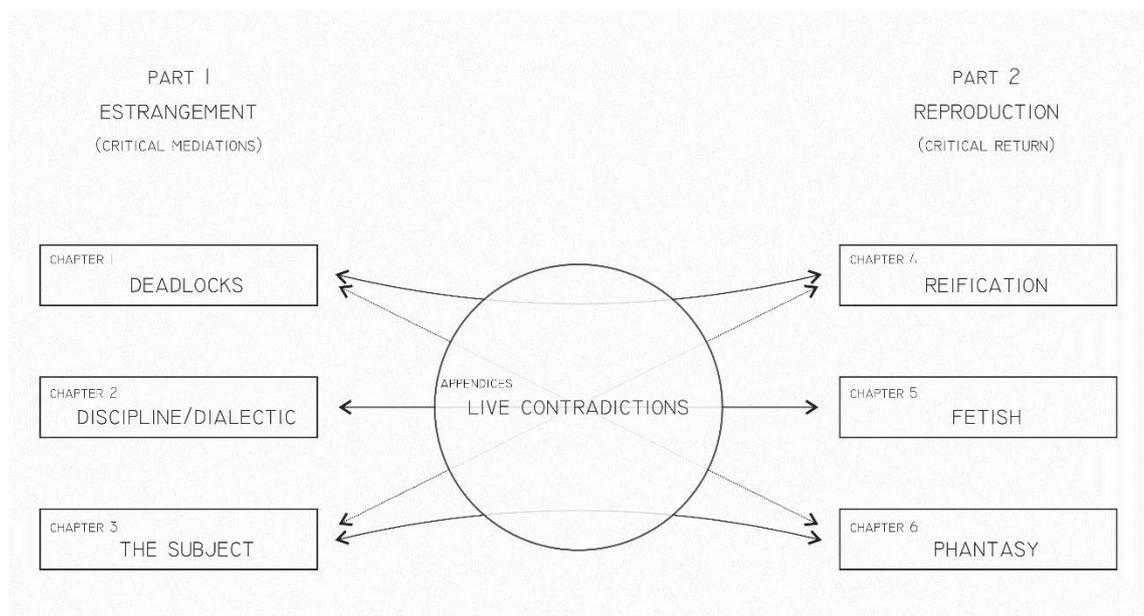


Diagram 1: Map of the thesis. Source: the author.

This initial set of ideas lead us back to the cognitive map that this thesis is. As mentioned above, the fieldwork – reported in the appendices – were a tool that enabled to identify the key paradoxes of the discipline of architecture and the ways in which these disciplinary structures result in the reproduction of architecture. Therefore, this fieldwork is an omnipresent source for the discussions in the chapters that follow, functioning as a mediator between Part 1 and Part 2.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The fieldwork resulted in four stake points – further discussed in the appendices – upon which the map was developed. These stake points generated the two axes (the estrangement of part 1 and the reproduction of part 2). They are stake points not only in the sense that they refer to the ‘building

Part 1 is an abstract account of how to critically approach the deadlocks uncovered in the discipline, and Part 2 is a reflexive return to the concrete experience of the architectural profession. Thus, Part 2 elucidates how disciplined deadlocks frame the architectural unconscious, transforming architecture into a disciplining force that reproduces social relations rather than accomplishing its potential to engage in political struggles. In this sense, each chapter has a theoretical relationship with its symmetrical peer in the other part (see diagram 1 above).

Chapter 1 describes the different deadlocks of architectural theory, establishing the literature landscape that this thesis aims to avoid: It is about what it is not about.

In Chapter 2, we begin designing our cognitive map, tracing the disciplinary elements of the field of architecture and its dialectical overcoming. This design creates not only a new picture of the territory of architecture but also renders a new theory of the subject inhabiting this map.

In Chapter 3, we further develop the idea of the current subject of architecture, its historical emergence, and a theoretical framework of a 'subject to change'. Rather than architecture being understood as a structure subjected to an operation that results in a later structure (S-O-S), a new ontogenesis of architecture is developed, allowing the understanding of architecture not as a 'thing' but as a 'process' – an operation that creates a structure only as a phase in the emergence of a new operation – (O< >S< >O). In this new ontogenesis of architecture (a being becoming), architectural subjectivities become the driving means of the reproduction of architecture. Thus, the following three layers of architectural reproduction emerge: reification, fetish and phantasy.

In Chapter 4, we proceed with a critical return to the concrete everyday of the profession, revealing how the conception of architecture as a thing is in fact a thingification of social relations.

Furthermore, in Chapter 5, we investigate how architecture operates this thingification, namely, through fetish. Fetish is understood as a 'present participle', both a noun and a

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surveying' of our map but also because they reveal the main paradoxes in radical practices: the points at stake.

verb. Thus, architecture is revealed to be a technique of phenomena (i.e., a method of fetish), capturing the work of others, hiding artifices of power and framing subjectivities. Subjectivities are framed through a process in which architects themselves become instruments: things operated by others. In addition, understanding how architects come to desire their own oppression is the topic of the following chapter.

In Chapter 6, we unveil how the narratives produced in the field are the means through which the subjects of architecture come to desire their own instrumentalisation. Subjected to framing, fragmentation and hierarchy, the collective subject of architecture is expropriated by phantasies of ‘princes’. In line with Althusser’s interpretation of Machiavelli’s prince, ranked architects are nothing more than representations and a socially accepted means of expropriation. Princes and ‘utopias’ are investigated as the main phantasies of architecture. In Slavoj Žižek’s approach to Lacan’s conceptualisation, phantasies are conscious narratives that are developed to justify and mobilise unconscious desires. Therein lies the foundation of architectural reproduction and the core of architectural estrangement – i.e., the separation of architects from the means of their own production. The result is a map that enables subjects to traverse these phantasies.

No solution is provided here. Although somewhat discouraging, what is at stake is the use that someone might have for this map.

**PART 1:**  
**ARCHITECTURAL ESTRANGEMENT:**  
**Mapping discipline, dialectics and subjects**

On the one hand, architecture seems to implode inside the illusions created by the field itself. On the other hand, architecture seems to explode into divergent and dissenting practices that attempt to critically overcome the limits of the field. The question we aimed to investigate comes from the conflict between these two dynamics: Can we find in these practices of dissent some way of producing architecture that delivers radical social changes?

If we position ourselves at a radical distance from the discipline of architecture and examine it from an impartial abstract viewpoint, we find the discipline of architecture to be so intertwined with the reproduction of the social system, that many critical accounts suggest architecture to be ‘the problem’ of ideologically framed social spaces (for instance, see Carcciari, 1993; La Cecla, 2008). These accounts assume ‘architecture’ to be constrained by its ‘disciplinary condition’, leaving no space for dialectics or contradictions; in addition, such accounts do not consider practices outside the formal discipline – such as vernacular or vulgar architecture.<sup>6</sup> In these approaches, architects are trapped in the spiral of the mode of production, thereby reinforcing ideologies, if they do not simply accept an *ad hoc* position in some pre-established social role. Nevertheless, contradictions are manifested in this condition by the two inverse dynamics: on the one hand, the field seems to implode on itself and, on the other hand, it seems to present fragments of an explosion.

In the first dynamic, the structures and hierarchies of the field are pressed towards an increasing concentration of power, with internationally acclaimed architects occupying positions of social esteem. The romantic figure of the solitary humanist architect is replaced by large offices resembling the structures of corporate and international brands, wherein the labour of hundreds of architects is concentrated.

In the second dynamic, widespread discontentment with the ‘rules of the game’ motivates thousands of emergent critical initiatives aimed at escaping the constraints of the discipline and engaging in the social and political realms. Around the world,

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<sup>6</sup> Alternatively, as we discussed in the introduction, we aim to investigate the dialectic between the discipline of architecture and the reproduction of social relations. Paradoxically, in this way, the socially accepted concepts of what architecture is matters precisely because they are a topic of debate. Furthermore, the approach of the reproduction of architecture considers the (social) products that architecture delivers – usually seen as ‘things’; the methods established in practice to create ‘facts’ – here argued to be the techniques of phenomena in the form of fetishes; and architecture as the narratives that justify the mobilisation of collective desires – namely, phantasies.

collectives, non-profit organisations and independent groups are attempting to develop activities that reengage architecture with the production (or the imagining) of alternative social spaces (for an account of these experiences, see Appendix 3).

Substantial to these efforts is the research and experiments developed in the realm of academia, especially in the form of so-called ‘Live Projects’. Harriss and Widder (2014) organised a network of the institutions involved in these experiences that aims to transform the pedagogy of architecture into a ‘hands-on’ activity. This approach aims to move beyond the ‘design studio’ – detached from reality – emphasising a ‘complex participation in the world’ in a process focused on collective and trans-disciplinary efforts rather than individual initiatives. Like a nail in the head of this discussion, Alan Chandler (2014) finds the fact that ‘building’ is both a noun and a verb to be a fundamental point. As an ‘action’, architecture is more than a ‘thing’ in the common sense of the word, and its status as a process and an activity of production and labour fully reveals the social relations involved in architecture.

To understand the interference of architecture in the reproduction of social relations, we focused our investigation on design experiments related to public spaces. We started with an analysis of the condition of contemporary public spaces (the fieldwork in Appendix 2). A sample of constructed projects approved after 2009 were subject to a quantitative and qualitative analysis, resulting in a picture of the average new traces of these spaces. In this sense, these spaces are new ‘common spaces’ in contemporary cities because they are both becoming the usual and ordinary things (commonplaces) and forming the new ‘commons’ of society.

We advanced the research by investigating a series of UEL Live Projects both in the master’s module ‘Urban Ecology’ and in the post-graduate professional architecture programme module ‘Construction Week’ (the fieldwork in Appendix 3). These projects aimed to design and construct interventions in urban spaces in London and abroad. As we aim to understand how architecture is prevented from interfering in the production of social relations, we focused on three workshops that entail a close relation of architecture with public spaces, especially focusing on the paradoxes that inhibited the aims of the workshops.

We did not aim to undermine the multifaceted richness of the experiences; we instead sought to focus on the critical points that these experiences were able to reveal, namely, the ones in which the discipline is pushed against its own ‘limits’.<sup>7</sup>

In this way, the conflict between the implosion and explosion of architecture pointed directly to the problem to be investigated in this first part. A question that returns is: Can this conflict suggest how architecture can produce new social relations instead of reinforcing the existing ones?

To assess the elements at play, we developed initial working hypotheses. These hypotheses were provisional conceptual frameworks that aimed at allowing exploratory research, in the sense that these ‘constructed expectations’ could facilitate the navigation of the different elements at play. The working hypotheses were as follows: (1) new privatised public spaces were a form of ‘urban enclosure’; (2) architecture could operate as the production of micro-utopias in the sense of Foucault’s micro-politics, suspending or countering the current mode of production at the scale of experience; (3) as the social mode of production is shifting towards a society of control framed by information technologies (IT), the last hypothesis implied the possibility of change by means of methods similar to IT hacking (a more detailed account on these working hypotheses can be found in Appendix 3).

In the conflict between implosion and explosion and in the paradoxes faced by critical practices, we found the elements that revealed our initial hypotheses to be limited. Nevertheless, they enabled the emergence of a new one – the reproduction of architecture. The point of no return on the road to an architecture that might shape new social relations does not emerge by adding new ideas within the constraints of a disciplinary field; instead, it resides in enabling a new subject to emerge and reposition itself in the disciplinary process that architecture reproduces.

For that, in the first chapter of this part, we mapped how architectural theory frames the discipline in a series of deadlocks forming its main paradox: can architecture produce rather than reproduce social relations? This problem not only concerns architecture but

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<sup>7</sup> More detailed reports of these workshops were developed during the research process as a means for discussing with the supervisory team. Nevertheless, to preserve the anonymity of the participants, these reports are not included in either the body of this work or in the appendices.

also involves a wider realm of theory concerned with social products, from which the architectural debate borrows different approaches.

After this first chapter, we were able to trace a cognitive map picturing how the discipline of architecture reproduces itself and social relations, establishing the context for the debate between the disciplinary character of the architectural field and its dialectical relations with society (presented in Chapter 2).

This map helps to navigate the ordinary forms of *illusio* in the field and uncovers the gaps in the state of the art.<sup>8</sup> In addition, in the final chapter of Part 1 (Chapter 3), we challenged the idea of agency and the vulgar concept of the subject in architecture, also developing our hypothesis regarding a transindividual subjectivity in architecture that is an operation rather than a thing, thus paving the way for the conceptualisation of practices ‘within’ and ‘against’ the field.

This cognitive map of architecture intends to enable navigation in the field as it currently operates and to offer a critically reflexive perspective on the operations that maintain the architectural paradox (to shape, and not to shape society). Doing so provides a preliminary tool for any radical project that seeks to challenge or redefine these terms.

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<sup>8</sup> As we shall see, *illusio* is a concept from Bourdieu that aims to unveil how the ostensibly ‘revolutionary’ proposals in a field are simply cyclical repositions of old hierarchies within the same framework.

**CHAPTER 1:**  
**The architectural deadlocks: to shape or not to shape**

In general, common sense would accept the idea that ‘architecture has always shaped society’ (‘Rebel Architecture’, 2014). Monuments, squares, streets, patterns, houses, nature, and rituals, among others, are understood as elements that mould the cultures and ways of life in every city. By contrast, we increasingly accept the idea that the field of architecture cannot change society because it is a small part of a complex socioeconomic structure. The fundamental paradox of architecture lies in, at the same time, being able to shape and unable to reshape.

Initially, it will be important to map how the current debate in architecture frames this paradox by means of a series of deadlocks. These ‘frames’ may reveal how the debate creates different types of false dilemmas and arguments for moderation, which result from internal disputes that deflect radical inquiries about the architect’s social role.

The architectural paradox (to shape and yet be unable to shape) hides a fundamental contradiction in architectonic epistemology. Normally, architecture is theorised as a ‘given’ rather than a social product. Architecture as a way of seeing and acting in society is not a natural fact. Architecture and its activities are social constructs, the products of human activities in a given context. However, architecture is not a random or spontaneous activity free of any foundation. Architecture is a complex activity that engages in a series of processes in a chain of production; it involves a complex system of knowledge and skills that are handed down from generation to generation. Therefore, history is the matter of architecture.

Furthermore, architecture is a (form of) discipline. As a ‘profession’, a topic of ‘knowledge’, an assemblage of ‘corporatist’ interests, a shared cultural language, a social praxis, a set of skills or a division of labour, the phenomenon usually referred to as ‘architecture’ serves as a disciplinary force within society. It regulates patterns of behaviour, defines measures of comparison, controls interactions among individuals, imposes ways of thinking, defines what is seen and what is unseen, suggests what should be supported and what should be opposed, defines identities and social roles, establishes a rhythm and regulates everyday life. At the very least, architecture is currently designed to do these things. In this way, architecture as a discipline establishes a specific form of subjectivity among its followers and determines a series of practices and mechanisms to produce a similar range of ‘objects’.

These objects are evaluated, hierarchically distinguished, disseminated and reproduced through a series of institutions and protocols. In turn, these objects interpellate subjects (see introduction and Althusser, 1971), as they place the subject in expected social roles. This interpellation occurs in the abstract field of architecture, as much as in the concrete field of everyday life in real cities or in the imaginary world of desire promoted by propaganda and the media. Thus, denying that architecture plays a role in the process of reproducing social relations would be at the very least imprecise. Moving from the symbolic to the concrete, from the abstract management of production to the pragmatic experience of the everyday life, architecture functions as a means of realising ideologies in social space (see Spencer, 2012, pp. 105-109).

What process, then, still renders architecture as both incredibly powerful and hopelessly impotent? How can such diffuse and contradictory ideas paint architecture as a discipline that shapes but is unable to shape social relations? In this chapter, we argue that a series of theoretical deadlocks generate this paradox. Therefore, we shall first trace the most common deadlocks to be avoided, which will be reviewed according to the following groups:<sup>9</sup>

- (1) Dead ends: when the propositions do not overcome the elements identified as problematic;
- (2) False dilemmas: when pseudo ‘technical errors’ in the profession are blamed as the structural causes of social problems; thus, a different ‘style’ would be able to solve the problem;
- (3) The fallacy of autonomy: when architecture is estranged from society, denying its embeddedness and social interaction, as if it could be conceived outside political and ethical considerations;

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<sup>9</sup> In concrete manifestations, these deadlocks intertwine and reinforce each other. The presented systematisation has only an instrumental character, and it aims to map the different aspects of the paradox of architecture. Furthermore, this prolegomenon will focus on the logical errors in the cognitive reproduction of the architectural paradox; thus, we will retain the analysis on the formal aspects of the reasoning. This approach aims to investigate how architectural theory frames a condition in which architects can do nothing but reproduce the field. In the next chapter, we will map the discipline of architecture and the ways in which a dialectical approach can facilitate detours in the field.

- (4) The denial of the dialectic: when architecture is regarded as a mimetic reflex by denying that architecture and cultural products counteract society, i.e., architecture is considered a ‘superstructure’ that is separate from the ‘base’ – a sort of ‘effect’ detached from deeper causes;
- (5) A lack of reflexivity: when any ‘idea’ about architecture is considered ‘false’ and the spokesperson is presumed to be the only possible emissary of the absolute ‘truth’ about reality (either positively or negatively).

### **1.1. Dead ends: charity, resignation, escapism and protest**

Dead ends can generally be identified as a lack of critical detachment or a lack of imagination. Nevertheless, the complexity of the problem might blur some boundaries, and it might even be used as a cynical or dissuasive instrument to simulate a radical approach. Most notably, dead ends in architecture appear in the following modes: charity, resignation, escapism and protest.

#### *Charity*

Architecture that is produced as charity presupposes the possibility of solving a problem with the same formula that has created the problem. For instance, to remedy the shortage of housing in capitalist societies, architects should intensify and spread capitalism, developing more houses for the market and targeting excluded groups. More than a moral concern about ‘making profit out of poverty’, what matters here is the rejection/incapability of overcoming the precise logics that reproduce inequalities in the first place.

Alejandro Aravena is an illuminating example of today’s fashionable practice of targeting low-income consumers as a form of redemption. In a lecture at UEL (24 November 2015), Aravena described how the ‘market’ used to ignore him until he went to Harvard (a ‘distinguished’ institution), where a colleague noted that social housing

was an ignored ‘niche’ market in architecture. Therefore, he and his colleague proposed a module that explored student projects in this field. His proposal was to ‘do better’ architecture in the very ‘same game of the market’. Aravena (2015) recalled how these experiments remained relatively unknown and academic until he met the Chilean Housing Minister, who was a Harvard alumnus and became a close friend. With the Housing Minister’s influence, he was able to attract a vast number of state-funded business-led projects.

Aravena’s projects aim to smooth inequalities rather than eliminating them altogether. At the UEL event, he described how he wanted to transform architecture into a device like ‘the beaches in Brazil’. According to Aravena, the reason that rich and poor people do not ‘kill each other’ in Brazil is because the beaches work as a social device that smooths the enormous social contrasts by offering enjoyment and pleasure. When asked how he could draw the line between ‘charity’ and ‘really tackling’ the problem, he dismissed the question, answering ‘I only do design’ (a tactical answer very common among famous architects). To make his point, Aravena used a hypothetical project for Syria, in which he would simply ‘not think about war’ because it would interfere with good design practice. In this sense, charity in architecture can be precisely understood as a form of deflecting the problem that it should address, thus reproducing its roots by either extending its contradictions to a wider field or covering the problem with a beautiful façade. Furthermore, despite any good intentions, the charity approach will ultimately address the effects rather than the causes of a problem.<sup>10</sup>

### *Resignation*

Resignation is another form of dead end. There are two faces to the same resignation coin: abdication and abnegation.

To abdicate is to give up. It is to recognise one’s failure in carrying out a duty, thereby renouncing a position of social power. To abdicate in architecture is to deny its social power, as power is understood to exist elsewhere. In this attitude, architecture must be

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<sup>10</sup> For other variations of this approach, please refer to *Architecture for Humanity*, 2006; Smith, C., 2007.

accepted as a natural fact that occurs within a society and be understood as regulated by natural laws. In this sense, architects are powerless. They do not act; they only actualise. Truth is seen only in the immediate experience; thus, the status quo becomes absolute. For the architect, there is no room for critique, reflection or consciousness. Only with this form of reasoning can architecture be understood as merely the solution of an equation or as a technical procedure.

Arguably, the most famous proponent of this idea is Patrik Schumacher. For Schumacher (2015), the time when architecture aspired to interfere in society is in the past. He argues that architecture is a discipline and that politics is another field; thus, architecture should stick to its own corner. For him, architecture should only mirror the contemporary condition rather than trying to interfere with it. In his words,

Architecture has no capacity to resolve political controversy. Political controversy and activism would overburden and explode the discipline. However, architecture can and must respond to transformative historical developments that become manifest within the economy and the political system. Architecture can only react with sufficient unanimity and collective vitality to dominant political agendas that already have the real power of a tangible political force behind them. Architectural discourse must develop innovative architectural responses to these historical transformative trends. [...] The author [referring to himself in third person] argues that parametricism is the only truly innovative direction within architecture and should be promoted as the only credible candidate aspiring to become the unified epochal style for architecture, urbanism and all the design disciplines for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This thesis is being argued for within a comprehensive, unified theory [...] All top-down bureaucratic attempts to order the built environment are bankrupt. [...] The functional (programmatic) dimension of this new urban order is being delivered by client-entrepreneurs competing and collaborating within the institutional framework of the global market process: neo-liberalism (Schumacher, 2015).

By contrast, Douglas Spencer (2012) has demonstrated how contemporary architects, such as Schumacker and Foreign Office Architects (FOA), have ultimately reproduced and mimicked the abstract instruments of a ‘society of control’ that Deleuze (1992) criticised. Once the status quo is regarded as natural, neoliberalism becomes axiomatic and the law. Once capitalism is considered ‘natural’, any critique, proposed change or intention to produce a counterplan is labelled ‘fascism’. The only alternative is to enjoy the flow and to use architecture to providently mimic what is already there: the status quo and the discipline become absolute.

According to this epistemology, there is no ambiguity in architecture. Architecture is conceived as either having an immutable essence or as obeying a recognisable universal law of evolution to which architects should adapt. Arguably, the architect's position results from a choice of ignorance and impotence. The architect chooses to ignore that architecture is a social product with a conflicting history. He or she ignores the conflicts and different ethical and political dilemmas implicit in various practices. However, he or she ultimately chooses impotence, accepting things as they are and expecting immediate benefits in return for his or her resignation. In fact, abdication does not deny the power of architecture to shape society; instead, through circular reasoning, the architect who abdicates chooses impotence by accepting nothing more than the shapes aligned with the machinery of the status quo. Thus, he or she resigns to circumstances, which are expected to be absolute truths.

Abnegation, a gesture against the self, is the act of denying oneself something. Abnegation does not deny the power of architecture; it instead hands over this power in an act of self-denial.<sup>11</sup> Abnegation in architecture distributes its power to other individuals rather than the architect, transforming architecture into a medium and denying the architect's responsibility by inviting others to exercise the power that he or she has given up. Thus, the architect resigns in favour of others, who are expected to have some form of absolute wisdom. Abnegation most commonly appears in the form of participation, when the one in power renders his decision-making capacity to others.<sup>12</sup>

Claire Bishop (2006, 2012), on the one hand, praises participation as an instrument that creates 'factual events' in the world, extending our capacity to imagine our relationship with the world. On the other hand, she criticises how participation became an escape route after the collapse of communism, thereafter embracing an attitude of post-

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<sup>11</sup> Alternatively, a very different attitude can be understood through the verb 'abrogate' (formally repeal). When Peter Kropotkin famously rejected his title as prince at the age of 12, he was not giving up a fight or submitting himself to powerlessness. He was paving the way to build an anarchistic struggle. Similarly, when Anthony Neil Wedgwood (1998), known as Tony Benn, renounced his hereditary 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Peerage, this act would ultimately enable him to join the political struggle and develop his famous key questions: 'What power do you have? Where did you get it? In whose interests do you exercise it? To whom are you accountable? And, how can we get rid of you?'

<sup>12</sup> This deadlock was famously represented in Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Participation, which had eight steps, starting with less participation and increasing with each step: manipulation, therapy, informing, consulting, placation, partnership, delegating power and the ideal aim of citizen control. Planning thus becomes a neutral means. This deadlock is usually associated with charity in many contemporary examples (see Schinkel et al., 2014; Architecture for Humanity, 2006; Smith, 2007)

politicality, marketisation, populist neoliberalism and a 'Reality Show' aesthetic.<sup>13</sup> In some cases, she notices how participation entirely merged with spectacle instead of serving as an oppositional force.<sup>14</sup> In this sense, she argues that participation is not a privileged medium nor a ready-made solution. Participation yields better results when it maintains a tension between artistic critique and social critique. Perhaps similar to the way in which Marcuse (1981) describes art as a break with reality and the imagination of another possible dimension, Bishop argues that artistic representation can sometimes generate more dissent and consciousness than participation in reality, making the most ineffectual gestures even more exemplary ('however uncomfortable, exploitative, or confusing') than pragmatic micro-interventions, as artistic representation might invent an unpredictable subject rather than allocating a fixed space to fill the voids left by dominant powers. For her, 'good intentions shouldn't render art immune to critical analysis' (Bishop, 2006).

For Bishop (2006, 2011), the turn towards 'participation' is often made as a strategy to avoid 'spectacle', which aims to transform passive citizens (lost in images) into active citizens. Nevertheless, following Baudrillard (1994), she argues that images and the medium have merged into simulacra; even if citizens were to participate in, say, architecture, they would do so in a realm of masquerades, preconceptions and false values rather than being exposed to fundamental contradictions in society. In developing Hegel's master-slave paradox, Paulo Freire (1996) argued that the 'oppressed' only know the logic of the 'oppressor', thus reproducing the attitude of the oppressor in his mind. In this sense, participation only encourages emancipated subjects if it creates some form of consciousness (an awareness of the fabricated relationship between the self and world).

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<sup>13</sup> In addition to noting the fact that voluntary work also means unpaid and precarious work, Bishop (2011) criticises the dichotomy between an 'art critique' (focused in disenchantment, inauthenticity, individualism, egotism, networking, mobility, project work, and affective labour) and a 'social critique' (focused on oppression), as it creates a detached realm for art, in which oppression focuses on individuals and has no roots or real consequences. This duality 'underlines, for me, the necessity of sustaining a tension between artistic and social critiques (...) a continual play of mutual tension, recognition and dependency', in which the irreconcilable tension between individual and society can be explored and propaganda and moral discourses can be avoided.

<sup>14</sup> See Anthony Gormley, *One and Other* (2009). Participants became immediate and temporary centres of the spectacle, which Higgins (2009) referred to as 'twitter art' in *The Guardian*.

## *Escapism*

However, various forms of 'escapism' or 'myths of evasion' constitute another dead end. In the modernist vanguard, escapism consisted of an attempt to flee civilisation's contradictions by escaping to a primitive environment.<sup>15</sup> Such was the notorious case of Gauguin's escape to Martinique and then to Tahiti.

In spatial terms, Oswald Mathias Ungers, of whom Rem Koolhaas is an ambivalent disciple, proposed the architectural classic of such escapes. He conceived of projects as utopian islands in the city that disrupt the regular social structure.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the proposals of Temporary Autonomous Zones (TAZs) aim to produce interventions in which social rules are momentarily suspended:

The TAZ is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerrilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, before the State can crush it (Galloway 2004, 35).

The TAZ is inspired by Foucault's (1986) concept of heterotopias, although the former does not recognise that any existential space would already be formed by multiple dimensionalities, rituals and layered experience. Instead, disconnected spatial structures in short-lived detached experiments are proposed as pure potentiality; thus, they are disengaged from the concrete experience and, in this sense, escape from its constraints.

In a similar but distinct vein, Sande argues for the creation of 'micro-utopias' or the 'acting as if one is already free' (Sande 2013). Ringel (2012), using an 'anthropologic-anarchist approach', conceives that micro-utopias should be dedicated to creatively producing free spatialities, thus avoiding a neoliberal evacuation of the future by

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<sup>15</sup> See Michelli, 1991.

<sup>16</sup> Ungers based his political dialectic on his previous research on the housing interventions in 'Red Vienna'. Those interventions created isolated superblocks as ideal spaces for workers. These spaces were not like the modernist minimum standard but instead were performance spaces for the full realisation of life. In addition, Ungers researched alternative communities in the USA and became convinced of the possibility of creating entities that were autonomous from the overall social system. These ideas would combine to form his most famous paradigm: the Archipelago. The Archipelago was inspired by Schinkel's interventions in Berlin. It was conceived as an alternative to urban expansion because by the 1970s, Berlin was shrinking. Therefore, Ungers proposed that the city become a system of 'cities within the city', archipelagos of urbanity surrounded by green spaces. In this sense, the city would be formed by contrasts, opposing forms, conflicts, and a hodgepodge of different collective dimensions. Therefore, each island would become a micro-city. In other words, each island could create its own utopic proposal (see Aureli, 2011 and 2008, pp. 177-228, especially p. 178).

developing a ‘creative presentism’, which creates new grounds for hope. Webb and Lynch (2010) analyse how the post-punk scene constructed new experiences of reality that were momentarily actualised in ‘pirate spaces’ of globalisation and then actualised into the ‘lifeworld’. Bourriaud (2002a, p. 31) argues that traditional critical theory can no longer sustain artistic strategies, as the strategy of total negation and transformation of society is no longer available. Thus, he argues for everyday tactics, working within the system and promoting new forms of conviviality and encounters. For him, contemporary art already works through the invention of idiosyncratic ‘vanishing lines’; he argues that what ‘artists are trying to do now is to create micro-utopias, neighborhood utopias, like talking to your neighbor’ (Bourriaud, 2002b). For him, these micro-utopias are a new form of ‘possible’ micro-politics. Similarly, John Wood (2007) proposes designing micro-utopias in a less rational, critical and negative way, dismissing both the idea of a monolithic utopia and Western mechanistic individualism in favour of a multifaceted proliferation of imaginative ‘miracles’ and ‘dreams’ in an ethics of flow. Alternatively, Pier Vittorio Aureli (2013) proposes a monastic architecture in which subjects can detach themselves from society and realise the true nature of their inner selves, thus escaping society through ascetic cells of an absolute architecture that is supposedly based on a true and natural human essence (Aurelli, 2011).<sup>17</sup>

For Douglas Spencer (2016), these proposals fail to critically acknowledge their own positions and to effectively confront the complexity of the contemporary condition. Thus, by accepting the possibility of an architectural autonomy and mystifying the notion of an individualistic subject (detached from any social constraints), they precisely and inadvertently align themselves with the most characteristic neoliberal ideology: there is nothing beyond the realm of free individuals making free choices. Thus, all these approaches fail in two ways. On the one hand, they avoid the problem not by resigning but rather by abandoning and departing from the problem of how architecture is reproducing society. On the other hand, they aim to address the essential nature of a ‘free subject’, ignoring the historicity of architecture, its practices, and the

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<sup>17</sup> A final variation of this escape comes from architects such as Peter Zumthor and FOA, who escape the ethical implications of architecture by addressing the supposedly absolute and pure joy of corporeal experiences of the senses in a realm of pleasure, idyllic experiences and futile affect (on the politics of affect, see Spencer, 2012, pp. 179-194).

ways in which the architect's subjectivity (as well as any other subjectivity) is historically and socially produced (interpellated) and contingent.<sup>18</sup>

### *Protest*

The last mode of the dead-end group involves transforming architecture into protest. Important radical architects ultimately fell into this logical entanglement. Although they have developed a powerful critical view that enables them to identify how architecture is used as an instrument of power and ideology, the solutions proposed are all versions that involve either 'taking over' the discipline or committing a 'symbolic kidnapping' of the existent structures. In such cases, architecture remains trapped in a system of representation; thus, it can at most be used to denounce its own mistakes. For instance, although Aldo Rossi developed an important and critical theory, he ultimately fell into this dead-end deadlock.

According to Aureli (2008, p. 56), Aldo Rossi, under the influence of Gramsci, understood architecture not as a product of Great Masters but as an integral part of urban phenomena, formed in the dialectic of individual actions, political economy and social history. Therefore, he managed to avoid any metaphorical justifications, developing an approach that could directly address the concrete aspects of a place's political production, as the uniqueness of his concept of 'locus' could not be reduced to capital integration (Aureli, 2008, p.63).

For Rossi (1982), architecture, as a repository of labour, has a 'profound value as a human thing that shapes reality and adapts material[s] according to an aesthetic conception'. Although Rossi also critiques 'naïve functionalism', he does so to rescue political values and social content, which are embedded in architecture as 'artefacts'. For him, an artefact is the result of social labour and careful conceptualisation. When Rossi creates the concept of typology, he does so to address architecture's social heritage and historical symbolism in the city. A type is a repository of culture, social knowledge and collective work.

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<sup>18</sup> For a more extensive critique of this conception of the subject, please refer to the discussion in the end of Chapter 2 and Chapters 3 and 6.

At this point, the theory is extremely consistent, but from diagnosis to prognosis, a ‘Mexican standoff’ is reached.<sup>19</sup> A representative project is that for the Centro Direzionale de Torino. The proposal aims to reveal the social conditions of labour and to avoid creating a pseudo-Eden; instead, it aims to reinforce the workers’ massive collectiveness. Although architecture is the property of the dominant class, the structures’ silent rigidity says nothing about anything but its massive existence, shifting attention to the locus, to the greatness of the social union (in this emblematic ‘worker’s city’), and to the architectural act of providing that union with monumental symbolism. Although this architectural symbolism expresses a political choice, it does not interfere with how architecture is produced nor with how it reproduces and reinforces pre-existing social structures.

In this dead end, architects engage with the context and the design with political intentions, positioning themselves in urban social struggles and using architecture as a representation of their positions. Nothing fundamentally changes in architecture, except that it becomes a sign that is raised in protest. However, architecture continues to be an image that covers all the implicit mechanisms of its production, its machinations, its arrangements, its articulations, its organisation, and its gears. No social change can be delivered before some ‘outside event’ resolves the contradictions represented by ‘the standoff’: one must wait for the ‘final revolution’. Despite all the advancements of Rossi’s theories, they accomplish nothing outside the system, nor do they contribute to the production of a different ‘condition’. Yet again, the architect is locked in a paradox of ‘re-presentation’; (re)presenting an alternative image rather than building something new.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> A Mexican standoff is a confrontation between two or more parties in which no participant can proceed or retreat without being exposed to danger. As a result, all participants must maintain a strategic tension, which remains unresolved until some outside event makes a resolution possible (from Wikipedia).

<sup>20</sup> Notably, we are not arguing that images have no power; instead, we are arguing the opposite. We aim to unveil the power of creating images. In Chapters 3 and 6, we will see how the architect might be conceived as a ‘prince’ in the Machiavellian sense (see Althusser, 2000) or as the ‘vanguard of the proletariat’ in the Gramscian tradition; thus, the architect becomes the image of a political endeavour (a representation), an instrumental abstract symbol of a social desire. Nevertheless, to return to a previous metaphor, Rossi is still playing the game of ‘football’. In Brazil, there is a football team called *International* who play in a red kit, and was the first to accept black players in the squad in early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Somehow, silently, they might still represent the ideals (images) of *The Communist International*. However, our aim is less compliant with the ideologies implied by the game (such as competition). The aim is to explode the stadium.

## 1.2. False dilemmas

Developing ‘false dilemmas’ is a common way to avoid the radical roots of the architectural paradox. Architectural theory and practice have systematically developed many variants of ‘technical errors’ to explain why stated conceptions of architecture are unable to reshape social relations, thereby moving beyond what is regarded as its catastrophic failures. According to this kind of reasoning, the architect will propose a dichotomy: first, the ‘wrong view’ shared among architects and, second, the ‘right way’ of tackling the problem (the proposed method). Methodologically, the operation consists of presenting a ‘straw man’, which represents a particular line of ‘reasoning’ by distorting the original logic in order to reduce it to absurdity. Then, the straw man is used to represent the ‘mistakes’ being applied, which allows the alternative to be presented as the solution of these problems. Nevertheless, in this process, the overall structure of the field remains the same, only reshuffling the dominant players.

For instance, Sharon Zukin (2010, pp. 219-227) demonstrates how Jane Jacobs represents the complex change from a ‘centralised state’ to a ‘neoliberal ideological’ mode of urban production, as if the former were a ‘technical misconception’ of the architectural avant-garde. The fact that modern cities are ‘dying’ is thus represented as the technical incapacity of architects to read the elements that compose urban ‘life’. For Zukin (2010, p. 227), Jacobs ‘was too smart a journalist, and too experienced a community activist, to ignore the forces that structured, and structure still, what is built and how: the force of money and state power’. Zukin (2010, p. 25) suggests that this camouflaging of social conflicts can be explained by the origins of Jacobs’ funding (the Rockefeller Foundation) and her links to powerful media institutions (such as *Time* and *Life*). Therefore, Jacobs’ critique is inserted into the rules of the game, taking a position in favour of certain interests in the guise of a certain ‘school’, thus proposing a change in style rather than a political change in spatial production (i.e., the way that architecture is engaged in the social production of space).

False dilemmas, such as those mentioned above, have sparked internal disputes between different ‘schools’ in the field – from Robert Venturi’s defence of a ‘popular language’ in architecture against the ‘erudite language’ of modern architecture to the conflicts among Frank Lloyd Wright’s ‘organicism’, Le Corbusier ‘formalism’, Walter Gropius’ ‘functionalism’, and Mies van der Rohe’s love for the ‘absolute’ fact. Such dilemmas

are not merely the peculiarities of architects; as Bourdieu (1996a) would assert, they are the ‘Rules of Art’.

For instance, De Stijl and Mondrian proposed a new and pure plastic order, based on fundamental and universal facts, such as the primary colours and vertical and horizontal lines based on M. H. Schoenmaekers’ neoplatonic philosophy (Frampton, 2000). Thus, the ‘false’ perception of reality was substituted for a ‘true’ one. By contrast, the *Realist Manifesto* of Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsner (Gabo, 1920; Krauss, 2001, pp. 292-303) recognised some advances in this artistic avant-garde. But for Gabo, all the avant-garde was embroiled in the scale of ‘machines’, fascinated by low velocities while the ‘sun travels at 500 km/s’; thus, for him, conflicts involving pictorial superficiality could never reflect the essence of the universe. Therefore, Gabo proposed an art spirit as ‘precise as a compass’, where the line was the central element in the movement of sculptures.

This method is always the same: first a straw man and then a new reasoning chain as a new *illusio*. Bourdieu (1995, pp. 227-231, 331-336) referred to an *illusion* as playing by the rules of the ‘game’, where a ‘genius’ is supposedly capable of reinventing the whole field by providing a new image of the whole (we will discuss this idea further in Chapter 2).

Tshumi’s (2000, pp. 214-229) *The Architectural Paradox* [originally published in 1975] is of great interest to the present discussion due to its complex presentation and his disappointing final argument for moderation (*argumentum ad temperantiam*). Although a common strategy in rhetoric (presenting two chosen propositions as extreme radicalism, such that a third position can be presented as a moderate equilibrium), this strategy is uncommon in artistic theory, likely due to his attempt to tackle dialectical thinking, although he never overcomes the ‘disjunction’ of dichotomies.<sup>21</sup>

In *The Architectural Paradox*, Tschumi (2000) argues that ‘the impossibility of questioning the nature of space and at the same time experiencing a spatial praxis’ is an internal contradiction in architecture. He summarises this ‘impossibility’ as a

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<sup>21</sup> See Tschumi’s (1994) *Architecture and Disjunction* for an example of his use of dichotomies and the treatise in dialectical reasoning of Lefebvre (1975) for the impossibility of dialectic without overcoming dichotomies.

contradiction between the pyramid (conceptual/ideal) and the labyrinth (senses/praxis/experience). Therefore, he criticises architecture's 'failure' to tackle experience because of its supposed focus on the wrong 'abstract dimension'.<sup>22</sup> Although most of his argument centres on 'experience[s]', 'event[s]', 'jouissance' and the liberation of internal drives (what could be easily contextualised in the hopes of 1968), he remains aware that pure affect will eliminate the conscious control of one's own destiny.<sup>23</sup> In this sense, he makes a rather convoluted argument for moderation.

Although he aims to move towards the 'general organisation of building processes' and to avoid the contradictions that he identifies, he proposes an unnecessary, ephemeral and orgasmic architecture. In this sense, he does not try to tackle the paradox that he identifies (concepts versus experience); he instead tries to escape it by conceptualising a way of fully immersing into experience, not negating concepts but proceeding with a sort of sublimation of concepts into reality. In doing so, he centres on one side of the dichotomy (experience) and takes the other (concepts) to be an element of the first, thus aiming to produce an experience which is in itself 'the experience of a paradox'.

Notably, the proposed dichotomy becomes an absolute – an inevitable fact – where pure experience is the basis for moderating the other pole, the conceptual. Inadvertently, he uses a concept (of experience) to sublimate all other concepts. This position actually blurs into the next deadlock to be analysed, as it presupposes a fundamental disjunction (to use one of Tschumi's key terms) between 'experience' and 'society' (history, context, values, politics, consciousness, the production of subjectivity, and so on), thus unwillingly taking the first step towards architecture's fallacy of autonomy from society.

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<sup>22</sup> Only through the production of a 'straw man' can different theories, such as those of Gottfried Semper's textile architecture, Adolf Loos' Raumplan, Frank Lloyd Wright's organic spatialities, Le Corbusier's promenade, Alvar Aalto's materiality, and Sverre Fehn's phenomenological architecture (together with Norberg Schulz in the PAGON group), be considered to ignore experience. What matters in the 'straw man' is not its precision but its capacity to flip these theories into absurd consequences.

<sup>23</sup> Tschumi addresses important points for the theory of architecture, aiming to be closer to a dialectical and political theory. Although his thought is complex and entangled, a careful analysis reveals his translation of philosophical concepts to architectural elements to be somehow too literal. 'Experience' is related to 'immediate perception', 'events' to 'programme' and 'activities', and 'jouissance' to immediate pleasure. For instance, as we shall see in Chapter 3, 'event' has a deeper meaning in Badiou (2012) as the bringing a truth and a collective subject into being, and so does jouissance for Lefebvre (2014), as the production of desire by appropriation.

### 1.3. The fallacy of autonomy

Although the fallacy of autonomy is also a type of false dilemma, it has unique characteristics. While the previous arguments of false dilemmas would affirm the possession of a key universality as opposed to a false condition (by building a dichotomy with a straw man), the denial of a conjunction between architecture and society instead amplifies the dichotomy to completely separate the realm of architecture from the world as it is. Thus, only what is maintained within the architectonic *illusio* is viewed as a positive effort, while any contact with reality contaminates the purity of the discipline. This fallacy creates an absolute separation from reality, allowing total freedom to operate in a completely imaginary field. Thus, architecture becomes a fairy tale, developing a series of myths, illusions, internal rules, role play, and so on. In other words, the essence of architecture becomes its own fantasies.

In this sense, the dichotomy presents itself as the recognition of an absolute border: on one side of a line, there is the dirty and imperfect condition of the world (society or related conceptions); on the other side, there is architecture (a crystalline object of purity). Even though this autonomy can be easily unmasked by architectural diversity linked to cultural and historical differences (thus revealing how architecture is connected with culture), this fallacy does not simply assert that the realm of illusions is 'better'. Furthermore, it presents itself as an 'absolute' illusion, more real than reality itself. Thus, it enters the realm of the simulacrum, an illusion built upon illusions, where architecture is pure fantasy. Žižek explains fantasy in the Lacanian sense:

So, what is fantasy? Fantasy does not simply realize a desire in a hallucinatory way; rather it constitutes our desire, provides its coordinates – it literally *teaches us how to desire* (26).

This is the favourite paradoxical deadlock of famous architects because the inherent circularity of this reasoning reaffirms the central role of celebrities in the 'game'. In what Bourdieu (1998, pp. 166-173) called 'the production of beliefs', there is an internal 'social logic' in which any field of art determines the value of its products. In a position of celebrities, star architects are given pedigree in an aristocratic court (Bourdieu, 1996, pp. 11-18), thus evoking a distinguished value to their achievements. This value is considered self-evident, as the existing institutions and structures of the field reinforce it. In other words, the position of celebrity (as part of an architectural aristocracy) is

taken as evidence of its true value. In this parallel world, celebrated works are regarded as rules that define what is right or wrong, good or bad, smart or stupid, advanced or backward, and of the future or of the past. In this parallel world, no paradox exists because 'I (the celebrity) am the truth'. In addition, others must attentively respect these definitions.

In this context, much criticism aims to reinforce the parallel reality of architecture. Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter (2000 [originally published in 1978]) and Peter Eisenman (2006 [originally published in 1984]) defended architecture as an autonomous practice that should forget society and concern itself with only 'technical' or internal matters. Architecture thus becomes a geometric 'game'. Shapes from different contexts and epochs can thus be compared without conflict. Even the historicity of geometry can be ignored. The construction of this parallel world allows famous architects to feel comfortable designing for dictators, using construction sites that operate based on contemporary slavery, and promoting primitive accumulation, segregation and expropriation as if those things 'didn't exist'. Or, rhetorically, 'didn't concern good design', after all, Zaha Hadid was only doing 'design' (understood as drawings) in the case of a dictator's award-winning museum (see Catling, 2014; Fairs, 2014).

Rem Koolhaas enjoys a specific deviance in this fallacy, resulting in his acknowledged 'cynicism' of the game. His office does not ignore reality completely; it uses reality as a game of representations. For instance, his office plays with history as an imaginary identity, social context as fictional allegories, and laws as rules of the game. The depoliticisation of Unger's dialectic (Aureli, 2008) allows the Koolhaas 'brand' to instrumentalise the context and irreverently appropriate the most despicable characteristics of the *status quo* as an inevitable absolute. He can thus develop his work as blind utopias, a kind of dystopia without critique, as he does in 'Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture' and 'Junk Space' or in the transformation of architecture into 'branding' for Prada (see Spencer, 2012, p. 239 and 298).

We will further develop the analysis of this phantasmatic dimension of architecture in Chapter 6. For now, retaining its logical contradiction will suffice: the production of this parallel world of architecture does not avoid the contradictions of society. In fact, because architecture is absorbing and accepting the status quo as inevitable, it fully engages in the process of turning ideologies into masquerades and fantasies.

By proposing the fallacy of autonomy, architecture not only masks its relationship with society but also becomes an instrument that reproduces the fantasies of the status quo (i.e., to accept is already an ethical choice). This process of collective fantasy is only possible through the grounding of the architectural discipline in fetish (the production of facts by means of sprezzatura and techniques of phenomena, as we will address in Chapter 5).

As opposed to the fallacy of autonomy, which implies an absolute border, asserting architecture as an 'automatic' reflection of deeper social causes, i.e., as a superficial image or representation, implies a negation of the dialectic, as we shall see next.

#### **1.4. The denial of the dialectic**

Analysing the denial of the dialectical power of architecture, beyond the simple abdication in the dead ends analysed above, will require entry into much deeper and marshier territory. This trek will demand a preliminary review, a generalisation of positions, and a position to be taken in the debate. We will proceed by focusing on the field of critical cultural studies, using the analysis of this problem by Raymond Williams (1973) as a guide and adding contemporary contributions with a special focus on architecture.<sup>24</sup>

First, although the increasing complexity and fragmentation of spatial production has transformed 'architects' into a small fraction of the immense machinery of spatial production, 'architecture' has become, as a matter of social fact, an increasingly important device in interfering in the everyday experience of the city, especially in the production of spectacles and simulations of socialisation, such as the 'revitalisation' of communities. These simulacra produced by architecture have a concrete social impact (a topic to be further explored in Chapter 4).

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<sup>24</sup> The objective here is not to exhaustively describe the debate but to establish the contradictions and the position of this research in the debate. This will allow contextualisation of the investigation in the next chapters. By critical cultural studies, we mean the current influenced by cultural Marxism but not restricted to Marxism itself.

Nevertheless, some authors present the relationship between society and architecture as a parallel to the relationship between the base (material conditions, economy and the mode of production) and superstructure (culture, values, ideas), where the first is the ultimate root of causes and the second is only an effect or consequence of the first. This approach is usually referred to as ‘Orthodox Marxism’, even though it does not resemble Marx’s dialectic approach; therefore, it is often referred to as ‘economic determinism’ or ‘vulgar materialism’ (as opposed to ‘dialectical materialism’).

Although many authors have identified this problem and demonstrated the need for a dialectical take on the relationship between the base and the superstructure (Williams, 1973; Lefebvre, 1975b; Harvey, 1990; Jameson, 1991), it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking, on the one hand, that architecture has no effect on social genesis or, on the other hand, that architecture is an automatic effect, producing the mimetic ‘images’ of precise material conditions. Therefore, in this debate, it is important to establish the dialectical relationship that we aim to investigate later.

In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels (no date [1846]) were primarily fighting against ideas and theories that were detached from the concrete experience of reality. For instance, the definition of justice or human rights (e.g., the right to healthy alimentation) had no relevance if it was debated in purely abstract terms. These concepts would only be important according to their actual realisation (e.g., what really matters is if people can eat every day). In addition to this concrete use of ideas, Engels [1880], in a text discussing the dialectic method, emphasises how ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ and the limits of things are interactive factors that mutually define one another.<sup>25</sup>

In this sense, the dialectical method does not allow simplifications that establish the ‘base’ as the determinant of cultural facts. Nevertheless, the mistake might have

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<sup>25</sup> ‘[E]very organized being is every moment the same and not the same; every moment, it assimilates matter supplied from without, and gets rid of other matter; every moment, some cells of its body die and others build themselves anew; in a longer or shorter time, the matter of its body is completely renewed, and is replaced by other molecules of matter, so that every organized being is always itself, and yet something other than itself. Further, we find upon closer investigation that the two poles of an antithesis, positive and negative, e.g., are as inseparable as they are opposed, and that despite all their opposition, they mutually interpenetrate. And we find, in like manner, that cause and effect are conceptions which only hold good in their application to individual cases; but as soon as we consider the individual cases in their general connection with the universe as a whole, they run into each other, and they become confounded when we contemplate that universal action and reaction in which causes and effects are eternally changing places, so that what is effect here and now will be cause there and then, and vice versa’ (Engels, 1880).

originated in Engels' [1883] speech at Marx's funeral, when he entered into a brief discourse in emotional and symbolic praise about how his friend brought the economic mode of production to the forefront of cultural discussions.<sup>26</sup> In light of previous observations, this praise does not imply a mechanic determinism of the economic but states the aim of philosophy, which must be focused on the dialectical realisation of ideas rather than on an autonomous parallel reality (as we observed previously in the fallacy of autonomy)<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> 'Marx discovered the law of development of human history: the simple fact, hitherto concealed by an overgrowth of ideology, that mankind must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc.; that therefore the production of the immediate material means, and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch, form the foundation upon which the state institutions, the legal conceptions, art, and even the ideas on religion, of the people concerned have been evolved, and in the light of which they must, therefore, be explained, instead of vice versa, as had hitherto been the case (Engels, 1883).

<sup>27</sup> As in much of Marx's thought, this point is rich in subtleties and has been the topic of long debates. Marx only approaches this problem directly in a preface (Marx, no date [1859]) and in a famous footnote of 'Capital' (Marx, 1990, 175) that cites the previous work. In this footnote, he asserts that vulgar bourgeois economists will consider any institution of another time or culture 'artificial' and all bourgeoisie institutions 'natural', very much in the same vein as the 'Fathers of the Church', who treated pre-Christian religions as inventions and their own religion as an emanation of God. Thus, he concludes that 'the economic structure of society' is 'the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness' and that 'the mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life'. In his analysis of this matter, David Harvey (2010, pp. 195-201) argues that the difference between 'conditioning' and 'determining' is fundamental to this point. For him, Marx endeavours to avoid pure speculation (as in the post-Hegelians) and to first observe concrete contradictions and then interpret them. For Harvey (2010, p. 198), it is 'Marx's way of moving by descent: you start with the surface appearance, then dive deep down beneath the fetishisms to uncover a theoretical conceptual apparatus that can capture the underlying motion of social processes. That theoretical apparatus is then brought step by step back to the surface to interpret the dynamics of daily life in new ways'. Thus, Harvey points to another footnote (Marx, 1990, pp. 493-494) in which Marx argues that a history of technology should consider its collective nature and the ways in which it is a human invention (not a natural law) and that it flows from social relations. For Marx, even a history of religion should consider the social material basis from which it emerges and should not be purely written 'in abstraction', such that the misty inventions can be revealed, 'i.e. to develop from the actual, given relations of life the forms in which these have been apotheosized'. Thus, his method avoids pure speculation by rooting itself in the analysis of the concrete material base. In 1873, in the 'Postface of the Second Edition', Marx (1990, pp. 99-100) notes 'That the method employed in Capital has been little understood is shown by the various mutually contradictory conceptions that have been formed of it', highlighting that some authors describe him as 'metaphysical' and that others view his work as 'deductive', 'analytic' or 'Hegelian sophistry'. Finally, he points out that an article in The European Messenger of St. Petersburg 'finds my method of inquiry severely realistic, but my method of presentation, unfortunately, German-dialectical'. The author asserts that his method is idealistic in form and realistic in content; rather than finding universal laws as in physics, his method is akin to biology, as each new period creates a new set of laws. The author also claims that this method analyses how social movements determine consciousness and takes part in a process that always confronts a fact with other facts rather than speculations and ideas. However, Marx refutes these observations because they describe the dialectic method, and his method is something else: 'My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite'. For Marx, the 'ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought', and its object is 'every historically developed social form as in fluid movement' and 'its transient nature not less than its momentary existence'. Fundamentally, his method is 'in its essence critical and revolutionary'. Thus, Marx does present a reflection, a consciousness, an idea, and an understanding of a given material

Furthermore, the determinism of the base will create a condition in which subjects are only passive spectators of the external world. Such determinism also produces a common deadlock in the architectural paradox, which can be called ‘Tailism’, i.e., the idea that society will develop itself spontaneously, following the ‘tail’ of progress. This term was rescued from Lenin by Lukács (2000) in his *Defence of History and Class Consciousness*. In the context of architecture, the deadlock refers to the belief that the newest style, the newest technology, or the newest social tendency will always be better than the previous one as a result of a ‘natural’ evolution of humankind.<sup>28</sup> In this sense, the new is accepted as the better or best fit. Here, there is no space for critical practice, nor there is space for human imagination. There is only space for ‘sensibility’ that can ‘capture’ a tendency. This reasoning is used by recent ‘accelerationists’ (Srnicek, 2013, Williams, 2013, Mackay and Avanessian, 2014) and architects such as Koolhaas (1994 [originally published in 1978], 2002). Lukács was radically critical of this kind of approach because of the mechanical hope in progress and the elimination of conscious subjects concretely participating in the creation of the historical process.

An opposing but mirror-like position is delineated in Manfredo Tafuri’s (1976) famous book, *Architecture and Utopia*. Although his analyses are fundamental to the understanding of the articulation between material conditions, the economy and cultural practices, he concludes that architecture is nothing more than an ideological reflection of a mode of production, i.e., nothing more than the appearance of the economic base.

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condition to visualise the possibilities of transforming it revolutionarily. That is why ‘the method of presentation must differ in form from that of inquiry’. This point can ultimately be understood if we analyse the lines that Marx suppressed in his quotation and that followed in the preface of ‘A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy’. There, Marx (1959) asserts that social existence conditions intellectual life and that in a certain stage, a conflict between ‘the material productive forces’ and the ‘relations of production’ emerges, which leads to social revolution and a change in the superstructure. Thus, for him, ‘in studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation’ and the ‘ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out’. Therefore, consciousness is not unimportant to the struggle, but instead of explaining it through speculations, one can explain this consciousness ‘from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production.’ In other words, because the mode of analysis differs from the mode of presentation, the analysis only serves as the basis for creating a revolutionary consciousness, which is available in the final theoretical presentation. Or, as Harvey (1990, p. 198) puts it, ‘the following sentence from the Critique, which explains that it is in the superstructure that we become conscious of political issues and fight them out’.

<sup>28</sup> A conception that dates back to Comte’s (1848) positivism and his faith in ‘progress’.

Nevertheless, this approach is typical of what has been termed ‘Messianic Marxism’, where in the absence of the ‘Messiahs’, a righteous life is impossible.<sup>29</sup>

For Tafuri, architecture is “‘Uselessly painful” because it is useless to struggle for escape when [something is] completely enclosed and confined without an exit’ (Tafuri, 1976, p. 181). In this sense, Tafuri conceives of the social ‘system’ as a perfect enclosed machine. Furthermore, for him, ‘the subject is now the system’ (Tafuri, 1976, p. 55). Based on that conception, in the absence of a communist society, a correct epistemology is impossible. This conclusion cannot withstand Marx and Engels’ dialectical approach, and the paradox returns in a new version of the previous deadlock: this time, a form of escapism into the abstract realm of ‘negative criticism’ and the belief that the critic is a ‘free’ subject, who is capable of detaching himself from the grime and dirt of reality, thus supposedly bringing a pure ‘negativity’ to the surface.<sup>30</sup>

In this sense, Jameson (2000) notes four main constraints in Tafuri’s thought, which largely relate to his ‘negative dialectic’: (1) Tafuri conceives capitalism as a completely enclosed system (‘far worse than Max Weber’s iron cage’); (2) aesthetics is somehow detached from the ‘real’ causes of social and political transformation, being a ‘reflection’ of structural causes; (3) Tafuri was concerned with revealing ‘the truth’ of architecture rather than acknowledging that he was producing a truth; and (4) an emancipated architecture can only be conceived in an already emancipated society, only after ‘the’ revolution had arrived (yet another variation of a Mexican standoff).

Although Tafuri (1976) took important steps in critically demonstrating how different artistic proposals are part of an ideological context – thus implying that any project has a series of social preconceptions, hierarchies, theories, reasoning, causal series, and so

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<sup>29</sup> For Lukács’ critique of ‘utopian messianism’, see his preface to the 1967 edition of ‘History and Class Consciousness’ (Lukács, 1971, p. xiii-xv, xxv)

<sup>30</sup> In a colloquium in 1972, when Tafuri presented ‘structuralism’ as a capitalist ideology and ‘workers’ struggles’ as the engine of capitalism, Lefebvre ironically remarked directly to him, ‘You put everything into your system,’ to which Tafuri responded, ‘Not mine, that of capitalism’ (in Lukasz Stanek, 2011, p. 165). Here, it is easy to see the lack of reflexivity in Tafuri. If he is not talking about ‘his system’, he is inevitably talking about ‘his conception’ of the absolute ‘System of Capitalism’. Reflexivity is the topic of the next section.

on – he ultimately fell into the same abyssal separation of architecture and politics that did Schumacher, as previously cited in this chapter.<sup>31</sup> For Tafuri (1976, pp. 181-182),

...it is useless to propose purely architectural alternatives. The search for an alternative within the structures that condition the very character of architectural design is indeed an obvious contradiction of terms. Reflection on architecture (...) cannot but go beyond this and arrive at a specifically political dimension.

This is indeed an obvious ‘false dilemma’, where things and processes must be ‘purely’ either ‘architecture’ or ‘politics’, which leaves no room for the possibility of a ‘political architecture’ (i.e., the possibility of a politics within architecture and of an architectural practice as political action). Only a carefully designed dialectical method can overcome this paradox and thereby approach any architecture as already political (even if it blindly advocates for the *status quo*). In the last section of this chapter, the theory of hegemony and a counter-hegemonic culture will be important in this endeavour. However, we should first briefly overcome the last deadlock of considering oneself free of ideology and thus suffering from a lack of reflexivity.

### 1.5. Lack of reflexivity

For Bourdieu (1998, p. 206-207), reflexivity is a subject’s capacity to identify how his methods are proceeding in constructing his object of knowledge and to develop a theory that survives his own critique. In this sense, a theory that defines any ‘idea’ as false is immediately defining itself as false.

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<sup>31</sup> We do not seek to undermine the importance of Tafuri (1969) in the present work. Many of his passages fit perfectly with what we observe in the fieldwork (see appendices): ‘the rediscovery of the *game* as a condition’ and architecture assuming ‘a new, persuasive rather than operative role’ (p. 30). He argues that ‘there can be no proposals of architectural “antispaces”’ (p. 33). As we shall see in Chapters 4 and 5, Tafuri comments on ‘the “public,” who use the city while being unknowingly used by it’ (p. 16); the figure of the architect assuming a ‘deliberately “heroic” act and as a bluff, conscious of its own self-mystification’ (p. 16); and even ‘the *fetishization of the art object and its mystery*’ (p. 19) and ‘on the horizon, feared as the worst of all evils: the proletarianization of the architect’ (p. 31). In addition, as we shall see in Chapter 6, Tafuri highlights how some architects ‘are attempting pathetically to relaunch modern architecture “ethically”’ (p. 31). Nevertheless, there are differences. Only with an epistemological rupture can we avoid the absolute negative ontology of Tafuri’s negative messianism, where the city is completely ‘structured as a machine’ (p. 16, p. 21) and where ‘there can never be an aesthetics, art or architecture of class’, leading to a conception that is ‘[u]selessly anguished because it is useless to struggle when one is trapped inside a capsule with no exit’ (p. 32).

Tafuri's (1973) position is the antithesis of the antithesis of modern utopia, a negative utopia (a u-utopia) that condemns any proposal as part of the superstructure or simply as a reflection of a given economic base. Thus, addressing an architectural narrative or biography can be understood to be equivalent to addressing the 'base'. In other words, based on this formulation, architecture is part of the social mode of production; therefore, its conceptions have all the political features of the social system. In this sense, what Tafuri conceives to be 'architecture' cannot interfere in the social dimension. The architect is trapped not only in the social system but also – because architecture is the spatial component of the labour division – in the hierarchical and symbolic structures of established power. For Tafuri (1973, p. 181),

...no 'salvation' is any longer to be found within it [architecture]: neither wandering restlessly in labyrinths of images so multivalent they end in muteness, nor enclosed in the stubborn silence of geometry content with its own perfection. For this reason it is useless to propose purely architectural alternatives.

As a result, the radical architect is reduced to a role of negation, which should aim to reveal the hidden fallacies of any proposal and the power relations embedded in the production of forms. For him, there can be radical critique of architecture but not a radical architecture. For him, there is no critical architecture.

Jameson (2000, p. 444) analysed Tafuri's historiography and suggested 'that Tafuri's position is *also* an ideology [in the sense of a logic of ideas], and that one does not get out of ideology by refusing it or by committing one's self to negative and critical "ideological analysis."' Thus, Jameson aims to demonstrate that Tafuri's proposition is part of a larger intellectual history; rather than being an absolute knowledge, Tafuri's claims are framed by a specific methodological context.

Tafuri's position is not the only one that will err in this way.<sup>32</sup> Very important radical works, such as Cacciari's (1993) negative appraisal of architecture, do not survive self-criticism either. From a different perspective, even the very rich work of La Celca (2008), which identifies architecture as 'the' problem of contemporary cities, arguing

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<sup>32</sup> Variations of this reasoning would propose different alternatives of 'anti-architecture' by either romanticising the traditional and vernacular (Rappoport, 1972), or nihilistically proposing the death of architecture (see Cacciari, 1993; La Cecla, 2008; Bicca, 1984; Ferro, 2006), or even in variations that melancholically hope for the disintegration of the world as it is (see an account of those in Cunningham & Warwick, 2013).

that architecture is itself the process of expropriation and spectacularisation, cannot survive a reflexive analysis, as it simply ignores the contradictory forces that are part of the architectural field (including his own). Although linking architecture with ideology (in a bad sense) helps elucidate many important aspects of the production of space in contemporary capitalist societies, it fails to recognise that there are residual, emergent, non-incorporated and oppositional ideologies in society, even though these forces never appear in pure and uncontaminated forms.

Thus, to be reflexively aware of one's own biases would allow the subject of knowledge to recognise the forces of subjectification acting on him and the position that he assumes in the social structure. Furthermore, in analysing the thinking of Machiavelli, Althusser (2000) argues that 'appearances' or 'representations' also have a social existence; thus, they are positive forces in social reality. Thus, for instance, whether architecture 'by nature' can or cannot change society is not at issue; instead, understanding how architecture – despite and by means of its phantasies – 'actually' interferes in the game at play is the problem: how architecture mediates the production of social relations and how social relations forge the reproduction of (certain ways of producing) architecture.

Thus, despite any 'falsehood', what is socially referred to as architecture is reproducing concrete social relations of power. Thus, the concrete architectonic products of this social activity (to be analysed in Chapter 4), the methods employed in the production process (to be analysed in Chapter 5) and the subjectivities being reproduced (to be analysed in Chapter 6) are the key elements that will unfold the operations of the reproduction of architecture. In this sense, if Tafuri [1974] aimed to investigate the private perversions of architectural practices in his *Architecture dans le Boudoir*, we alternatively aim to investigate the collective phantasies of architectural ideology. Therefore, we arguably aim to make an analysis of '*Architecture in a Divan*'.

## **1.6. The belly of the architect**

Our paradox remains in all the deadlocks addressed above. How can architecture shape society while the architectural discipline seems unable to shape society? Why is architecture constrained in reproducing the rules of a game wrote by itself? We

hypothesise that, in the production of architecture, social relations, architecture and architects are reproduced.

As argued by Raymond Williams (1973) following Marx's *Grundrisse*, the most important thing that a worker ever produces is himself. To explain himself, Williams applies Lukács' argument for 'totality' – as opposed to an approach that distinguished between societal and cultural layers. This notion of totality does not intend to generalise in terms of a uniform context, nor does it imply that minor individuals are determined by colossal forces. Instead, 'totality' elucidates the importance of the element of 'consciousness'. If the conscious mind is constituted by ideas, consciousness is the awareness that individuals have regarding the broader formation of those ideas. Thus, ideas are never meant to be ignored, as they are instruments of real political struggles, as Gramsci explains:

For the philosophy of praxis, ideologies are anything but arbitrary; they are real historical facts which must be combated and their nature as instruments of domination revealed, not for reasons of morality etc., but for reasons of political struggle (...) For the philosophy of praxis the superstructures are an objective and operative reality (or they become so, when they are not pure products of the individual mind). (...) The philosophy of praxis itself is a superstructure, it is the terrain on which determinate social groups become conscious of their own social being, their own strength, their own tasks, their own becoming. (Gramsci, no date [1929-1935])

For Williams (1973), the Gramscian concept of 'hegemony' refers to the dominant culture in a society, which is based on a 'common' sense (thus, it is not something singular). This hegemonic way of thinking is not simply something abstract; it is actually lived, embodied, and used in the practical everyday, modulating expectations and a sense of reality in general groups of people. Thus, the hegemonic way of thinking tends to reproduce the thought of dominant classes, institutions and individuals. Hegemony is the logic of the ideas that define the traditional structure of a specific society. If we add that traditions are produced and evolve historically, hegemony is a continuously mutating part of social structures.

For Williams (1973), the cultural elements of a society (such as architecture) are made of residual culture (reminiscences of facts from the past) and emergent culture, with new tendencies being born by recombining social elements. Residual elements can be

both ‘incorporated’ and ‘not incorporated’ into the hegemonic culture. The same is true for emergent elements. Thus, new elements can be both regressive or progressive in kind. Likewise, in cultural proposals, ‘alternative’ only means ‘different’, and such ‘alternatives’ might ultimately be incorporated into hegemony. For Williams, critical cultural practices should be oppositional, forcing changes in society.

For those reasons, Williams considered Gramsci’s work fundamental to an understanding of the dialectical interactions of consciousness, social structures and cultural practices. Although we shall discuss this point further in Chapter 3 and 6, one preliminary point must be made about our paradox here.

We do not aim to classify all theory of architecture as paradoxical or to propose that our account magically escapes this paradox. Instead, we seek to convey that the way that one approaches this architectural paradox interferes with the answers delivered. However, we do not mean to imply that there is no escape or that theory is useless, as though it cannot develop or have any consequences. On the contrary, we aim to create a tool that reveals that these images are constructs, snapshots of the relationships between architectural theory and social practice. In this sense, the paradox is the result of accepting some ‘truths’ about architecture without realising that they, too, are social products. If architecture is a means of projecting abstract ideas into social space, the first step in gaining an awareness of the process involves being able to reflect on one’s own position within the field. Therefore, we are not escaping the paradox; we are merely starting to enter its void.

Nonetheless, our investigation does have a scope. We do not aim to understand architecture as everything and thus as nothing. We intend to explore the limits presented by concrete practices that challenge the discipline and its reified subjectivities. However, although this research departs from punctual experiences, its critical analysis investigates the consequences in the social totality, mapping not only the field but also its possibilities. Thus, the analysis of punctual events is intended as evidence of larger social forces. The analyses of experiences do not accept the illusions and values of the field, instead using them as the means of reflection.

We aim to produce a cognitive map of the process of the reproduction of architecture, underlining the correlations of power involved in the social organisation of the

discipline. As such, this research may contribute to a reflexive awareness in the profession of architecture. In the next two chapters of Part 1, we aim to advance in the production of this cognitive map and in the interactions between architecture and the reproduction of social relations.

## **CHAPTER 2:**

### **The reproduction of architecture: mapping discipline and dialectic**

In this chapter, we aim to draw the first sketches of a cognitive map of the reproduction of architecture, so later we can reposition how subjects are conceived in relation to the production of social space. We thus seek to enable possible detours and new possibilities to avoid the deadlocks identified in the previous chapter. To do so, we shall debate the implications of the idea of architecture reproducing social relations within the architectural field and in society. This debate implies some recognition of the conflict between the disciplinary field and the dialectical movement of transformation. On the one hand, this investigation of the discipline aims to establish a preliminary moment of analysis of the forces in operation by identifying them through five general elements (centralities, axes of habitus, social dimensions, distinctions, and *illusios*). Nevertheless, the discipline cannot be seen as a closed system from which there is no escape. Rather than considering the discipline of architecture an ‘apparatus’, we shall trace its non-trivial machinations. In ‘trivial machines’, each input corresponds to a symmetrical output. As we shall see, ‘non-trivial machines’ have a complex structure that shifts and interacts with the inputs and the outputs in a dynamic process of metastability. On the other hand, we shall develop a critique of vulgar structuralism through dialectical theory. This critique aims to envision the fissures in this field, and how the ‘structure is absent’. Furthermore, structures are ‘produced’ and are, in turn, inventions that create mediations in a metastable field, as we shall clarify through Simondon’s (2013) theory. Doing so will enable us to conceive a cognitive map of the reproduction of architecture that moves beyond the dichotomy of subject/field; therefore, we aim to create a device that enables architects to take a detour through the image that they create of themselves in relation to the transformation of social structure. This device implies an acknowledgement that architecture operates in the production of transindividualities and reproduces preindividualities in the unconscious of architect’s subjectivities.

## **2.1. The reproduction of social relations**

Henri Lefebvre is a philosopher of great importance in the theory of space. As such, he has particularly influenced disciplines such as geography and architecture in recent decades. A prolific writer, Lefebvre wrote more than 60 books on various topics, and even though he has been very involved in the architectural scene (Stanek, 2011, pp. 33, 40), none of his work was known to specifically address architecture until 2008, when

Lukasz Stanek retrieved a lost Lefebvre manuscript entitled *Towards an Architecture of Enjoyment*, which was written in 1973 and published in 2014 (see Lefebvre, 2014). Writing specifically about architecture, Lefebvre outlines his view on the possibility of thinking about architecture in revolutionary terms.

Lefebvre asks, ‘...an architectural revolution? Why not?’<sup>33</sup> Although Lefebvre (2014, p. 27) argues that architecture has the potential for achieving ‘radical subversion’, setting ‘aside’ relations of production and temporarily ‘turning the world upside down’ (as would occur within large institutions), he also admits that ‘[t]his project alone is incapable of changing the world’. As he has argued elsewhere, a revolutionary project needs both ‘contempt’ and ‘corruption’. In other words, it needs, on the one hand, a form of consciousness that critiques a social condition and, on the other hand, a form of consciousness that can also somehow result in the concrete ‘*rehabilitation of everyday life*’ (Lefebvre, 1991a, pp. 127).

Thus, his curtailment of the discipline is a means of narrowing a form of provocation: ‘Can change occur without expectation, without exploration of the possible and the impossible?’ (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 27) Essentially, his argument is that although a revolution produced by architecture alone is impossible, no revolution is possible without a renewed imagination of social spaces. In other words, there is no architectural revolution, and there is no revolution without architecture. For these reasons, his inquiry (in the abovementioned book) aims to go beyond ‘the architect’, ‘the discipline’ and its internal disputes to approach architecture in a wider sense: ‘It is a question of “mankind” and its future’ (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 29).

Therefore, Lefebvre’s initial question (‘[A]n architectural revolution? Why not?’) has conflicting connotations. It can be read as a rhetorical device, a challenge, a provocation (negative or positive), or the perplexity of a disbeliever. The irresolute character of this

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<sup>33</sup> Lefebvre’s discussion of architecture is clearly critically opposed to Le Corbusier’s (1986) classical book *Towards a New Architecture*, not only in terms of the similarity of the book titles but also in relation to the chapter *Architecture or Revolution*. This chapter is an expansion of the famous dictum of Le Corbusier in *L’Esprit Nouveau* in the early 1920s, when he praised the rise of fascism in Italy in his notebooks, declaring it the manifestation of his ideals (see Brott, 2013), and worked alongside the Vichy government in France (Jackson, 2001). The main message of Le Corbusier to the powers that be in the modern world is that revolution can be avoided if architecture is allowed to pacify societal conflicts. We shall return to this point on the relationship between power and architecture in Chapters 5 and 6.

intriguing question might be caused by the different levels upon which it acts – what it enunciates, what it desires and what it implies.

With that question, Lefebvre is simultaneously enunciating a possibility, desiring a challenge, implying a fact and considering a condition *sine qua non*. Later, he describes the revolutionary possibilities for architectural practices but also the limits of architecture. He imagines how a revolutionary architecture can exist by producing virtual objects (of desire) but implying the constraints in his questions: Why not? Why isn't architecture revolutionary? This impediment often arises because the space in which architecture operates is not a neutral space. Space is already a social product.

For Lefebvre (1991b), space is not an *a priori* element of reality nor an abstract entity into which one can insert contents; instead, space is socially produced. For him,

To speak of 'producing space' sounds bizarre, so great is the sway still held by the idea that empty space is prior to whatever ends up filling it. Questions immediately arise here: what spaces? and what does it mean to speak of 'producing space'? (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 15).

Every social space is the outcome of a process with many aspects and many contributing currents, signifying and non-signifying, perceived and directly experienced, practical and theoretical (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 110).

...if there is a productive process, then we are dealing with *history*; (...) we may be sure that the forces of production (nature; labour and the organization of labour; technology and knowledge) and, naturally, the relations of production play a part (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 46).

Therefore, as space has a changeable historical and cultural existence, it is not a simple thing; it instead encompasses the (re)production of social relations. For Lefebvre,

The object of interest must be expected to shift from *things in space* to the actual *production of space*, but this formulation itself calls for much additional explanation. Both partial products located *in space* – that is, THINGS – and discourse *on space* can henceforth do no more than supply clues to, and testimony about, this productive process – a process which subsumes signifying processes without being reducible to them. It is no longer a matter of the space of this or the space of that: rather, it is space in its totality or global aspect (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 37).

(Social) space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity – their

(relative) order and/or (relative) disorder. It is the outcome of a sequence and set of operations (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 73).

What exactly were the great cathedrals? The answer is that they were political acts (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 74).

Lefebvre's theory defines space as a product of social, philosophical and practical human activities; therefore, it is not a natural fact but a social construct with social implications. Furthermore, for him, the production of space is a key element in the reproduction of social relations in general. This is the case because 'the production of space itself replaces – or, rather, is superimposed upon – the production of things in space' (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 62).

Furthermore, in *The Survival of Capitalism: Reproduction of the Relations of Production*, Lefebvre (1976, p. 83-86) argued that capitalism has managed to avoid extinction through the production of space. According to his argument, because space is produced within a cultural logic (say, capitalism), it also reproduces a field of everyday life in which rules and social relations are objectified in space. In this way, capitalism reproduces itself as the dominant social reality, and architecture plays an active role in this reproduction.

An even more significant illustration of this can be obtained from architecture, a specific, partial and specialized practice which has close links with the everyday. The Architect receives what might be termed a social commission, forcing him to realize spaces which suit society, i.e. which 'reflect' its relations by concealing them under the décor (Lefebvre, 1976, p. 88).

They mould it, fill it, and produce their own specific kind of space, which is both homogeneous and fragmented, visual and pulverulent. The architect cannot free himself from them, either in practice (his projects and designs) or in his imagination. (...) But it is the everyday that carries the greatest weight. (Lefebvre, 1976, p. 88)

Power occupies the space which it generates, the everyday is the very soil on which the great architecture of politics and society rise up (Lefebvre, 1976, p. 89).

For instance, 'private spaces' become a social reality when spatial elements (which distinguish them from public spaces) project this abstract concept onto social reality.

Thus, spatial elements (say, fences, limitations, contracts, walls, borders, coercive control, and so on) are both concrete and abstract.

In this sense, architecture as a social practice is not simply inserted into the general logic of society. In a society ruled by commodity fetishism and objectified social relations, architecture becomes a device that continuously reproduces that logic within space. Thus, architecture reinforces and traps society inside a restricted set of rules, thereby reproducing society. In this sense, the expression, ‘the reproduction of architecture’ has a triple meaning: it reproduces of society; it is reproduced by society; and it reproduces itself. Nevertheless, for Lefebvre, this social reproduction is not ‘a pre-existing system’. Therefore,

...it follows that the ‘real’ cannot be enclosed. It is not a situation where there is no possible outcome, nor is the only outcome global collapse; for the contradiction themselves develop though unevenly. And finally, theoretical concepts may escape the system, even though they are born in it and have emerged from (...) space dominated by the strategy of homogenization and of the programmed everyday. But they still have to free themselves from that system (Lefebvre, 1976, pp. 90-91).

In this sense, our findings should be differentiated from current use of Foucault’s idea of the ‘apparatus’ (dispositif). Clare O’Farrell (2005, p. 129) has defined an apparatus as ‘various institutional, physical and administrative mechanisms and knowledge structures, which enhance and maintain the exercise of power within the social body’. This is an important point to consider when analysing how the architectural discipline frames the production of spatial forms and how it reifies subjectivities (of the public but also of the architect) to reproduce itself, trapping reasoning within its rules. However, to understand society as an apparatus or a ‘trivial machine’ misses the point that society is neither an absolute totality nor ‘total’ stability. Social space is not a ‘trivial machine’ in which an input inserted into an absolute system always and precisely corresponds with a specific output.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> We will discuss this process of structuration of social space further in the next chapters with the theory of Simondon (2013). Although Simondon cites various sources on cybernetic theory and builds part of his theory upon it (especially the differentiated conception of information, not as a message but as *mise en forme*, i.e., in formation), he approximates but does not mention the idea of non-trivial machines. Nevertheless, this concept will allow us to prepare the terrain to later introduce Simondon’s theoretical scheme, which moves beyond the idea of an absolute structure with the classical sense of stability towards a metastable system of complex dynamics.

Von Foerster (1972), discussing trivial and non-trivial machines, used physics and philosophy to create what came to be known as second-order cybernetics. As we can see in the diagram below, he argues that a trivial machine is characterised by a one-to-one relationship between input and output, where this invariability precisely defines what the machine is. As a deterministic system, once an output for a given input is observed, the system becomes predictable. However, in the non-trivial machine, the input-output relationship is variable and depends on previous inputs. A broader description of this relationship can be described in the second algorithm below, where the input, once processed, produces a transformation in the structure of the machine and the output creates a new context that further transforms the internal structure of the machine. Thus, the non-trivial machine operates with conflicting internal structures. This new structure produces a virtual transformation of the original context of inputs, further conditioning subsequent inputs. Thus, the concept of a non-trivial machine can elucidate how a social space operates in a complex field of historical and conflicting relations.

Furthermore, to discuss concepts of subjectivity, Alberto Toscano (2006, pp. 136-156) introduces dynamic system theories, arguing that a system can be conceived without a previous hierarchical order, in a complex interaction between the internal and the external, and with no stable and distinct objects. He relates this idea with various elements of the theory of the individual in Simondon and discusses the idea of the 'theatre' of operations and individuation. In the process of producing a metastable system, irreversibility is created, which he calls 'trace' and which determines the context of the next transformations. This conception aims to avoid genetic determinism (as in biology) and representationalism (as in psychoanalysis) (Toscano, 2006, p. 148). It also avoids deterministic theories, rejecting the possibility of isolating categorical causalities, but without falling into the traps of holism – for instance, as in Spinoza, where everything is God – and organicism – where everything has a pre-established place – in which no transformation of a given system is conceivable (Toscano, 2006, p. 149).

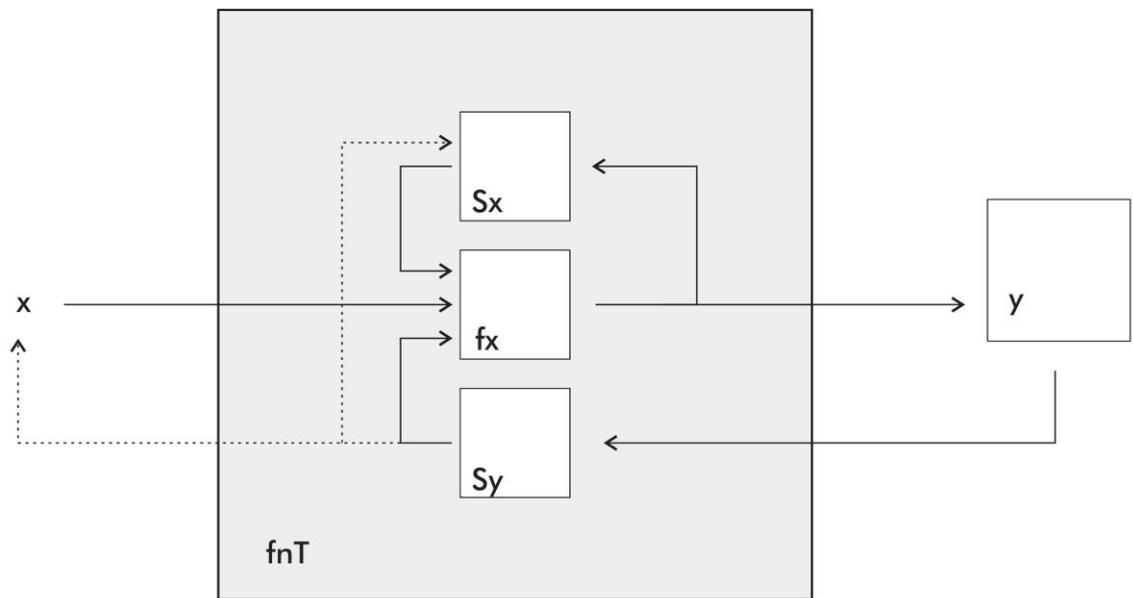
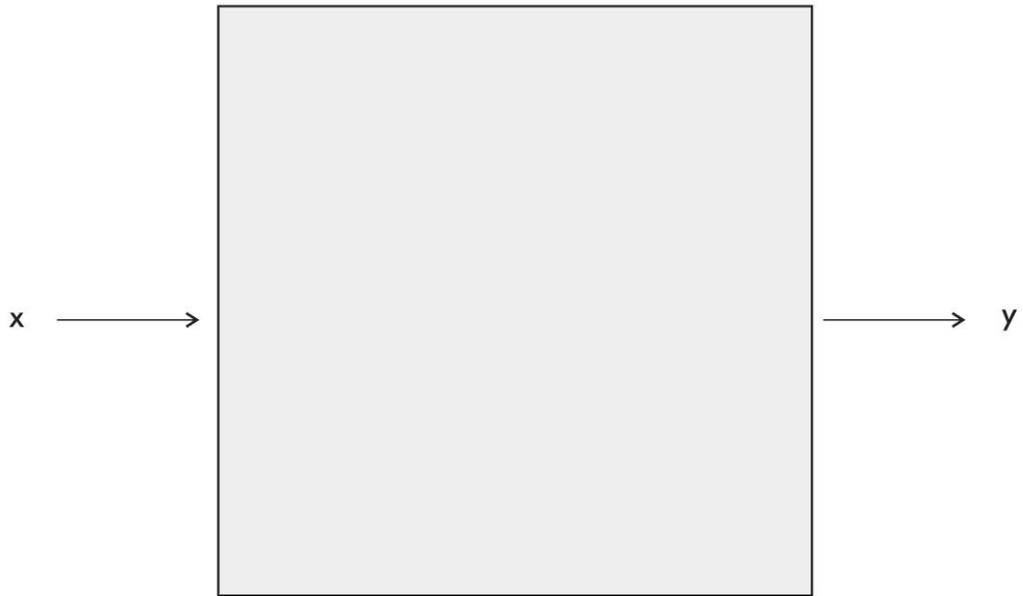


Diagram 2: Trivial and non-trivial machines. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – ideas from Von Foerster, 1972).

Only in this way can we approach the system of the architectural discipline not as the product of a sort of ‘Big Brother conspiracy’ and can develop our map as a metastable field in which conflicts and tensions can emerge dialectically. In this sense, architecture is not simply the reflection of a *status quo* pre-established system, although it operates in the reproduction of specific ‘traces’ and in the permanence of specific social structures, i.e., ensuring that the same frames are reinserted into the system. In these terms, the idea of a ‘reproduction of architecture’ is a key concept that is useful in overcoming the paradox of ‘to shape or not to shape’: architecture is shaping over and over again. Therefore, the concept of reproduction in architecture leads to a conflict between discipline and dialectics. However, conflicts are what dialectics is all about.

## **2.2. The conflict between discipline and dialectics**

To unveil the conflict above, it is important to note that discipline is a condition, not an essential truth. Architecture as a disciplining force is a social condition that has been historically produced. This vital key helps us understand why the deadlocked discourses of architecture are not enough to expose the fundamental contradiction between discipline and dialectics, i.e., the fundamental contradiction between the social apparatuses that discipline architects to behave in a certain way and the dialectical movement produced by the conflicts, the imagination and the desire to create other possibilities.

The dialectic is contradiction or nothing at all. In the *Communist Manifesto*, history is contradiction (Marx, no date [1848]). Furthermore, the whole effort of Marx (1990) in the first chapter of *Capital* is to show the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist system: how the reification of social relations contradicts the assumption of ‘things as they are’ as natural, how ‘exchange’ value contradicts ‘use’ value, how capital and concrete exploitation contradicts the supposedly ‘free market’, and how the labour value embodied in products contradicts the commodity fetishism.

For Lefebvre, to obtain a dialectical logic (instead of an abstraction of the dialectic), one must overcome the old principle of identity (the principle of ‘no contradiction’ or the ‘excluded third’, see Lefebvre, 1975b, p. 2). For Lefebvre, the two terms in a

proposition are dialectically implied in one another, transforming one another. These terms are both true and false, depending on the reference. This is true even in the case of  $A = A$ , where the repetition already introduces a difference (1975b, pp. 8-10). Furthermore, Lefebvre argues that connecting form (A) with a concrete reality is already a social and ethical judgement of a fundamental 'fissure' between forms and contents.

For instance, to say 'architecture is just architecture' is already a contradiction, which states that architecture should be understood as what someone understands as 'architecture'. Similarly, for Marcuse, there is always a struggle, a contradiction in any such affirmation. For example, Marcuse (1967, pp. 133-134) asserts that saying that 'the State is reason' or 'men are free' is already to disregard (or sublimate) all circumstances in which the state is irrational and men are enslaved. This is, according to Marcuse, an ethical choice, an engaged option that relates particular content to a particular form. Thus, any affirmation already originates from a political positioning in the debate.

Nevertheless, the possibility of contradiction has been denied by a sort of critique founded in absolute negation. For Adorno (1951, §18), 'There is no right life in the wrong one'. For Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1979, pp. 84), refusal is only an internal mechanism of the system to allow development. Similarly, Baudrillard (1991, pp. 9-14) claims that we are condemned to live in a simulacrum.

For Jameson (2002, pp. 75-78), these positions within a 'total system' can trace their roots to Weber's 'iron cage', where change is relegated to the 'nonmeaningful', thus eliminating the possibility of dissent and reintegrating any form of struggle as a functional part of the system. To avoid 'operational myths' and teleologies, Jameson (1981, pp. 125-126) argues for a move towards a genealogy in which one departs from a 'full-blown system' only as a means to retrace history to discover the elements that created the potential for such a system to emerge.

Furthermore, according to Rancière (1994, p. 59), we must move beyond simplistic 'genealogies': 'What must succeed the genealogies and emblems of royalty is a new way of thinking about the transmission of meaning and about legitimate descent'. Thus, genealogy is at risk of falling into a field that chronicles the 'nobles'. In this logic of filiations there is an offspring hierarchy – the firstborn – reducing the diversity of

origins into a linear causality that directs to one single cause – the patriarch. In this methodological inverted tree structure, the present is always subordinated to the past.<sup>35</sup>

To overcome this paradox, we should move further towards the original sense of the active nihilism of Nietzsche (1987) and the break with the tree model in genealogy, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest with the rhizome (Gilbert, 2016), which adds the perspectives of horizontal and complex relations of dependency beyond that of offspring. For instance, in the case of the history of machinery, Guattari (1995, p. 40) asserts the following:

The phylogenetic evolution of machinism is expressed, at a primary level, by the fact that machines appear across ‘generations,’ one suppressing the other as it becomes obsolete. The filiation of previous generations is prolonged into the future by lines of virtuality and their arboreal implications. But this is not a question of a univocal historical causality. Evolutionary lines appear in rhizomes; datings are not synchronic but heterochronic. Example: the industrial ‘take off’ of steam engines happened centuries after the Chinese Empire had used them as children’s toys. In fact, these evolutionary rhizomes move in blocks across technical civilisations.

With those points in mind, what was thought to be irreconcilable, the paradox between discipline and dialectics, can be overcome if one is prepared to accept that no original pure essence of architecture (a glorious lineage) exists and that the social system is not ‘closed’; instead, it is a process of ‘enclosing’ by ideology. In this continuous process of enclosure by both the discipline and its products, there is no reason to assume that struggles and ‘difference’ cannot emerge. Dialectic implies the emergence of difference; and contradicting the idea of an absolute apparatus, the system does not encompass the possible and the impossible.

Can an analysis of architectural practices in these terms reveal new possibilities for the profession? Can theoretical straitjackets be overcome and a theoretical map for the exploration of new territories of possibilities and struggle be developed?

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<sup>35</sup> In the field of architecture, the paradigmatic example is Charles Jencks’ evolutionary trees of architecture, in which the branches are abstract categories. This reductionist device allows him, for instance, to locate ‘Fascist’ architecture, Lucio Costa and Carlos Raúl Villanueva all in the same branch of the ‘Self-Conscious’, because they share the same ancestral (Beaux-Arts’ Perret). For the list of these ‘trees’, see Guermazi, 2014 (available at: [https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/bitstream/handle/1773/26553/Guermazi\\_washington\\_02500\\_13406.pdf?sequence=1](https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/bitstream/handle/1773/26553/Guermazi_washington_02500_13406.pdf?sequence=1))

Jameson (1998, pp. 442-461) uses Gramsci to overcome the abovementioned theoretical straitjacket of ‘disciplinary apparatuses’. A counter-hegemonic proposal must be developed – a perspective that enables transformative proposals rather than an absolute solution. At a conference in 1990, Jameson (1990) proposed the development of ‘cognitive maps’ that could help us understand and visualise the current social condition in which we live and thereby place ourselves in a counter-active position in relation to the existing structures.

The following strategy is to draw such a cognitive map, enabling an assessment of the fissures and counter-hegemonic possibilities within the field and how different contemporary proposals address that disciplining field. In other words, this mapping exercise aims to launch a reflexive investigation, in which the architectural discipline is only the context for tracing potential fissures and dialectical struggles. In this sense, even though power and discipline are active realities, they are not pure original essences in society (i.e., part of its fundamental ‘nature’).

Therefore, to say that ‘there is a possibility of an architecture that struggles the reproduction of preset fantasies and contemporary social relations’ is not to say that ‘this is the essence of architecture’ or that ‘such architecture exists’. Instead, this effort aims to search for this possibility exactly where the disciplinary field insists that it is impossible. Thus, this search implies a wish and, beyond that, announces the ethical motivation for the endeavour to come.

However, we do not mean to provide a complete inventory of every aspect of the field. Instead, we aim to construct an instrument to guide analysis and critique. This aim implies a critique of exactitude in science, as outlined by Jorge Luis Borges (1975):

In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast map was Useless, and not without some Pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of Sun and Winters. In the Deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in all the Land there is no other Relic of the Disciplines of Geography.

Even though the analysis of how architecture has imposed a disciplined mode of spatial production (namely, the reproduction of architecture) can be investigated by means of a cartography, it is important to remember that the ‘map’ that we are proposing is not equal to ‘the territory’. This instrument can be used to locate the deadlocks that we have identified in the discipline, which can be explored as dialectical conflicts. When all that is solid in the discipline vanishes into thin air, the potential for new possibilities can be articulated. In this sense, to produce new potentialities is to rearticulate the old in its present form of conflict.

In this endeavour, we have already recognised two forces: on the one hand, the discipline reproducing architecture and, on the other hand, the dialectic and its recognition of the possibility of ‘the new’ and its appeal to find fissures through which concrete transformations can emerge. To approach the ‘discipline’, we will first conduct a diagrammatic analysis of the structures in play, only to enable a second step in which to develop a properly dialectical framework. As in Lefebvre’s (1975b) argument mentioned above, dialectical logic draws upon a first moment of formal analysis. For him,

To reduce is a scientific procedure facing the complexity and the chaos of immediate findings. At first, one should simplify, but next and as fast as possible one should restore progressively what the analysis takes away. Without that, the methodological requirement is transformed into servitude; and from legitimate reduction one moves towards reductionism (Lefebvre, 1975b, p. 116, our translation).

Similarly, Carlos Lessa (1972) discusses the difference between formal analysis and a dialectical approach. For him, analysis dissects reality into small and distinct parts, while radical critique involves the establishment of relationships between the parts and the whole. To do so, it uses dialectics, searching for the interrelations, the implicated dynamics, and the contradictions in reality and between objects-ideas (see diagram 3 below). For Edward Soja (2000, pp. 86, 272-274, 282-283), the Chicago School understood the city as a mosaic, very much in the sense of analysis, and dissected the city into small pieces. He argues for a fractal approach to scale, in which each part is an image of the whole and vice versa. In this sense, we can investigate the superimposition of the scale of the ‘part’ – the neighbour, the concrete realisation, the body, the everyday, the inner psychology, the micro, and so on – and the scale of the ‘whole’ – the distant, the abstract, the macro political economy, the transindividual, and so on.

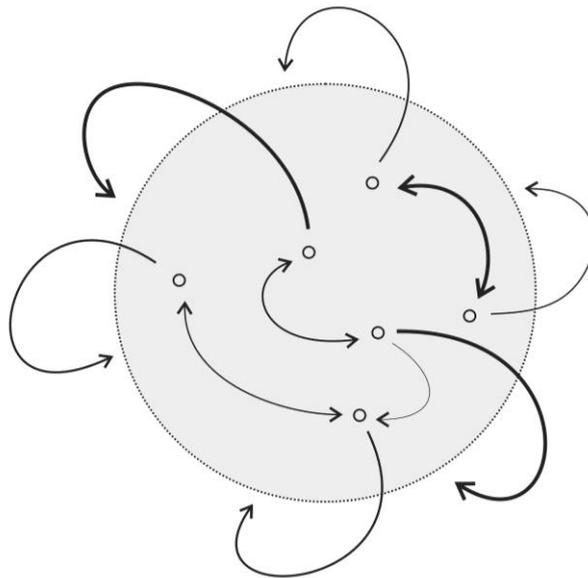
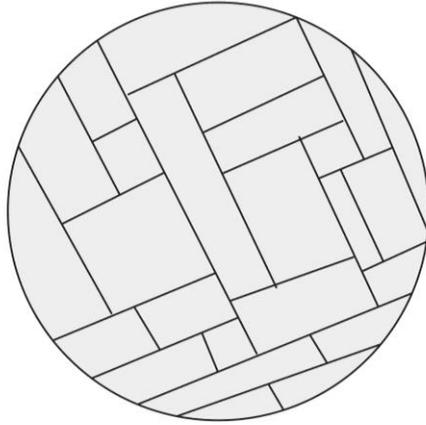


Diagram 3: Formal analysis and critical dialectics. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – ideas from Lessa, 1972).

Therefore, we will approach the ‘discipline’ analytically and later dialectically explore its contradictions. For the analytical step, we will use the methodology of Bourdieu (1996a, 1996b), which was developed to investigate the social field of art. This approach served as the basis of many studies in the field of architecture (Stevens, 1998, Deamer 2015, Wood, 1999). Although this provides a revealing enough picture of the forces in play, defining its limits, structures and the elements, it does not provide a theoretical approach for comprehending the reproduction and the fictitious and historical character of this metastable field. Thus, in the next section, this preliminary picture will be used only as an approximating device to identify how the field pseudo-critiques are disciplinary forces. In this way, for the dialectical step, we shall trace routes to the fissures of this non-trivial apparatus. In a latter step, we aim to enable a visualisation of the dialectical relationship between the discipline and society as a whole.

Therefore, the apparent conflict in using such different theories (one from Bourdieu and one from Jameson) is just a methodological strategy to first describe discipline and then to overcome it dialectically. Furthermore, this approach will enable us to deconstruct the idea of an individual subject opposed to an absolute territory, thus opening up the possibility of thinking of architecture as the product of a transindividual force that is full of tensions, struggles and fissures (c.f. Toscano & Kinkle, 2015; Simondon, 2013). In this way, we will be able to change the subject of architecture from an individual to a field of transindividuality (to be presented in the next chapter).

### **2.3. Discipline: a description of the field and its illusions**

Pierre Bourdieu (1996a, 1996b) initiated a series of studies of different social fields, such as education, literature, fashion, and gastronomy. His aim was to develop a systematic account of how social relations would interfere in professional fields that were rhetorically defined as autonomous. For Bourdieu, the field of literature, for instance, is a complex structure formed by celebrative instances, forms of narrative, meeting places, social agents, institutions, means of communication, bureaucratic moments, professional bodies and so on. Such elements would interact with one another, thereby establishing the actors in positions of social domination or

subordination. His study of literature was very influential in other fields, including some studies in the field of architecture.

In architecture, we can argue that similar elements of the ‘field’ account for the overall rules in the architectural discipline, training subjects to obey certain laws, to behave according to established codes, and to accept a pattern of variations. Furthermore, the discipline also establishes a branch of knowledge and correlated discourse on truth. This discipline is not imposed, but forms a prerequisite collectively shared. To take part in the game, practices and methods must be accepted.<sup>36</sup>

To sketch the disciplinary field of architecture, we will first identify five general elements: (1) Centralities; (2) Axes of *habitus*; (3) Social dimensions; (4) Distinctions; (5) *Illusios*.

### (1) *Centralities*

Bourdieu (1996a, pp. 205-207) uses the idea of the field to convey its multiple polarities and to overcome the traditional duality of internal/external interpretations of art. Such analyses would divide the study of art into two separate realms: contextual forces (social, historical, economical, etc.) and internal factors (biography, schools, etc.). For him, these elements interfere jointly in the formation of the multiple dimensions of the field.

The idea of the ‘field’ in science spread after Einstein’s (1920) theory of general relativity gained traction.<sup>37</sup> Before his theory was accepted, theoretical physics generally assumed the existence of some kind of ‘ether’. This ether would be an empty entity or a kind of neutral void, in which all matter could be supported by and organised into

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<sup>36</sup> For instance, this framework allows us to explain the recent success of Aravena in the field (in the case mentioned in Chapter 1). Although he works in a niche market usually associated with radical practices, he maintains the axioms of ‘only doing good design’, he comes from a distinguished institution in the field, he has networks with powerful people, he advocates for the free market as the solution to all problems, and he aims to manage inequalities by design. It is the latter conditions that made him a recognized member of the main institutions in the field.

<sup>37</sup> I use the term ‘spread’ here instead of ‘invented’ because recent and exhaustive research has demonstrated that Einstein did not ‘invent’ the theory of relativity (Gine, 2010, Gray, 1995, [Pierseaux, 2005](#)). We shall examine this topic in further detail in Chapter 5.

universal laws. Nevertheless, the principle that each object can establish a centrality for coordinating time and space (the general relativity) in a four-dimensional space, demands a non-Euclidian geometry to be applied to space – a ‘curved space’ in the famous insight of (Georg F. B. Riemann, commonly attributed to and appropriated by) Einstein.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, the notion of a neutral dimension underlying space is replaced by the idea of a ‘field’. According to this conception, the field will be multiform and will change its coordinates according to the object in play. New objects create new gravitational centralities, changing the form and dynamic of the field.

Lefebvre (1991b, p. 13, 399) uses the idea of field to flesh out his conception of differential space. For him, social space has multiple centralities, which are produced in different epochs and are dependent on social interests and struggles. Furthermore, he argues that the social field is formed by multiple representations. Therefore, each representation generates different dimensionalities to the social space. Lefebvre cites the concept of heterotopy in Foucault (1984) to explain how the same space can have different dimensions for different social groups (e.g., class, age, and culture).

For Lefebvre (1991b, pp. 38-41), this space of representations is formed by the ideas that have been objectified (realised in social objects) throughout history. These objectified ideas are perceived as the dimensionalities of the space. These ideas might be long-standing traditions and ways of seeing and living our everyday lives, or they may be actively created and imposed through a rational activity, for instance, the abstractions produced by architects.

In contemporary society, a whole series of centralities create an ever-changing field of multiple centralities and dimensions. A diagrammatic representation of the multi-centrality of the field can be found on the next page.

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<sup>38</sup> ‘This question leads to a quite definite positive answer, and to a perfectly definite transformation law for the space-time magnitudes of an event when changing over from one body of reference to another’ (Einstein, 1920).

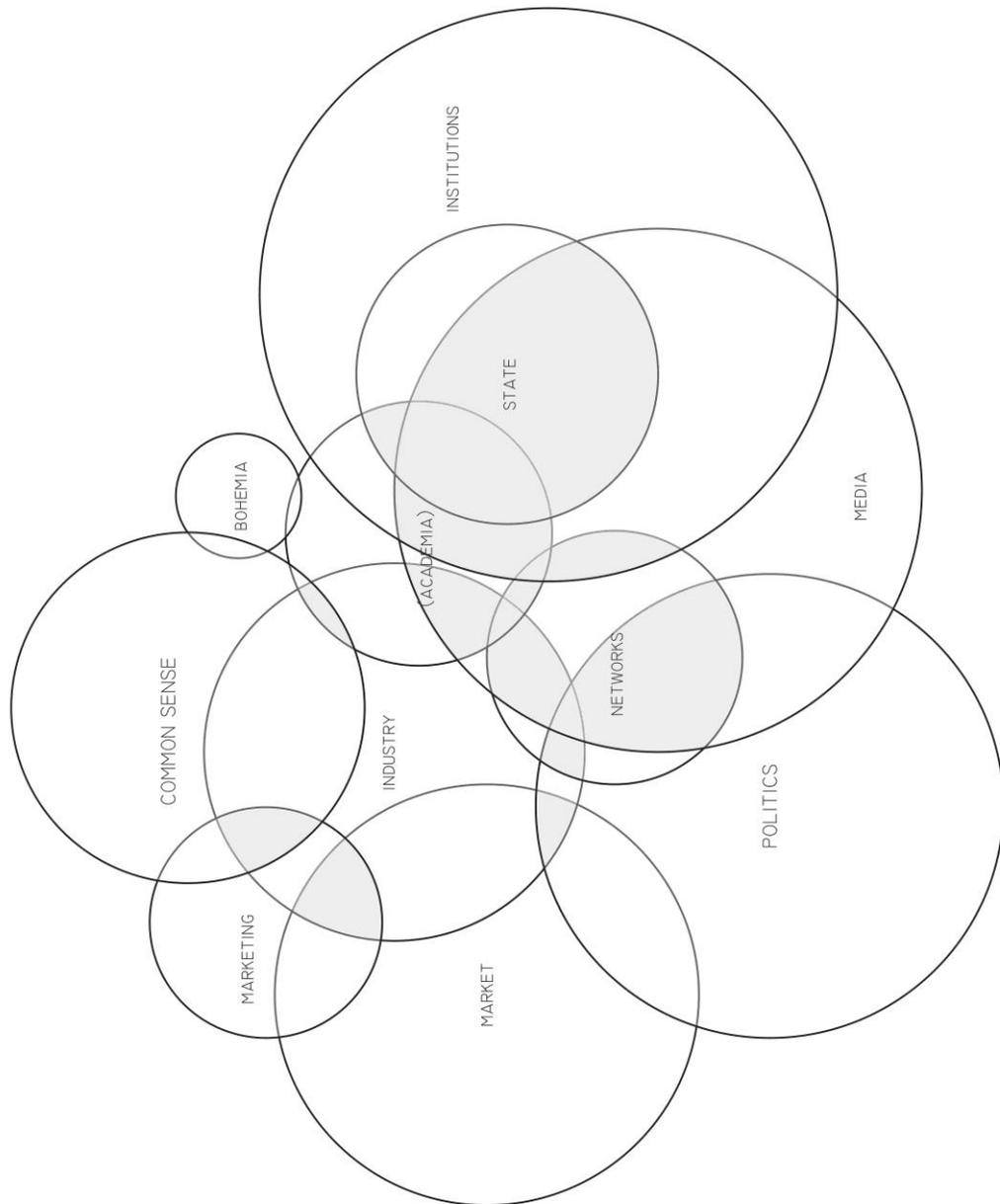


Diagram 4: The multi-centrality of the field. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – ideas from Bourdieu, 1996a, and Lefebvre, 1991b)

In a certain way, each of these centralities generates a frame of power that spreads its influence on social life, rules, images, tastes and discourses. These frames interact and resonate with one another, both contradicting and reinforcing one another. They can be imagined as an electrical field, in which forces interact dynamically; however, the difference is that, in this case, equal polarities are attracted to one another rather than being repelled by one another (see diagram 5 on the next page).

Therefore, we can understand how a field such as architecture can have complex dynamics yet structured tendencies; the system produced by the field is the result of struggles for the realisation of different programmes and points of view by different centralities. Thus, depending on the result of these struggles (between actors and institutions), the field will provide different guidance for the ‘perceptions’ and the ‘choices’ available within the system, which might be contradictory and incoherent in nature.

In this sense, the mutability of the field will be conditioned by a series of elements, both historical and emergent: inherited concepts, social demands, hierarchical positions, the pre-dispositions of actors, the need for differentiation, and so on. Although mutable, this field creates a frame for what is possible and impossible to achieve. Furthermore, these centralities operate as gears in a cogwheel, whereas the different elements of a specific programme generate momentum and attraction within the field (see diagram 6 on the following page).

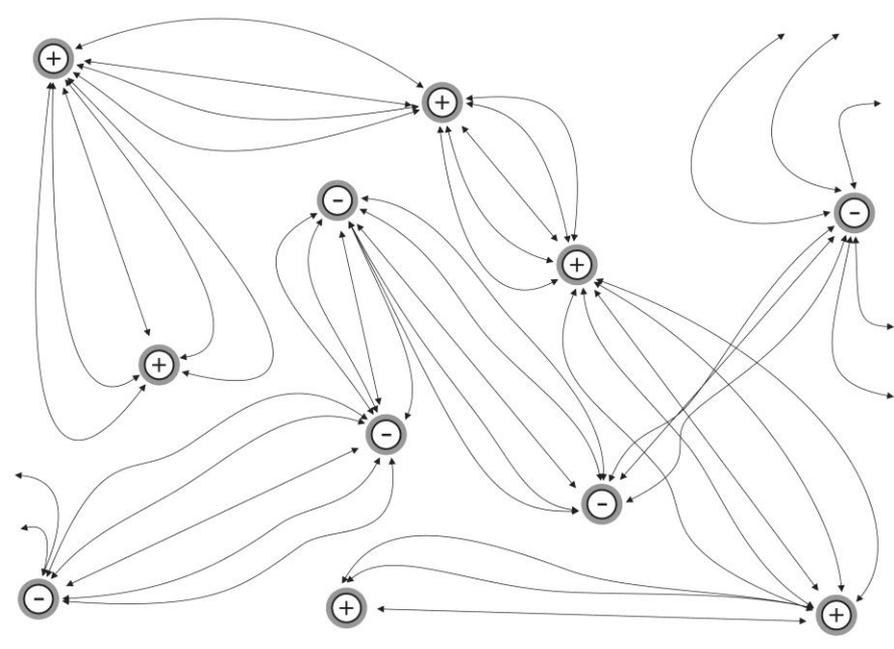
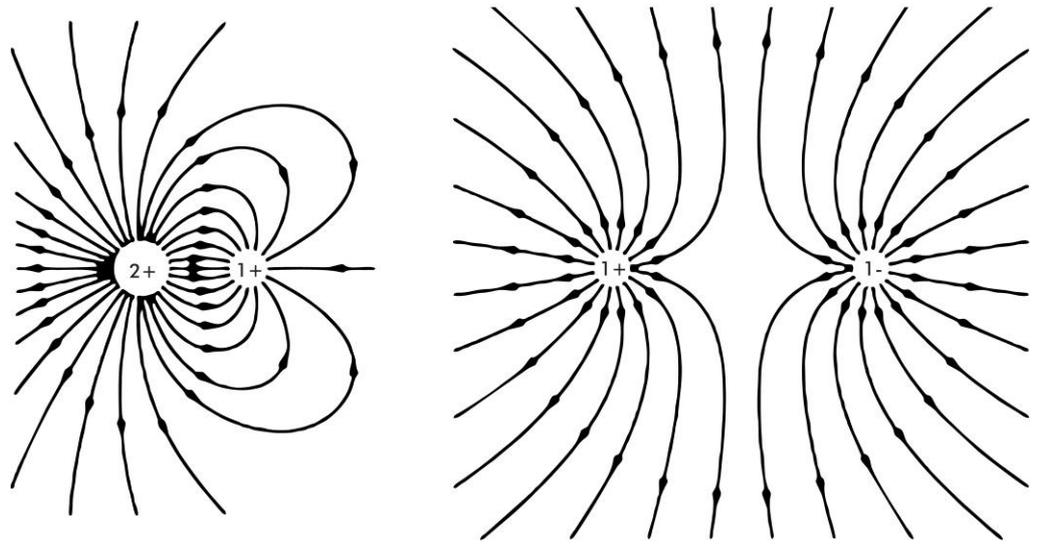


Diagram 5: Centres of power in the field. Source: the author.

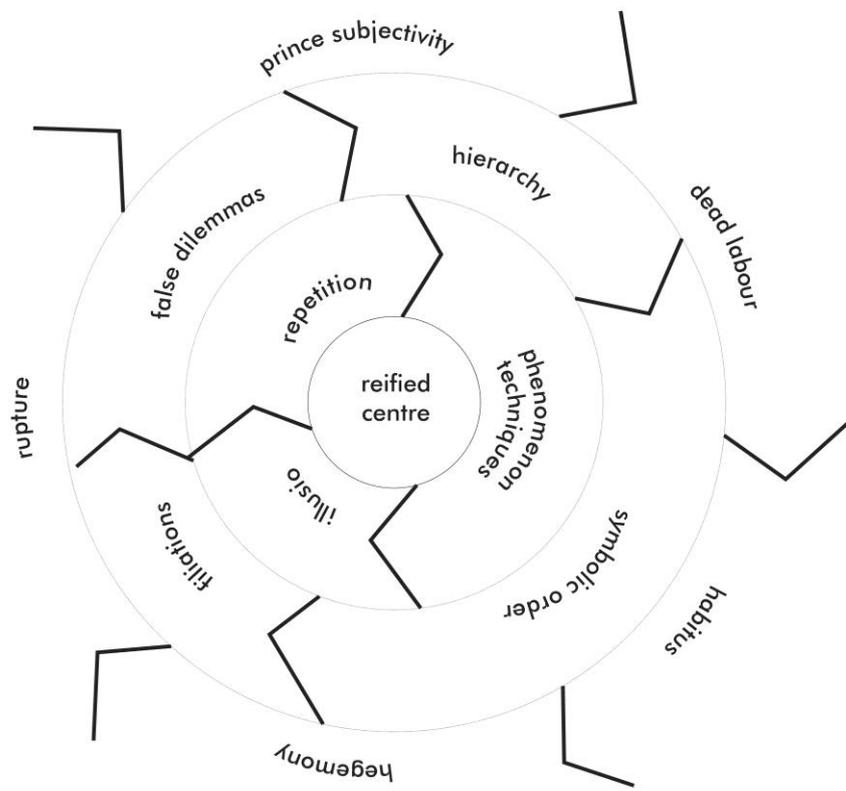


Diagram 6: The vortex momentum of the centres. Source: the author.

## (2) Axes of *habitus*

What determines the intensity of the social power in these centralities is a complex question as well. Bourdieu (1996) created a famous diagram for the relationship between cultural capital and economic capital in the field of gastronomy. In this diagram, two axes (economic capital and cultural capital) create different ways of valuing and developing lifestyles (see diagram 7 on the next page).

These axes of value are ways of establishing norms for a culturally accepted social hierarchy. For Bourdieu, they are the roots of what he calls the *habitus*: a general system of dispositions and schemes of perception. These axes establish a social hierarchy and define the mechanics of conflict between different actors who are attempting to occupy dominant positions in the field. For instance, Bourdieu (1996a, p. 49) mentions how Napoleon III overcame his condition of political farce by means of cultural events, celebrations and gifts, thus creating a new system of value and a new way of life in which his social position was guaranteed. Similarly, in the field of architecture, institutions will promote events, celebrations and prizes to impose their own conceptions of architecture.

Bourdieu (1996a, pp. 179-180) develops the idea of *habitus* as a generative device that emerges from empirical observations, not from an abstract interpretation. He derived this concept from Panofsky's idea of how a scholastic *habitus* produced the medieval architecture. Thus, a subject's *habitus* is the conscious and unconscious mechanisms that he or she uses to operate in the world. Although Bourdieu (1996a, p. 198) praises Foucault's method of enabling a readout of cultural products connected to social strategies, systems of rules and cultural differences, he argues that Foucault gets lost in a semiotic field of discourse. Thus, for Bourdieu, the idea of *habitus* has the potential of connecting the realm of ideas (interests, polemics, mental practices, values) with concrete praxis (relations between agents, institutions, socio-logics, hierarchies and so on).

Furthermore, a whole series of combinations of these axes that blend different elements of social power can arguably be proposed: tradition, technology, ideology, media exposure, political power, networking and so on.

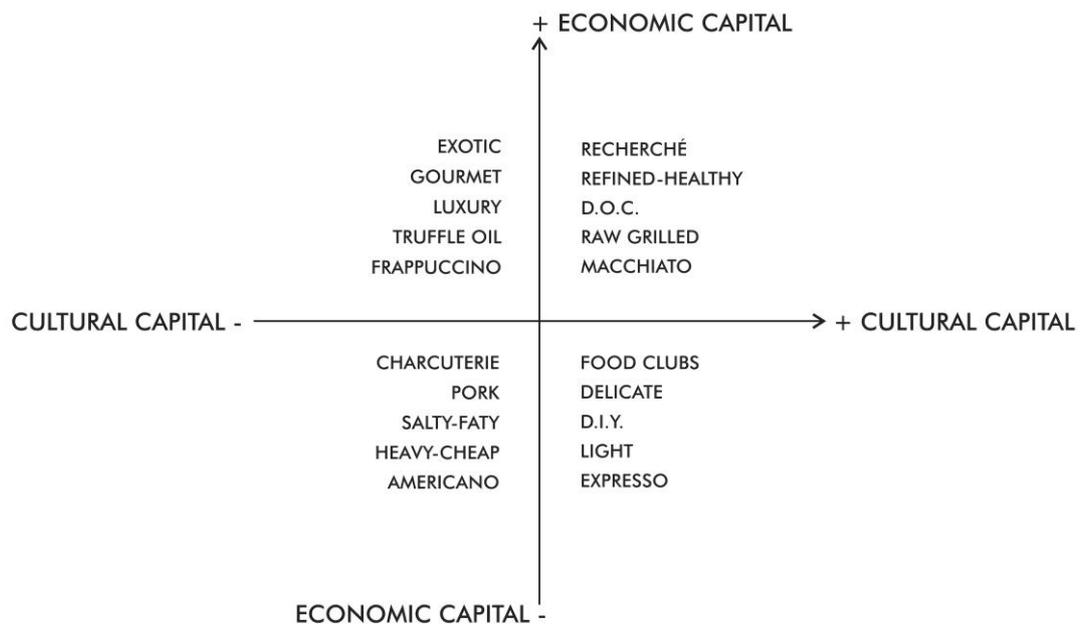


Diagram 7: Variations in food taste. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – images 9, 10 and 11 from Bourdieu, 1996b).

### *(3) Social dimensions*

Social dimensions are the delimitations of spaces of action and the interests of different agents; they also define the places in which these agents operate and their character in the production of different aspects in the field. For instance, Bourdieu (1996c, pp. 65-66, 163) asserts that the literary field has two main dimensions.

On the one hand, the literary industry is centred on editorial groups, newspapers and the market in general. In this dimension, the artistic production is a commodity like any other, driven by diffusion, immediate success, the numeric print run, the mind-set of clients, public demand, known formats and so on. This dimension relates to capital, tendencies and short-term investments. On the other hand, high-profile literature is created by the salons, high society, patrons, groups, and so on. In this dimension, products are seen as unique; it is a luxurious market that is guided by specific instances of acclamation within an internal courtesan politics of the academy, fellowships, friendships, prizes and so on. For Bourdieu, this dimension relates to symbolic capital, historical value and long-term investments.

The field of architecture can be divided in many ways. The overall manifestation of spaces inhabited by humans is arguably a matter of concern for the field. Such spaces include not only slums but also natural spaces. By contrast, one might understand architecture only as the place where beauty, function and durability come together in the form of a building – to use a classical definition. In addition to the infinite ways that this delimitation can be proposed, the way that these dimensions create ‘focused interests’ and discourses is also of interest in this study. Thus, the accuracy or truth of these definition matters less than the fundamentals (read prejudices) that they create with a given rhetoric. Furthermore, taking one step back, ‘dimensions’ are not important because they reveals truth and lies in the field; instead, dimensionality can be regarded as a device for investigating existing conflicts in the field. For instance, the diagram 8 below shows the different relations between the whole social space, the space controlled by bureaucracy, the space managed as commercial activity, the intersections with celebrated spectacular buildings and the spaces valued by the media. This diagram might serve as an instrument that delineates the realm in which one intends to act within or against a given dimension.

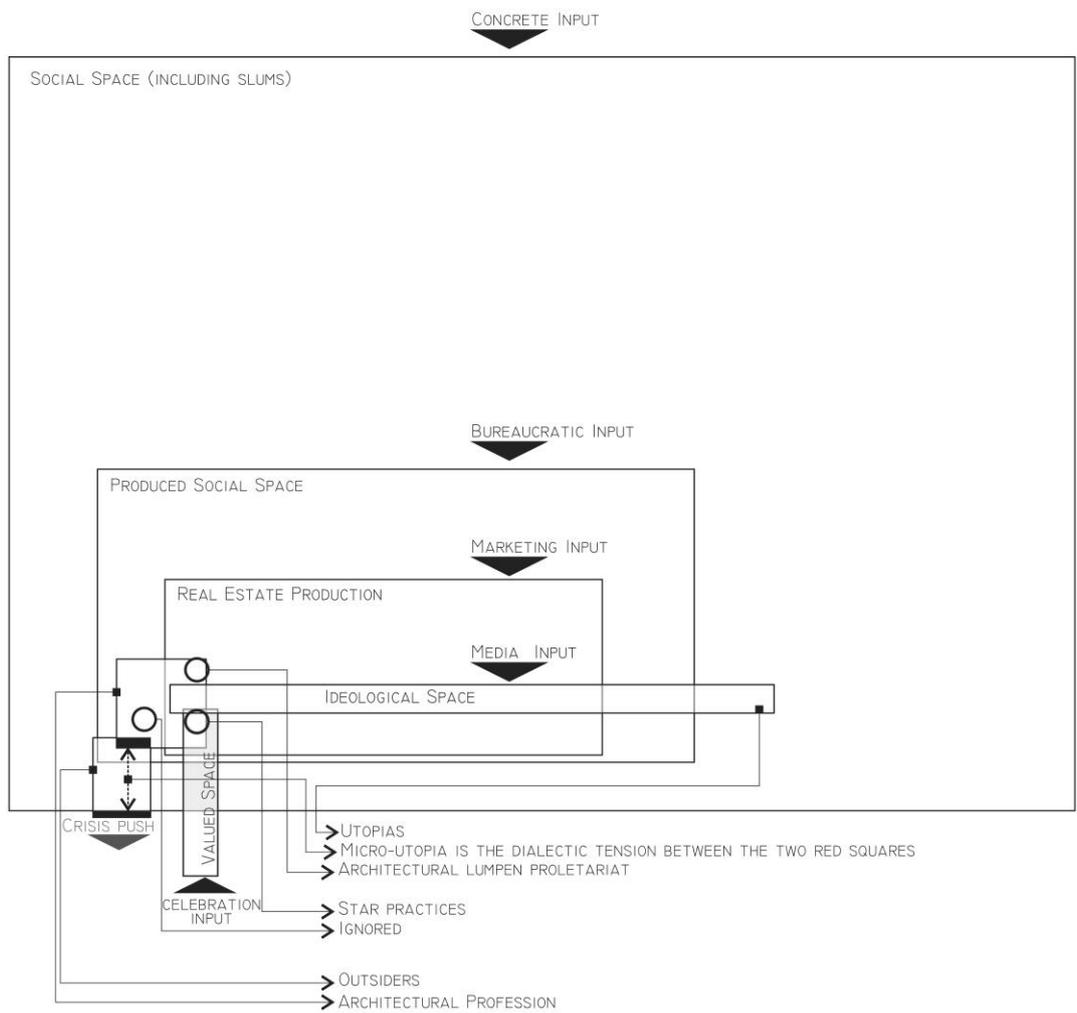


Diagram 8: Social dimensions of the field. Source: the author.

In addition to these more abstract dimensions, for Bourdieu, there are also concrete places in the production of art in general. Like nodes of structuration, each of these places articulates different concrete dimensions. In the case of art, these places include the café, the salon, the school, the foundations, the state departments, the studio, the aristocratic clubs, the learned societies, and even virtual places such as journals, reviews, museums and internet sites. These places are important because they articulate the ‘circumstances’ that make works of art possible, establish the context in which such works are evaluated, and permit the organisation of networks.

Finally, for Bourdieu (1996c, pp. 196-197), these dimensions are established by concrete persons, but they generally assume stereotypes in the manner typical of Balzac’s literature: the prophet, the priest, the artist, the craftsman, the bohemian, the critic, the bureaucrat, the proletarian, the editor, the merchant, and the colleague are all figures of everyday experience that render valuation and intersubjective values in the field, and they can become centralities themselves.<sup>39</sup>

#### *(4) Distinctions*

For Bourdieu, the pressures that mediate the production of various works are both internal and external to the field, and they also relate to the symbolic capital of the involved agents and their positions in the social hierarchy. The routine that the institutions impose on the agents establishes a symbolic order, a circle of valuation, a level of publicity and a definition of legitimacy. This imposed order establishes hierarchies and differentiations in the field. This process is not scientifically precise; instead, it is the result of social struggles for dominant positions in the field (Bourdieu, 1996a).

Here, the celebrative instances play an important role in the ‘game’. They are responsible for the ‘symbolic alchemy’ or the mode of valorising the works of art. Although this mode of valorisation is intertwined with the economy, it functions in an upside-down manner, according to Bourdieu (1996c, p. 198). This is the case because the more a work of art defies the bourgeois mode of valuing things, the more valued it becomes. The centralities that we observed above are those that are entitled to create a

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<sup>39</sup> We shall propose a different view on subjects and agents later in this thesis.

*habitus*, foment desires, and establish institutions and hierarchies, properly mobilising the libido and the acceptance of the order. Precisely by creating a desire for distinction in the field, these distinct actors are able to define what is good or bad.

To establish such distinction, 'biography' is a rather diffuse mode of operation (as we will describe in further detail in the next section). Currently, the narratives of artistic biographies are based on the ideology of 'creation' (Bourdieu, 1996c, p. 193), in which the products are seen as mysteriously produced by geniuses (Bourdieu, 1996c, p. 212). Bourdieu argues that, in this way, the artist is 'created' by the work of the critic, which preserves an aura of 'detachment' around the artist (Bourdieu, 1996c, p. 194). These narratives usually focus on revealing affiliations (proving the nobility of the actors) and to create a biography of the 'great man', where the work is evaluated through a mythological account of the formation of his subject (Bourdieu, 1996c, p. 213).

For Bourdieu, this process creates the illusion of an omnipotent intellectual, which he sees in the figure of Sartre, who occupies a special position in the field, securing the control and centralisation of a vast army of subservient intellectuals (Bourdieu, 1996c, p. 238). This illusion culminates in the invention of a 'pure aesthetic' and the figure of the major artist, who is allowed to commit transgressions and be utterly free of any moral responsibility. This apotheosis allows the modern artist to unabashedly indulge in a random mix of bourgeois excesses, scientific asceticism and bohemian hedonism.

Nonetheless, the 'great man' only exists immersed in the orthodoxy and dogmas of the culture that sustains his fame (Bourdieu, 1996c, p. 131).<sup>40</sup> This cult of personality and biography creates illusions of a retrospective coherence in the life of great characters (visible in sentences such as 'From a young age he already showed signs of...').<sup>41</sup> This cultish ritual also leads to the production of 'false ruptures', for instance, demonising old idols or simply inverting current trends, to change the hierarchy within the field without questioning its structure (Bourdieu, 1996c, pp. 213, 218-219).

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<sup>40</sup> Tony Benn addressed the appeal of co-optation as follows: 'When you get to No 10, you've climbed there on a little ladder called "the status quo". And when you are there, the status quo looks very good' (House of Commons, 1995). For Bourdieu (1996c, p. 74-77), even if they are critical of it, artists tend to align themselves with power or vanish in silence. For him, modern art has never actually been radically critical of the bourgeoisie; in fact, it has been a form of self-criticism: the recognition that the bourgeoisie had no style and the development of a style based on its cultural logic (narratives, abstraction, rationality, ruptures with the past, and so on). Thus, modern art aims to overcome the aristocratic monopoly of style and to bring to light bourgeoisie's real grandeur, its truthful way of living, rather than to diminish it.

<sup>41</sup> In the next chapter, we shall discuss examples in architecture of such narratives.

(5) *Illusios*

Bourdieu called *illusio* the overall effect, the magic that makes the field function, the fantasies that one must accept to ‘believe’ in the truths that the whole system proclaims to carry. These fantasies include the rites, the dogmas, the rules of the game, the planned obsolescence, in addition to the systemic forms of rupture that proclaim a ‘revolution’ but deliver only simulacra of novelty. For Bourdieu (1996c, p. 131), actual artistic revolutions never come from the dominant agents in the field because these agents have no interest in the radical change of the order that consecrates them. Arguably, these *illusios* are reproduced through the deadlocks and false reasonings we observed in the previous chapter. This reproduction can be organised in following table:

Deadlocks	Dead ends	Charity	Pacifying and managing inequalities		
			Using the poison as treatment		
			Intensifying causes		
			Profiting from poverty		
			Being ‘better’ at the ‘game’		
		Resignation	Abdication	Failure to carry a duty	
				No critique of preconceptions	
				Nothing but ‘design’	
				Mirroring the ‘spirit of time’	
			Abnegation	Apparatus for reproducing ideology	
				Self-denial	
				Believing the medium to be ‘neutral’	
				Mirroring the ‘hegemonic logic’	
		Escapism	Reproducing the ‘oppressed’ logic		
			Myths of evasion		
			Archipelagos of acceleration		
			TAZ (detached and short-lived)		
			Monastic neoliberalism		
	Protest	Mexican standoff			
		Simulation of radicalism			
		Symbolic kidnapping			
		Denouncing own mistakes			
		Lost in representation			
	False dilemmas	Straw men and selective criticism			
		Operative disputes of styles and schools			
		‘Technical errors’ and a-political solutions			
		Argument to moderation (false dialectic)			
		Escape to individual pleasures			
	Fallacy of autonomy	Cynicism	No politics (naturalising the status quo)		
			No ethics (anaesthetisation of apartheid)		
			History as imaginary identity		
			Context as deluded allegories		
		Universal laws	Natural evolution above agency		
		Essentialism	Immutable fundamentals of architecture		
	Simulacra	Radical escape into illusion as absolute			
		Star architects as centre of disciplinary cosmos			
Denial of dialectic	Base/superstructure paradox				
	Architecture as mimetic image (puppet)				
	Ultra-abdication				
	Tailism				
	Negative messianism (ultra-Mexican standoff)				
Lack of reflexivity	Positive	‘I, the celebrity, am the truth’			
	Naïve	‘All, who dares to imagine, are truthful’			
	Negative	‘Everything, except my [situated] critic, is false’			

As diagram 9 below represents, illusions always present themselves as expansive movements that hide the infinite vortexes at the centre of their spirals (A); these movements pretend to be part of a linear evolution ascending towards a sublime human existence (B); instead, they are more like complex struggles between ‘styles’, swinging between conflicting trajectories but having a common centre (C), and they are propelled by different axes of power in the discipline (D). Despite this complexity, we can identify the general form of these movements as the creation of two lines of circular reasoning on the axis of the discipline, setting into motion continuous conflicts in the field, without questioning the balance of power in the discipline and centring resolutions in its vortex, ‘the belly of the architect’ (E); furthermore, the pacified poles of conflict are binary dichotomies and false dialectics, always creating mechanisms of flipping value (‘straw men’), which each *illusio* creates on its opposing pole to gain the momentum to achieve a new position (F); as a result, the structure of the field always remains in place, and each ‘style’ or ‘school’ is just another face of the same forces, i.e., the reproduction of a game of masquerades (G). In this sense, although an *illusio* claims to be radical, it ultimately reinforces what it ignores, and the whole structure of the discipline is accepted as an inoffensive field of social hierarchies.<sup>42</sup>

However, *Illusios* are not trans-historical devices. They evolved from a fetish produced by stewards in a court who were trying to fortify a society around their masters to a process of *sprezzatura*, which hid the artifices of courtesans to maintain positions of power, to parasitic structures of imperialistic struggles, and, finally, to the reproduction of myths structuring assembly lines of inventions, protocols and techniques of phenomena.

In Part 2, we will investigate the means of production for these illusions in the field of architecture. For now, suffice it to say that the reproduction of disciplinary *illusios* are sustained by three dimensions: they seem to be things (making ‘social constructs’ into natural things, i.e., the reification discussed in Chapter 4); they are magical (hiding their means of production, appearing as givens, i.e., the fetish discussed in Chapter 5); and they embody desire (i.e., the biopolitical phantasies in Chapter 6).

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<sup>42</sup> For Kuhn (1987), the commitment to the existing rules of a discipline is a pre-requisite for developing accepted normal science, so there is always a tension between the desire for innovation and the demand to think within the discipline.

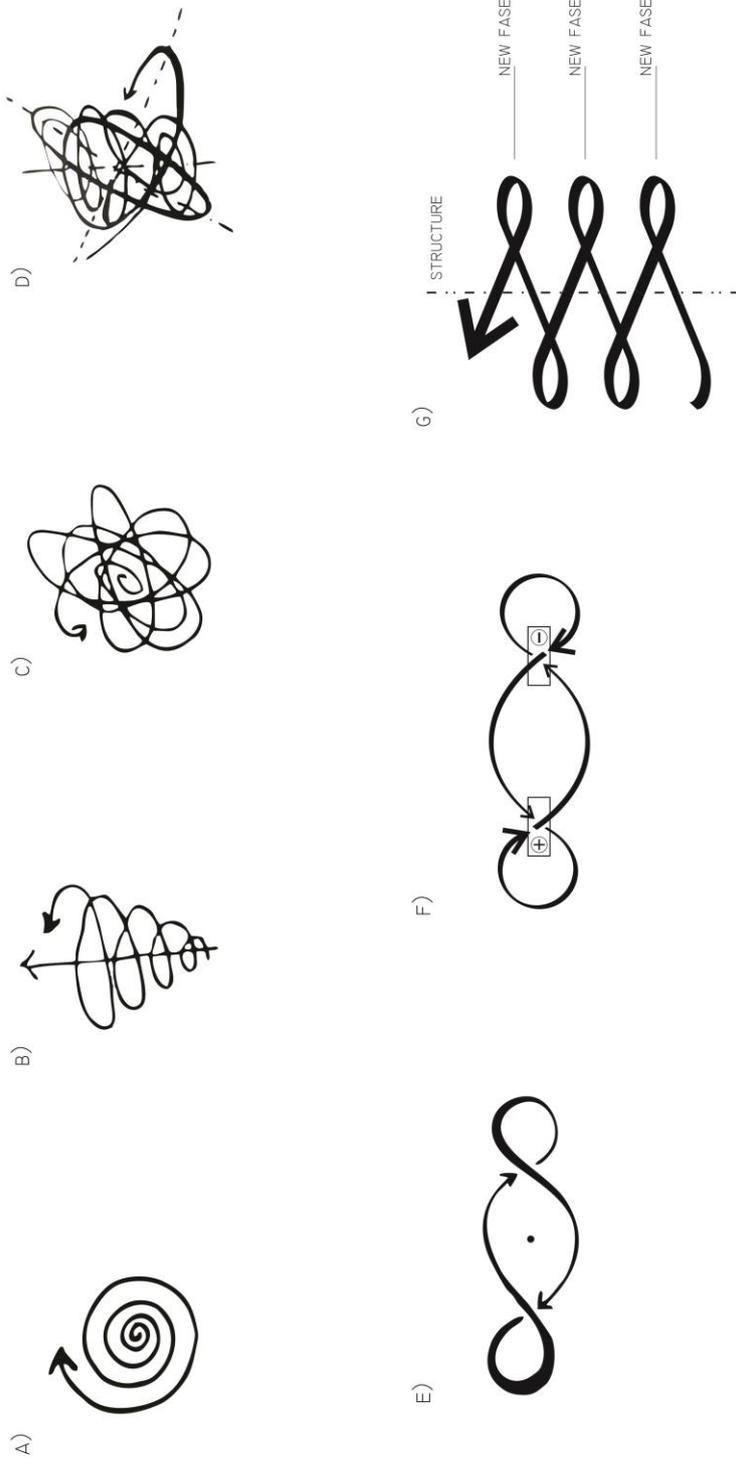


Diagram 9: Swinging *illusios*. Source: the author.

This leads us to the point of Lefebvre and Marcuse discussed in the beginning of this chapter: saying that ‘A’ is ‘A’ is already the choice that ‘A’ should indeed be accepted just as I conceive ‘A’. Therefore, traditional histories of architectural utopias are nothing but a collection of illusions. Although entertaining and somewhat interesting for those who aim for a 1:1 cartography of the field, for the reasons mentioned above, these illusions are only of interest in this research from a bird’s-eye view. Thus, we can visualise the phantastic territory upon which we shall navigate only with the aim of traversing it. In this sense, a cognitive mapping should have the following aspects:

Cognitive Mapping	Enabling subjects to represent their positions in the social structure
	To set architecture on the analytic divan (the belly of the architect)
	Reflexivity: enabling the traversing of unconscious choices
	Routing: navigating the opaque and obscure waters of the field
	Enabling detours: revealing counter-hegemonic potentialities

#### **2.4. Dialectics: a cognitive map of architectural reproduction**

The following diagrams aims to produce heuristic devices for understanding the dynamic relations of the field from which we aim to take a detour. As Toscano and Kinkle (2015, p. 16) assert, cognitive mapping should enhance the ‘aesthetic’ power of mediating ‘the disjunction between experience and abstraction’, thus revealing ‘the causes of our social life’ that are ‘elsewhere’ (Toscano and Kinkle, 2015, p. 16). In this sense, this diagramming ‘does not provide a method, or advance a concept; rather, it poses a problem which is at once political, economic, aesthetic and existential’ (Toscano and Kinkle, 2015, p. 22).

Transforming that into a cognitive map implies the inclusion of the dialectical relations between the field, society and subjectivity. To locate ‘the architectural subject’ in his self-conceived position in the field of architecture, we shall start by understanding the different ‘logics’ used to conceive causalities and structures. For approaching that we will use, as did Jameson (Jameson, 2002, pp. 8-9), Althusser’s three modes of increasing complex causality: the mechanical, the expressionist and the structural. In doing so, we might be able to propose a dialectical ‘overcoming’ of them.

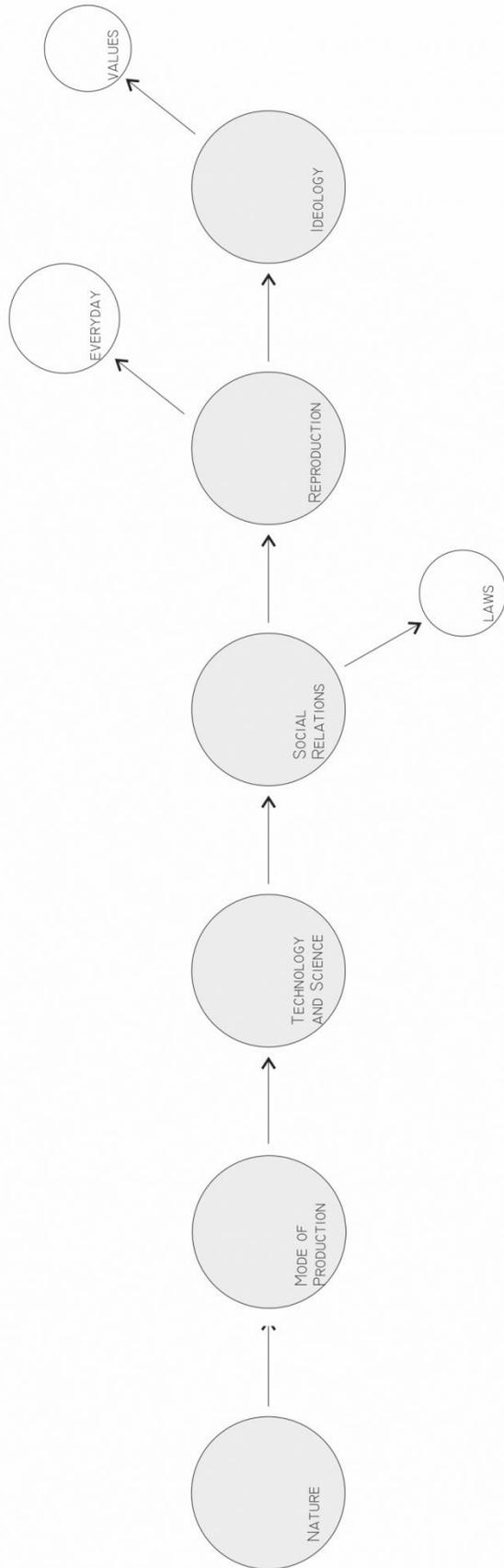


Diagram 10: Linear formal logic. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – ideas from Jameson, 2002).

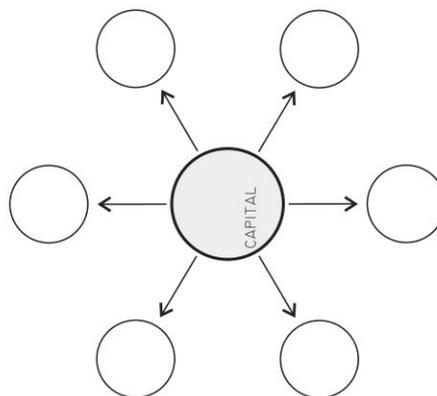
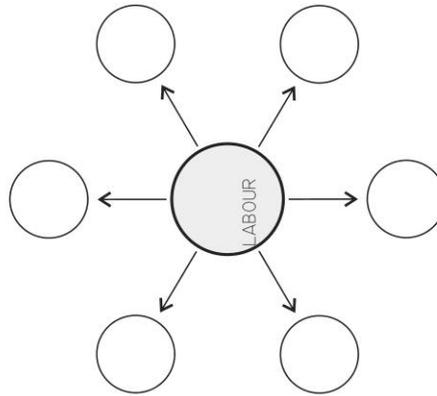
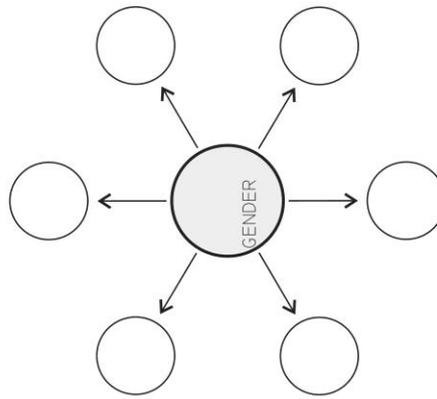


Diagram 11: Variations of expressive causality. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – Jameson, 2002).

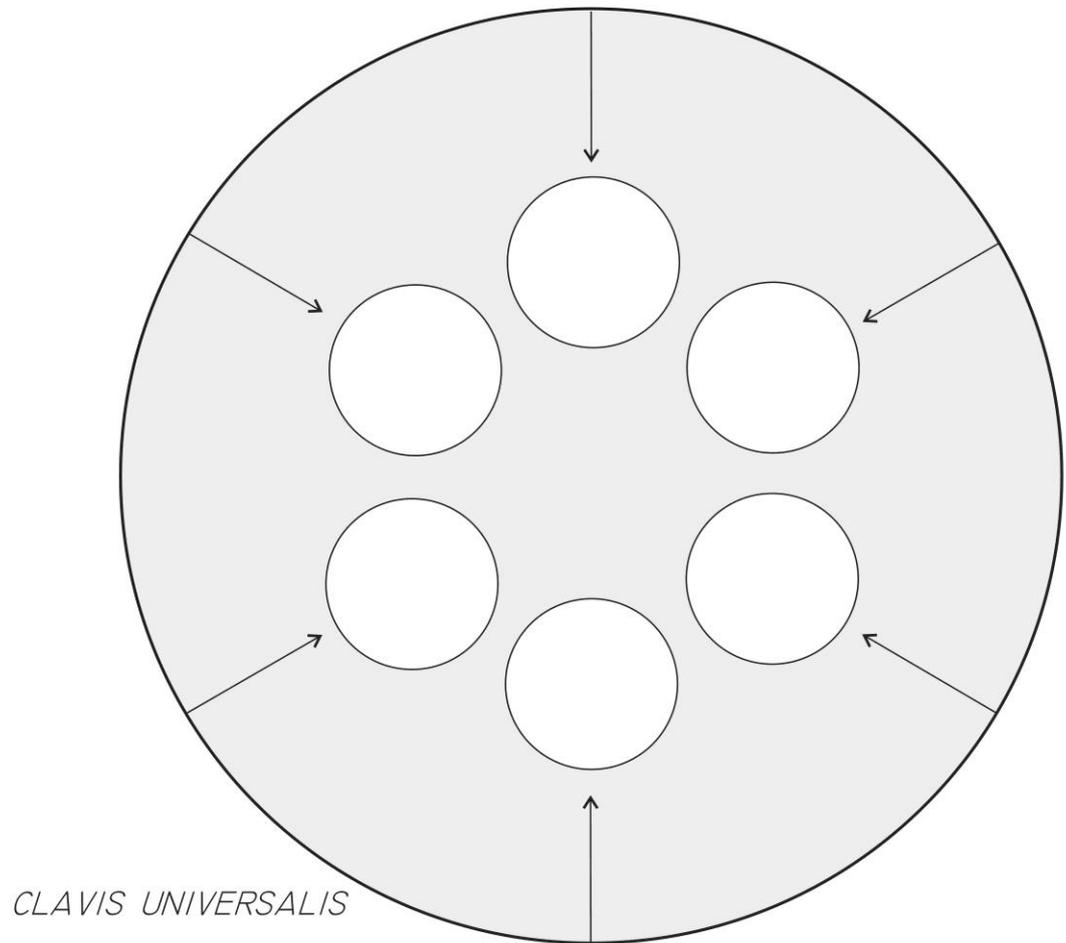


Diagram 12: *Clavis universalis*. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – Harvey, 2010; and Kapp, 2004).

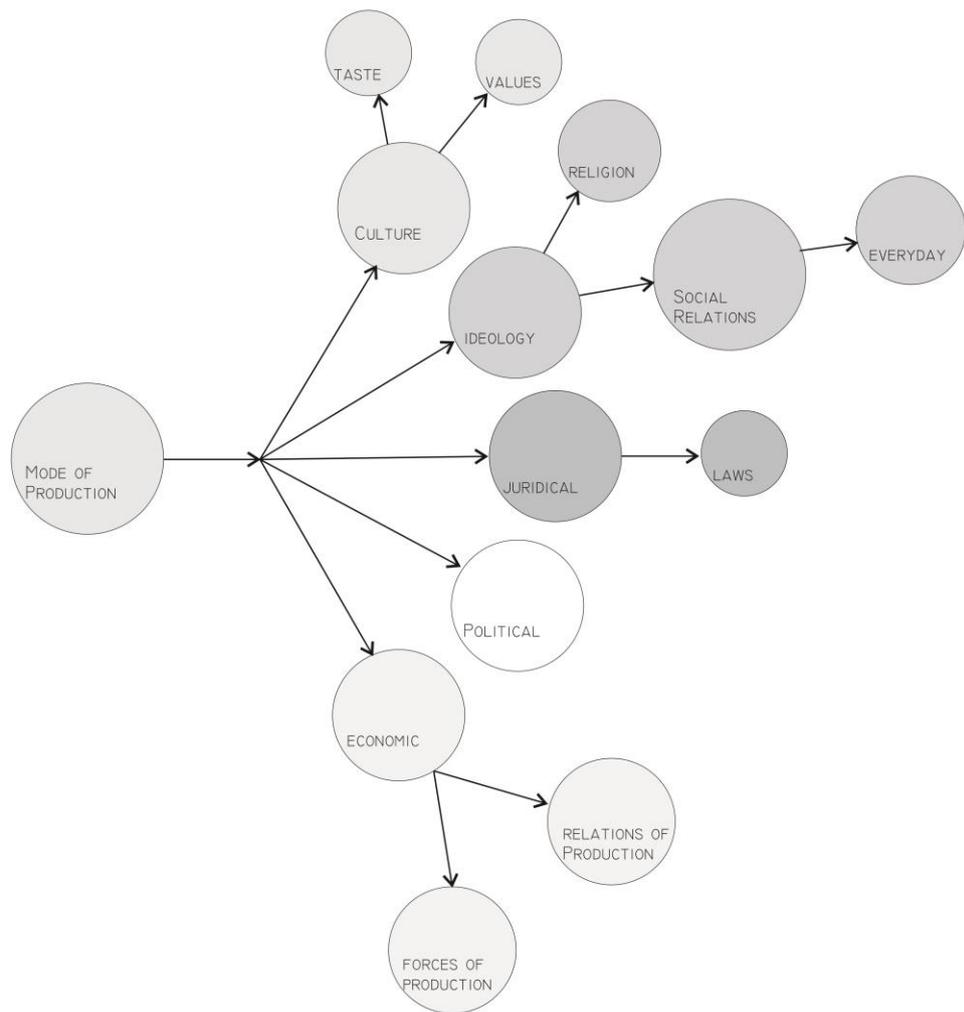


Diagram 13: Structural logic. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – Jameson, 2002).

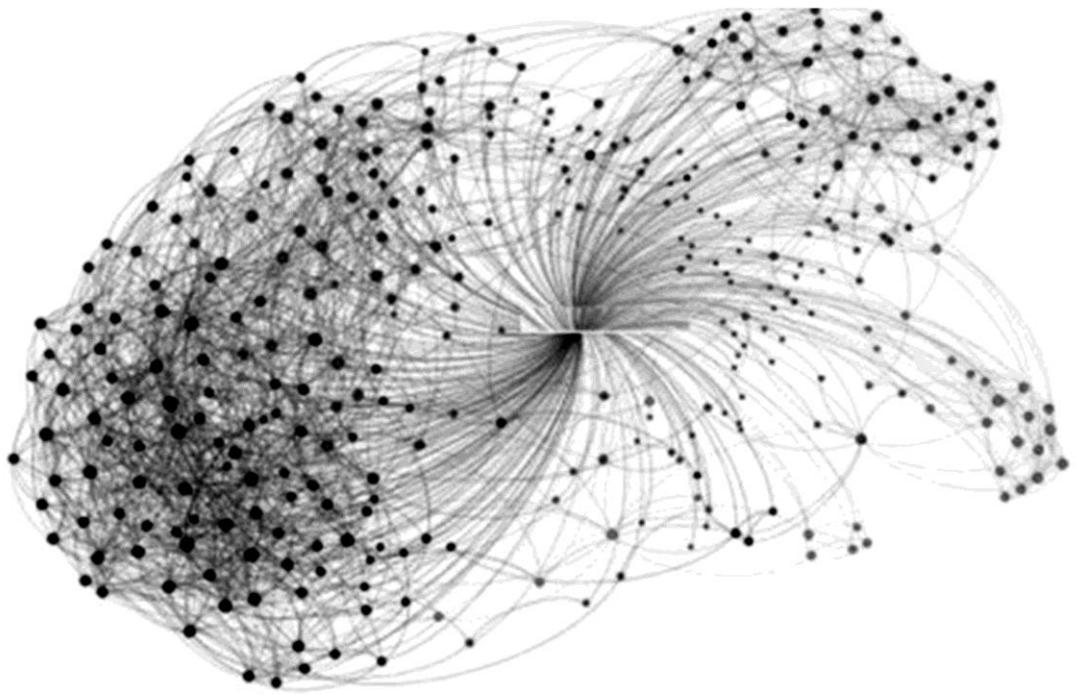


Diagram 14: The obsessive (absent) structure. Source: the author (based on – but opposed to – Eco, 1991).

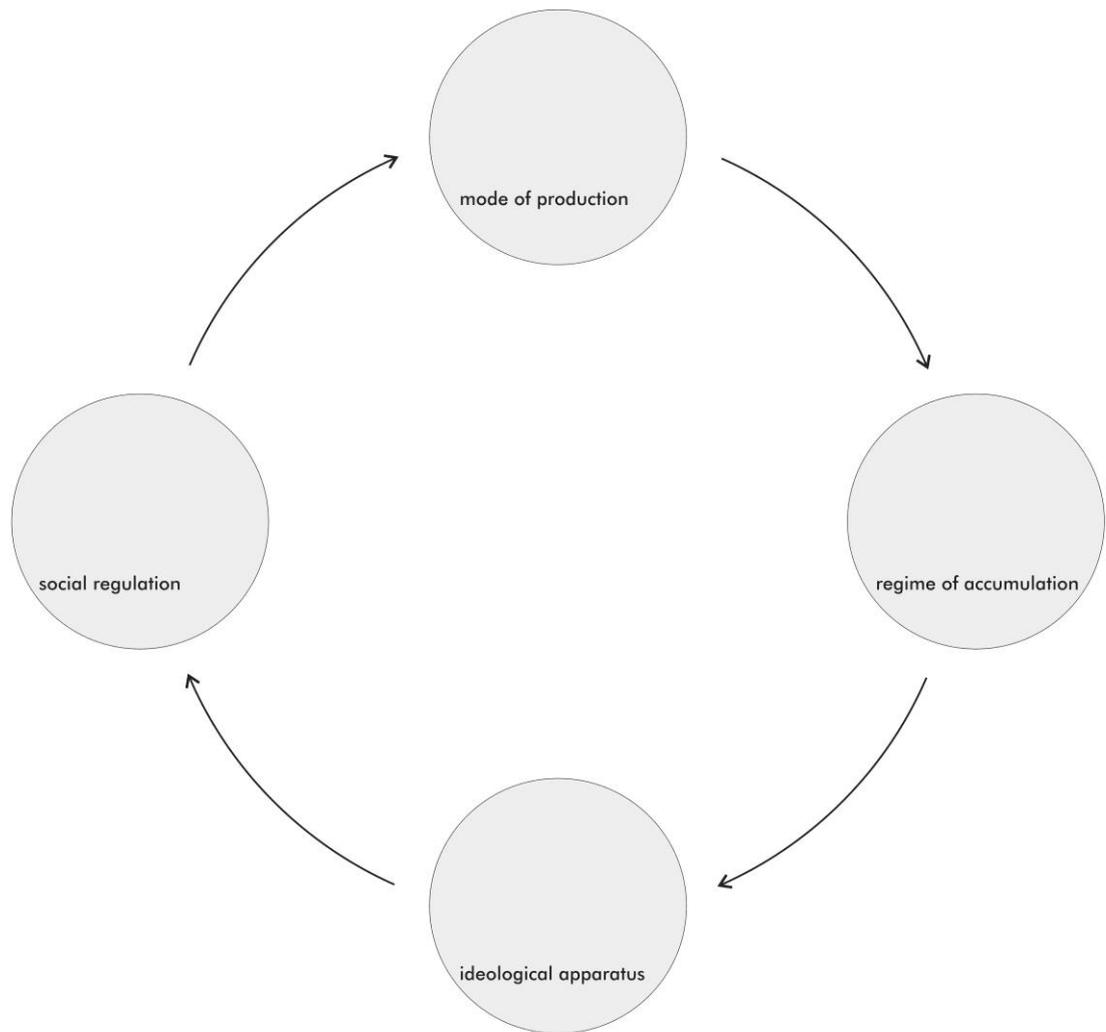


Diagram 15: Dialectical regulation. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – Soja, 2000; Harvey, 2010; and Jameson, 1991).

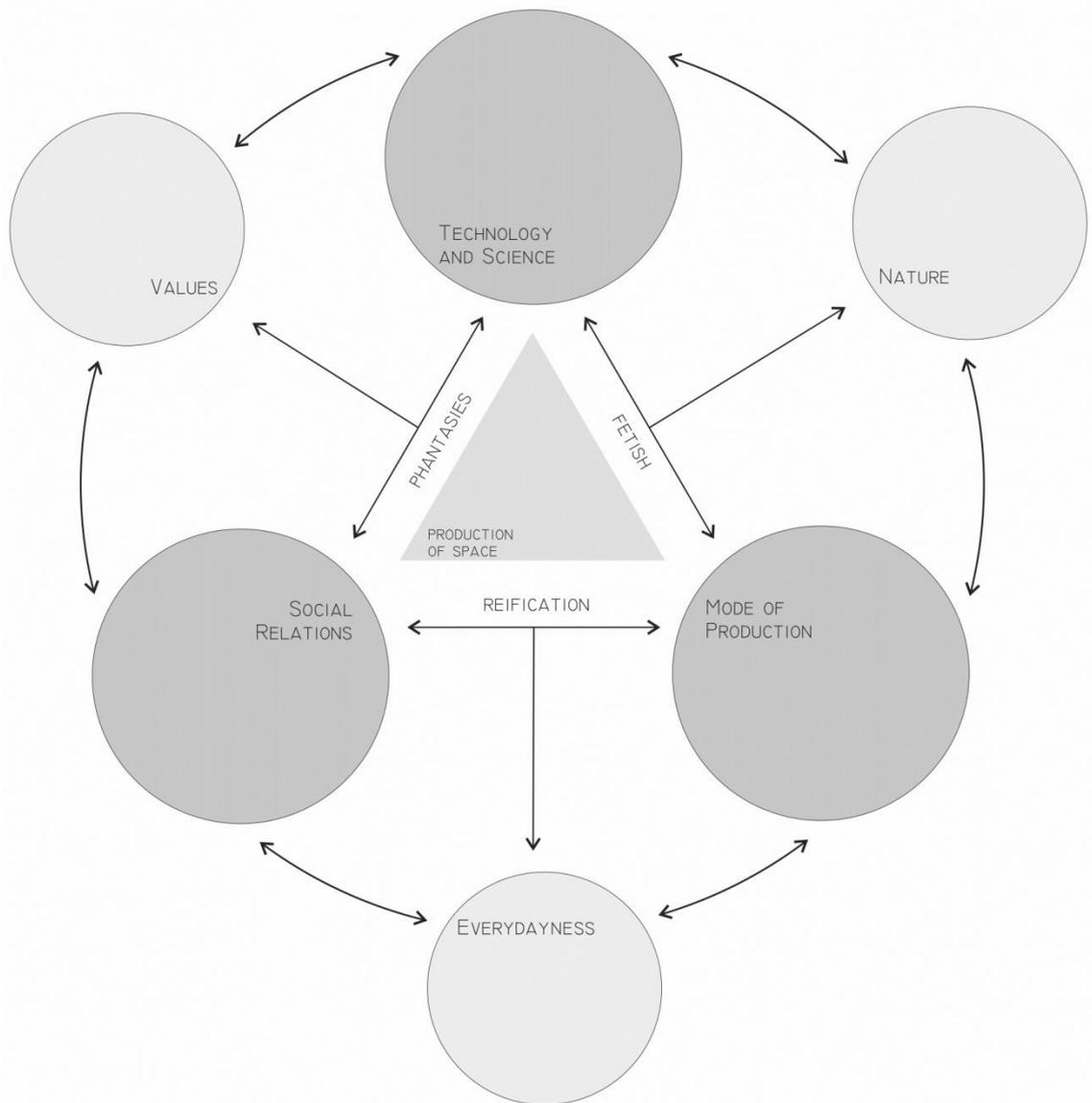


Diagram 16: Dialectical reproduction of space. Source: the author (based on – but an alchemy of – Harvey, 2010; and Lefebvre, 1976).

The first mode of causality is linear formal logics, which Jameson attributes to Descartes. It involves the formulation of a chain reaction similar to a billiard ball effect in a mechanistic and transitive mode (see diagram 10, above). In this form of reasoning, the ‘parts’ are the focus of thought, and the ‘whole’ does not necessarily interfere with those parts. This sort of analysis produces rigid conclusions – of the ‘the base determines the superstructure’ type – as we discussed previously. Its linearity allows for no dialectical reasoning (of the sort we mentioned in Engels’ account).

Second, Althusser discussed the idea of an ‘expressionist concept’ like that of Hegel and Spinoza, in which the ‘whole’ would be an all-encompassing essence to which any phenomenon would be simply a manifestation – a reflection of an essential nature (diagram 11, above). For Jameson (2002), this expressive causality is the one that Riegl applies to epochal styles or the teleological and universal subject of Hegel’s history.

This reasoning has an important theoretical function. Harvey (2010) notices how philosophers position different aspects at the centre of their equations. For instance, autonomists centre on labour process, feminists on daily life, Friedman on technology, Hegelians on mental conceptions, Frankfurt scholars on ideologies, and so on. Nevertheless, this proposition ultimately proposes a type of *clavis universalis* (Kapp, 2004), an ‘all-encompassing cause’ that is the key for interpreting everything. In this way, the whole becomes a closed system (see diagram 12, above).

In a context of multiplicity, uncertainty, complexity and diversity, such reasoning is relatively useless because it presupposes that a synthesis can reduce all the contradictions and dynamics of social reality. It also presupposes the unconditional determination of the part by the conceived whole, thus leaving no room for contradictions (for instance, the absolute system in Tafuri).

Third, Althusser would argue for a structural causality in which different ‘levels’ would have ‘semi-autonomy’, maintaining different structural connections and interactions but with no deterministic causality. For Althusser, this ‘structure’ is not an ‘essence’; instead, it should be seen as a fluctuating combination of multiple chains of cause and effect (see diagram 13, above).

Nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine how this position will be able to overcome the essentialist causality, as the structure *per se* will become a sort of *clavis universalis*. If Umberto Eco's (1991) self-criticism is correct, the 'structure is absent', meaning that it is not equal to the real and is instead an interpretative tool. We can also note works inspired by Bruno Latour's 'Actor-Network-Theory', which tend to direct their analyses towards complex social structures. This complicates the scheme of structuralism, yet it continues to imply the presence of a structure in the form of a 'network' (see diagram 14, above).

Thus, this approach involves the same contradiction of that of Eco, where the structure that one develops to understand a social group is not a fact; instead, it does not exist prior to the 'processing into data'. In addition, we should recall that our aim is not a 1:1 map but an interpretative tool that envisions relations and interactions in the field to mobilise new possibilities and detours.

Therefore, to provide an appropriate dialectical interpretation, the approach of the so-called 'school of regulation', where different spheres of society interact with one another, dialectically reinforcing one another in constant historical development (see diagram 15 above, and Soja, 2000, Jameson, 1991), would be a good place to start for our cognitive map.

For instance, the mode of production would depend on and interact with a regime of accumulation (e.g., colonialism and mercantilism, Fordism and mass consumption or Toyotism and flexible accumulation), an ideological apparatus (e.g., imperialism, modernism or post-modernism), and a mode of social regulation (e.g., absolutism, welfare state or the neoliberal market). Thus, different social spheres cyclically regulate and reinforce one another.

In addition, as Lefebvre (1976) argued, the production of space plays a fundamental role in the reproduction of social relations. Space is the produced social field, the realm where everyday interactions and hierarchies frame existence. In this sense, the production of space coordinates the interactions among the different spheres of society. Developing Lefebvre's point through David Harvey's (2010) 'scheme' will result in diagram 16 (above), which represents the junction of social regulation (the outer vicious

circle on that diagram) and spatial reproduction (in itself a technology, and the coordinating pyramid in the diagram's centre).

Harvey's 'scheme' comes from a footnote in Marx's *Capital* he draws attention to, in which Marx 'links in one sentence six identifiable conceptual elements' (Harvey, 2010, pp. 191-192). This sentence is marked in italics (by us) in the quotation below:

A critical history of technology would show how little any of the inventions of the eighteenth century are the work of a single individual. As yet such a book does not exist. [...] Darwin has directed attention to the history of natural technology, i.e. the formation of the organs of plants and animals, which serve as the instruments of production for sustaining their life. Does not the history of the productive organs of man in society, of organs that are the material basis of every particular organization of society, deserve equal attention? And would not such a history be easier to compile, since, as Vico says, human history differs from natural history in that we have made the former, but not the latter? *Technology reveals the active relation of man to nature, the direct process of the production of his life*<sup>[43]</sup>, and thereby it also lays bare the process of the production of the social relations of his life, and of the mental conceptions that flow from those relations. (Marx, 1990, p. 493)

The elements Harvey identifies are technology, relations to nature, actual process of production, reproduction of daily life, social relations, and mental conceptions.

In the diagram, social regulation is realised through technology and science, the mode of production, and the social relations and it is mediated by values, the reified everyday (the 'everydayness' of Lefebvre and Levich, 1987) and nature. In this diagram, reproduction is the creation of mediations between the different spheres. In this sense, the mode of production in capitalism will transform social relations into things, thus objectifying them, and this reification is what programs the modern everyday into a dynamic yet repetitive experience (we shall discuss 'reification' further in Chapter 4). The fetish is the force that articulates technology (methods, techniques, knowledge and so on) and responds to a given arrangement of production. The interaction of these two spheres produces what we perceive as 'nature' and the 'natural' in social life (we shall discuss fetish in Chapter 5). Finally, phantasies are the processes of subjectivation that

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<sup>43</sup> In the first English edition (available at [www.marxists.org](http://www.marxists.org)) this 'element' is alternatively translated as: 'the process of production by which he sustains his life'. Therefore, we deduced from it, and represented in the diagram 16 as: the 'mode of production' and the 'reproduction of daily life', or 'everydayness', as Lefebvre and Levich (1987) conceptualise it.

articulate social structures in a given technological condition, resulting in ways of thinking, mental conceptions and forms of value (we shall discuss phantasies in Chapter 6). Thus, this diagram orientates the investigation regarding how the production of space reproduces complex dialectical relations between different social spheres.

Bourdieu (2009) aimed to draw a precise picture of the field to investigate how social logics are manifested in concrete practice. Our cognitive map does turn the investigation upside down: the diagrams are heuristic and aesthetic devices that can help envision how concrete practices are reproducing abstract social relations.

Nevertheless, Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* is conceived as the 'actual' practice of 'agents' producing the 'structure', which is supposed to be regulated and regular. By contrast, these agents are not free individuals who are self-inflicting an external system. This is not the case because the means of reproduction in the field are historical abstractions transversally shared by multiple subjects. In this sense, the subject of the 'architect' is not an absolute individual who freely operates in a field of closed possibilities. Architects are not detached atoms, as they confront and act in the world through a very old frame of subjectivity: the way that they see, the methods that they use and the procedures that they develop are historically produced.<sup>44</sup> This notion leads us to the following question: what subject inhabits the sort of cognitive map that we aim to draw?

## **2.5. Overcoming the subject-territory dichotomy in the map**

In the next chapter, we will dissect how subjects are traditionally conceived in architecture and how counter-narratives can be conceived. Nevertheless, we should first map how different subject-society relationships have been conceived. To do so, we will

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<sup>44</sup> Bourdieu relates the critique of the notion of the absolutely free subject facing ethical choices in a totally free field to Sartre's existentialism. As we shall cover in detail in the next chapter, saying that it is the 'agency' of the individual that is framed by the field is insufficient. Instead, the ideas of 'agency' and 'individual' should be questioned altogether. There is not only no antecedent-less struggle between a subject and the social world but also no such a thing as a subject without a social world that enables his emergence in first place.

introduce four metaphors for conceiving this relationship: the ideological individual, the interindividual, the prince and the transindividual.

The ideological view of the individual is the simplest and most widespread. The field is understood as a neutral stage, where abstract dimensions do not interfere in the performances of the players, who are considered equal individuals competing in a fair game. In this way, current ideologies can justify the hierarchies based on personal skills. Thus, an architect who occupies the top of the pyramid got there because of his ‘talent’. The narrative of the field becomes one of the ‘ladder’ and the ‘leader’. According to this line of reasoning, once someone has passed through all the phases of his development, he will be in a leadership position, and the architects below him will remain there because of their flaws (see diagram 17 below).



Diagram 17: The ideal logic of the individual. Source: the author.

This metaphor ignores all the facts presented thus far in this chapter. As we have observed, the space in which architecture is produced is not a neutral space. Different centralities produce a field of power in which the struggle for hegemony endures. The social *habitus* frames different values and thus different lifestyles. Furthermore, architecture is divided into different social dimensions, different realms of operation and pertinence. Additionally, different institutions compete in the production of the field’s dominant illusions and not only act on behalf of their disciples but also establish the very rules of the game that reproduce their hegemony. In this sense, to understand how architecture reproduces itself, one needs an approach that reveals the historical and social dialectic of the architectural field, its subjectivities and its products.

The second metaphor is the intersectional individualities developed by Georg Simmel (see Stoetzler, 2016). For Simmel, increasingly complex individualities would be formed through the development of different ‘social circles’. According to this idea, complex modern individualities are the result of the articulation of different circles of identity, such as gender, family, class and religion (see diagram 18 below).

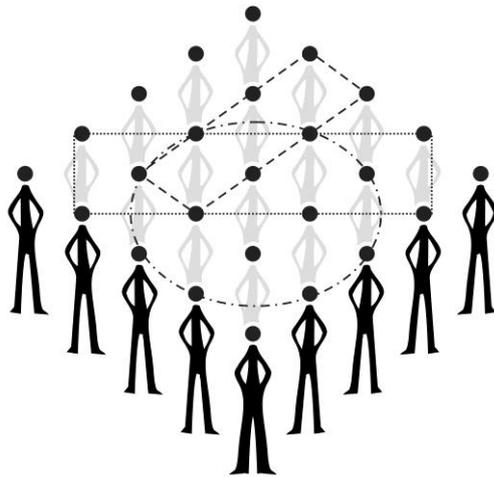


Diagram 18: Intersubjectivity. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – Simmel, *in* Stoetzler, 2016).

In this conception, a group of people might inherit a common culture ‘A’ through some tradition, and a group of professionals might develop a shared knowledge ‘B’ by working together. The association of these two social circles with other identities (such as class and gender) would explain increasingly complex individualities. In this sense, the subject of agency is not an isolated individual but an intersection of the social circles that interconnect different groups of people. This conception acknowledges how ideas, conceptions and values are shared and produced in collective social ensembles. Although histories of architecture usually assert the contrary, no architect is entitled to a single ‘great idea’, as such ideas are the result of a collective shared knowledge. In this sense, multiple common circles inhabit multiple subjects.

Nevertheless, this conception still regards the individual as a kind of inner-centred knot, and it does little to explain how individuals come to actualise different traits of individuality at different moments in their lives or to elucidate the formation of collective subjects.

The third conception is the prince. This proto-critical approach comprehends the mechanisms of power and representation. This conception was first systematised by Machiavelli (2008, and for a critical analysis Althusser, 2000). Here, the leader is neither in a natural nor in a neutral position in the field. His position is produced by a series of social articulations and manoeuvres. The prince wins his position of power through the control exercised over other subjects. In this metaphor, the prince is a public image that represents political relations and intersubjective desires. The prince is the image of a social body, a social institution, a social mechanism of production, a collective will, and so on. Thus, the prince is an abstract instrument that can incorporate (extract) the social power of a collective (see diagram 19 below; we shall discuss that in further detail in Chapters 3 and 6).

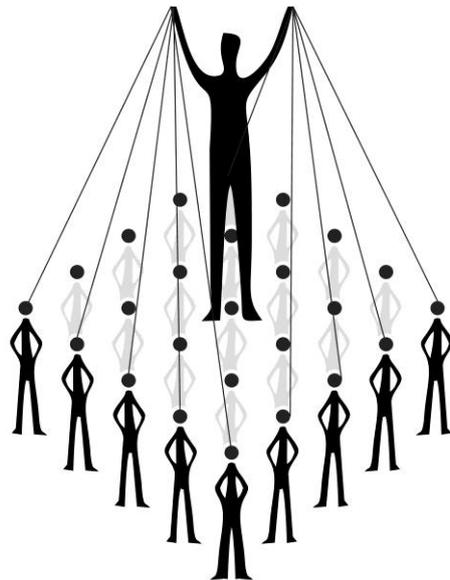


Diagram 19: The Machiavellian subject of history – the prince. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – Machiavelli, 2008, Althusser, 2000).

In this metaphor, a process of ‘subjectivation’ is developed, framing the subjectivities of others so they can be expropriated. This process is also a form of social control. Many variations of this metaphor have developed, such as: the conception of classes (a representation of a ‘collective prince’) or political parties. Again, such ‘princely’ representations colonise what is collective into a single entity.

Furthermore, the subjectivity of the 'prince' is not the only thing forged in this process. In fact, all subjects are transformed into a kind of impotent princes. Toscano and Kinkle observe how the television series *The Wire* portrays its characters in relation to the cityscape of Baltimore: 'While traditional narrative locates causal agency at the level of individual characters, in *The Wire* the socio-economic system (...) is the opaque subject', so individuals feel impotent (Toscano and Kinkle, 2015, p. 139). For Toscano and Kinkle (2015, p. 155), a cognitive map should reveal the domination and exploitation that remains opaque and obscure. This 'obscurity' causes 'agents' to feel as though they are always being co-opted by the system against their will.

For instance, to implement their practices, architects who are critical of the system, sooner or later, will have to either resign and decline to act or repeatedly adhere to actions that they reject, just as in *The Wire*, where the characters feel 'the inevitable frustration that comes from attempting to "buck the system"' or 'the fatalism of playing "the game"' (Toscano and Kinkle, 2015, p. 140). Ultimately, subjects will acknowledge 'how we're all, all of us vested, all of us complicit' (Toscano and Kinkle, 2015, p. 153), as does Freamon, a detective in *The Wire*.

Although this metaphor is important for understanding how the field's ideology operates through the production of figures such as 'princes', thus making it possible to reveal the fetish of the field, it does not provide an alternative approach for positioning a critical subjectivity on our cognitive map (i.e., repositioning the subjects' representation of their own condition in the world). In other words, although this metaphor has a concrete presence in reality, capturing collective labour, it does not give the collective (behind the mask of the prince) an operative image of its own condition.

For Toscano and Kinkle (2015, p. 147), the aim of a cognitive mapping is to represent a given condition 'in such a way that it could be available for critique'. If, on the one hand, cognitive maps 'capture that we are tragically enmeshed in the urbanised accumulation and reproduction of capitalism', on the other hand, this 'inquiry into the aesthetic' 'realism of abstraction' (Toscano and Kinkle, 2015, p. 151) aims to enable a reflexive experience that views both the subject and the world as products, producing

and reproducing themselves. In this sense, the idea of a cognitive map implies the deconstruction of the idea of an individual centred on himself.<sup>45</sup>

While analysing the multiple layers of the ‘production of subjectivity’, Guattari (1995, p. 22) proposed ‘to decentre the question of the subject onto the question of subjectivity’. Subjectivity would be an ensemble of delimiting and self-referencing conditions, formed by an ecology of apparatuses and incorporeal universes of references, institutions, spatialities and ethico-aesthetic paradigms (Guattari, 1995, p. 9). As such, Guattari argues that an approach to ‘subjectivity’ should be less of a scientific paradigm and more of a multi-faceted cartography of cognitive references, myths, rituals, symptoms, anguish, affect, inhibitions, drives, family relations and neighbourhood identities (Guattari, 1995, p. 11-12). Thus, he argues for a map with a series of musical metaphors of existential orchestrations, which are precarious partial objects, such as harmonies, polyphonies, counterpoints, rhythms, and aesthetic subjectivities (Guattari, 1995, p. 18). For him, subjectivity is pre-personal, polyphonic, collective and machinic; thus, it is not centred on the individual (Guattari, 1995, p. 21). Nevertheless, Guattari is struggling against structuralism, using its theoretical apparatus to build a complex theory rather than a theory of that complexity. The result is the creation of complex structures, with multiple elements layered in partial levels and made of complex refrains, with temporary (yet precise) consistencies, interfaced by non-discursive virtualities, and so on (see especially Guattari, 1995, pp. 23 and 27). To use his musical metaphor against his argument, such theory could explain the complex functioning of an orchestra but not the dynamics of jazz improvisation. Therefore, he applies semiotics to escape structuralism by rendering this very structuralism more complex, and still the complexity of reality escapes his complex structure.

Therefore, the concept of subjectivity will demand something completely different from ontology, escaping the requirement for the ontological elements of structuralism – no matter how complex they might or might not sound. This different approach does not aim to reveal the hidden universal ‘music sheet’ behind the orchestra, nor to make a ‘1:1 record’ of the flow of the jazz; instead, it seeks to investigate this social field’s process

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<sup>45</sup> In this sense, Feltham affirms that ‘Badiou’s subject of praxis is not identical to an individual person; in his view, subjects are constituted by works of art, scientific theorems, political decisions, and proofs of love. Despite this, a “subject” is not an abstract operator; any individual may form part of such a subject by their principled actions subsequent to an event’ (Feltham, 2006, xxxi).

of coming into being. Returning to the musical metaphor, to investigate the formation of subjectivities – the conflicts and struggles in the social production of tastes, musical sensibilities, hierarchies of value, and so on – that acknowledge such objects as music.

Thus, we arrive at our last metaphor: transindividuality (in Chapter 3 we will develop further this idea, and in Chapter 6, we will investigate how it is reproduced in architecture). Simondon (2013) departs from a long history of the concept of the individual and concludes that the idea is based on a conception of an inner-centred substance in the individual or in a convergence of matter into a particular form. His argument is that instead of approaching the already individuated individual, one should focus on the process of his becoming – his individuation. By only studying *being qua being*, one departs from the effect rather than from the process and its causes.

Thus, Simondon changes the inquiry from an ontology of universal and eternal beings towards an ontogenesis. This conception helps explain how, for individuation to be possible, a preindividual field of possibilities must exist beforehand. In this sense, for Simondon, the individual is only a ‘phase’ (an ‘actualisation’) in a series of potential individuations. In this sense, how a subject is formed of contradictory internal energies can be better understood. In this sense, the individual is not a resolved centre of being that exists in some kind of classical stability (the only one known by the ancients). That conception cannot explain how radical transformation of being is possible.

Mixing thermodynamics with philosophy, Simondon (2013) conceives of ‘being’ as a process of information (*mise en forme* – to shape). This information is a provisional structuration of dynamic forces into a metastable resolution. Beyond the simple actualisation of inner virtualities (as a seed that becomes three), his theory is a conception of individuation as a process of structuring disparate forces. Thus, the individuation is the creation of a mediation that articulates a field of conflicting energies (or disparate orders of magnitude). To understand the individual as a process of individuation, Simondon (2013) argues that a third term – namely, energy – must be added to the ancient duality of matter and form. In this sense, the inquiry shifts from an investigation of the internal (individual) as opposed to the external (society) to an investigation of an energetic process in constant actualisation.

Simondon (2013) conceives of individuation as a 3-phase process. The first phase is the physical individuation, where a limit is established between an inside and an outside. This first individuation cannot develop and only decays, as it occurs in physical individuations, such as the process of crystallisation. The second phase is the living individuation, where the formation of a limit is instead the production of an inner realm in continuous relation to an outside. In this individuation, an internal dynamic is constantly interacting with external dynamics, forming a ‘kingdom inside a kingdom’, in a continuous ‘theatre of individuation’. The third phase is a double individuation, both psychic and collective, where reminiscent elements of preindividualisation (remaining unactualised in different individuals) are connected, thus actualising a transindividuality.

We aim to unveil how the field of architecture produces potential predividualities and reproduces ‘mediations’ for the formation of transindividuals. We shall provisionally call this process the reproduction of the architectural unconscious. We will discuss this process further in Part 2. For now, we shall sketch this idea in one last coordinate of our map.

## **2.6. One last sketch: a bird’s eye view of the architectural unconscious**

In his last thesis on Feuerbach, Marx famously argued that ‘Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it’ (Marx, no date [1845]). In addition, he conceived of the role of philosophy as an instrument of social transformation in a letter entitled *For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing* (Marx, 1978). In this sense, the history of the theory of architecture is a quarrel between different interpretations, and only a ruthless critique of everything can highlight new directions in our cognitive map. To provide theoretical instruments for architects to reposition their condition in the reproduction of social relations, we shall excavate the different levels of ideology that operate in the reproduction of architectural discourses. To do so, we should sketch one last aspect of architectural transindividuations, so we can add, in the next chapter, a political dimension to Simondon’s account.

In Marxism, alienation usually means the general condition of being separated from one's inner being. Reification is one kind of alienation, which turns social relations into 'things' and ultimately objectifies humans themselves. The fetish of commodity is one kind of reification, which uses the abstract value of capital to measure the value of things and to mediate reification of social relations, transforming relations between humans into relations between things. Fantasies are the shared values, attitudes and beliefs that accept this order of things and that mobilise the desires to consume such things. Therefore, fantasy is a subset of fetish; fetish is a subset of reification; and reification a subset of alienation (see diagram 20, below).

If fantasies have recently been used to understand alienation (Žižek, 2014), the dissemination of the concept is due to its use by various disciples of Freud, who famously used an iceberg as a metaphor to map the human mind. According to Freud, we are only conscious of the tip of this iceberg, and we are preconscious of a not-so-deep level, called the preconscious. Part of the Ego, the rational self, has emerged from the water, while some of it remains submerged; the same is true of the Super-Ego, or the social structures and expectations that inhabit our minds; but the Id, the centre of our drives and impulses, would be completely unconscious and submerged (see diagram 21, below).

More than a map of generic subjectivities, our cognitive map aims to reveal how the field is reproducing specific forms of subjectivity. Thus, our map is not so much a map of supposed universal cognitive faculties as it is a map of the estrangement that subjects face with regard to the means of production of architecture. Departing from the understanding that human beings themselves have no natural essence, as the genus *homo* is an artificial construction (see Taylor, 2010 and Appendix 2), we will not conceptualise alienation as separation from an inner nature; instead, it is the production of social 'estrangement'. In this sense, estrangement is separation from the social means of producing one's own reality. Therefore, estrangement produces the feeling that social structures are placed apart from one's capacity to know and act. Estrangement is the unidentifiable distance between the subject and the instruments that can make him an active producer of the world around himself.

Thus, we will need a different metaphor – a buried pyramid – to understand the architectural unconscious, as it is not only submerged but also separated. As diagram 22

(below) shows, estrangement is the distance between the observer and the inner core (what structures the shape of this architecture). Estrangement is generated by the abstract surface of the pyramid and its ruining walls. These ruined walls have holes and fissures that make passing observers to wonder. However, only a bird's eye view can trace the depth of this pyramid. Reification, the process of objectifying architects and social relations, is halfway underground. In archaeology, social events and the reproduction of space (for instance, the demolition and reconstruction of houses in an ancient city) will create layers that archaeologists call 'context', which successively buries the origins of a social structure. In our metaphor, fetish is the next of these layers. In architecture, the fetish includes the hidden tricks, the abstract methods and the techniques that produce spatial phenomena. The fetish is the *means* with which architects transform abstractions into spatial relations. Even deeper are the phantasies: the blindly accepted narratives that ground architectural practice.<sup>46</sup>

Thus far, in Part 1, we have identified elements of the reproduction of architecture. In the last chapter of this part, we shall focus on the reproduction of the subject of architecture. If our sketched map thus far envisions the field in which the collective fantasy of architecture is produced, we shall next deconstruct the narrative of the subjects in contemporary architecture and the ways in which we might conceive of social transformation without falling into the trap of individual agency. In other words, we have set the stage for the necessary beheading of the architectural princes. To finish the job, we shall now construct a theoretical guillotine.

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<sup>46</sup> Each chapter of Part 2 matches each one of these layers.

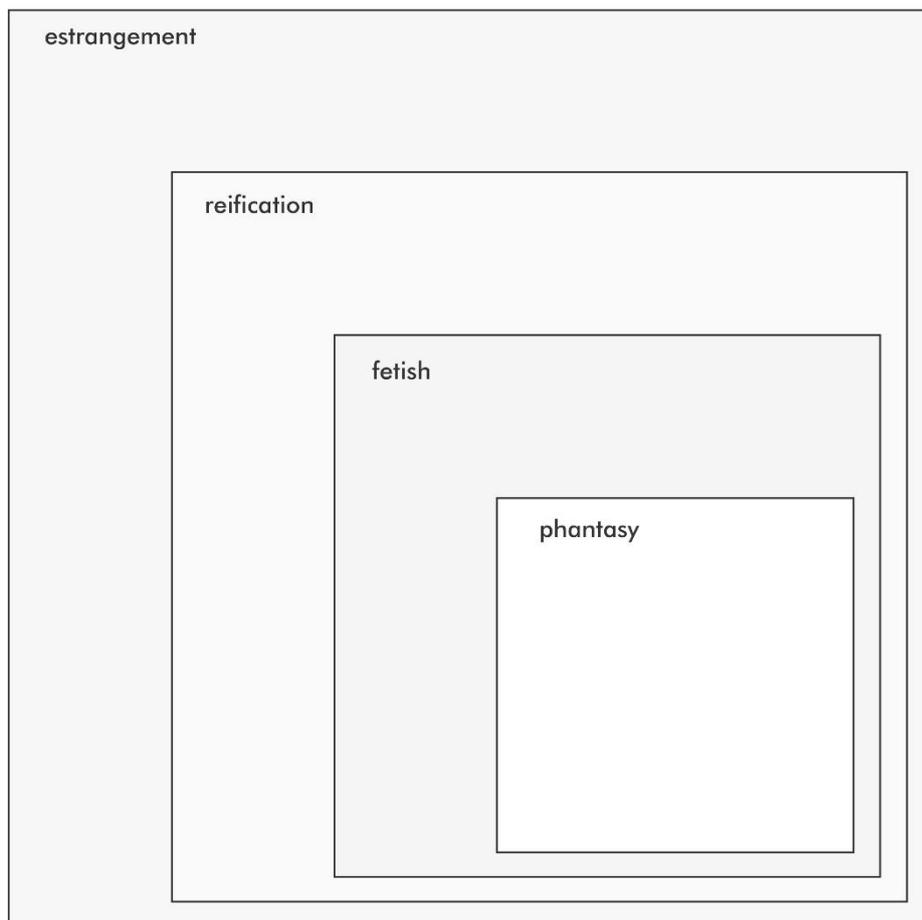


Diagram 20: The inception of estrangement. Source: the author (based on – but not identical to – Marx, 1990, Žižek, 1997).

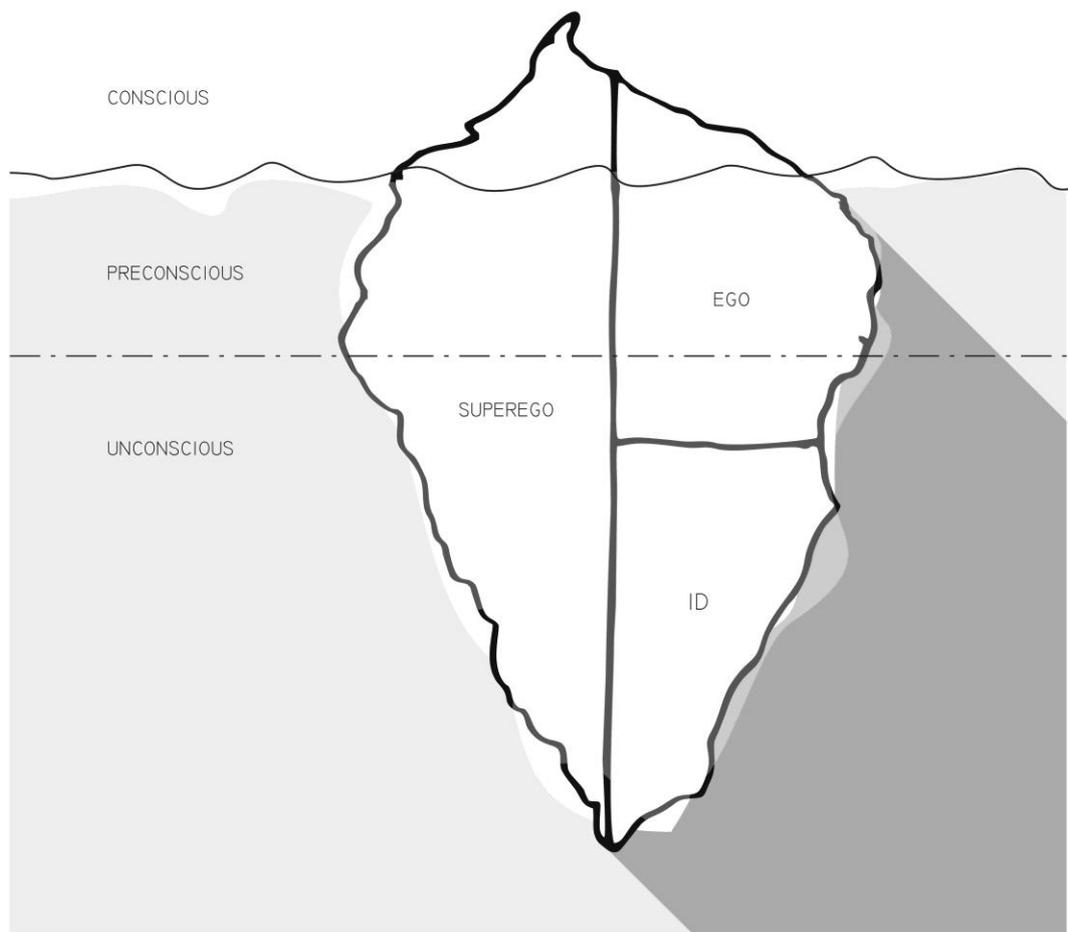


Diagram 21: The unconscious iceberg. Source: the author (based on the early Freud – but not identical to the late Freud).

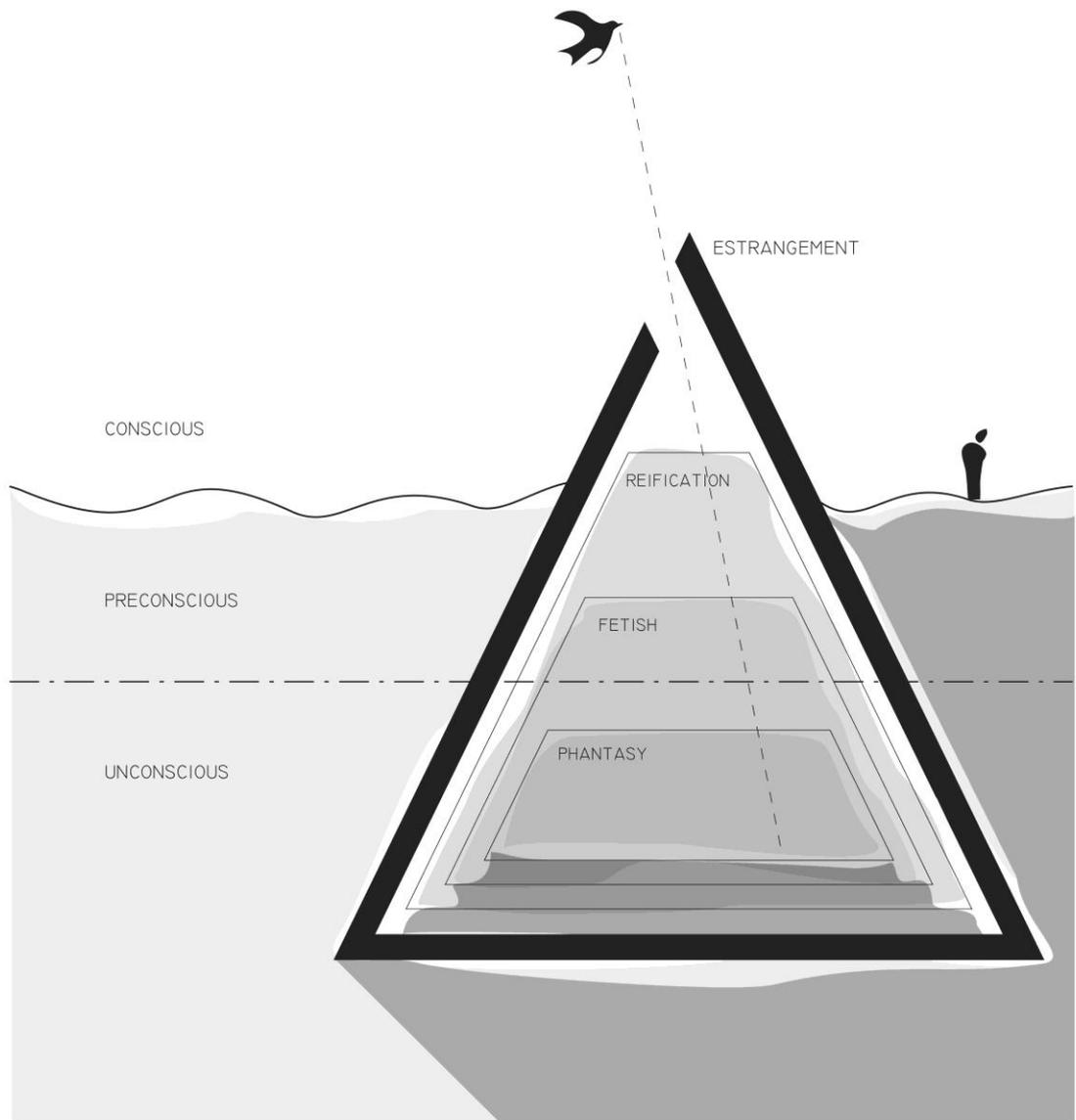


Diagram 22: The architectural unconscious. Source: the author.

## **CHAPTER 3:**

### **Subject to change: beyond and beneath the architect**

### 3.1. The architect's gap

There is a gap between the actual means of architectural production and the narratives of the field – a gap that conceals the fundamental contradiction between the rhetoric of the ‘genius’ and the collective character of cultural production (the ‘general intellect’ of Marx, no date [1857]). In an effort to reveal this contradiction, we aim, in the discussion below, to critically address the narratives of how architecture is produced so that we can transform the way we conceive the subjects of architecture and their relation to the reproduction (or transformation) of social relations.

In so doing, we should start by noting (as did Stuart Elden, 2004) that the title of Lefebvre’s book – *The Survival of Capitalism: reproduction of the relations of production* – is more ambiguous in the French language – *La survie du capitalisme* – as ‘*survie*’ means both survival and afterlife. In this sense, the reproduction of architectural ideology operates not only by way of its own self-maintenance but also in the way that its phantasmatic elements embody the subjectivities approaching it.

Arguably, the hegemonic form of *architectural* ideological *survie* is narrative, taking the form of supernatural and fantastical tales. These tales are produced in an enchanted lethargy of body and soul, seducing by irresistible songs and echoing from the obscure realms of new mythologies. Where all artifice is hidden, there lie heroes without any of the shortcomings of living men, of whom all is forgivable; yet, these heroes are praised by the mourning zeal of legions of believers. This praise arises from the whisperings of dead architects.

This plight is shared not only by believers but also by many critics. For instance, although Tafuri (1976a, 1976b, 2006) builds a devastating critique of the ideology of architecture, his critique targets architecture understood as the work of ‘individuals’. Alternatively, Kracauer provides the means to circumvent this theoretical representation by addressing the paradoxes of architecture using vulgar examples, as in his famous text *The Hotel Lobby* (Kracauer 1995, 173-188, originally written in the 1920s).

The approach below will enable a counter-narrative of the (re)production of architecture, moving beyond criticisms that remain in the realm of ‘agency’. Only through a ‘Copernican revolution’ in the concept of the individual will we be able to

transform the ideological conception of the subject of social transformation – i.e., we will change the concept of the subject who changes – thus revealing the different forms of the representation of the ‘subject to change’. This approach aims to develop the understanding that the reproduction of architectural subjectivities operates through collective preindividuations in a transindividual realm; it also operates through a socially mediated process of individuations.

Beyond the concept of individual beings, we shall find the continuous process of individuation. According to Simondon (2013, 260-266), traditional ontology seeks the essence of ‘being’ in individuals who are already individuated. This approach causes research to fixate on the ‘part’ (the effect of beings already individuated) instead of investigating the roots of what caused the individuation to occur in the first place. Therefore, Simondon proposes an ‘ontogenesis’, or the study of how individuals happen to become. Arguably, this shifts the traditional separation of being and becoming (such as in Heidegger) towards a study of how being becomes. Not only is this the study of the becoming of being, it is also the study of being as becoming. This approach radically transforms the ideological ontology of architecture – seen as the production of individual structure by individual architects – into an ontogenesis of architecture conceived as operations, which creates a structure only as a means of allowing a new possible operation to emerge.

### **3.2. *Intermezzo*: dead architects**

These whisperings are something quite different from the last century’s way of spreading the ideals of dead architects: a scheme that took the form of foundations. Le Corbusier, Buckminster Fuller, Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies Van der Rohe, Lina Bo Bardi, and practically all major figures of modern architecture have left foundations that are responsible for spreading their convictions, developing research, supporting publications, funding disciples and reproducing the architects’ ideals. This was a mechanism for safeguarding a prominent and increasingly powerful position in the field of architecture.

In 2012, when Oscar Niemeyer died at the age of 105, he was still ‘designing’ a vast number of buildings around the world. A few days after his funeral, his grandson, the architectural director at Niemeyer’s office, declared that the firm would finish the projects already started, setting an end to 78 years of architectural practice, even if one could not measure the size of Niemeyer’s contribution towards the end of his life. Nevertheless, Niemeyer remained very talkative and engaging in his lectures, always surrounded by admirers astonished by his unceasing commitment to designing. As expected, Niemeyer left a foundation to protect his legacy, even if his grandchildren are now in a fierce legal battle over his heritage.

The death of Zaha Hadid, in early 2016, led to a very different turn of events. At the time, Zaha Hadid Architects (ZHA) had offices in London, Beijing and Hong Kong. These offices had already developed more than 950 projects, and the firm was about to open a new office in New York, with additional plans for offices in Dubai and Mexico. Some weeks after Hadid’s death, finding the world of architecture in mourning, Patrik Schumacher, who had become a partner at ZHA in 2002, declared to the NY Times that ZHA would continue designing (Erlanger, 2016). According to Schumacher, Hadid had set a precedent; she had imbued the practice of architecture with a ‘new repertoire’ and a new ‘spirit’. On this basis, he could ensure that the firm’s 400 staff members could confidently continue her vision and research (see Erlanger, 2016). Thus, Zaha Hadid lives:

any star in architecture has been born in the discipline itself, and emerges through schools, competitions and colleagues. (...) We want to tell the world that we’re still a viable, vibrant address for major work of cultural importance. (...) My ambition is to become more visible as a leader of the field to clients (...) This star signature is a relatively new phenomenon (...) We feel very confident that we will carry on and go forward with her vision and her legacy and the experimental research she established in the office (Patrik Schumacher *in* Erlanger, 2016).

Arguably, these spirited architects controlling a design practice by means of supernatural means is a new phenomenon in architecture. However, this is not a new phenomenon in other fields, such as the fashion industry, where many designer names have continued after the deaths of the founders.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, in architecture, the

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<sup>47</sup> Consider, for example, Coco Chanel, Gucci, Versace, Prada and Benetton. Except for the first, these are family names, and the companies continued after the founders’ deaths, with family members playing

image of the ‘gifted architect’ determining the structure of the field with his pen demanded a quite different discourse, and notions of brand used to be quite extraneous.<sup>48</sup>

Another paradox seems inevitable. The history of architecture has traditionally remained distant from the logic of the market, developing its own distinctive qualities apart from market value (Bourdieu, 1996c) and building a parallel system of valorisation. In this system, biographical narratives have been the most important reference for measuring the greatness of a ‘genius’. With few exceptions, ever since the first history of painters by Giorgio Vasari in 1550, the history of art has been depicted as a collection of biographies that chronicle the ‘succession of inventions’ delivered by each individual artist along a linear timeline, sometimes with the addition of contextual information for background. Could the meaning of ‘genius’ now return to its original Latin sense of ‘spirit,’ thus animating a brand’s industrial business? Or has ‘genius’ always been part of the fetish of the field?

As Schumacher demonstrates in his first pronouncement after Zaha Hadid’s death, in a Facebook post entitled ‘Zaha’s Incredible Moves’, he is very resolute in reinforcing Hadid’s genius contribution to the field: ‘The bounds of architectural possibilities had shifted. Architectural design gained a whole new dimension’. He is even more direct in the following passage: ‘Zaha had indeed delivered an unprecedented expansion of the discipline’s repertoire’; and finally, he writes of the ‘wholly original and empowering “discoveries” that Zaha gifted to our discipline’.<sup>49</sup>

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different symbolic roles. For instance, when Christian Dior died in 1957, some considered closing the company (see <http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/christian-dior-s-a-history/>). Nevertheless, since its beginning, the company had been financed and controlled by the industrial complex of Marcel Boussac, and since the first year, Pierre Cardin had been the head of the 80 employees’ creative workshop. Thus, continuing under the artistic direction of Yves Saint-Laurent was a natural move for a business born as a corporation. Furthermore, by 1950, the company started a licensing program, putting its famous name on dozens of products produced by a wide range of companies worldwide. Although this scheme created controversy among colleagues in high-fashion, who wondered about the pedigree of the inventions, this would soon become a model for the rest of the industry. Since its start, the Dior brand has been behind a wider chain of creative productions and factories.

<sup>48</sup> Now, Rem Koolhaas has openly advised the team of ZHA to follow in the steps of fashion houses; see <http://www.dezeen.com/2016/05/14/zaha-hadid-architects-should-follow-example-of-mcqueen-says-rem-koolhaas/>

<sup>49</sup> For the ‘Facebook post’ please refer to <https://www.facebook.com/patrik.schumacher.10/posts/10208103116688623> It is remarkable enough to see how a drawing of a student exercise can be used to corroborate the narrative of ‘inventiveness’ and ‘innovation’ in the field, even though it mimics experiments carried by Van Doesburg, Gerrit Rietveld

Thus, the phenomenon of the architectural ‘star’ introduces new elements, allowing the emergence of a phantasmagorical era in architecture in which the magic produced by these architects does not even require that they be alive.<sup>50</sup> Some new questions also emerge: would it be possible for a well-trained and highly tuned team to continue not only the legacy but also the inventiveness associated with a dead architect? And more radically, could we, for instance, resuscitate Le Corbusier?

This question reveals a conflict in the internal logic of the field; it also reveals the intensification of a contradiction in the discourse on how architecture is produced. So far, the mainstream history, as documented by the academy and the offices, persists with the rhetoric of a great figure: the great (wo)man who had a vision and a set of skills, and who, with his/her hand and pen (or computer), changed the world. We now see a veiled move, intensifying the idea that an architect is not a normal human acting in flesh and bone – a normal human who will one day die. He or she has been replaced by a new spirited genius who, rather than producing architecture directly with his/her hands and brain (as a living worker), is a type of device that manages complex and abstract processes and coordinates the actions of hundreds of other architects and employees. This is a step closer to the image of a prince(ss) who is nothing more than a representation of collective work. Thus, Zaha Hadid shall live.

This condition only reveals the gap between the actual means of production of architecture and the narratives of the field. While the narrative is that Zaha Hadid’s personal cleverness created a whole new field,<sup>51</sup> this narrative is nothing more than a representation of the work of 400 employees and the (human and financial) capital necessary to maintain her office from 1979 until her first built commission in 1993. It is important to note that this myth of ingenuity is widespread in today’s culture. Mariana

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and El Lissitzky (cf Frampton, 2000, 157-178) more than half a century before, simply by mentioning the inspiration of painter Malevich and eliminating from the formula the previous spatial and architectonic experiments. Thus, to build an illusionist narrative, a chain of causalities is reshuffled by means of discourses confirmed and reproduced by the main institutions in the field.

<sup>50</sup> Douglas Spencer (2014), using Adorno and Benjamin, explores how architecture has transformed into a phantasmagorical practice, in the sense that architects impose specific social relations by means of architectural shapes and forms that ‘appear’ as natural, as in a play with animated shadows. What follows is an intensification of this phenomenon, in which the architect himself becomes a shadow, an appearance, a spirit or a phantom.

<sup>51</sup> Certainly there is a question of belief at play here. Did the Pharaoh really believe he was god? Did Zaha Hadid really believe she was a genius? How come both we and they can believe in this kind of social mystification? There is a social frame – a mode of visibility – at play, a social fantasy that goes beyond personal opinions and frames the possibilities of what we can – and cannot – believe.

Mazzucato (2011) has recently attacked these myths of innovation. Most notably, she debunked the myth that the iPhone was the product of the ‘vision’ and ‘ingenuity’ of Steve Jobs, exposing how, in reality, the major innovations have come from state-funded research, i.e., they have been collectively produced. Then, such innovations have simply been appropriated by companies and produced by thousands of workers overseas. In this sense, Mazzucato’s argument reinforces the idea that production is the result of a social and collective process – a ‘general social knowledge’ in the words of Marx (no date [1857]) – that we shall examine below.

Thus, we should proceed directly to the argument of this section: the myth of the architect as an enlightened prince is a form of abstract machinery for harvesting symbolic distinction in the field and for capturing the work of other architects. To counter the reproduction of architecture in these terms, a new subjectivity must be conceived for architecture.

In the previous chapter, we aimed to map how architecture frames society, i.e., how architecture both disciplines architects and dialectically shapes their social context. Now, we aim to specify how the subjectivity of the architect is reproduced so that we might trace emergent routes for oppositional architectural practices. To excavate potential oppositional subjectivity in architecture, we would like to establish some principles to overcome the myth of the genius in architecture. To do so, we must critically address our understanding of how architecture evolves – the narrative of causal change – and its correlated conception of the ‘subject’ who creates architecture.

### **3.3. Producing counter-narratives**

Clearly, a complete analysis of the evolution of the epistemology of historical narrative is beyond the scope of this work. Nevertheless, it is essential to underline the internal contradictions of different modes of architectural valorisation. In addition and more fundamentally, this analysis might underline how a narrative of the evolution of the discipline is related to a specific form of imagining the development of architecture and the contribution of individual architects to this process.

The aim is to bring to the foreground the conflicts and contradictions in the different modes of establishing cause and effect in architecture. Thus, the focus is to explore the limits of ‘critical accounts’ of architectural history, focusing particularly on revealing its blind spots and unquestioned truths.

This strategy would help to overcome a long-standing dichotomy in historical narratives between a ‘chronicle of the princes’ and a ‘history of the masses’ (Rancière, 1994).<sup>52</sup> For Rancière, there is a poetical struggle in the production of history, where those in positions of power aim to make history the result of their own actions, thus silencing the concrete history experienced by others.

It is in this sense that Kracauer (1995 [a collection of texts ranging from 1920 to 1933], 101-106) argues biography to be the ‘Art Form of the New Bourgeoisie’.<sup>53</sup> For him, the novel of the previous century, in which individual unity was immersed in an overall context, was replaced by (and condensed in) the history of highly visible heroes. As the ‘actual life’ of individuals gives a sense of ‘certainty’ to historical veracity, facts become crystallised, making history the ultimate result of individual actions. For Kracauer, this is the ultimate form of ‘evasion’ from the masses and the collective character of history.

Manfredo Tafuri (1976), in his *History of World Architecture: Modern Architecture*, made important progress on the project of a critical theory and history of architecture. Nevertheless, some evident blind spots in his arguments (such as equating high-profile western modernists with the ‘world’) might offer important clues for our purposes.

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<sup>52</sup> For Baumer (1990), modern history starts with Voltaire, who applied a set of invariable principles to explain the variety of historical events, thus treating time as Newton treated space. This allowed him to ‘add’ chapters on the history of China, India, and the Americas to the universal history of Europe. For Lefebvre (1971b), the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the mother of science, providing explanations for the vertiginous transformations of the time. The model provided by Hegel explained the continuous evolution of contradictions, with the models of Saint-Simon and Comte being caricatures of an evolutionist social physicist. For Hobsbawm (1998), Marx adds the historicity of social structures, interactions with the economy and concrete experience as engines of the construction of the modern man’s own destiny. For Rancière (1994), the evolution towards the ‘Ecole des Annales’ (of Lucien Febvre, Fernand Braudel and Jacques Le Goff) pushed towards the everyday and the concrete experience of the masses in the understanding of the factual history beyond the narrative of ‘heroes’. For Rancière (1994), the theory of history has only recently tried to approach not only what lies on the ‘wave crest’ but also the enormous forces moving in the ‘depths of the sea’. For Jameson (2000, p. 445), there has been a crisis in the narrative storytelling of history since the end of the nineteenth century, which culminates in a critique of representation. He argues in favour of Althusser’s position, that the historian should conceive his work as that of producing history, rather than representing it.

<sup>53</sup> In an era of digital media, perhaps this art form is not decaying; rather, it is imploding into the form of ‘profiles’: abbreviated and simulated representations in the shapes of avatars.

Although Tafuri ([1974] in Hays, 2000) was well aware of the historiographical problem in the traditional history of architecture, he still ascribed an important role to the narrative provided by the buildings of high profile architects, and even if he avoided the architects' justifications, he reproduced their distinction in the field. For him, architecture was a reflex of the mode of production and was the means by which capitalism could realise ideologies. Thus, he would criticise the production of the field of architecture without reflexively questioning its representation or distinctions. Therefore, the fetish of architecture is located completely within a blind spot:

But this forces us to abandon almost entirely the paraphernalia of the traditional categories of judgment. Since an individual work is no longer at stake, but rather an entire cycle of production, critical analysis has to operate on the material plane that determines that cycle of production. In other words, to shift the focus from what architecture wishes to be, or wishes *to say*, toward what building production represents in the economic game means that we must establish parameters of reading capable of penetrating to the heart of the role played by architecture within the capitalist system. One could object that such an economic reading of building production is *other* than the reading of architecture as a system of communication. But we can only reply that it will never be repeated too often that, when wishing to discover the secret of a magician's tricks, it is far better to observe him from backstage than to continue to stare at him from a seat in the orchestra ([1974] in Hays, 2000, 165).

Tafuri's (1987, pp. 1-24) 'project' aimed to fight what he called 'operative' history, which was the production of historical narratives as a manifesto to the followers of modern architecture. For Tafuri, a critic should not take the role of an ideologist. Furthermore, Tafuri (2000 [originally published in 1969], pp. 14-15) addresses important points in this debate: architecture has become a history of things, further demonstrating the commodification of society; and, the myth of individual architects who define the social future was a further bourgeoisie heroic myth. Nevertheless, by reinforcing the idea of the individual as simply actualising an inevitable 'destiny' of the city, he avoids addressing the political economy of the means of architectural production.

As a result, the overall effect of his effort reinforces the discourses in the field, up to the point that one of his objects of critique (and one of his best friends) can call himself a

follower (see Eisenman, 2008).<sup>54</sup> For instance in *'L'Architecture dans le Boudoir'*, Tafuri's (1987, pp. 267-290) analysis enters into a deep discussion of the semiotic logic of the arguments of high-profile architects, leaving aside any concrete aspect of architectural production. Thus, he continues to structure the narrative of his history of architecture around the chronicle of the mishaps of the 'masters' and is thus unable to avoid writing history as a series of biographies; as a description of groups, friendships, and quarrels; or as a compilation of self-legitimizing discourses, even though all of these are negated as ideology and associated with social economic contexts using complex theoretical gymnastics.

For Jameson, Tafuri's negative dialectics was able to deliver a sweeping critique of all aspects of culture in contemporary capitalism. Although it delivered a strong and condensed account, at the same time, it also delivered a sense of failure, closure and impossibility of acting against an all-encompassing structure (Jameson, 2000, p. 446). For Jameson, Tafuri's method departs from a retrospective account of reality, proposing the current state of affairs as an inevitable result interconnecting the totality of all previous events and causalities. In these terms, even 'resistances come to be seen as mere inversions within the system' (Jameson, 2000, pp. 447-452). For Jameson (2000, p. 454), Tafuri was too quick to presume an immediate symmetry of architectural form and social condition, as he himself provided empirical examples in which architectural style simply did not make any difference at all.

Kracauer (1995), in his analysis of the 'Hotel Lobby,' adopts a different strategy. Instead of developing a rigorous analysis behind the 'discourse' of famous architects' buildings – the magician's trick seen from behind the scenes – he aims to investigate how, in the process of aesthetic production, by aiming to produce a totality and ultimately failing to do so, the aesthetical act – due to its contextual condition – ends up maintaining this totality as the veiled frame of its appearances. In this sense, what the

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<sup>54</sup> This friendship is frequently recalled by Eisenman, and it is true that academic cordiality and friendship might blur the line of ruthless critiques, but there is no basis in the interpretative gymnastics that sees praise where critique is delivered: 'To dismantle and reassemble the geometric metaphors of "the compositional rigorists" may prove an endless game, which may even become useless when, as in the case of Peter Eisenman, the process of assemblage is all too explicit and presented in a highly didactic form. In the face of such products, the task of criticism is to begin from within the work only to break out of it as quickly as possible in order not to remain caught in the vicious circle of a language that speaks only of itself, in order not to participate guiltily in the "infinite entertainment" that it promises' (see Tafuri, in Hays, 2000, p. 161).

object obscures is more important than what it reveals (just as Tafuri's blind spots reveal more about the discipline than do his own negative critiques). In this sense, his analysis, for instance, uses the detective novel as a means to show society its 'own face in a purer way,' making it possible to reveal 'a whole out of the blindly scattered' (Kracauer, 1995, p. 175). In this sense, there is no logical justification for focusing on examples of 'star' architects to reveal the contradictions of the field. In Kracauer's words, 'For no matter how insignificant the existential power that gives rise to the artistic formation may be, it always infuses the muddled material with intentions that help it become transparent' (Kracauer, 1995, p. 174).

This reveals a double dialectic. On the one hand, both 'high art' and 'mass ornament' deliver, as by-products of their aesthetics, precisely what the artist and the culture cannot entirely grasp or see. Similarly, for Marcuse (1981), the obscure material of an aesthetical work can only be captured by means of the critical thinking that causes primordial violence to the object, in the sense of rupturing its common appraisal and accepted appearance. It is necessary to remove the object from its regular context of appreciation, revealing what was not initially possible to contemplate. On the other hand, critique is an aesthetical work, bringing to the visible what is secretly changing in the subterranean.

Thus, aesthetics and visibility are key issues in critical analysis. For Rancière, aesthetics is a political act, which has nothing to do 'with aesthetic utopia, with a certain idea of artistic radicality and its capacity to perform an absolute transformation of the conditions of collective existence' (Rancière, 2009, p. 19). Rather, 'what links the practice of art to the question of the common is the constitution, at once material and symbolic, of a specific space-time, of a suspension with respect to the ordinary forms of sensory experience' (Rancière, 2009, p. 23). Thus, art is not political because of the way it represents society but rather because of the distance it creates from society and the type of space it has enabled as a result. A political aesthetic elicits awareness of the mechanisms of domination, thus turning a passive 'spectator into a conscious agent' (Rancière, 2009, p. 45).

We shall return to the problematic of the 'agent', but first we would like to focus on how this aesthetic operation acts on the present as formed by concrete objectifications of the past. It is in this sense that Walter Benjamin (no date [1940]) famously proposed

the task of brushing ‘history against the grain’. For him, our awareness of the present is moulded by those who have been victorious; thus, we should make an effort to revive the views of those who have been defeated.

This is an approach to history as a situated assessment of contradictions empirically observed, followed by a contextualised excavation of its origins, followed by a reframing of the problem.<sup>55</sup> In our case, this approach shows how architecture, despite all its rhetoric of innovation, creativity and revolutionary conception, concretely operates as an instrument of reproducing social relations. For this reason, to conclude the first part of this thesis, we will need to deconstruct the idea of ‘agency’ attributed to the architect.

### **3.4. Beyond agency**

It is important to recognise that the research project entitled *Spatial Agency: Other ways of Doing Architecture* (Till et al., 2011) has made important contributions to new understandings of the field of architecture and of how architects contribute dialectically to the production of space. Most remarkable is how this project presents the different practices, discarding any linear or compartmentalised narrative and rupturing with the notion of linear evolution in the field. Rather than presenting a series of affiliations and schools, the report presents practices in alphabetical order, simultaneously eliminating both hierarchy and precedence. Practices are addressed as a network of interconnected yet individual contributions.

This approach is developed, fundamentally, by merging Lefebvre’s (1986) notion that space should be understood as a social product, Latour’s (2005) theory that actors should be understood within a network, and Giddens’ (1984) idea that ‘agency and structure should be understood as a duality, two linked but separately identifiable conditions’.

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<sup>55</sup> This proposal would change the way we approach architectural history. It is not a cartography, nor a compilation of manifestos, nor the critique of promoted illusions, nor the revealing of the magical convergence of base into aesthetic. It should not be a collection of bourgeois narratives, nor of biographies of architects, and not even the revelation of a supposed fall from paradise and our condemnation to sin.

The ‘Spatial Agency’ book (Till et al., 2011) allegorically starts with a ‘half-joke’ made by Latour: ‘There are four things that do not work with the Actor-Network-Theory... the word actor, the word network, the word theory and the hyphen’. Latour’s (1999b) intention was to stress his proposal as a method of reconstructing how actors build their activities rather than to formulate a new social theory (which he sees as ‘grand-narratives’). Nevertheless, he ultimately concedes that his theory fails to take into account the ‘pressure’ of epistemology (what is ‘out there’) and of psychology (what is ‘in there’) (Latour, 1999b, p. 23). Arguably, to advance beyond the ideas of an ‘actor’, of a ‘network’ and of a ‘hyphen’, it would be necessary to overcome the long-lasting structuralist model of ‘langue-parole’ (the logical origin of ‘network-actor’, in this case).<sup>56</sup>

Furthermore, it could be argued that the proto-post-structuralist agency theory of Giddens (1984) is, in his words, an attempt to overcome this ‘dualism’ by means of a ‘duality’ (sic), thus – more or less – delivering the same partial self-criticism as Latour. Nevertheless, I would like to argue that Umberto Eco has applied his previously mentioned self-criticism (1972) with more rigorous consequences (in his book *The Absent Structure*). There, he presents the origins and developments of structuralism, from Saussure until the full mainstream semiotics, and provides a long account of the relation of langue-parole, i.e., the language (the structure) and the actual linguistic performance of individuals (parole is, for instance, speech, sentences or poetry). Thus, language is the overall structure of rules – syntagma, paradigms, phonemes, words and so forth – assumed to pre-exist; and parole is the concrete (and sometimes poetic) deployment of phrases that could, in its originality (and if powerful enough), reframe the entire structure. Despite Eco’s mastery of the semiotic method, his ultimate masterpiece is (in its title) the recognition that the structure does not exist; it is ‘absent’. In this sense, Eco acknowledges the post-structuralist critiques and postulates the use of the idea of ‘structure’ only as a useful device, not as an ontological element of reality.

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<sup>56</sup> We will argue that what Latour is recognising (without saying so) is the socio-political instance of the production of subjectivity, i.e., the collective nature of both the subject who produces and the object that is produced.

This is rather more radical than solving the problem by identifying an intricate sort of inseparable ‘duality’.<sup>57</sup>

Pierre Bourdieu (2009, p. 39) tries to overcome this paradox by considering the exchange of ‘the model of reality for the reality of the model’. Thus, he proposes that although the structure is a social representation, it has actual impact. This is a relevant point, and therefore, the analysis of the structure of the field matters. Nevertheless, this account does not illuminate the way in which this structure is actually internalised in individual subjectivities, nor does it allow us to build a form of action that moves beyond the necessity of a ‘personal’ actor who provides the creative shift in the structure.<sup>58</sup> The solution of this paradox will demand the reframing of the problem altogether.

This step could not be a caricature of post-structuralism, which bases itself in a complexification of the structure, critiquing and deconstructing it endlessly, aiming to provide the utmost model of the continuum of reality.<sup>59</sup> Once again, we should remember that the aim of this thesis is much more modest. Rather than providing a new 1:1 cartography of the absolute complexity of reality and its cognition, we aim to produce a map that allows us to navigate it, to build shortcuts, to create deviations and, hopefully, to allow readers to conceive possible detours around these paradoxes.

The fundamental problem of the idea of ‘agency’ is the assumption of an ‘autonomous’ subject, acting with free will in a neutral structure. Nonetheless, to move beyond the

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<sup>57</sup> According to Jameson (2000, p. 443), the escape to a phenomenology of the ‘body’, as an ahistorical weighing of human ‘nature’ or a dialectic of ‘negativity,’ would ultimately mean that ‘In all the arts, the new “textual” strategies stubbornly smuggled back into their new problematic the coordinates of the older political question, and of the older unexamined opposition between “authentic” and “inauthentic.” For a time, the new mediations produced seemingly new versions of the older (false?) problem, in the form of concepts of “subversion,” the breaking of codes, their radical interruption or contestation (along with their predictable dialectical opposite, the notion of “cooptation”).’

<sup>58</sup> ‘By forcing one to discover externality at the heart of internality, banality in the illusion of rarity, the common in the pursuit of the unique, sociology does more than denounce all the impostures of egotistic narcissism; it offers perhaps, the only means of contributing, if only through awareness of determinations, to the construction, otherwise abandoned to the forces of the world, of something like a subject’ (Bourdieu, 2009, p. 21). However, ultimately, Bourdieu’s account needs something ‘like a subject’.

<sup>59</sup> A general critique of post-structuralism would note how the method departs from a process of complexification of all structuralist categories up to the point of collapse (the mechanism was to contrast structuralism with the critique of its limits, unveil the fortuitous character of its categories, remark on the subjective nature of its propositions, remark on its ethical implications, and develop variations ad infinitum, multiplying the variations into an account, thus contrasting it with increasingly complex metaphors and so on) and to the point of uselessness (the map will never be the territory).

concept of agency does not aim to deny the possibility of action; rather, it aims to engage in how social structures frame possible choices, condition alternatives, foment drives, and induce behaviours by expectation; and, furthermore, to engage in how subjects are (from the start) subjected to a past that goes beyond individuals.

### **3.5. Subject to change: beneath (re)presentations**

As we saw, emerging at the end of the 19th century, the 'biography' genre became fundamental for the individualistic subject of capitalist society. Beneath that, the architectural imagination is trapped in a deeper conception of history based in the chronicles of 'princes'.<sup>60</sup>

Arguably, the notion of a 'prince' directing history was first systematised in Machiavelli's (2008) book *The Prince* [1513]. According to Althusser (2000), Machiavelli's ultimate goal was to create an 'intellectual dispositive' to inform political practice. He was specifically concerned with 'fortuna', the circumstances or conjectures that a prince would have to face to 'command and act'. The prince was a device thought to act 'negatively' and 'objectively' to control the randomness of the future.<sup>61</sup> For Althusser, this negative objectivity was what Machiavelli conceived as *virtù*.

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<sup>60</sup> We will develop further (in Chapter 5 and 6) the implications of this concept for architectural subjectivity. For now, it is important to note that conceptions of history are not themselves, however, trans-historical. In his history of the development of ideas, Foucault advises (2005: 271) that one must recognise the 'historicity' of the concept of 'history'.

<sup>61</sup> According to Althusser (2000, pp. 37-42), the theory of Machiavelli was based on three theses and one form of action. The first thesis concerns the immutable order of human affairs, which made the history and knowledge of previous experiences fundamental for those who wanted to intervene. Machiavelli demonstrated this in a rather concrete manner, approaching the effective experiences of previous forms of government and thus using history as a device rather than as a winner's chronicle to legitimate the status quo. The second thesis is the idea that the world is in constant motion and is never in perfect equilibrium. This thesis is in antithesis to the first and negates immutability while simultaneously presupposing it. The third thesis is the cyclical theory of history, borrowed from the Aristotelian theory of the cyclical return of government forms. Nevertheless, Machiavelli's proposed action is to develop a government that combines the three 'good' modes of government (monarchy, aristocracy and democracy). Therefore, his proposal is that a prince should impose a synthetic form of government that negates the cyclical nature of history. Louis Althusser considers the book *The Prince* (by Machiavelli) to be the first political manifesto for concrete action. Although Machiavelli would consider the ancient experience as a form in 'eternal return', he would always take an approach that was directly interested in the 'effective truth of things' (Althusser, 2000: 16).

Machiavelli (cf. Althusser, 2000) was not inventing the figure of the prince *per se*. He was systematising and transforming, or ‘capturing’, a traditional practice in its purest form (as an ideal, a prince as a re-presentation). So, the representational character of the prince was intensified and conceived as an image, and specifically as a public image. This image, then, could support a figurative narrative of political developments and international affairs. The interactions among social conditions (*fortuna*) are then ideologically manipulated by means of the image of a ‘prince’, which aims to capture social drives and expectations to build a new (logical) chain of necessity in the form of a new linear narrative (*virtù*). In this sense, the prince is a device, conceived to achieve social goals. For instance, in the case of Machiavelli, the goal was the unification of Italy, and a new virtuous prince should emerge in order to articulate this social transformation (in this sense, his prince was a representation of a complex context, different forces and different interests that could mobilise and direct the action of a social collective).

Thus, a prince is an operative public image of a political narrative; he is an image of power or truth rather than power or truth itself.<sup>62</sup> It is by means of this intellectual operation that the ‘prince’ becomes ‘the subject’ of history, and the majority of theories and histories of architecture are arguably based on ‘architectural princes’. In this sense, although much research, including Tafuri’s approach, has made great advancements in contextualising architecture in a social context, scholars have ultimately reinforced the abstract device of the ‘prince’ because the critique was centred on representations (be they architects or buildings) conducting the evolution of architectural history.<sup>63</sup>

In critical theory, attempts to re-imagine the broken subject of history have revisited texts such as Marx’s *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* and *The Civil War in France*. In those texts, Marx uses his historical method: in the former, he demonstrates the gradual formation of mechanisms of control in the formation of modes of production, and in the later, he aims to demonstrate the Paris Commune as a critical moment of increasing contradictions in society. In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx (no

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<sup>62</sup> For instance, Barack Obama is just an image of Power who gained prominence with a narrative of hope and peace, even winning a Nobel Peace Prize, although the actual economic power and oil interests he represents delivered the worse humanitarian crisis of our time (<https://www.amnesty.org.nz/syria-worst-humanitarian-crisis-our-time>). Nevertheless, the image does the trick.

<sup>63</sup> For instance, Tafuri’s (2006) last work was ‘Interpreting the Renaissance: Princes, Cities, Architect,’ which deployed many interesting interpretative tools to consider the interactions among those actors.

date [1848]) set out his famous concept of history as the eternal struggle between classes. Thus, class becomes the central engine of history. This implies that ‘class consciousness’ is a key element for historical change, as Lukacs (1971) observed. As in Blanqui’s judgement, by recognising himself as a ‘proletarian’ and by making the judge include this as a ‘profession’, he was founding a new class and taking part in a new political subject.<sup>64</sup>

Thus, a theoretical problem would soon emerge: that of organisation (Lukacs, no date [1924]). This problem was first developed by Lenin (1961 [originally written in 1902]) in the pamphlet *What is to be done?* His solution was to conceive the Communist Party as the ‘vanguard’ of the proletariat, thus entitled to act on the behalf of that class. Nevertheless, Freire (1996) would famously assert that those who are oppressed by society could not enter the struggle for freedom in the condition of objects and only later become fully entitled as human beings, otherwise the struggle would be lost from the start. It is in this sense that Freire proposes a pedagogical strategy centred in the development of subjects who are critically conscious of their place in society.

In this discussion, the important point to retain is what Amir Djalali (2014) has identified as the ‘common’ of architecture, wherein architectural knowledge is produced by the entire field, whose origin is collective in nature. Although this production is collective, its products are captured by social apparatuses. This is a point of no return. The general intellect that produces architecture is not a princely ‘subject’, and it could only be identified as such by means of phantasies (a point to which we will return in chapter 6). Architectural knowledge is the product of a general subjectivity that is alive in a trans-individual dimension beyond any single architect.

For Jason Read (2010, p. 123) the political problem arrives because this subjectivity is ‘reified’ (framed/moulded/distorted) by abstract social machines and structured by a ‘fetishisation in which the qualities and attributes of social existence are attributed to a thing’. Thus, ‘Society itself exists as a fetish’ (Read, 2010, p. 125) and therefore Read asserts that, as Marx had put it before, ‘production not only creates an object for the

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<sup>64</sup> ‘judge: “What is your profession?” Blanqui: “Proletarian.” Judge: “That is not a profession.” Blanqui: “What! Not a profession? It is the profession of thirty million Frenchmen who live by their labour and who are deprived of political rights.” Judge: “Well, so be it. Let the clerk record that the accused is a proletarian”’, in Benjamin (2002), *The Arcades Project*, p. 735.

subject, but a subject for the object' (p. 120). Our aim is to investigate how the architect gets trapped in this process of 'reification' and how architecture becomes an instrument of fetishism. For Read (2010, p. 114), this idea is

often seen as tantamount to a denial of political agency altogether, to the assertion that everything is an effect of power, that agency and action cannot exist. What I would like to propose is that far from being a theoretical dead end for politics the production of subjectivity is the condition for its renewal (...) It is a matter of articulating this common, the unrepresentable transindividual collectivity, against the conditions and practices that conceal it (...) not a matter of looking for 'the subject' (Read, 2010, p. 130).

However, how can a collective subjectivity possibly be mobilised? For Alain Badiou (2012), an 'event' is the moment when a new political truth is collectively accepted. Thus, an event is the emergence of a truth into being. The event is a process of collective subjectivation, in which a group of people accept a new appearance of a given social condition and mobilise their will to act. In this sense, an event is similar to a work of art because it brings about a new aesthetic of things.<sup>65</sup>

Badiou calls this an 'idea' that assembles collective participation in a singular political process in the form of a historical decision. It is retroactively projected onto the symbolic movement of history, giving a name to those who had no say (Badiou, 2012, pp. 8-9). An event is the process by which a social necessity appears, rupturing 'the normal order of bodies and languages as it exists for any particular situation' (Badiou, 2012, p. 6), becoming the affirmation of something that was, up until then, 'impossible'.

However, this conception of an event is not one of a single point in time (an instant), nor is it a variation of something like a function or an activity (such as in Tschumi, 1994). Rather, as Žižek (2014) draws upon Badiou, an event emerges when reality is reframed by a sudden moment of truth (as in an insight), or by a subject who recognises how his cogito builds his own existence, or when a mistake's incongruence with reality

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<sup>65</sup> In this process of event as an art production, Žižek (2014, 136-148) argues there is a reversal of contingency into necessity: a master-signifier of the past is changed in order to make the present its inevitable result. In this sense, the unity imposed by a work of art re-appropriates the past. This is not simply illusory, nor simply imaginary, as it establishes a new social reality by symbolically restructuring the entire field (even though there is no new content, everything might seem different) and retroactively changes the past chain of causalities that brought us to the present. Thus, the creativity of the work of art as event is to make visible a chain of causality in a process of transformation.

reveals the abyss of everyday madness, or when the imaginary realm of social representation is unmasked and recreated. Thus, events transform both subject and reality. For Feltham (2006), commenting on Badiou, ‘The “and” of “being and event” is thus up to the subject: it's open’ (Feltham, 2006, p. xxxi).

It is in this sense that, for Badiou, truth is always and only politically real because it is the projection of an exception to ordinary programmed life. For him, ‘an idea is always the assertion that a new truth is historically possible’ (Badiou, 2012, 12). Notoriously, Alain Badiou’s favourite idea is ‘communism’. Thus, this idea must be something shared by a collectivity to become reality (Badiou, 2012, p. 11). This is why he names ‘being’ as an event, which is something coming into socially accepted existence and instigating a transformation in the social order. Could architecture be understood as an event, or as the process of reframing the possibilities of a given moment?

### **3.6. Beyond the individual: being becoming**

Our investigation of the processes of estrangement in architecture leads to the most perplexing inquiry: How does the reification of architecture result in the reification of the architect himself? A similar difficulty has been depicted in the controversial movie *Exit Through the Gift Shop* (2010), by Banksy. On the one hand, the movie depicts an aspiring artist who uses a series of artifices to become famous, even without any apparent talent or deep understanding of the philosophical implications of that practice. On the other hand, what lies below the narrative is the fact that the atelier of Banksy and the field structure that makes him a star artist are the same as those used by the protagonist. The paradox rests, therefore, not so much in the subject pretending to be radical (while using the ‘system of art’ in a fetishistic way) but in the artist who is willing to be radical but finds himself trapped in the reproduction of his reified practice.

Our argument is not simply that the field encloses the artists and makes them subject to its heritage. Rather, we would like to deconstruct the understanding of an agent facing a field, a subject confronting an object, a soul more or less attached to a body, a consciousness distinct from an unconsciousness; in general, a dualism of matter and form. To do so, we will draw on Simondon’s (2013) critique of the idea of an

‘individual’ formed by matter and form, and we will substitute it for a metastable system in which tensions, contradictions and non-actualised potentials function not as a substance (inside the individual) but as a process (the individuation); in other words, as a live and continuous ‘theatre of individuations’.

Beyond Deleuze’s assertion that ‘Nothing is harder to define than the individual’ (in Toscano, 2006, p. 157), this is also an old problem that has its own development in the history of ideas (see Simondon, 2013, pp. 357-520). Here, we do not aim to retell this history, only to map the differences that might build an understanding of how the disciplinary process in architecture and the reproduction of the subjectivity of the architect are one and the same process.

Giacoa JR (2012) thus synthesises two different aspects of Simondon’s critique of ontology. Simondon critiques (1) the Ontological Monism that takes being as ‘substance’ and unity in itself and (2) the various forms of Hylemorphism in which reality can be categorised into types, species and individuals, thus explaining differences as subparts. According to Giacoia (2012), Simondon makes a move in the same direction as Nietzsche and puts the centre of ontogeny in the ‘becoming’ (*devenir*). In this sense, there is no substance in individuals (such as the negative humanism targeted by Lukács, which we discuss in chapter 4); there is only an unfolding of relations, events and continuous processes of becoming.

Toscano (2006, p. 142) also synthesises Simondon’s critique in a similar way. According to Toscano, Simondon first attacks the conception that information can be the copy of an ideal reality (such as in Plato) and the conception that individual being is an independent and substrate matter that takes a form (as in the hylemorphist tradition of Aristotle), proposing instead an operational fundament of reality. For Toscano (2007), Simondon thus avoids the risk of substantialising antagonisms and even of preconceiving antagonism because the way an operation might transform a system is neither transitive nor latent in it but is open to invention and hazard. In this sense, for Toscano (2006, pp. 43-44), the concept of information in Simondon means a *mise en form* (in formation, i.e., to set in form), which avoids the problems of the absent structure in structuralism and of the arbitrary games in hermeneutics. Simondon is aware of the availability of many potentialities and is focused on the genesis of the conditions of the operation that produces specific individuations (becoming being). In

other words, being is the operation that resolves a series of processes, conflicts, tensions and possibilities into a sustained structure (i.e., a structuration).

Conceiving the production of subjectivity in this way is very different from the average view of the unconscious substance of the individual. For instance, the Freudian approach to the unconscious is the search for a deep root of the essence of the subject. To illuminate the deadlock of this type of search for the essence of the subject, we will use Jean Baudrillard's (1994) 3 metaphors of knowledge. For Baudrillard, classical epistemology understood knowledge as a mirror in which ideas would be the perfect image of the real itself. The second epistemological stage was that of the 'Mask', in which thinkers would recognise that knowledge itself creates a deformed image of the real, such that the thinker should engage in trying to see the 'real' behind the mask. For Baudrillard, this is the spirit of Sigmund Freud, who wants to understand the human drives behind the surface of the conscious, thus developing an understanding of the unconscious as the real cause of drives. Baudrillard's last metaphor is the simulacra: where the unveiling of a mask would only lead to the realisation that we are trapped in a new mask, which, when unveiled, would lead to a continuous spiral where concepts would never reach the depth of their references. For Baudrillard, this is the birth of a hyper-real in which all reality is nothing more than simulation. In this sense, Baudrillard himself is trapped in the hylemorphic paradigm that Simondon critiques, as this paradigm is trapped in an increasingly paranoid search for the primordial substance of being.

Simondon displaces this problem by not considering the individual and instead by putting the process of individuation at the centre. The individual is not an immutable being in which one should search for a substantial truth behind the masks of appearance (behind the conscious the unconscious, behind desire the drive, behind the principle of reality the fantasy, behind the fantasy the primordial phantasy and so on). If one understands the individual as a metastable system in which a certain order is actualised by an operation, the reality of being reveals its full dynamic condition. If we take our case of interest, the architect and the discipline of architecture, although there is no substance in the architect, each architect's subjectivity is a dynamic structuration of a complex series of conceptions, ideas, desires and forces, with some parts actualised, some parts only as potential, some elements in priority positions, and some in secondary positions. Each subjectivity is a complex, dynamic structure of realised, virtual and

potential possibilities. In this sense, even though each architect manifests an individual ‘system’ of subjectivity, this system is composed of past subjectivities and potential subjectivities before they are realised (or not), which Simondon calls preindividual (what comes before the operation of individuation).

In this sense, it is not our intention to understand the development of the idea of the unconscious. We are not searching for the ‘dark substance’ of the architect’s mind. Similarly to how Vygotsky (no date [1930]) puts it in his discussion of the unconscious, ‘the subconscious is not so much *a* psychological problem but *the* problem of psychology’.<sup>66</sup> While investigating the reproduction of the architect’s subjectivity, we are not so much concerned whether reproduction is an architectural problem; rather, our problem is the reason why architects reproduce the status quo even when they sincerely desire to transform it. This architectural subjectivity is not a problem *per se* but rather the problem of the person who wants to avoid its reproduction. Or as Combes (2013, p. 50) asserts, Simondon’s thought displaces the Kantian question ‘What is man?’ with the question ‘How much potential does a human [in our case an architect] have to go beyond itself?’

What we aim to do next is to eliminate the discussion of substance (building a negative humanism) and to put action, energy and power (in one word, process) in its place. In this sense, to overcome the hylemorphism of architectural theory, we shall add energy, action, process, operation and labour to the event of individuation.

The following discussion aims to unveil how the traditional hylemorphic conception presupposes a substantial individual, on which, for instance, the whole edifice of Freud is based. Therefore, we will develop Simondon’s conception of individuation, which is fundamental to understanding the production of subjectivities as a process/event.

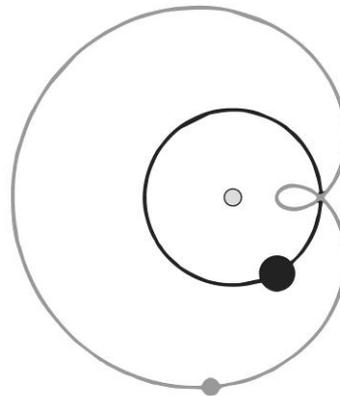
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<sup>66</sup> Vygostky (no date [1930]) aims to build a dialectical approach to psychology to overcome the main currents of psychology: ‘Such are the three paths: the refusal to study the mind (reflexology), the “study” of the mind through the mental (descriptive psychology), and the knowledge of mind through the unconscious (Freud).’ For him, Freud remains in the realm of a mechanic materialism: ‘inasmuch as he introduces the idea of the strictest determinism of all mental manifestations and reduces their basis to an organic, biological drive, namely the reproductive instinct, Freud remains on materialistic grounds... a hopeless blind alley.’

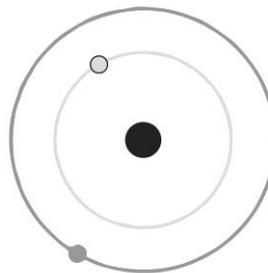
*A Copernican revolution on the principle of fundamental narcissism*

The final paragraph of Freud's (1957 [originally published in 1914], p. 101) analysis of the fundamental 'narcissism' of the unconscious starts with a remarkable conclusion: group psychology could be understood on the basis of individual narcissism as long as the collective is understood as a manifestation of homosexual libido, or ultimately, self-love. Arguably, Simondon's scheme provides a theoretical framework with which to overcome the duality between individual and collective, thus supporting a 'Copernican' revolution in this conception of individual and collective.

GEOCENTRISM



HELIOCENTRISM



- THE SUN
- THE EARTH
- MARS

Diagram 23: Orbit of planets before and after the Copernican revolution. Source: the author.

For our purposes, it does not suffice to critique the theory of Freud in the manner of Marcuse, who reveals Freud's *prognosis* to be constrained by the prejudices of his time.<sup>67</sup> Our first step in critiquing a production of the architect from the perspective of the discipline demands to break with Freud's *diagnosis* of subjectivity as an 'energy' centred in the 'individual.' Once Freud's entire theoretical framework is developed on this basis, the resulting picture is of planets and stars orbiting around the earth. As we discussed earlier in this chapter, it is a specific conception of history that centres in the individual the forces of social production. From this point of view, all other elements seem to revolve in complex ways around the figure of 'geniuses'. Repositioning the centre of the forces of social gravity does not proceed without consequences. To understand this issue, it is worth taking a brief look at the picture of self-centrism.

Very schematically, for Freud, the unconscious is the root of what moves a man; it is behind the 'mask' of consciousness, and it is based on a primitive narcissistic instinct of autoerotism and self-preservation.<sup>68</sup> For Freud, this ego-libido only moves towards the other when this other serves his self-interest.<sup>69</sup> In this sense, although he conceives of 'ego-libido' as the antithesis of 'object-libido', the later only becomes an 'object-cathexis' as long as it mobilises an 'auto-erotic instinct' (Freud, 1957, pp. 76-77). In this sense, although the conception of an 'ego' is not available to the mind of the child from the start, his 'instinct' is there. Therefore, all further development would be only a projection of the self. In this sense, he introduces a 'differentiation in psychical energies' only to explain a 'later confusion' (from the consciousness of the individual) of what is 'essentially' (unconsciously) self-love.

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<sup>67</sup> 'The psychiatrist takes care of the Don Juans, Romeos, Hamlets, Fausts, as he takes care of Oedipus-he cures them' (Marcuse, 1967, p. 74).

<sup>68</sup> 'Narcissism in this sense would not be a perversion, but the libidinal complement to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation, a measure of which may justifiably be attributed to every living creature.' (Freud, 1957, pp. 73-74)

<sup>69</sup> Even if not properly self-love (narcissistic), one would still love the other because the other represents one who 'feeds' or 'protects' him: 'What I have so far said by way of indication may be concluded by a short summary of the paths leading to the choice of an object. A person may love: (1) According to the narcissistic type: (a) what he himself is (i.e. himself), (b) what he himself was, (c) what he himself would like to be, (d) someone who was once part of himself. (2) According to the anaclitic (attachment) type: (a) the woman who feeds him, (b) the man who protects him, and the succession of substitutes who take their place.' (Freud, 1957, p. 90)

Paradoxically, Freud concludes his argument on Narcissism with the possibility of using psychoanalysis to explain 'group psychology'.<sup>70</sup> What is axiomatic here is the convergence of all 'forces' towards the centre of an individual principle, as one 'mask' is unveiled after the other, in a continuous motion of thought that seeks to find the central substance behind the appearances. Through this process, truth itself emerges as a narcissistic gaze that finds, behind the images of reality, its own narcissistic primordial instinct.

For this reason, arguably, Freud's account of Narcissism is founded in a narcissistic principle. According to some versions of the myth of Narcissus, when he looked into the pool of water, he saw in that 'otherness' (the water) nothing but the beauty of himself. Fascinated by his own image (re-presentation) apparent in that external object, he jumped into the pond, trying to re-encounter the beauty of himself, and died without noticing the 'other' engulfing him. For Freud, the external world is only such a mirror of the individual.

Although Lacan (1949) made important contributions to the Freudian paradigm of the mirror foundation of the ego by means of including in his argument a semiotic theory of a 'doubled mirror', the centre of his model continues in the individual. That is, behind the image (mask) of a mirror, there is another mirror. Vanheule (2011) analyses the evolution of the mirror model in Lacan – passing from one mirror to two, and later abandoning these models completely in favour of the concept of Fantasy, and later, in favour of a fundamental phantasy – to explain the formation of desire as a manifestation of an even deeper drive:

as his inquiries shift toward understanding what fuels desire rather than describing how desire is articulated in signifiers, Lacan left this scheme behind [the doubled mirror]. Arguing that a crucial aspect of drive-related functioning cannot be understood in terms of signifiers, but should be studied in terms of a dialectical tension between drive and signifier... [thus] Lacan shifts to topological models, like the interior eight and the Möbius strip (Vanheule, 2011, p. 8).

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<sup>70</sup> 'The ego ideal opens up an important avenue for the understanding of group psychology. In addition to its individual side, this ideal has a social side; it is also the common ideal of a family, a class or a nation. It binds not only a person's narcissistic libido but also a considerable amount of his homosexual libido which is in this way turned back into the ego. The want of satisfaction which arises from the non-fulfilment of this ideal liberates homosexual libido, and this is transformed into a sense of guilt (social anxiety).' Freud (1957 [1914], pp. 101-102)

All of these theoretical instruments are not useless as thought experiments, and they do provide considerable mental exercises (as, for instance, the double mirror provides grounds on which to imagine a virtualisation of self-representation or a virtual projection of the self as an outside object, in its turn product of the gaze of the individual). Nevertheless, the fundamental centre of gravity remains axiomatically in the individual.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, it is worth noting that Althusser (2000) conceives the narcissistic view of the world itself as a ‘doubled mirror’ but in a very different sense than Lacan’s virtualisation of self-representation. Rather, in Althusser, the doubled mirror is a device that, instead of reflecting, projects a specific *subjectivity* as if it was *reality*.

Following his text on Narcissism, Freud went on to write *Group Psychology and Society and its Discontents*. Jodi Dean (2016) offers a solid analysis of how Freud’s ‘sociology’ reduces the collective (specifically the crowd) to a collection of individuals. As Dean asserts, all this deviation is important to understand how

Not only is agency privileged over structure but the presumption that agents are individuals formats the alternative of autonomy or subjugation as an opposition between individual and collective. Collectivity comes to be associated with constraint, with preventing rather than enabling creativity and initiative. Liberal political theorists explicitly construe political agency as an individual capacity; others take the individuality of the subject of politics for granted. I argue that the problem of the subject is a problem of this persistent individual form, a form that encloses collective political subjectivity into the singular figure of the individual (Dean, 2014, p. 364).

Dean (2014, pp. 368-369) asserts that this representation is itself a fantasy that places what one can only do among ‘others’ into an imaginary ego, thus making twin concepts of agency and the individual. Dean notes here how Freud’s theory produces an ‘enclosure of the individual’ (Dean, 2014, p. 371). Dean’s (2014, p. 372) analysis of *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* explains how this enclosing is accomplished. She argues that Freud developed his analysis based on Le Bon’s *The*

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<sup>71</sup> In this sense, the Lacanian search continues, seeking to reveal, one after the other, the hidden substances behind the ‘mask’ of appearances. For Žižek (1997, pp. 130), ‘[t]he Lacanian answer is that spectrality is not the ultimate horizon of our experience: there is a dimension beyond (or, rather, beneath) it, the dimension of drive attained when one “traverses the fundamental fantasy”’. Behind experience, there is spectrality; behind spectrality, the fundamental fantasy; behind fundamental fantasy, the drive. Lacan’s theoretical evolution is a continuous self-negation providing neurotic and layered answers for a substance behind a former appearance, which, in turn, becomes a new appearance.

*Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* and that Le Bon himself was ‘a pessimistic conservative who presented his racist, elitist, and misogynist ideas as scientific discoveries’ and instructed the reader to fear the primitive communism of the crowd. (Dean, 2014, pp. 374, 375) Nevertheless, for Le Bon, the crowd was a ‘process’ and had an unconscious of its own in the form of a racially hereditary substratum (p. 376). However, for Freud, the crowd could not have an unconscious (p. 378), although the unconscious would be a crowd in two senses: ‘The first is an analytic or structural sense of a repressed product of history, whether of family or species, as it impresses itself within the individual’, and the second sense is only metaphorical, in which the unconscious behaves in movements analogous to the flow of the crowds (p. 377).

According to Dean (2014, p. 378), for Freud, a crowd does not create anything new, it only creates ‘what is already contained in the human mind’ in the dimension of the ‘unconscious repressed’. With this assertion, Freud aimed to establish ‘the reputation of psychoanalysis by demonstrating its explanatory power’ (p. 381). Therefore, for Freud, the crowd feels powerful because our deepest selves lack responsibility and the crowd enables the suspension of repressions (p. 378); the crowd has no desire, and what is seen is only the amplification of frustrated individual desires (p. 381). The crowd behaves collectively through the manifestation of the ‘scientific myth’ of the primal horde (a supposed patriarchal entity of prehistoric socialisation) (p. 381). The fierce violence of the crowd can be explained by the same phenomena that mobilise hysterical teenagers around a musician (p. 383); and the demand for justice derives from an original envy (p. 387). Furthermore, the crowd cannot ‘suggest’ any behaviour, so that looking ‘behind the shelter, the screen, of suggestion’, Freud finds love (p. 382) in the form of a homosexual desire for the ‘leader’ (i.e., self-love); and, ‘Just as Freud transposes the activity of the crowd on the leader, so too does he transfer the crowd’s creativity to the poet’ (p. 385). And in this way, Freud ‘enclosed in the bourgeois sites of boarding school and concert hall, the ferocity of collective power’ (p. 383).

Although Freud did not ‘discover’ the unconscious, nor did he ‘invent’ it (as would go the vulgar narrative), he was a central figure in disseminating the concept in western culture. Here, one should not throw the baby out with the bathwater, and if Freud, despite himself, is not the discoverer of a universal truth of the human species, he has the precise value of describing the ideal logic (ideology) of bourgeois society: his ideas

reveal the limits and constraints of conceiving society, agency, substance and political action by means of individual agency (as applying Krakauer's method would suggest).

Two further points are worth noting in Jodi Dean's account of the enclosure of the subject. She inverts Althusser's famous formula by saying that it is not the case that ideology interpellates the individual as subject, rather, capitalism interpellates subjects as individuals. In addition, in the beginning of the paper, she promises, but does not develop to its radical consequences, the idea of transindividuality, thus ultimately remaining in the realm of Žižek's folded interpretation of Lacan's multi-folded hermeneutics.<sup>72</sup>

For Simondon (2013, p. 170), Freud does not distinguish tendencies (social) from instincts (actualised individuations). Thus, he conceives the individual in a univocal way as if an absolute unity could be founded in his being. For Simondon, because it can be subject to change, any being must be in a metastable condition and thus has non-actualised potentialities. If there are non-actualised potentialities, any individual must have internal tensions and dualities, if not multiplicities. For him, Freud adheres to the doctrine of 'vitalism' and can only conceive of conscience as long as it is included inside a perspective of a species as a manifestation of a biological monism. In this sense, the 'good form' for Freud would be one of stability and centrality of being, but for Simondon (2013, p. 204), this type of ultimate stability is only encountered by living individuals upon their deaths.

For Simondon (2013, p. 300) the difficulty of the whole doctrine of Freud resides in the identification of the subject with the individual. To understand this assertion, we need to understand how Simondon builds his approach not on the basis of the individual but on the basis of individuation. The error resides in giving to the atom already-individualised a status of principle, i.e., in presupposing the individual as if it were the essential reality to be explained. Simondon's (2013, pp. 24-25) effort is to conceptualise being as (the continuous conservation) of becoming, to acknowledge the individual by means of its actual process of becoming – its concrete operation of individuation – and not the

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<sup>72</sup> 'My goal is to demonstrate the sense in which this interiority is transindividual, a crowd at the heart of the person' (Dean, 2014, p. 370). To reify the crowd inside the 'heart' of the individual does nothing to break the hylemorphism in Dean's proposal. As we will see, Simondon's alternative is much more radical, as the individual is only a metastable phase of a presubjective being that preserves itself only through the movement of becoming (*devenir*).

opposite way. In this sense, being is not seen as substance, nor matter, nor form but as a system in a precarious state of (not fully) resolved tensions and in a continuous process of transformation. This conception will help to formulate – in terms of the production of subjectivities – what Lukács outlined (see chapter 4 of this thesis) as a negative humanism and the idea of things as social relations. That theoretical framework is what we shall (in the next sections) firstly outline, later politicise and, finally, apply to architecture.

*The production of individuation: preindividual and transindividual*

There are two views according to which the reality of being as individual can be approached: a substantialist view, considering being as consisting in its unity, giving to itself, founded upon itself, not generated, resistant to what is not itself; and a hylemorphic view, considering the individual as generated by the encounter of form and matter. But in those two views there is something in common (...) Departing from the created individual, the effort is to reach back to the conditions of its existence (...) it is the individual as long as constituted individual the reality of interest, the reality to be explained (...) *Such a perspective of research gives ontological privilege to the constituted individual.* Thus, it risks not approaching a truthful ontogenesis, of not positioning the individual inside the system of reality in which the individuation is produced (Simondon, 2013, p. 23, *our translation*).

It is in this way that Simondon begins his PhD thesis, approaching the history of the concept of the individual – displayed in full in 166 pages of its Appendices – in two groups. These two views together represent a model that presupposes an opposition between being and becoming, even if becoming might be conceived as an ability of being to produce different phases of its own reference (Simondon, 2013, p. 25). Alternatively, if one considers becoming as a dimension of being, then relations are being, and it is possible to think of the individual as ‘taking part in’ a relation between its interior and its exterior, without naming any new obscure substance (as in ‘behind the mask of appearance’).<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> In the case of becoming as a dimension of the living being, the individual reveals a continuous ‘theatre of individuations’ (Simondon, 2013, p. 29). The living individual is the one who continuously re-enacts the operation of its becoming (its individuation).

For Simondon (2013, p. 49), to overcome substantialism, thought must depart from the process of the genesis of the individual, from the action of individuation (i.e., becoming being, without the ‘and’ in the middle). In doing so, one must complete the hylemorphism of matter and form with a third term: energy. Only by adding energy to this formula is it possible to think of being as a dynamic system, as a process of relations and interactions (i.e., being becoming), and even as the product of an intention, of a work, of an act of production.

Simondon elegantly illustrates this three-term ‘ontogenesis’ with a long consideration of the ‘taking form’ of a brick (Simondon, 2013, pp. 39-58). The ‘clay’ as matter is not simply passive raw material; it has multiple possible transformations; it has aptitudes and tendencies. However, the clay is already a processed material, for which the grains were selected and to which the right amount of humidity was added. Additionally, it was collected and transported. Its properties and identification were only made possible by means of a long process of knowledge. As for the ‘mould’, it is not simply an abstract shape, conceived in advance by an intellectual process; it has a procedural role in imposing a limit on the transformation of the clay. This is an active action; more precisely, it is a reactive action of an equal and opposite force in relation to the one exercised by the clay on it.

The process of individuation of the brick is, so far, already composed of a dynamic system of interaction, with potentialities and forces interacting to produce a final state of stability. Nevertheless, one should add to this scenario the actual work of the artisan, which separates, discharges and presses the clay, while also using complex and subtle artifices to open and close the mould and give it perfect geometrical limits. Nevertheless, Simondon notes that the individuation of physical and technical objects occurs (usually) only once. Thus, such individuation is relatively stable and cannot transform itself. It can only degrade. For Simondon, classical philosophy knew only this type of stability, but the thermodynamic concept of ‘metastability’ offers new possibilities for understanding living individuations. We shall approach these different ‘phases’ of individuation later; for now, we should note some differences this scheme introduces to the understanding of individuals.

For Simondon, seeing reality as becoming transforms the ‘finite’ being of substantialism into a being that is instead ‘limited’ (Simondon, 2013, p. 93). Being, as

such, can be conceived in dynamic terms, as an undefined being bearing potential energy bigger than its factual actualisation. Thus, the idea of the ‘limited’ being is able to acknowledge how being can relate to outside matter and how it can incorporate, reorder and transform. For Simondon, only in this way can transformation (creation and invention) be consistently conceived. Finite and eternal beings are not subjected to the possibility of change for the simple fact that what is said to be ‘fundamental’ is assumed to be ‘being as such’ (the pure ultimate and supreme undifferentiated reality, which is therefore inaccessible and immutable). Rather, Simondon argues, the limited limit of a being is not fixed. This limit is a process of structuration, a process of giving structure to a relational space between an inside and an outside (Simondon, 2013, p. 95).

Combes (2013, pp. 14-15) explains the change produced by this scheme – named Allagmatic, meaning a theory of operations – by introducing a theoretical analogy. She argues that Marx traced the constitution of capitalism by the substitution of the formula C-M-C for the formula M-C-M. Here, C stands for commodity and M for money. Initially, in the former mode of exchange, a commodity was traded using money, which could later be exchanged for another commodity. Once money becomes the beginning and the end of the process, with the commodity only being its means, Capital is born and starts to reproduce itself. Similarly, she argues that Simondon changes the original notion of S-O-S (where S stands for structure and O for operation) to the notion of O-S-O.<sup>74</sup> In this sense, ‘operation’ becomes the beginning and the end, and the structuration is only an instant when form and matter coincide.

Furthermore, for Toscano (2006, 153), the fundamental concept of Simondon’s method is ‘transduction’. This concept opposes traditional reduction, deduction and induction (see diagram 24 below). Transduction is conceived as the process of resolving internal contradictions and energy conflicts inside an individual.<sup>75</sup> In this sense, information is not a form of communication between two separate beings; rather, it is the production of

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<sup>74</sup> This conception of being as becoming can be seen in the architectonic workshop of Wood Street, presented in Appendix 3. The architectural device produced did not create a permanent structure, rather, it only created an operation that mobilized and mediated implicit potentialities, allowing the emergence of subsequent operations.

<sup>75</sup> Toscano (2006, 149, 150) introduces a series of what Simondon’s theory is not: it is not qua agent (but theatre); it is not stability (but local resolution of disparities); it is not agency (but site of becoming); it is not a subject of decision (but resolution/invention) [although, we should note, Simondon (2006, 300) differentiates Subject of Individual by means of the idea of choice]; not autopoietic sovereignty (there is internal disparity); not a centre (but a constructivist ontology of relation). Also Lefebvre (1967, 2001) uses the concept of transduction with fewer details, and as a method for the production of possibilities.

a 'mediation', of an element that potentially connects two internal dimensions, thus bringing into being what was not realised in the individual (previously existing only as the preindividual).

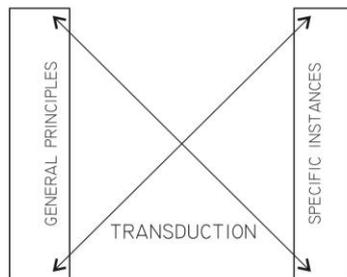
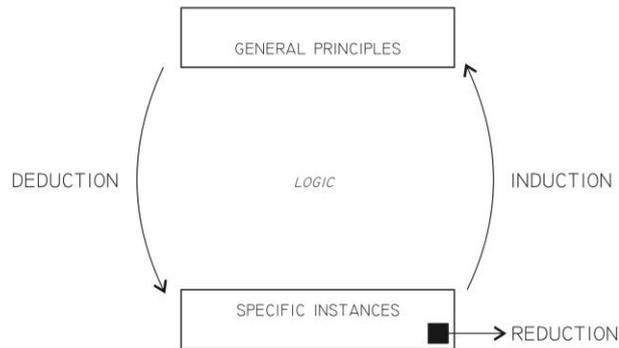


Diagram 24: Deduction, Induction, Reduction, Transduction. Source: the author (based on – but not equal to – Simondon, 2013, and Toscano, 2006).

It is in this sense that Simondon (2013, p. 170) asserts that an individual is not a virtual (in the Aristotelian sense) that actualises itself (always in the same way); rather, it is a transduction that performs a real transformation of the possibilities of the system.<sup>76</sup>

Arguably, Toscano's (2006) approach to Simondon could not be satisfied with the formula O-S-O, as the links between the terms are not causal. It is not a primacy of operation ( $O \gg S$ ) or of structure ( $O \ll S$ ); it is not a resolute correspondence ( $O=S$ ); rather, it poses a fundamental void between these terms ( $O < \quad > S$ ), in which invention is the production of one among many possible mediations between contradictory internal and external elements, as a connection between two scales or potentialities unresolved inside a metastable field. Different from classical stability, metastability is a concept that comes from thermodynamics, where an excess of energy creates a precarious state of stability, which can be ruptured with a disturbing object (as in the case of water over a hundred degrees that suddenly evaporates due to contact with an external object).

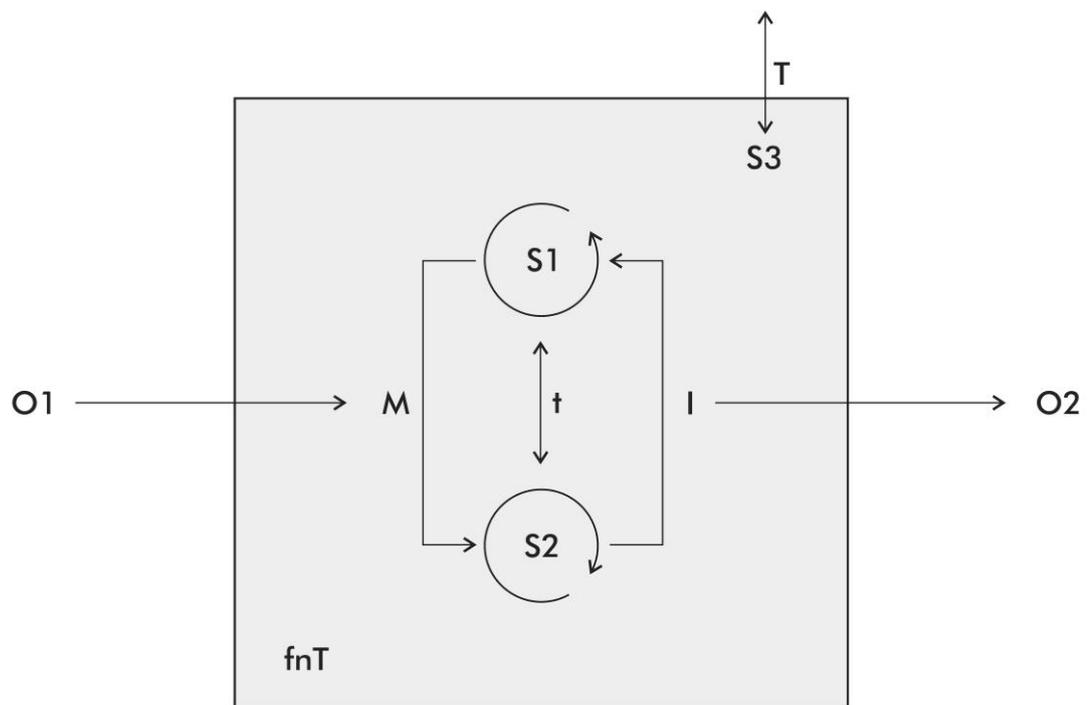
With this torsion of ontology, individuality cannot be understood only in its manifested form; rather, it must be understood as a manifestation of something that existed before as potentiality: the result of a preindividual, which is actualised transindividually. As we advanced in chapter 2, preindividuality is the dimension of being that comes before an individual is individuated. In this sense, each individual is a structured process of limiting (see diagram 25 below). It bears inside itself contradictions and possible individuations (expressed as  $S_3$  in the scheme). By means of an operation (O1), a mediation (M) and an interaction (I) are made possible between different orders of magnitude (also referred to as preindividual scales), where this process is called transduction (t). Thus, structure is only an instant, a means between the first operation and the following being becoming (O2).

Furthermore, Simondon distinguishes among three 'phases' of being: the physical (as we saw in the case of the brick, entailing the formation of a stable limit); the biological (as in living beings, which are in a continuous process of individuation that is therefore

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<sup>76</sup> To emphasise this difference, Combes (2013) introduces a distinction between virtuality and potentiality. For Simondon (2013, 68,69), when thinking about individuation one must apply the notion of relation, introducing the possibility of a system with potential energy (capacity for transforming energy into form, matter or work). Combes (2013) also follows Simondon when introducing a distinction between individuation and individualisation (which allows the conception of a dual and non-fully realized status of the individual).

called a ‘theatre of individuation’, where the internal is a kingdom inside a kingdom, circumscribing in the internal a part of the external); and finally the Psychic/collective individuation. This last phase of being explains the relation of individuals and society as a sort of double (perhaps multiple) individuation, whereas individuals individuate themselves as singular and collective individuals at the same time. This double individuation is what Simondon (2013, pp. 260-266) calls individualisation.



$$(S3 = S3 + S4 + S5 + \dots + SN)$$

Diagram 25: Ontogenesis of individuations. Source: the author (based on – but not equal to – Simondon, 2013,).

The possibility of a collective individuation is possible because the individual is just a provisional actualisation of a shared field of pre-individualities, thus formed of internal ‘disparations’. An event is necessary to produce a mediation, or modulation, able to interconnect un-actualised fields of possibilities. This collective dimension of individuality is what Simondon calls the transindividual, expressed in the diagram above by the letter (T).<sup>77</sup>

It is here that Simondon’s distinction between the subject and the individual emerges (Simondon, 2013, pp. 298-303). For Simondon, the subject is the articulation of the three dimensions of individuality: preindividual, individuated and transindividual. His central point on the subject is that it emerges by means of a ‘choice’. This choice creates an actualisation of a part of the internal preindividual that had not been individuated previously. However, it can only emerge by means of a collective. This choice is thus a process of structuration inside the subject but directed towards other subjects. For Simondon, this implies that the subject is more than the individual.

Although Simondon builds a new ontology of genesis (including concepts of process, operation, energy, work, non-determinacy and so on), which actually creates a new basis for a new social thinking, he does not clarify how ideology, society, hierarchy, social struggles and conflicts (i.e., politics) interfere in the production of preindividualities and transindividualities (be they disciplined or radical).

Toscano (2007) even suggests that one could see an ‘anti-political tendency’ in Simondon’s writings, if one takes, for politics, terms such as ‘sovereign’ and ‘democratic representation’. Nevertheless, Toscano asserts that it provides fertile ground to think about ‘pre-revolutionary’ conditions and the emergence of resolutions of internal conflicts. In this sense, one would need to think of politics as a process of philosophical ‘torsions’ of metastable individualisations that occur through the production of events. As in the crystallisation of water in metastable conditions, an event is ignited by means of the insertion (invention) of a ‘structuring germ’, able to mediate and create new transsubjective individuations.

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<sup>77</sup> In this sense, Toscano (2006, 153) explains that the preindividual is not an *a priori*, just as transsubjectivity is not an *a posteriori*. Rather, this allagmatic expresses a systemic *a praesenti*: an informative and interactive process, at the same time bigger and smaller than the individual.

Although the concept of transsubjectivity enables the understanding of the emergence of transformation, the theory of Simondon does not advance in the political behind these transformations: the struggle for the emergence of new subjectivities; and the conflict between different ‘pre’ and ‘trans’ individualities. Therefore, beyond acknowledging the production of individualisation, we will need to discuss the (re)production of presubjectivities and transsubjectivities themselves. For that, we will return to the dialectical psychology of Vygotsky (no date [1930]) so as to inform this discussion politically.

### *The production of transsubjectivities*

Despite the great contributions of Simondon’s framework, which help to visualise the continuous process of the production of the individual, his framework does not advance far enough in terms of the production of preindividualities and in the reification of possible transindividualities. To advance further, we will have to approach how the ‘subjective senses’ are produced. In this way, we can politicise the debate over transsubjectivity.

González Rey (2007) rescues the concept of ‘subjective sense’ and that of ‘units of subjectivities’ as key concepts in the late work of Lev Vygotsky. These concepts are concerned with the production of the social dynamic configurations of the collective psyche. Against the understanding of the human mind as a blend of standardised traits, Vygotsky was concerned with the dialectical production of consciousness. For that, he expands the Freudian concept of transference to better comprehend external influences on personal behaviour.

Nevertheless, González Rey (2007) asserts that Freudian psychoanalysis took the direction of proposing a universal subject, formed of essential libido energy. Thus, by proposing an abyssal division between psyche and culture, modern psychology ended up reifying a specific cultural condition into its theory. The use of the term subjectivity by Soviet Psychology aimed to break down this abyss. Subjectivity does not aim to encompass all the phenomena of causalities or a description of substances; rather, it aims to create an ‘intelligibility of this reality’. For this reason, Vygotsky does not

eliminate the use of the term ‘unconsciousness’ but cleanses it of the ‘internal universal drive’.

In this sense, González Rey (2007) asserts that Vygotsky’s concept of ‘subjective sense’ aims to address the configuration of subjectivity resulting from lived experiences, historical background and contexts of life, including the relationship among activities, memories and fantasies in a network of what is symbolic and emotional. In this sense, ‘The psyche becomes a symbolic production within cultural scenarios, yet it is not reduced to a symbolic phenomenon’ (González Rey, 2007, p. 6). In this way, the sense of a word can only be understood in the context of a phrase, a phrase in a book, a book in the work of an author, an author in the context of a nation, a nation in the context of the world. Thus, subjective senses are integrations between cognitive and affective processes, forming a ‘dynamic system of senses’.

The social becomes subjective not because of internalization, but by sense production related to living experience... The subjective sense is not confined to being intrapsychical. It always exists in the continuous tension between already organized subjective configurations, which are always under pressure from social subjectivity, and the subject’s action (González Rey, 2007, p. 9).

Subjective senses are the units of a dynamic system of subjectivities, and they are defined by how different social spaces are interrelated. These senses create internal contradictions, and an important source is the ‘Social representations and discourses from which the social evaluation of people is produced’ (González Rey, 2007, p. 11).

A parallel to this idea of ‘subjective senses’ can be found in Feyerabend’s (1989) concept of ‘natural interpretation’. Feyerabend argues that what Kant takes as *a priori* concepts of the mind are actually produced concepts that frame how we observe a specific phenomenon. In this sense, the reality of a phenomenon would depend on which ‘ideas’ we mobilise to observe a phenomenon. It is in this sense that he analyses the famous ‘Tower Controversy’ used against the Copernican hypothesis to ‘prove’ that earth was not in motion – otherwise a stone thrown from a high tower would fall in a curve instead of falling in a perpendicular line. To counter this argument, Galileo introduced a new ‘natural interpretation’ of inertia dynamics and a principle of relativity, allowing one to see that when two objects are in equal motion, the motion between them is perceived as equal to zero.

To understand architecture as a disciplining of the ‘subjective senses’ is to understand it as producing this sort of natural perception. Thus, one new conception of architecture produces one new dimension in a complex field composed of multiple forms of subjectivity, in which contradictory psychic states may coexist. However, the question remains: how are these subjective senses produced and reproduced by architecture?

We shall investigate how this is accomplished in the field of architecture in chapter 6.<sup>78</sup> For now, we shall finish this chapter by reinforcing its key conclusions.

### *Conclusions*

The representation of the production of architecture by princely individuals is a complex form of ideology. It is framed by a historical narrative that imposes a specific logic of causality. This ideology reproduces a specific form of the reified perception of architects in relation to the means of production of architecture: architects see themselves as detached individuals imposing new structures on the world, i.e., as heroic princes in a field of windmills. To avoid this fantasy, a Copernican revolution regarding the concept of the individual must be activated, creating a completely new understanding of architecture as operation (O< >S< >O).

This conception adds a completely new dimension to the Wood Street fieldwork (presented in Appendix 3). When the housing block and a local square were facing the risk of demolition and privatisation, a mediation between different groups (University of East London, E17 Architects, Wood St. First community group, WF Council, and the RIBA) enabled the production of an ephemeral architectonic structure built in the square. This structure functioned only as a means to mobilise a series of activities and to enable the participation of the community in the debate about the transformations to come in the local area. The object produced was less important than the event it created. One could argue that after the event, the square remained physically exactly as it had been before. In classical architectural ideology, this could not be understood as

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<sup>78</sup> Later, in Chapter 6, we will investigate how phantasies reproduce reified ‘unities of subjectivities’. This will allow us to expose how the discipline of architecture operates its reproduction by the framing of the architect’s ‘pre’ and ‘trans’ individuality.

architecture, as it did not produce a permanent structure. Only with the understanding of architecture as operation, as ontogenesis, could one understand it as an operation that enabled further operations. This mobilisation led not only to the interruption of the plans to regenerate the square but also to other initiatives to protect the important spaces for the community. If architecture can be understood as the creation of counter potentialities, then it can change reality by opening new horizons: a potential, yet real, existence. In that case, architecture is neither codes of beauty, nor a style, nor an affiliation with a school; it is a political praxis.

Our aim so far was to set up reflexive tools for understanding architecture as a process of transformation rather than as a process endlessly reproducing unconscious social relations. Our hypothesis is that the field of architecture is a historically specific structured mediation, a non-trivial machinery reproducing specific ideas of subjects conceived in specific positions in relation to their means of production. As we have mapped in this chapter, this disciplinary reproduction depends on the reproduction of a specific subject of architecture. As we mapped in the previous chapter, the reproduction of this unconscious subjectivity (actually a process of estrangement) is founded on three levels: reification, fetish and phantasy. In the next chapters, we shall investigate these levels more deeply so that we can traverse this phantasmagorical narrative of architecture, thus delivering a complete cognitive map to enable architects to consciously reposition themselves in this phantasmatic field. This is not a blueprint for ‘new practices’, only a first step for understanding the power relations involved in this dynamic field. In these terms, if Marx (no date [1867]) saw his book *Capital* as ‘without question the most terrible missile that has yet been hurled at the heads of the bourgeoisie’, this cognitive map is instead programmed to ignite from within the heads of the architects themselves.

**PART 2:**  
**THE MEANS OF REPRODUCTION:**  
**Reification, fetish and phantasies**

In Part 1 of this thesis, we presented the overall map of architectural estrangement, or how architecture reproduces a narrative of phantasmagorical individuals, ultimately rendering concrete subjects into a disciplined practice, unable to provide them with a critical position in relation to the transformation of their condition in the world. In Part 2, we aim to further investigate how architectural subjectivity is reproduced by unconscious layers of subjectification.

These layers were identified in the analysis of the fieldwork (reported in Appendix 3). On the fieldwork about the privatisation of public spaces in London, we identified how social relations were reified into architectural things, later further reifying subjectivities in the city. In the fieldwork engaged in participant observation, we recognised how the fetish of architecture goes deeper than the surface of the concepts employed, and the ontology of architecture were set into question (could architecture be something beyond a thing?), thus revealing how architecture becomes a process of hiding artifices, intentions, desires and instrumentalisation of others (fetish). In the fieldwork engaged in an observation of participation, it was possible to further reveal the processes at play. The fetish of the master was based in a process of reification of subjectivities and hierarchically controlled by the individual architect occupying the position of a ‘genius’ or ‘prince’, thus controlling the reproduction of myths and phantasies.

Part 2 aims to critically explore the limits and contradictions of this process of reproduction so that we can reposition the means of production of architecture as a means of transformation of social relations (operations) in the hands of possible collective transindividualities.

If in Chapter 2, we used the metaphor of the pyramid to map the architectural unconscious, how its surface functions as an instrument of estrangement, and how the production of architectural subjectivities has three levels (reification, fetish and fantasies), in Part 2, we aim to investigate these levels more deeply.

The first level of reification is the subjective sense that sees architecture as ‘things’. Things are the objects of immediate everyday experience, they operate at the level of ‘appearances’, but as we will discuss, these appearances are socially and historically produced. Reification is the process of transforming social relations into relations among things, as we will investigate in chapter 4.

Furthermore, architecture is only able to produce this ‘thingification’ by means of a very ancient method of fetishisation, which operates at a preconscious level and is produced by concepts, methods and ways of thinking that confine architects into hidden artifices of the production of social truths. This problem will be investigated in chapter 5.

In chapter 6, we will investigate the fundamental basis of this unconscious architectural pyramid, including the phantasies that mobilise (prince complex) and justify (utopia) desire in architecture. This highly unconscious level depends on a shared narcissistic epistemology, and the result goes beyond producing things and leads to the thingification of architects themselves (a condition of which subjects-objects are unaware).

These aspects will be investigated with the help of examples of hegemonic architecture, chosen as poles of tendencies in contemporary patterns, regardless of their valuation as ‘exceptions’. Chapter 4 develops its argument using the fieldwork on a generic sampling of the production of architectonic things in the city of London. Chapter 5 investigates – in a regressive perspective – how architecture becomes a means of producing social fetishes, i.e., a method of objectifying ideologies (framing ideas and logics into things). Chapter 6 will use high profile architects as exemplary poles of shared phantasies in architectural subjectivity.

As we discussed at the end of chapter 2, this unconscious architectural pyramid is not an ‘iron’ pyramid, as in Weber’s ‘iron cage’ (Jameson, 2002, 3-8, 75-78, 126), nor is this investigation a simple revelation of excavated truths. The process of critique is also a process of tracing potentialities in the field by investigating its social implications and its historical production. For Jameson (2002, 126),

In genealogical construction, we begin with a fullblown system (capitalism in Marx, and in the present book, reification) in terms of which elements of the past can ‘artificially’ be isolated as objective preconditions: genealogy is not a historical narrative, but has the essential function of renewing our perception of the synchronic system as in an x-ray, its diachronic perspectives serving to make perceptible the articulation of the functional elements of a given system in the present.

Our X-ray perception departs from the full-blown system of the massive process of reification of public spaces in London. Our interest is to investigate the dialectical and

multiple relations that these unconscious structures create between the reproduction of architectural subjectivity and the reproduction of social relations.

In addition, the model of the pyramid should not be seen as linear or hierarchical, as the layers are not on top of each other but are incorporated into a shared spatiality, adding the perspective of horizontal relations, superpositioning and complex relations of dependency. In this sense, the investigation of the paradox of discipline and dialectics aims to map how this unconscious is being produced socially and how it frames the way this subjectivity ‘sees’ simple architectonic ‘things’, ‘facts’ and ‘chains of causality’.

This realm of appearances is not an absolute, and it has historical roots. Thus, the material presence of the past is fundamental to this investigation. Part 2 will be organised according to the regressive-progressive method of Lefebvre. Henri Lefebvre (2003a, 111-120) developed this method in an essay on rural sociology, acknowledging that social reality is formed by a two-fold complexity: one horizontal, in which antagonistic social and political phenomena interact in the formation of a given historical moment, and a vertical complexity, in which one can trace the paradoxical juxtaposition of archaic and modern formations, which are borne back in different moments in time. To capture that, he proposed a method consisting of three parts: (1st) a descriptive moment, in which observation in the field would bring to the foreground the current contradictions of a given condition (see chapter 4); (2nd) a regressive analytical investigation, part of an attempt to describe and rescue the processes of formation of the conflicting elements of the present condition (see chapter 5); and (3rd) a historic-genetic account, returning to the present with an elucidated understanding (see chapter 6).

In our investigation, we must first identify reification as the main contradiction in the random data from the production space in London, which leads us to the regressive investigation of how architecture produces fetish (namely, with techniques of phenomena), and finally, we return to the present with the critique of the hegemonic phantasies of the field (prince complex and utopia) that support this phantasmagorical pyramid.

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **Disentangling reification: the social relations in architectural things**

This chapter aims to arrive at a first-hand account of the relation between architectural ‘things’ and the reproduction of social relations. For that it draws upon the theory of reification and the fieldwork about public spaces in London. The analysis aims to shed light on the relation between the architectonic production of public spaces, the reproduction of social relations in the city and the reproduction of architectural subjectivity. This also sheds light on the contrasts and continuities of social relations in the modern metropolis. Thus, what has been observed by scholars and the new aspects observed in the field can be compared. The aim is to discuss how the process of spatial reification is being produced by the contemporary discipline of architecture and how social relations are transformed into the new appearance of ‘things’ in cities.

Reification is a form of ‘hypostasis’, a fallacy that takes abstractions as if they were a concrete entity (e.g., the map for the territory), but furthermore, reification is a modern social process of imposing historically designed and abstractly produced modern social relations as if they were inevitable, and thus, it is connected to the birth of capitalism in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. Thus, arguably, reification in architecture could be said to start that Century, when Alberti (1988, originally published in 1485) first called architecture ‘*De Re Aedificatoria*’ (literally *the building thing*); and it is a notion that persists through the whole history of modern architecture and still plays a key role in the contemporary ideology of architecture.

For instance, the main theme of the Venice Biennale of 2014 directed by Rem Koolhaas was conceived as a collection of ‘fundamentals’, which was presented as a series of ‘things’ (see OMA, 2014). These things were understood to be the ‘fundamentals of our buildings, used by any architect, anywhere, anytime’. These things were understood to be: floors, walls, ceilings, roofs, doors, windows, façades, balconies, corridors, fireplaces, toilets, stairs, escalators, elevators, and ramps. Here, it is not enough to notice that not a single one of those ‘things’ was present in the first image at the entrance of the Brazilian pavilion: an indigenous architecture and no floor, no wall, no ceiling, no roof, no door, no window, no façade, no balcony, no corridor, no fireplace, no toilet, no stair, no escalator, no elevator, no ramp, yet, architecture. Rather, the radical step emerges by revealing how Koolhaas’ office concretely produced this thingification of architecture.

This reification of architecture was designed upon a reification of other architects. Initially, by conceiving the exhibition ‘Monditalia’, Koolhaas’ office (see OMA, 2014) captured other biennales and festivals of the city (such as dance, music, theatre and film) into his own – thus the whole cultural activity of the city became one single thing. In addition, in one in a series of ‘for the first time’ in Venice Biennales, Koolhaas’ office proposed an overall idea to be addressed by the national pavilions – namely, how the modern movement built the architectural aesthetics of each country. In this way, from the start, Koolhaas’ office framed the ‘Others’ proposals into an inquiry that was his own. Furthermore, this formatting of proposals was reproduced in the part of the exhibition that was supposed to be of his own personal initiative; it was produced in an assembly line of design.

The exhibition was divided into small pieces, each thing designed by a different group of architects. In an interview with one of the architects who participated in the production of the exhibition (who preferred to remain anonymous), it was revealed that his office was approached by one member of Koolhaas’ staff and was offered 20,000 euros to design and build one of the elements of the exhibition. Without ever meeting Koolhaas, their first idea was refused for being too radical, too political and too polemical. A second proposal was made and approved. It remained only ‘too polemical’. The budget was too small to cover the costs of the construction of the exhibition piece, let alone the labour time, transportation, daily costs and lodging. However, the possibility of participating in a famous event, hosted by a famous architect, kept the participants motivated. This partition of the exhibition into an assembly line of design not only reduced architecture to atomised things, it also reduced architects themselves to objects instrumentalised by one mastering will.

We shall return to this objectification of the architect in subsequent chapters. For now, rather than investigating whether architecture could be something other than a thing, we aim to investigate how an ‘architectural thing’ is actually something more than a neutral object - namely, a process reproducing relations as if they were unconditional.

#### 4.1. Getting one thing straight: things are social relations

As we have seen, Lefebvre (1976) argued that capitalism has managed to avoid crisis by reproducing the relations of production. According to his argument, this reproduction is achieved by destroying traditional spaces and by producing instrumental logic in space. Thus, architecture (and the city) has become the means for trapping society inside the capitalist system, mainly by establishing the fetish of the commodity as a guiding principle of its production. What is a specific logic becomes ‘natural’ (supposed neutral space). This process could be called spatial reification.

The means of reification have many variations and subtleties of interpretation, having been described in the work of many authors under different names, such as mystification, instrumentalisation, phantasmagoria or protocols (see Marx 1996; Adorno and Horkheimer 1996; Lukács 1972; Galloway, 2004). The inauguration of this discussion can be found in an important passage in Marx’s Capital:

The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists therefore simply in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men’s own labour as objective characteristics of the products of labour themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things ... It is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things (Marx, 1990, pp. 164-165).

Unlike Marx, we will not focus on general commodity reification-fetishism but rather on architectural reification-fetishism specifically. In this chapter, we will investigate the immanent aspect of turning social relations into things – the reification. In addition, in the next chapter, we will investigate the ‘mysterious ways’ of this process – the method. One common definition of reification is as follows:

Reification is the apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things, that is, in non-human or possibly supra-human terms. Another way of saying this is that reification is the apprehension of the products of human activity *as if* they were something else than human products – such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or manifestations of divine will. Reification implies that man is capable of forgetting his own authorship of the human world (...) The reified world is, by definition, a dehumanized world. It is experienced by man as a strange facticity, an *opus alienum* over which he has no control rather than as the *opus proprium* of his own productive activity (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, pp. 82–3, italics in the original, in Silva, 2013).

The word ‘reification’ comes from the Latin *res*, which means thing or object. Hence, reification is also referred to as thingification or objectification. These three terms have been used interchangeably and are central terms in Marxist theory. Although all three terms refer to the same process, here we shall use ‘thingification’ to emphasise the naturalisation of social aspects, ‘objectification’ to emphasise the instrumentalisation of space and subjects, and ‘reification’ to emphasise the conversion of social relations into things and vice versa.

### *Reworking things out*

Arguably, the essay ‘Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat’ from 1922, by Georg Lukács (1971), was a benchmark of this debate and influenced many studies that followed. Here, we do not aim to discuss all aspects and implications of the work of Lukács, as our aim is to clarify how the discipline of architecture contributes to the process of estrangement by both reproducing social relations as well as by reifying the subjectivity of architects (or what Lukács called the ‘soul’).

For this reason, we shall start with Lukács’ own ‘self-critique’ in the *Preface to the New Edition* of 1967 (Lukács, 1971, pp. ix-xxxviii) as a means of introducing a radical view of the production of objects (things) and subjects (souls). There, Lukács notes what he considers a ‘fundamental and crude error’ of his previous work: the matching of reification and alienation. For him, this comes from Hegel’s notion that ‘the object, the thing exists only as an alienation from self-consciousness, to take it back into the subject would mean the end of objective reality’ (Lukács, 1971, p. xxiii). Alternatively, Lukács’ self-critique recognises that objectification is an instrumental device of the mind and is part of both ‘true’ and ‘false’ approaches.

Every externalisation of an object in practice (and hence, too, in work) is an objectification, that every human expression including speech objectifies human thoughts and feelings, then it is clear that we are dealing with a universal mode of commerce between men. [...] And in so far as this is the case, objectification is a neutral phenomenon; the true is as much an objectification as the false, liberation as much as enslavement. (Lukács, 1971, xxiv) [Thus he concludes:] For no purposive activity can be carried out in the absence of an image, however crude, of the practical reality involved. Practice can only be a fulfilment

and a criterion of theory when it is based on what is held to be a correct reflection of reality (p. xxv).

Lukács identifies alienation as the problem of reification, noting that only when the existence of man is ‘subjugated, deformed and crippled can we speak of an objective societal condition of alienation and, as an inexorable consequence, of all the subjective marks of an internal alienation’ (Lukács, 1971, p. xxiv). In this sense, he was criticising the following use of his theory, which resulted in a generic critique of any form of rationality, as the ideas in his ‘book were converted into fashionable notions’ (Lukács, 1971, p. xxxviii). In this sense, his self-critique is directed to the possible misuses of his theory. By stressing that there is ‘good’ and ‘bad’ objectification, he is condemning the schools that equate any object in society with ‘bad’, as he suggests is the case with ‘messianic negative idealism’ (i.e., the impossibility of reaching truth in the absence of the messiah, but in idealistic negation).

As Lukács himself does recognise other achievements of his work, we shall bear in mind the fact that the production of objects and things is a human condition. Thus, we focus on the identification of estrangement: how things become as pure ‘facts’, and separate subjects from awareness of how they are created, produced, invented and historically imposed (Lukács, 1971, pp. 128, 130, 140). This is the key to identifying how subjects comprehend (and are estranged from) their own positions in the system of production, and how there are always social processes inherent in apparently objective things (Lukács, 1971, p. 179).

#### *A sure thing of all things*

The fundamental point of Lukács’ book was to show how things are not absolute facts. Rather, they are ‘produced’ in a social and historical process; therefore, things are the result of an ‘action’, which presupposes a subject who acts and, thus, more fundamentally, ‘creates’ (Lukács, 1971, p. 140). We must acknowledge that ‘we shall have raised ourselves in fact to the position from which reality can be understood as our ‘action’ (Lukács, 1971, p. 145). Thus, the ‘action’ is the fundamental epistemological key to the process that unites history, social conditions, subjects and objects.

For Lukács, man is the product of a social milieu, and the social milieu is the product of man; this is the ‘epistemological problem of production, in the systematic question of the subject of an “action”, of the “creator of a unified reality”’ (Lukács, 1971, p. 135). Therefore, he points to ‘the decisive problem of this line of thought: the problem of the subject of the action, the subject of the genesis’ (Lukács, 1971, p. 145), which can be found in ‘the identical subject-object, the subject of action’ (Lukács, 1971, p. 149).

In this sense, we aim here to emphasise the relations between architectural things and the production of subjects: how conscious these subjects are about these processes; how the production of things (reification) concretely reproduces social relations (alienation); and how subjects accept these things as ‘facts’ beyond the action of concrete subjects (estrangement). Thus, instead of accepting or conceiving architecture as a ‘thing’, an immutable ‘absolute’, we aim to disentangle in concrete processes how architecture simultaneously produces ‘things’ and ‘subjects’.<sup>79</sup>

### *One thing led to another*

Furthermore, the following account does not propose to build an absolute theory of reification, only to enable ‘self-critiques’ of the process – in a sense, to reproduce Lukács’ melancholy. Consequently, it performs a constant ethical unveiling of subject-object constructions in the ideas presented.

Lukács’ approach in 1922 (Lukács, 1971, pp. 83-209) has his own ethical commitments: it departs from the understanding of knowledge divided into two main blocks (one bourgeois, the other in the direction of the negative consciousness of the proletariat). Rather than consider it a simplification, we could understand it as a theoretical tool used to clarify points of view. Thus, on the one hand, he enables us to understand how the first type of knowledge departs from the ‘immediate’, and the latter from a ‘mediated’, point of view. He goes on to analyse what he calls ‘bourgeois thought’, treating it as a coherent whole only to envision how different philosophical systems are variations of

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<sup>79</sup> In this sense, Object Oriented Ontology or Object Oriented Philosophy simply misses the fact that objects are produced, and thus have a history, a social condition and subjects defining them, and for this reason it is not a critical philosophy.

the acceptance of immediate objects as the sources of universal laws. Things become absolute facts.

For Lukács, therefore, that thought builds a pragmatic discourse on truth by departing from those supposed 'facts'. Thus, instrumental rationality and calculability accepts the status quo as an axiom, and the existent objects as natural absolutes. Thus, this way of thinking ignores what he called the 'social processes': the continuous and complex transformations of social things, the historicity of the social relations that had produced those things in the first place, and most important of all, the fact that all knowledge and social existence are produced by humans themselves. In this sense, Lukács argues that bourgeois thought and practice necessarily mythologise what 'exists' as unconditional and what 'ought to be' as unthinkable (Lukács, 1971, pp. 126, 150, 155, 160-163).

On the other hand, he also criticises those theories that depart from the mediated and take the transcendental as an absolute, as in Hegel's theory wherein the products of the human mind are taken as absolutes in themselves. He goes on to analyse many thinkers, especially Kant, and how his absolute separation of reason and the 'thing-in-itself' ultimately turns the bourgeois social condition into an absolute.

The belief that the transformation of the immediately given into a truly understood (and not merely an immediately perceived) and for that reason really objective reality, i.e. the belief that the impact of the category of mediation upon the picture of the world is merely 'subjective', i.e. is no more than an 'evaluation' of a reality that 'remains unchanged', all this is as much as to say that objective reality has the character of a thing-in-itself.

It is true that the kind of knowledge which regards this 'evaluation' as merely 'subjective', as something which does not go to the heart of the facts, nevertheless claims to penetrate the essence of actuality. The source of its self-deception is to be found in its uncritical attitude to the fact that its own standpoint is conditioned (and above all that it is conditioned by the society underlying it) (Lukács, 1971, p. 150).

For Lukács, the concept of 'thing-in-itself', in addition to presupposing a necessary idealism from the start, also assumes that what is socially produced is an absolute. For Lukács, that absolute separation of form and content can only lead to a false

relativism.<sup>80</sup> Thus, in that situation, rationality can only act upon partial things, while the totality is not seen as the result of human action and is seen as belonging to a blind power – an irrational immanence – and as rendering fate to an uncontrolled force that acts against our will. In Lukács' (1971, p. 191) words:

For as long as society, as it is, is to be declared sacrosanct it is immaterial with what emotional force or what metaphysical and religious emphasis this is done. What is crucial is that reality as it seems to be should be thought of as something man cannot change and its unchangeability should have the force of a moral imperative.

Therefore, Lukács ethical commitment is to unveil the social relations in and the ethical implications of any 'thing'. However, if things are social relations, then what are social relations?

#### *In the least little things*

For Lukács (1971) to overcome the trap of the disjunction between the immediate and the mediated, it is necessary to break the immediacy of things – the objects as they appear – and to analyse how the totality of human society integrates each singular thing in human existence.

Reification [relating here to the 'alienated' type, we should note] is, then, the necessary, immediate reality of every person living in capitalist society. It can be overcome only *by constant and constantly renewed efforts to disrupt the reified structure of existence by concretely relating to the concretely manifested contradictions of the total development, by becoming conscious of the immanent meanings of these contradictions for the total development.* But it must be emphasised [sic] that (1) the structure can be disrupted only if the immanent contradictions of the process are made conscious [...] (2) [...] What is crucial is that there

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<sup>80</sup> For Lukács, much like the assumption that all knowledge is false, this separation ends up taking what 'is' as absolute: 'it inevitably reverts to the dogmatic position of those thinkers who likewise offered to explain the world from premises they did not consciously acknowledge and which, therefore, they adopted uncritically. For it is one thing to relativise the truth about an individual or a species in an ultimately static world (masked though this stasis may be by an illusory movement like the "eternal recurrence of the same things" or the biological or morphological "organic" succession of periods). And it is quite another matter when the concrete, historical function and meaning of the various "truths" is revealed within a unique, concretised historical process. [...] For it is only meaningful to speak of relativism where an "absolute" is in some sense assumed. The weakness and the half-heartedness of such "daring thinkers" as Nietzsche or Spengler is that their relativism only abolishes the absolute in appearance.' (Lukács, 1971, p. 187)

should be an aspiration towards totality, that action should serve the purpose, described above, in the totality of the process [...] [because] the individual elements incorporate the structure of the whole. [...] Hence (3) when judging whether an action is right or wrong it is essential to relate it to its function in the total process (Lukács, 1971, p. 197, italics in original).

Here, Lukács bring to the forefront an issue that we have discussed before: the relation between scales, and the dialectic between the part and the whole. As in fractal geometry or in a kaleidoscope, any change in the whole changes the part, and vice versa. Therefore, although the part manifests idiosyncratic appearances – which might lead to the error of acknowledging them as individually independent – the individuation of the part is only an actualisation of the whole (i.e., the transindividuality in Simondon).

This brings Marx and Simondon closer. In Marx, things are social relations because: they were historically produced, and therefore relate to the context and the concrete labour that produced them; the ideological apparatus (values, knowledge, science, laws, beliefs, values and so on, mobilised to see, recognise and represent things in thought and action) is historically and socially produced; and not only things represent abstractions (as in the case of money), but they also mediate the relations between subjects. Therefore, the accepted ‘nature’ of things is produced by complex interactions of subjects in a society. In addition, for Simondon (as we represented above in diagram 25) the individuation of things occurs by the production ‘mediations’, where form and content are mediated by an energetic process of action (labour). To shape (the information, *mise en forme*) is to create a mediation between different orders of magnitude, upon which a potentiality is actualised. Therefore, things are the shaping of a limit, and the living individual is a ‘theatre of individuations’, constantly re-enacting the relations of interior-exterior mediated by this limit. As a result, bringing Marx and Simondon together enables us to understand how social relations are not simply constitutive of subjects but are also constitutive of all beings and each little thing.

Both Lukács and Simondon acknowledge that ‘reality’ is not an *a priori* thing-in-itself; rather, it is a reality that becomes (what we called ‘being becoming’), and therefore things are processes, as we can see in the following assertion:

This reality is not, it becomes [...] the transformation of things into a process provides a concrete solution to all the concrete problems created by the paradoxes of existent objects (Lukács, 1971, p. 203).

Thus, for Lukács, every ‘thing’ is a process, a historically produced object, dependent upon concrete actions. To realise that, one must be critical of its own condition (in a negation of itself), and that is why he sees the proletariat as existing in a pivotal historical condition: the proletarian is denied access to the objects he produces, he is dispossessed of everything, just as he himself is objectified as a commodity in the market where he sells the only thing that remains with him, namely, his own body. This condition creates a unique experience of ‘object-subject’, as long as a class consciousness emerges to recognise that the subject himself has become, simultaneously, both subject and object of the system. It is in this sense that, for Lukács, the proletarian is a negative subject.

### *The grand scheme of things*

The negative subject also implies a negative humanism. It is in this sense that Lukács notes Marx’s opposition to humanism. For Lukács, Marx considered that humanism would ultimately turn a socially constructed concept of ‘the human’ into an absolute. Therefore, Marx aimed to take a step beyond Feuerbach’s transformation of philosophy into anthropology (Lukács, 1971, p. 186) in the sense of proposing a non-existent man, a man without essence, a man aware that his ‘manhood’ is a social product.<sup>81</sup>

This consciousness only becomes radical once the subject realises not only that he is historically transformed but also that he is himself produced and created, thus generating what Lukács called a dialectical humanism. Thus, Lukács’ theoretical struggle is against the acceptance of the status quo as absolute and in favour of a fluid notion of a complex process of existence that continuously transforms abstractions into things.

However, if we are to understand Lukács’ theory in light of his later self-critique, we should understand that the concept of reification *per se* is not enough, as he noticed in *The Changing Function of Historical Materialism*: ‘It has frequently been stated with justification: socialisation is a question of power’ (Lukács, 1971, p. 251), and thus a

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<sup>81</sup> The obvious problem in searching for a ‘human nature’ to fundament a philosophy of reality is the historical fact that when humans emerged as a species, their existence was already funded in artificiality – stone tools, fire, and so on (see Taylor, 2010 and Appendix 3).

matter of who is able to impose a truth over the objectivity of things, i.e., to impose a form of reification over others. Therefore, he quotes Marx's second Thesis on Feuerbach: 'The question whether human thinking can pretend to objective truth is not a theoretical but a practical question. Man must prove the truth, i.e. the reality and power, the "this-sidedness" of his thinking in practice' (Lukács, 1971, p. 198).

Thus, the definition of things defines not only social relations but also relations of power and where each subject is positioned with regard to its actions in society. In this sense, the products of architecture are not neutral: architectural things reify social relations and (re)produce mediations between subjects. In turn, these mediations reified in space by architecture become the social condition inherited by the following generations. In this sense, space bears the remains of past reifications. Therefore, space is not neutral either.

This enlightens the specific question of this chapter, which could be synthesised as follows: how does the production of things by architecture in turn reproduce social relations and subjects?

To continue answering that, we will next return to London's privatisation of public spaces to demonstrate how things reproduce subjects and social relations by: enclosing space and framing possible mediations between subjects (reification); producing a realm of appearances, an artificial immanence, where the aesthetic turns social rules into natural things (thingification); and transforming the urban experience in a form of control and instrumentalisation of space and subjects (objectification). This reproduction is mediated by the products of architecture; and in the next chapters we shall investigate the reproduction mediated by the methods (fetish) and desires (phantasies) of architectural subjectivity. In addition, we shall arrive back to London through one last detour.

#### **4.2. *Intermezzo*: first things first – primitive enclosures**

The process of transforming space to introduce new forms of social relations is not new. In Part VIII of *Capital* (1990 [originally published in 1867]), Karl Marx famously analysed the process of privatisation of common land in England as an example of a

form of 'primitive accumulation'. In that context, he demonstrated how capitalist development in England was preceded, on the one hand, by a legislative process of wealth expropriation that mainly focused on confiscating common land and transferring its ownership into private hands. This created a dispossessed and dependent mass of proletarians. Examples of this process were the 'Enclosure Acts' created by Parliament (chapter 27). On the other hand, new legislation was produced to criminalise the behaviour of the poor through a series of statutes that were created to enforce a culture of wage labour behaviour and to control 'beggars' and 'vagabonds' (chapter 28, entitled 'Bloody Legislation...'), thus establishing a disciplined and dependent proletariat.

De Angelis (2000) argues that Marx's 'primitive accumulation', as explained in the 'land enclosure' process, was not a process concealed in time and space; rather, it is a continuous process of wealth accumulation that constantly reproduces inequalities based on access to power. In this sense, the 'primitive' has a sense of 'in anticipation', i.e., the base that allows capital accumulation and that finances the separation of workers from the means of production. For De Angelis, this separation is the basis of Marx's theory of reification: the transformation of free subjects into objects in the marketplace through the alienation from the source of materials and instruments of production, thus imposing on them the condition of wage labour. Therefore, he argues that 'primitive accumulation could be identified in those social processes or sets of strategies aimed at dismantling institutions that protect societies from the market' (De Angelis, 2000), demonstrating how this procedure is constantly re-emerging and even reinforced in the neoliberal context.

In addition, Wark (2004) argues that we are facing a new mode of production wherein extreme mechanisation and automation have not delivered the promises of release from work. Jonathan Crary (2013) has demonstrated how physical toil has been replaced by stressful mental work. This happens because the complexity and instability of production increase, which demands even more immaterial work to coordinate production and consumption. Even in cases of reduced working hours, labourers face an everyday life that is colonised by productivity: we rest to be productive, we have leisure to amplify creativity, we exercise to be more productive, we travel to network, and so on.

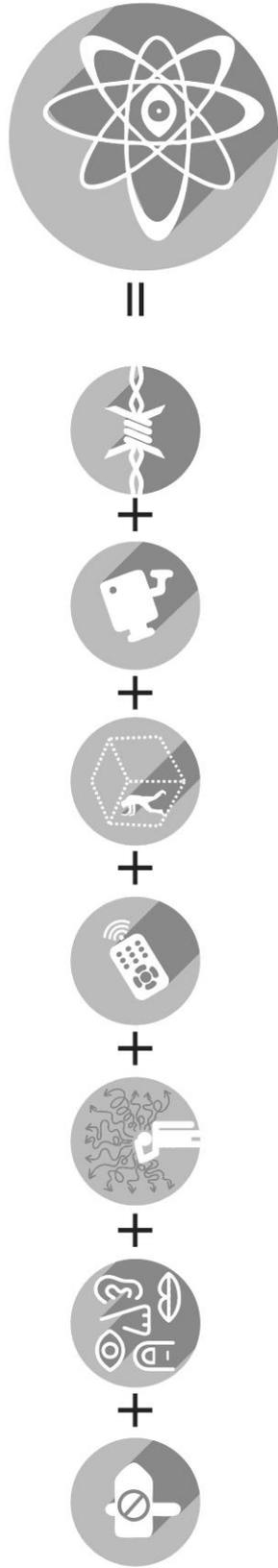
In this scenario, Ross Adams (2014) argues that architecture in contemporary society is becoming a technology of subjectivity, functioning as a means of crystallising specific forms of socialisation while pretending to be ahistorical. For him, architecture has become an ‘inferno of the same’, admitting no negativity or difference. Furthermore, architecture becomes a meta-architecture, an explosive ‘interior’ encompassing the whole environment. This meta-architecture is subtle and light, almost immaterial, and its means are transparent and seem to entail no appearance, only fascination. Therefore, Adams argues that architecture becomes as vast as the world, an ‘act of pure enclosure’, which he suggests is the proper phenomenology of empire (as in Negri, 2000).

London's urban reification process follows a path similar to that of the Land Enclosure Acts: it is focused on strategies of both 'behaviour control' and 'dispossession'. The process of behaviour control is secured by increasingly severe legislation known as the 'Anti-Social Behaviour Orders', as well as by strategies of 'security by design' and 'public spaces privatisation'. The process of dispossession was guaranteed by changes to and the interpretation of the 'Compulsory Purchase Orders' legislation and 'Land Assembly' strategies. These new conditions of legality in urban production tend to produce a new form of public space.

In this sense, just as the very appreciated idyllic landscape of the Highlands is the result of the Land Enclosure Acts, which violently cleared peasants from the land (Marx, 1990, chapter 27), the velvet architecture of London is the result of a new process of enclosure, a re-emerging primitive accumulation: this time in urban spaces and subtle and deceptive; it is a process of urban reification by comfort and disorientation, rather than disciplining and punishment.

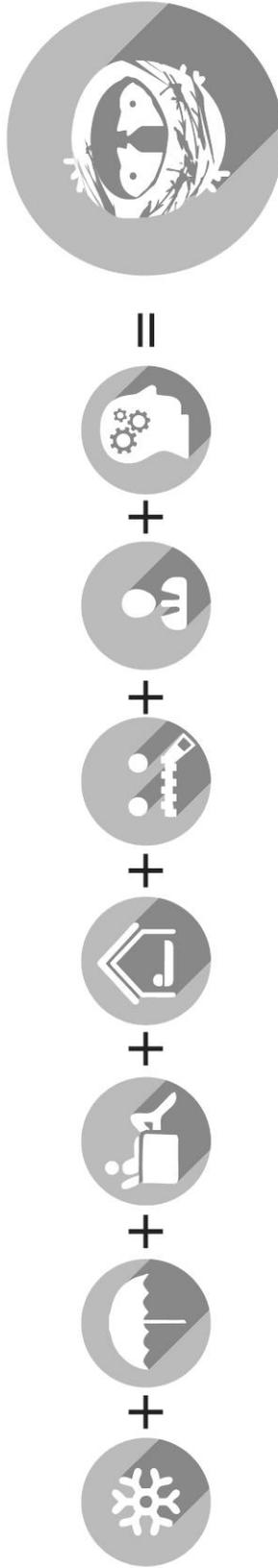
### **4.3. A thing or two we learned from the urban enclosure of London**

In practice, we learned three things about London's enclosure: fractal social relations are *reifying* tangled orbits of control that disorient users into passivity; spectacle and comfort are the *thingification* of an (an)aesthetic velvet ground, seductive enough to tame behaviour in a bird's nest prison; and the managing of a compulsive anxiety into a game experience *objectifies* citizens into driven consumers (see Diagram 26 below).



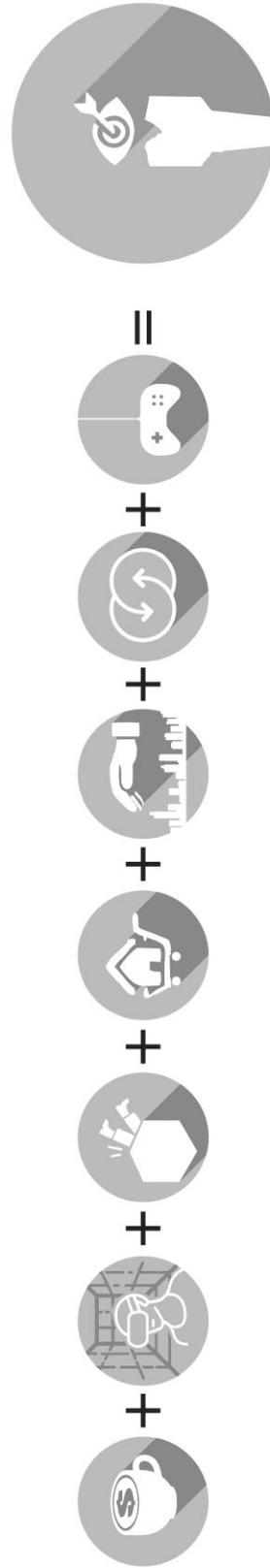
(A)

FRACTAL RULES + FRAGMENTED EXPERIENCE + DISORIENTATION + REMOTE CONTROL + INVISIBLE CAGES + SURVEILLANCE + INDUCED BEHAVIOUR = TANGLED ORBITS OF CONTROL



(B)

CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT + HOSPITABLE + ANAESTHETIC COMFORT + DOMESTICATION + PACIFICATION + FRAMED PROFILE + AUTOMATION = VELVET GROUND



©

CONSUME COORDINATION + SIMULATION + DISTRACTION + SPACE COMMODIFICATION + MANAGEMENT + COMPULSIVE REPETITION + GAME EXPERIENCE = DRIVEN SPACE CONSUMPTION

Diagram 26: Summary of London's Enclosure. Source: the author.

*(a) The reification into tangled orbits*

The reification of fractal social relations creates tangled orbits of social control. This is achieved through: a constant shift in the rules for the use of spaces; a fragmentation of experience, where users cannot fully master space; a disorientation, and a form of remote control; the production of 'invisible cages' by adding widespread techniques of surveillance associated with objects designed to induce behaviour.

In contrast to the apparent accessibility of these spaces, their uses are controlled and managed by different undemocratic entities. This allows the management of a spectacle of beauty and order, while at the same time delivering a feeling of comfort and efficiency for those who join the rules. Nevertheless, similar to the evasion of surroundings in the dark room of a cinema, as Benjamin (2008) argues for the creation of distracted appropriation, this new urban experience cancels the overstimulation so characteristic of modern metropolitan spaces in order to control and guide experience.

Therefore, to live in cities, we used to have to confront contradictory experiences that revealed our incompleteness and the cognitive dissonance of our senses, thus enriching experience (Sennett, 2002, p. 371). If Simmel (1950 [originally published in 1903]) once characterised the metropolis as the space where individuals could feel free of the 'orbits' of control to which they were subjected in small communities, the new fragmentation of public spaces creates a field of entangled orbits, obliging the user to 'anaesthetise' his behaviour to adapt to constantly changing rules.

Therefore, this ongoing process is generating a new set of tangled social 'orbits'. If Simmel's modern metropolis became the experience of freedom by transcending the orbits of small communities and thus only accounting for 'inner laws', the new 'blurred' boundaries of the cities are the naturalisation of 'outer laws' inside the individual.

*(b) The thingification into velvet grounds*

In the London fieldwork, we saw how a new aesthetic of things reproduces estrangement disguised as the natural order of things. This is achieved by: controlling

all the aspects of the environment so they become cosy and hospitable; so this comfort anaesthetises the urban experience, and citizens are domesticated; this is enforced by the elimination of politics and dissent from these spaces; this frames subjects into target profiles, and an automation of the citizen is imposed.

Richard Sennett (2002) challenges the idea of a pacification of the city. For him, this notion of comfort is a social construction, which conceives citizens as passive elements, rather than in a hard gained political arrangement: 'Intense civic bonds arouse from the very play of displacement [...] Yet the ancient city was itself not like a monument to stability' (Sennett, 2002, p. 371).

Whilst the embrace of the concept of domestication sounds 'delightful', it is self-evident that it also has connotations of control, patronising and hierarchy. Rather than domesticating, this taming (to 'make less powerful and easier to control', according to the *Oxford Dictionary*) is actually a form of dressage (an 'art [...] that develops obedience, flexibility and balance', according to the *Oxford Dictionary*). Therefore, these new public spaces are not neutral things. They create homogeneity and comfort in order to frame experience and manage the passivity of object-subjects, so they can become full potential consumers.

It is in this sense that these strategies transform the city's spaces into a 'velvet ground' created by comfortable, shining and blurred spaces. This (an)aesthetic of things conditions citizens to appropriate the space by means of consumption, carefully placing each element to induce a compulsive consumption experience. Anaesthetised by the constant vibration of 'urban life', the wandering citizen represses his innermost values by experiencing the place only by playing the game of repeated consumption.

### *(c) The objectification into driven citizen-consumers*

Furthermore, citizens become instruments and objects of a game of driven spatial consumption. This is achieved by carefully orienting all elements of design to acts of consumption. The whole environment becomes a simulated spectacle, where consumers are themselves appropriated by distraction that turns the whole environment into a fetish

of commodity. This is achieved by a careful management of space and anxiety, so citizens enter into a compulsive repetition of consumption in order to regain the lost appropriation of space by means of a game experience.

Sennett (2002) argues that the urge to experience comfort in cities is a dangerous game, because too much protection from 'stimuli' can create a 'sickness of lack'. He argues that pleasure can only emerge as a distension of unpleasurable experiences and that we need to confront ourselves with the 'reality principle' to acknowledge the degree to which our minds are playing with our senses of pleasure and unpleasure.

This idea is founded in the Freudian text *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (Freud, 1955 [originally published in 1920]), in which it is argued that although unpleasure and pleasure are important elements with which to understand mental life, it is the process of the 'repression of desires' that is the key principle. As Freud (1955, p. 11) asserted, 'Most of the unpleasure that we experience is perceptual unpleasure' because our instincts and desires are repressed inside our unconscious by our social experience. This perceptual unpleasure is formed, in such cases, by the expectations of unpleasure and danger, or by the pressure of unsatisfied instincts. Therefore, a conflict emerges between the repressed unconscious and the actual experience, creating a compulsion to repeat the manifestations of that repressed desire. Those manifestations can emerge as painful experiences or as accepted social games. Freud explains this condition by describing a game played by a child. The child repeatedly throws a toy behind the bed to enjoy reencountering this toy when he finds it. The child achieves, by incessantly repeating the disappearance of an object and its rediscovery, a form of revenge and the feeling of mastery over his destiny. Therefore, the child regains control over 'the passivity of the experience' only through 'the activity of the game' (Freud, 1955, p. 17).

Latham and Koch (2013, p. 6), with the story of a 'piano in a square', inadvertently described how the passivity of the urban experience is created by such games. In a regenerated London square, a man saw a piano in the street and asked the waiter if he could sit on the chair, only to be shown a sign reading, 'Play Me. I'm Yours!' After playing music and being applauded by the surrounding customers, who kept asking him for 'one more', the man left. The passivity of his experience in the velvet architecture of London was joyfully overcome through a planned 'game activity' reified into the form of a well-placed piano.

However, this is a subtle game. In contemporary entangled spaces, the anxiety of the experience (generated by the multiple reifications of social rules in such spaces) is swamped by the specific game of consumption. The feeling of belonging is carefully orchestrated so that one only feels suited to the space as he engages in the game of consumption. Tables and chairs, as well as views and pianos, are carefully orchestrated by business intentions. Thus, the former blasé ‘abstract distance’ is transformed into domesticated ‘consumer closeness’. This is the repeated game of consumption, a game of incessantly repeating the disappearance of citizenship and its reencounter in the form of commodity.

These new forms of reification, thingification and objectification extend the realm of impact of the operation (i.e., reproducing it on new grounds). Thus, the reification of the city's spaces extends its focus from the workspace (the organisation of the factory into an assembly line, for instance) and becomes a process of reifying the space of everyday life as a whole. Although this process presents itself as ‘natural’, it has been supported not only by the new set of legislation and the massive strategies of 'regeneration' but also by a good deal of spectacle, rhetoric and law enforcement (for more details see Appendix 2).

In the London fieldwork, we saw how the majority of the new public spaces are being transformed into privatised public spaces, and that transformation has a large impact on the public realm. This process is a dialectical arrangement of economic, political and social doctrines, which creates new codes of interpersonal behaviour in the city.

Furthermore, a critical analysis of the arguments in favour of such changes will be helpful to trace back the acceptance of things as absolute and to trace back its ethics and veiled elements of control.

#### **4.4. Against ‘taking things easy’**

For De Magalhães, there is no reason to be 'overpessimistic' about the privatisation of public spaces, and pessimistic views on this process come from a frozen, idealised concept of public space (see De Magalhães, 2010). He argues that it is just a matter of

recognising the 'natural' necessity of current developments, as the bankruptcy of the welfare state is an unquestionable fact (De Magalhães, 2010, p. 560). For De Magalhães, the only possible action is to technically understand the process and, by so doing, learn to control it. For him, the ongoing process can be described as a simple 'contracting out' of the public character of cities' spaces, and the heart of the matter is knowing how to make good contracts to balance rights and duties. He argues that this is not a history of 'corporate take-over' or 'exclusion' but rather a 'complex redistribution of roles' and a 'domestication' of public spaces.

Similarly, Latham and Koch (2013) argue that the ongoing process of transforming public space is the 'hard work of domestication'. They contrast their use of the concept of domestication with its former critical use (see Zukin, 2010). For them, the spaces in question have never been 'wild' because they are artificial products. In this sense, it has not been tamed because it was tamed from the beginning.

In these terms, by ignoring dissent, social conflict, politics and the whole history of mankind, De Magalhães, Latham and Koch can understand the domestication of urban space as an expansion of 'home-making' by blurring any social difference between private and public. This provides many points to apply to our cognitive map (even if it is still under construction).

The first point is the supposed neutrality of the process of 'contracting out'. This assumption disregards both the condition in which these contracts are made, and the positions of power of the subjects that are engaged in the negotiations. In this way, the rhetoric of neutrality acts in the reproduction of social relations in two ways.

First, the social actors involved in the contract are informed differently about the elements and the rights that are being sold (most of them will never know what happened in this negotiation), while developers are usually aware of the elements at play, as these opportunities emerge from systematic efforts on their behalf. In contrast, as was the case in Wood Street experiment, sometimes local authorities might not be aware of other alternatives, and be influenced by 'trendy' experiences. Furthermore, authorities suffer different pressures, from campaign funding to budget austerity, which might force a choice for abdication. The citizens, object-subject of the interventions, are in turn submitted to techniques of disengagement and propaganda. Therefore, the proposal that

it is simply a matter of knowing to ‘technically control’ the process is an academic’s delusion. It ignores the political choices and the struggles of interest involved; it also ignores the power that emerges from economic and cultural capital: both influencing decisions and producing consensus by financed design and research (we will discuss examples of that in the next chapter).

Second, the lived space is fragmented, into a profusion of rules (sometimes formalised in these contracts, sometimes not), transforming the public space into a tangled orbit. Thus, these rules will potentially change from place to place, square to square, street to street. The regular citizen, walking through the city, experiences a constant metamorphosis of the city’s character, becoming persistently more or less free, more or less familiar, more or less active, more or less detached. For those in the streets, the feeling is a constant shining, blurred and soft, estrangement. The way out of the anxiety induced is managed, so it is found only through consumption. In this way, experience of citizenship in the city is objectified (instrumentalised).

Furthermore, the complex fragmentation of rules can enable the emergence of malicious domestications (dressage) without any social control over it. Additionally, the blurring of boundaries makes awareness of limits difficult, so individuals become atoms (a small cog), that cannot master the means of space production. Space (the whole) is turned into a machine of reproduction. This condition prevents the emergence of significant differences, as it enforces passivity and eliminates political dissent. Dissent, as the basis of politics (see Rancière, 2010), is one of the first targets of these many ‘contracted out’ rules, usually prohibiting any form of protest and even leafleting. This enforcement of a de-politicisation of public spaces – evident during the Occupy movements – is a fundamental shift in the character of public spaces.

The second point is the naturalisation of domestication and the formulation of a narrative that fundamentals an ethical linear causality: domestication = cosy + good = tamed + unconditional = citizens’ dressage is fine.

Although the human condition is artificial before even the emergence of the species – as we noted before – there is a fundamental difference between ‘domestication’ and ‘dressage’, as there is a difference between ‘being a subject of’ and ‘being subjected to’.

In that proposition, architecture becomes the social engineering of subjective homogeneity, as it is evident in Latham and Koch's enumeration of the elements to create domestication:

**'Foundations'**: the reimagination of the place, which is not a tight script, but is enforced by social and legal legislation (such as 'permits, licensing, management contracts, leasing agreements, service provisions'). 'Important here is the idea that foundations are not only about the material. They are also about a kind of ethos – a way of thinking about the kind of public space that might be put together.' [...] **Furnishings**: [...] 'Engagement with a range of material objects [...] we can outline a process of domestication here consisting of several general features. First, there is the construction of regular, predictable routines associated with the use of these furnishings. Secondly, there is the establishment of roles for taking responsibility for the space and its furnishings. Thirdly, [...] practical activity can generate collective affects'. [...] **Invitations**: [...] 'The hard work of domesticating a public space – creating a new "patterned ground" [...] norms, conventions, expectations, appropriate forms of behaviour and so forth. [...] making a regular habit [...] the routines already described did not magically happen on their own. People needed to be invited to make themselves [...] **Accommodation**: [...] 'Closely following this example, a fourth element in the domestication of public space is accommodation: the process of adapting or adjusting to others in order to get on with living.' (Latham and Koch, 2013, pp.15-18)

Despite the 'delightfulness' provided to those willing to obey, there is a problematic effect of this line of thought. As Simmel (1950) asserted, the foundation of modern rational freedom in the metropolis is based on the experiences of abstraction, distance and difference that are made possible by the big city. In opposition to this modern space, the feudal city was formed precisely by a domesticated space, fully experienced through emotional relations to the place, and mediated by the 'heart' and tradition, with the sensation of a cyclical and eternal stability that can only be felt at home. Therefore, the proposition of transforming the modern city into a home is, by logical conclusion, regression from a long-fought battle for freedom in the modern metropolis.

Therefore, the domestication advocated by Latham and Koch (2013) entails both delightfulness and elimination of the abstract distance and solitude among the multitude, which is so important to creating the uncomfortable encounter with freedom and the (not reified) Other. As Simmel (1950, p. 418) argued: 'For here as elsewhere it is by no means necessary that the freedom of man reflect itself in his emotional life only as comfort'.

The third point is the false dilemma of either we accept ‘things are as they are’ or we fall into ‘big state fascism’. The critique is not about reaffirming the state’s lost control of space. As Zukin (2010, p. 30) asserts, in the privatisation of public spaces and regeneration schemes, the state plays a strong role in guaranteeing that big business gains control over the city. As she demonstrated in the case of the WTC in New York, in these schemes, state control can become more repressive, more ideological and less representative than in former types of intervention (Zukin, 2010, p. 150–158).

The last point is straightforward: the cognitive mapping of this reproduction reveals how naive it is to consider any ‘thing’ as ‘natural’, as it is to consider any ‘fact’ as ‘unquestionable’, although these are the basis of their arguments.

#### **4.5. Getting into the swing of things**

Many authors argue that conflict and tension are inherent to democracy in space. Rancière (2005, p. 18-26) stated that the *Agora* had a fluid existence sustained by the living words of its interlocutors – the breath of life. The reality of the polis itself was like a dancing chorus, like a choreography created by the changing pace of the *Agora*’s speakers. For Zukin (2011, p. 130), democracy is intrinsically loud, unruly, unpredictable and dangerous. Therefore, the calm business-friendly environment of today exists only through negation and through a soft-disciplining disguised as service to ‘better serve you’, which serve to hide any sign of this environment’s imposed social order.

Sennett argues that the transition from Christianity to Modernity changed rituals for labour and self-discipline such that comfort was directed to home and fatigue was directed to the workplace, thereby suspending the sensory functions of the body. A passive relationship with the environment was built by the anaesthesia offered at home, on the one hand, and the disciplinary punishment of the street, on the other. Today, we observe the emergence of a new type of sensory suspension that is formed by both velvet discipline and tangled alienation.

These new public spaces extend the enclosure of the subject to the whole field of the urban experience. If, in early modernity, the social relations engraved in urban 'things' enabled the emergence of a new subjectivity in the metropolis, as well as a new revolutionary politics of the masses, the move towards an enclosed urban space extended the capitalist reification from the working space towards the total social space. It is in this sense that we argued that reification is part of the process of reproduction, always expanding its limits without changing its nature. Therein lies the reproduction of social relations by means of architecture.

In this experience, architecture becomes the means of hiding behind a curtain of spectacular images the reproduction of enclosed forms of social relation, i.e., reproducing the estrangement of the subject from the means of production of his own conditions. In this sense, these 'things' are a process of enclosing the urban space in a neoliberal experience of precariousness and consumerism.

#### **4.6. Putting things together: the route to fetish and desire**

This investigation has forced us to confront the social reality of things. Georg Lukács (1971) developed his analysis of thingification by confronting mediated and immediate, form and content, reason and thing-in-itself, thus revealing how what 'is' is the result of a process of human production in a historical and social context. Our investigation revealed how architectural things is a transformation of social prerogatives into an objectification of the entire city, thus framing the experience of reality and the possibilities of its appropriation.

It is in this way that the new forms produced in London are similar to the process of primitive accumulation, in which the citizen is progressively separated from the means of production and appropriation of the place, and at the same time behaviours are reified. This new condition of 'urban enclosure' reasserts the role of cities in the global economy by amplifying the reification of social relations beyond the realm of work to encompass the entire scenario of one's everyday experience in the city.

This process transforms users into 'free sellers' of their citizenship through reified mechanisms of tangled social rules, driven spatial consumption and velvet architecture. Cosy and kind, domestic and comfortable, these are the new, emerging, bird's-nest forms of imprisonment (completely different from the former means of control); they operate through disorientation and comfort, rather than disciplining and punishment.

The investigation of the production of 'things' in London's public space shows that there are hidden intentions lying beneath their appearances. These things are the result – the spatial individuation – of a deeper layer in the architectural unconscious. The products delivered by the profession of architecture are rooted in unconscious methods of the discipline. Arguably, the way forward if we are to expand Lukács' self-critique is to investigate the means of architectural reproduction.

Although the assessment of architectural 'things' and its 'immediate appearances' has already provided a revealing picture, the investigation must go beyond actualised appearances because these appearances are produced by acts of power, which install a social order and perform a social function. It is for this reason alone that these things seem to be objectively real. In this sense, not only do Latham and Koch's elements appear to be real, they also have real social implications. As Marx noted,

The categories of bourgeois economics consist precisely of forms of this kind. They are forms of thought which are socially valid, and therefore objective, for the relations of production belonging to this historically determined mode of social production, i.e. commodity production. The whole mystery of commodities, all the magic and necromancy that surrounds the products of labour on the basis of commodity production, vanishes therefore as soon as we come to other forms of production (Marx, 1990, p. 169).

It is to this 'mystery' and 'magic' that we shall turn our investigation in the next chapters – as we already dealt with 'necromancy' in Chapter 3. Reification is possible through 'fetish'. Investigating the contradiction and struggles of the process of spatial production should reveal the means by which architecture reproduces social relations, i.e., its techniques of phenomena. For now, we would like to summarise one last point about objects, so we can find in our map the direction to take towards this fetish.

Arthur Schopenhauer (1909) identified objects (or, we could say, 'things') as the representation of the 'will' (or, we could say, desire). This means that the subject frames

reality to make the subject's desire possible. To identify an object in the real world is to build the means of achieving a goal (i.e., the world is formed by desires). Schopenhauer finds this conclusion in the integration of the *idea* (from Plato) and the *a priori* (from Kant). For Schopenhauer (1909, §31), the thing-in-itself is the same as 'will'. Thus, all phenomena are only re-presentations of desire, i.e., 'objectified will'. He reaches this conclusion by asserting that the world outside Plato's Cavern is only another world of shadows (appearances). Thus, knowledge of the world resides precisely in the logic and judgements that allow the subject to predict the sequence of and relationship between the shadows, which are actually truthful to both inside and outside the cavern:

Their wisdom would thus consist in predicting the order of the shadows learned from experience. The real archetypes, on the other hand, to which these shadows correspond, the eternal Ideas, the original forms of all things, can alone be said to have true being (*óntôs ón*), because they always are, but never become nor pass away. To them belongs no multiplicity; for each of them is according to its nature only one, for it is the archetype itself...' (Schopenhauer, 1909, §31).

In this philosophical framework, we can visualise that the ideas recognising the interaction between the shadows are actually the only reality that is always true in itself, and exists throughout the different incarnations of these shadows (both the things inside and outside the cave). This idea is what Schopenhauer calls the will, and therefore objects are the representations of the will. In this sense, although subjects' desires might be hidden in things, these desires are what brings things into existence. Nevertheless, updating Schopenhauer's universalist ontology into historical and materialist reasoning is fundamental. This 'will' is not a universal and abstract spirit (as reason is in Hegel); rather, it is historically produced collective desires.

In these terms, the objectification of architecture in Rem Koolhaas' Biennale is only a symptom of a deeper process. In the overall scheme of things, architecture itself is turned into a reifying practice, wherein reified desires are reproduced by means of disciplined transsubjectivities and, ultimately, architects are objectified, as we shall investigate in the next chapters.

## **CHAPTER 5:**

### **Unveiling fetish: hidden artifices and techniques of phenomena**

## 5.1. A dancing table

We have seen how architecture is not a simple thing. It is reified social relations, and furthermore, this reification frames subjectivities in cities. How does architecture achieve this reification?

Marx (1990, 163-164) started his conclusion regarding the fetish of the commodity by analysing the secret behind a simple table. He urged the reader to turn that ‘sensuous’ form (with its four legs) upside down in order to see how it ‘evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than if it were to begin dancing of its own free will’. It is not only because behind its forms, still made of wood, the table also becomes an object to be exchanged, thus creating interactions between subjects in the ‘market’. Furthermore, that ‘thing’ the table ‘is’ is not only what architects would normally make of it: lines, planes, shapes and styles. It is not even what more sensible architects would envision as social constructions encircling a cultural habit of sharing food. This metaphorical dancing table ‘rather transforms every product of labour into a social hieroglyphic. Later on, men try to decipher the hieroglyphic, to get behind the secret of their own social product’ (Marx, 1990, 167). In this dancing table, Marx finds the hidden means through which it was produced: the social knowledge involved, the science of materials, the symbolic value it carries, the mobilisation of desire, the logic of commodities, the division of labour and, furthermore, subjects enclosed in a chain of actions. In other words, he finds the hidden forces reproducing social relations by means of an object of design – he finds, namely, the fetish.

In this sense, the fetish of this dancing table cannot be understood either under the sign of a simple verb or as a simple noun. The mysterious character of the fetish of commodity in Marx has the ambiguous meaning that it is both a (social) action and the result of this (social) action. It has the ambiguous property of being produced by social relations and of being productive of social relations. It has the ambiguous property of being believed to (or seeming to) have powers that it does not have and at the same time constituting forces that could not exist without it. It has the property of being simultaneously ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’.

It is in this sense that we will use the word fetish as a present participle, in the original Latin sense of being at the same time an adjective, a noun and a verb. In this sense, the

fetish in architecture can be seen as the characteristic in an object or as the constitutive forces of this object. Therefore, fetish can be understood as a verb in the original Latin *partem capit* (literally meaning ‘an action’ that ‘takes part’ – a present action). This does not intend to add imprecision to the concept. Rather, it draws upon the imprecision that makes fetish possible and causes past reified social relations to be accepted as natural phenomena. Only in this way can we understand how the table is not a table that can dance; rather, it is a dancing table in its very stillness.

Thus, the aim of this chapter is to understand how architectural operations inhabits things, continuing to act in their very stillness. We aim to understand how architecture mobilises mediated social processes in the form of immediate truthful things. We aim to understand how architecture transforms ‘things into persons, and persons into things’ (Marx, 1990, p. 209). In this sense, we will need to unveil the black box of the non-trivial machinery of architecture, we will need to unveil the enigmatic operations behind the production of architectural things, and we will need to unfold the methods implied in the production of ‘architectural truths’. Only after deciphering this hieroglyphic enigma will we be able to recognise, later on in Chapter 6, how architects ultimately subject themselves to the fetishes of the discipline (namely, the objectification of architects themselves by means of shared phantasies).

## **5.2. *Intermezzo*: magic blasphemies**

*It is interesting that in Ancient Egypt, and certainly in South Asia as well, the architect was privy to secret knowledge, again knowledge that would be used in constructing a temple, constructing a palace, again, building typologies really associated with the upper echelons of society and power. And so, architects were also thought, particularly in Egypt, to possess magical powers and I think in today's architecture profession they still cultivate on that as well, with the star architect. I mean, I was just reading now, he would probably dispute this, you know, identification with the star architect... the Swiss architect Peter Zumthor and the notion that he has to interview the client, and the client has to convince him that she or he is worthy of having a Peters Zumthor architecture. So, again, sort of being initiated into the cult of the priestly caste of architecture in some way. And, in a funny kind of way, I think that mixing up architects with magic and religion and, again, having certain powers still continues on today. (Interview with Mary Woods, in Arbuckle Industries, 2015)*

In January 2016, David Cameron (2016) identified the demolition of council houses as a key strategy to tackle social problems, to help businesses flourish, and even to improve ‘national security’ against ‘Islamist extremism’. For him, ‘the bulldozing of sink estates’ was at ‘the heart of turnaround Britain’. For David Cameron, the strategy was simple: to ‘sweep away the planning blockages’ so that the rules in play for all would not apply to the people in power, to build ‘new steps’ that would ‘reduce political and reputational risk’ so that the reputations of the people involved would not be destroyed by the outrage caused by the measures, and to create new uses for public spaces that were seen as ‘wasted open space’. As a nice aristocrat, Cameron saw utility only in the areas of the ‘park’ (for pleasure) and the ‘garden’ (of earthly delights), which valorise the buildings as commodities, and, of course, he stated: ‘To finance this, we’ll establish a new £140 million fund’, as the supposed entrepreneurs could only make this enterprise possible through the exceptional channelling of public funding (thus appropriated as private). With that, Cameron’s plan was to destroy 100 housing estates, displacing 100,000 poor residents. Thus, what was put into play was precisely an assault (by the rich) on the most vulnerable and poor, or, as Cameron would put it ‘my second term agenda is to wage an all-out assault on poverty’; and he added: ‘regeneration plans. For some, this will simply mean knocking them down’ (Cameron, 2016). How could David Cameron so influentially identify the root causes of all social evil in council estates? Well, he did not do that alone; he used architecture (research and theory) to support his conclusion, thus glossing it with an air of objective truth:

The riots of 2011 didn’t emerge from within terraced streets or low-rise apartment buildings. As spatial analysis of the riots has shown, the rioters came overwhelmingly from these post-war estates. Almost 3 quarters of those convicted lived within them. That’s not a coincidence (Cameron, 2016).

Of course, we do not aim to argue that this is coincidence. Quite the opposite: we want to determine how architecture became, on the one hand, an instrument used to manage inequalities resulting from years of segregation and lack of social investment and, on the other hand, a source of powerful rhetoric to further expropriate the poor. This is exactly what was done by the prestigious Space Syntax Laboratory at the Bartlett Architectural School, in partnership with Space Syntax Limited, a company funded to develop commercially viable applications of the work developed in the Laboratory, ‘to provide industry-focused research for commercially-minded clients’ (see [www.spacesyntax.com](http://www.spacesyntax.com)).

Space Syntax aims to use the technology of mapping and data processing in urban spaces to improve the ‘operational performance’ of these spaces. Thus, the company uses a series of techniques to conduct simulations and the spatial modelling of data, to forecast models and predict human behaviour, to produce highly graphic visual analyses and find patterns and geometries, all ‘evaluated using a mathematical algorithm’ and with ‘the use of our evidence-informed tools and techniques’. In this way, its research decisions seem to be the products of an automaton, with no ethical choices involved; they seem to be based only on ‘objective truth’. Fetish does not lie, fetish creates concrete reality in a realm of simulacra (see ‘service offer’ in [www.spacesyntax.com](http://www.spacesyntax.com)).

In its report titled *London, Riots Research*, the Space Syntax (2011) group eliminates all variables that might interfere with the model it has built – for instance, access to good quality health and educational services – so that the result of the research coincides with the pre-existing hypothesis, namely ‘a hypothesis that riot incidents occurred in places that were both near town centres and near large post-war housing estates’. As we saw in Lukács’ and Marx’s discussions about the fetish of things, once you take the immediate as an absolute, thus eliminating any critical considerations of the whole of society (say exclusion, education, inequalities, racism, and so on), the reification of reality becomes effective truth.

In addition to the astonishing complexity of the ‘algorithms’ deployed, which makes viewers feel they are witnessing a magic show, the studies of the Laboratory generally deploy a simple method based on the theory that ‘Space is the machine’ (Hillier, 2007). First, a total reification of space into a trivial machinist system is assumed; then, convoluted methods and vast amounts of collected data are presented; then, some type of automaton algorithm performs calculations that are impossible to understand (always summarily mentioned, as they are too complex for a detailed explanation, and sometimes presented as a short video of moving objects); then, the rendering of models, maps and astonishing graphics makes the simulation seem more real than reality itself. After this careful manipulation of information, the conclusions (especially the raw and simplistic ones) magically confirm the first ‘hypothesis’.<sup>82</sup> Thus, any conclusion is

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<sup>82</sup> The conception of information in Simondon (2013), discussed in chapter 2, helps to clarify how this fetish operates. For Simondon, information is not simply a message transmitted between two individuals. For him, information is a *mise en form* (setting in form) because a mediation must be created to create and maintain a connection between two disparate realms. This mediation articulates the preindividualities on

presented as the revelation of an invisible truth (for instance, one might ‘see’ the ‘invisible architecture of Venice’ magically coinciding with a Le Corbusier design in Psarra, 2012).

It is in this sense that the production of truth cannot be separated from its ethical and political implications because these implications are the sources of that production, even when they are presented as impartial. Just as Jane Jacobs was engaged (as we discussed in chapter 1) in the move from an aesthetic of the ‘big state’ towards a neoliberal ideology of small entrepreneurs, the contemporary ‘discourses on complexity’ are also engaged in procedures of fetish.

Douglas Spencer (2012) demonstrated how hegemonic architectural discourses on complexity are engaged not only in legitimating but also in constituting the special means of post-disciplinary societies of control (2012, pp. 3-11, 98). For instance, in his account of the BMW headquarters designed by the Zaha Hadid Office and the Ravensbourne College designed by FOA, Spencer systematically unveils how contradiction is wiped off the concept of complexity. In the case of the BMW project, this is done by an attempt at ‘managing’ and ‘articulating’ complexity (pp. 41, 76) by naturalising humans as ‘molecular’ agents subjected to self-organisation in a ‘laissez faire naturalism’ (pp. 66-67), which is carefully produced by architecture to apply the general means of a swarm theory (p. 62), thus producing a collective subjectivity passive enough to be captured (p. 67).

In the case of FOA, the office conceives ‘complexity’ as a sort of universal Hegelian ideal emerging as a natural process without agency (Spencer, 2012, 131, 134). In so doing, the Office conceives a theory of complexity that eliminates politics, history, criticality and any conceptual speculation (p. 122-134). In this way, complexity can become a means of steering and control (p. 137) in the foundation of a sort of ‘ordoliberalism’ (p. 163). In FOA’s project for the Ravensbourne College, the conditions of contemporary capitalism (such as precariousness, market realism, citizens as consumers, fragmentation, deterritorialisation, and networking) are designed into the building spaces, aiming to naturally frame the students’ subjectivities.

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both sides of the field; thus, it is a process that structures the potentialities. In this sense, information is an action that forms the object. The active process of articulating a form and its content reveals how the message is actually forming the individuation of the supposedly neutral object.

In this sense, fetish does not simply ‘hide’ truth as if it were lying. Fetish actually creates reality in a very specific way. It not only provides a logic for the functioning of objective reality, it does so by means of mysterious artifices operating through the created objects. In this sense, architecture not only hides intentions within space, it also reproduces them, as the viewpoint – framed into the reality – further frames the subjectivity of others, as if it were a magical power revealing the natural character of existing reality (see Mary Woods quote above).

In this chapter, we shall first establish a definition of fetish in architecture; second, we shall identify and analyse the use of architecture as fetish through concrete examples of housing policies in London; third, we shall perform a regressive analysis of the operational use of fetish in architecture, highlighting how its roots are associated with the discipline of architecture – an orchestrated carnival of architects, pirates, courtiers and stewards; finally, we shall discuss how architecture produces things through phenomena-techniques and how this renders contradictions that are always on the brink of collapsing. This picture aims to reveal how fetish not only operates in the production of ‘external’ objects but also produces an objectification of architects themselves.

The point is not to blame architects for how things are; rather, we aim to reveal how things come to inhabit the architectural unconscious. Or, as Adorno explains: ‘Dialectics is the self-consciousness of the objective context of delusion; it does not mean to have escaped from that context. Its objective goal is to break out of the context from within’ (Adorno, 2004, p. 406).

### **5.3. The fetish of facts**

‘The good historian, the genealogist, will know what one must think of this masquerade. He must absolutely not refuse the spirit of seriousness, but instead he should want to take it to the extreme: he wants to stage a big carnival for the time when the masks return incessantly. [...] genealogy is a history just like an orchestrated carnival (Foucault 2005, p. 278).

In the quotation above, Foucault was emphasising the mechanism through which he investigated the history of ideas as a succession of truths produced socially and emphasised as reality by means of power. For him, the question was not whether knowledge is power; rather, power was the position from which subjects could impose a

notion as truth. In this sense, the concepts accepted by society as truths have a history of creation and struggle, which occurs through the institutions of society.

When Bruno Latour went to a laboratory of Neuroendocrinology (Latour and Woolgar, 1986) in 1979, he entered the world of scientific truth production as an anthropologist who was entering a mysterious primitive tribe, trying to understand its activities and how these activities would produce the tribe's beliefs. He would soon unveil a world full of veiled hierarchies, machinations, and procedures for the creation of new phenomena. He noted:

It is thus possible that there is some useful similarity between Marx's (1867) notion of fetishism and the notion of scientific facts. (Both fact and fetish share a common etymological origin.) In both cases, a complex variety of processes come into play whereby participants forget that what is 'out there' is the product of their own 'alienated' work (Latour and Woolgar, 1986, p. 259).

Later, Latour (1999) would develop the idea of 'factishes'. While a fact is supposed to be a property of an independent object, and a fetish is supposed to be the projections of a subject's idea upon the things-in-themselves, the idea of factishes presupposes an indivisibility between object and subject, with the product being the result of an action, an event, where the subject acts upon reality and reality acts upon the subject. However, it is exactly because factishes are produced that they have real effects on humans, on things, and even on nature.

Thus, in Latour's sense, fetish is a fact of human life. Again, fetish would be not a simple lie, nor would it be a simple deceiving mechanism hiding intentions behind the appearance of a thing. Although Latour's perspective recognises how fetish creates actual things that have concrete consequences, this perspective falls into an argument for multiplicity, in which the truth becomes only a play, and as long as you connect your fetish with multiple 'others', it would become more operative, in a sort of postmodernist argument for diversity. What this argument fails to do is to take into account – behind the production of truth – the game of power, the imposition of a 'will' and the notion of the 'whole'.

When Lukács (1990) points to the centrality of the notion of the whole, he is implying that in the production of things – mediated by fetish – therein lies a way of reasoning

and an ethical conception of man and society. As we have seen, in his conception, in each part, each singular thing, there is the presence of the historical context and of a philosophical understanding of the world. For him, the mathematical and pragmatic reasoning reduces social relations to things as they exist here and now, thus ignoring their historical formation, which usually is based on blood, violence, or exploitation. Furthermore, the conception of things implies an ethical view of the whole community of man, including an understanding of what is fair, an understanding of how life should be lived and what is dignifying in existence, a division of labour, a conception of the agents in play, a conception of politics and economy, and even an understanding of how we should or should not respect the points of view of others.

Therefore, fetish is not the same as, for instance, the idea of ‘method’. Fetish is not simply a procedure, but it is a mystifying procedure, it gives birth to an event – in the sense of Baudiou as we saw in Chapter 3, with ethical consequences – and creates reality. However, it does that with the appearance of a ‘naturally existing’ thing. In this sense, fetish is not magic (i.e., where the magician and the public know it is all a trick), because he who acts by means of fetish leads to the belief in that truth. Thus, fetish is eminently a social device, it actualises an ethics in reality, and it is subjected to struggle between competing arguments.

Therefore, when Mies Van Der Rohe praised ‘Less is More’, he was actually saying ‘if you hide the true artifices of the building process of architecture beneath a clean appearance, you will make people believe that that intriguing and unnatural beauty was achieved with pure procedures, thus they will be strangely seduced by it’. Nevertheless, he might have actually believed he was only doing ‘less’ and not hiding the ‘more’, just as the Egyptian priest performing his fetish, in the quotation above from Mary Woods, was acting with the knowledge available and controlled by him, thus making this knowledge real – as much as this knowledge was making him real – through the actual construction of a temple. Similarly, Mies Van Der Rohe hides the constructive pillars of the Barcelona Pavilion by adding a clean chrome cover – what is, at least, one thing ‘more’. Additionally, the massive marble walls are in fact hollow spaces. In the unseen void the ‘more’ is hidden: the effect of a clean massive wall is produced by placing massive blocks in the corners (so that there are no visible joints in the marble), while the middle blocks are in fact thin marble finishing plates covering the elements of support. Thus, perhaps unconsciously, the fetish of ‘less’ is produced by hiding the ‘more’.

When artifices are consciously managed, arguably, we enter the realm of '*sprezzatura*', an essentially modern technique of concealing artifice. In the opening chapter of Manfredo Tafuri's (2006) magna opera on the Renaissance, he discusses the concept of *sprezzatura*. Mentioned in Castiglioni's book *The Courtier* (about the etiquette of the court), *sprezzatura* is the main aesthetic attitude expected from a courtier or artist. This procedure consists of creating an 'illusion', just as the 'perspective' creates one in a painting, but it is applied to various realms. For instance, a courtier's 'gait' was of the utmost importance for social distinction; this gait entailed the transformation of regular walking by a series of small variations to create grace, lightness, structure, delicacy and grandeur. However, all transgression of a normal walk should be concealed, so it would not look fake. Thus, a product could keep the appearance of being 'naturally artificial'. In the final result, an elegant courtier gait 'looks effortless' and distinct. Fetish and *sprezzatura* have in common this ability to produce phenomena by hiding artifice (as we shall see towards the end of this chapter). In the social realm, revealing the means of this type of production demands a form of social struggle.

When Marx (1990, pp. 163-177) spoke of the fetish of the commodity, he was forging the intellectual weapons of an imminent struggle in a period between the age of revolutions and the age of extremes (as Hobsbawm would term it). Thus, Marx was emphasising that what the powerful regarded as simple facts were – concretely – the products of the historical development of capitalist society. The aim here is to reveal how intentions are hidden behind the affirmation of certain social facts.<sup>83</sup> Thus, fetish can be understood as a key element in the struggle against the reproduction of society. Furthermore, as in Adorno's quote above, the analysis of fetish is not to deny its reality but to help build the 'consciousness of the objective context of delusion... Its objective goal is to break out of the context from within' (Adorno, 2004, p. 406).

In the next section, we will look behind the stage to unmask the tricks of the magicians, but only as a first step to, in the following section, understand how the whole theatre operates, placing active subjects in the stage and passive spectators in comfortable seats. In this way, just as Hamlet's theatre in the theatre revealed the phantasm to be true, we

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<sup>83</sup> If we return to the example Schopenhauer's cavern, there is a 'will' that connects the shadows both inside and outside the cavern. And, we should reinforce, this will is not to be seen as a universal spirit but as the concrete manifestation of an ethical approach to society and as an engaged action of collective subjectivities towards the construction of social objects.

aim to turn fetish against itself, and reveal how it is the means of the architectural objectification of architects.

#### **5.4. Tracing fetish in the production of London**

To assess the process of fetish, this study turned to the production of space in London and assessed the new 'housing' policy proposed by the mayor of London (Johnson, 2009, 2010, 2013 and 2014). The formulation of the housing problem in these terms resulted in the imposition of a large-scale-capital solution upon the interests of common citizens.

To 'bring forward land' for development, the proposed tactic was to change the laws governing 'compulsory purchase', 'land assembly', 'anti-social behaviour' and 'affordable housing' – a concept that imposes a substitute ethics on and hides a new logic in place of council housing strategies. The result of these changes was the dismantling of traditional communities and urban places through a process of accumulation by dispossession – a term used by David Harvey, 2004, to acknowledge how 'new' imperialism uses laws to strip local citizens of older forms of wealth to which they held title – and a subsequent re-concentration of property in the hands of big real estate actors. In other words, in a time of financial crisis, architecture became a tool for transforming individually dispersed patrimonial capital into concentrated capital for a centralised renting economy.

Historical data collected by the organisation Shelter (2015a) have demonstrated that the 1980s witnessed a significant decrease in the construction of social housing in England. Currently, the annual construction rate of social housing is 90% lower than the rate of production in the mid-1950s. In this context, the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) has been advocated as the foremost tool to be used in producing a greater number of houses. An analysis of that will reveal the fetish of this proposal.

Although CPOs are a legal instrument that has existed since 1961 with the purpose of enabling authorities to serve public interests (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2005), the large-scale use of CPOs as an instrument of housing production in London is a current trend. Evidence of this change is seen in the creation (in 2002) of

the Compulsory Purchase Association, a member organisation that aims to guide and promote the practice as well as to support relevant expertise and networking. The result is that the majority of local authorities make use of 1 or 2 orders per year, for a total of more than 40 per year (Dees, 2012). This instrument has been endorsed by the former mayor of London (Johnson, 2013, p. 77) as a key strategy for 'land assembly'.

Furthermore, the major shift in the use of this instrument is related to a shift in interpretation. Since the economic crisis of 2009, any benefit to the economy has been interpreted as 'of public interest'. In this sense, an instrument that was intended for the common good has been oriented to favour the market. In the case of a regeneration process in Barnet Council, which faced massive street protests and resistance from local residents, the council leader, Richard Cornelius, reportedly said,

The regeneration project will transform the estate and will provide high quality and attractive new homes at a time when public finances are incredibly tight. We believe that this is very much in the public interest (Booth, 2015).

Another common justification for this process is the austerity imposed upon local governments. The regeneration process is often connected with the process of privatising public spaces, a process that saves local authorities from the maintenance of streets and squares. When asked whether the new policies on creating housing using CPOs could be implemented in public spaces in a manner consistent with the public interest, a Great London Authority higher officer – who asked to remain anonymous – answered as follows:

It could be coherent with it. But it will not. It is not the interest of housing developers. It is not just a problem of design. The Planning Department will not reinforce it. (...) The public management of the streets involves funding. So it needs money. (...) There is a large amount of things to be done in the public space, and it is simply easier to do it with corporations and a local authority. When there is many landlords involved, things becomes difficult, and it is hard to negotiate all the interests. With a local authority holding the land, it is easier. There is just no money to do otherwise (Anonymous, 2014, in an interview to the author in the process of developing this thesis).

In addition to this point, data from Shelter (2015a) demonstrated that from 2003 to 2014, the number of rented social houses remained nearly stable. After 2003, there was an increasing shift from houses being rented by local authorities to houses being rented

by housing associations. These associations are non-profit organisations; thus, they represented one more step in the downturn of the welfare state. Furthermore, the National Affordable Housing Programme, created in 2008, is a step away from the previous models; in this new programme, public funding is allocated to partner developers to deliver homes for both rent and ownership at 80% of the market price. This policy ostensibly provides socially committed houses. Nevertheless, with a 72% increase in the ratio of the median house price to the median salary between 2008 and 2014, this 20% discount offers little to people excluded from the market. A rigorous analysis should reveal it to be nothing more than an instrument of wealth dispossession and property accumulation.

London's current housing policy was first detailed in a 2010 document (Johnson, 2010). In 2013, a draft document for consultancy was elaborated (Johnson, 2013) and, later, a final statutory document was formally approved (Johnson, 2014). The 2014 version is an especially tricky and artful text, wherein statements at the beginning support contradictory proposals in the middle. Furthermore, a careful analysis comparing the two versions of the documents (the consultancy document and the approved document were compared using the tools of common word software) exposes a series of key changes.

Although none of the proposals underwent any substantial changes, and many of them were amended on an ongoing basis, two facts are especially important. On the one hand, part 5, 'About this Strategy', which revealed the subjectivity of choices made in the proposals, simply disappeared, as if the proposals were the result of mysterious technicalities. On the other hand, a vast series of sentences and paragraphs – direct and revealing statements regarding the chosen strategies – were altered into obscure, labyrinthine rhetoric. The following analysis of this procedure will reveal the devices used by this politics of appearances and disappearances – a politics that governs the production of urban space.

Here, we encounter what we conceived above as a fetish by *sprezzatura*. There are many examples, but due to the constraints of this chapter, only one will be presented. For instance, the sentence 'The GLA is particularly keen to explore the concept of a London Housing Bank focused on large-scale developments to generate additional supply' (Johnson, 2013, p. 39) was changed to:

The Mayor wishes to develop a London Housing Bank with the aim of accelerating the pace of development and generating additional housing supply, particularly on large sites where speed of delivery is significantly constrained by the traditional house-builder business model (Johnson, 2014, p. 68).

A further analysis of the documents reveals many such *sprezzaturas*. Of great importance is the account of the Localism Act of 2011 that transferred planning powers to the Great London Authority (GLA), 'while removing the legal restriction on the Mayor to spend money on housing' (Johnson, 2013). In this case, the policy builds the discourse on public investment in the private sector to legitimise the creation of the 'London Housing Bank' as a funding body of the private sector. This is one of the main strategies in London's housing policy: 'due to the imperative for increased supply of homes of all tenures, it is expected that cross-subsidy will primarily come through the provision of open market housing' (Johnson, 2014, p. 70). 'The Mayor wants to accelerate delivery, bringing new buyers into the market via a Build to Rent fund, backed by the government's debt guarantee' (Johnson, 2013, p. 48).

In a context of financial crises, the risk of such large investments is not in the banks' interest. Therefore, it is proposed that all the risk should be assumed by the public sector, while the profit remains in the hands of the developers. This is the case because the loans will be 'available at below market rents for a fixed period, at the end of which the homes can be sold on. The funding provided by the public sector would be repaid, potentially including a value uplift' (Johnson, 2013, p. 39). Therefore, developers are granted the use of public money as capital and will only 'potentially' pay it back with some uplift; but they will surely profit with zero risk:

[T]he London Housing Bank should initially utilize up to £200 million of this funding (...) There will be flexible loan terms at lower than commercial rates, to enable registered providers to offer sub-market rents for the period of the loan. At the end of the loan period the Mayor will expect a positive return on the loan and the initial capital to be paid back (Johnson, 2014, p. 69).

Furthermore, the Localism Act 2011 created a mass transfer of land ownership to the GLA, which became the largest public landowner. Therefore, the policy document has a specific section on how to privatise this public land, entitled: '4.12 Bringing forward public sector land.' It aims to do so 'by making it faster, easier and cheaper for public landowners to bring forward land for development. It establishes a framework

agreement of 25 developers and contractors' (Johnson, 2014, p. 77). In addition, the 'housing zones' would create 'lighter touch planning and effective land assembly, including, where necessary, the use of compulsory purchase powers' (Johnson, 2014, p. 77). In her analysis of this trend, Raquel Rolnik notes that this easy access to planning permits without any control of land speculation is leading to further land banking (UN, 2014, p. 10).

This new 'lighter touch planning' (so dear to neoliberal rhetoric) is (not so) surprisingly accompanied by an intensive mobilisation of the state apparatus to benefit big industry: 'The Mayor will use his full range of powers to get more homes built in all sectors, and this will involve new initiatives to secure additional finance, bring forward the land for development and build the industry capacity' (Johnson, 2014, p. 24). If assessed fragmentally, this statement could seem to indicate that the government is somehow retaking public control over the development of the housing sector. Nevertheless, the majority of new houses will be produced by the private sector as supposedly 'affordable houses'. Understanding the 'unaffordability' of these 'affordable' houses should be sufficient to unveil this *sprezzatura*.

In the previously mentioned Barnet Council case, original two-bedroom flats were offered at a value of £175,000 to those from whom they were being compulsorily purchased, whilst the new one-bedroom 'affordable' flats were expected to be sold for £415,000. In addition, the proposed scheme would provide 199 fewer 'affordable' houses compared to the number of social houses previously available (Booth, 2015). Furthermore, former council tenants were not given any choices other than buying a new flat or facing the private rental market. This made it impossible for the local community to participate in the 'sustainability' of the development. This situation is similar to the city's other regeneration schemes. In the case of the Elephant and Castle regeneration scheme, 'affordable rents' are expected to be double the price of previous rents, and new flats cost almost three times what the originals cost (Wainwright, 2014).

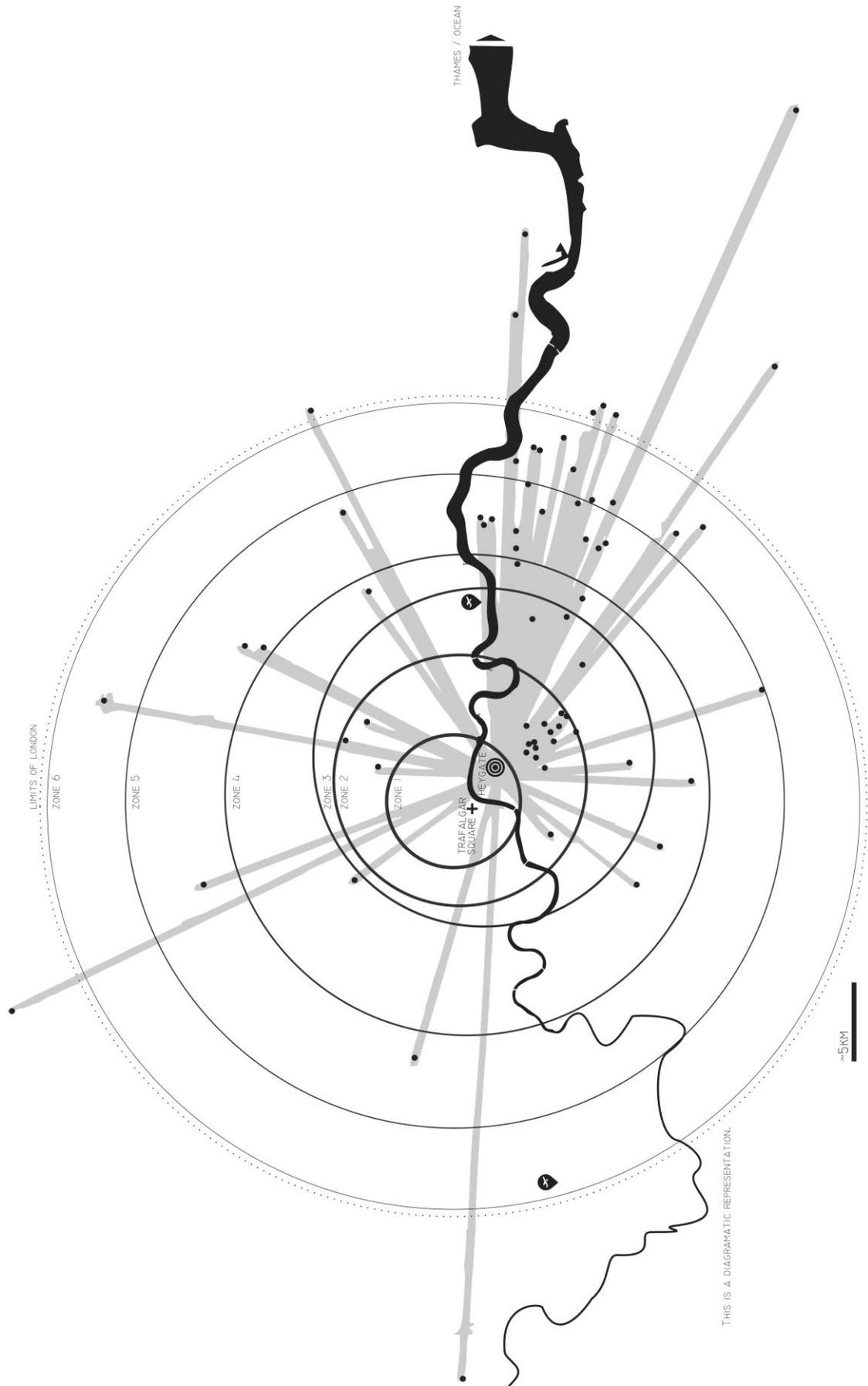


Diagram 27: Dislocation of Heygate Estate Residents. Source: the author (based on information from Better Elephant, 2013).

In reaction, local residents created an association called Better Elephant to fight this process of dispossession using live information about the social effects of the new policies. The diagram 27 (in the previous page) was produced on the basis of a map created by the association to illustrate where the scheme was displacing current residents (Better Elephant, 2013).

In their efforts to provide land for development, the creators of these strategies consistently articulate tactics of compulsory purchase and land assembly that overlap the local scale. All of the solutions produce space on a scale that overrides the local level. As Zukin (2010: p. 222) asserts, we may have not seen the end of history, but we are certainly seeing the end of 'place-bound culture'. Therefore, there is a different housing problem that does not fit the rhetoric of the policy document.

The problem that needs to be solved is not that of producing as many expensive flats as possible; it is that of providing housing for Londoners. The reality that is not addressed by any of the proposals is that of the crude living conditions in London. Despite efforts to rectify these precarious conditions, data from Shelter (2015b) show that 20.6% of the houses in England are 'non-decent' (i.e., houses in bad physical condition with 'modern' facilities that are failing, not thermally adequate or fall below minimum standards). Furthermore, 35% of private rented households in England fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard (UN, 2014, p. 8). In addition, 11.3% of London households are overcrowded (ONS, 2014).

Thus, London's housing problem is formulated in an illusionistic manner, and the proposed way of managing the crisis creates a 'false solution'. The assumption of London's housing strategy is that an increase in private production is the solution that will enable the delivery of necessary housing. Although 77% of the production of new homes is already in the hands of the private sector, overall production remains at less than half of the baseline needed (UN, 2014, p. 7). Therefore, London's policies are actually disenfranchising the city's most vulnerable residents of the right to adequate housing (UN, 2014, p. 20) whilst producing a massive process of property accumulation by dispossession. This reveals the fetish that empowers a 'naturally artificial' process of dispossession.

Although David Cameron's use of spatial syntax simulations was a means of imposing a truth, and Boris Johnson's *sprezzatura* was used to create a false problem, those are only two steps in the long history of using architecture as an instrument of fetish in social space. How deeply into the discipline of architecture do these fetishist procedures go? Are these magical phenomena of architecture isolated cases, or do they have roots in a broader social experience?

We can envisage a conflict of logics emerging from these black boxes of neutral theories and methodologies. There is a conflict between fetish as a means of reproducing social relations and the events that (ethically) create such relations as possible alternatives. In addition, we saw in previous chapters how this urban condition surpasses gentrification (the exchange of one class by other) and entails the reification of the whole experience of citizenship in the city.

Next, we diverge into a regressive analysis of the discipline of architecture with the aim of revealing the fissures in its linear narrative of neutrality. With that, we aim to further reveal the roots of fetish, the fundamentals of the theatre that make it possible in the first place.

### **5.5. Regressions in the production of fetish**

As we saw above, the production of urban 'things' presupposes an image of the whole or, more precisely, institutionalises a way of conceiving truth and society. Thus, the production of things is simultaneously the reproduction of specific forms of social relations. The architect functions as a gear in the manufacturing of these social orders. As we go deeper into our analysis of fetish in the discipline of architecture, we shall recognise that fetish not only reproduces social relations and produces things, it also reproduces the discipline of architecture itself and produces an architectural reified consciousness. Thus, the production of truth in architecture, in addition to having an implicit conception of society, also has an implicit conception of what architects are and how architectural production happens. Next, we aim to investigate regressively the mechanisms involved in picturing the 'geniality' of the architect, who supposedly acts as a super-individual – conceiving and creating social space.

Mary Woods (1999) termed this vision of a super-individual architect as ‘Roarkism’, after the character Howard Roark in Ayn Rand’s novel *The Fountainhead*, which ‘focus[es] on the architect as solitary creator to the exclusion of other narrators and narratives’ (Woods, 1999, p. 1).<sup>84</sup> Thus, Woods aims to bring the *mise-en-scène* and the background to the forefront in order to understand the formation of the profession of architecture; she investigates the conflicts and the multiple participants that support the actions of the architect (such as the schools, the building committee, the courtroom, the clients, the admirers and the critics). In doing so, she aims to break with the traditional narrative of architectural history – a narrative based on the architects’ biographies (as we discussed in chapter 3) that has little to say about how architecture is actually done. However, despite Woods’ intention, over the course of the book, the individual figures of the first professional architects in America continue to play the role of guiding lights in her historical fabric.

The above observation is not, in itself, a depreciative comment on her work; as we have seen, fetishes have a real impact on reality. Nevertheless, next, we aim to investigate how, besides using fetish to forge an implicit vision of the whole, the discipline also produces a specific form of fetish: the ‘architect’ himself. Once we reveal the fetish creating the image of the architect, we shall uncover the underlying fantasy (the third and supporting layer in our unconscious architectural pyramid).

This is not, however, an eccentricity of the figure of the architect (although it is not a coincidence that it was the chosen subject of Rand’s ‘bible’ of individualism). As in all reifications, the whole of society is constitutive of its parts. Thus, we shall use examples of major figures of fetish in the contemporary mythology of ‘genius’ to develop a critical awareness of those types of social ‘facts’. We shall start by recalling the most emblematic figure of the ‘genius’ in our times (mentioned in Chapter 3), namely, Steve Jobs.

Biographies of Steve Jobs (*Jobs*, 2013) usually present the narrative of a brilliant mind who leads a revolution, and the narrative continues: despite facing much difficulty,

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<sup>84</sup> Adam Curtis (2002), in the documentary *The Century of the Self*, captures how – progressively over the last century – the narrative of the self, and the individual’s self-realisation, spread as a dominant ideology in connection with a change in the mode of production and a new focus on consumerism and the realisation of personal wishes.

indifference and resistance, in a magical moment induced by an LSD hallucination, Jobs had a vision of the future and worked hard to realise it. Nevertheless, the actual operative means of production he created functioned through propaganda. By constructing a magical narrative, he was able to recruit brilliant minds to work in his name. Furthermore, the actual elements of innovation (the GPS, the voice-activated system, the touch-screen display and the internet) in his most famous ‘invention’ – the iPhone – were actually developed by state-funded research (see Mazzucato, 2010). Thus, the fetish of Jobs was not to mysteriously create the iPhone; rather, it was the creation of a company/narrative able to appropriate both the work of individuals and the social work developed by state-funded research. Thus, the secret of his success was the creation of this accepted mythology that he was himself a genius. By this means – the fetish of the genius – he concretely managed to appropriate the work of others as the result of his own genius.

Furthermore, Jobs did not invent this abstract machinery for expropriating inventions. Thomas Edison is perhaps the most iconic modern ‘inventor’ and has been systematically depicted in schools and by the media as the genius behind the invention of such things as the ‘light bulb’. Nevertheless, a series of studies of the actual means by which the inventions (commonly attributed to Edison) were produced shows a different picture. In the early days of the Thomas Edison laboratory in West Orange, he was employing more than 200 scientists, craftsmen, labourers and machinists. When the laboratory expanded and became associated with a factory complex, the number of employees jumped to 5000, and today General Electric employs more than 300,000 people (Padgett, 2016). At the beginning, these men were paid only ‘working man’s wage’; however, the famous inventor reportedly said that – in exchange for their ambition – his employees were given the opportunity to work side-by-side with a genius (Bellis, 2016). However, how much of the lab’s creative labour came from Edison and how much came from his workers?

Carlson (1988) has studied the process by which the alkaline storage battery was invented. He argues that during the course of this invention, Thomas Edison developed a new way to produce inventions. Previously, Edison would work with mechanics and craftsmen in a relatively loose way, wherein those workers would investigate diverse aspects of an invention, and eventually Edison would step in ‘only at the appropriate moment’ to ‘pull together the various discoveries and improvements into a successful

invention'. Later, in Edison's laboratory, large groups of chemists, engineers and college-educated scientists would work on experiments focused on very specific goals, in a systematic, step-by-step arrangement of assignments. In shifting from a 'divergent' to a 'convergent' style, Edison became a manager who oversaw the project, a role that left him time to focus on strategies of productivity and commercialisation.<sup>85</sup> However, the 'most important' role now played by Edison was to 'motivate his research team', using 'decidedly informal' techniques of 'motivating and directing' through his 'use of a personal, folksy style [that] may well have been deliberate' (Carlson, 1988, p. 10-11).

Although this convergent approach produced highly reliable results, it came at the cost of requiring over 50,000 individual experiments. Furthermore, Edison had thoroughly routinized the innovation process. By breaking down the research into a sequence of small, standardized experiments, Edison had altered the creative process from hands-on ingenuity and skilled observation to persistence and careful record-keeping. Gone were the last vestiges of the 'heroic' myth of invention in which insight came in a blinding flash; results now came by plodding through innumerable experiments (Carlson, 1988, p. 6).

Invention became an 'orderly', 'predictable' process, making Edison's 'large staff and substantial facilities' an advantage to beat competitors, which in turn made 'the innovation process a reliable component of business strategy' (Carlson, 1988, p. 11). For these reasons, his friend Henry Ford reportedly said, 'Mr. Edison gave America just what was needed at that moment in history. They say that when people think of me, they think of my assembly line. Mr. Edison, you built an assembly line which brought together the genius of invention, science, and industry' (quoted in Newton, 1987, p. 31).

For these reasons, the same critique Marx applied to the fetish of the commodity (used by capitalists to alienate products from workers in industrial assembly lines) can be applied to the fetish of the invention (used by the 'genius' to alienate the creative work of a collective). Correspondingly, if Thomas Edison was famously fond of saying 'Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration', we could say that what was actually taking place was 1% fetish and 99% expropriated work.

In addition to developing this abstract assembly line to expropriate the work of others, Thomas Edison cultivated his fame through vast investments in marketing and

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<sup>85</sup> For instance, he participated in the association that developed 'programmed obsolescence'.

especially through the legal mechanism of patents. Edison alone is credited with the invention of 1,093 patents (Simonton et al., 2015). Lemley (2011) investigated how the conception of a sole inventor – which is implied in patent law – is a myth, as inventions come from progressive collective work and are therefore frequently produced simultaneously by independent groups, as ‘Inventors build on the work of those who came before, and new ideas are often “in the air”’. Thus, a patent is also a means of privatising the work of others.

That said, we should not be at all surprised by the fact that the most mythological figure of modern science was working in a patent office in the year he published a series of ‘ground breaking’ papers, causing scholars to nickname that year ‘*annus mirabilis*’ (see Rynasiewicz and Renn, J., 2006; Sallent Del Colombo, 2013). Indeed, Albert Einstein was well versed in the art of the patent (the assembly of small step-by-step innovations into a big invention). When he finished his university studies with low grades, he did not find a job as a researcher and was left working as a clerk in a patent office, with no research group and no assistants (Contieri, 2005).

Nevertheless, Einstein’s papers – quite unusually – contained no references at all to previous studies, a finding that has recently raised a series of doubts regarding credit for the theory of relativity (Gine, 2010). Although Einstein did not reference Poincaré with regard to the conception of relativity (Darrigol, 2004), he also failed to mention the source of his famous equation – whether it was from the Englishman Oliver Heaviside, the Frenchman Henri Poincaré, the Italian Olinto de Pretto, or perhaps all of them (see Bartocci, 1999; Drageset, 2015; Socolovsky, 2012). The point here is not to suggest that he was simply a ‘plagiarist’, as many have recently argued. Rather, he was just a ‘scientist’ doing the regular work of a ‘genius’ by presenting the result of a socially constructed theoretical development as his own magical invention.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this event is the fact that while Poincaré was capturing the work of a legion of disciples in his academic work and managing his distinct position in the academic field, Einstein was able to surpass Poincaré through a new modern form of fetish enabled by the political context of struggle between empires. In this context, Germany was struggling to emerge as a dominant power as tensions were building between the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the breakout of World War 1. Thus, although Einstein had no position in the academy – which means no support from

academic corporations – he was supposedly able, in a short period of time, to publish a series of papers ‘revolutionising’ physics. Furthermore, the ‘mysterious’ (Darrigol, 2004) similarities between his theory and Poincaré’s were simply ignored not only by the German journal *Annalen der Physik*, which published it, but also by the enormous machinery of propaganda erected at the dawn of media and cinema in the years immediately before World War 2. At this time, Einstein was exiled to the emergent power of the US. In this way, Einstein emerged as the first celebrity scientist, as ‘famous as Chaplin’, and he became symbol of a pure (detached and objective) science in opposition to the ideological Nazis.

Again, this is not to say that relativity is false, nor that Einstein was lying about relativity. Perhaps he was not lying that he had formulated the theory, as he likely believed in his own fetish. However, precisely because of that belief, it is possible to see how the fame of this iconic figure was produced upon a fetishistic device (the patent) and to see how his own status as a genius was produced by another fetishist device (the media) – two devices that precisely composed the main geopolitical power of the emergent empire.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> In this sense, what the genius creates is actually a collective work captured by some fetish apparatus, and what creates the genius is not simply himself, but the ‘field’ that recognizes him as such (the media that creates the propaganda, the academy that creates distinction, and so on). In this sense, what should we think (besides the narrative of his father, who was also his devoted teacher and an indistinct composer) about Mozart composing his first music at the age of 4 and his first symphonies at the age of 8? Again, this is not simply to emphasize that his composition was a lie, rather that the whole myth of a genius composer is a fetish. Paradoxically, the controversy among specialists, totally immersed in this reified field, is about whether he composed the first concerto at the age of 4 or 5. The great exception (yet not fully a critic of the ‘myth’, much like the above-quoted Mazzucato) is the work of Woodfield (2012). Woodfield traces the transition that erudite musicians underwent during Mozart’s lifetime, moving from being members of the court to participating in the business of big Opera companies. Woodfield study ‘aims to draw upon this wide range of primary sources to give a systematic account of the Bondini-Guardasoni Company and thus of the organisational context in which Mozart’s Italian operas came to be performed in Prague and Leipzig. It will show how the Italianische Opera-Virtuosen came into being as part of Bondini’s wider Theatrical empire, along the well-established cultural axis linking Bohemia with Saxony (...) No study of the Bohemian reception history of Mozart’s opera can avoid an overriding question: the extent to which the narrative of the composer’s professional dealings with Prague, promulgated by Niemetschek and others, represents history or myth-making(...) While there may be an element of truth in this, the present study will suggest that Prague and Leipzig played a seminal role in the years immediately after the composer’s death, when Guardasoni, ignoring commentators (...) continued to promote them as core repertoire works. (...) two doctoral dissertations on *Don Giovanni* have provided insights (...) [that] reconstruct the personnel and repertoire of the Bondini troupe in the early 1780s and proposes a new interpretation of the events surrounding the genesis of *Don Giovanni*.’ (Woodfield, 2012: 4-5). In the same sense, how much does Van Gogh’s genius owe to his brother, an experienced art merchant, and to his sister, who managed his spoils and the posthumous narrative of his life? Similarly, a recent exhibition at the National Gallery, called ‘The Invention of Impressionism,’ shows how the narrative of the group and the development of the style were closely managed by Paul Durand-Ruel, ‘the entrepreneurial art dealer’ who ‘discovered’ them, spread their style to the centre of Empire, gave lodging

Again, it must come as no surprise that one of the chief theoreticians of the United States' empire was also an architect. Thomas Jefferson was not only the architect of a few buildings but also one of the architects of the US Empire. He once asserted: 'I am persuaded no constitution was ever before so well calculated as ours for extensive empire and self-government' (quoted in Negri, 2000: 160).

Here, Jefferson was praising the construction of what he termed the 'Empire of Freedom', where power was to be exercised over others while internal democracy would construct an apparently natural state of justice. Thus, freedom in this empire has distinct meanings – whether you consider it to be used inside or outside – while equality and fraternity were not even part of the formula. Tocqueville interpreted the foundation of this new form of power as 'soft despotism', in which the actual means of power were exercised using deceitful – as opposed to frank and open – methods of violence.

Noam Chomsky (2003) analyses the formation of this empire to understand both the contemporary state of affairs and what would ultimately lead it to become a Terrorist State, promoting wars against non-aligned states in order to impose rules, laws, and means of production (in short, the means of fetish). As a metaphor, he asserts that behind the mask of the Emperor there is a Pirate:

St. Augustine tells the story of a pirate captured by Alexander the Great, who asked him 'how he dares molest the sea.' 'How dare you molest the whole world?' the pirate replied: 'Because I do it with a little ship only, I am called a thief; you, doing it with a great navy, are called an Emperor' (Chomsky, 2003, p. vii).

Thus, the fetish of empire is only a more sophisticated means of expropriation. Nevertheless, this is not a completely new invention. The British Empire already ruled a vast area 'through and by the natives' (Frederick Lugard) using the symbolic power of coercion to impose its rules and laws on colonies, as in the famous couplet 'Whatever happens, we have got the Maxim Gun, and they have not' – the Maxim Gun was the weapon most associated with the British imperial conquest, and it was patented by the

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and food to most of them in exchange for their work, helped to develop the unity of this fast-producing style and later managed their work as valuable 'assets'. The question, again, is not simply to determine whether impressionism is a fetish or a 'discovery'; rather, the question is to understand how the whole field of art is full of these types of 'bets', where the whole field is just a systemic casino, in which the people in positions of power create the rules (and manoeuvres) of how the dice rolls. It goes without saying that impressionist painting indeed has a magical beauty.

former American and later British inventor Hiram Stevens. Hiram Stevens was also famous for litigating in court against Thomas Jefferson over the patent of the light bulb. These episodes, in which the truth of an invention is litigated, are not exceptions of contexts of wars. There are many such cases: the litigation between Newton and Leibnitz over the invention of the differential calculus, or Santos Dumont and the Wright brothers over the invention of the airplane, or even the centrality of Darwin in the ‘invention’ of evolution. All of those can only be explained by the analysis of Empires fighting for positions of power, which allows imposing their fetish.

Investigating architecture in Thomas Jefferson’s Empire, Mary Woods (1999) unveiled the formation of the ‘professional architect’ in America, replacing the former version of gentlemen architects such as Jefferson himself. Instead of coming from a noble background, this new kind of architect emerged as a modern professional, situated in between clients and builders. Nevertheless, Woods asserts that Jefferson personally supported many such architects, and the profession was gradually constructed outside the realms of the old elite, thus developing into a new field of liberal professionals. A new (liberal) Empire creates a new (liberal) form of fetish.

The above discussion comes to a high point that closes a circle. As we mentioned above, Foucault asserted that it is not the case that knowledge is power; rather, power is the position of defining knowledge and truth. Thus, those in positions of power (be they nobles in the courts, Boris Johnson or David Cameron) are able to impose a specific *sprezzatura* of reality. This circle brings us back to the first quotation of Mary Woods in the *intermezzo*. In Egypt, architects were part of the royal court, and the very first figure of an architect was Senenmut. Senenmut was a former Steward of the Queen, a position that developed his knowledge and allowed him to serve members of royalty by transforming fetish into concrete architectural objects, the fundamentals of Egyptian civilisation. Thus, the re-emergence of the new class of butlers in London (Batty, 2016) – highly educated professionals occupied with serving the 1000 ‘family offices’ and managing the wealth of the new superrich from inside their houses – should come as no surprise. The circle is closed: the new geniuses are themselves objects, servants of the status quo.

Despite the advances of her research, in an interview, Mariana Mazzucato declared that she was not saying that Steve Jobs was not a genius but rather that one should recognise

the bigger picture of how innovation is really developed in society. With this analysis, we show that one must go a step further and assert the unpleasant consequences of these findings. Steve Jobs was not a genius who invented the iPhone, he was a representation of a collective desire, a narrative able to capture the work of others as his own. This representation is the figure of a Prince (in Althusser's sense, as mentioned in Chapter 2, and to be further developed in the next chapter dealing with phantasies). However, this point should be sufficient for now, as we should summarise the topic of fetish in architecture.

### **5.6. The techniques of phenomena: conceptualising fetish in architecture**

Arguably, the movement known as 'Autonomism' has investigated production through a renewed analysis of Marx's (no date [1857]) account of the 'general intellect' in the 'Fragments on Machines' in his notes called the *Grundrisse*. There, Marx proposes that the actual force of production is the general knowledge that results from society's functioning as a complete ensemble. Nevertheless, this knowledge is increasingly objectified into machines, which, in turn, function as devices to capture more of society's collective productive forces. Thus, machines function as means of control and expropriation: 'In machinery, knowledge appears as alien, external to him [the labourer]; and living labour [appears as] subsumed under self-activating objectified labour' (Marx, no date [1857], p. 695). This passage in Marx has been very fruitful for contemporary critical theory because it envisions how the actual production of innovation, science and technological development occurs under the development of mechanisms to frame and capture social work.<sup>87</sup>

For Paolo Virno (2001), the dialectical nature of Marx's materialism could not be seen as today's 'Marxism', as for Virno, Marx reveals how the material conditions of production are objectified abstract scientific knowledge fixed into capital (one could say

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<sup>87</sup> The fundamental contradiction between the (neo)classical economy and a (neo)Marxist political economy is thus the theory of 'Labour' value. In Marx, the value of a product comes from labour. Indeed, for Adam Smith and David Ricardo, that was also the case. However, mathematically, this is incompatible with any ethical justification of capitalism because value has to be extracted from the workers by the capitalist. This sheds light on the neo-classical mathematical economy of Michio Morishima (1977), which ultimately demonstrates micro-economy's assumptions to be incompatible with the labour theory of value. Morishima resolves this problem by simply eliminating ('abandoning') concrete labour from his formulas.

‘past labour’), thus revealing an ‘inter-subjective foundation’ in any labour praxis.<sup>88</sup> For Lazzarato (2014, p. 31), this radically changes the search for a subject of history, as this condition is neither a representation nor a consciousness but rather a mechanistic entanglement of molecular parts. In this realm, there are no individual subjects being dominated (as in personal enslavement), rather, there is diagrammatic management of all workers in society.<sup>89</sup>

In addition, David Harvey (2010, p. 40) stretches the emphases of Marx’s *Capital* into the ‘roles’ people play in the market system. In this system, social relations are

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<sup>88</sup> For Virno (2001), the fundamental contradiction between knowledge and product did not – due to new forms of domination in post-Fordist societies – result in the breakdown of capitalism as expected by Marx. For Virno, the mass intellectuality that is not objectified in machines is later captured by a mass control of communication and sharing, thus controlling living labour. Furthermore, a politics of affects and cynicism makes possible a widespread pseudo-solidarity with those suffering, and at the same time it becomes the basis of ferocious forms of competition. As Jason Reads puts it: ‘Competition is a paradoxical form of individuation in that it produces individuals who are all the more alike in that they see themselves as absolutely opposed to each other, locked into bitter struggle.’ (Read, 2010, 130)

<sup>89</sup> Some critics are correct about the contemporary neoliberal emphasis on creative and immaterial labour as a more radical form of expropriation, but they presuppose that critically approaching a topic corresponds to a naïve acceptance of the process, thus equating praise (Florida, 2002) and critique (Lazzarato, 1993) (see Brouillette, 2009). Nevertheless, a careful reading of Lazzarato (2014), searching for context rather than fragmented contradictions, could not avoid the fact that Lazzarato is well aware of the paradoxes involved (as Marx was in his fragments), aiming to develop an account of how labour is increasingly being reified by abstract machines, thus, no being is a naïve safe harbour for freedom. Even if one might disagree with the lack of concreteness (Lazzarato, 2014, pp. 26, 37), the myth of free will and the complete human (p. 27), the disregard of how this complete man could also be exploited (p. 38), an excessive semiotic (p. 39) and excessive effectiveness of abstract causality (p. 42), a lack of attention to the production of the consumer rather than just the producer (p. 43), punctual reinforcements of the myth of the bourgeois inventor (p. 45) and some absurd accounts of the conception of machines producing themselves as a magic trick (accepting fetish) or the idea of consuming as producing (the distinction of realisation and the increasing role of reproduction on it) (p. 49) and a non-reflexive account as if processes of subjectification would happen only under capitalism (p. 51), and thus disagree with his conclusions, this disagreement does not justify matching the critic and the described object. Therefore, apart from academic competition and its endless necessity of proving creativeness and originality (Brouillette, 2013), it is fair to say Lazzarato is not Florida. Brouillette references her critique of the multitude in Postone (see Postone, 1995; Slater, 2006), who is very keen to develop straw man arguments to produce superficial slogans supposedly able to capture absolute essences and dismiss, once and for all, entire lines of thought. Nevertheless, Postone aims to assert that labour is already a historical form inserted in the context of capitalism, thus, the party responsible for capitalist expropriation (a clear inversion of cause and effect) is thus unable to provide any source of autonomy and should rather be combated. For Scholz (2016), Postone focuses on the first 150 pages of Marx volume 1, circumscribing his critique on commodity and abstraction of labour, thus disregarding how the capitalist system is considered as a whole and how the third volume reveals the inherent contradiction of commodity, only superficially addressed in volume 1. For Scholz, the result of Postone is to understand Marx’s suggestion of the overcoming of the proletarian class as a defence of the enlightenment of the middle class as the subject of history. As it relates to our study in this moment, it will suffice it to say that the autonomists and such are trying to develop, as criticism, their own version of a gramscian subject, be it the ‘multitude’ or the ‘enlightened’. Rather than asking if the worker is the ‘soul’, ‘stolen’ or ‘colonised’, we aim to investigate how, besides being produced, these (architect-)subjects are theoretical devices that do not comprise the collective nature of culture and identity. Thus, architects (subjects) are neither enclosed capsules nor a collection of capsules, leading to the analysis of how subjectivities are socially produced and composed transversally and meta-individually.

presented as an exchange of things (Harvey, 2010, p. 41). In addition, even if one might have ethical and moral principles when dealing with people face-to-face in the buying of a commodity in the market, these relations appear as relations between things (commodity-money) and therefore as inevitable facts. For instance, at the moment you buy bread, you are reinforcing the system as much as your retirement fund is managing assets in the global market. For this reason, Harvey (2010, p. 47) says this creates an unavoidable condition, which imposes specific 'roles' because 'the characters who appear on the economic stage are merely personifications of economic relations'. Therefore, people will, even unwillingly, become 'the bearers' of capitalistic social relations.<sup>90</sup> In this sense, it is not a matter of a 'bad' architect enslaving another but rather of a whole field of practice working as a collective apparatus reifying subjectivities, which is producing new object-subjects of fetish.

Thus, Marx's fragment on machines and his considerations of the production of social relations in the form of fetishism led many authors to investigate how subjectivity is produced in contemporary society rather than to investigate how subjects could free themselves, find their supposed true natures and be autonomous individuals acting in the historical process (Guattari, 1995; Lazzarato, 2014; Read, 2010; Spencer, 2012).

For Jason Read (2010, p. 155), the expression 'production of subjectivity' has a double meaning: as something 'productive' and as something 'produced'. Subjectivity is historically produced by multiple processes of individualisation in physical, biological, collective, psychic, linguistic, and cultural sensibilities and through power struggles. At the same time, it is productive of social relations that impact the possibilities of action in society. Read rescues this idea from Marx's *Capital*:

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<sup>90</sup> Harvey elucidates this point with an example: 'recognizing that individuals can and do often occupy several different roles, even deeply contradictory positions (as when, in our time, a worker has a pension fund invested in the stock market). This focus on roles rather than individuals is as perfectly legitimate as if we were analysing the relations between drivers and pedestrians in the streets of Manhattan: most of us have taken on both roles and adapt our behaviors accordingly' (Harvey, 2010, p. 48). The implication, he explains, is 'that our social relation to the laboring activities of others is disguised in the relationships between things. You cannot, for example, figure out in the supermarket whether the lettuce has been produced by happy laborers, miserable laborers, slave laborers, wage laborers or some self-employed peasant. The lettuces are mute, as it were, as to how they were produced and who produced them [...] It is all very well to insist on "good" face-to-face relations and to be helpful to one's neighbor, but what is the point of that if we are totally indifferent to all those whom we do not know and can never know, but who plays a vital role in providing us with our daily bread?' (Harvey, 2010, 40)

the special productive power of the combined working day, is under all circumstances, the social productive power of labour, or the productive power of social labour. This power arises from cooperation itself. When the worker co-operates in a planned way with others, he strips off the fetters of his individuality, and develops the capabilities of this species (Marx, 1990, p. 447).

Subjects are always subjects in a collective, therefore, a differentially articulated part of a whole, and the individuations of a metastable field of trans-individuality. This means that a subjectivity is formed by *a priori* elements (language, culture, structure, social expectations, and so on) ‘externalised in machines and internalised in concepts, habits, and ways of thinking’ (Read, 2010, p. 118-119). The political problem emerges regarding how these machines operate not as atoms but transversally, capturing the collective intellect formed by society.

In the contemporary mode of production, there are many examples of such processes. The biggest new businesses are only abstract machineries, platforms that capture not only the labour of others but also their everyday lifestyle. Today, Facebook is the biggest platform for sharing information, which it does without producing any content, only capturing a series of ‘interconnected’ users gladly producing content as a form of leisure, without recognising it as production. Uber might be considered the biggest transportation company in our ‘smart’ times; without owning or maintaining any vehicles, it transfers all the risks of the business to its workers while it also exploits the socially produced infrastructure of the city without paying taxes for it. Similarly, Airbnb offers the largest variety of lodging without owning any of the properties, but it still creates new subjectivities of trendy travellers and kind hostesses based on people gladly providing undervalued goods and/or services in exchange for a ‘social experience’. This goes far beyond Le Corbusier’s trivial house-machine or the pathetic concrete life in Koolhaas’ trivial machinist house depicted in the film ‘Houselife’. Closer to the new non-trivial machines are initiatives at the MIT Media lab, which are creating automatons that reproduce ideological systems through the deployment of algorithmic fetishes in architecture (see Shvartzberg, 2015).

However, the fundamental question here is how does fetish come to inhabit these non-trivial machines? Latour (1986) investigated how abstractions would acquire life when they were reified into technical apparatuses. When a scientist uses an apparatus to observe phenomena, what he sees on the other side of the ‘black box’ of the apparatus is

framed by the past theories and hypothesis that produced that ‘black box’. Thus, he argues, the phenomena this scientist sees only existed through the mediation of the machine, and the machine only existed through the past labour reified on it (the theories inscribed in this material basis). In his words,

The central importance of this material arrangement is that none of the phenomena ‘about which’ participants talk could exist without it. Without a bioassay, for example, a substance could not be said to exist. The bioassay is not merely a means of obtaining some independently given entity; the bioassay constitutes the construction of the substance. Similarly, a substance could not be said to exist without fractionating columns (Photograph 7) since a fraction only exists by virtue of the process of discrimination. Likewise, the spectrum produced by a nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectrometer (Photograph 8) would not exist but for the spectrometer. It is not simply that phenomena *depend on* certain material instrumentation; rather, the phenomena *are thoroughly constituted by* the material setting of the laboratory. The artificial reality, which participants describe in terms of an objective entity, has in fact been constructed by the use of inscription devices. Such a reality, which Bachelard (1953) terms the ‘phenomenotechnique,’ takes on the appearance of a phenomenon by virtue of its construction through material techniques (Latour, 1986, p. 64).

It is in this sense that he explains the ‘black box’ of laboratory equipment using Bachelard’s idea that these scientific apparatuses are ‘reified theories’: ‘When another member handles the NMR spectrometer (...) to check the purity of his compounds, he is utilising spin theory and the outcome of some twenty years of basic physics research’ (Latour, 1986, p. 66). The ideas inscribed and configured on the machine were based on arguments and theories, and these were the results of discussions at conferences and disputes in journals and articles, until they were finally accepted as facts. Thus, the ‘so-called material elements of the laboratory are based upon the reified outcomes of past controversies’ (Latour, 1986, p. 87).

To create a theory of photography, Vilém Flusser (1985) developed a ‘philosophy of the black box’. Flusser (1985, p. 43) argued that it is the photographic camera that performs the operation of transforming reality into codified signals of visual communication, and the photographer is manoeuvred by the few potentialities inscribed in the apparatus. Therefore, the photographer actually looks inside the apparatus rather than outside, thus ‘revealing’ rather than creating. However, for Cabral and Baltazar (2010), analysing Flusser’s theory in the realm of art and technology, it is not a matter of destroying the ‘magic’ of the black box or of making its devices predicable and dull but rather of

opening its internal mechanisms for potential interactivity. A music box would have interactivity, but only repetition; a piano does not reveal its content but allows creation and interactivity, but in the same way as a photographic camera, it does so within a framed realm of possibilities. The challenge is to open the inner realms of the devices for interactivity and creation.

In the field of architecture, the emergence of apparatuses such as CAD, renderers, and 3D software are increasingly ‘entailing’ the production of architecture, in the same sense that a refrigerator ‘entails’ a power source (to use an example from Taylor, 2010, p. 44), thus transforming architects into operators of machined global styles who share content that is capitalised by companies providing access to this content. Furthermore, one could agree with Mark Cousins (2016) that whereas previously, the artist had a symbiotic relation with the ‘brush’, and the architect with the ‘pencil’, today the ultimate apparatus of architectural production is the ‘office’, which enables a ‘genius’ to seduce followers and to channel the work of a legion of workers. With a high-profile office, an architect can expropriate the work of hundreds of others. However, this non-trivial machinery only works if architects desire to be part of it.

Deleuze has famously asked: how do people come to desire their own oppression? For Žižek (2014), the answer of what we desire lies in Phantasies: the narratives a subject creates to build a logical chain of causalities that assures his desires as unconditional. In architecture, once the fetish of the genius architect has collapsed, these phantasies start to emerge raw and naked. This is the topic of the next – and last – chapter.

**CHAPTER 6:**  
**Traversing phantasies: the narratives of desire in architecture**

Proceeding with our investigation of the reproduction of architecture, in this chapter, we aim to finally investigate how this reproduction operates not only in the production of things but also through the reification of the architect's subjectivity itself. If Michel Foucault (1979) investigated how Jeremy Bentham's panopticon framed the subjectivity of modern subjects, we aim to investigate the reproduction of 'Bentham's' subjectivity itself: how his desires and phantasies framed the ways in which he addressed the problem of the production of social relations.

As we observed in Chapter 3, the discipline of architecture is rooted in a narcissistic principle, against which we have launched a 'Copernican Revolution'. The unconscious traces of subjectivities form the preindividualities that allow architects to operate and become individuals in the disciplinary field. Nevertheless, this principle is reproduced on three levels: from reification to fetish to phantasies.

First, the transformation of social relations into things (reification) ultimately reifies architecture itself (transforming it into a collection of things rather than social relations), which, in turn, reifies users and architects (as we observed in the 'fetish' of new public spaces in London). However, if architectural things are actually *produced* social relations, how can they be taken into consideration as neutral or natural facts?

In the last chapter, we focused on the 'how' of this question. Through the reification of the practice of architecture, a fetish becomes a truth (an 'action' that remains part of the delivered 'noun': a verb-noun as a present participle, i.e., a 'dancing table'). Thus, architecture becomes a way of creating truths and hiding artifices about society, architecture and architects themselves. Architects are ultimately reified by their own means of production: the phenomena techniques – which operate in objects (black boxes) through the reification of subjectivities.

Now, we focus on the 'taken into consideration' of this question. Fetish is only able to function if subjects believe in it and desire to take part in it (*parten capit*). However, how do architects come to desire their own reification?

## 6.1. The aim: traversing the phantastic character of architecture

Our argument in this chapter is that reification and fetish are based on the reproduction of architectural phantasies. Phantasies are narratives that build a logical chain of causality that mobilises ‘desires’ and justifies them as if they were ‘facts’. As we shall develop later, we distinguish between fantasy (conscious) and phantasy (unconscious). On the one hand, a fantasy is an imaginary construct, an image, a representation presented as a non-existent object that can be desired or despised. Here, desire is based on a ‘presented’ object of desire. On the other hand, a phantasy operates unconsciously, framing our methods, our senses, our perceptions, and our very ways of reasoning. As phantasies exist *a priori*, architects remain unaware of the phantasies operating through their subjectivities. Because architects believe their methods to be impartial – supposedly universal, necessary, unequivocal, unconditional, value free, positive, and fundamental – their fantasies are based on an ‘absent’ object of desire.

This chapter investigates how the phantasies of the discipline operate a triple narcissism. At the same time, what the architect take into consideration becomes a fact, phantasies turn desires into facts and, inversely, these phantasies also produce desire itself. The latter is the case because phantasies frame ‘subjective senses’, i.e., the ways that architects view themselves in their relation to the conditions of production. Thus, the discipline of architecture creates potential preindividualities and conditions the emergence of transindividuations.

This notion implies a politics and an ethics in the discussions of what is ‘fundamental’ in architecture. To approach that aspect, we made a return to Vygotsky’s dialectical psychology and moved forward to understand how pre- and transindividuations are produced. Through architectural phantasies ideologies are incorporated and articulated in units of subjective senses.

With that critical map, we can locate the different politics of phantasies in the subjectivity of the architect. For now, we should remind the reader that our intention is not to present the whole scope of those phantasies (as in a 1:1 map of the territory); instead, we aim to bring examples to the fore to mark points of reference, to trace axes and to suggest poles in a map conceived to orientate self-reflexivity.

To do that, we chose to consider two phantasies that have deeper and longer traditions and implications in the politics of architecture: the prince and utopia.

Our ultimate aim is not to find the positive truth behind the fake appearance of these phantasies; instead, we aim to unveil how these phantasies have concrete implications in reproducing transindividualities. As such, instead of negating them, we aim to ‘traverse’ these phantasies. This idea comes from Lacan, who argues that a subject cannot escape fantasy but can recognise the elements that constitute his desire and its representation in objects, thus enabling the subject to act reflexively towards his impulses.

Ideally, this traversing of phantasies could enable an architect to reposition himself in the field that reproduces his own desires. Changing the position of the subject also changes the projection of the map (just as the repositioning of the camera changes the picture). Thus, who repositions himself also produces a new map. This does not eliminate the projection distortion; rather, it only makes it identifiable, traversable and available to reflexivity. However, to change the distortion does not mean to be aware of its fetish.

Mythologically, when Buckminster Fuller conceived the Dymaxion map in 1943, he discarded any other alternative by showing off bad ones (just as a magician shows his left hand to hide the card with his right hand).<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Here we turn the fetish against itself (just as Marx did in *Capital*, temporarily assuming in Volume 1 that the market is in equilibrium, allowing him to focus on production, an argument of Harvey, 2010). Anyway, it is worth noting that B. Fuller’s map was not the first to project the world map in icosahedrons, nor was it the first with uninterrupted continents and minimal distortion (Keyes, 2009). In addition, Irving Fisher’s version of regular projection distortions on the icosahedron, was developed by a draftsman and freelance cartographer named Richard Edes Harrison, who worked for *Time-Life*’s Fortune magazine where Fuller first announced his map. In an interview with Keyes, Harrison recalled how Fuller opposed the icosahedron map at that time, insisting on the virtues of the cubo-octahedron. Eleven years later, and after the death of Cahill (the owner of a patent for uninterrupted continents map), Fuller applied for the patent of the Dymaxion map with a modified version on an icosahedron. Keyes suggests that Harrison worked with Fuller, although he was given minor credits in the *Life* publication (which says ‘R. Buckminster Fuller & Life’s cartographic staff’). Nonetheless, it is strictly deductive to assert that Fuller was aware of these former projections, that his proposal was developed with the help of the work of others. The exercise of deconstructing Fuller’s map was done in the first semester of this research. As it happened, the exercise was one of the fundamental moments to gain

Although he argued it was a technical solution to reduce distortion in the planar geometric projection, he was sedimenting a fetish. Concretely, he was taking Europe from the top of Mercator's map and setting the US as the new (horizontal) axe of the world (the 'new Greenwich'). Maybe, he did this to give an aesthetic to the North American civilisation (a fantasy like the one we shall discuss in Frank Lloyd Wright), or maybe his fetishism was unconscious (a phantasy); either way, a [ph]antasy supported a fetish that sedimented a thing that reproduced subjectivities.

Alternatively, when the Uruguayan artist Joaquin Torres Garcia painted an inverted map of the Americas in 1943, he did it to enhance the political visibility of post-colonial choices. Although, his map was technically useless to eliminate distortion, it was aesthetically useful to traverse these distortions. However, it entered the game through protest, demanding the representation of the south-on-top-fetish, and no solution was provided for the north's hierarchical enlarged projection. Arguably, one step further could combine the two maps into a device to traverse its own phantasies.

In the diagram 28 below, we 'traversed' Fuller's map, because the distortion of his geographic coordinates are random and serpentine, making Fuller's fetishistic coordinates worse than useless for navigation. To traverse his fetish, we rotated the icosahedron to a position where two vertices could match the Earth's poles. Although the new range of possible maps does not escape distortions completely, this operation made these distortions less ambiguous and the map more intelligible.

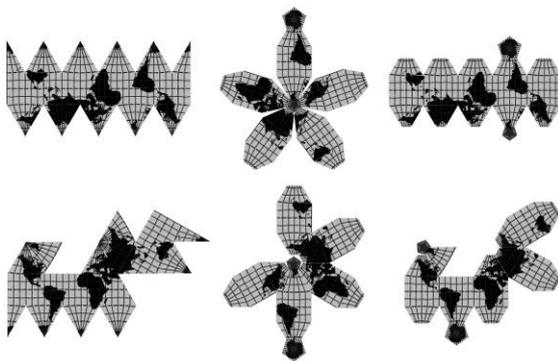


Diagram 28: Traversing map phantasies. Source: the author.

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awareness of the fetishes involved in the production of this map and in the reproduction of architecture as a whole. That said, the awareness of these other maps would have made easier our effort to rebuild Fuller's projections.

Similarly, the following discussion primarily seeks to make less ambiguous and more predictable the role of ‘utopia’ and ‘the prince’ as constitutive fantasies of architecture. Although they cannot be eliminated, they can be traversed through understanding their phantastic truths, tracing their social ‘creations’ and inherent ethics, and revealing how the part is related to the whole – always partially negating and partially departing from it. As such, architectural subjectivity can be understood as the historical inheritance of a culture of things that have been framed by past subjects, who have themselves been inserted into other (ethical and social) contexts.

Žižek argues that Lacan is a key reference to discuss the ‘traversing of phantasies’. For Žižek, the subject can avoid the confusion of ‘what he is’ and ‘what he desires’ not only by recognising the phantastic frames setting these desires in motion (1997, p. 62) but also by closing the gap between ‘imposed’ choices and ‘framed’ choices (Žižek, 1997, p. 40). Vanheule (2011, p. 8) further explains the importance of ‘traversing the fantasy’ for Lacan:

Traversing the fantasy, in its turn, means that through ongoing free association, the positions the analysant has been occupying in relation to the object ‘a’ [the unattainable object of desire] are mapped with the aim of enabling different positions toward the Other’s desire and toward the object ‘a’. The fantasy is traversed with the aim of breaking the repetitive cycle of incarnating the same position in relation to the Other and to the object ‘a’.

In this sense, our cognitive map of phantasies aims to enable subjects to break the cycle of repetition and reproduction of architecture. However, rather than understanding the ‘Other’ as the (absent) ‘structure’ of language or any other deeper ‘dark matter’ in the individual (as does the first, the middle and the last Lacan, respectively representing it in a mirror, in a semiotic double mirror, and in a Moebius individual inner substance), we aim to understand the process of instituting these phantasies as historical and collective operations, i.e., as the social production of collective subjective senses.

To realise this aim, we shall use a preliminary set of examples to elucidate the political and conflicting aspects of the architectural field of phantasies.

## 6.2. *Intermezzo*: Strawberry Fields

*Living is easy with eyes closed  
Misunderstanding all you see  
It's getting hard to be someone  
But it all works out  
It doesn't matter much to me*

*Let me take you down  
'Cause I'm going to Strawberry Fields  
Nothing is real  
And nothing to get hung about  
Strawberry Fields forever*

(The Beatles, *Strawberry Fields*)

In the process of architectural design, on the one hand, we should expect a series of ideologies to frame possible design solutions. On the other hand, the architectural discipline also functions as a phantasy to justify and valorise specific fundamentals for social spaces. However, these processes hide internal contradictions and political presuppositions, which we can approach through some preliminary examples.

A classic example of a ‘substantial fundament’ of architecture is that of Marc-Antoine Laugier’s (1755a and 1755b) ‘primitive hut’.<sup>92</sup> His theory explained the Doric order as a mirror of the supposed essence of habitation. This primitive “essence” is formed of a series of simple and round tree columns with primitive capitals at the top that support a triangular pediment, providing the model of the most ‘essential’ of shapes. Therefore, he argues, the ‘good judgement of a gentleman’ demands an architecture founded in simple, rational and pure elements. In addition, Laugier’s conception of the true origins of architecture would justify the neoclassical (and later the modern) architectural aesthetic. However, Viollet le Duc designed his own version of the ‘primitive hut’

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<sup>92</sup> For the English edition with a title that reveals some of these paradoxes, see Marc-Antoine Laugier, *An essay on architecture; in which its true principles are explained, and invariable rules proposed, for directing the judgement and forming the taste of the gentleman and the architect, with regard to the different kinds of buildings, the embellishment of cities and the planning of gardens* (London: Gray’s inn, 1755), accessed 22 April 2015, <https://ia902706.us.archive.org/35/items/essayonarchitect00laugrich/essayonarchitect00laugrich.pdf>. For the image to be discussed here, see Marc-Antoine Laugier, *Essai sur l’architecture. Nouvelle édition, revue, corrigée, & augmentée*, (Paris: Chez Duchesne, 1755), Accessed 22 April 2015, <http://www.e-rara.ch/zut/content/pageview/31371>.

(Viollet-le-Duc, 1875), drawing on a different logic, as he was fascinated with the ‘*rationalisme structurel*’ of Gothic architecture. In le Duc’s hut, there was no place for ‘elementarisation’: the structure was a continuous and sinuous whole in which each part had a role to play in the overall effect. His essential architecture was based on the systematic structural logic of medieval scholasticism (Panofsky, 1957). A non-trivial question emerges: how can something be universal, fundamental and essential if it is not unconditional? Or would it be the case that the ‘intrinsic nature’ or ‘indispensable quality’ (the essence) of architecture is extraneous and artificial?

Using two contemporary examples, I would like to illustrate how architecture proceeds in the naturalisation of different ethics within its discourses of truth. The first is from Axel Paredes, a Guatemalan architect who developed his own version of the primitive hut. In his thesis project at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Paredes (2007) replaced Laugier’s columns with computer-generated structures and surrounded them with (what are now vintage) Apple Macintosh computers. His argument was that new technologies were reinventing the foundations of the discipline. Therefore, when Paredes was commissioned to build an internet facility for a community in Tecpan, Chimaltenango, he was not interested in the ancient Mayan ruins that dotted the landscape with horizontal monuments. Paradoxically, as the “good judgement” of any contemporary architect demands, he was very keen to open a ‘dialogue’ with the local context. To do so, he understood the context as ‘strawberry fields’, because, while holding a strawberry in his hand, a ‘selfie’ photo magically captured the beauty of the red strawberries as it stood in front of green fields.<sup>93</sup> Without a doubt in his mind, he proposed a red steel building. The prefabricated object appears in photos populated by indigenous people in traditional clothes. The curious kids in the pictures give the scene a sentimental feel. However, the object has no connection to local traditions or local ways of building. Here, modernisation is something to be given – not developed. Therefore, locals are invited to enjoy ‘modernity’ in a few square metres rather than acquiring the means to hold its reins. Locals become visitors in their own territory.

A conflicting example is the proposal of a cultural house for the Xakriabá, an indigenous community in central Brazil that has faced devastating historical pressures to

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<sup>93</sup> Photos of the projects are available at the architects’ Facebook page. Accessed 10 August 2015, [https://www.facebook.com/paredesaleman/photos\\_stream?tab=photos\\_stream](https://www.facebook.com/paredesaleman/photos_stream?tab=photos_stream).

acculturate to Western society. These pressures have detached the community members from old forms of architecture. Inversely, also many forms of resistance emerged, leading to a partnership with the Federal University of Minas Gerais. This includes an interdisciplinary research programme and specific courses and diplomas for *mestizo* knowledge (for *mestizo* knowledge theory, see Gruzinski, 2002). One of these programmes investigated local building knowledge and traditional means of production. Traditional materials and skills were redeveloped together with local artisans, which led to a project brief for a new community house to articulate the activities. In this way, architecture was neither image nor object; it was instead a means through which the community could reinvent itself. Through architecture as a means of ‘researching’, alternative forms of economy – ways of tying wood, ceramics knowledge, *mestizo* techniques and artisanal brick machines – and local work was developed. In this sense, the choice of materials was also a choice for an ‘economy of local solidarity’ (Monte-mór, et al., 2006). Although arguably beautiful, its style was not a frozen image, it had no ‘formal integrity’ to be preserved (Kapp, 2006). Thus, the community appropriated the house in an open way, continuously growing, developing and transforming it. The role of architects became one of partnership, co-creation, and ‘ethno-development’ (Monte-mór, et al., 2006).

These conflicting examples illustrate how the game of the ‘essence’ of architecture is informed by different political agendas, shaping the territory in which architecture is grounded and architects and users are placed. Different aims do not simply inform different inputs of an essential process; instead, architecture itself is a metastable field of conflicting energies. For that reason, one should go all the way through the ‘Strawberry Fields’, where ‘nothing is real’, if one aims to traverse what the above quote of the Beatles’ song described as ‘Living is easy with eyes closed’.

### **6.3. Phantasies and the reproduction of ideological subjective senses**

In Chapter 3, we mapped how Simondon developed an account of individuation that surpasses the simple stability of ontological essences, thus producing a philosophy of ontogenesis by adding a third term to the hylemorphism of matter and form, namely, energy (work, action, tensions, forces). This notion helped us to see that the creation of

a new fetish does not overcome the reproduction of architecture, nor does it mean awareness of the process. It is useless to find beyond one thing another thing (e.g., beyond a ‘primitive hut’ to find a ‘vintage high-tech primitive hut’, or beyond a ‘north-on-top-map’ to find an ‘inverted-map’). This is the reproduction of architecture (S-O-S).

Arguably, traversing the phantasies (as in the traversed map) is to recognise the fundamental gap between the desire that mobilises actions and architectural things (which we used the algorithm  $O < > S < > O$  to express). In addition, we can envision how an individual is not a molecule, he shares a common knowledge and a series of myths and the subject is a metastable system with internal contradictions (in the strawberry fields nothing is real).<sup>94</sup> The subject mediates interior-exterior with a limit and sometimes with an enclosure, but potentially capable of collective individuations (the Xakriabá house is a collective process).

These contradictions, leads us to the key question in this chapter: how do these conflicting subjective senses come into operation? Despite the great interpretative achievements so far, the point is to change architecture: an architecture to change. To advance our understanding of how conflictive preindividualities are produced and how transindividualities are reified, we must explore how ‘subjective senses’ are produced by the linking of the symbolic and the emotional (phantasies), and how this disciplines and reproduces ‘subjective senses’.

We argue that phantasies are the means of operation of the ideological reproduction of subjective senses. Phantasies are the units that constitute one’s subjectivities. We would like to explore this point. Arguing that ideology frames subjectivities via phantasies, Žižek (1997) approximates the concept of ideology and the concept of fantasy, providing an alternative to the Freudian use of the term.<sup>95</sup> For Žižek, phantasies are not inserted in a mysterious centre of the individual; they are instead socially produced,

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<sup>94</sup> In this sense, a conception of architecture – or a particular school of architecture or a certain discipline within this practice – is the production of one dimension in a complex field of multiple dimensions of subjectivity. Consequently, our two-dimensional allegory of the pyramid of the architectural unconscious ultimately reveals itself to be insufficient: this map should also be traversed. Not simply three-dimensional, this territory is multi-dimensional, whereby contradictory psychic states coexist.

<sup>95</sup> The concept of phantasy is not the sole invention of Freud (as the fetishist myth would lead us to believe); it can be traced back to Aristotle. See the *Journal of Ancient Philosophy* - FFLCH/USP ([www.revistas.usp.br/filosofiaantiga](http://www.revistas.usp.br/filosofiaantiga)) (Engl. ed.), São Paulo, v.7, n.1. p. 19-48, 2013. and Kevin White The Meaning of Phantasia in Aristotle's De Anima, III. in *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review / Revue canadienne de philosophie*. Volume 24 Issue 3 October 1985, pp. 483-505.

although they actively exercise power over the individual. Thus, Žižek (1997) inverts the psychoanalytic causality of phantasies from an ‘unconscious drive’ to the ‘narratives’ that produce or justify desire. For him, the fundamental question is as follows: how do we know that we desire a ‘strawberry pie’ in the first place?<sup>96</sup>

The first thing to note is that fantasy does not simply realize a desire in a hallucinatory way: rather, its function is similar to that of Kantian ‘transcendental schematism’: a fantasy constitutes our desire, provides its coordinates; that is, it literally ‘teaches us how to desire’. (...) To put it in somewhat simplified terms: fantasy does not mean that when I desire a strawberry cake and cannot get it in reality, I fantasize about eating it; the problem is, rather: how do I know that I desire a strawberry cake in the first place? This is what fantasy tells me (Žižek, 1997, p. 7).

Returning to our *intermezzo*, we might ask the following: how does an architect know that he desires a ‘strawberry field’ in the first place?

As subjective senses assume an actualised individuation in the subject through the production of phantasies (a narrative that provides linear causal links to justify one’s desire), Žižek argues that desire does not create fantasy; instead, phantasy produces desire. For Žižek,

Desire emerges when drive gets caught in the cobweb of Law/prohibition (...) and fantasy is the narrative of this primordial loss, since it stages the process of this renunciation (...) In this precise sense, fantasy is the very screen that separates desire from drive\*, it tells the story which allows the subject to (misperceive the void around which drive circulates as the primordial loss constitutive of desire. In other words, fantasy provides a rationale for the inherent deadlock of desire (Žižek, 1997, p. 43).

Nevertheless, ‘drive’ is an inconvenient reminiscent of Freud’s substantialism in Žižek’s argument. Here, we do conceive phantasy as the appearance – a ‘mask’ – of a ‘dark’ substance (nor we conceive phantasy as a multi-layered mask of a drive’s substantive void, as Žižek argues for). Instead, we understand phantasy in the context of a ‘production of subjective senses’ (in the tradition of Vygotsky), operating in Simondon’s transindividual field. If in Plato’s philosophy the ‘phantasma’ is the

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<sup>96</sup> Žižek does not make clear a difference between fantasy and phantasy, as we mentioned in the introduction. But this quote points to the conflicting meanings, differentiating ‘fantasy’ and ‘fantasise about’. Arguably the two variations (conscious and unconscious) have roles in the architectural reproduction, and we shall demonstrate this below, in section 6.5.

distortion of reality produced by the five senses of perception, here, the phantasy is the actualised reality reproduced by the subjective senses.

This theoretical framework (a unit of ‘subjective sense’ under construction) offers new possibilities for approaching architecture and its production of the architect’s subjectivity, elucidating not only the paradoxes that emerged in our fieldworks but also the overall process: phantasies reproducing trapped practices of architects. This is the overall process because, as in the case of utopias, phantasies only function if we believe in them, as is also the case in, for instance, religion. Thus, our inquiry reaches its climax: what causes architects to desire their own oppression? The reproduction of architecture: entangled reifications (disentangled in Chapter 4), which are produced by veiled fetish (unveiled in Chapter 5), which are reproduced by disciplined phantasies, i.e., reified subjective senses (to be traversed below).

Next, we aim to map two of these phantasies that are at the core of the discipline of architecture (prince complex and utopia). We aim to untie the deadlocks of architectural desire and to trace the picture architects create of themselves and their action in the world. These phantasies will be approached according to the systematisation of the table below.

*Core phantasies of architecture*

<i>The Prince</i>		<i>Utopia</i>	
<i>Individual</i>	<i>Collective</i>	<i>Absent</i>	<i>Present</i>
<i>Machiavellian</i>	<i>Gramscian</i>	<i>Blind</i>	<i>Naïve</i>
<i>Pathetikos</i>	<i>Commons</i>	<i>Resigned/Tailist</i>	<i>Virtual</i>
<i>Hysterical</i>		<i>U-utopian</i>	
<i>(Transindividual)</i>		<i>(Traversing)</i>	

We will start with the prince phantasy, because we have already introduced the topic in earlier chapters, especially in Chapter 3 where we discussed the main conceptions of the subject of architecture, and how this is reproduced in architecture and in Chapter 5 where we identified how the reification of architecture leads to the reification of the architect by means of fetish. Taking those analysis into account, in section 6.4 we will trace back how these different subjects of architecture operate, resulting in the characterisation of six types of prince. To use the metaphor of diagram 28, this creates a new set of geographic coordinate projections in our cognitive map, aiming to make the differences less ambiguous and more intelligible. In section 6.5, we will investigate another set of coordinates for utopia, this time exploring deeper and in more details the contradictions of each type, so we can finally (in section 6.6.) trace the route to traverse these phantasies.

#### **6.4. The prince phantasy: an architecture of the self**

As we argued in Chapter 3, Jodi Dean's inversion of Althusser's argument revealed how the capitalist ideology interpellates the subject as an individual. Similarly, our point here is not that the subject of architecture is a prince; rather, current subjective sensibilities reproduced by the field of architecture interpellate architects as princely subjects. In Chapter 3, we also observed how Althusser turned the Machiavellian prince into a concept to understand the means of political action.

As ghosts in the realm of architectural preindividualities, the prince appears in different forms, as subjects are represented differently in their roles in political transformation. A geometric plane needs three points to be defined in space. We will use these princely forms to create these points of reference in the field. The diagram 29 below locates different points of representation for such princes. Two axes are traced – a horizontal axis that opposes the poles of dialectics and discipline and a vertical axis that opposes the phantasmatic and the potential poles.

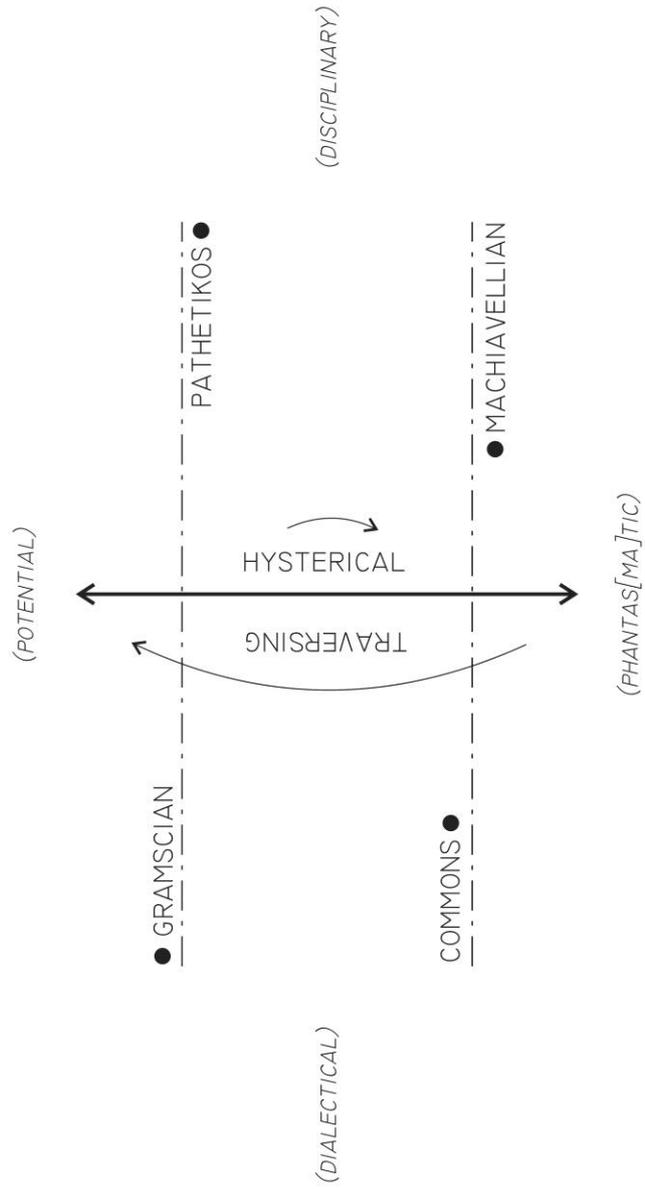


Diagram 29: Axes of the prince phantasies. Source: the author.

In the diagram 29, the classic Machiavellian prince is designed within the ‘rules of the game’, but this prince crosses the boundaries of the common sense, because it acknowledges and instrumentalises his phantasmatic image. The image of the prince is a ‘representation’ of collective desires, which captures social power. The *pathetikos* prince receives his name from Aristotelian psychology, in which ‘*nous pathetikos*’ is a passive form of subjectivity. As such, the *pathetikos* prince manages to articulate great potentials in the field, although never crossing the boundary into creating new opportunities. Aravena is the epitome of the *pathetikos* prince of architecture. As Gramsci (no date [1929-1935]) formulated the ‘cultural block’ and the ‘organic intellectual’ based on a dialectical critique of Machiavelli, this Gramscian prince occupies a diametrically opposed position in the field. Although able to mobilise new potentials, in the way back to architecture this prince does not manage to traverse representations. This condition locks him in a deadlock of ‘protest’, as we observed in the work of Aldo Rossi (see Chapters 1 and 3). In Antonio Negri, the multitude (i.e., the ‘commons’ as a prince) is diametrically opposed to a pathetic acceptance of reality. Nevertheless, the commons is still trapped within the limitations of the *status quo*, as the average character of the commons cannot be based on anything but current common sense, itself a terrifying ideological field, ignoring fetish completely. Cunningly, the hysterical prince operates by moving along the vertical axis, connecting phantasies and potentials. Nevertheless, trapped within the constraints of the *status quo*, the hysterical prince acts to frame potentialities into phantasmagorias. Alternatively, traversing the prince phantasy depends on acknowledging the phantastic character of architectural transindividuality and his own phantasmagorical individuation. For that, a mediation of new potential and old individuated phantasies must be operated to create an individualisation of new collective subjects, who are aware of their existence in a *relation to the world* and in a *position from* which they can act in it.

Before we use this framework to enlighten the current condition, an important point must be made: although the prince provides no ‘substantial’ truth about how architecture is made, he represents a phantasy that has concrete consequences. Architectural princes are individuations that only reproduce the field of architecture into new appearances ( $S_1 - O_1 - S_1'$ ). Nevertheless, as we observed above, to conceive of an actual transformation ( $O_1 < > S_1 + S_2 + S_3 < > O_2$ ) the role of collective individuations of architecture must be repositioned (an event in Badiou’s theory). In other words, collapsing the naturalness of the architectural princes is a small first step on new routes,

but it is a hard one to build. We have been building this step since the beginning, and now we have traced the coordinates to assess “coordinate distortions”. With that, we move on to look back at the field and identify the position of key points of reference – princes – for the discipline.

As we have observed throughout the history of architecture, subjects are being trapped in the field – from Senenmut, effectively a butler to the elite, to Thomas Jefferson, the pirate emperor, who are still preindividualities being reproduced in the field of architecture. Throughout this history, architects have had a special relationship with power. As Le Corbusier cheered the rise of fascism in Italy (see Brott, 2013) and worked alongside the Vichy government in France (Jackson, 2001), he proposed his famous axiom: ‘architecture or revolution’. Koolhaas approaches power in a similar way, he admires the Chinese State power ability to impose utopias (Spencer, 2016), praises the association of Japanese metabolists with political centralisation (Cunningham and Goodbun, 2012), and worked with the European Union in the reification of the European flag into a symbol of commoditisation – the barcode. The information is always the same: we architects serve fetish for power.

As Cunningham and Goodbun (2012) note, Koolhaas start his account of the metabolist princes almost as a fairytale, but one where cities were demolished ‘into radioactive rubble’ in a new post-apocalyptic tabula rasa. But we shall instead start our tale of phantasies by noting that there is no tabula rasa in the architectural disciplining of subjectivities, and hysterical princes, such as Koolhaas himself, are the radioactive reminiscences of a practice permanently on the verge of collapsing. As a matter of fact[ish], collapse is the very means of their triumph.

### *The Machiavellian prince*

Althusser (2000) understands Machiavelli’s prince as the production of a device that manages *fortuna* (the unpredictable contingency of context) to capture public will by means of *virtu* (i.e., the wise and rational orchestration of collective desire and, we could say, through phantasies). In this sense, the prince is only a public image, who is concerned with only the effective power of producing a certain truth rather than with

truth itself. Thus, this image could support a mystical narrative of social affairs, which is capable of capturing social expectations to build a chain of causalities in a linear narrative that increases the power of the prince.

In this sense, the prince is not power himself; instead, he is an effective image for political aims. In these terms, a prince is not a substance or a structure, and he provides power as long as his image is able to guide operations. Only by means of this fetish is a prince the subject of transformation. Arguably, applying the concept of the prince to architecture better captures how architecture interpellates the subjectivity of architects because he can provide an account of the politics of fetish and the mobilisation of transindividual desires. Although many current critiques of architecture use the term ‘star architects’, these critiques do not provide a viable framework for answering these questions, thus reinforcing the myths they aim to criticise.

Derived from its use to describe celebrities in movies and music, the ‘star’ concept implies that an individual has special qualities, outstanding abilities, or the capacity to impose his magnetic power over others, just as astronomical stars do. In the same way that we analysed – in Chapter 5 – the myth of the genius in various fields, a close approach to actors would reveal that they too are representations, myths, and images of their underlying means of production (marketing, film industry, magazines, professional agents, schools, class hierarchy, social connection, and so on). In this sense, the star concept only reproduces the reality that it aims to criticise.

Comparing architects to film directors or producers would also be flawed, as the latter two are also only mythological effective images that mask what is actually collective work. As we observed in Chapter 3, using Tafuri’s (2006) approach to the prince will also be inadequate. Although his work made great advances in locating the social context of architectural production, his method ultimately reproduces (without acknowledging) the interpellation of the ‘genius’ because it critiques architecture by approaching individual architects. Simondon’s terms might elucidate this point: Tafuri critiques the already individuated architects as though they were the fundamental substance. The torsion of Tafuri is the following: first he asserts that the ‘base’ is the cause and architecture is the automatic effect, and immediately after, he focuses his account on the effect (the individual architects) rather than on the process (the individuation of subjectivities and the production of phantasies). But the prince

architects that he criticises are just images capturing what is a transubjective and collective work.

For instance, although Tafuri (1976b, p. 140) noted that Frank Lloyd Wright made the decisive shift towards what would become his famous style by using all of his wife's fortune in The Broadacre City project, he fails to address the means by which this project was produced. With that capital, Wright created the 'Taliesin Fellowship' (a messianic school in the middle of the desert), with this means he appropriated the work of a series of collaborators and apprentices as his own (Friedland and Zellman, 2007). Wright's style is the product of a collective that was appropriated by him. Better said, appropriated by his myth of genius. If Broadacre City brought him close to bankruptcy, it also made him a 'symbol' of US architecture. This was not unintentional. In his lectures, he was very clear in the aim to become the icon for the style of a US civilisation to be spread around the world. Architecture was a means to capture collective subjectivities and to reproduce collective subjectivities. Therefore, the point is not to recognise that Broadacre City project is a reflex of the American society (a satellite image is enough to reveal how the grid and the arrangement of nature and urban interventions is just a representation of the local scenario in an image of a new universal truth). The point is to understand how these phantasies (both the prince and the utopia) further reproduce this reality by colonising the subjectivity of others.

In our own society of spectacle and immaterial toil, the "princes" imploded upon themselves. If the architectural office was once the elite's stronghold, dividing intellectual and manual work, it is now becoming the new sweatshop. In this sense, Bjarke Ingels gives a first-hand account of what it was like to work in Rem Koolhaas's office (Parker, 2012). The only way to rise in rank at OMA was by acquiring 'more and more sorrows', by creating 'space for designers beneath me in responsibility to crank out cool stuff'. Ingels recalls episodes of yelling and 'hurling of office supplies' and that designers were under constant tension and stress due to negative reinforcement. At some point, he felt he 'had paid [his] dues', and decided to open his own office. What was his alternative? To create his own sweatshop, employing dozens of architects, using up-to-date behaviourist techniques: rather than "negative" he uses "positive" reinforcement (a more tender dressage).

This transforms intellectual work into subjectification. The role of Craig Webb in Frank Gehry's office, captured in the movie *Sketches of Frank Gehry* (2006), demonstrates how an architect who doesn't know how to switch on a computer can be the "prince" of computer-generated forms by transforming another architect (Webb) into a puppet. The image of the prince justifies the expropriation of collective work.

In this sense, a critical approach to Machiavelli's account can focus on the process of 'becoming being' of an architect. Althusser's interpretation of Machiavelli's prince is capable of systematising the process of producing this fetishist practice in critical terms. In addition, to achieve these ends, his interpretation includes a dimension of political power in the production of accepted collective narratives (as socially shared chains of causality). The ontogenesis of individuated architectural princes reveals a preindividual field that not only frames possible individuations but also constructs a field of inequalities that reproduces reification and fetish.

### *The Gramscian prince*

In his research on the development of political struggles, Gramsci (no date [1929-1925]) combined the discussion of Machiavelli and the Marxist debate, developing the concepts of 'historical bloc' and 'organic intellectual' (Gramsci, 1989), which inspired many counter-hegemonic struggles. For Gramsci (1929-1935), a revolutionary moment in history would only occur when 'social groups become conscious of their own social being, their own strength, their own tasks'. His historical bloc was a widespread and transversal consciousness that would unite divergent individuals in one unique endeavour. Thus, consciousness would depend on a mixed convergence of social conditions.

Perhaps Aldo Rossi's take on the organic intellectual in architecture has been the most influential one, even though the radicalism of his propositions has been largely downplayed by pacifying his thoughts. To understand how architecture produces 'historical blocs', Aldo Rossi (1982) developed a political anthropology to understand urban spaces as artefacts of labour and thus concrete forms filled with abstract and collective desires.

Rossi's concept of *Genius Loci* aimed to capture this complex network of territory, history and collective memories that shapes a peculiar form of living. We can understand his concept as a parallel to Hegel's spirit of the time: the *Genius Loci* as a concrete spirit (or a de-spiritualised subjectivity), i.e., a culture engraved in a place. Thus, Rossi would argue that the city is a political and cultural project built over time and that this condition creates what he called a *Tendenza* – i.e., a direction that shapes the possibility of life in a specific place.<sup>97</sup>

Nevertheless, Rossi is trapped in the 'protest' deadlock, as we saw above. Although he enabled a powerful critical view to identify how architecture is used as an instrument to capture the general intellect, his works accept the field of architecture 'as it is' and, as alternative, they use architecture to represent the 'proletariat'. Ultimately, architecture remains trapped in the same system of representation and reproduction. In this sense, to overcome the idea of a 'prince' as the subject of history seems to demand the development of a 'neo'-Gramscian perspective on architectural production (as argued Jameson, 2000, p. 452).<sup>98</sup>

### *The multitude*

The debate surrounding subjects' 'place' in society, the subject that can transform society and which 'class' is to be object of his consciousness has stretched into the present, with theoreticians such as Negri (1997; 2000, pp. 393-413; 2003) identifying 'empire' as the place and 'multitude' as the identity of the subject or Standing (2011) identifying the 'precariat' as a new class to gain consciousness and act as subjects of history. As mentioned in the introduction, David Harvey (2000, p. 32) proposes a generalisation of this search. For him, as factory workers could universalise their

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<sup>97</sup> As Aureli demonstrates (2008, p. 4 -20), Aldo Rossi has a long-standing relationship with the Left, particularly with the Venice group *Tendenza* and the *Autonomists*. Aureli (2008, p. 53-54) argues that Rossi has developed the concept of locus in architecture as a political category of the city. Instead of blind modernisation, he proposes a re-foundation of the city via a new relationship with architecture. For Rossi, to propose a building is to simultaneously recreate the city's symbolic structure. In this sense, a city should construct its own tradition when re-appropriating the bourgeoisie city. Therefore, architecture should create alternatives: 'a political and cultural project, a *tendenza*' (Aureli, 2008, p.58).

<sup>98</sup> Arguably, to go beyond Gramscian architects (*organic intellectuals* who produce new historical blocs, while reproducing the existing discipline and reproducing himself as an individual prince), one will need to traverse the dialectical interpellations of the discipline of architecture (which produces the subjectivity of architects and users, while reproducing their architectural unconscious and reproducing society).

demands to the benefit of society as a whole, any kind of particularity able to create a universal claim could assume the character of a conscious subject to move history forward. This would be the case as long as they manage to ‘project their militant particularism as the basis for a wide-ranging social reconstruction that will advantage, if not save, us all’ (as was the case with ecological movements, feminists, gay pride, and so on).

Nevertheless, the idea of the ‘The Commons’ (with capital ‘T’ and ‘C’) does not take into account the reproduction of subjectivities and the permanence of reified presubjectivities inside the very common sense. The Commons presupposes a collective and social nature of shared subjectivities, which, arguably, is not a unity in principle, as the emergence of the Podemos in Spain was accompanied by the emergence of Ciudadanos; the emergence of Syriza in Greece by the rise of Golden Dawn; the protests for free transportation in Brazil by a coup d’état; the rise of Jeremy Corbyn in Britain by the campaign for Brexit; the rise of Bernie Sanders in the US by Donald Trump; and so on. This means that the subjectivity commonly shared has contradictions, and although collective, it might negate this very collectivity. In this sense, in a field shaped by discipline (such as architecture) could be expected to have more conservative than radical potentialities, and its commons is exactly the object that should be traversed.

Therefore, trapped within the limitations of the *status quo* and relying on the common ground of a society immersed in reified subjectivities, this account is unable to traverse its own phantasies, thereby at best encouraging conspiracy theories. Thus, this account becomes the inverted image of that which it fights against: the pathetic acceptance of reality as it is (i.e., our next prince).

### *The pathetikos prince*

In *Modern Painters*, John Ruskin (1987) created the term pathetic fallacy to address the sentimentality of 18<sup>th</sup>-century poetry, asserting that ‘the foam is not cruel, neither does it crawl. The state of mind which attributes to it these characters of a living creature is one in which the reason is unhinged by grief’.

The Venice Biennale of 2016 was directed by Alejandro Aravena. In Chapter 1, we delineated how Aravena's architecture is fundamentally a charitable dead end (pretending to solving a problem with the poison that has created it). At the Biennale, he achieved an outstanding sublimation of this position.

Drawing upon a vague sentimentality, we could reframe Ruskin's argument as follows: Aravena's conception of architecture does not simply fallaciously describe the cruelty of the world and the messianic role of his 'good design'; it is a fetishist description of his own desires for poverty as an object of manipulation. This reframing takes the deadlock of resignation to an entirely new level. As in the Foucauldian management of inequalities, architecture becomes an instrument of surveillance in response to a perceived risk. The precarious condition of poverty becomes an instrument of both conversion into the system and exploitation.

As Douglas Spencer (2016) asserts, the resignation of the 'Franciscan Turn' was the foundation of the logic of neoliberalism. Claiming evangelical poverty, the order had subjected itself to a precarious life that, rather than being reclusive, depended on the *status quo* for mendicancy and trading, which ranged from donations to the selling of places in heaven. Similarly, Mother Teresa has been criticised for using charity as a means of imposing colonialism and racism; reinforcing questionable regimes, self-promotion, money laundering; and, ultimately, converting people in precarious conditions to her own beliefs.

Similarly, this type of prince, now shining in the field of architecture, is not simply accepting the *status quo* anymore, nor is it simply ignoring the 'real tackling of the problem' in favour of beautiful design. This architecture depends on the reproduction of inequalities as a source of objects of manipulation. Marvellously conceived, with spectacular images and installations, the last Biennale is the beauty-reification of poverty. This world is cruel, and it crawls. As Aristotle divided the intellect into the active intellect (*nous poietikos*) and the passive intellect (*nous pathetikos*), intellectuals in architecture have become the passive matter on which the logic of neoliberal capitalism operates. Beyond blind or resigned, architecture becomes pathetic.

### *The hysterical prince*

Despite Koolhaas' (no date [1976]) description of his method in Freudian terms, it is not a paranoid method (deconstructing imposed identities for fear of being manipulated by others), nor is it psychosis (the impairment of thought and emotion that detaches from external reality) or even what others have described as perversion (a behaviour that enjoys breaking away from orthodoxy but that paradoxically reinforces it). Instead, this kind of prince is based on hysteria: a repetitive traumatic behaviour triggered by the anxiety of the 'loss' of power.

Here, there is a delight in abdicating (as we mapped in Chapter 1). The architect does not exercise power; he serves power. Architecture is considered an automatic response to 'natural' tendencies in society. Thus, architects do not act; they merely actualise tendencies. In this sense, they express the symptoms of crises, pathologically enjoying them. The subject does not fear being controlled by others (as in the case of paranoia); because there is no other subject of action than 'just the way things are'. Thus, the architect can locate himself outside any 'blame' (and ethics), enjoying his pathological behaviour and the 'madness' of reality as an inescapable condition, as though he were not taking part in the action.

Examples of that attitude (as we shall return to below in our analysis of utopias) are two of Koolhaas' proposals: 'The City of the Captive Globe' – from his book *Delirious New York* (Koolhaas, 1994), where he turns neoliberalism, egotism and the 'technology of the fantastic' into an unconditional condition – and 'Exodus: or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture' – from his 1972 Architectural Association thesis, where he extends the horror of the Berlin Wall's segregation into an architectural condition for freedom through self-imprisonment. The same is true for his more recent proposals, such as *Junkspace* (Koolhaas, 2002), where he aestheticises the slums to create a slogan for the enjoyment of the madness of contemporary reality: enjoy it because that is just the way things are.

In this sense, Koolhaas' primary strategy is based on a 'progressive' perspective, where progress is matched with better (the Tailism we saw in Chapter 1). This strategy assumes that the existing tendency represents the correct political alternative to follow. Therefore, the role of the architect is to accelerate the emergence of a given condition.

This position of resignation clearly has a close relationship with positivism. The belief that all social problems will be solved by technology and the progress has its roots in Saint Simon. Be that as it may, Comte (no date [1848]) systematises the doctrine asserting the ‘relative nature of the positive spirit’, which addresses only the truth and renounces the discovery of the earliest origins and the final destinations of all things. For him, all propositions are imperfect and speculative, given their situated conditions. Therefore, Comte argues that we can approach rightness only by using the most advanced techniques and science. Positivism assumes that if everything is relative, then only progress – what is to come – can be used to measure truth. Positivism has a blind belief in the future.

In Koolhaas, history is used simply as an imaginary identity; social contexts are used as mystic allegories; and laws are merely the rules in a frivolous game. Therefore, these tendencies can be explored through an apparent aspect of psychotic perversion: what is inherent to the system but denied by ideology is converted into positive emotion by accepting it as ‘given’, as what we inescapably (naturally) are. Although called a dialectical strategy, no negation is involved. The conceived political act is to interpret intrinsic virtualities, not to invent or construct a potential – not even to choose a path. Here, pluralism is simply the acceptance of everything that is already individuated. In this sense, there is a double contradiction in terms. Its method is supposedly not technocratic but relies on the architect’s ‘interpretation’. It is supposedly political, but it makes no choice.

Thus, accelerating the current tendencies – whatever they may be – becomes the right choice for positivists and hysterical princes alike.

A second radioactive activity of hysterical princes can be seen in the moment that collapse becomes glory in the field of architecture. Ten days after Kunlé Adeyemi won the Silver Lion at the Biennial of Venice for the simulacrum of his floating school in Lagos, Nigeria, the original and (most of time) ‘to be occupied’ school suffered an ‘abrupt collapse’. Similarly, Kunlé recently designed a small pavilion at the Serpentine, whose benches are ergonomic only in the renders.

The politics of hysteria is, on the one hand, reality as it is (mad, and collapsing); on the other hand, a simulacrum of glory (freedom without choice, and schools without roofs).

However, the Serpentine pavilion of Koolhaas' former disciple, perhaps represents a more visionary collapse. Showing signs of structural fatigue and deformation since its inauguration, staff at the gallery confirmed that work was completed later to avoid structural collapse. However, the pavilion's collapsing aspect (*parten capit*) remained visible. Thus, phantasy itself surpasses architecture; as the architect proclaimed in praise of the project: 'We can turn fantasy into concrete reality'.

Koolhaas asserts the following about this famous disciple:

Contrary to many, maybe including himself, I do not consider Bjarke Ingels the reincarnation of this or that architect from the past. On the contrary, he is the embodiment of a fully fledged new typology, which responds perfectly to the current zeitgeist. Bjarke is the first major architect who disconnected the profession completely from angst. He threw out the ballast and soared. With that, he is completely in tune with the thinkers of Silicon Valley, who want to make the world a better place without the existential hand-wringing that previous generations felt was crucial to earn utopianist credibility.

We are friends. Once, during lunchtime, I used his office to prepare a competition presentation. (We lost.) On the menu that day was quiche. Wow, I wondered, so you can do great architecture without violating anyone's comfort zone? (Koolhaas, 2016).

Therefore, Koolhaas can be credited for inventing not only a new version of the prince but also one that is self-reproductive, a hysterical theatre that continuously surpasses itself. His fascination with Coney Island and its 'Technology of the Fantastic' became an inverted automaton: both a technical phantasy and a phantasy of technique. His princely action is a radioactive implosion of the field on the belly of the architect.

### **6.5. The inescapable condition of utopian phantasies: on present and absent objects of desire**

We will start our mapping of utopian phantasies in architecture with Mannheim's inversion of the correlation between the following pairs: 'reasonable-utopia' and 'possible-impossible' (Mannheim, 2000, pp. 173-175). For him, the ideological interpretation of 'reality as it is' as something 'natural' completely ignores the concrete history that has produced that reality. To match social reality with 'unconditional' is an

ideology (an idea and a type of logic). It assumes the mystifications of society as already realised (such as all ‘men are born free’), although they might never be accomplished in the current logic of things. Thus, ideology (i.e., the hegemonic cultural logic) assumes its abstract ideas as if they were already on place (thus they are ‘u-topic’, ‘out of place’).

If ideology has played a key role in ‘the conversion of things into persons and the conversion of persons into things’ (Marx 1990, pp. 209), utopia is the element that justifies and reproduces the order of these things in the field of architecture (departing from existing things and existing social relations). Thus, utopia operates on two levels: justification and reproduction. The first is usually the object of classical utopian thought, while the second is that of pseudo anti-utopian proposals. This situation leads us back to the distinction between fantasy (conscious) and phantasy (unconscious), which can help us overcome that limitation.

On the one hand, utopia functions in architecture as fantasy, providing a reasonable narrative about how an architect has reached a specific proposition and thus becoming a story that justifies his desired proposals, mobilises the desires of others and justifies the repetition of a series of ‘things’ (social relations) in the name of the production of an image. In this sense, this type of utopia is a narrative produced consciously by the architect to justify and mobilise desire. Therefore, it is a ‘presented’ object that the architect desires. This ‘present’ and ‘conscious’ object is the fantasy.

On the other hand, utopia has an ‘absent’ object of desire (phantasy) in the various ways architecture functions as a method of social fetish, where this process is framed by the discipline of architecture (here, discipline in its full sense of disciplining subjectivities and a way of doing things). In phantasy, architects are relatively unaware of the ‘process’ embedded in architectural things, believing their methods to be impartial technical methods dealing with *a priori* substances. At this unconscious level, utopia operates as a phantasy (rather than a conscious fantasy). Here, even if utopia is a partially built narrative, it emerges from unconscious assumptions, thus turning

preindividual desires into generalisations and requirements. Here, utopia is phantasy: an ‘absent’ object that the architect desires.<sup>99</sup>

In this sense, trying to escape the paradox of utopia by simply denying it is a senseless endeavour. Instead, we argue the inverse: the phantastic character of utopia is an inescapable condition; therefore, we need to traverse these phantasies and to make the artificial nature of our desires and the fetishist nature of its production conscious. Thus, the detour to follow involves traversing these constructive phantasies and making the ethical grounding and drives behind these mobilising images conscious. Doing so reveals the political dimension of phantasies, as any proposal is founded on a representation of reality (a conceptual framework outside the *topos*).

In this sense, Jameson’s (2004) ultimate argument is that the value of ‘utopia is somehow negative’:

...and that it is most authentic when we cannot imagine it. Its function lies not in helping us to imagine a better future but rather in demonstrating our utter incapacity to imagine such a future – our imprisonment in a non-utopian present without historicity or futurity – so as to reveal the ideological closure of the system in which we are somehow trapped and confined (Jameson, 2004, p. 45).

For this reason, Jameson asserts that ‘each of these utopias is a fantasy, and has precisely the value of a fantasy’ (Jameson, 2004, p. 50) and asks the following question: ‘Is this to say that we can form no substantive or positive picture of utopia, short of embracing all the multiple contradictory pictures that coexist in our collective social unconscious?’ (Jameson, 2004, p. 51).

To answer this question, we will need to make one last effort in our cognitive mapping of the architectural unconscious. Metaphorically speaking, this is our last section with architecture on the psychoanalytic divan.

In this sense, we will initially divide utopia into two main groups. On the one hand, one group of utopias represents ‘absent objects’ (subdivided into the blind and the resigned),

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<sup>99</sup> Even if some architects claim to be non-utopians (even if conceived in objective, positivist, or pragmatic terms), they are putting forward one conception of ‘truthful’ architecture, among infinite other possibilities. Therefore, their own subjective condition is the ‘absent’ object of phantasy.

as they suppose that their ideas do not exist – that they are supposedly dealing with only ‘positive’ reality. This is the uncritical disciplined ideological conception of being ‘impartial’. On the other hand, the other group of utopias represents ‘present objects’ (subdivided into the naïve and virtual), as they consciously propose utopian objects (fantasies) even if mediated by unconscious ones (phantasies). If not dialectical, this group is at least critical of the status quo.

Following a pattern similar to that of the diagram of the prince phantasy, the following diagram 30 is divided into a virtual horizontal axis where the poles are dialectic and disciplined, and a vertical axis where the poles are phantasmatic and potential.

In diagram 30, blind utopias are positioned in a disciplined phantasmatic position, and their actions only result in the reproduction of the centrality of the architectural discipline. They do not produce new phantasies and only reproduce existing ones. Resigned utopias are positioned in such a way that they reify actual potentialities into new phantasmagorias. Naïve utopias are on the dialectical side, although they operate in the existing phantasies of the field; thus, they only rearrange existing ‘things’, ultimately reinforcing the centre of the discipline. Virtual utopias are dialectical; nevertheless, they are engaged in realising virtualities (what the ‘tree’ is for the ‘seed’) and not in producing new potentialities (as we observed in Simondon, the creation of a new reality through the creation of new mediation). Arguably, u-utopias (such as the negative dialectics of Tafuri) can traverse the phantasmatic nature of utopias, but it does so in a direction contrary to the production of potentialities (thus, as in the case of Tafuri, utopias are simply regarded as equivalent to the current ideology). The following analysis of those key utopian phantasies aims to traverse this field, moving from recognising its phantasies towards producing new potentials.

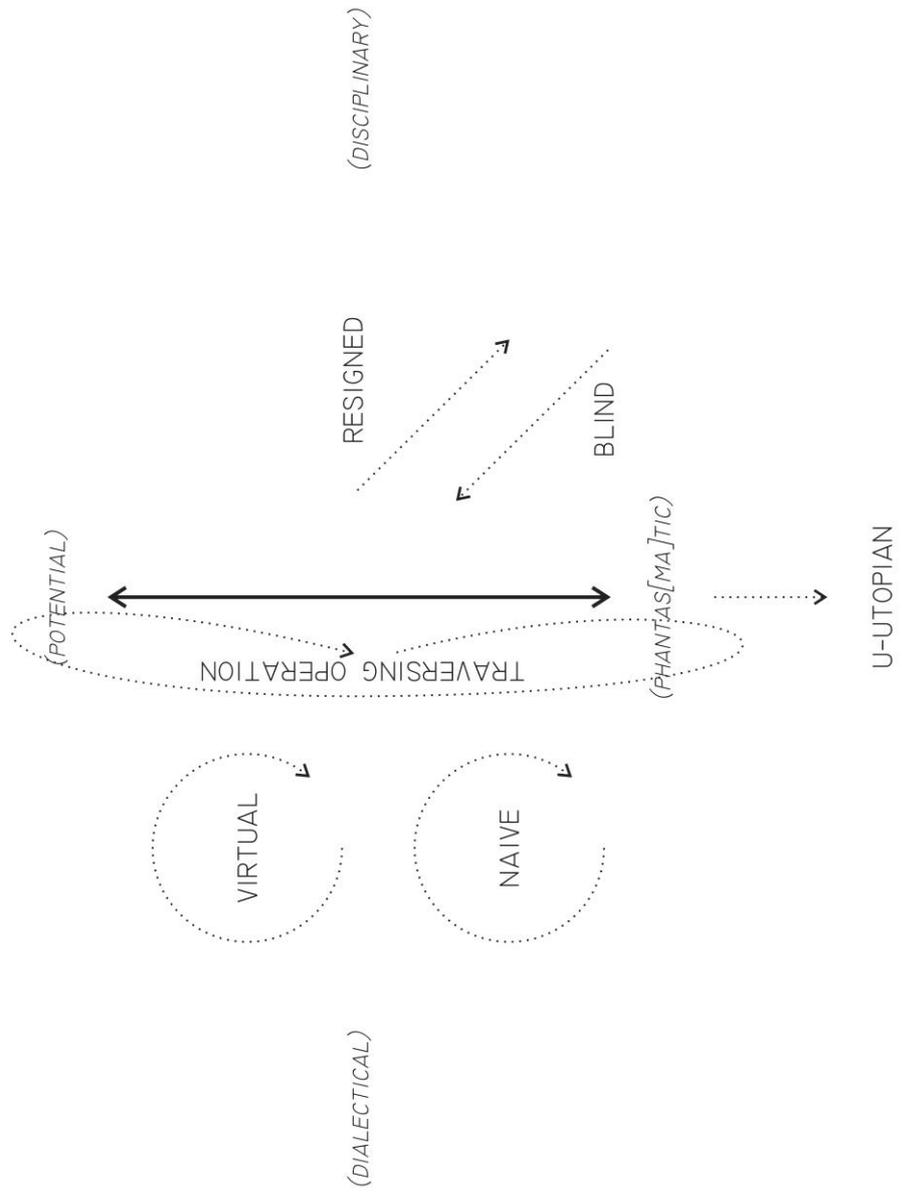


Diagram 30: Axes of utopian phantasies. Source: the author.

A conservative critique of utopia has a long history. In these studies, utopia is equated with architectonic modernism, as in Alice Coleman's *Utopia on Trial* (1985) and Colin Rowe's *Collage City* (Rowe and Koeter, 2000 [1978]); however, variations appear in works such as Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1992) and Eisenman's *The End of the Classical* (2006).

In these criticisms, politics is suspended, and social and political aspirations are equated with illusions of technically unfit architectonic proposals. The main point to retain is Lukács (1972) critique that the ideologist considers capitalism to be 'natural'; therefore, any attempt to change it is likened to authoritarianism (supposed artificial interventions against the human nature). Nevertheless, these criticisms do not consider any social product to have an inherent subjective, historical and social character.

This is a simulacrum of a radical critique of utopia, pretending to achieve what utopias do, but instead of critiquing the *topos* as false ideologies, they take their conceptions of *topos* as absolute, therefore, only reproducing it. Those are the absent utopias. An absent utopia can easily become an instrument of distancing and estrangement to protect architects from the traumatic failure of their proposals, establishing a narrative about the absolute separation between the conceived ideal and the real to be blamed for any mistakes. This ultimately transforms architecture into a straightforward fetish. These utopias produce fetish in two ways: on the one hand, it creates a mask, which covers, ornaments and hides the concrete aspects of an architectural proposition; on the other hand, utopia becomes a fetish in the sense of a 'magical technique', i.e., a method of hiding artifices (as in the case of *sprezzatura*), thus concealing the real means of production of a spatial object.

Unconscious utopian phantasy in architecture operates in a preindividual realm, and it is even more intensively at play when utopia is said to be denied. To illustrate this point, I would like to start the following discussion by investigating two manifestations of allegedly non-utopian practices, which propose discourses of non-politics and radical acceptance of the real, even though they produce and reproduce social relations, i.e., imposing abstractions on the *topos*. Later, we will discuss the dialectical utopias, and the limitations they face, so we can find the route to traversing the phantasy of utopia.

### *Blind utopias*

Blind utopias aim to negate the political dimension of architecture and reset the discipline under an ‘autonomous’ field. To do so, proponents suggest they have recognised the failures of the discipline in a changing society and have tried to demonstrate how modernism ignored tradition and the value of historical experiences. As a methodological strategy, they suggest that architects should focus on the elements considered ‘essential’ to the field. In this new tradition, the elements that were considered ‘pure’, part of the ‘true’ tradition of architecture, and ‘objectives’ were primarily informed by geometry, ironically, a historically produced abstraction. Consequently, this method reaffirms context (status quo) as inevitable only through the negation of its own contextual inferences. In this sense, this drive to eliminate the social role of architecture by sublimating the political condition can be called a ‘blind utopia’. Colin Rowe (Rowe and Koetter, 2000 [1978]) is the referential theorist to adopt this approach, and Peter Eisenman is the main disciple of this new tradition.<sup>100</sup>

Colin Rowe elaborates a simplification of architectural ambitions. To escape from the contradictions and anxieties of the social effect of architectural practice, Rowe proposes an autonomous architecture. According to Michael Hays (2000, p. 72), Rowe argues for a pure form – against any ‘escapist myths’, moral incantations and external sentiments, social vision, or future vision. In these terms, architecture should be ‘ideologically indifferent’, result from the demands of the flesh, and simply be the ‘best’ possible proposal in a contingent condition.

Colin Rowe (1972, p. 74-75) attacks the ‘modern architect’ for his presumption of being not only scientific but also sentimental. He argues that the fantasies of the ‘true believer’ had failed and that the total design of a social revolution did not make sense in America because the American Revolution had (in his mind) already occurred in 1776. Therefore, he argues that the American architect became a bon vivant, passionate about

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<sup>100</sup> In the period of postmodernism, the negation of the dialectical relationship between architecture and society assumed two sides of a same coin. On the one hand, architecture was treated as an objective technique in which the role of the architect was to develop a superior form of art out of geometric studies. On the other hand, architecture was expected to avoid any sublime aesthetical or social intention. From this perspective, architecture should learn from reality as is. For architecture to regain a publicly accessible language, architects should mimic popular behaviour and apply ordinary strategies. In this sense, Kevin Lynch (1965), Robert Venturi (1965, 1972), and Charles Jencks (1977) could be argued to be different versions of this same tradition.

sports, full of youth, dedicated to a simple life, and interested in allegorical sociology and technology, and for Rowe, so should it be: he argues that buildings should be elegant personifications of that way of life. Therefore, he argues modern architecture in America became a *decor de la vie* or a veneer for enlightened capital. This condition supposedly revealed the most important contribution of America to architecture: ‘the disinfection from [the] political’ or a modernism that was ‘safe for capitalism’ (Rowe, 1972, p. 76).

Rowe (1972, pp. 79-80) then issues a series of ‘false-dilemma’ criticisms. He suggests that the utopian visions of modernism were trapped in a paradox of positivism (its supposed scientific techniques) and the representation of a teleological future, whereas architecture should be the ‘midwife’ of history, who plays no active role. For Rowe, ‘prophetic speculations’ should be replaced by memory and meanings in overtones to ‘communicate’.

In a later book, Rowe (1978) establishes the principles and strategies for his Collage City. His mix of ideas proposes strategies such as cross-breeding, assimilation, distortion, challenge, superimposition, and figure ground (1978, p. 92). These strategies result from fusing the concept of bricolage from Lévi-Strauss and the anti-utopian open society discussed by Karl Popper. This operation allows Rowe to create an absolute overlapping of the ‘old’ and the ‘new’, where the new is the result of a use of tradition without contextual critique, which he considered to be abstract utopian reasoning (1978, p.100). The use of tradition as a hypothesis that has been tested would allow architects to use urban solutions freely.

According to this assumption, there is no space for action in history. Rowe approaches ‘tradition’ as if it were not ‘produced’ socially. Without a history, without invention, without social, political and ethical origins and consequences, tradition can be regarded as a catalogue of ‘things’. However, as we observed in Chapter 4, ‘things’ are nothing more than social relations. Furthermore, by ignoring fetish, Rowe does not even address social change, as his methods imply the blind repetition of previous social relations. In short, Rowe cannot escape the reproduction of the discipline’s prejudices.

As an example of his (anti)ethical approach, Rowe addresses the segregation and integration of African Americans in the USA (Rowe, 1978, p. 97-98). Without stating

his position, he indicates that there are arguments for one and the other, both proper and improper. Nevertheless, he concludes that segregation and integration are a matter of natural grouping equals and ordering freedom in the city. For him, although the matter is open as an 'idea', it is closed as a 'fact'. Therefore, for him, segregation is paradoxically the result of the free association of equals. With that he ignores the history that created inequalities, and the social relations of power that sustains it. Notably, his proposal, while claiming to be 'impartial' (and therefore displacing ethics), actually accepted the result of ethical choices as a natural fact.

This blindness allows Rowe to suggest that one should not be political 'beyond a point' (whatever that might be). For him, such political dilemmas should be treated in a 'third way' – technical solutions. Overly comprehensive design considerations should be avoided, and the focus should remain on form. This tactic, which he calls 'sublimated conflict', is what reproduces architecture into a state of ambivalence, ambiguity and, ultimately, ineffectiveness. In his words, this 'virtue of irony' is 'a technique for using things and simultaneously disbelieving in them, it is also a strategy which can allow utopia to be dealt with as image, to be dealt with in *fragments* without our having to accept it *in toto*' (Rowe, 1978, p. 109). This criticism of modernism became very influential among students and young architects. Nevertheless, despite its popularity, the focus on 'form' only emphasised one aspect of hylemorphism; 'sublimated conflict' is only the disregard of the metastable character of systems; the only virtue of irony is to misrepresent the production of things (social relations). More than an image, utopia is a phantasy of that Rowe does not escape.

An example of these deadlocks in practice is the production of Peter Eisenman. As Eisenman (2008) suggests, Rowe was his greatest mentor: 'The time I spent with Rowe was my education'.<sup>101</sup> Eisenman describes a 'Grand Tour' that the two took together in which Eisenman assumed the role of the 'noble savage' and Rowe taught him how to see, interpret, and think about architecture. They visited the classical buildings of the Italian Renaissance, and Eisenman absorbed Rowe's teachings like a 'sponge'. This experience led Eisenman to have a peculiar view of architecture and a keen ability to depoliticise philosophies.

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<sup>101</sup> The relation to a court affiliation and the attempt to derive distinction via an established intellectual in the field are notable.

In his text 'The End of the Classical', Eisenman (2006) states that objects have no enduring values and that, in turn, no value can legitimate architecture. For Eisenman, this means the end of classical architecture (including modern architecture) because he argues that there is no longer a truth upon which all architects can base their architecture. There is no unchanging ideal; thus, architecture can no longer represent any ideal. Therefore, architecture should be the result of an infinite play with abstract forms, depending on the designer's technical methods. Paradoxically, behind what he sees as 'masks' of truth, Eisenman finds the substance on which to base architecture: the syntagmatic rules – semiotics structures – of the basic elements of geometry – Euclidian geometry.

Eisenman's House VI is an example of that notion in practice. Its unemotional name is the first indication of its pretended impartiality. The house emerges from a flat site as a sculpture that is isolated from its context. No symbolism is intended. No functionality is determinative. The house is the result of a geometrical exercise. As a result, the couple's bed is divided in half, and everyday life is 'accidentally' conditioned by an 'impartial' process (although architecture can become inadequate, it is not intentional, i.e., it does not involve a conception of a new typology of romantic relationships for postmodern couples). Here, the absolute abstraction of values makes no concessions to the concrete experience. Values, ideals, conceptions, traditions, and so forth are neither actively denied nor transformed; they are simply disregarded and overlooked. The result is that the *status quo* is simply reproduced.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> The blindness of these 'revolutions' of the modernist utopia can also be applied to the formulations of Robert Venturi (1965, 1972) and Charles Jencks (1977). Although they represent a tentative triumph over the monotony of the universal proposals of modernism, they remain a fundamentally linguistic form of criticism. In this sense, the failures of modernism are explained as a problem of communication. Therefore, forms should be more popular, ambivalent, complex, and exciting. The crises in the realisation of utopias are interpreted as communication failures: modern architecture did not adequately communicate its message to the public. Additionally, the Enlightenment belief that humans' problems can be solved rationally is invalidated. Therefore, this theory not only 'asserts' that the only alternative is to accept consumerism and mass culture but also reproduces this condition.

### *Resigned utopias*

A different phantastic utopia is elaborated through the lineage of Oswald Mathias Ungers (Aureli, 2008, p. 177-228). Although the universal aims of modernism are denied, reality is addressed as a flattened present in which current tendencies are explored. In this tradition, a free pluralism of methods is employed to find the inherent tendencies of a place. In this case, the deepness of the urban context is exploited but not radically challenged. In this sense, the primary strategy is based on a 'progressive' perspective (progress as a goal). It assumes that the existing tendency represents the correct direction to be followed. The role of the architect is therefore to accelerate the emergence of a given condition. His influence in contemporary production can be analysed in the work of Koolhaas (1994). Here, the utopia of a project is not invented; it is merely found (retroactively). Although what we shall call 'resigned utopias' produces simulacra of 'radicality', they merely constitute an irreverent acceptance of what is bizarre in the *status quo*.

In the 1970s, Oswald Mathias Ungers also attempted to develop a 'third way' to overcome a duality that he identified as 'technocratic architecture' and 'postmodernism' at that time. According to Aureli (2008, pp. 177-228), Ungers developed his theories based on a dialect between the simplicity of the parts and the complexity of the whole city. By proposing a *Dialectic City*, he aimed to contrast his position with Rowe's *Collage City*, with whom he previously had imagined proximities. Nevertheless, Ungers' call for 'dialectics' has a contextual meaning: he was opposed to Rowe's individualism. Where Rowe observed an *ad hoc* accumulation of forms, Ungers observed dialectical tension between situations. Where Rowe sought idiosyncratic architectural figures, Ungers sought the collective nature of the city.

Ungers based his political dialectics on his previous research on the housing interventions in 'Red Vienna'. Those interventions created isolated superblocks as ideal spaces for workers. These spaces were not like the modernist minimum standard; instead, they were performance spaces for the full realisation of life. In addition, Ungers researched alternative communities in the USA and became convinced of the possibility of creating autonomous entities from the overall social system. These ideas would combine to form his most famous paradigm: the Archipelago.

The Archipelago was inspired by Schinkel's interventions in Berlin. It was conceived as an alternative to urban expansion because, by the 1970s, Berlin was actually shrinking. Therefore, Ungers proposed the city as a system of 'cities within the city', archipelagos of urbanity surrounded by green spaces. In this sense, the city would be formed by contrasts, opposing forms, conflicts, and different collective dimensions. Therefore, each island would become a 'micro-city' (based on the terms of Aureli, 2008, p. 178). In other words, each island could create its own utopic proposal.

According to Aureli (2008, pp. 194-197), the initial projects of Unger, such as Grüzug Sud, propose a 'retroactive' rationalisation of the existing conditions. By exaggerating the natural ingredients of the city (such as aggression, enmity, and separation) and its contrasting parts, Unger transforms the most controversial aspects into the drivers of the project.

Koolhaas extends this perspective – he worked with Ungers on the Berlin project – and explores it in several projects. In Koolhaas' (1994) fictional conclusion of the book 'Delirious New York', he unveils what the utopia of New York would be, as though it were developed by a single project (a method that he would mimic in future works). There, he stated that

The City of the Captive Globe is devoted to the artificial conception and accelerated birth of theories, interpretations, mental constructions, proposals and their infliction on the World. It is the capital of Ego, where science, art, poetry and forms of madness compete under ideal conditions to invent, destroy and restore the world of phenomenal Reality (Koolhaas, 1994, p. 294).

In this retroactive (resigned) utopia, Koolhaas aims to capture the supposed 'democratic' aspect of the iron grid of Manhattan.<sup>103</sup> He creates an equal context for each block, simultaneously creating the conditions of freedom to allow each to develop its own spaces in a completely autonomous way, as in an archipelago of islands. The forms of the building are generic and express images of themselves, whereas their interiors are both completely divorced from and flexible to the instability of the metropolitan way of life. However, instead of proposing an isolated micro-utopia here,

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<sup>103</sup> Although, notably, in 1970, New York was ravaged by inequality, crime and violence.

his ‘retroactive manifesto’ proposes accelerating the already existent tendencies of the city’s liberalism.

In the case of Koolhaas’ former utopian project, ‘*Exodus: or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture*’, this enthusiastic resignation is even clearer. As Aureli (2008, p. 197) asserts, it ‘deliberately accepts the reality of the city as made of separation and exclusion rather than unity and inclusion’. Here, Koolhaas accelerates the condition of segregation and social division, not only accepting it but also transforming it into a voluntary state in the sense of ‘love it or leave it’. This proposal emerged from his third-year project, which he elaborated on a visit to the Berlin Wall. Instead of engaging in a political discussion of the Berlin Wall, he opted to observe the different ‘landscapes’ that it generated. Koolhaas approached the Berlin Wall more as a series of spatial discontinuities, a series of impressions and spatial situations, than as a massive object of terrible social consequence and immense political conflict. By accepting all ethical, social and political consequences of the Berlin Wall as a given, Koolhaas was allowed to propose the creation of two of these walls in London (certainly doubling his artistic license).

In this sense, in Simondonian terms, the fetish of Koolhaas’ office arguably does not produce any operation. At play in this method is the rescue of implicit unrealised structures in the field of preindividualities, without proposing any transduction (t), any mediation (M) or any interaction (I) between conflicting instances (see diagram 25 in Chapter 3). He creates a vulgar image of the perverse repressed character of current ideology. Without perverting it, he only presents the perverse side of the current structure as a given reality, served in a well-dressed dish. Similar to how Freud’s ultra-individualism is only the systematisation of the current ideology, Koolhaas’ proposals have the precise value of depicting a phantastic image of the dystopian character of current ideologies.

### *Naïve utopias*

Naïve Utopia has a long tradition in architecture; thus, it has been extensively submitted to different accounts. On the one hand, a traditional view of utopia becomes a collection

of narratives, a historiographic enumeration of dreams, as shown in the classic book of Mumford (1928) up until the recent work of Vidler (2011). On the other hand, a radical critique of utopia originates in Engels's *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1880), in which utopian proposals are regarded as a result of a cultural and social condition. Because of these restraints, a utopia cannot free itself from the *status quo*. In these terms, a utopia will not produce an actual negative version of reality (a proper u-topia); instead, it will produce a rearranged version of 'things' as they already exist.

A naïve utopia risks becoming its opposite, namely, the narcissistic fetish. The architectural field actively produces phantasmatic glances, disciplining subjectivities to see the outside as a mirror of individuated narratives. A clear example of how a utopia can be trapped in the fundamental narcissistic principle is Le Corbusier's *Modulor*. By attempting to find the 'hidden' principle of beauty, he ultimately denied the other. The feminine body is not part of his formula. Furthermore, the architectural game does not simply subjugate the other in the sense of exclusion. It is not just the ignorance of 'Echo' (the nymph ignored by Narcissus) or the hiding of her reverberating truth. A transformation of the self and the world (not only the end point but also the starting point) reifies both reality and the self. In this sense, the architectural discipline functions as preindividual political device, imposing subjective senses and reproducing the *status quo*.

In architecture, interpellations are being imposed at three different levels: first, by the architectonic objects produced, which create a ritual that constantly reinforces how architecture should be understood; second, by the instruments that architects use, such as perspective or computational techniques, which both frame and produce facts; and, finally, through the disciplining process (institutions, boards, academia, clients, the market, and so on), which function as 'others' to create the architect's own fantasy. Architecture does not simply present ideologies as facts, as though it were lying; it transforms ideologies into social facts.

### *Virtual utopias*

Many attempts have been made to produce a dialectical version of utopia, in the sense of being an imaginary object of future possibilities that counter the concrete reality of things as they appear in a particular social context. In Mannheim's classical study, a utopia is an idea that is able to envision new possibilities. Thus, utopias should be understood as the construction of real possibilities that depart from an existing context, which is deemed to be changed.

The classic study of Ernst Bloch (1986) would argue that utopia is fundamental because it is a 'principle of hope': once one understands that the reality of 'things' is not as natural as it seem, then hope can be converted into a different reality for things. In *Spaces of Hope*, David Harvey (2001) argues for the conception of dialectical utopias, which avoids the simple 'imagination' of alternative worlds; such utopias should be conceived as counter-topias, devices that relate negatively to reality, thus allowing for the imagining of future alternatives rooted in the concrete.

Similarly, in his book *The Right to the City*, Henri Lefebvre (2000) proposes an experimental utopia, developed in an intellectual operation that he calls 'transduction': the production of theoretical possible object's as references, a strategy designed to transform society (his most famous 'possible object' being the 'urban revolution').

As discussed before, the limitation of proposing a utopia as the production of a 'virtual' object is that such a proposal implies that the seeds are already there. The virtuality of a 'seed' can only be its corresponding 'tree'. In this sense, there is no room to produce new mediations and the structuration of new individuations, as it concerns the idea of 'potentials'.

### *U-utopias*

Baudrillard's (2006) writings in the group 'Utopie' mark the beginning of a process that would lead him to condemn reality as a series of simulacra. Similarly, Tafuri (1976) investigates how modernist utopias were all versions of a transformation in the mode of

production, thus only formulating the ideology of late capitalism. This vision relies on the necessity of a radical rupture with the present, which makes it possible for the new to emerge; thus, it focuses on ‘negating’ the present rather than formulating the future.

The fundamental problem in this take is an inverted version of ‘Tailism’. Lukács (2000) resurrects one of Lenin’s concepts, in which society is assumed to develop itself spontaneously, following the ‘tail’ of progress. This inverted tailism imagines progress automatically following the negation of all that exists, without the need to conceive an alternative. The negation of the possibility of negating the social space (i.e., a u-topia) can deliver only fatalism and despair. Thus, the problem of conceiving an alternative future remains.

This ultimately inextricably links the negation of utopia to the topos: without the possibility of imagination, reification becomes omnipresent. From a reflexive activity, critique becomes the affirmation of the inevitability of the *status quo*. I do not aim to ignore these critiques; instead, I seek to further investigate how we can move in the opposite direction in our cognitive map: how can a critique provide the basis for the creation of new potentialities?

As we noticed in Lukács self-critique, the production of objects is the creation of mediations that allows thought to intervene in reality, and the problem is not the production of objects, but the ethical consequences of those objects. Overcoming this paradox does not involve condemning the world as ‘utopian’ and claiming to find the absolute ‘rightness’ in a negative thought that exists only in your mind; instead, it should generate a conscious awareness of how different utopias actively operates in the process of becoming being of any architectural account.

## **6.6. Traversing architectural phantasies (and the insufficiency of this phantasy)**

Hamlet, the prince of a rotten kingdom in Shakespeare’s play, was informed by a phantasm that he was living in a net of lies and simulations. Thus, he became

melancholic<sup>104</sup>, trapped between two worlds: one of the pompous lies of the court, which made his uncle a king; and the other the phantasmagorical truth, revealing all to be a game of appearances. To test whether the ‘accepted courtly phantasies’ or the ‘phantasmagoria awareness’ was the truth, he staged a play inside the play, a theatre inside the theatre, which revealed the lies of his uncle-king. Our map is a kind of theatre inside the theatre, a phantasy inside the phantasies, to reveal their own limitations.

For instance, regarding the prince phantasy as we mapped it, Koolhaas’ hysterical method has the appearance of being ‘critical’ because it is based on the actualisation of existing social potential; it is the actualisation of preindividualities in the field (or the acceleration of tendencies). Nevertheless, his actions do not create a new mediation that structures new radical potentialities; instead, the movement is the inverse, capturing potentials from already disciplined phantasies of the field. In other words, to traverse the phantasy of that kind of prince, the inverse movement must be mediated: instead of turning potentials into further phantasies, one should unveil the operating phantasies to create radical new potentials (see Diagram 29, page 221).

Our first step was to identify the prince phantasies and to position them in a political and ethical field. The second step depends on the ways in which the map is used rather than on the map itself. As an instrument, this map is just a heuristic device that allows subjects to recognise their own desires and the phantasies that support them. As we observed in Simondon’s account of the subject, the creation of a conscious individuation depends on a choice that connects preindividualities and transindividualities, already individuated individuals, and the possible transindividual individuations. Although the critical production of this mapping is the first step in the process of traversing the phantasy of the prince, it is insufficient on its own.

The movement towards acknowledging the phantasmatic nature of architectural princes and the shift upwards on the diagram’s vertical axis – to create mediations for the emergency of potential collective subjects who are aware of their existence in *relation to the world* and in a *position from* which they can act in it – is a continuous theatre of

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<sup>104</sup> Here we extend Vygotsky’s (no date [1925]) long analysis of the play, to counter the commonly accepted interpretation that Hamlet was lying to be mad, he was actually melancholic: a feeling common at the time, when a profound depression was reached by perceiving how the instruments of reason were insufficient to find the truth of the world, as depicted in the Albrecht Dürer painting *Melencolia I*.

individuation, a dynamic field of operations, which is informed by its context and by the choices that subjects make in any given moment.

Regarding the utopian phantasies, to traverse them is not simply to note failures of utopias and the miserable conditions of its existence as a simulacrum; instead, it is a matter of recognising that the production of utopian phantasies is the production of a preindividual field, which allows the emergence of architecture and architects. Instead of blindly accepting or resigning, unveiling the process of production of these units of 'subjective sense' helps in the perception that its artificiality is inevitable; and, therefore, open the possibility of transformation. In other words, it is a map that orientates subjects in the 'Bacchantic orgy' of the reproduction of architecture, 'in which no one escapes being drunk' (as we already quoted from Hegel).

Once again, as we excavate deep within our pyramid of the architectural unconscious, an inconvenient revelation is that this model cannot adequately inform such a map. This pyramid not only has multiple dimensions, which are produced over time, but also has a mysterious passage that connects fantasies with the interior of the estrangement wall. In this sense, instead of being the unconscious substances of an individual, phantasies are the collective subjectivity that enables such subjects to emerge, they are social operations that reproduce what separates us from the means of producing architecture and our role in it.

We should move beyond Lacan, for whom traversing the fantasy (the visible image, the shining appearance) is to traverse what conceals the dark emptiness of the inner subject's drives. To traverse the produced phantasies, one should not attempt to go deep; instead, one should return to how appearances are effective in reality, as phantasies are manifested in the open air as though they were reality. Thus, traversing the phantasy does not involve eliminating it or scouring beneath it; instead, it involves abstracting the subject from his original position so that he can look to himself, not from outside, but transversely, recognising the preindividual subjective senses as part of his most intimate desires. However, this idea does not mean assigning the blame for one's failures to the 'Other' (asserting that the object of one's desire is absent because it is subtracted by somebody else); it is quite the inverse: although the object of one's desire is always socially constructed, it is fundamentally mediated by each subject's process of

individuation. In other words, there is no 'blame' in the world nor in the subject; it is a question of transforming the mediations that exists between subjects and the world.

Although they are not the only ones, the prince complex and utopias are important mediators of the architectural unconscious; for that reason, they play an important role in how architecture operates today in society. To understand their role is just the first step in conceiving architectural interventions that are fundamentally critical operations, which starts with a reflexive self-critique. This understanding might provide a genuine utopia of traversing utopias, i.e., a critical map of the political praxis reproduced by the phantasies of the field, thus allowing a self-critique that dares to see the prejudices inside our own minds.

This map started with the analysis of workshops developed as critical interventions, where we were able to identify unresolved paradoxes in the attempt of critical interventions. These paradoxes revealed a series of deadlocks in architectural subjectivity, the main one being the question of whether architecture can shape society. To trace this question, we started developing a cognitive map of architecture to unveil how architecture is formed of both disciplining and dialectical elements. Furthermore, this map revealed how the discipline interpellates a specific subject to inhabit this map. Although different conceptions of this subject are possible, a pre- and transindividual unconscious will reproduce architecture on three different levels: reification, in which architecture transforms social relations into architectural things; fetish, or the means through which architecture creates truth as a means of power and mechanisms that capture social work; and, finally, the phantasies that mobilise desire in architects and that, if unconscious, ultimately transform architects themselves into things. Only through the recognition of the becoming being of architecture can we conceive of architecture as an 'event', a dynamic and continuous theatre, in which architecture is not a thing but a series of ethical operations that enables other operations to emerge.

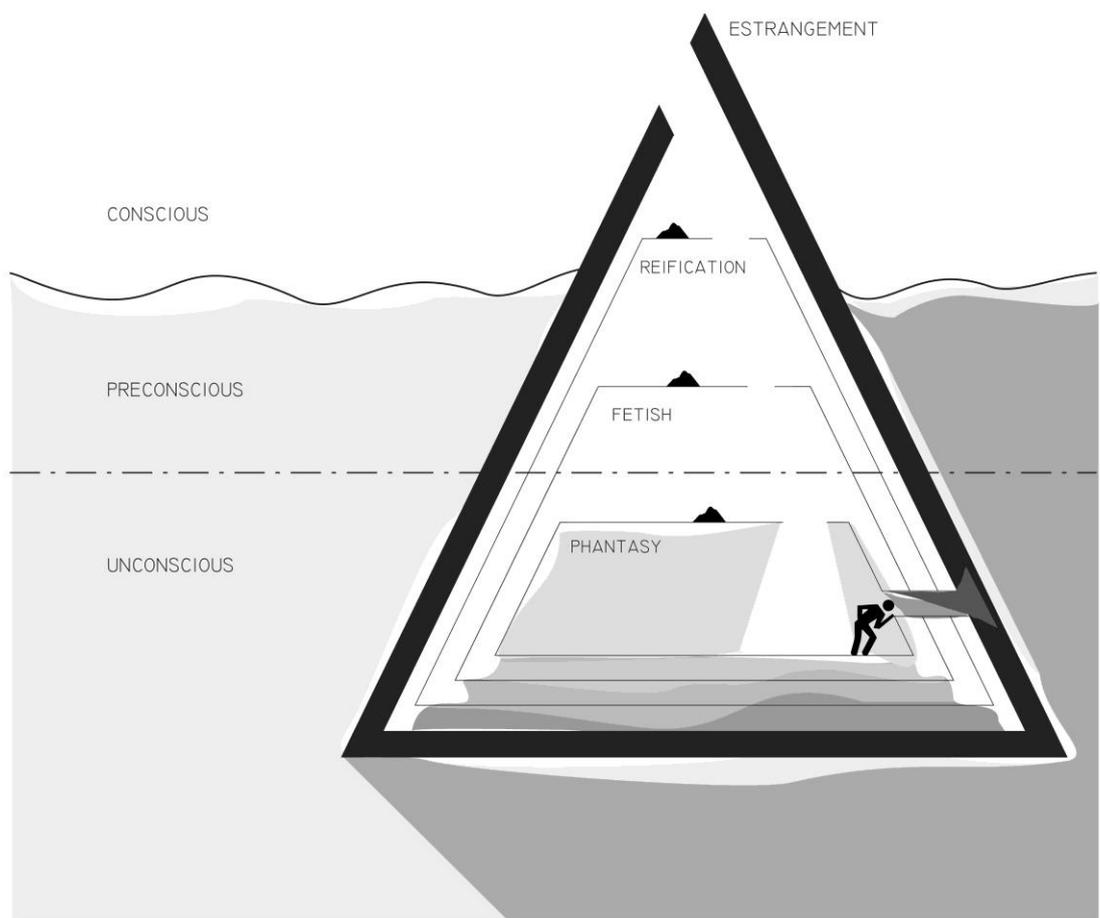


Diagram 31: Traversed pyramid: the secret passage. Source: the author.

## CONCLUSION

To approach architecture through its means of reproduction turns the disciplinary field of architectural theory upside down. In this approach, rather than investigating architecture as a neutral set of skills, methods and concepts that aims to produce things, architecture is revealed to be a process of objectifying subjectivities. Furthermore, this approach also turns the critique of architecture upside down. If we return to an earlier illustration, rather than investigating how the panopticon can produce subjectivities, we investigated how the panopticon was the reproduction of an already disciplined subjectivity.

The object of our analysis was not the first intended result of the research. As science boasts many famous accidental discoveries – such as penicillin, plastic and radiation – the research aim was to investigate how architecture could be revolutionary. To do so, we turned the fieldwork into a laboratory and started our investigation with the working hypothesis of hacking and micro-utopias. As the participant observation of this architectural ‘laboratory life’ was transformed into a ‘live laboratory’ that was subjected to an observation of our own participation, a new full-blown picture emerged: the reproduction of architectural discipline.

Even though the research departs from these specific fieldworks, these experiments enabled us to track down the wider limits of this disciplinary practice. We called those perceived limits ‘stake points’ (which are the reference points in our subsequent analysis and the points at stake in the production of new social relations through architecture). Thus, the investigation of possible architectural alternatives as revolutionary forces unexpectedly illuminated the means of the reproduction of architecture.

This reproduction of architecture is not formed by a linear causality; it instead functions dialectically. Architecture reproduces social relations in space by reproducing itself and the subjectivities (of both architects and those who appropriate architecture immersed in distraction). Therefore, architecture cannot be understood to be developed by an individual.

The critique of the concept of the ‘genius’ producing architecture leads to a ‘Copernican Revolution’ of the concept of the subject. Rather than focusing on the supposed immutable and essential centre of creativity within a singular individual, subjects were found to be the void floating in outer space – a collective transsubjectivity. These individuals are just actualisations of pre-existent potentialities – the preindividualities – which are dynamic and collectively shared. Architecture is not the agency of an architect but the manifest operations of preceding dynamics.<sup>105</sup> This acknowledgement renders most of the histories of architecture, which fill libraries worldwide, futile.

Furthermore, this acknowledgement casts the problem of a radical architecture in a totally new light. The question is not how architects are able to do revolutionary proposals but how they ultimately reproduce society in their proposals. This question also has implications for the concept of revolution itself. It is not about what should be done now, to refer to Lenin’s famous assertion; it instead reveals the intricate relationship between revolution and consciousness.

It is not about conceiving the right model for the freedom of mankind; it is instead about enabling a conscious positioning towards the means of production of one’s social condition, which results in both a new understanding of the ‘big scheme of things’ and a new understanding of the ‘least little things’. It implies the non-essence of objects, the non-existence of individuals and the dialectical collective nature of the subjects themselves.

In these terms, the investigation provides neither a fixed image nor an ultimate algorithm of architecture. Instead, it became a matter of enabling the visualisation of the process of reproduction. Therefore, the dissertation became an instrument: a cognitive map to reveal and elucidate the limits and contradictions involved in the exercise of architecture.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> The first two live projects presented in Appendix 3 revealed how the insertion of two concepts in the practice of architecture could not avoid the reproduction of architecture. Instead, this action revealed how the discipline constrains how architects can place themselves in relation to the mode or production of architecture. Brought to its limits in these experiments, architecture became an event, an operation that mediated different forces at play, and its structures became only effemeral instruments to bring into life a new set of possible operations.

<sup>106</sup> This thesis as a whole can be seen as a cognitive map, whereas the diagrams are heuristic devices to approach this map. Future research in the development of these two-dimensional diagrammatic

As we argued, this map is not a 1:1 representation of the field. Instead, it traced coordinates departing from the identified points at stake. Two coordinating lines were of special interest: estrangement (how the architectural discipline separates subjects from the means of producing their own conditions) and reproduction (the means through which architecture would create a cycle of repetition in the guise of new appearances). Estrangement and reproduction are the coordinating lines of the two parts of this thesis.

In the first part of this thesis, we identified the deadlocks of the discipline or the ways in which the theory of architecture traps the production of architecture within a series of dead ends, fallacies, false dilemmas, denials of dialectic, resignation, protest, escapism and, ultimately, a lack of reflexivity that prevents self-conscious actions. Nevertheless, the architectural discipline is not a closed system; it is instead an enclosing operation. It restricts, delimits, differentiates, values and establishes the rules of a game to be played. However, contradictions are manifested in the permanent tensions. In other words, history reproduces not only the system but also its dialectical contradictions.

Hence, this internal conflict between discipline and contradiction creates a paradoxical condition. Architecture both shapes and does not shape society. Architectural reification is not ‘everything’, yet we are all subjects who act from within a given condition. Our actions are reified into a specific logic from the early hours when we buy bread until the late night when we work out the design for a competition.

Therefore, this cognitive mapping is not a prescriptive model; it is merely the first instrument to allow a self-conscious positioning towards our condition. Our cognitive map departed from the fieldwork, and therefore is related with the process of identifying the concrete points at stake in the experiments observed. Nonetheless, these points at stake revealed the underlying process of the reproduction of architecture. In other words, the particular experiments revealed connections with overall social processes. As a first step, this map was concerned in perceiving (aesthetically identifying) the means through which architecture subjectivity is reproduced – namely, reification, fetish and

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representations could add important contributions for this topic. In addition, recent research in the field of quantum cognitive mapping could provide important insight in further explaining how consciousness is produced and shared between different subjects (for an example of quantum cognitive mapping of physical properties as interaction of conscious agents rather than things, see Hoffman, 2014).

phantasy. These three aspects were then investigated in an enlightened return to the common practice of architecture, in the second part of the thesis.

The investigation of things in architecture revealed how any supposed objectivity is informed by social relations. This was attained by the investigation of the privatisation of public spaces in London, revealing further aspects of how social relations are reproduced through the production of the aesthetics of 'things' in a contemporary city. These social relations are present in any architectural product through its information (*mise en forme*, shaping). These social relations not only are operative reflections of a given condition but also operate through architecture to build this very social condition.

Therefore, reification is not simply a perversion of the natural processes of things – the conversion of social relations and humans being into things. Instead, all things are social relations, including human nature and nature itself. Things are desires that are represented in objects.

Objectification is needed for mediated reflection (as noted Lukács); and further, all things are mediations and – ultimately – social relations. The problem thus lies in the enclosure produced by these objects, as revealed by the analysis of privatised public spaces in London. There, the production of things is not simply the production of limits, separations and delimitations but also the production of facts, the reproduction of hidden intentions and the reproduction of collective sensibilities through the aesthetics of things. Therefore, things are always ethical actions, in the sense that to present an object is to represent one's desire.

From Alberti to Koolhaas, the production of architecture as things incorporates sets of relations into form (*mise en forme*) and make these relations invisible – this is the fetish's *participium praesens*. The consequences of such production are not unimportant: the reification of architecture is the first step in the instrumentalisation of the collective subjects that produce space. As we observed in the 'observation of our participation' in the last workshop – described in the Appendix 3 – the figure of the genius in power controls the possibilities of the collective work, reifies the subjectivity of other architects at work, exploits the surplus of creation as if it was his own product and hides its desire through narratives of legitimation (phantasies).

Thus, architecture not only aligns itself with power but also reproduces the hierarchy that empower some subjects and instrumentalise others. Architecture places power. Power is established by concrete social spaces. Power is everywhere – it is not in space; it is space. As we have observed, space is not a neutral void; it is historically and socially produced. As history, space is the result of conflicts and struggles. As a product, space is the result of actions and intents. Hence, those in position of power are supported by the reproduction of space.

Power is not necessarily based on lies. The invisible social relations that inhabit things in space are not lies. They have truthful consequences. They do socially exist. Therefore, they are real, but theirs is a special form of reality, one that is produced by hiding the artifices of its creation. This operation is what lies behind social reproduction: its fetish – its magic blasphemies.

Furthermore, architecture plays a key role in these magic blasphemies, as it produces the perceived ‘facts’ of social space. These facts are the result of a process of production, which includes a means of production and a social division of labour. In architecture, fetish is both a verb and a noun – a ‘dancing table’ – because this subjective action is present in inanimate things. Actions take part in things, forming their core. As we have observed, the intensification of this process has taken on not only inanimate things but also inanimate architects. The fetish of the geniuses now survives the precarious existence of their own bodies – in the whispering of dead architects, as we observed in the case of Zaha Hadid.<sup>107</sup>

The regressive investigation of the role of fetish in architecture traced its relation to power. It is not only a technique that produces social space phenomena (i.e., a means of power exercised from the field of architecture on society, thus, reinforcing positions of power) but also a social power exercised within the field (i.e., a means of enforcing assembly lines of architectural creation, thus, reproducing the instrumentalisation of architects). Fetish in architecture is thus a means of expropriating collective social work. This expropriation of the collective work of architecture is only possible because architects come to desire their own oppression through phantasies.

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<sup>107</sup> Recently, a popular online magazine placed Zaha Hadid – despite her sad passing earlier last year – as #1 on its ‘hot list’ of November 2016.

Phantasies are conscious narratives of unconscious desires. For instance, the myth of the genius is only socially effective because architects (not so) secretly want to be the next genius, as they are captives in a ‘Bacchantic orgy in which no one escapes being drunk’ (as Hegel once said). These phantasies provide the narratives that sustain the field and hide the artifices that produce the ‘causal chains’ of ‘an orchestrated carnival of masquerades’ (as Foucault once said).

For instance, as we saw, the narrative that sustains the field says that the genius of Frank Lloyd Wright magically invented a whole new style for modern architecture, while the hidden artifice was to expropriate the work of hundreds of architects in the *Taliesin Fellowship* sponsored by the fortune of his wife. The causal chain ‘the genius had an idea and invented a new style’ hides the actual process of production. Namely, it was produced by a collective work and expropriated by financial and cultural capital. Again, a particular narrative was socially reproduced.

This socially produced logic of things depends on the production of subjectivities. Subjects are the actualisation of potential pre-subjectivities. The politics of subjectivity thus relies on an investigation of the production of potential pre-subjectivities. The dialectical ‘subjective senses’ are blocks of perception, framing possible actions in the world. By framing the minds of architects, providing narratives for their desires, architecture reproduces its very means of (self)oppression and estrangement.

The result of this discussion is quite striking for architectural theory. As architecture becomes successful in the very moment of its collapse, a road is bound to collapse under the weight of its dearest myths: the prince, the utopia, the facts and the architectural object. On the one hand, the ‘prince’ is a powerful political device; Machiavelli has noted this figure’s power more than five hundred years ago. Again, princes are not ‘lies’ because they have true consequences and they articulate and colonise collective subjects. Furthermore, this myth is based on the myth of the individual. It is a myth based on a narcissist epistemology that is unable to see what is beyond itself – the belly of the architect. On the other hand, very dear in the field of architecture, utopia is also a myth: a myth of a myth. Utopia does not escape the *topos*, because it rearranges the status quo. Utopia is nothing but desire, because it reproduces narratives of causality. All mainstream histories of architecture – compendiums of collective phantasies – are rendered futile.

However, there is no escape from such phantasies; the ‘Bacchantic orgy’ and the ‘carnival of masquerades’ cannot simply be ended – ‘no one escapes being drunk’. Instead, one must traverse these phantasies, which relates to developing a consciousness to understand how social myths come into concrete operation.

Architecture has no essence, no ontology. Such things do not exist *a priori*; they are produced. There are only processes of production – actions. Architecture is a series of operations, which are incorporated into structures only as a means of creating new operations; it is a non-trivial machine that reproduces collective subjects.

This thesis is not a model. It is a theoretical instrument for aesthetically instigating the perception of a particular reality: the reproduction of architecture. This investigation used cognitive mapping to unveil the means of architectural reification and its transindividual subjectivity; it also challenges its common ontology (from structure to operation, from thing to action, from mythological narratives to concrete labour). This map is only an instrument to help architects better situate themselves in the field of reproduction of their means of production – and hopefully more ably avoid the traps. Rather than answering a question, this thesis uncovers a problem, setting the stage for new enquiries.

The moment that architecture is most used in the reproduction of ideology is also the moment that architects have become less important. With the findings of this theoretical investigation, we do not aim to resurrect the importance of architects nor to find salvation in this ‘moment of greatest peril’, as there is no redemption after death. In other words, redemption after death is part of the problem, as architects do not even die anymore. However, the road to the solution of this paradoxes might be found in this phantas(ma)tic implosion, as the black box of deadlocks is ready to be opened. To open this box does not make us free of the ghosts, rather it releases them. The only solution is reflexivity, i.e., being conscious of the ghosts haunting our subjectivities.

In short, this cognitive map is programmed to ignite from within the heads of the architects.

If Tafuri argued that there is no radical architecture, only radical critiques of architecture, we argue that his critique of architecture was not radical enough because it

was not a self-critique. Text is a way of thinking with concepts just as much as architecture is a way of thinking with space. However, more striking is the fact that architecture is just as much a means of reproducing ways of thinking as texts are. Therefore, both are threatened by the same ghosts (such as ‘the architectural princes’ in Tafuri).

Returning to the example of Schopenhauer’s reading of Plato’s Cavern, the logic that connects the shadows is both inside and outside the cavern. Similarly, the radical in architecture (whatever one might conceive it to be) should be traversed inside and outside the shadows of architecture. Radical awareness exists precisely in the recognition that what connects the shadows are ideas and logics – ideology is our very means of thinking. The investigation of the ways of thinking about architecture is a radical road to be paved. To know the way that one is thinking about architecture does not involve a retelling of the idiosyncratic tale of a prince; instead, it involves uncovering the historically and socially produced realm of subjectivity that allowed this prince to think in the first place.

If there is no salvation, the alternative is not to go beyond the illusions but to traverse them – to be aware of the mediations that each one of them imply. In this way, this research returns somehow to its original intent. Although the initial mistake was to search for a model that could deliver revolutionary architecture – hacking reified social relations through micro-utopian interventions – in the end the research revealed the key to the black box: revolution is consciousness. Therefore, the answer is not to invent the ultimate anti-illusion, nor any form of escapism – notably, many radical critics of architecture become painters, as they refuse to produce new illusions through architecture. To be sober and to refuse to enter the ‘Bacchantic orgy’ is just another way of being drunk. The alternative is to be conscious of the ethical implications and of the social artifices involved in the illusions one has chosen to propose and to be able to successfully demonstrate those aspects in other architects’ proposals.

For this reason, the product of this research is a cognitive map of the reproduction of architecture. It supports a continuous dialectical disenchantment of the field’s phantasies. More important than the small step taken by this map is the landscape it helps to envision. Although there are no predicaments or prescriptions, it enables a vast landscape of new studies in architecture, such as the analysis of the material and

transubjective base of theoretical deadlocks in architectural proposals, the unveiling of the hidden artifices behind architectural discourses, the unveiling of concrete labour behind the architectural production of geniuses, and assessing the concrete power of reproduced illusions.

Furthermore, the enquiry must go beyond an awareness of the subjects' position in relation to the means of production. We are all disciplined subjects of architecture. The fight is against ourselves in a self-critique that traverses the reproduction of architecture inhabiting our deepest desires.

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***APPENDICES***

**(1) DOCUMENTS**

Copy of University Research Ethics Committee Ethical Approval  
Information sheet, consent form  
Interview forms



26 October 2015

Dear Camilo,

<b>Project Title:</b>	<b>Architecture and revolution in the 21st century: micro-utopian spaces as hacking of objectified social relations in the city.</b>
<b>Principal Investigator:</b>	<b>Douglas Spencer</b>
<b>Researcher</b>	<b>Camilo Amaral</b>
<b>Reference Number:</b>	<b>UREC 1516 02</b>

I am writing to confirm the outcome of your application to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), which was considered by UREC **on Wednesday 16th September 2015**.

The decision made by members of the Committee is **Approved**. The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation. Your study has received ethical approval from the date of this letter.

Should any significant adverse events or considerable changes occur in connection with this research project that may consequently alter relevant ethical considerations, this must be reported immediately to UREC. Subsequent to such changes an Ethical Amendment Form should be completed and submitted to UREC.

#### Approved Research Site

I am pleased to confirm that the approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

<b>Research Site</b>	<b>Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator</b>
Location of participants' choosing, University of East London and online	Douglas Spencer

#### Approved Documents

The final list of documents reviewed and approved by the Committee is as follows:

<b>Document</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>
UREC application form	2.0	23 October 2015



Participant information sheet - professionals	2.0	23 October 2015
Consent form –professionals	1.0	2 September 2015
Interview topic guide	1.0	2 September 2015
Participant information sheet – students/stakeholders	1.0	23 October 2015
Consent form - students/stakeholders	1.0	23 October 2015
Questionnaire - students	1.0	23 October 2015
Questionnaire - stakeholders	1.0	23 October 2015

Approval is given on the understanding that the [UEL Code of Practice for Research](#) is adhered to.

The University will periodically audit a random sample of applications for ethical approval, to ensure that the research study is conducted in compliance with the consent given by the ethics Committee and to the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

**Please note, it is your responsibility to retain this letter for your records.**

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of this project.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Fieulleteau  
University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)  
Research Integrity and Ethics Manager  
Email: [researchethics@uel.ac.uk](mailto:researchethics@uel.ac.uk)

**University of East London,** Docklands Campus, University Way, E16 2RD

**PROJECT TITLE:** Architecture and revolution in the 21st century:  
Micro-utopian spaces as hacking of objectified social relations in the city.

**THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Camilo Vladimir de Lima Amaral  
Docklands Campus, University Way, London E16 2RD,  
Phone: 07552887318

## INFORMATION SHEET

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this study.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Research will investigate the field of architecture and how small practices are challenging its structure. It also investigates how social relations occur in the activities and products in the field of architecture.

This project will use techniques of grounding theory, which involves field observation of architectural projects, participant observation in design workshops and qualitative interviews.

I would ask for your account on your practical experience in the field of architecture. This information would be important for the research to assess how social relations are involved in the production of architecture.

For this reason, the participants will be asked how they experience the constraints to the freedom of their everyday professional practices. For this, they will be asked to describe the process of design and contact with clients and the market, and how these affect their work. They will also be asked if they have developed strategies to overcome these constraints. Participants will also be asked to give an account of their labour conditions, and how they relate to other architects, professionals and users, and how this relates to their process of design. Finally, we will ask on how those questions interfere in the products they can deliver as an architect, what currently would be the social impact of his work.

There is no hazard risk other than we face in normal everyday life experience, and you would be expected only to give your view on your own experience in the field of architecture.

### AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The proposal aims to assess how alternative architectural practices can challenge social relations that are objectified in architectural elements, spatial rules and urban objects. The hypothesis is that architecture can produce emancipated social relations in temporary spatial agencies. This hypothesis, if confirmed, can explain the current changing in architectural practice, and foment new forms of practices among architects. The subject about architectural production and social transformation has been debated in theory for a long period, but no experimental assessment has been done. Therefore, the results may give a new basis for objective and scientific debate on the subject.

Although the field of architecture is structurally constrained by its founding preconceptions, the recent economic crises created the conditions for the emergence of new social roles for architects. This research is a critical immersion in the practices that proposes socioeconomic alternatives that enables a revolutionary role for architects. Revolution is understood, in the realm of this study, as a conscious action of radical subversion of the social role of architects, as framed in current context.

The aim is to investigate how these practices are challenging the reproduction of the field, as well as its objectified complex social relations, as well as the limits and challenges they face. Ultimately, this perspective aims to contribute with benchmarks for alternative modes of practice and to construct a socially active approach.

The hypothesis is these practices create 'micro-utopian' alternatives, which act as hacking devices in current architectural field.

Here, hacking is understood as attitudes as techniques for subverting and reconfigure social protocols, rather than a concept or definition. This enables to understand a peculiar aesthetic and practices emerging in the current informational mode of production, without restricting it to a meaning.

Thus, this dialectical approach repositions utopia as immanent kaleidoscopic fragments in a condition marked by complexity and uncertainties. The focus is on experiences producing a creative fissure in the field. A new framework for understanding these transformations is being constructed, thus rendering a new image for the field.

### **NON-CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE DATA**

The data will be secured by protocols in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy. This data will be used for the elaboration of a PhD dissertation and possible paper publications. Due to the qualitative character of the sample, the technical nature of the questions, and the intended association with case studies of your work, the participants might be identified in the publication of the material.

### **LOCATION AND INTERVIEW FORMAT**

The research is being carried at UEL school of Architecture, with supervision of Professors Hassan Abdala, Douglas Spencer, Roland Karthaus and Alan Chandler, and with support from the Federal University of Goias and a scholarship from CAPES/Brazil.

As a participant, I would like to interview you at a location of your choice, or if you prefer at proper locations in our university. The questions I would like to ask are related to architecture and your professional practice. Interviews would cordially last less than 1 hour, and I would be recording you on audio or video, at your discretion, for the purpose of data collection and presentations. The record will then be transcribed by me. You might decline to be video recorded, and still would be welcome to participate in the research.

### **DISCLAIMER**

There is no remuneration for participating in this research, and interviews will be conducted on a voluntary basis.

You are not obliged to take part in this study, and are free to withdraw at any time during tests and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied. Should you choose to withdraw from the programme you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason.

As participants are not in a dependent relationship with any of the researchers, the participation in this research will have no impact on assessment, treatment, service-use or support provided by UEL.

In any possible case, UEL students choosing to decline or to participate in this research, it is ensured this will not have any impact on their assessment neither on their learning experience.

**This research has received formal approval from the University Research Ethics Committee.  
If you have any queries regarding the conduct of this programme, please contact:**  
Catherine Fieulleateau, Ethics Integrity Manager, Graduate School, EB 1.43  
University of East London, Docklands Campus, London E16 2RD  
(Telephone: 020 8223 6683, Email: [researchethics@uel.ac.uk](mailto:researchethics@uel.ac.uk)).

**UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON**

Consent to Participate in an Experimental Programme  
Involving the Use of Human Participants (professionals):

**Architecture and revolution in the 21st century: micro-utopian spaces as hacking of objectified social relations in the city.**

I have read the information leaflet relating to the above programme of research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed, the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me, and I understand the intended use of the data.

I understand that my involvement in this study is voluntary.

I understand that this research is being held at University of East London, as part of a PhD research, which has received support from the Federal University of Goias and CAPES/Brazil research founding agency.

I understand that information and non anonymised quotes might be used in the publication of the PhD thesis, scientific papers, conferences and internet.

I understand the interviews will be recorded, and I authorize the collection and use of the following data (inscribe 'Yes' or 'No'):

Audio recording

Video recording

I hereby **freely and fully consent to participate** in the study which has been fully explained to me and for the information obtained to be used in relevant research publications, and acknowledge that no hazard risk other than faced in normal everyday life experience is involved. Having given this consent **I understand that I have the right to withdraw** from the study at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Participant's Signature .....

Investigator's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Investigator's Signature .....

Date: .....

**UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON**

Consent to Participate in an Experimental Programme  
Involving the Use of Human Participants (students):

**Architecture and revolution in the 21st century: micro-utopian spaces as hacking of objectified social relations in the city.**

I have read the information leaflet relating to the above programme of research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed, the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me, and I understand the intended use of the data.

I understand that my involvement in this study is voluntary and that I am free to participate or to choose to decline, as this research will not impact on any UEL assessment neither on any learning experience held in that institution.

I understand that this research is being held at University of East London, as part of a PhD research, which has received support from the Federal University of Goias and CAPES/Brazil research founding agency.

I understand that procedures for the anonymization of data will be conducted, even though the small number of participants might compromise my anonymity, as this data will be used on the publication of a PhD thesis, scientific papers, conferences and internet.

I hereby **freely and fully consent to participate** in the study which has been fully explained to me and for the information obtained to be used in relevant research publications, and acknowledge that no hazard risk other than faced in normal everyday life experience is involved. Having given this consent **I understand that I have the right to withdraw** from the study at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Participant's Signature .....

Investigator's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Investigator's Signature .....

Date: .....

**University of East London**

Docklands Campus, University Way, London E16 2RD

**Interview topic guide (professionals):**

Main theme 1: the Field Constraints

1. How would you describe your role as an architect in the process that goes from the "need" of space to the final use, passing through the processes such as the design, the construction site and the market?  
Did any change occur recently?
2. Does the structure of the profession, the work market and the real estate market constrain your work?  
What are the signs of this?  
How do you feel it interferes in your work?
3. How do you deal with such constraints (if any)?  
Do you have strategies to overcome these kinds of limitations?

Main theme 2: Labour Conditions

4. How would you describe the relations you have with other architects, clients and technicians in the process of designing a space?
5. What you look for when you search for an employee?  
What kind of work arrangements you have with other architects (contracts/outsourcing)?
6. Do you think users, builders and other workers should have a say in process of design?  
How does this occur and how important is this for your process of design?  
Could you name who you consider the main actors in the process of architectural design?

Main theme 3: Production of Objects

7. Do you consider the current professional rules interfere in the products you can deliver?  
What would you consider the main constraints to the free exercise of your work?
8. On the other hand, do you consider your recent work to be able in any way to reacted or interfere in the society and its relation to the city?  
Could you give examples?  
Do your practice interfere in matters of construction organization?
9. What do you consider to be good architecture?  
How is your architecture being assessed and valued by your peers?  
What you consider to be the main agents/instances that set value to your work?  
Has it changed recently?

**University of East London**

Docklands Campus, University Way, London E16 2RD

**Questionnaire (students):**

Answer the questions from 0 to 4, where 0 is negative, and 4 is positive.

1. Was working in this workshop different from the architectural education you have experienced before?  
0  1  2  3  4
2. Was the working experience more rewarding than your experiences in architecture to date?  
0  1  2  3  4
3. How would you evaluate the importance of your role in the final artefact proposed?  
0  1  2  3  4
4. Did external constraints (market, bureaucracy, and so on) interfere in the process of project?  
0  1  2  3  4
5. Do you consider that these constraints held back your proposal?  
0  1  2  3  4
6. Do you think your ideas (and your colleagues') were considered in a fair way during the design?  
0  1  2  3  4
7. Did you feel comfortable and open to discuss with your peers the issues involved in the design process?  
0  1  2  3  4
8. Would you consider the decisions in your project were taken in a democratic manner?  
0  1  2  3  4
9. Did users, builders and local community have real input in the product delivered?  
0  1  2  3  4
10. Do you think the proposals had a good impact on the place, the users and the community?  
0  1  2  3  4
11. Did the construction and the creative experience come together in your experience?  
0  1  2  3  4
12. Do you think the actual result was different from what a conventional architectural practice can deliver?  
0  1  2  3  4
13. Would you consider the final product as a 'valuable' architectural product?  
0  1  2  3  4
14. What stakeholders you would consider important to be engaged in any architectural design?

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15. Please describe what you consider most important in your experience of the workshop.

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16. Please give any examples of any constraints or negative points you felt in your experience.

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17. Please share below any further comments/suggestions you would like.

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## **(2) FIELD WORK I: COMMON PLACES IN LONDON**

### **The context**

First considerations  
New common places in London  
Background noise – urban experience and social relations

### **The methodology**

The research design  
General points on the methodology  
Specific points on the methodology

### **Critical observations I: Outside Observation**

First phase data  
Second Phase Data: 3 Dimensions of the new reified experience  
Stake point 1: common places and the aesthetic of things

## **The Context**

### **First considerations**

This appendix reports on the first of three phases of fieldwork. This ‘first observations’ refer to a classical observation, in which a view on the ‘results’ of contemporary architecture is developed from an outside point of view, addressing the external effect of architectural products and the aesthetic experience produced by architecture in the contemporary production of London (‘Outside Observation’).

The Appendix 3 reports on the fieldworks of ‘Participant Observation’ and ‘Observation of Participation’. The ‘Participant Observation’ refers to case studies conducted as anthropological investigations, as if the researcher were studying architects as some sort of exotic tribe with their own rites and rules. The ‘Observation of Participation’ goes a step further by fully immersing the researcher in the anthropological object of study, with its paradoxes and discipline, as though the ethnographer had ‘become native’ (we shall develop further this concept below).

This movement of thought enabled a perception of not only the contradictions in architectural products but also the ways in which these live contradictions are part of the disciplining process in architectural production. We called such contradictions ‘stake points’ not only because they were used as ‘construction surveying’ points for the presented thesis but also because they revealed the borders of the discipline at stake and thus the limits of the experiments’ successes and failures.

These live contradictions made it possible to identify the deadlocks of the field – the points of no detour – making architecture an abstract disciplinary force that reproduces current social relations, despite its promises to do the opposite.

## **New common places in London**

The end of the 1980s saw the birth of a new kind of space as a result of political and economic reconfiguration. The metropolis in centralized economies faced a process of deindustrialization; which, with the increasing flexibility of work relations and the pressure on the welfare state, reframed the mass production economy into the so-called toyotist economy (Harvey, 1990). For this new neoliberal economy, a new form of space was produced. The paradigmatic example was Canary Wharf. Developed in an old industrial area, a vast new financial centre was designed from scratch, where the streets and squares were no longer 'adopted' by the weakening welfare state, but, were controlled by another entity: the corporation.

In the book *Ground Control*, Anna Minton (2009) analyses the emergence of privatised public spaces, arguing that Canary Wharf became a model for almost all recent developments in England (Minton, 2009, p. 3-14). Although maintaining the appearance of public spaces, these streets are not democratically accountable. Such spaces are privately managed and are based on specific strategies and sets of rules. The result is high levels of management, stratification, big chain stores and corporate control over public security to avoid any disruption of capitalist activities. Besides maintaining the appearance of public spaces, these streets are not adopted by the local government.

Zukin (2010: p.222) state that this is a long process that took place in the period after the great wars, creating what she called the 'corporate city'. This city has been produced by specific arrangements of: private capital investment, State specific policies and rules design, media image construction and direction of consumers tastes (Zukin, 2010: p.30). This new configuration of social space (capital, state, media) excluded civil society from the formula. Not surprisingly, the collapse of public spaces are accompanied by the collapse of democracy itself, as empirical studies demonstrate that political decisions are defined by corporation interests, and are no longer influenced by the public opinion (Gilens and Page, 2014).

For Smith and Low (2006: p. 14-16) as we watch the collapse of basic rights, public space emerges in the centre of the contemporary debate on democracy, as the production of space is a central strategy for the implementation of neoliberal concepts. For Smith and Low, this is the reason why political movements are always attached to

places (the archetypical mass in a public space). As we will see, changes in the production and control of public spaces will also have implications on the political potential of those places. Zukin (2010: p.145) argues that schemes of private city space management are a new form oligarchy. For instance, the votes and decisions in Business Improvement Districts are balanced by the size of ownership in the local arrangement, and usually the vote is proportional to the size of the property. Based on the argument that the State does not have funds in a moment of economic crises, therefore, those who have capital should rule. For instance, in this equation both homeless and unemployed simply do not exist. Smith and Low (2006: p. 15) reinforce the argument stating that this is the formation of a new apartheid, excluding the poor, the homeless and the immigrants out of the city spaces.

Furthermore, local authorities now expect buildings and streets to be designed according to the guidance of 'Security by Design' manuals (Minton, 2009: 61–82). These manuals establish a series of design measures that incorporate implicit strategies into physical objects. Thus, space is filled with social rules that are designed strategically in order to avoid conflict, control use, orient behaviour and guarantee a business-friendly environment. Therefore, both Appleton (2014) and Zukin (2010) emphasise that laws are increasingly a mixture of authorities' wish to control society and business' interests framing decisions in the management of social spaces.

In addition to these measures, and in order to reinforce control of behaviour in urban places, the recent creation of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act in England challenges the conventional rights of citizens in the public space. Along with many mechanisms to assure dispersal powers to the police, the new law creates a mechanism in which specific punishments can address specific individuals and behaviours, depending on the understanding of a court (Minton, 2009, p. 132–178). The modern idea that the public space is a place in which people can manifest their freedom has been significantly diminished.

Moreover, Appleton (2014) analyses a new bill currently passing through the UK parliament that will ensure even more restrictions upon the public. He argues that the law gives authorities an almost free hand to control who can do what in public spaces, with complete flexibility in rule design. In this sense, there is no previous definition of

what is prohibited, nor any previous definition of the scale of the sentence, thus holding people in a state of permanent self vigilance.

In London and United Kingdom recent public spaces policies, yet a new series of instruments are being set in use in order to build a new urban neoliberal context. For instance, in order to 'bring forward land' for development, the proposed tactic is to change the laws governing 'compulsory purchase', 'land assembly' and 'affordable housing' (as a replacement for council housing strategies). We further analyze the process of how government is using architecture and other techniques to justify and produce reified public spaces in Chapter 5.

It is important to notice that the result of that process is the dismantling of traditional communities and urban places through a process of accumulation by dispossession (laws that stripped local citizens of older forms of wealth to which they held title) and a subsequent re-concentration of property in the hands of big real estate actors. In other words, in a time of financial crisis, architecture became a form of releasing real state capital from the hands of citizens into new forms associated with rental economy.

### **Background noise – urban experience and social relations**

Many intellectuals have observed the connection between metropolitan space and social freedom (Simmel, 1903, Lefebvre, 1991, Berman, 1990, Baudelaire, 1995, Sennet, 2002, inter alia). Although this connection could hardly be dismissed, there is a great deal of complexity in the topic. This relationship has changed in different historical moments, and cities have played different roles in the formation of modern citizenship, in these new common spaces, old hierarchical social relations are intensified under the guise of new appearances. Therefore, rather than repetition, this process reproduces social relations through space – as discussed in the introduction.

Charles Baudelaire is perhaps the most cited author on the account of the modern construction of freedom through the experience of the city. In his literature he was able to express how the modern metropolis became an instrument to create an ephemeral and free spirit in the modern man (cf. Baudelaire, 1996). For Baudelaire (1995) the modern man is like the modern painter, who is able to design his own life, as freely as an artist

design his paintings. This freedom was enabled by the sudden transformation of the small, closed and stable traditional space, into a multitude, open and the constant changing fashion. This atmosphere was founded in the city itself, and was experienced by the *flaneur* attitude: a modern man that would engage in the news and movement of the city, connecting freely with the street's 'family of eyes', and swimming in the stream (Berman, 1990: p. 148-154).

Marshal Berman (1990) examines how different cities in the 19<sup>th</sup> century transformed the citizens' social perception. Contrasting the boulevard's experience in Paris with the Prospect's experience in Saint Petersburg, Berman demonstrates the intimate relation between the social awareness and the city forms.

In this sense, Sharon Zukin (2010, p. 129) argues that public space has had an important role in the democratisation process.<sup>1</sup> For instance, even before the French Revolution clashed against the previous classes' privileges, the mixture that was promoted by the markets' space was creating the basis for modern democracy and paving the way for the city space to be open for all. Moreover, Zukin highlights that London and New York created public spaces in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as libraries, parks and museums, even before the right to vote was available to everyone. Rather than just an effect or image, public spaces were also generating democracy and are, therefore, politics in praxis<sup>2</sup>.

Moreover, Georg Simmel (1903), from a different perspective, analyses how the experience of the metropolis changes modern men's consciousness and, therefore, social relations. For Simmel, the modern city creates an intensification of 'nervous stimulation', a continuous confrontation with the unexpected, a highly impersonal relationship with others, an abstract mode of mediation (money) and, therefore, the

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<sup>1</sup> Neil Smith and Setha Low (2006) analyse the political role of public space in modern society. They argue that the definition of Public Space has been constructed as the opposite of Private Space. Therefore, both social constructions are the result of modern capitalist society. In this sense, this phenomena is the result of social struggles against the former feudalist spatial order, and it is even a progressive development from the Greek polis, which did exclude both slaves and women from its political space, the Agora. Thus, public space arises as a new set of social relations, articulating the power of civil society, the market and the modern State (2006: p. 4).

<sup>2</sup> Specifically in London, the struggle for the control of public spaces and streets was the outcome of a long dispute that happened towards the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century (Minton, 2009, p. 19–21). By this time, major squares of the city were enclosed, guarded by private security and surrounded by sentry boxes. After a conflict with guards resulted in a murder, social unrest and the involvement of the printed media resulted in two major parliamentary inquiries. These inquiries resulted in streets becoming 'adopted' by the local authorities, which were gaining power by this time. In this sense, the rise of the public space coincided with and represented the construction of local democracy in London.

necessity of fast reactions. That situation leads to the unconditional use of rationality. In other words, by these new features, the modern man is ripped apart from the old 'orbit' of the feudal village. Therefore, for Simmel the modern metropolis experience generates freedom by the transcending of its own displacement, thus only accounting to its 'inner laws'.

Nevertheless, David Harvey (1992) and Fredric Jameson (1991), among others, have discussed how changes in the mode of production have transformed the way spaces are produced with the intention of reshaping the way society operates. They argue that the move towards a post-fordist mode of production is articulated with many aspects of post-modern urbanism and spectacular architecture. This aims to change the very nature of work, society, control and space, arguably to adapt it to a new condition formed by contemporary logistics, automation of production, and cybernetics (Antonio Negri, 2000; Nick Srnicek, 2013).

Michel Foucault (1980) and Gilles Deleuze (1992) argued that, with modernization, capitalism moved from a centralized society, controlled by despotic power, with hierarchy and direct modes of punishment and control, towards a disciplinary society, organized by a strong bureaucracy, where the decentralization of control was enabled through a rigid set of laws and education. Henri Lefebvre (1971a) called that society "The Bureaucratic Society of Controlled Consumption". Nevertheless, in one of his latest works, Deleuze (1992), asserts that society was moving towards a new form of social organization, where the economy would be organized by cybernetic machines and computers, with a new kind of social control being born, which is much more diffuse and implicit.

In this sense, Alexander Galloway (2004) argues against arguments such as Castells' (2002), which considers the network implicitly free. He argues that today control is established in the same manner as the *protocol* controls the internet. Protocols are the system that rules exchanging data between different machines. Because software are made of algorithms, he argues that control has become much softer. Therefore, he compares this softness of control with the kind of control one can feel in the highway:

To help understand the concept of computer protocols, consider the analogy of the highway system. Many different combinations of roads

are available to a person driving from point A to point B. However, en route one is compelled to stop at red lights, stay between the white lines, follow a reasonably direct path, and so on. These conventional rules that govern the set of possible behavior patterns within a heterogeneous system are what computer scientists call protocol. Thus, protocol is a technique for achieving voluntary regulation within a contingent environment. (Galloway, 2004: 7)

Therefore, Galloway uses the architecture of the internet to generate very powerful insights about the structure of control in contemporary society, such as the double structure of the internet protocol (TCP/IP versus DNS). These systems works with two abstract machines: one with a ‘formatted’ freedom (of the highway kind), and the other with a ‘hierarchical’ control, as Galloway (2004: 10) puts it, of the kind one could simple delete the entire China from the internet. He concludes that what were the mysteries of commodity for Marx’s time may be the mysteries of protocol for our time.

In the same way that this dual structure is omnipresent on the virtual world, two forms of social control are now being spread in urban spaces: the public (formatted in new forms by the State) and the privatized public spaces (hierarchically controlled by corporations). This situation creates a logic in which one is free to navigate, but only under certain rules, which are designed to secure control under certain roles, which transforms individuals into consumers.<sup>3</sup>

Douglas Spencer (2011) has studied how contemporary architecture is producing spaces with complex forms, smoothness, folding and responsive to difference, but, at the same moment, conceiving the buildings in order to achieve a new kind of smooth and invisible form of control<sup>4</sup>. They move these ideas from ‘critique’ to ‘valorization’,

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<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, Alex Williams (2013) argues that the idea of ‘everything being capitalism’ is either fallacious or a misunderstanding of how systems’ works. He argues that the entity called ‘capitalism’ cannot be omnipresent and omniscient, because it is not a ‘closed system’. In contrast, it is an assembly of many open systems interacting with each other. He concludes that, besides Capitalism being totalizing, it is not absolute. Therefore, it is important to investigate how dissent and alternatives may be produced by the capitalist space itself.

<sup>4</sup> Spencer (2011) analysis a new educational building, for accommodating Ravensbourne’s relocation to Greenwich, showing how educational spaces and ‘public spaces’ are carefully interconnected in order to make the students engaged with marketing at all time, whereas the public is invited in the building as ‘consumers’. The building also facilitates a flexible agenda that narrows the gap between education and ‘industry experience’. The engagement between building and new technologies opens the old enclosed spaces of education, towards the market and the new mode of production. The architects

manipulating a new kind of “politics of affect”, in a kind of a-political politics (Spencer: 2011: 18). Therefore, terms once used to build a critical and negative analysis (such as nomadism, differential, micro-politics) are now used in order to achieve its furthestmost neoliberal potential, transforming what was saw as negative into positive. The seemly fluid, free and liquefied space is, indeed, a very controlled one.

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used a fusion of architectural theory, drained philosophy and managerial business strategies (Spencer, 2011: 13).

## **The methodology**

### **The research design**

The research is conceived in a series of “constant comparative analysis” as proposed in the Grounded Theory approach (Guest et alii, 2011, Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Fundamentally, this is a qualitative sociological method that aims to develop theories on the basis of rigorous observations. In this sense, the process of data collection, analysis and theoretical explanation is in constant movement. Thus the codes and themes extracted from a first data collection are constantly confronted to new observations, new reconsiderations and new tests. Drawing upon this, the research is divided into 7 stages.

The first initiative was to develop a rigorous project, develop research skills and throughout a literature review pinpoint the main concepts to be tested (privatization of public spaces, micro-utopia, mode of spatial production, hacking strategies, and so on).

Secondly, on the basis of these enquiries, case studies of “modern architectural praxis” and of “contemporary architectural practices” were developed in order to reveal their fundamental differences and originalities. These practices were focused on the spatial production of public spaces in the city of London.

Thirdly, a process of “grounding the theory” took place, identifying main “codes” (patterns of behaviour, segments of data, preliminary categories, and so on) in these architectural social practices. These observations were assembled into main themes (such as Hacking of Objectified Social Relations, Velvet Ground, Tangled Orbits and Repeated Compulsion of Space Consumption).

Fourthly, these themes were subject to fieldwork confrontation, directing activities of participant observation in two UEL Architectural workshops (Urban Ecology Prototypes and Construction Week) and debated with peer in conferences.

Fifthly, the systematization of this new data is making possible to develop a preliminary map of theories about the field of architecture (which included concepts such as Prince Complex, Silent Utopias, Kaleidoscopic Interventions, Tangled Social Control, Driven Spatial Consumption, Velvet Architecture, Soft Urban Dispossession, and so on).

Sixthly, this new set of theories were tested in a last round of fieldwork that involves semi-structured Interviews, Participant Observation, observation of participation, two new workshops and conference debates.

The last step was the conclusion of the critical analysis process, during which theories were validated or falsified, allowing a final map of the theories to be drawn. Then, the limits and advantages of the framework were considered, and the dissertation was written down.

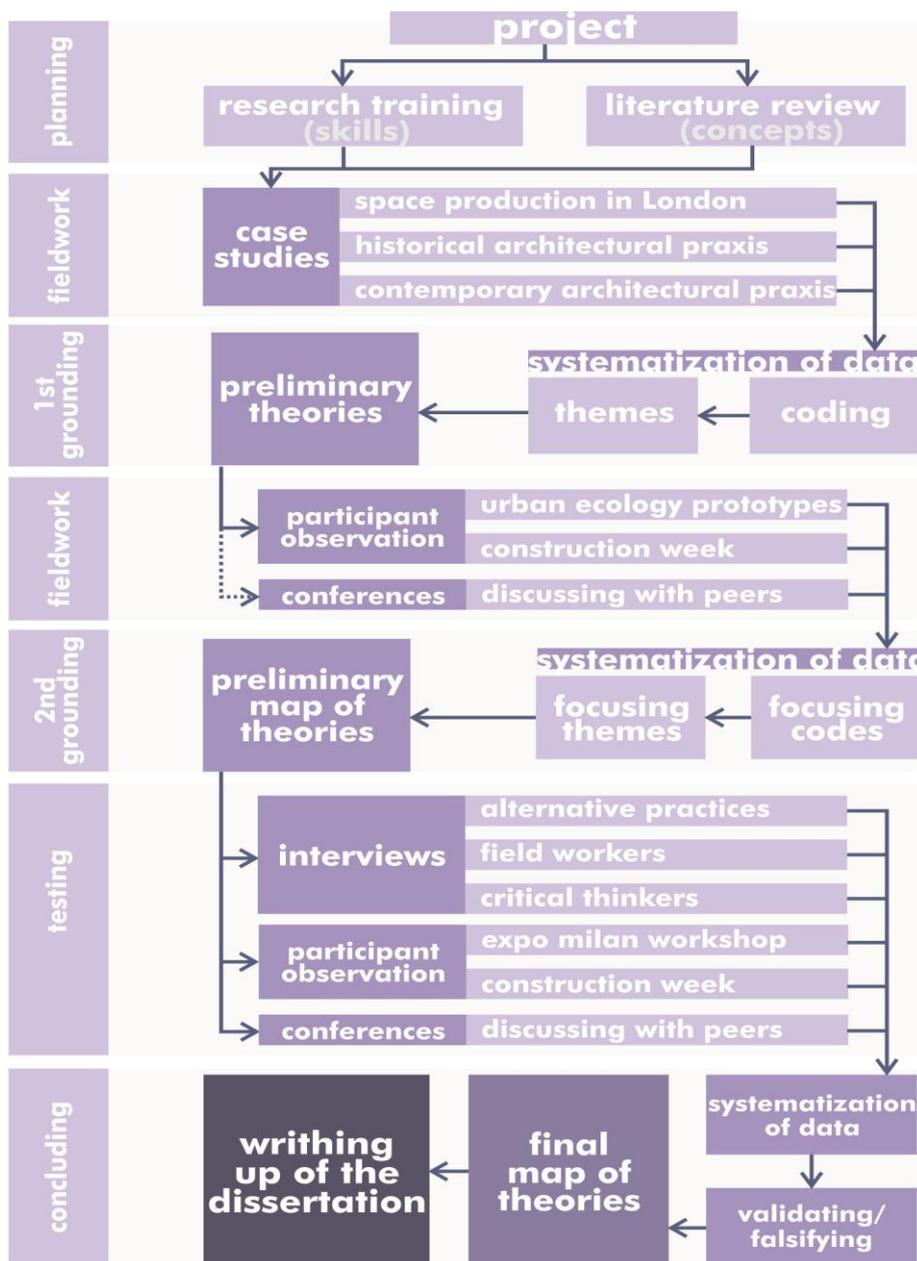


Diagram 32: The research design. Source: the author.

## **General points on the methodology**

The positive approach towards science has mutated into different frameworks during the last centuries. The question of how close ideas and theories can reach reality is an issue deeply connected to the process of rational thinking itself. From conservative to moderate positions, many strategies have been developed in order to classify theories as more valid or less legitimate (Popper, 1989, Feyerabend, 1989, Khun, 1987, Adorno e Horkheim, 1996, Santos, 2003, Guest et alli, 2011). Science has become a game of power and instrumental control of nature and social work.

Ultimately, in contemporary circumstances, the truth of a theory is measured only by its effectiveness in mobilizing human efforts, attention or hierarchical control of labour division. Bourdieu (1996) studied the formation of “fields” (such as art, literature or education) as a set of social rules, scientific paradigms and ideologies that legitimate the value and dominance of certain “habitus”. Uneven relations are established to secure the concentration of production, as well as secure the cult of personality and verify the accordance of ideas to the centre of the system.

On one hand, this means that every explanation is socially engaged (Santos, 2001) even acceptance of the status quo. On the other hand, this means everything that exists was artificially constructed (Escobar, 1996, Lefebvre, 1967, Rancière, 2005, Santos, 2007). Two antagonistic effects are fundamental in this research approach: the weight of tradition is, paradoxically, much heavier than one would accept, as everything have been constructed through the long evolution of architecture as a social practice, thus imposing a scenario to our rational thinking and its capability of deconstruction; and there is no limit to creatively inventing new truths, other than its social effects and its endurance (impact, toleration, flexibility and deepness).

Therefore, the research uses a methodological pluralism of philosophical argumentation, social science techniques of qualitative research (Grounding Theory, Thematic Analysis, Participant Observation, Semi-structured Interviews).

Furthermore, the reproduction of social relations by the production of public spaces is a complex aspect to observe. This diffusion of control is one element that makes it difficult to assess, as well as the different means to influence behaviour and articulate

relations between people in space. Furthermore, there is a conceptual difficulty in defining public space and how it relates to the promotion of social relations. The related literature presents multiple methodologies that assess the 'publicness' of a place into divergent grids and concepts (Varna and Tiesdell, 2010, Benn and Gauss, 1983, Kohn, 2004, Németh and Schmidt, 2011, Németh, 2012, Lessing, 2001, Staeheli and Mitchell, 2008, Iveson, 2007).

A review of this literature provided two main themes for a first-phase analysis based on publicly available data, and supported the more qualitative approach of the second phase of the research, in which techniques of field study were applied and the development of a form was used to notate the observations. This form was created by a critical synthesis of the many methodologies to measure the 'publicness' of spaces, resulting in 36 elements/criteria to be checked.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, the research combined this assessment with the analysis of the new strategies for 'public spaces' (Johnson, 2009) and the 'housing' policy proposed by the mayor of London (Johnson, 2010, 2013 and 2015). The formulation of the investigation in these terms allowed to investigate how punctual actions related with the big picture, thus further revealing how architectural reification becomes a means in the trans-subjective agencies identified in our cognitive map.

In this way, the analysis presented here aimed to reveal how these new common spaces go beyond the simple process of gentrification – the replacement of one class by another – and produce a new 'aesthetical dimension' over the reproduction of specific social relations, whereby the urban condition operates as its material means.

In short, the current scenario in London is a combination of private tangled social control, driven spatial consumption, and the pacification of conflicts by comfort rather than punishment. In this scenario, while former Londoners are expelled to outside the city limits, top-down strategies are targeting the international market for luxurious (and empty) apartments. The first hypothesis was that this process relates to urban enclosure, as in the historical 'land enclosure' in England, but it is now packed into a nice velvet architecture. Nevertheless, the research points to the fact that enclosure is a 'primitive

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<sup>5</sup> See image below.

accumulation' of a deeper process of reification (a matter we will explore theoretically in Chapter 4).

### **Specific points on the methodology**

In the first phase of the research was accomplished through an initial inventory conducted by combining information from various entities, including the planning portal of the UK government, the Greater London Authority website, the British Property Federation website, the New London Architecture organisation, and the websites of major property corporations and local authorities.

From an initial list of 1024 projects, 708 developments were found to be already completed. After that, the approval dates of the projects were searched. It was not possible to determine the approval date of 32 projects; therefore, these were eliminated from the analysis. 101 projects fit the criteria of having been approved after the mayor's first policy documents were drafted. Of those, 25 were found to not enter the realm of public and private boundaries (being mainly internal refurbishments). Each one of the 32 boroughs and the Corporation of the City of London have different websites with different search engines, which means that the information is neither transparent nor accountable.

Seventy-six cases were initially analysed through their projects' online information. The public realm impact; the public space privatisation and the resulting public space's 'coefficient of conversion' into privatised public space were assessed. The average of these three analysis creates the overall coefficient of reification of the intervention in the public space.

In the second phase of the assessment, 20 spaces with different private/public arrangements were subjected to a field investigation that collected the information on 36 criteria (to be described below) that were developed upon state of the art research on public space. The aspects and considerations derived for the observations came especially from the following studies:

(1) Varna and Tiesdell (2010) characterized the conceptualization of publicness in two major effort groups: (a) *Inductive*: the quality of been public comes from external element, physical properties, material elements and barriers; (b) *Deductive*: comes from internal issues, symbolic interpretations, rules, socially constructed meanings, (in the eyes of the beholder). They propose a model for publicness interpretation by measuring: ownership, physical configuration, control, civility, and animation.

(2) Benn and Gauss (1983) propose three dimensions for the publicness examination: (a) *Access*: the ability people have to occupy the space, i.e. appropriate the space and recreating its function; (b) *Agency*: the examination of who defines how the space is controlled, i.e. if the rules have social accountability; and (c) *Interest*: the examination of the space management decision, interpreting on if the 'rules' are in benefit of the public or particular interests.

(3) Kohn (2004) uses three criteria for publicness: (a) *ownership*; (b) *accessibility*: the freedom, control and neutrality of access; and (c) *intersubjectivity*: how the elements of the urban space facilitate or make difficult the encounter and interactions of people, allowing difference to emerge.

(4) Németh and Schmidt (2011) has used three axes to analyse publicness: *ownership*, *management*, and *uses/users*.

(5) Staeheli and Mitchell (2008) argued that a space is truly public when it can integrate the inhabitants into the creation and use of the space. For that, is important to analyse the receptivity, welcome, and comfort provided.

(6) For Iveson (2007) spaces becomes public trough a process that engage people the debate of the space's proprieties itself. Therefore, a place is public when is subjected to public assessment, or if it becomes a means of *public conscience*.

(7) Lessing (2001) creates a model of interpretation of the space creating a interpretation grid drawn upon information networks society. He uses three 'layers' for that: (a) *Physical*: the hardware is the material elements and infrastructure (as cables, mediums, objects); (b) *Code*: that are the laws, codes, protocols and rules that mediates the exchanges; (c) *Content*: the actual information and elements involved in the transaction between people.

(8) Németh (2012) asserts that ‘truly public forum is characterized by (relatively) open access, unmediated deliberation, and shared participation (...) Nevertheless, publicness is always subjective: whereas some might feel a space full of homeless persons is “truly public,” this sight might drive other users away. (...) A simple metric might examine public space vis-à-vis’ [a] *Free Access* and [b] *Behaviour Freedom*. He suggests that a complete analysis should consider the following aspects: Physical (spatial programming, mobility, restrictions and aesthetic); Code (laws, regulations, policing, norms, language and guidelines); content (use, behaviour, symbolism meaning).

(9) For Zukin, S. (2010) culture used to be place-bounded, and Public Space was connected to its history, but, it is not anymore. Rather than preserve only the buildings, Public Spaces should also preserve the community that created the authenticity of the place. Domestication by cappuccino is a form of controlling the space by consumption taste. She argues one should not lose the big picture: the issue is about capital granting incomes, controlling workers, associating with state to make profitable rules, and using media apparatus for managing consumers’ tastes. For her, authentic democracy is loud, unruly, unpredictable, dangerous, undisciplined, independent and non-programmed behaviour. Therefore, Public Spaces should be free for Protest, as the political aspect is one of most important elements of the polis.

In short, the reification in contemporary metropolitan spaces can only be understood by the dialectic between the physical arrangements and the economical, political and social doctrines. As we saw, ‘things’ in public space are not a matter of simple barriers, cosy benches or fancy comfortable materials, but how the objectified social relations reproduce citizenship roles in the space. These things are the social codes and interpersonal rules that are graved in spatial elements.

Thus, the matter in the analysis of architectonic reification does not deal simply with *objects per se*<sup>6</sup>, but also with the social relations implemented when fences, doors, tables, and even grass and pavement directs social behaviour. Social roles are the

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<sup>6</sup> Note that this proposition is completely different from Object Oriented Ontology (OOO), that supposes objects to have and positive existence, with no special status, and nothing beyond pragmatic aspects. In this sense, OOO makes a tabula rasa, completely avoiding dialectical thinking, and ignoring history and the genealogy of ideas that produced both the objects and their own theories about them, what the first part of this dissertation argued impossible, naïve and non reflexive.

activities people are expected and accepted to play in specific places. Beyond the apparent accessibility of privatized public spaces and beyond its physical beautification, the metropolitan space, once symbol of difference, rationality and freedom is being transformed into a space of fragmented orbits of control, engraved in fractal and cosy objects. This creates a new spatiality, where citizens move across it in unconventional dimensions. If we take dimensions as the measure and directions of the space, thus, we will need concepts other than forward, sideways and vertically, as this question involves multiple aspects and tensions.

For doing so, the field analysis involved a multi-layered methodology registering different aspects of the space, aiming on the one hand, a rigorous analysis, and on the other hand, the observation of regular experience of common users. In this sense, the case studies were a mixed methodology involving dialectical investigation, analytical techniques, behaviour and aesthetical observation and critical synthesis. The observations of each case study were than filled in a form, registering 5 main aspects:

*(1) Descriptive and Informative elements*

General information and data collection is important for the interpretation of the impact of the developments in the city. This data was undertaken in a straight forward spirit, and is the first moment of analysis, where the accumulation of pragmatic facts helps the observer to engage and get closer to the object of analysis. It also helps to keep the conclusion in tone with the concrete experience, avoiding any excess of speculation and idealism.

*(2) Territoriality aspects*

In the field investigation, aspects of the construction of the site and the production of the territoriality are observed. Those aspects involve the production of a character/identity for the object in relation to its surroundings or regular spaces in the town. It is a subjective analysis not because of its imprecision, but because it depends on the interpretation of the impact of the object in the subject that observes it. It is an analysis of how the object presents itself as a phenomenon. It is specifically concerned with forms of creating

boundaries and managing flows, as those are the aspects that creates its relation to the overall system of the city.

*(3) Mechanisms of Heteronomy*

This aspect is interested on how a series of apparatuses and ‘invisible’ machines are set into the place, transforming the territory in an instrument of controlled and directed experience. Signs, indications, directions, regular furniture silently work together creating patterns of behaviour, and effecting a spatial protocol of exchanges and flows.

*(4) Observation of Public Experience*

This aspect is concerned with elements of affect involved in the sense of publicness of a place. Thus, it aims to assess how different perceptions and patterns indicates and create expected behaviours. In a sense, how the space, the use and the events indicates forms of possible subjectivities, actions and actors, much in the sense of an Althusserian ‘interpellation’ of space. Although it is an extremely subjective element of experience, it can be registered through different concrete elements.

*(5) Personal experience through photographic register*

Finally, a personal experience using critical and aesthetical techniques aims to synthesize the overall experience of the site.

<b>Basic Information</b>		# 0001	<b>Status:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Proposed <input type="checkbox"/> Under construction <input type="checkbox"/> Partially completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed		
City: London					
Local Authority: City of London					
Name: 1 New Street Square					
Manager: Land Securities					
Property: Land Securities		Use: Mix			
Address: 1 New Street Square,		Postcode: EC4			
Field inspector: Camilo Amaral		Date: 2/4/2014			

Architect: Robin Partington Architects		<b>Dates</b>		
Developer: Land Securities		Submission	Approval	Completed
Client: Land Securities			2011	2014

<b>Description</b>	The site is now being reinvented as a major new extension to New Street Square, one of the most exciting mixed-use developments to be completed by Land Securities in recent years. There has been a real sense of magic around New Street Square since it opened, with the dramatically expanded public realm being used for everything from live sports screenings to local food markets. As well as providing a high-profile base for leading businesses and retailers, it has created something even more important: a new sense of place.
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<b>Other information</b>	250,000 sq ft office and retail accommodation / restaurants and retailers  more info: <a href="http://www.rplondon.com/projects/1-new-street-square-london">http://www.rplondon.com/projects/1-new-street-square-london</a>
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<b>site / territory</b>	<b>Type</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Intervention <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regeneration <input type="checkbox"/> New Development <input type="checkbox"/> New Building	<b>Public Boundaries:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> -1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> snake/lassoing	<b>Property:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Charity <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed <input type="checkbox"/> other:	<b>Context:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Brownfield <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape <input type="checkbox"/> Square <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban
	<b>Scale:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> lot <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Block <input type="checkbox"/> Square/Street <input type="checkbox"/> Neighbourhood	<b>Access:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> open to all <input type="checkbox"/> managed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> controlled <input type="checkbox"/> restricted	<b>Management:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Public (adopted) <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed <input type="checkbox"/> other:	<b>Previous arrangement impact</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3

<b>control</b>	<b>Signs:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> rules <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ownership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> information <input type="checkbox"/> directions Quantity: <input type="checkbox"/> < 3 > <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> advertisement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> merchandise (persuasive) Quantity: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> < 3 > <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Control:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private security (visible) <input type="checkbox"/> Sentry-box <input type="checkbox"/> Car Barriers <input type="checkbox"/> fence/ spikes/ barbed wire/ pins <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> pavement differentiation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> furniture unity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bollards <input type="checkbox"/> others:	<b>Security by design:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Active Behaviour Mitigation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No visible blank walls <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No visible recesses <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no visible waste containers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clean views <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Behaviour Direction (sheep effect) <input type="checkbox"/> other:	<b>Control:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Design cohesion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anonymity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> highly management (no effect broken window) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Controlled vegetation  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CCTV (presence + signs) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Light (uniformity/all cover) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Panoptical (No blind spots) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Passive surveillance
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<b>publicness</b>	<b>Simple Metric:</b> Access with neutrality <input type="checkbox"/> -1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Behaviour Diversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1	<b>Right to the Polis:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to occupy <input type="checkbox"/> Protest allowance <input type="checkbox"/> Happiness (Drinking) <input type="checkbox"/> Agency (public decisions on control) <input type="checkbox"/> Interest (public benefit directs decision making) <input type="checkbox"/> Intersubjectivity (space facilitate diversity encounter)	<b>Aesthetic/ Subjective:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Authenticity (place-bounded culture) <input type="checkbox"/> Independent actions (not progr.) <input type="checkbox"/> Inter-subjectivity <input type="checkbox"/> encounter <input type="checkbox"/> exchange <input type="checkbox"/> difference  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> controlled <input type="checkbox"/> loose <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> tomb <input type="checkbox"/> alive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> clean <input type="checkbox"/> cosy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> dress coded <input type="checkbox"/> mix <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> consumption <input type="checkbox"/> use	<b>Resume:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tangled Orbits (codes) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Velvet Ground (Physic) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Repeated compulsion for space consumption (Content) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 PRI <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 PPS <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3
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<b>Personal Observation</b>	Walking down the street, the 1 New Street Square development is easily perceived. Predominantly grey, the cluster of buildings has gaps in its corners, like spatial fissures that create a passage through the complex. On the other side, in a calmer street, the boundaries snakes the limits of public/private space, and as a lasso accommodate one more bench, in which a working class figure is sited. (TO) The pavement has straight lines of shade change, like the immaterial barriers in the art of Marcus Galan. A small totem with chrome maps, information and a CCTV drawing marks the entrance of the urban fissure. Everybody is wearing suits, some passing by in a hurry. Two figures in black stand in the front of different buildings. As I walk around, I imagine if one of them is watching me, so pictures are taken hidden. (RCSC) Entering the square, many people are sited in cafes, but only one person is sited on the square benches. In Land Securities website own words, the place is thus outlined: "There has been a real sense of magic around New Street Square since it opened, with the dramatically expanded public realm being used for everything from live sports screenings to local food markets"
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<b>Photos</b>	
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<b>Graphics</b>	
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Image 1: Example of a field investigation form. Source: the author.

List of second phase cases

Name	Local Authority	date			Address	Developer/manager	Area	Use/ topic/ theme	Architect/ contacts	PRI	PPS
		submi ssion	appro val	compl eted							
Short Blue Place	Barking & Dagenham			2013	1 short blue place, Barking, [G118EJ]	Contractors: Marlborough		Street and square	Patel Taylor and Muf	3	3
The Granary	Barking & Dagenham	2010		2011	Road Riverside Conservation Area by the River Darent	headquarters for developer/contractor Roof.		Workplace Conservation	Pollard Thomas Edwards	3	3
Aloft London Excel	Newham		Work started jun 2010	2011		Client: Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Company Contractor: McAleer&Rushe	14,000 m2	hotel	Jestico + Whiles	3	3
Commercial Road	Tower Hamlets	2008	29/04 /2009	2012	E14	Contractors: Higgins Construction	319 residential units and 750 sqm		HTA Design LLP	3	3
1 New Street Square	City of London		2011	Recent Expected 2016	corner of Shoe Lane and Little New Street	Land Securities	28,020sq m or 250,000 sq ft	office and retail accommodation restaurants and retailers	Robin Partington Architects	3	3
Handball Arena	Hackney	11-2010	12-2010	2011	Olympic Park, London E20 3HB			Sports	Development team: Architects: Make Architects: Arup Architects: PTW	3	3
Woolwich Chic Offices	Greenwich			January 2011		Developers: London Borough of Greenwich		Workplace	Architects: HLM	3	2
Woolwich Squares	Greenwich			2011	Different places	Developers: Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Developers: Transport for London Engineers: Arup		Public Realm	Architects: Gustafson Porter Architects: Space Syntax Architects: Fountain Workshop Limited	3	3
Tidemill Academy and Depford	Lewisham	Sep 2010	Sep 2010	2012	Giffin Street Regeneration Area, Giffin Street, London,	Contractors: Galliford Try Construction		Workplace Public Realm Housing Education	Pollard Thomas Edwards (PTE)	2	3

Renaissance	Lewisham		15 March 2010		Renaissance Loampit Vale, Lewisham, London, SE13	Developers: Barratt London		Regeneration Housing	Assael Architecture	3	3
Foundry Studios and Residential	Islington	Initiated 2006		2012	5 BALDWIN TERRACE LONDON N1 7RU	Contractor: Jerram Falkus		Regeneration Workplace	Cullinan Studio	2	3
Packington Estate	Islington	Planning permission 12-11-2008 Material alterations 08-12-2010		2010				Regeneration block Housing	Pollard Thomas Edwards (PTE)	3	3
Aylesbury Estate SW Corner	Southwark	Levitt Bernstein were commissioned in 2006	January 2010	2012	Woberton, sedan way London, se17 2aa east of Walworth Road and north of	L&Q	285,000sq m	Housing	Levitt Bernstein	3	3
Borough Viaduct and extension	Southwark	14/07/2009 09/AP/1589	18/08/2010	2012	Borough Market SE1	Contractors: Skanska Construction		mixed	Jestico + Whites	3	3
GUY'S HOSPITAL	Southwark	12/AP/2062	06/11/2012	2013	GUY'S HOSPITAL, GREAT MAZE POND, LONDON SE1	Clients: Guys and St Thomas Hospital NHS Trust		Healthcare Environment	Penoyre & Prasad LLP	3	3
NEO Bankside	Southwark		14/11/2012	201?	44-50 AND 52-58 LANCASTER STREET, LONDON	Lancaster Street Properties Ltd		housing	Architects: John Robertson Architects	2	3
10 Brock Street	camden			2013		British Land			Wilkinson Eyre	3	3
of the Arts London Campus for Central Saint	Camden			2011					Stanton Williams	3	3
Store Street Regeneration Scheme	Camden			1st February 2012	28-42 Store street			High street regeneration		3	2

<i>Two Waterhouse Square</i>	Camden			1st July 2011	Chancery Lane Station			Offices		2	3
<i>Urbanest King's Cross</i>	Camden			1st July 2013				Student house		2	3
<i>BBC Broadcasting House</i>	Westminster			2013				Offices		3	3
<i>Brown Hart Gardens</i>	Westminster			1st July 2013				beneath a raised hard landscaped deck which is a privately owned space with public access.		3	3
<i>Covent Garden</i>	Westminster			?						3	3
<i>32 Lincoln's Inn Fields</i>	Westminster			April 2013						3	3
<i>Peabody Avenue</i>	Westminster			1st March 2011						2	3
<i>Quadrant 3</i>	Westminster			3rd November 2011						3	3
<i>St. James's Gateway Public Realm</i>	Westminster			1st June 2013						3	3

## Critical observations I

### First phase data

The following diagram 32 represents the degree of enclosure in these spaces. The first bar represents the scale of the public realm impact: 31 projects (40.8%) made a large enclosure impact on the surroundings (red); 31 projects (40.8%) made small impacts (yellow); and 14 projects (18.4%) had no impact on the openness of the public environment (green). The second row represents public space privatisation: 42 projects (55.3%) resulted in large privatisations (red); 27 projects (35.5%) privatised a few aspects of the space (yellow); and 7 projects (9.2%) did not privatise any aspect of public spaces (green). The last bar represents the sum of the two indexes (for each project), resulting in the public space's 'coefficient of conversion' into privatised public spaces. The average of these three analyses creates the overall coefficient of the reification of the public space, diagrammatically represented in the map of London (see diagram 32 in the next page).

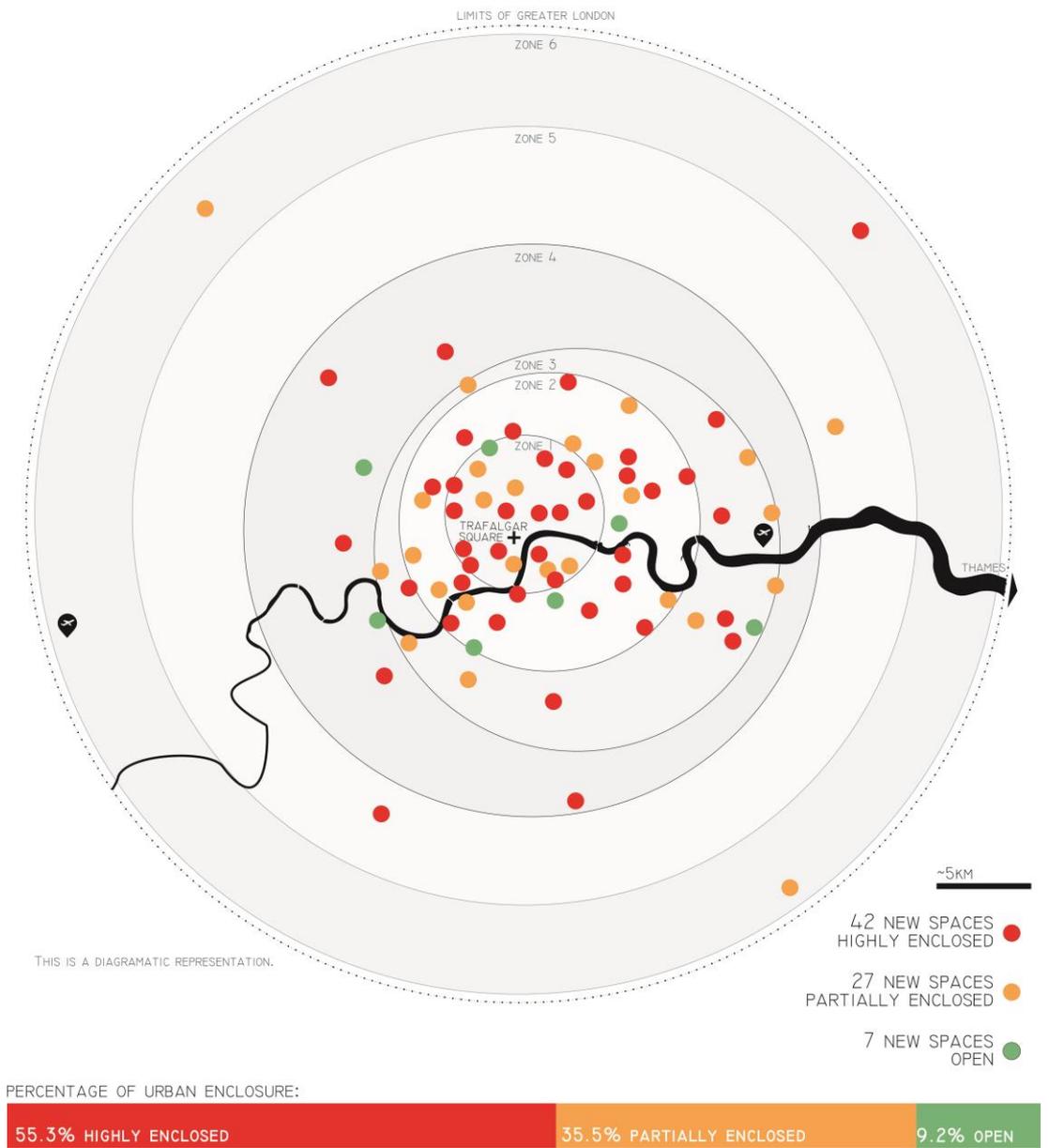
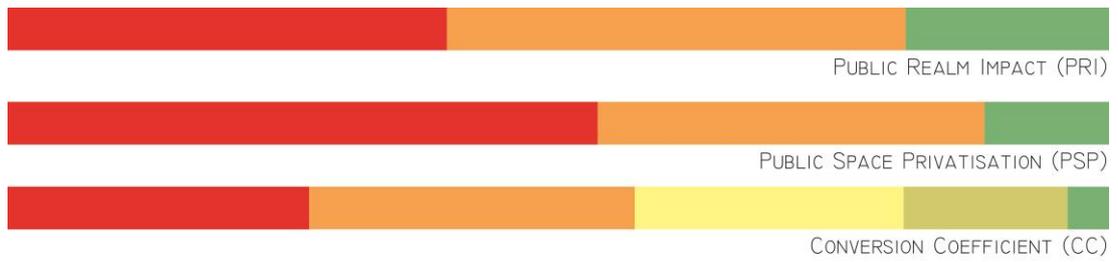


Diagram 33: Public space enclosures in London in a non-georeferenced schematic diagram. Source: the author.

***Second Phase Data: 3 dimensions of the new reified experience***

The analysis of the new housing and public space strategies in the production of spaces in London revealed the mechanisms through which the urban space is being enclosed. The combined analysis of textual documents, data collection, field qualitative interpretation and theoretical reflection made it possible to formulate a grounded theory of the contemporary production of reified urban forms. This analysis revealed the mechanisms through which urban spaces are creating specific forms of social relations.

These new forms produce a similar effect to the process of primitive accumulation, in which the citizen is progressively separated from the means of free place appropriation at the same pace at which reified behaviours are imposed. This procedure is made possible by strategies that hide the commodification of place and create a sense of 'naturally artificial' social order.

These new urban forms amplify ideologically driven behaviour from the realm of work in order to encompass the entire scenario of a person's everyday experience in the city. This process transforms users into 'free sellers' of their citizenship through the production of three new dimensions of urban experience: (1) tangled social rules; (2) driven spatial consumption and (3) velvet architecture. Cosy and kind, domestic and comfortable, these dimensions form a type of bird-nest prison, which differ from the former means of (panoptical and gridded) control and operate through disorientation and refuge rather than discipline and punishment.

Furthermore, rather than architecture being appropriated by distraction, as in Benjamin (2008) famous theory, architecture here functions creating both smooth flows and striated paths (like a highway, as we saw before). Therefore, we need an aesthetic narrative able to capture these dialectical dimensions of reified spaces. Therefore, in order to present this new observed spatial experience, a different form of presentation is demanded beyond a simple collection of numbers.

For this reason, Image 2 (see below) represents three examples of enclosed spaces in a series of film frames, aiming to enlighten how the different elements work together in the production of this spatial experience.



FILM FRAME 1: I NEW STREET SQUARE.



FILM FRAME 2: ALOFT HOTEL.



FILM FRAME 3: RENAISSANCE DEVELOPMENT.

Image 2: Film frames of enclosed spaces. Source: the author.

This strategy of representation aims to present our finding in an account similar to Baudrillard's *America* (1988) recounting routes and detours in this spatiality using the mentioned 3 dimensions as guidance. This strategy aims to rupture, as Baudrillard (1988) would put it, with the spectral form of ideological appearances, the emptiness of its signs, the seismic form, fractal, interstitial culture, rifting from the world as it is; a fragile, tactile, mobile and superficial culture, a vertigo always in imminent collapse, in synthesis, holograms of the whole in each part, a spectral, fake serenity of death, in soft resort-like simulations of a civilization. Neither dream nor reality, we present this new landscape using the identified three dimensions to describe this series of still frames.



Diagram 34: Velvet ground/nest prison. Source: the author.

Velvet architecture is the proper product of the regeneration process that is mediated by techniques of spectacle; the foreground presents a phantasmagorical image that transforms citizens into spectators surrounded by an anaesthetic (untouchable) environment (similar to the comfort a person experiences when sitting in a dark cinema). The sensation is of velvet spaces built on the negation of the former difficult experience of freedom in the city. Thus, velvet architecture provides both comfort and spectacle, as seen in the following example.

New Street Square is an example of velvet architecture (see image above). The development is easily perceived when walking down the street, with a gradual transition from public streets through the gaps in the buildings' corners. The access is smooth, and almost imperceptible shades of pavement mark the boundaries between the public and the private. The space is well maintained and predominantly grey, with all buildings carefully designed in a minimalist way. In the form of a patio, the square is separated from the noisy surroundings, keeping conflict from entering the space and generating an enduring sensation of emptiness, except when social activities are programmed from

time to time. Although a profusion of minimalist benches is always available, people sit in the comfortable 'retro' chairs of the veranda cafe.



Diagram 35: Tangled control. Source: the author.

Instituting multiple specific rules, with each place imposing a different set of use norms (such as the prohibition of bikes and drinking or the necessity of leaving a licence on a parked vehicle), transforms the city into an intertwined set of *tangled orbits* of hierarchy and control. The city becomes a fragmented atmosphere, as if the 'manual' that we need to use a place must be changed every step along the way, inspiring a constant feeling of impossible idiosyncratic experiences within that space. Every object has its place. In this condition, users easily hand over control to the place's automated fractal structure. In this condition of uncertainty, people tend to behave as they immediately assume to be appropriate in the scenario. This condition is reinforced by hidden artifices of 'security by design' and, of course, by anti-social behaviour legislation, which embodies censorship.

An example of that is the Aloft Hotel (see images above), in which the objects of design are carefully placed to create a fluid order. Concrete benches zigzag across the access platform, simultaneously emphasising the overall design and preventing terrorist attacks with vehicles. Across the plaza, a profusion of bollards directs the flux and creates a transitional space, distinguishing traffic zones and creating permeable transitions between the public and the private. Numerous signs emphasise the different rules for each corner of the area.



Diagram 36: Driven spatial consumption. Source: the author.

This dimension creates a strange kind of anxiety because of a sense of distance whereby architecture is no longer appropriated by use (as in the modern metropolis); instead, architecture occurs only if it is mediated by an act of consumption. In this condition, the subject only shares the experience of place through the 'game' of consumption (which can be called *driven spatial consumption*).

At the Renaissance development (see image above), the smoothness of the modern furniture is interrupted by metallic spikes to avoid spontaneous use by radical urban sportsmen; in addition, a sign invites users (i.e., consumers) to enjoy the 'now even greater' outdoor space of the development by enrolling in one of the outdoor classes provided by the development's gym. Similar to 1 Street Square, where users pay for a coffee to sit in a chair instead of on a 'public' bench, users here can pay for classes to enjoy the public park (thus, citizens become consuming-citizens).

### **Stake point 1: common places and the aesthetic of things**

Beyond the fact of progressively separating the citizen from the means of freely appropriating the place and at the same pace reifying behaviours, these new dimensions have mechanisms that hide the place commodification and create a sense of a 'naturally artificial' social order.

Thus, the matter of architectonic reification not only pertains to *objects*<sup>7</sup> but also relates to the implicit social relations implemented when fences, doors, tables, and even grass and pavements direct social behaviour. Social roles are reified by the activities that people are driven to play in each place. Beyond the apparent accessibility of privatised

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<sup>7</sup> Note that this proposition is completely different from Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO), which supposes objects to have a positive existence with no special status and nothing beyond pragmatic aspects. In this sense, OOO establishes a tabula rasa, completely avoiding dialectical thinking.

public spaces and beyond their physical beautification, the metropolitan space – once a symbol of difference, rationality and freedom – is being transformed into a space of fragmented orbits of control, engraved in fractal and cosy objects. This transformation creates a new spatiality in which citizens experience a continuous process of de-territorialisation as they move across these unconventional dimensions with constantly changing rules and coordinates. The result is a new kind of estrangement that leads users to an apathetic behaviour – cool and mellow – as no one can be sure of what is allowed or prohibited. As they do not know what behaviour is expected, users are held in a state of expectancy rather than experience.

As anthropological archaeologist Timothy Taylor (2010, pp. 160 and 145) argues, ‘things rule us’ in their ‘slippery and redefinable associations’, and if they ‘appear to have no ideology’, ‘in the practice that then emerges, everything may change, and your culture and identity may disappear’. Taylor (2010) argues that things are changing humans not only in modern times but also since the beginning of our species because evidence of the first stone tool dates back 190,000 years before the evidence of the first specimen of the genus *Homo*. These tools allowed a diet rich in protein and, in turn, the evolution of big brains in first place. Therefore, for Taylor, there are no natural humans; we are ‘artificial apes’.

In this sense, to understand how the reification of contemporary spaces is changing social relations and citizens, we will need to develop a critical and dialectical account between physical design and economic, political and social processes. If architectural things are social codes and interpersonal rules engraved in space, then these common places are not only a matter of built barriers, choices of cosy benches or elegant fancy materials but also a matter of objectifying social relations to reproduce and reinforce citizenship roles. We develop further this argument in Chapter 4.

It is important to note that social relations are reproduced by means of the appearances of urban things (their aesthetics). Thus, architecture is entangled in this process, as we shall uncover in the next case studies.

### (3) FIELD WORK II: LIVE PROJECTS

#### **The context**

The live contradictions in architecture  
Other debates: Summary of counterarguments in conferences

#### **The methodology**

Laboratory life and live laboratories  
Working Hypotheses for Live Projects Laboratory: *Hacking; Micro-utopia*  
Interviews

#### **Critical observations II:**

#### **Participant Observation and Observation of Participation**

Hacking: Experiments in urban ecology  
Stake point 2  
Micro-utopias: the Wood Street Worksho  
Stake point 3  
Observations of participation: a view from within  
Stake point 4

## **The Context**

### **The live contradictions in architecture**

The current transformation of public spaces in contemporary cities does not occur without struggles and forms of resistance, both outside and inside the discipline of architecture. We can generally organise them into two groups, one occupying space and the other developing critical interventions in the production of space.

On the one hand, recent economic situations have created a series of social movements that are directly engaged with the appropriation of space. The most notable of these movements is the Occupy Movement, which aimed to regain control of society by occupying space (but many others urban conflicts emerged, both symbolic and physical). As Smith and Low argue, no revolution can occur without taking over the space of the city (Smith and Low, 2006). In many situations, a practical form of ‘surrealism’ was born in the streets. Protesters would transform everyday objects and urban furniture into occupying weapons, subverting the spatial rules of such spaces (Singer, 2014). In these strategies, the experience of urban art and social media collaboration was fundamental in spreading ready-made strategies.

On the other hand, a series of experiences have emerged to confront the architectural field’s traditional boundaries. Architects have engaged in alternative forms of spatial interventions in the city. This dialectic of a software mode of control, urban struggles and architectural practice has developed an entirely new set of social intervention strategies. A series of small-scale experiences were conducted by architectural groups like DK\_CM, Assemble and Atelier Urban Nomads.

David Knight and Cristina Monteiro from the office DK\_CM developed the project ‘Building Rights’ that aims to develop a socially organized systemic database of urban planning. As urban rules become more complex, the duo proposes to develop tools that make it easier for the popular discourse to regain power over planning rules. Therefore, they develop a deep analysis of the rules, exploring alternatives and possible solutions to be applied by the population. The project also works as a collaborative tutorial, where the community can exchange knowledge on how to ‘break’ the rules without going against them.

The architectural collective Assemble came up with an initiative to transform an abandoned petrol station into an ephemeral hand-built cinema. Developed in the do-it-yourself spirit, the project was built with ready-made resources, exploring the poetics of raw material. Successful architecture is revealed to be more an instrument of conviviality and encounter promotion than advanced technology and industrialized processes. Built using a volunteer workforce, the construction itself became an instrument to transform the place into a landmark for the community.

The collective Atelier Urban Nomads have created several initiatives that depart from engagement with local communities in order to transform and re-appropriate abandoned urban spaces. Using hand-made prototypes and small pieces of furniture, they are able to transform the perception and use of everyday spaces. In the initiative 'Jogos de Rua' (Street Games) the group approached different forms of recreational activities to explore new possibilities of emptied neighbourhood spaces. Through a series of workshops, local residents were invited to participate in all steps of the process from conception to construction and use. Once set into practice, the process developed a new bond between the community and neighbours, ultimately creating new 'rituals' and meanings for places.

These experiences have inspired research and experiments in critical approach to the architectural discipline. Specifically, in academia, a form of architectural pedagogy emerged that involves concrete projects in what have been called 'Live Projects'. Working along the margins of education and building practices, these projects engaged education in communities and local interventions (see Harriss and Widder, 2014).

Brown (2014), exploring the classical tension between 'product' and 'process' in architectural education, argued that Live Projects provide a base from which to surpass the classical pedagogy of architecture based in the design studio. For him, Live Projects allow to break with the binary teacher/student and to avoid the conception of a 'banking education', where knowledge is deposited in a passive student. Such projects point towards a critical pedagogy that not only applies an experimental learning model (experience>reflection>abstraction>experiment) but also engages architecture as a collective process of production. Therefore, students can learn while questioning the existing 'roles' and 'positions' of the architect in a concrete 'participation in the world'. Gloster (2014, pp. 45-55) finds this 'guerrilla practice' helpful in supporting the

construction of the students' skills and profile, even as defined by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) accreditation. Additionally, Chandler (2014) notes that the aims stated by RIBA criteria of professional standards are more centred on 'reflection' as separated from 'doing', so he argues for a 'building of reality' and the 'reality of building' as a form of breaking the long-standing disengagement of the field.

This practice of Live Projects has found fertile ground at UEL, as this institution has a great interest and a leading position in social engagement. The architectural programme has many alternative projects, strategies and tactics to engage with communities and public spaces, researching and developing unorthodox practices that have a wider impact within and against the established field. For example, the design collective Assemble (leaders of some of those Live Projects) recently won the most prestigious British prize for innovative artistic practices (the Turner Prize), showing how these practices are on the cutting edge – not only in architecture but also in other disciplines.

### **The workshops' choice**

Every summer, UEL organises a series of Live Projects called 'Construction Week'. In one or two weeks, groups of students from the master's and postgraduate architecture courses work collaboratively with staff and different communities to design and build a 1:1 architectural piece. These collaborative efforts aim to give students close contact with the concrete processes of producing architecture. The task, the context, the public, the learning opportunities and the demand vary, and the workshops range considerably in terms of scope. Nevertheless, these projects generally seek to engage students with communities and to extend the research of the university to the outside world.

This research used some of these experiments as a laboratory for our investigation. Therefore, although the research is a small investigation, it stands on the 'shoulders' of a larger collective knowledge developed at UEL, especially at the Place Production Laboratory, and therefore represents its greatest potential of contributing to the discussion of the limits of the architectural discipline. Before we entered the field of participant observation, we developed two hypotheses to assess how these experiments challenged the discipline – namely, hacking and micro-utopias.

At UEL, I joined many research activities and workshops, especially in the context of the 'Construction Week' and the 'Place Production' research group. I also had the opportunity to join other workshops at the University of Hasselt and the University of Bergen. I am grateful to these institutions and the teachers involved for those opportunities. Although all those experiences were important in the development of this research, they were used only as counterexamples, and this report will focus on experiments that had a close relation with the reproduction of social relations in cities, namely the experiences in the master's module *Urban Ecology* in 2013/2014, in one of 2014's Construction Week workshops, and in a Summer School workshop in 2015.

To avoid identification of personal sensitive data, the students mentioned in this report will be anonymised. As the analysis of the last workshop also involves other types of participants, those were also anonymised. The participants in debates at conferences were also anonymised. The students' responses to the interview forms were anonymised. The professionals' responses to the interview forms were submitted to the signature of consent forms that might identify them in the study and subsequent dissemination of the research findings and/or publication.

### **Other debates: Summary of counterarguments in conferences**

At this point, the research had made progress and promoted important debates with peers. A series of concepts dealt with the restrictions on the contemporary practice (such as velvet architecture, tangled social control, divided spaces and repeated compulsion of space consumption), the philosophical flaws that define the problematic relation between practitioner and the public (such as silent utopias, prince complex, reproduction of spatial valorisation, and urban enclosure), and the construction of new modes of operation (such as micro-utopia, kaleidoscopic strategies and hacking of objectified social relations). All these concepts were debated and received with both polemics and enthusiasm in major conferences of the field. Below, we should briefly

counter-argue some counter-arguments<sup>8</sup>, as they were instructive for the deconstruction of architecture's fundamental fantasies.

(1) Some counter-arguments would simply reaffirm that historical narratives (books, documents) and show buildings as the result of individual inventions.<sup>9</sup> The fact that history is a narrative interconnecting a series of causes and effects, and all these causes and effects depend upon a series of choices made by the narrator. As we investigated in chapter 5, the work credited to the figure of single architects has actually emerged from the collective knowledge appropriated from employees, from a school, or most commonly, from a vast number of passionate (and usually unpaid) disciples. Furthermore, inventions are always based on previous knowledge, produced over many generations, and they are always the product of collective endeavours (Foucault, 2005).

(2) Secondly, another usual counter-argument is for the benefit of ignorance. Some have argued that the field is interesting and concise as it is, that architecture has a great value in society, that people are not unhappy with it, and that architects very much like their work. Therefore, for the sake of current state of affairs, the situation simply looks much better if one ignores any paradox.

This counter-argument maintains some similarity with the arguments of slave-owners against abolitionists, arguing that even if it was ethically reproachable to own another human being, if they were to be freed, slaves would not have an owner to take care of them, and would thus suffer much more. It is not the case of deconstructing the misinterpretations of every step of this argument, but simply to reject what might be

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<sup>8</sup> These are summaries of counter-arguments expressed on some occasions in which this research was presented, especially at the following conferences: International Conference Past Present and Future of Public Space, Bologna, June 25 – 27, 2014; International Conference Architecture Philosophy – Autonomy Reconsidered, Delft, Netherland, 2014; UEL Postgraduate Research Conference, London, 2014; CUI '14: II. International Contemporary Urban Issues Conference, Chamber of Architects, Istanbul, November, 2014; Conference of European Network for Housing Research, Lisbon, July, 2015; International Interdisciplinary Conference: Utopia, at the Centre for Applied Philosophy, Politics and Ethics, at University of Brighton, September, 2015; 16th Utopia Studies Society Conference, at New Castle University, July, 2015; 12th AHRA Conference – This Thing Called Theory, Leeds Beckett University, November, 2015. Although, we would like to acknowledge the contribution of the participants, we opted to remain their contribution anonymous due to ethical issues.

<sup>9</sup> Methodologically, this is akin to leaving the sticker on your brand-new sunglasses, and then triumphantly announcing your discovery that the world has a big elliptical dark patch everywhere you look, and that this has some important relation with the sun. Besides revealing naivety, and the lack of any reflexivity, this argument is inevitably the assertion of a rule by an exception. The argument reinforces that if there is one known example of an architect who is deemed to have been a genius, thus, it must be true that architecture is produced by individual ingenuity.

“reasonable” for the sake of what is “rational”. If it is demonstrated that architecture is not produced by “princes”, but by a collective subject acting dialectically (and in complex ways) within and against the discipline, it follows that we must have the rigor to take this conclusion to its consequences.

A similar counter-argument advocates a sort of imaginative “laziness” and convenience for the sake of tradition: “It has been like this for such a long time, so, I can’t even imagine how it could be different”. This sort of argument might also vary to a counter-argument of moderation: “This idea is too radical; thus, it must be wrong; the answer must be harmony with ‘reality’”. This sort of conjecture has the same problem as the former. The negative impact of a conjecture does not make it invalid.

Yet another variation of this argument would urge “not to transform ourselves in the neoliberal subjects we so keenly aim to criticize”, meaning that we should not develop a critical account that reveal ourselves as part of the problem. Thus, it suggests that the aspects of subjectivity being criticized should keep regular critical architects and scholars safe. Nevertheless, we are not interested in ‘winning the debate’, and attack other to occupy a better position in the field. Rather, we aim to reveal the problems that we all share. As a matter of fact, this research aims to unveil how we all share such subjectivity<sup>10</sup>, reproduced through discipline and society as a whole. Thus, the aim is not to inflict guilt to some “other”. Rather, the aim is to build a reflexive account of the architectural subjectivity, so self-counciouness and reflexive reasoning can emerge.

(3) Another sort of counter-argument would support “imperfection” in the following way: “the world is wrong and bad, it is just part of reality, so we can’t think architecture should be perfect”. Thus, it asserts the following logical chain: Reality = imperfection = architecture = nothing to do = be glad with what is wrong = only enjoy the flow.

Initially, it is important to notice that the wide spread of a socially produced mistake cannot be an argument for its necessity, as is the case with climate change issues.

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<sup>10</sup> ‘Yes, we are decentred, caught in a foreign cobweb, over-determined by unconscious mechanisms; yes, I am “spoken” more than speaking, the unconscious Other speaks through me, but simply assuming this fact (in the sense of rejecting any responsibility is also false, a case of self-deception. Psychoanalysis makes me even *more responsible* than traditional morality does; it makes me responsible even for what is beyond my (conscious) control. What this means is that the dimension of subjectivity (in the sense of free autonomous agency) is irreducible: we cannot get rid of it; it continues to haunt every attempt to overcome it.’ (Zizek, 2014, 75-76)

Furthermore, as we developed previously, architecture is not simply a reflexion of pre-existent “trends” (such as “base” or “natural” laws), but it is an activity that produces and reproduces social realities. In this sense, there is an inevitable ethical “positioning” architects cannot avoid.

(4) Lastly, there is the widespread and popular counter-argument for cynicism: “ok, it is fake, it is a lie and a masquerade, but I get some success, I am well paid, and it works fairly well, so it does not bother me”

Indeed, as we saw, this is the root of fetish in architecture. This is also beyond simply lying, in the sense of pretending to have some special property. This counter-argument is the entrance in the realm of simulacra (Baudrillard, 1994), in the sense of arguing that to do architecture is to join its social fantasies.

The fundamental problem with this counter-argument is that it reveals personal choices, but without considering the ethical implications of these choices. Every choice departs from assumptions and, above all, every choice has social consequences, and fetish becomes an instrument of power and expropriation.<sup>11</sup>

The critical point here is not to argue for a “truthful” architecture, neither to become a cynical “liar”. It is rather to understand that truths are produced historically in a field full of both mistakes and power relations (i.e. discipline). Thus, it is rather fundamental to undress architecture, to reveal this process, to unveil its manufacture, its assumptions and constructs.

Furthermore, in order to move forward in the analysis of architecture and the reproduction of social relations, it will be important to critique and overcome the traditional forms of historical narrative and valorisation of architecture (unveil its collective subject) so we can investigate how emergent and dissentious practices could challenge different aspects of the reproduction of the discipline.

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<sup>11</sup> I am not saying architecture is not a lie. I am rather saying architecture is a very specific form of lying. A form of lying that evolved from fetish, to sprezzatura, to parasiting, and then to a full range of phenomeno-techniques. None of them eliminate the other. They sum up as a palimpsest. But, those are forms of lies that have actual consequences. In this sense, they are truly effective, and act basically in the building of truths. Thus, one should understand the mechanisms and choices faced by architects as fundamental elements in building social fetish. It is a position of an active nihilism.

## The methodology

The research used a methodological variety of qualitative research techniques in social sciences (Grounding Theory, Thematic Analysis, Participant Observation, Semi-structured Interviews, Observation of Participation) and experimental research (as though we could machine the chemistry of substances, trying out the results of a mixture, as in the ‘hard sciences’).<sup>12</sup> In this way, the dialectical reflection could be grounded in concrete reality but not concealed by its appearances.

### Laboratory life and live laboratories

In his book *Laboratory Life*, Bruno Latour (1986) described the ‘construction of scientific facts’ in his participant observation in a chemistry laboratory. He used a series of fictional characters to recount the observed social production of ‘facts’ (as if he were an anthropologist encountering an exotic tribe, as if he were a person who ignored science, and so on). This process aimed to reveal the contrasts between the actual process and his own explanatory text and to determine how different subjects would result in different objects of analysis.

Similarly, in the first group of workshops, the research aimed to provide an inside view of the production of architecture; and furthermore, these workshops were themselves a laboratory experimenting with new practices and hypotheses in architecture so that they could be subjected to ‘tests’.

In these experiments, we applied the working hypotheses of ‘hacking’ and ‘micro-utopias’ in workshops involving interventions in common spaces. For this reason, the preliminary case studies are the analysis of common spaces in London, as a ‘first observation’ to contextualize the approach to these workshops in ‘participant observation’.

This participant observation enabled the research to examine the ways in which the discipline operates, and the ways in which it mobilises its apparatus to produce

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<sup>12</sup> The analytical part of the research was conceived through a grounded theory approach (Guest et al., 2011; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and a critical approach on the epistemology of science (see Popper, 1989; Feyerabend, 1989; Khun, 1987; Adorno and Horkheim, 1996; Santos, 2001; Santos, 2003; Santos, 2007; Foucault, 2005; Bourdieu, 1996; Escobar, 1996; Lefebvre, 1967; Rancière, 2005; Taylor, 2010). For a discussion of the methodological approach, see Appendix 2 and 3.

architecture. As we investigated the attempts to use architecture to intervene in and transform social relations in the city rather than solving paradoxes in the field, the hypotheses revealed further constraints of the discipline of architecture upon the participants.

For that reason, in the last workshop presented, these constraints were explored by taking one step further. To further investigate the predicaments, we moved towards an ‘observation of participation’. Metaphorically, the ethnographer studying the tribe could himself, for a moment, become a native. As we will describe in detail later, the researcher (an architecture teacher for 14 years) joined a workshop as ‘an architecture student’. More than a look ‘at’ the inside, this move provided a full-blown view ‘from within’. In this sense, the account of the last workshop enabled a distinct view of the paradoxes of attempting to produce critical architecture.

If in his book ‘Laboratory Life’ Bruno Latour made a report on his participant observation in a chemistry laboratory, using fictional characters to recount the observed facts; by contrast, in this experiment, I developed ‘personas’ as a direct instrument while observing the social relations in the production of architecture.<sup>13</sup>

Those personas were: (1) Myself; (2) A student that chose the ‘red pill’; (3) a ‘humble student’; (4) an ‘Aspirant Disciple’. In the first case, I found myself lost in the limbo between a tutor and a student, culminating with an epic debate and the setup of this strategy. In the second case, my positioning was incisively contested by the ones holding the symbolic power, always controlling the discussions and avoiding that any trace of my positions remained valid in the end of the discussions, thus reifying all conclusions in their favour. In the third case, by lowering down my social defences, the

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<sup>13</sup> As the event that lead me to the position of a participant were dynamic and unpredictable, I used as way of conceiving a strategy theories that I knew from other matters, and it was not planned beforehand. I thought about the theories of Antonin Artaud, the Theatre of Cruelty and the theory of the Double. In these ideas, the actor do not ‘represent’ a text, or a gesture. By contrast the actor engages in an embodiment, an incarnation, living what is happening as personal reality, thus connecting unconscious thinking with the body experience. My idea was to experience those events not through representative reaction pertinent or constructed for some ‘characters’, but as an embodiment of archetypical traces of those personas that might reside in me, in a here-and-now experience. Furthermore, this was also one of the elements that made impossible to take notes, as it would imply an external rational reflection, a distance I chose to abstain from, but also, inversely, involved deep emotional reactions. Later, after the workshop ended, I could reflect upon my own experience. This produced an interesting form of first-person narrative in a report developed for this workshop, in which my description examines (my own) deep thoughts and pragmatic experiences through the standpoint of an omniscient third-person narrator (thus, an observation of participation).

tutors in a position of symbolic power engaged in a systematic procedure of humiliation and bullying, in order to eliminate any symbolic power I could have had with my peers, and a systematic procedure of ‘authorship expropriation’ was initiated<sup>14</sup>. In the last case, of an ‘Aspirant Discipuli’, the attack found an armistice, and the teachers in position of power returned to listening my opinions and giving me space to work.

In Tedlock’s account on the evolution of the ethnographic tradition – from the pioneers to Edward Said, passing by Levi-Strauss and Clifford Geertz – she notices how not only the results changes with the changing in the narrative formats. Therefore, she locates Martin Yang’s *A Chinese Village* (1945) as a benchmark, as the author described the village in which he grew up. This serves as the grounds of an ‘ethno-sociology’ and the possibility of an ‘auto-ethnography’, but it also makes developing a self-reflexive ethnography possible (Tedlock, 1991, pp. 78-80).

Although both ‘participant observation’ and ‘observation of participation’ keep the crucial dilemma between “participation” (which entail emotional involvement) and “observation” (which require detachment), in the observation of participation the divide between the self and the other is overcome as ethnography becomes a process. Instead of representing the findings in a memoir narrative centred in the self (in the shape of a novel of education) or as an abstract structure representing the inner scientific nature encompassing passive Others (suppressing all individuals, from the ones observed to the observer himself, to form abstract nonempirical entities), the findings become the result of a unique and specific dialogue, and the mediations shared by those “observing” and those “being observed”, in a collectively constructed knowledge.

For Tedlock (1991, p. 71), this knowledge ‘belongs neither to the realm of objectivity nor to that of subjectivity, but rather to “human intersubjectivity”’ (as we will discuss later in chapter 3, this is arguably the realm of transindividuality). But, to use an example deployed by Tedlock, if being born female does not automatically result in feminist consciousness, the same is valid for architects.

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<sup>14</sup> An interesting parallel to Marina Abramovich art performance called ‘Rhythm 0’ is evident. When she allowed the audience to do anything with her for six hours, lowering all her social defenses, people revealed their most perverse side, humiliating, harassing and even cutting her neck. Similarly, the lowering of my social defenses revealed the darkest sides of architectural disciplining.

Therefore, only through a self-reflective effort will we be able to both distance ourselves from and engage with the data at an experimental moment to transform the emerging paradoxes into a co-produced picture of shared subjectivity. This investigation showed how the current architectural disciplining structure is continuously reinforced. Therefore, the new hypothesis regarding the ‘reproduction of architecture’ emerged from these experiments and became the basis for the philosophical and dialectical investigation of each of the thesis’ chapters<sup>15</sup>.

In this sense, the results do not point to building ‘the’ revolutionary architecture; rather, they provide the stake points with which to sketch our ‘cognitive map’. This map might be useful for ‘navigating’ the field and repositioning the subjects involved and their relationships to the means of production of architecture (as Jameson, 1990, argues). In this sense, the ‘stake points’ from each case study serve as the foundation for the construction of the investigation of this thesis.

### **Working Hypotheses for Live Projects Laboratory**

In order to start the fieldwork, we developed initial working hypotheses. The working hypotheses provided a provisional conceptual framework. This framework was a set ‘constructed expectations’, elements that could subvert or contrast with the different elements at play in the production of an architecture that aimed to counter the reproduction of social relations in the city. This enabled the research to become an experiment. For these fieldworks, the working hypotheses were ‘hacking’ and ‘micro-utopias’.

#### *Hacking*

The industrial revolution confronted the social imagination with a fast-mechanical change in society, therefore, *history* was a concept vastly used to explain social transformations, through a linear universal concept of time (Lefebvre 1971b, 17, 229-

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<sup>15</sup> Rather than architecture being able to produce new social relations, its disciplinary means could start to be tackled, demonstrating how it reproduces social relations, reproduces itself and reproduces the subjectivity of architects. For now, suffice it to say that the discipline frames social relations not only in its products but also in the process and the mobilization of desires. In this way, the discipline is also a form of self-disciplining.

230). Recently, a sense that ‘nothing is really changing’ has subjugated many scholars with a feeling that ‘the future is dead’ (Wolfe 2012; Berardi 2011; Bauman 2010; inter alia). In an informational society, which is changing through reprogramming, how could social space transformation be conceived?

For Antonio Negri, we live in a cognitive labour age, associated with the automation of production, where revolution takes a new path. Therefore, he proposes a course of struggles towards reformatting and reprogramming platforms (of production, finance, logistics and consumption) as a strategy of power subversion (Negri 2014).

Nevertheless, McKenzie Wark argues that despite all the changes that have taken place in the recent social space, the structural contradiction in capitalism remains the same (Wark 2004). On one hand, a social class has control over the means of production. On the other hand, there is the class that works and produces and that has become more engaged in abstract labour, after automation of production. But, its creativeness is extracted by the soft machinery (protocol) of the ruling class (especially by copyright strategies). He names ‘hackers’ this contemporary class of dispossessed. In this way, Wark brings the idea of hacking to an everyday basis, i.e. creates a new class conscience (Wark 2013).

It is in this sense that we aimed to explore the possibility of social transformation as a hacking experiment. But, how could hacking be defined?

Although many attempts have been made, instead of providing an ideal definition of hacking, we tackled hacking as an aesthetic procedure, as a way of ‘seeing’ differently and manipulating the system (of social space). In this sense, we started our experiments with a new understanding of the means of production in architecture rather than an objective aim. Rather than proposing structures, design was concerned with subverting existing public spaces rules to test the limits and paradoxes that could emerge from this experiment. Therefore, hacking in architecture was conceived as grappling with the pragmatic aesthetics of spatial frameworks. This hacking aesthetics was further developed and divided into two major dimensions (attitudes and techniques), with each of these further divided into three aspects (see diagram 36 below).

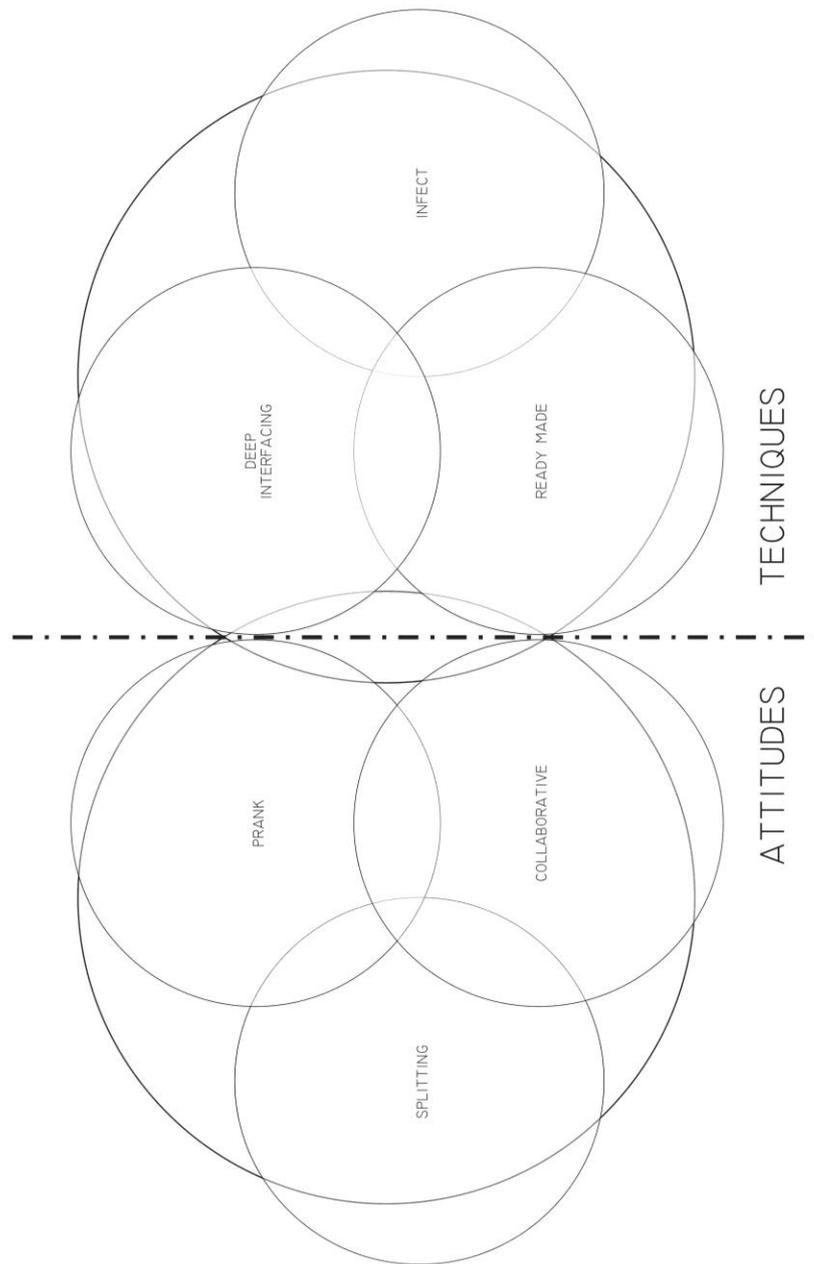


Diagram 37: Hacking aesthetic. Source: the author.

The first attitude usually observed in the hacking experience is the so-called ‘Prank’. Hackers tend to use sarcasm as a potential weapon to create awareness, state a point of view, destroy reputations, create jokes, or simply, to create surprise (Kushner, 2012; *The Antics Roadshow*, 2011). The power of the prank is to reveal some hidden aspect of reality, thus constructing conscience through a ruthless amusement in the form of sharp critique.

The second attitude is what could be called the ‘Hammer’ attitude. The word ‘hack’ also means to cut (crop, slash, bang). This attitude requires courage and engagement in unknown territories, far from codified and secured spaces. A very famous example is the Cory Arcangel hacking incident of a Nintendo Super Mario Brothers cartridge. One of the chips is cut off and a new, programmed chip is soldered onto the game.

The third attitude very often is the collaborative spirit. Besides the fact that hackers usually work alone in the shadows, they often engage in anonymous forms of collaboration. In fact, the very act of being anonymous potentiates collaboration, as no one can identify accomplices or identify copyrights of products. Therefore, hackers tend to come together only for specific purposes. This attitude is fundamental, because a large amount of knowledge is necessary to subvert a sophisticated system.

For this same reason, another important technique for a hacker is the development of what can be called ‘Ready-made’ solutions. This technique has a very special relation with architecture, especially through the work of Christopher Alexander in his book “A Pattern Language” (Alexander, 1977). In hacking, those patterns are known as exploits. Exploits are specific kinds of ready-made programming codes that explore known failures in systems, programs and codes (Galloway and Thacker, 2007). Thus, hackers explore weak spots with ready-made packs. The common praxis of copy (cntrl+c) and paste (cntrl+v) also be considered a ready-made technique, as well as the act of remixing (see *RiP: A Remix Manifesto*, 2008).

The second technique is the well-known use of computer viruses to obtain information and destroy functionalities in systems. These softwares are usually worms (self-replicating programs) or Trojans, a concept that has obvious origins in urban struggles. A more recent strategy of ‘inception’ is being used.

The last techniques can be assembled using the idea of deep-in/ interfacing. A great deal of the power to transform systems is the ability to understand the programming, and finding the spots to attack, therefore, diving-in its codes. Nevertheless, of equal importance is the ability to make this information legible, therefore, developing new interfaces that facilitate the manipulation of data. In this process, diagrams become a very important tool. Diagrams are graphical and technical frameworks that interpret data and transform it into a series of available functionalities.

For all these reasons, the sum of a new set of techniques and attitudes of the ‘dispossessed’ is creating a new aesthetics, which requires a kludge wisdom and a tricky imagination, just as in the Greek Odyssey Ulysses used ‘*mêtis*’ (Williams 2013b) in contrast to *poiesis* and *techne*. Therefore, as architecture is in front of a brave new world, it needs the ability to infer and adapt to new situations.

### *Micro-utopias*

Architects are trapped within expected social roles as the field of work has evolved in relation to the social mode of spatial production. But, could architecture develop emancipated and autonomous practices within the current conditions? Cultural expectations, scientific developments, technological instruments and the new social conditions might be changing the architectural field of work. Architectural theory has traditionally defended hierarchical forms of work, transforming architecture into an instrument for maintaining social inequality. In parallel, critical theories of architecture theory have either fought against architecture itself, or searched for alternatives outside architecture (e.g. vernacular or pop culture). By contrast, could architects emancipate themselves and recreate their set of skills to become “autonomous” players?

Although architects have not been able to change society, the conception of their role may have contributed to this failure. Since the Renaissance, the idea of rationality has played a strong role in the hopes of humanist realization. Since the Enlightenment, the idea of technology has also come into play, resulting in a strong faith in progress. This combination, of rationality, science and technology, produced a revolution in the way human kind would understand itself. In the ancient regime, the court (which included

architects) held divine rights. By contrast, the French Revolution declared that all human beings are born equal, as it was stated on the first Right of Man. Although this is one of the greatest inventions of all times, the second right surprisingly declared as “natural” the right of property, along with liberty, security and non-oppression. This caused great conflict of interests. In parallel, architects have insisted on their divine rights, their court privileges, and remained as Machiavellian princes acting in “favour” of society. More than 200 years ago, Western societies had not been able to set into practice the claims of equality, fraternity and liberty. As a mirror reflecting these contradictions, architecture’s own utopias have faced difficulties in becoming realized. Nevertheless, a new social role for architecture is emerging, and many debates call into question what should be destroyed, what should be built and, furthermore, how it should be done.

The question of social emancipation has also changed accordingly to the new social condition. Although, we are facing a new mode of production, the mechanization and the automation have not delivered the promises of release from work. Instead, physical toil has been replaced by stressful mental work. This happens because production is increased in its complexity and instability, and because it demands even more immaterial work in order to coordinate production. Even the cases that reduce workday hours, workers face an everyday life colonized by productivity: we rest to be productive, we have leisure to amplify creativity, we exercise to be more productive, we travel to network, and so on (see *24/7* by Jonathan Crary). This social condition also fragments production and isolates workers. Therefore, old class identities and old forms of social articulation and interaction have changed. This has resulted in new forms of social control and hierarchy.

According to Zizek (2008), among the traditional forms of accepted violence (the State monopoly of violence, i.e. the police, the army and the imposition of unilateral laws) we are surrounded by symbolic violence and imaginary terror. This happens through a new kind of politics of violence, in which a game of objective and subjective violence takes place. In this process, the media has a special role by representing violence and maintaining it permanently present in people’s unconscious. This is clear in the media investment in covering terrorism and internal violence, such as robbery and murders. And it is also present in the constant announcements of ‘threats’ to ‘home security. The

consequences of this treatment of 'threats' can be measured by the increasing militarization of international relations.

Anna Minton (2012) would also argue that the spread of fear among citizens justifies increased forms of social control. This control is self-evident in the presence of CCTVs, the security protocols, mass espionage, the manipulation of information, the behaviour laws and the consumer-driven strategies. In parallel, according to Mackenzie Wark (2004), copyrights and laws guarantee the hierarchical control of (intellectual) production keeping of the overall social system. Therefore, new social structures are used to avoid social transformation and human emancipation.

Nevertheless, the recent years have been marked by mass rebellions against the structured social order. After the 2008 crises, the Occupy movement initiates in EUA, and it spreads to the world. In addition, a new set of struggles would emerge from the Arab Spring after 2010. These struggles were soon spread to Europe, with the emergence of the Indignados Movement in Spain, in 2011-12. The emergence of those movements was the condition to inflate an enthusiastic discussion about the possibilities to transform the status quo.

On the one hand, the old social pressure of the masses on the streets proved to still matter. It did effectively realize transitions in many Arabian countries, although all the challenges are yet to be overcome. Nevertheless, these 'masses' were relatively ineffective in reclaiming new social gains within the old European democracies. Democracy is facing a crisis of representation. This situation has created arguments for new forms of democracy and social control. On the other hand, new forms of social activism are being born with the creative use of technologies of communication. The internet and the new forms of socialization are transforming old identities and blurring old international boundaries. This process has boosted new forms of identity and new forms of social articulation and struggle.

For those reasons, the new condition of production demands new strategies of social transformation. The technologies of information and communication (TIC) have created the hypotheses of a social struggle based on TIC, which has been characterized as hacking (the virtual rebel). This new mode of production also creates new forms of social space and, therefore, new fields for architecture. TICs have created a new

relationship between the city and the world, transforming old distances. The former city mosaic is being transformed into a kaleidoscopic urban space, which has intertwined complex relations between the parts and the whole. This can be seen in the urban interventions, urban redevelopments and retrofits that dominate the city's spatial production. In this sense, the old hierarchy of the "whole" and the "part" is being challenged.

The former division of urban policy planning taking control of the whole and architecture being confined into the private realm is being challenged. The scale of the 'close' is also the scale of the concrete realization. For this reason, social rules may be more easily manipulated through architecture (as Lefebvre argues in "Architecture of Enjoyment"), and still challenge the rules of the 'big picture'. This hypothesis of an emancipated architecture that realizes the human emancipation in a concrete scale (and not in an abstract scale), while keeping an impact in the whole image of the kaleidoscope, may develop new forms of social struggles and social transformation. This strategy we shall call, from now on, 'micro-utopian'.

The idea of a micro-utopia was approached through two main aspects. On the one hand, it addresses a fractal and kaleidoscopic conception of action (see Soja, 2000). This idea builds upon the concept of micropolitics, stating that power is assured by concrete strategies in everyday life and the concrete body, both physical and psychological. On the other hand, this idea also challenges the traditional sense of scale, which opposes the macro and the micro, where the latter is only a reflection of the former. If the scale of the 'close' is also the scale of the concrete realisation, punctual interventions might realise changes in the 'kaleidoscopic image' of the whole. In this sense, architectural interventions could develop autonomous social relations on a concrete scale, as occurs within institutions (see Lefebvre, 2014), providing the grounds for new forms of social struggles.

In the scale of architectural intervention, micro-utopia may cope with difference and the 'Other', as well as it may cope with the complexity of reality, formed by a juxtaposition of political struggles over the city, as intended Aldo Rossi. This 'strategy' and this 'scale' form the elements to create freedom as the political enjoyment of the city's aesthetical reconfiguration.

According to Lefebvre, revolutions, such as the Paris commune and even the Paris Resistance during World War II (in which he took part), are considered by participants as being a ‘party’. This is a trace we can identify in many contemporary “revolts”. He argues that revolutions are a moment of creative engagement, free exchange, a moment when humans interact with each other, recognizing themselves as equal, and experience the freedom of manifesting differences. For this reason, the spirit of the party is the engine behind the transformation of everyday life into a creative form of existence. As if the self and its social position could regain total liberty. Therefore, Lefebvre argues that the urban revolution will occur as an artist paints (Lefebvre 1983). Micro-utopia should be, therefore, the poetic attitude of recreating one’s social reality through conscience. In other words, micro-utopia should be like a party.

Furthermore, it implies an inversion of the dichotomy “ideology-utopia”<sup>16</sup>. Mannheim would argue that ideology is the unreal, rather than utopia, so Mannheim inverts the common association of the pairs “ideology-utopia” “possible-impossible” (Mannheim, 2000, 173, 175). For him, ideology (i.e. the hegemonic cultural logic) presents itself as a reality ‘de facto’, although it has never been realized (acting only as a form of legitimating the existing order), whereas utopia is an idea that envisions a real possibility of rupturing with existing order. Thus, utopias should be understood as the construction of real possibilities departing from the existing context, which is deemed to be changed. Similarly, Lefebvre (1976) argues that ideology presents the status quo both as the only possibility – the natural one - and as if it was already the realisation of the capitalist promises - its alleged ideals - but in concrete social reality those are in fact the impossible. In this sense, Lefebvre (2000) suggests a method of ‘transduction’ - the production of a virtual possibility – with which architecture could act in the production of possibilities that escapes the realised possibilities.

In these terms, micro-utopia would be the process of releasing the commons. Galloway (2004) argues that concrete forms of freedom in the city are counter spaces that generate “temporary autonomous zones” (TAZ). For him, hackers exist in such temporary autonomous zones: “The TAZ is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerrilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, before the State can crush it.’ (Galloway 2004, 35) In other words, micro-utopias are pure potentiality.

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<sup>16</sup> This is similar to the way Mannheim’s would invert the dichotomy ideology-utopia.

Sande argues for the creation of ‘micro-utopias’ as the ‘acting as if one is already free’ (Sande 2013). Besides the fact that this idea draws upon Foucault’s concept of micro-politics, a micro-utopian proposition would need to reclaim Nietzsche’s (1968: §22-23, 26, 55, 372, 423, 552, 853) ‘active’ nihilism: if there is no ultimate value, then one should invent its own and implement it into reality. In other words, micro-utopias should be both a fight for freedom and an invention of freedom.

In order to assess the ability of architecture to develop “micro-utopian projects”, we investigated case studies of workshops that aimed to propose small architectural prototypes and urban interventions. Therefore, these prototypes could be researched as experiments in the urban space, just as a chemist researches experiments inside a laboratory.

## **Interviews**

We focused our discussion on how these experiments elucidate some other points at stake in the reproduction of architecture. To do so, we wanted to give voice to those involved in these experiences (both students and other practitioners), as they are facing such paradoxes on an everyday basis. With this goal in mind, in the next section, we present the key points of semi-structured interviews with three practitioners that engage in similar practices (Assemble, MUF Architecture/Art and Sarah Wigglesworth) and structured interviews with students that joined the Construction Week workshops.

The questionnaires aimed to assess three main dimensions of the experiences: (1) how the field is perceived to interfere with this practice; (2) how the subjects perceive their labour conditions; and (3) how they perceive the differences in the products delivered through this practice. The questions in these forms had to be marked on a numerical scale, ranging from negative to positive, with the midpoint (50%) representing neutrality. In this way, we can assess how participants perceived the interference of these elements in their activities.

*(1) Field interference*

As for the ‘field constraints’, the students perceived elements such as the market and bureaucracy as relatively neutral, with only 2.7% answering above neutrality and only 0.9% answering below neutrality with regard to those elements inhibiting their proposals.

Nevertheless, critical practices tend to attribute a larger role to those constraints. On one extreme, Wigglesworth considers such constraints a part of reality to be addressed. On the other extreme, Assemble considers them a part of reality to be strongly opposed. Some architects consider them as a condition that ultimately frames their possible practices in a process of co-opting former radical practices.

As a counterexample, the UEL workshop ‘Into the Green’ also produced an intervention in a public space in the form of an event, which also mobilised the community. As a result, an office was created at UEL to develop interventions in that space so that the ephemeral community activities therein could continue permanently. However, lost in the bureaucracy of the university, the office was dissembled, and the community became disengaged, putting an end to the process. Therefore, the field matters, even if you are not conscious of it: the discipline and social structures are engaged in a complex, dialectical relationship (we shall discuss this point further in Chapter 2).

*(2) Labour conditions*

The students assessed ‘labour conditions’ as the best dimension of their experience, which generated an average score of 80% positive. This topic was concerned with their role in the production, the sharing of ideas, the openness of the debates, and the democratic decision making in relation to previous academic experiences.

Surprisingly, the students did not consider this experience very different from other practices from their past. This finding suggests that the actual experience of work in practice is always collective, involving the trainees as a decisive part of the design process, although the ‘narrative’ in the field is that the production is decided by the main architect in the office. Such is the case in the office of Wigglesworth and Architects, where the collective is anonymous and the main architect is the reference.

Again, Assemble resides on the opposite pole, where the work is done in a collective way, whereby all activities – from the design process to lunch preparation – is shared.

### *(3) Products delivered*

As for the ‘products delivered’ dimension, the results are more paradoxical given the intentions of Live Projects. Students perceived the products to have a small positive impact on the place (only 19% above neutrality), the connection between creativity and construction to be limited (19.8% above neutrality) and the product to be very similar to what a conventional architectural practice can deliver (3.4% above neutrality). However, the interventions were considered a ‘valuable project’ (31% above neutrality).

This finding seems to be linked to the low level of input from the local community in terms of the effective products delivered. In the next chapter, we will discuss further how participation can become a deadlock in architectural practices. For now, we shall notice only the presence of these conflicts and the ways in which they point to something beyond (the reproduction of architecture).

For Sarah Wigglesworth, participation is a fundamental element in her architectural design process. In fact, she spends most of the time in any presentation she gives for a project talking about participation. Nevertheless, participation seems to be a ‘consulting’ process, where the users are invited to provide inputs and steer decisions. The architect appears as a guide in this process. Nevertheless, the resulting product is a conventional design, an object that hides the means of its own production in its cleanness. By contrast, for MUF, participation appears as an object to be ‘represented’ in architecture, and the traces of participation become a set of elements in the final aesthetics of the products delivered. Moreover, for Assemble, participation not only enters the process as an input but also becomes an output. As assured in the interview, the aesthetics of the products retains a certain openness, as if the user could see the way the object was produced and think ‘I could do that myself’. In this way, the product becomes an empowering object not a form that masks appearances. Furthermore, as in Assemble’s Granby Four Streets project, the process is actually the means of bringing a community together to actively produce their own spatial conditions.

These differences seem to bring us back to the Wood Street Workshop. In the Area Action Plan, participation was only a simulacrum of input, a means of legitimising proposals defined elsewhere. However, in the Live Project workshop, the ‘object’ of architecture became a means of bringing together a collective subject that was repositioned at the centre of fundamental decisions. This architectural experiment was empowering participation rather than being a result of it.

Another counterexample to demonstrate how this line is blurred is one of the workshops engaged in participant observation, which was called ‘Hoppert(h)ings’. Combining the name of the city Hoepertingen and the word ‘things’ in a bit of word play, the workshop attempted to find what ‘local things’, local desires, and local elements could be brought into being. Students struggled to find the limits of their agency, and they were continuously concerned with their teachers’ expectations. In addition, further questions were brought to light through this experience.

Of interest was the extent to which the resulting objects were more than sculptures representing the punctual interests of the community and the extent to which they were not simply playful activities. Here, as the objects represented community participation, they could not be any less constrained under the status quo ideology than the average ‘good citizen’ (this point shall also be discussed in the next chapter). In addition, the extent to which architecture ultimately resembled some ‘small project’ that someone did to pass the time was a concern because any such resemblance would transform participation into a community ‘game’.

To understand how architecture ultimately not only reproduces the existing social conditions but also reproduces its role in this wider reproduction, we moved the investigation inside the process itself: not only through an ‘external observation’ of the ‘internal participants’ but also through participation as a means of self-reflexivity.

## **Critical observations II:**

### **Participant Observation and Observation of Participation**

#### **Hacking: Experiments in urban ecology**

The urban ecology module of the school of Architecture, Computing and Engineering (ACE) at UEL was coordinated by Roland Karthaus, Alan Chandler and Anna Minton in 2013/2014. In this module, students developed theoretical research and a design experiment. The ecology of the urban space was understood as a complex set of relations that surround life in contemporary cities, amplifying the ‘under-theorised’ notion of the environment as only the ‘physical’. In this sense, the rules, hierarchies, forms of power, modes of production, and even physical objects were understood as part of a larger (ecological) system. Thus, urban ecology was understood as ‘the study of the city as a site of complex, social interactions and the rules and norms that govern them’ (Karthaus, Chandler, Minton, 2013).

As a methodology, the module proposed a three-stage exercise: first, theoretical research; second, a ‘performance’ intended to test the operative concreteness of those systemic elements of the city; and third, the production of a material ‘prototype’ intended to interfere in those immaterial instances of the city – ‘Drawing the responses to your activities will identify a subversive potential that could be exploited through a material construction’ (Karthaus, Chandler, Minton, 2013).

These objects were conceived as prototypes and models ‘built to test a concept or a process or to act as a thing to be replicated or learned from’. The prototypes were to particularly focus on ‘hacking’ in the privatised urban space in regeneration areas of London, which was first explored via special ‘performances’. Those performances were events produced by dissonant uses of the space:

Your performances or activities should have revealed instances of the complex, ambiguous or hidden rules that govern most privately-owned spaces and some publicly-owned spaces... We ask you to be inspired by the philosophy of 'hackers': people with great software skills who enter official systems, sometimes to subvert them, but sometimes just to reveal their weaknesses. If we consider the built environment as the hardware of the city, then the 'rules' of space become the software to be manipulated. In this case, your prototype should be a physical piece, but

it should engage with and disrupt spatial/social rules to achieve an alternative outcome (Karthaus, Chandler, Minton, 2013).

For instance, G.S. investigated the corporate control of images in privatised public spaces. These spaces are deeply influenced by symbolic capital and are based on ‘spectacle’ strategies. Therefore, any photograph is forbidden, unless you have express authorisation. In this sense, G.S. subverted the rules by simply drawing pictures in the space instead of using a camera.



Image 4: G.S. experiment. Source: G.S., 2012.

These experiments helped reveal aspects of the contemporary city and served as a starting point to isolate and manipulate variables in these spaces; as a collateral effect, they also helped trace the first paradoxes and limits of using architecture as a subversive tool. For this thesis, we will focus on the experiments of the student Z.Y. (2014).

In the first phase, Z.Y. worked with F.C., investigating a new privatised public space in Granary Square. As the space provides a series of measures to maintain a consumer-driven experience, security is orientated towards eliminating the practice of begging in the square. Nevertheless, the space is supposedly conceived as tool to enhance the ‘playful’ and ‘free’ interaction of its users. Exploring this limitation, Z.Y. dressed up in simple clothes and started to wander around the square asking passers-by if they were hungry and if they would accept a candy bar as a gift.

After a few minutes, security arrived and asked him to leave the square, as his behaviour was prohibited. The student explained that he was not begging for food, rather he was giving. A superior was called; the activity was understood to be against

the ‘rules’, and Z.Y. was warned to step outside the lines on the ground marking the division of public and private space or the police would be called.



Image 5: Z.Y. experiment. Source: Z.Y. (2014)

The activity, although in harmony with the intentions of the place, was somehow interfering with the expected uses of the space and with the intended appearance of its users. In this sense, the appearance of the activity was more important for the functioning of the ecology of the place than its actual agenda.

In the next phase of the research, Z.Y. investigated the diverse elements in the urban space that function as guides and instruments of control. As with the marks in the pavement called to Z.Y.’s attention, bollards are also important silent devices. Beyond the function of directing the flux of pedestrians and avoiding the flux of cars, they also create sensations of borders and delimit transitions.

As a type of prank intended to create awareness and shock, he proposed a prototype of a ready-made basketball net to be attached to these devices. As they would stay within the limits of the public and the private, the objects would be outside the jurisdiction of the private, despite acting as virus that would infect the uses and image of the space and amplifying the ‘playful’ experience of the space beyond the planned limits. In contrast to ‘security by design’, the prototype intended to insert ‘fun by design’ into the city. By playing with the limits of the public and the private, he was able to insert a challenging experience into a controlled space.

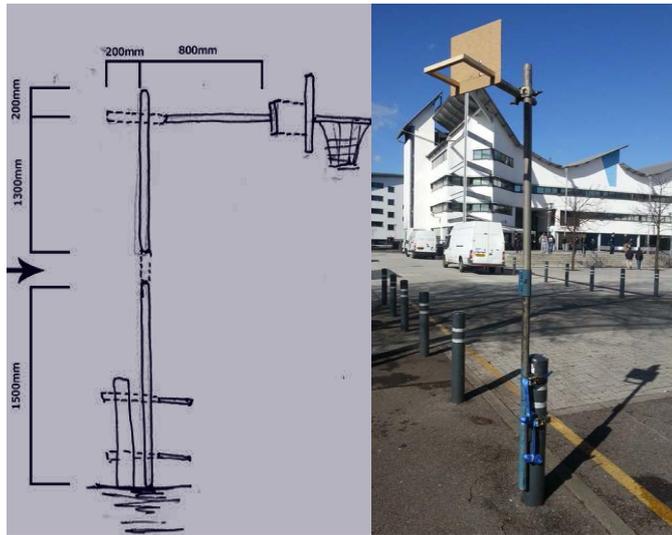


Image 6: Z.Y. prototype. Source: Z.Y., 2014.

## Stake point 2

Experiments such as the one described above not only have pedagogical value in terms of confronting students with the relationship between the production of architecture and the reproduction of social relations but also have the potential to investigate how architectural skills and knowledge can be mobilised in practices that might subvert the smooth systems of social control. By investigating the frontiers of the social rules engraved in urban spaces, design is mobilised as a means of change rather than a perpetual reinforcement of the establishment.

The ‘hacking aesthetics’ analogy is helpful and inspiring. The strategy is helpful in unveiling the abstract social rules that are considered ‘natural’, thus functioning as a means of entering the ‘ecological system’ of the city, which keeps subjects unaware of the built intentions and manipulations. Nevertheless, it might be too literal a conversion of the concept from the technological realm to the social. The urban space has too many particularities, and the dualistic distinctions and absolute categories of the digital realm – with abyssal choices between 0 and 1 or between hardware and software – are unable to tackle the dialectical dynamics of social spaces.

As we discussed in Chapter 1, the belief that technology will ‘redeem us from the old social structures’ is an idea as old as the positivism of Comte (1848). This notion supports a blind belief in the capacity of technological advancements to potentially solve social problems, as though we can find an escape from all our problems by simply following the ‘tail’ of progress (what György Lukács, 2000, called ‘Tailism’). This assumption is shared by conservatives and some lines of critical thought that are now organised under the label of ‘accelerationism’, as if the solution to all problems can be found in the acceleration of progress (see Mackay and Avanesian, 2014; Srnicek, 2013; Williams, 2013; and, for a critical account see Negri, 2014). We discussed the ‘Tailism’ deadlock in Chapter 1, and as we saw in Chapter 3, the urban space is not a trivial cybernetic machine.

Another point at stake in those experiments is the extent to which they become a form of ‘protest’ rather than delivering a transformation in the production of social relations. The power produced by ‘protest’ comes from its highly symbolic and representative dimension. As discussed in Chapter 1, social space cannot be equated with representation without falling into a deadlock.

Finally, the critical stake point relies on the distinction between the ‘tactical’ and ‘strategic’ agencies provided by these experiments. As in a game of chess, the strategies are the general picture, and tactics are the step-by-step actions. On the one hand, strategies are concerned with the structure of the game en route to a fundamental aim (which is to checkmate the king in chess). Strategic measures are the key elements to be controlled, such as dominating the board’s centre and keeping open lines of action for protected pieces. On the other hand, tactics are the short-term technical ‘tricks’ performed to efficiently obtain gains. In this sense, hacking can be understood more as a tactical instrument and less as a ‘whole picture strategy’ – where to go? – and perhaps the matter is the same as the difference between efficiency – the ratio of the output work to the input energy – and efficacy – the ability to produce the desired result. In short, it is the difference between doing things right and doing the right things.

These series of critical points lead our research to the next investigation. Can architecture subvert the traditional duality of scales (the big and the small, the local and the global, the part and the whole) and produce interventions that, although small in scale, have a concrete impact on the whole?

### **Micro-utopias: the Wood Street Workshop**

Wood Street is a historical shopping street in Walthamstow, London, flanked by a council housing estate and a recently redesigned 20<sup>th</sup>-century plaza. The local council developed an ‘Area Action Plan’ for the one-mile long street (see Borough Council of Waltham Forest, 2013). This plan is a statutory planning document to guide a process of ‘regeneration’ over the next 15 years. A consultation process was undertaken between 2009 and 2011, which involved meetings with council officers, questionnaires with retailers and an ‘informal consultation’ through the distribution of leaflets and an ‘Urban Design Framework’. This last part consisted of a large model of the street with the sites of intervention marked in blue, which was presented at a meeting with residents, stakeholders, and Ward Members, and further three exhibition ‘events’. As a result, a series of actions were planned, which were divided into six ‘clusters’ and further subdivided into a total of 19 ‘sites’. The plaza subject of our workshop is in Cluster 4 and is divided into ‘Site 10 – Marlowe Road’ and ‘Site 11 – The Plaza’. The plan proposes to ‘Demolish the estate, leave Northwood Tower standing and rebuild the estate as a mix of private and affordable properties’. In addition, ‘The Plaza should be redeveloped to provide flats above shops’.

This ‘consultation’ process was considered insufficient by some members of the organised community, as it simply reinforced the application of ‘regeneration schemes’ that have appeared everywhere in London, such as the ones we analysed in the first case study. Therefore, a regular methodology to create a ‘consensus’ involved attending to planning requirements and simply legitimating preconceived solutions. In the collective participation, the report says that people liked ‘local shops, independent/family businesses’, prioritised the ‘support for independent retailers’, wanted to encourage ‘more people to visit Wood Street’ and to improve ‘green space, public realms and play areas’, which meant, in the project’s conclusion, the ‘demolition of social housing’ and the ‘privatisation of public spaces’. Although the images of the report are charming, finding the logical reasoning that leads from the collected participative demands to the project’s conclusions is a matter of finding deception.

In this context, *Architects E17* (a non-profit organisation) and *Wood St. First* (a community group) started an independent process of community engagement in the discussion:

AE17 were keen that local people should be positively engaged in the future of the area and wanted to demonstrate how this could be facilitated. With a small grant from Wood Street First and the RIBA, AE17 made a post box, called Dolly the Trolley who spent the summer in various locations and events around Wood Street collecting people's views on the area and ideas for the square. Workshops were held with various local groups, including the Soul Project and Frederick Bremer school, the local secondary school located north of Wood Street off Fulbourne Road. On Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> September, an ideas day was held where local people and AE17 together made models of temporary interventions that could create new possibilities for the use of the square. Representatives from Waltham Forest Council and Wood Street First acted as a jury to select the best ideas (Karthaus, 2014).

This mobilisation attracted the attention of the local council, which lent its support and led to a partnership with UEL's School of Architecture that would be developed as a Live Project. The mission of this Live Project was to

...design and build temporary installations in Wood Street plaza that respond to the aspirations of local people and offer broader opportunities for the use of the space. The intervention should occur gradually during the week, culminating in an 'event' on the final Saturday, the design of which is part of this brief. The duration of the installation is uncertain and may be adopted by the local authority or one of the local groups, or may be required to be removed after the opening event, depending on its nature. The purpose is to change the perception of the square through temporary physical interventions (Karthaus, 2014).

Seven students, two architectural researchers, one social work researcher and one tutor participated in this workshop. Local suppliers secured some recycled materials; RIBA provided a small amount of funding reserved for community projects; and a local school provided access to their material workshop to be used during the construction process. To launch the design process, the students were allowed to gather at a café in the square. On the second day, they used donated cardboard boxes to create some 'performances' and experiments. This exercise intended to get students interacting with locals, to test the scale of the place, and to assess how small interventions could interfere with the activities in that place.



Image 7: Wood Street experiment 1. Source: the author.

The students began to explore the material that they could use and design possibilities. Five days later, they presented some ideas to a local jury at a community centre and brought a wood frame to the plaza to support boxes that would hold proposals from locals and display historical information about the site. The handling of different interests remained concealed, and the overall discussion centred on empowering the community in the discussion.



Image 8: Wood Street experiment 2. Source: the author.

Students from the local school helped construct pieces of the design and participated in the assembly testing of the structure. Leaflets were distributed for the event, and the local café provided food. Parts were produced during the week, and the structure was raised in the morning of the event. A small group of people gathered around the structure, and some curiosity was generated for the event, which kindled some heated debates. On this occasion, the circumstances of the Area Action Plan and the future of the plaza were discussed. Proposals were collected from the local community, and kids were encouraged to contribute to the project with their drawings.



Image 9: Wood Street experiment 3. Source: the author.

At the end of the event, when the structure began being disassembled, a group of kids furiously demolished all the boxes, somehow reflecting the violence of being deprived of power over their local destiny. Something was in the air, exposing the paradoxes brought to light through this experience.

### Stake point 3

As the structure was completely removed, the plaza remained just as before, and one of the participants asked: ‘Did all this work change the square in any way?’



Image 10: Wood Street experiment 4. Source: the author.

As part of the mobilisation led by Architects E17, this process continued in the form of other initiatives. Especially interesting was the fact that this project led to an initiative that introduced a web map called ‘Where in Wally?’, where locals could share places that they considered important to the community. According to the Localism Act of 2012, these places can be listed as ‘Assets of Community Value’ and thus be protected from market forces.

The ephemeral ‘architectonic’ device built in the square was more a means of mobilisation than an actual product – more of a process than a thing. This object was less important than the event that it produced. If one could argue that the square remained physically the same after the event, could an architectural procedure have changed this space by not actually changing it? And what would the consequences of this event be with regard to the concept of architecture?

In the case of Wood Street, architecture emerged to produce a greater awareness of the process in course, which was fundamental to the fate of the plaza. In general, the community had not been engaged in the debate. Architecture became a device that changed the actual centre of decisions, bringing into action a collective subject. In this way, the fact that the plaza remained unchanged (not regenerated) was the very result of the design process.

Thus, the potential fate of Wood Street was changed, and this ‘architectural’ intervention existed in a virtual sense that had real consequences<sup>17</sup>. In this case, architecture became a political tool. This experiment points to a core stake point in this thesis. The workshop did not provide ‘architecture’ as a ‘thing’, nor was it an event in the sense of Bernard Tschumi (as activities or animated *jouissance* of a space, see Tschumi, 1994). Instead, this workshop represents an event in the sense of Alain Badiou (2012). For Badiou, an event is the emergence of a collective subject, the transformation of ‘appearances’, where the reality of things is suddenly changed in a ‘moment of truth’, when a collective joins together in a singular political process (we shall further develop this point in Chapter 3). ‘Things’ here are more than purely positive objects; they become a process (as we shall discuss in Chapter 4).

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<sup>17</sup> See Lefebvre (1967, 1991) and Rancière (2005).

To understand how an empty square might be understood as architecture, we will have to radically transform the idea of ‘architecture’ from a structure to an operation.

### **Observation of participation: a view from within**

As we discussed in the introduction of this chapter, the field research moved towards an observation of participation, as the researcher entered one of the workshops as a student participant. To guarantee the confidentiality of the participants, we will describe the main conclusions schematically, explaining the circumstances of their emergence.

In short, this last experience allowed a visualisation of how the discipline of architecture operates in framing the subjectivity of students, reifying not only the results that architecture delivers but also the users and the architects themselves. The analysis of this process suggested the presence of the means of architectural discipline, as well as the ‘phantastic’ narratives supporting it.

#### *Description*

At the end of a large exhibition of international pavilions, the 12-day workshop aimed to design a new pavilion to be built permanently in a park in a nearby city, which would use recycled materials from the exhibition. The workshop was organised as an ‘architectural competition’, with students divided into seven groups with five members each. These groups would work on different proposals, and a jury would choose the proposition to be built. The jury was composed of a tutor, an external professor and the managing architect of the original exhibition.

A large number of teachers and speakers were involved in the workshop. There were four groups of such workshop participants: a small group of three dominated the decision-making process through various means; another group included ‘assistant’ teachers, who lacked recognition as important players, and who endorsed the first group, and who mostly occupied administrative roles; the third group included passive teachers, who did not make decisions or influence tutorials but who maintained a

celebrative role; and a last group included external visiting teachers, who created tension when questioning the assumptions of the first group.

A similar hierarchy emerged among the group of students. Those who were often praised by the teachers in charge enjoyed some 'privileges', such as jumping the plotting queues and having more time under supervision.

### *Live conflicts*

During the course of the workshop, some conflicts emerged about the methodology applied in the workshop, especially during the discussions after lectures. The main topics were the rendering and the 'selling' of architecture, the privatisation of public spaces, the relations among users, clients and architects, and the 'rules of the game'.

Following a lecture, a polemic debate emerged about the use of renderings in architecture. The external teachers questioned renderings as final products of architecture, their role in the spectacularisation of architecture, their distancing from the concrete experience and production, and their role of commodification. The dominant group fiercely debated the issue, arguing that architecture 'had to be sold' and that renderings were a way of convincing clients to accept a proposal. One hour after this debate, a group of assistant teachers entered the studio and announced the required content of the final five boards, of which two should have 'realistic renderings'.

In a lecture about privatisation of public spaces, external teachers delivered critiques of the process in terms similar to those presented in the first section of this chapter. The dominant group countered that 'good and bad privatisation' was possible, depending on the 'quality' of the design.

With regard to the relations among users, clients and architects, an external lecturer presented an office that established the clients as a fundamental part of the design process, while the architects were only facilitators in the process. In fact, clients were free to contact the architects to make changes to the final building after the construction. This point was also passionately opposed by the dominant group, which complained that the clients would destroy their design, arguing that 'participation always results in

bad design’ and that the ‘best architecture’ emerges when dictators are in power (e.g., Giuseppe Terragni’s Casa del Fascio during the fascist dictatorship of Benito Mussolini).

Conflicts also emerged when the dominant group advocated that ‘you need to play the game’ if you want to deliver change. In the fierce debate that followed, the external teachers aimed to assert a different concept of beauty and another social role for design. In their counterargument, the following metaphor was used: one could not ‘choose to sit on the bench, watch the football match, and refuse to go on the pitch’. Opponents argued that the whole institution of football is just ideology, a spectacle to create identity in an alienated world, reinforcing the notion that winners and losers always emerge in free competition. Thus, the alternative to ‘playing the game’ would be to destroy the stadium and advocate for the end of football (or collective non-competitive alternatives as the ‘altinha’ in Ipanema beach, depicted in many youtube videos). Thus, destroying the game rather than playing it would translate into real changes.

In all the debates, the dominant group was intense and never left the final argument in a contradictory or open way, always using the ‘monopoly of the last word’ and raising their voices as a means of ending debates. In one case, they ended the discussion with a final rhetorical question: ‘Architecture has to be sold, right?’ Our aim here is not to tally the many ways in which architecture is not ‘sold’. Instead, we first seek to notice how the group’s position of power began to steer the process and frame the ways in which discipline was imposed.

Furthermore, the dominant group imposed an agenda by devaluing any counterargument, using irony, cracking jokes and sometimes shouting. However, the ultimate source of their power was holding the decision on the grades of the students and forming the jury with their ‘friends’.

#### **Stake point 4**

The experience helped us understand how architecture is not simply a practice but also a subjectification process based on estrangement and reproduction. In this process, architects in positions of power and the institutions that provide them with that power

create (phantastic) narratives based on nothing more than their will (and the power to impose them).

These narratives could only stand by means of instrumentalisation. Concretely, instrumentalisation resulted in a continuous process of appropriating authorship. This process can be called the 'surplus of creation'. The dominant group not only proposed the ideas to be followed by the students but also appropriated the students' work. In a situation, a door was to be made by subtracting modules in the external wall of the pavilion. The tutor continuously shouted that she had already solved the problem and that the students had only to 'draw it'.

As the students engaged in the design process, a series of problems emerged about which the tutor was unaware: the symmetry of her sketches was unfeasible; the position was impossible because would make a cantilever bigger; and so on. However, she would return to the table many times with jokes and irony, as if the students were incapable of drawing her solution; by contrast, there was no solution yet. Aware of her stance, the students maintained a subservient attitude, repeating that the problem was solved. When the tutor turned her back, they would work on a viable solution again, which was only attainable by changing the form and rotating the entire structure by a number of degrees. However, once the solution was found, the tutor joyfully asserted that they finally understood her.

In another case, the tutor repeatedly changed the ground floor plan designed by the students, even though his changes made no practical difference. Better solutions proposed by students were re-sketched until the tutor felt that he owned the solutions.

Again, in a paradigmatic case, a design was structured with larger modules in the base and smaller modules on top. The tutor took the model and inverted it. He asked a fellow teacher, 'Should we do it like this? It will create an optical illusion that the structure is bigger'. Although the optical illusion intended would technically be delivered by the original proposal, the students (tired of continuous conflicts) accepted the tutor's suggestion as a 'stroke of a genius'. Their initial design was magically reworked by the genius (a change without changes), and the whole thing now belonged to his act of 'creation'.

By these means, in the common practice of the ‘studio’, an academic version of an architect’s ‘office’, the architectural product concerns not only the objects delivered but also the subjects that deliver those objects and the subjects delivered by those objects, resulting in the triple reification of users, architects and architecture (the other, the self and the field).

If the users were completely set aside in the process of this workshop (for instance, the students and tutors did not even visit the site), a spectacle of engagement and sustainability would be staged (a ‘recycling workshop’). The ‘Other’ became an object to manipulate. Similarly, architecture became an ‘object’, not a social process. It became a matter of creating beautiful forms in the right style – a rendering of the perfect image. The dominant group continued to claim that ‘participation would only result in bad design’, leading to a form of internal dictatorship in architecture. Thus, the working subjects became instruments that fulfilled the desires of the group in power. This hierarchy was gradually built through not-so-subtle gestures, including mocking, jokes, irony, and ownership of the last word. ‘Stop discussing and work’ was repeated many times.

In short, this last stake point provides the two main axes of this thesis: estrangement and reproduction. On the one hand, this process creates ‘estrangement’, the separation of those who are working from the means of architectural production, which are essentially concepts and drawing. On the other hand, this estrangement creates a system in which the architect must ‘play the game’ to find work. As long as the architect plays the game, his practice is enclosed in a field of possibilities, and he reproduces what was initially only a condition.