Rossi, Ungers and Koolhaas

Three positions on the relation between Architecture and Planning

Marzot, Nicola

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INTRODUCTION

The persistent condition of crisis of the building market has foremost affected the western world over the last decade. Notwithstanding, this crisis seems to offer a stimulating challenge to current architectural practice by multiplying the number of vacant buildings and waiting lands in the urban "brownfields". This increasingly constitutes an urban phenomenon that is widespread because of the internal dynamics of the Network City as a global given (Marzot, 2006). In addition, this situation potentially offers a new generation of experimental opportunities, which can be widely found in the European context and has been accompanied by a broad spectrum of interesting design initiatives (Oswalt, 2013)[1]. In fact, beyond a certain temporal threshold, any crisis (from the old Greek *krin*, to choose, to take decisions) at a certain moment shifts from a temporary state into a permanent condition of structural deficiency. While the former situation turns out to be typical for existing urban form development, the latter expresses a pathological situation that affects the city's overall systematic quality. This includes also the expected role performed by each building within the local community and within the existing urban framework. Basically, this condition of crisis leads to an irreversible loss of "commonly shared rationality", which had been required to achieve a general agreement about what the city should be. This agreement is entirely historical and, therefore, limited in value and by space and time constrains. This becomes evident through the study of urban form and is based upon the recurrence of specific building types within clearly defined historical conditions. Not by chance the notion of 'building type' defines the conventional aspect of architecture, which is based upon repeatability (Caniggia, Maffei, 1979).

However, within the aftermath of the Modern legacy, the notion of 'Planning' as an expression of a presumed "universal rationality", which claimed to be capable to cross harmful historical borders, had literary superseded the historical role played by the 'Building Type' in defining the form of the city. Moreover, Planning literary anticipated the possibility to experiment with new conditions, which was in fact the role of Building Type before Modernity. In fact the quality of the building type to become 'convention' always derived from an experimental process, that developed via trials and errors while experimenting with existing buildings and purposes. This experimental process eventually led towards the status of a new temporary "conventional decision", of which the former was considered the legitimating process.

In that respect, Manfredo Tafuri's seminal idea to distinguish between *Architecture* and *Planning*, is still a crucial critical threshold to understand the condition prompted by Modernity (Tafuri, 1976). In fact, according to Tafuri, the two disciplines of Architecture and Planning, that are based on the founding principles of the European Enlightenment, are intended to be perceived as two independent domains. They respectively address private entrepreneurship on one hand and public policy management on the other; i.e. locating architecture in the public realm and understanding the urban plan as a governmental issue. This observation explains why attempts to reflect on the role of contemporary design during a period of persisting crisis should, first and foremost, assume and question the relation between "Architecture and Planning". As a grounding premise this relationship has to be critically questioned as such.

This paper aims at tracing back the origin of this embarrassing impasse of the distinction between architecture and planning to Modern thinking. Subsequently it will discuss the formation of Urban Morphology and Building Typology as promising fields of investigation. In addition, this paper investigates the post-modern struggle of overcoming the enduring dichotomy between Architecture and Planning upon which, in fact, Modernity founded its questionable legitimacy, i.e. basing itself on premature judgment. In conclusion, this paper will demonstrate how this opposition has affected, and still affects, the possibility to reach coherent urban form transformations, especially within existing contexts (Conzen, 1969).

1
Many of them, not by chance, are present in the most congested metropolitan area, such as Berlin (the Tempelhof Airport), London (the Brick lane district) and Amsterdam (the NDSM district) .

2
Modern Planning is based on the sheer distinction between infrastructure and zoning.

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METHODOLOGY

The emergence of Urban Morphology and Building Typology, since 1950 onward, as a proper disciplinary field (Marzot, 2004), clearly reflects the discussion among architects on the relation between Architecture and Planning as a critical aspect that conditions any design strategy regarding the contemporary city. Not by chance the emergence of this new field was the result of the necessity to reconstruct the European cities after the Second World War's impressive damages. It was clearly on this occasion that Modern Architecture became progressively aware of its incapability to deal with the historical cities, because of the different set of rules upon which they had been built. Urban Morphology and Building Typology produced an impressive body of knowledge on the historical city's regulating systems, based on the previously mentioned conventional quality of the Building Type. This knowledge is in opposition to modern Planning's[2] , and answers reciprocally differ in relation to the role assumed by the specific nature of the so-called "agents of change" (Marzot, 2014). Parallel to the distinction between architecture and planning this assumption justifies a very basic distinction between "object oriented" perspectives and "process oriented" ones. The former tends to emphasize the autonomous capacity of architecture to subvert the existing conditions. In fact, it mostly acts at a formal level. Basically, it substitutes an existing "architectural language" by a new one. In the latter case, it tends to postpone the critical reflection on the appearance of any disciplinary code to a necessary previous analysis of an already existing change regarding newly emerging socio-economic agents claiming a role within society. In this case, the possibility of an architectural language is in fact subject to an experimental process on the existing city and its building structures. The experimental phase is therefore fundamental. By claiming a proper space through experimentation, the agents of change have the chance to really construct their own set of rules. This gap is justified by different philosophical backgrounds in approaching the same fact, i.e. reality as a "phenomenon". The "object oriented" perspective always answers to the question "what it is a city?" by presuming, but never questioning, its existence. This implies an endless search for definitions, which remain inevitably constrained within, and limited by, the boundaries of an assumed "disciplinary field", which is grounded on

preliminary hypotheses regarding its functioning and character. Not by chance this specific way of questioning experience without emphasizing the role of the so-called "agents of change" resulted, since the very beginning, in the foundation of Architectural Metaphysics, which from that moment onward was doomed to produce logical "entities". Not by chance these were the premises of J. N. L. Durand's method of Composition. In the introduction to his *Précis* (Durand, 1809), he was in fact proud to justify the consistency of his method by arguing that it would allow all students without previous practice or experience in the field of architecture to become a talented designer. Not by chance Enlightenment's aim was to guarantee a scientific approach to every field of knowledge. But the so called "scientific approach", once applied to common matters or extended to social phenomena, is the paradoxical result of this "unconscious" prejudice. In fact, Science literary "suspends" the judgment with respect to any phenomenon, up to the end of its investigating process, by substituting subjective desires with preliminary hypotheses on the phenomenon's nature. Not by chance, Durand's above-mentioned method was intended by its author to guarantee the possibility to articulate a architectural proposal for any possible geographical setting without having any knowledge about it and its societal setting. Accordingly, this assumes a pre-formulated explanation model to be applied, i.e. "projected", onto the analyzed real. Only if the reaction from the real confirms the preliminary hypotheses, these are recognized as "law" and then accepted by the scientific community as part of the discipline. If not, they are rejected, and the process starts again with new hypotheses to be tested. The Functional city is an example of this process. In that respect, Le Corbusier's *Manière de penser l'urbanisme* (Le Corbusier, 1945) is the result of the sheer application of scientific principles to the discipline of Urban Design. It assumed that the city performs according to functional specializations and, even more, that the quality of architecture had to be subject to this planning principle. With other words, the author projected the model extracted from these hypotheses onto the 'modern' city, testing its reaction. Of course, no one cared about the resistance to this application, since the reaction itself is considered part of the procedure and its implicit "scientific quality". As a consequence, when using this 'scientific' method, it is not possible even to question the relation between "Ar-

chitecture and Planning" as such, since the two expressed "entities" are implicitly presumed to exist prior to any research. Additionally, even the use of the coordinating preposition "and" unconsciously states that the two categories belong to the same level of knowledge, i.e. the rational one.

The "process oriented" perspective, on the opposite side, avoids any preconceived definition by simply answering the question "why to build a city?". Doing so, this horizon of investigation never presumes to know who is doing what, why, when and where, which are usually considered the basic aspects of any consistent research. This is made explicit by Urban Morphology and Building Typology when investigation is addressed to the analysis of the city's transformation prior to the Enlightenment. In fact, the city's existence is continuously put under discussion through the elucidation of its lifecycle guided by experimentation on its existing architecture with the aim of achieving new forms of conventional building types (Aymonino, C., Brusatin, M., Fabbri, G., Lena, M., Lovero, P., Lucianetti, S. and Rossi, A. ,1970). Even more, this processual perspective envisions that all aspects of this analysis will be reciprocally defined by testing conflicting positions and by assuming failure and/or success as a simple possibility, or "event". Even more, experimentation takes place before the possibility of the city's existence, emphasizing the role of singular and collective responsibility in taking decision, starting with the very beginning of the process of experimentation. The most impressive case history regarding this perspective is the coming into existence of the medieval city immediately after the IV century A.C., i.e. the possibility of experimentation within the roman city, once it had fallen into ruins (Muratori, 1959/60 and Muratori, 1963).

To clarify this fundamental antagonism between architecture and planning, between process and object orientated perspectives we will compare three canonical texts dealing with the architectural quality of the city and its transformation in space and time. We will describe and explain the argumentation, which has been developed in these texts, in order to find out the implicit position of the three authors. Finally, we will try to extract a clear position vis-a-vis the relation between Architecture and Planning to see whether or not this could fulfill the expectations of a critical design approach when confronted with the existing situation. At the same time this offers the opportunity to raise a discussion on eventually missing aspects that have to be further investigated.

FORMING PROCESSES.
THREE CANONICAL POSITIONS

The architecture of the city (Rossi, 1966), *Architecture as a theme* (Ungers, 1982), and *Delirious New York* (Koolhaas, 1978) are the three texts selected for this experiment. The reason of this critical selection can be explained as follows: these texts were all written by architects and theoreticians operating in the field of architecture and urban design. Their shared aim was to trace back the history of urban form not dealing with abstract and prejudicial theories and/or hypotheses of Modernism but to find within this history the compelling premises to support their own intentional and operative design strategy. These premises tend to remain latent within the initial part of the books' content of these three authors; however, they are finally made more explicit in the course of the authors' narrative. Furthermore, all three were interested in questioning the role of Architecture in the definition and construction of the City, as the book titles already indicate, superseding the prejudice addressed towards Architecture's inability to handle complexity caused by the overwhelming power of Urbanism and Planning, which, not by chance was not existing before Modernity (Aureli, 2011). To achieve this result, all three were aware of the importance of Urban Morphology and Building Typology. In that sense, they all are clearly post-modern, and in accordance with the cultural climax of which they were part, they judged the results of Modernity from the perspective of its evident failure. However, looking closer, mutual differences emerge emphasizing the "untold" and the "un-thought" of their author's position. Here lies the aspect we are interested in vis-à-vis the Architecture and Planning debate, that also affects their design strategy.

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THE AUTONOMY OF ARCHITECTURE IN ALDO ROSSI

Aldo Rossi's text acquires a special value by virtue of the extensive dissemination of the ideas brought together inside it through numerous translations. It can legitimately be maintained that the significance of the work lies in the motives behind it. These do not seem to have changed over the years, as the author himself recalls in his various introductions, and this means there was never any call for him to bring the text itself up to date.

His essential idea is to question the theory of what can be called "ingenuous" Functionalism, which reduces architecture to the pure representation of its utilitarian functions through a one-way relationship of a causal kind. Rossi counters this principle with that of architecture as an autonomous discipline, endowed with a code of values independent of the indisputable pressures of an economic, political and social kind, based on the permanence of certain principles constantly verifiable in the course of history. These the author defines as the "form" of the urban "artifacts", to distinguish their general aspects - and their implicit validity – as compared with their concrete manifestations revealed in precise conditions of space and time.

The purpose of his argument thus becomes to bring out, through reference to situations, which have really occurred and are historically founded, the existence of closely correlated systems of laws and characters in order to try to create a theory of the city, an urban science. This science is intended to take Saussure's linguistic theory as its methodological model. This explains the implicit identification between the city, understood as a system of rules to which every building and architectural manifestation conforms, and *Langue*, as defined in precise terms by De Saussure himself[3]. The text is divided into four sections: the structure of urban artifacts; the primary elements and the concept of area; the individuality of urban artifacts; architecture; the evolution of urban artifacts.

The first section clarifies the hypothesis underlying the entire work. The city is considered as an artifact, a work that grows in time in accordance with a logic of continuous adaptations of the existing building patrimony to changing needs. In this way, the city is modified in keeping with criteria of an artisanal kind, namely by piecemeal adjust-

3
The reference to De Saussure's linguistic approach is explicitly addressed in the introduction to the first Italian edition of the book at pag.6. Moreover, it is finally elucidated within the introduction to the second edition, published in 1970. On that occasion Rossi fully declares his intention as "…to establish a theory of architectural design where the elements are predetermined, formally identified, but the significance which emerges at the end of the operation is the authentic sense, unexpected and original, of the research..". This definition pays respect to De Saussure's definition of the *Langue*. Rossi finds evidence of his belief not only in the transformation processes of urban form, investigated through urban analysis, but also in painting, especially in the genre of the so-called "capriccio", leading him to define the theory of the Analogous City.
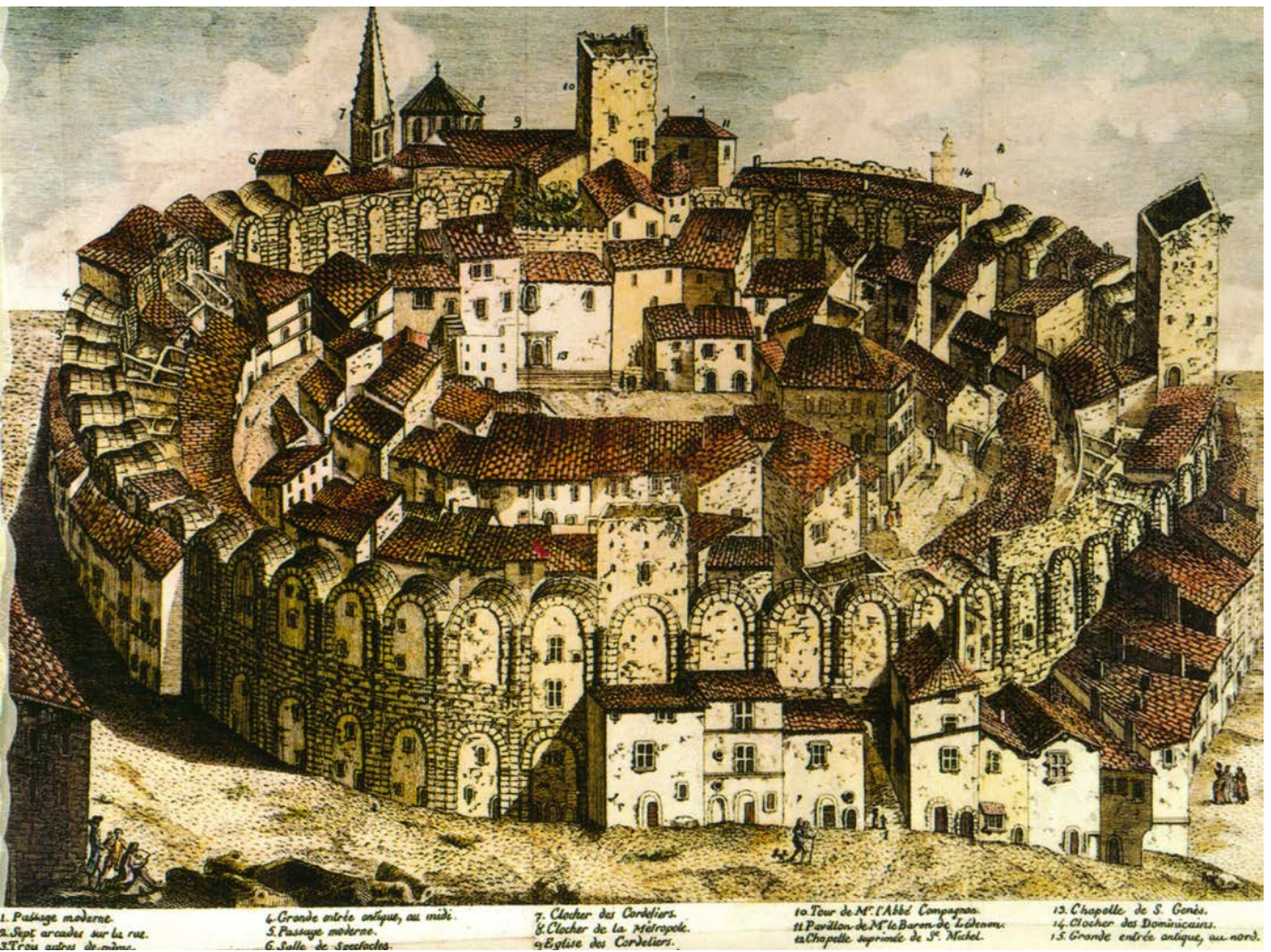
ments made in real time. Hence it is essential to recognize the individuality and uniqueness of urban artifacts as the starting point for any reflection on the future of the city and its transformation.

Nevertheless, we can succeed in defining the constituent modes of every individual architecture or urban manifestation only through a series of successive abstractions from the data with which the book starts, namely the concreteness of urban artifacts. Rossi defines the result of these operations as the "type". The "type" for Rossi is therefore a constant, namely the underlying "form" of urban artifacts. Surprisingly, this derivative process identifies with the fall into decay of a well-established community, which tends to reveal the emergence of the "type" as a "relict"[4]. In Rossi's interpretation of the city there thus co-exist a Platonic image, the idea of the city, and an Aristotelian vision, the whole set of urban facts in their concrete materiality as an occurrence, and these factors are always closely correlated, to the point where, out of respect for Saussure's linguistic formulation, the urban artifacts become the "words", or "speech act" through whose historical sedimentation "languages" are renewed. Seeking to define architecture as an autonomous discipline[5], Rossi identifies it with Composition, out of respect for the cultural-revolution that had begun by the Enlightenment. As the art of composition, architecture is pure rationality; it has its own lexical elements and its own rules of syntactical-grammatical articulation. These elements and rules do not belong to history but to the world of forms revealed by the superseding of history made possible by its conscious crisis. Subsequently, morphology is concerned with concrete urban artifacts, while typology with their constructional logic. The "analogue city" concept introduced by Rossi to support this hypothesis displays concrete artifacts under decay- the theatres of Arles and Nîmes, the fortress of Split, the Palazzo della Ragione in Padua, etc. – to express idea of the recurrence of elements and relationships which underpin the city and its architecture, independently of the use made of them in any given conditions (Fig.1). However his recognition of the existence of "types", understood as schemes with a meta-historical validity, does not follow from a processual analysis of the reasons for their existence, i.e. does not derives from critically answering the question "why do we need to build a city and, eventually, choosing a way more that another?". This is not

by chance. In fact Rossi's search for a dialectical relation between the universality of form, i.e. its inner logic deprived of any conventional value, and its specificity, i.e. its ever-changing interpretation made possible by the unique materialization of its logical premises, is always in favor of the author's self-satisfaction regarding the "unproductive role" of the crisis as such, which confirms his subtle compliance with Modernity and its disruptive attitude in "transcending" any kind of specificity (Biraghi, 2013).

This position is shored up by Rossi's decision to apply the architectural concept of the "type" to the building and the city, rejecting the humanistic distinction of the "scale" of the project. Doing so, the "type" becomes the unifying factor of a logical kind, which ties up all built manifestations, regardless of their dimensions and the complexity of their interrelations. Rossi identified the type with *Langue*[6], so superseding certain ambiguities present in the definition given by Saverio Muratori and his school, which apparently prevented the concept from acquiring an analogous unifying function. In practice, they limited the term "type" to defining the historically ascertained concept of the house[7]. The analysis of urban artifacts, hence of urban morphology, confirms the existence of logical principles, namely "types", which transcend morphology while comprehending it. The general validity of these principles is not undermined by the fact that they are embodied in widely different situations (Fig. 2). In fact, this constitutes the foundation of their truth. This same fact jeopardizes the functionalist assumption of form as an organ which is developed and modified in relation to its function. The concept of the house as a utensil is a slogan that does not do justice to the permanence of specific organizational principles in strongly differentiated programs. If anything, says Rossi, it is the type that is the organizational model of this function. In reality, the modern concept of Function subtlety hides the existence of new values, derived from the emergence of the industrial society based on standard and mass production, translating the scientific method application from the field of natural source exploitation to that of the human one.

Function does not lend itself to becoming an effective parameter for the analysis of reality, though the Modern Movement made excessive use of it. Other parameters that had a considerable success were those that had an economic

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1. Passage moderne.
2. Sept arcades sur la rue.
3. Trou autre de même.
4. Grande entrée antique, au midi.
5. Passage moderne.
6. Salle de Spectacles.
7. Clocher des Cordeliers.
8. Clocher de la Metropole.
9. Eglise des Cordeliers.
10. Tour de Mr. l'Abbé Compagnon.
11. Pavillon de Mr. le Baron de Lédenon.
12. Chapelle suprimée de St. Michel.
13. Chapelle de S. Genès.
14. Clocher des Dominicains.
15. Grande entrée antique, au nord.

Fig. 1.
Engraving of Arles' roman amphitheatre after the Roman Empire fall, XVIII century. Aldo Rossi finds archeological evidences of the survival of Form, calling it Type, after processes of functional disposal and successive abandonment of already existing public monuments of the past. Assuming this permanence, beyond historical epochs, as the grounding principle of the architectural practice, and naming it Composition, it becomes the "natural environment" into which architecture establishes its valuable horizon. As a consequence, neither the character of architecture is questioned nor its necessity. The dualism between the idea and its materialization duplicates, in the disciplinary field of architecture, the Enlightenment one between rationality and its sheer application.

4
Not by chance, in the introduction to the first Italian edition, at pag. 6, he declares that "…permanent elements could be identified as pathological elements.."

5
The reference to Autonomy and to the scientific approach is emphasized in the introduction to the second Italian edition.

6
 According to De Saussure's the *Langue* refers to synchrony and justify the existence of clearly defined elements, whose internal relations are unpredictable, since the elements can be selected and combined according to the author's changing intentionality. However, to define the *Langue*'s structure, we do need to start from the *Parole*, which refers to a diachronic process. Rossi fully developed De Saussure's program by analyzing "Urban Fact", i.e. the architectural *Parole*, to extract from them "Types", which correspond to the *Langue*.

7
 This point was explored in a paper I presented at the seventh IASTE conference held at Trani from 12 to 15 October 2000. The paper is published in the Working Paper Series n° 136 under the title *The Dialectic Between Tradition and Innovation in the Italian Typological Studies*.
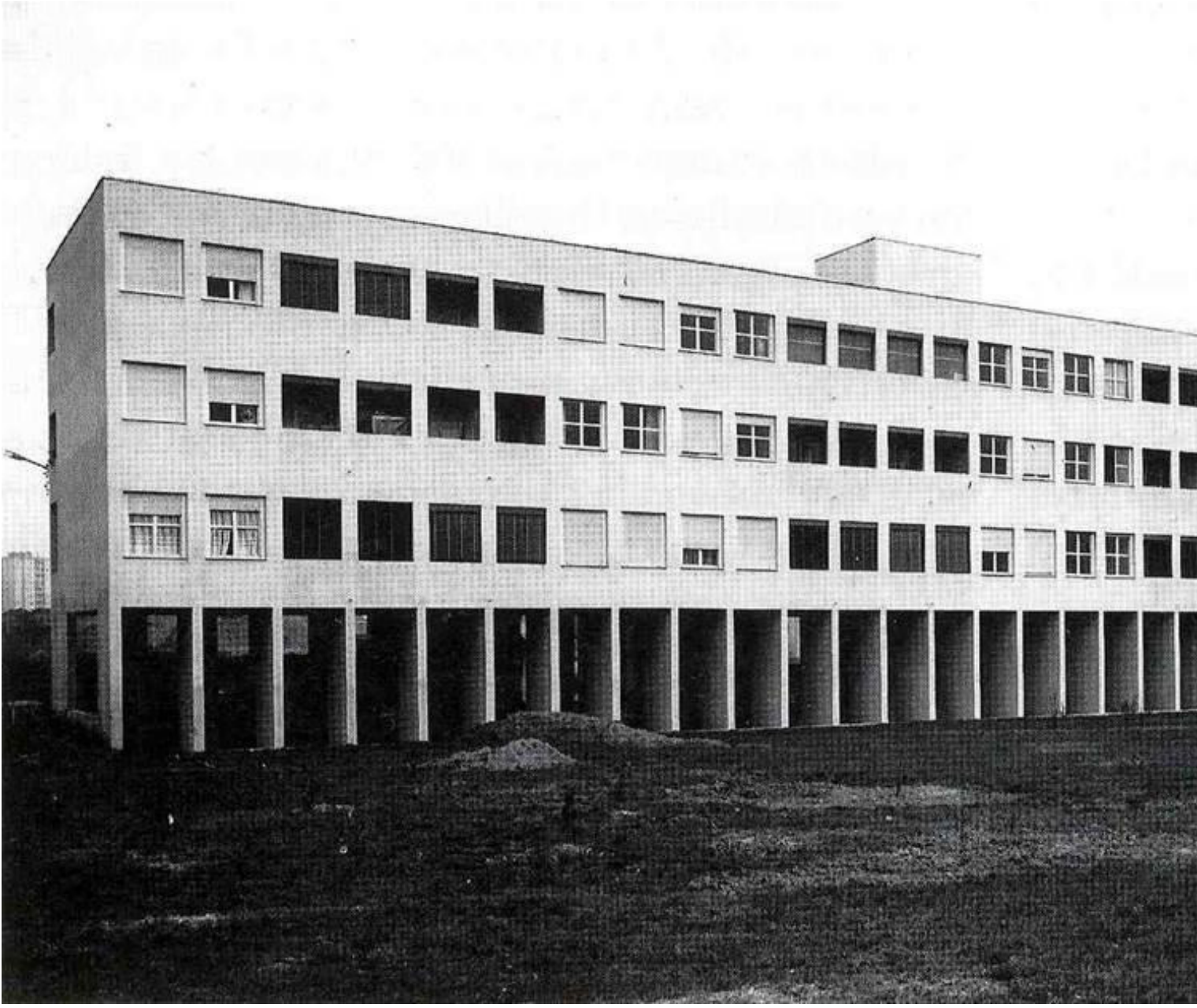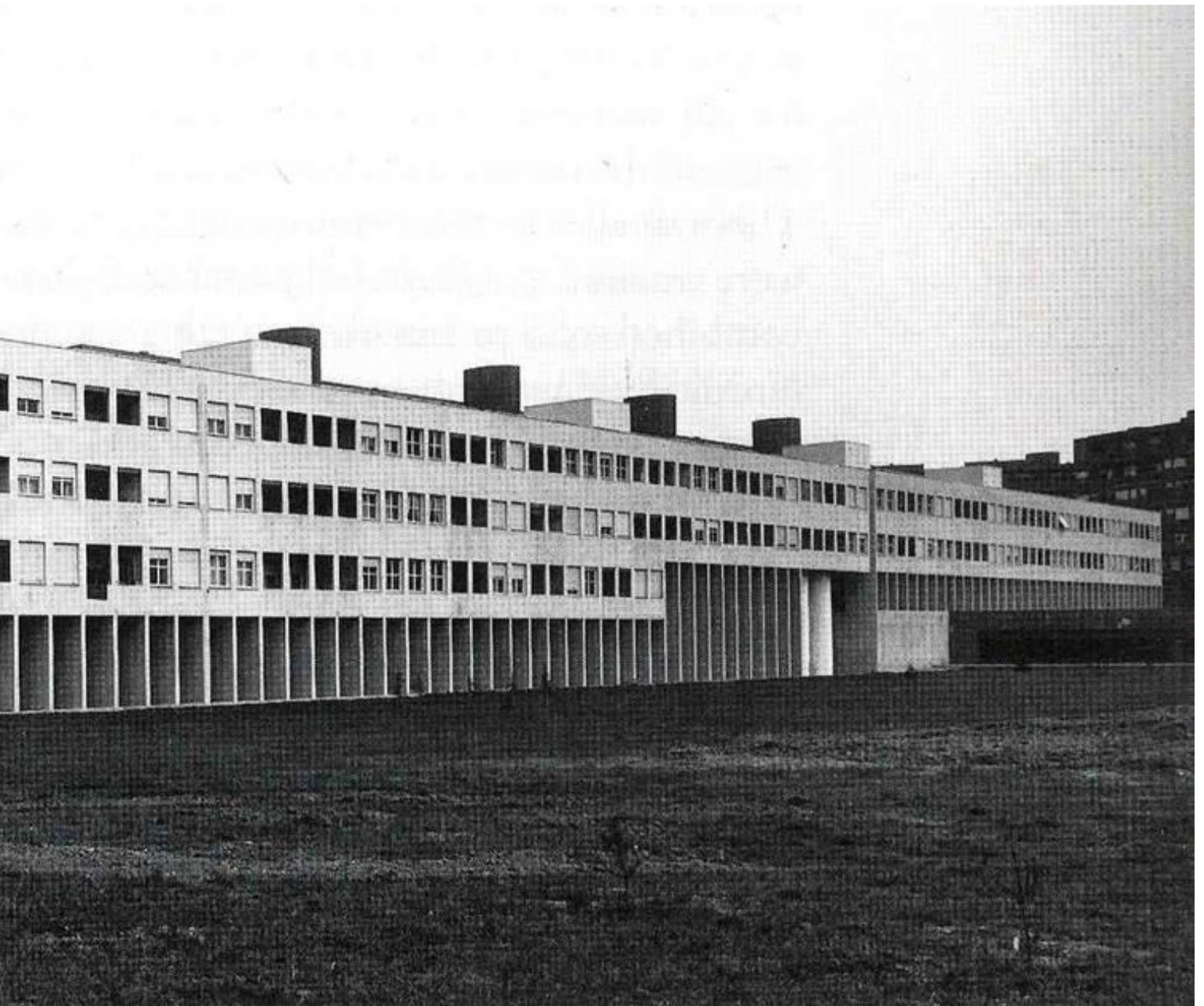
Fig. 2.
Aldo Rossi, Residential Unit, Gallaratese District, Milan, 1968-1973. The building stands out as the poetic interpretation of a viaduct's relict, which remains to the background as the implicit permanence of Architecture, beyond any functional or conventional value. The origin of the hidden precedent remains unquestioned as well as the role of the personal manipulation of it, intentionally dissimulating any kind of subjectivity, its possible aim and expected desire.

nature and social content. Though these analyses helped comprehend important aspects of Morphology, they are not capable of explaining it in its entirety. The city by its nature defies any all-encompassing interpretation which excludes recognition of the existence of purely formal categories endowed with their own behavioral autonomy. Only Marcel Poëte (Poëte, 1929) and Pierre Lavedan (Lavedan, 1926) introduced as criteria of analysis the identification of persistent elements in the urban organization that are capable of penetrating the form of the urban artifacts from a morphological point of view. For example, verification of the existence of elements of the plan of the city which retain their force through successive urban transformations, and which may actually consolidate it, is a confirmation of the autonomous validity and effectiveness of the principles regulating them. Rossi, however, never doubted that the persistence of these phenomena was not necessarily a synonym of choice but rather the effect of an inertia to change, due in part to the nature of the materials employed. Would the destiny of the theatres of Arles and Nîmes, in the early Middle Ages, have been the same if they had been built of wood and not stone? Couldn't respect for certain alignments be explained simply as less laborious than their alteration or cancellation? This would help understand why the *cardo* and *decumanus* of Roman cities are better preserved than all the other signs of lesser importance. It is therefore difficult to interpret the preservation of material elements as an implicit recognition of the validity of their underlying principles. It seems not possible to solve this aporias if not bringing to the fore the subjective position, its intentionality and its role in judging what is doomed to be abandoned and what is worthy to be subverted through subtle manipulation, for the sake of a newly emerging possible society, which implies to focus on a process oriented perspective.

OSWALD MATHIAS UNGERS: ARCHITECTURE AS A RHETORICAL DEVICE

This text is located historically at the end of a long period of reflection on the form of the city. It addresses the city's formation and transformation in the course of time and its relationship with architecture and the consequence of this theoretical output in the construction of urban space. As such this text is a fundamental contribution to the comprehension of part of the state of things in which we still live.

Ungers' principal objective is to stress the importance of architecture as an autonomous language, capable of expressing ideas, that is themes, which precede it and condition it in its choice of elements and its rules of inner articulation. In particular, those "themes" are derived from urban form transformative process careful analysis, to emphasize the importance to derive a consistent body of knowledge from the specific appearance of the "urban facts". In this way Ungers seeks to express his criticism of ingenuous Functionalism and the consequent subordination of architecture to purpose, technology and the reasons of the economy, which have made it an applied art. This urge to attribute a communicative capacity to architecture, regardless of the question of functioning inter-disciplinarily was typical of the 1960s[8]. It was also consistent with the reflection regarding the principles of scientific research, in which the initial working hypothesis defines the direction of thought in the analysis and quality of the results obtained. Themes, precisely because they are not natural or spontaneous aspects but the result of conscious choice, are partial. It only as such that they succeed in ensuring architecture has the linguistic function which the author seeks to attribute to it. But for the same reasons the choice of these aspects, to be widely shared, a collective choice and not a personal poetic inaccessible to most people, should possess a historicity of their own: i.e. they should clearly represent central aspects of the cultural debate at a specific time, a question that the author seems not to grasp unequivocally.

As the immediate result of choices not shared, the language of architecture will prove in various cases to be conditioned by the nature of the theme, so being translated into a catalogue of codes, meaning strongly specialized languages. The fact that the different themes/languages can coexist within the work of a single author reveals

its partiality and that it belongs to the field of the poetic. The '80s thus opened under the aegis of linguistic "particularism", following the heroic season of the '60s and '70s, which sought to re-found architectural language on more solid bases which could be widely shared through emphasis on aspects of active participation in its forma-tion. The individual was thus the author and beneficiary of the choices made. With Ungers, individuals delegate a brief to the architect who, by virtue of his poetic abilities, succeeds through his mediation in finding a form for the needs of the community. Notwithstanding the evidence of a Meta-Narrative attitude, according to which architecture indirectly reflects on what its pur-pose should be, not taking it into a proper action, however Ungers has the merit to indicate a new research line capable of developing Aldo Rossi's premises, substituting the former's negative dia-lect with a positive one.

"The theme of transformation or the mor-phology of the Gestalt" is defined by Ungers in a multiple way. It can be understood as the expres-sion of endless individual variations by which it is possible to express a general concept like "en-trance" (by analogy with the distinction made in linguistics between the "Act of Speech", corre-sponding to the French definition of *Parole*, which are endless and unrepeatable, and the French definition of *Langue*, which expresses the finite system encompassing the grammatical rules and the linguistic components). But the theme can also express the transition from a state of order - the layout of a planned city - to its abandonment because of a change in the general context, which seemingly alludes to a state of chaos. An example is the early medieval city, which developed on the earlier system in continuity with its most elemen-tary aspects. Finally, the theme can be expressed through a continuous transition from the natural element to the artificial and vice versa, hence by simulating a clear change of state. Each of these strategies, says Ungers, makes it possible to clarify the theme of transformation through the language of architecture, making architecture the language of transformation, enhancing the idea of a possi-ble variety within the unity of the system. Ungers supports this thesis with the examples of the pro-jects for the Museum Morsbroich in Leverkusen, the student residence at Enschede and Grünzug-Süd in Cologne.

8
Nothing to say that this urge had a twofold premise: to revaluate the autonomous capacity of architecture, via the project, to construct a clear idea of the city, and to subordinate the Planning to unfold this autonomous capacity, subverting the Modern prejudice towards architecture. This urge be-came unavoidable after the second world war recon-struction and was boosting the emergence of Urban Morphology and Building Typology as an autonomous research field, to rehabili-tate the lost role of archi-tecture to define the form of the city. Within the Modern legacy, only Le Corbusier and Hilberseimer tempted somehow to forecast the possibility of a new city made of architecture.

"The theme of the assemblage or coincidence of opposites" enables Ungers to remind us that Western culture has educated us to consider a lack of unity in the whole as a limitation for the attainment of beauty in a work. His purpose, on the contrary, is to show that the composition of contrasts is sometimes the only strategy available for coping with a design problem and, as such, it may be the source of aesthetic reverberations. The theme of fragmentariness is also taken as an act of freedom from the often-dogmatic imposition of unity. Aldo Rossi's conception of the "city by parts" emerges clearly from these words and Ungers demonstrates to be aware of it. The city lives by the richness of discontinuities, of contradictions, unlike the village, which emphasizes unity. This passage is perhaps one of Ungers' most important observations, as it prompts reflection on one of the principal themes of criticism of the bourgeois city in the late nineteenth century. Discontinuity, complexity and specialization have become synonymous with the modern condition and the big city in particular. The ideas contained in the model of the garden city were defined in opposition to them. But the theme of the assemblage also becomes a metaphor for the language of contemporary architecture as the place of the fragmentation. If architecture is the visualization of an idea, which by virtue of its partiality enables it to be communicative, the simultaneous presence in the same space and time of opposed themes, i.e. of fragments that are not composed into a single whole, becomes the expression of a Babel of co-occurring codes. This is due to the fact that architecture as a language presupposes specialization, a drastic reduction of its semantic potential by emphasis on a single aspect. But this very choice in practice decrees its rapid obsolescence. Codes, by definition strongly specialized languages, afford less flexibility to change of context. To confirm his thesis, Ungers cites the projects for the Tiergarten Museum in Berlin (significantly the ideal context to emphasize the theme of fragmentation, at which Daniel Libeskind has recently tried his hand), the Stadtsparkasse in Berlin, the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne, the restructuring of the Frankfurt trade fair and the Berlin courthouse.

"The theme of incorporation, or *the doll inside the doll*", is the description of an approach that can be developed, according to Ungers, in two directions, formal and conceptual. The first approach entails the existence of compositional analogies
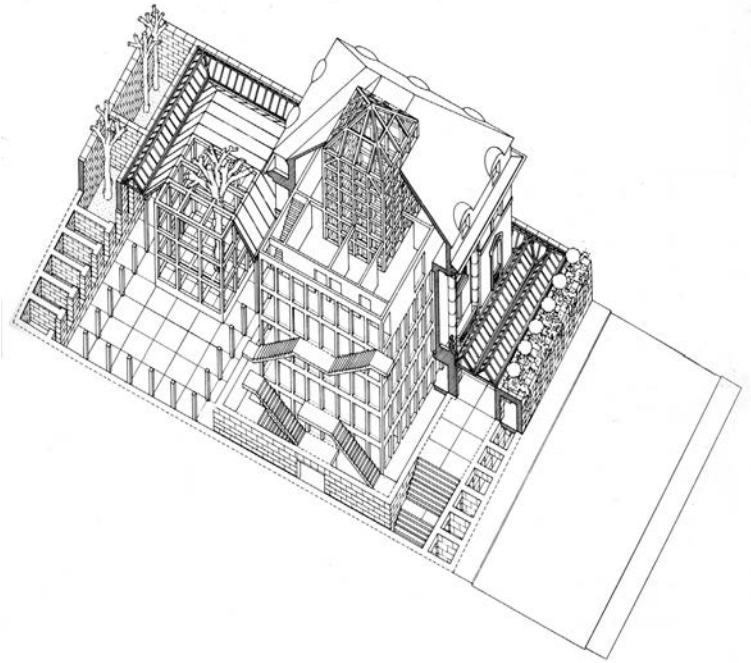
Fig. 3.
O.M.Ungers, Deutsches Architekturmuseum, Frankfurt am Main, 1978 (of Das Deutsche Architekturmuseum). Through the theme of "inclusion", interpreted as a rhetorical "figure of speech", architecture displays, and let it perceive, a narrative dealing with the reprogramming process of the existing complex building, a bourgeois urban villa dating back to the second half of the XIX century, to its grounding elementary premise, offered in the metaphorical shape of the primitive hut. If architecture becomes a discourse on itself, or a meta-language, its words explicitly refer to its underlying practice. Notwithstanding architecture cannot exceed the limitation of its system, intended as a *Langue*, because it remains circumscribed by its set of rules, according to Ungers it can at least elucidate its premises and foundation, ambiguously swinging in between the practical and the conceptual level.

between objects on different scales, which for this reason are comprised one within the other - like the relations that existed in the mediaeval city between the town wall and its contents, squares and inclusions, the city lot and the building within it – and have close points of contact with the idea of the "analogue city" already fully developed by Aldo Rossi. The second is with the existence of simple organisms, unicellular by nature, which remain incorporated in more complex spatial structures by a process of growth, as in the case of the ancient Greek temple in which the *naos*, the innermost cella accessible only to the priests, is the operative memory of the primitive form of the temple.

This theme is of particular interest because, in his various explanations, Ungers seems to be suggesting that in the processes of future transformation of the architectural object it is essential to recover the original matrix and begin again from this to find a new meaning in the work, suited to the changed contextual conditions. This hypothesis is confirmed by the projects for the Landstuhl Solarhaus, the Deutsche Architekturmuseum in Frankfurt **(Fig.3)** and a hotel in Berlin.

"The theme of assimilation or adaptation to the *genius loci*" was definitely the one most fully developed in the debate in the '70s, and is the most difficult one to define and systemize. In absolutely general terms it represents the idea that architecture, to be translated into a language, should draw its references unequivocally from the location in which it is set, and that the old and the new should therefore become reciprocally interdependent elements in the organization of existential space. So, the way the subject is interpreted not only varies from context to context, but should explicitly state this differentiation as its distinctive trait. With certain clear references to the concept of the "analogue city", but much more highly specified, adaptation to the context seems to allow for the citation of elements of local architecture, though they are embedded in an original system of relationships, which bears witnesses to the evolution of the times. Seemingly implicit in Ungers' arguments is the idea that architecture can be translated into language only if it recovers elements of the tradition by relating to them in keeping with rules of transformation. The significance of the innovation emerges from a comparison between what pre-exists the architecture and what is added within that interval. Innovation and tradition are therefore complementary. The context is therefore fundamental to any understanding of the significance of a work.

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From these considerations derives an important observation: in order to alter the existing state of things, architecture has to "comprehend", in the twofold etymological sense of the word, firstly as understanding through analysis and secondly as assimilation/inclusion through the operation of the project. The emphasis on syntax should not make us lose sight of the relationship with the existing structures, understood as a rich repertory of reciprocally interrelated forms. In that respect Ungers takes the distance from Rossi's search for an anonymous and universal language, putting the basis for understanding the unique specificity of the historical evidence of precise and definite historical languages[9].

Modern architecture therefore has to include traditional architecture within itself, if it is to supersede it with full awareness, in such a way that this superseding can be not just felt but also seen. Architecture is above all a language in images, or a metaphoric expression. Even though Ungers does not tackle the issue explicitly, it seems we can say that the idea of architecture as a language presupposes its being rooted in a context, and that every form of distancing, including a conceptual distancing, from this position, entails shifting the question to the criteria of the formation of languages, i.e. on a syntax and a vocabulary so general that it offers a level of abstraction which makes it an instrument applicable to different contexts. But it is necessary to remember that this level of generalization is not a language, but only a "generative grammar" which seeks to provide a rational explanation for the variety of languages, which is not negated by starting from a basis in rules that are common, since these are innate, hence not a product of culture. To confirm these hypotheses Ungers cites the project for a group of homes at Marburg, the project for the residential area on the Schillerstrasse in Berlin, that for the Badische Landesbibliothek in Karlsruhe, the project for the restructuring of the Hildesheim Marktplatz and the project for a building in the Braunschweig Schlosspark.

Ungers interprets "the theme of the imagination or *the world as representation*" in two different ways. The first is implicit in the general title of the text. It holds that we can talk about architecture as a language only if we decide to analyze it in accordance with an interpretation which will govern its transformation subsequently. The way we understand the world, and so build it, clearly depends on how we perceive it. The nature of the parameters or themes chosen is decisive in relation to the results eventually obtained. The second significance of the theme is that the language of architecture is language by images, a figurative language. In other words, there exists a rhetorical use of architecture, which is related to the use of "figures" analogous to the literary figures - metaphor, allegory, metonymy, hyperbole, etc. - which sometimes help to say what on a purely conceptual level (perhaps here we glimpse an attempt to move beyond the iconoclastic Structuralist positions of the '60s and '70s) it is impossible to convey in a specific historical period.

In this respect, some Enlightenment experiences clearly attempt to express new impulses, which were not possible to be conveyed in the language of the *Ancien Régime*. Among these "figures of speech", synecdoche (the part for the whole or the whole for the part) and metaphor have been the most widely used in the history of architecture. In particular synecdoche seems to offer the possibility of verifying the quality of a form which, through a condensation or rarefaction of the image, leads to a new expression not contained in the original. This reflection is present in the projects for a house at Berlin-Spandau, the construction on Welfare Island in New York and in the project for the Fachhochschule in Bremerhaven.

THE DELIRIOUS ARCHITECTURE AND THE HYBRID CITY OF REM KOOLHAAS

Although there has never been a clearly demonstrated relationship between *Deconstructivism* and the successful book *Delirious New York*, written by Rem Koolhaas and first published in 1978, in the writer's view it contains a series of extremely interesting critical reflections that exhaustively examine the post-modern condition with the additional merit of an essentially architectonic/town-planning perspective.

The author considers Manhattan Island to be the clearest expression of 20th Century town-planning culture, a collective work that he refers to as the "culture of congestion". Nevertheless, though he demonstrates an ability to systematically document the genesis and development of continuing practices that are analyzed with a comprehensive historico-critical approach, Koolhaas acknowledges that they lack supporting theory. In an age that seems to have firmly repudiated the avant-garde, which, since the start of this century has developed through the radical rethinks of the 1960s and early 1970s, the author's controversial intent is to propose a retroactive manifesto to justify a programme that is so at odds with the culture of modernity that, if its proposals were openly declared, it could never be implemented: In the author's words: "...This book is an interpretation of that Manhattan which gives its seemingly discontinuous - even irreconcilable - episodes a degree of consistency and coherence, an interpretation that intends to establish Manhattan as the product of an unformulated theory, *Manhattanism*, whose program - to exist in a world totally fabricated by man, i.e., to live inside fantasy-was so ambitious that to be realized, it could never be openly stated."[10]. Noting that choice of subject matter can determine the ultimate aim, the author justifies awareness of the theoretical project and his position regarding the risks and limitations of a more tested a posteriori critical and historical reconstruction.

Although the premises of this relatively unknown theory can be recognized in some technological innovations tested and presented at the Exhibition in Manhattan in 1853, such as the lift invented by Elisha Otis, Koolhaas states that we should not underestimate the role played by some archetypal structures, such as the tower and the sphere, which first appeared on occasion of this exhibition and took form in the *Latting Observato-*

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This also justifies Ungers's more explicit interest, in the description of city's transformative processes, about the role driven by agents of change.

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ry and the *Crystal Palace*, as well as the acclaimed grid-like infrastructure that had given plan and order to the island since 1811: "...The needle and the globe represent the two extremes of Manhattan's formal vocabulary and describe the outer limits of its architectural choices. The needle is the thinnest, least voluminous structure to mark a location within the Grid. It combines maximum physical impact with a negligible consumption of ground. It is, essentially, a building without an interior. The globe is, mathematically, the form that encloses the maximum interior volume with the least external skin. It has a promiscuous capacity to absorb objects, people, iconographies, symbolisms; it relates them through the mere fact of their coexistence in its interior. In many ways, the history of *Manhattanism* as a separate, identifiable architecture is a dialectic between these two forms, with the needle wanting to become a globe and the globe trying, from time to time, to turn into a needle - a cross-fertilization that results in a series of successful hybrids in which the needle's capacity for attracting attention and its territorial modesty are matched with the consummate receptivity of the sphere..."[11].

But the culture of congestion, which was to use technological innovation and the archetypes of the grid, the tower and the sphere to justify its own existence, historically finds its first major manifestations in Coney Island. To quote Koolhaas: "...Coney Island is the incubator for Manhattan's incipient themes and infant mythology. The strategies and mechanisms that later shape Manhattan are tested in the laboratory of Coney Island before they finally leap toward the larger island..."[12]. Although Coney Island, with its unspoiled natural beauty and relative inaccessibility, had represented an ideal place to shrug off the stresses of daily life since New York City's earliest days, during the city's rapid development into a metropolis between 1823 and 1860 the urge to escape became ever more pressing, and the growth of transport infrastructure between Manhattan and Coney Island - first the railway in 1865, followed by the opening of Brooklyn Bridge in 1883 - led to the island's beaches becoming the most crowded in the world, within easy and affordable reach of the proletarian masses. According to Koolhaas:"...This invasion finally invalidates whatever remains of the original formula for Coney Island's performance as a resort, the provision of Nature to the citizens of the Artificial. To survive as a resort - a place offering contrast - Co-

ney Island is forced to mutate: it must turn itself into the total opposite of Nature, it has no choice but to counteract the artificiality of the new metropolis with its own Super Natural. Instead of suspension of urban pressure, it offers intensification."[13]. Such a response translated into the realization of an endless series of amusements - Loop-the-Loop, the Roller Coaster, Shoot-the-Chutes, the Inexhaustible Cow, Electric Bathing - leading finally to the first amusement parks, such as Peter Tilyou's *Steeplechase*, where mechanical horses that anyone could easily control ran around an enclosed track; the *Lunar Park* of Frederic Thompson and Elmer Dundy, where visitors took a spectacular imaginary journey to the moon, ascending to 300 feet above the ground; and the mythical *Dreamland* of William H. Reynolds, the first true amusement park, organized in such a way as to resemble a coherent town plan. Koolhaas' interest in this entertainment project, in a scale greater than any previously seen, arose from the desire, coherently and gradually achieved, to provide experiences capable of satisfying dreams and the imagination and giving them greater solidity, far from the humdrum reality of daily life, through a calculated intensification strategy of spatio-temporal opportunities, beyond the offerings that could be experienced in the real city. The quest for the supernatural, in which Coney Island had deliberately placed its hopes of survival in the face of mass society and its secret rituals, thus took coherent form. Dreamland also represented the first amusement park devised for all social categories, overturning the previous logic of entertainment reserved for the proletarian masses. As Koolhaas recalls: "...Dreamland is located on the sea. Instead of the shapeless pond or would·be lagoon that is the center of Luna, Dreamland is planned around an actual inlet of the Atlantic, a genuine reservoir· of the Oceanic with its well-tested catalytic potential to trigger fantasies. Where luna insists on its otherworldliness by claiming an outrageous alien location, Dreamland relies on a more subliminal and plausible dissociation: its entrance porches are underneath gigantic plaster-of-paris ships under full sail, so that metaphorically the surface of the entire park is "underwater:' an Atlantis found before it has ever been lost..."[14]. By applying the same technologies that allowed Manhattan to become the world's most important metropolis and organizing [15] different thematic areas in a horseshoe pattern around a shoreline cove, Reynolds

managed to artificially reproduce an event space closely resembling the present post-modern condition, in which individual events take place in a totally unconnected way, with no past and an unpredictable future. Of the episodes that drew the most admiration and interest, we may recall *Lilliputia*, the miniature city, a faithful reconstruction of the Venice canals, a simulation of the Swiss landscape, the eruption of Vesuvius, and Fighting the Flames, a set that repeatedly simulated a fire in a city block and the consequent arrival of fire fighters who successfully extinguished it. Koolhaas comments:"...Ostensibly seeking to provide unlimited entertainment and pleasure, Tilyou, Thompson and Reynolds have in fact alienated a part of the earth's surface further from nature than architecture has ever succeeded in doing before, and turned it into a magic carpet that can: reproduce experience and fabricate almost any sensation; sustain any number of ritualistic performances that exorcise the apocalyptic penalties of the metropolitan condition (announced in the Bible and deeply ingrained since in the anti urban American sensibility); and survive the onslaught of over a million visitors a day. In less than a decade they have invented and established an urbanism based on the new *Technology of the Fantastic*: a permanent conspiracy against the realities of the external world. It defines completely new relationships between site, program, form and technology. The site has now become a miniature state: the program its Ideology; and architecture the arrangement of the technological apparatus that compensates for the loss of real physicality..."[15]. Despite the concern expressed by the defenders of well-meant town planning, i.e. the ideology of Modernity applied to urban form, who would have replaced the city of entertainment with a more decorous urban park, Coney Island has consolidated its success over time, becoming known for extraordinary construction initiatives of remarkable impact. In fact, an advertisement announcing the launch of the Globe Tower building project, the largest that the world had seen, appeared in a New York newspaper in 1906. To raise the vast sum required to finance the project, all New York residents were invited to invest in this adventure. This building attracted interest because of its many formal and programmatic features. The schematic sketch illustrating the Globe Tower's features showed that it represented a compromise between the archetypal structures of tower and sphere, which, as

10
Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, New York, The Monacelli Press, 1994, p.10.
11
Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, New York, The Monacelli Press, 1994, p.27.
12
Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, New York, The Monacelli Press, 1994, p.130.
13
Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, New York, The Monacelli Press, 1994, p.133.
14
Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, New York, The Monacelli Press, 1994, p.45.
15
Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, New York, The Monacelli Press, 1994, p.62.

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noted earlier, had made their first appearance at Manhattan in 1853 with the Latting Observatory and the Crystal Palace. Although in the Illuminist culture, the sphere had represented a secular alternative to the role of the cathedral, in this case it was stripped of any metaphorical adjectivation and, very pragmatically, reduced solely to its earning potential: "...It is the American genius of Samuel Friede, Inventor of the Globe Tower, to exploit the Platonic solid in a series of strictly pragmatic steps. For him the globe, ruthlessly subdivided into floors, is simply a source of unlimited square footage. The larger it is, the more immense these interior planes; since the Globe itself will need only a Single, negligible point of contact with the earth, the smallest possible site will support the largest reclaimable territory. As revealed to investors, the tower's blueprints show a gigantic steel planet that has crashed onto a replica of the Eiffel Tower, the whole "designed to be 700 feet high, the largest building In the world with enormous elevators carrying visitors to the different floors..."[16]. As planned, the tower was to occupy a small corner of Steeplechase, rented by Tilyou to Friede, and would contain Steeplechase, Luna Park and Dreamland enclosed within a single volume, each situated autonomously on its own floor. With a total floor space 5000 times greater than its actual footprint, the Globe Tower was an explicit example of the skyscraper's potential to admit other worlds. A single planning exercise, providing an elementary plastic/volumetric solution, made it possible to restore the appropriately condensed and intensified complexity that the experience of an extensive area offered. By resorting to the artifice of construction, it was possible to concentrate the meaning of an entire conversation in a single word. A new era of architecture and town planning opened up with little sign, as yet, of any full and conscious awareness. Although this initiative turned out to be fraudulent, with even the foundations never being completed, once Dreamland was destroyed by fire in 1916 the experience gained in creating the first city of entertainment was to prove essential to understanding the developments that had been under way in Manhattan since the turn of the century. If the experimental and extravagant "Technology of the Fantastic" defines the unconscious premise of a possible new urban era, further developments of the "Culture of Congestion"
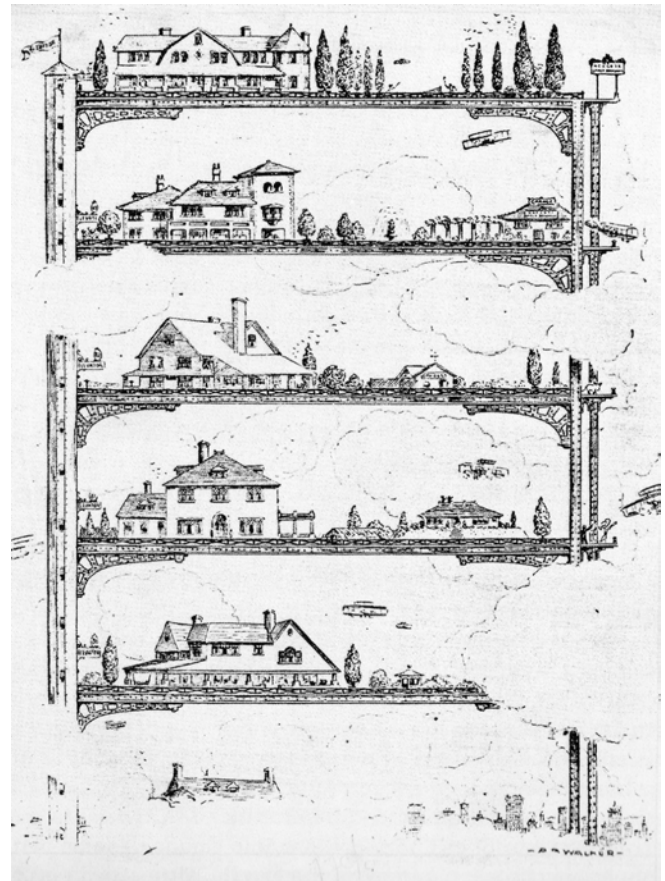

Fig. 4.
Life, advertise of the Skyscraper, 1909. The skyscraper identifies the City with its Architecture, dooming Planning to ratify *ex-post* an already manifested legitimating process of an entrepreneurship emerging through a continuous process of experimentation. In such a way practice envisions unprecedented social, economical, technical and also political possibilities, thus becoming *ex-ante* a theory by itself, then transformed into a "retroactive manifesto". Architecture is not simply a representation of new driving forces, claiming a role in the society, through a great Gesture, but, even more, its operational institutionalization.

leading to the skyscraper were linked to the convergence of three factors: the possibility of reproducing the world artificially, assimilation of the archetype of the tower, and the triumph of the city block, in other words, identification with Manhattan's infrastructure grid model, to encompass it within a new architectural entrepreneurship. Each of these aspects played an essential role, naturally taking account of the contribution of technological innovation, which made it possible to exploit to the maximum the potential of buildings of predominantly vertical development: "…In the era of the staircase all floors above the second were considered unfit for commercial purposes, and all those above the fifth, uninhabitable. Since the 1870s in Manhattan, the elevator has been the great emancipator of all horizontal surfaces above the ground floor. Otis' apparatus recovers the uncounted planes that have been floating in the thin air of speculation and reveals their superiority in a metropolitan paradox: the greater the distance from the earth, the closer the communication with what remains of nature (i.e" light and air). The elevator is the ultimate self-fulfilling prophecy: the further It goes up, the more undesirable the circumstances it leaves behind…"[17]. It was also clear that the lift, through synergy with the steel load-bearing structure, could almost indefinitely repeat the space corresponding to the reference parcel. This perspective is clearly outlined in a 1909 comic strip, in which the potential performances of the skyscraper are clearly identified **(Fig.4)**. A steel framework supports 84 floors, each of which retains the dimensions of the original plot. Each floor contains accommodation that differs in style and social aspiration with no interference whatsoever from adjoining floors. There is clear paradox in the idea of a single building whose life is in reality fragmented into a countless series of incompatible episodes while the steel structure guarantees a minimum of unity without interfering with the intended use of the individual buildings it houses. The latter can be continually updated without the need for any work on the structural framework. The town planning consequences of such potentialities are immediately underlined by Koolhaas: "…In terms of urbanism, this indeterminacy means that a particular site can no longer be matched with any single predetermined purpose. From now on each metropolitan lot accommodates - in theory at least an unforeseeable and unstable combination of simultaneous activities, which makes architec-

ture less an act of foresight than before and planning an act of only limited prediction…"[18]. The skyscraper became a factor in the promotion of a new approach to urban planning. The technology of the fantastic employed in Manhattan was then translated into a technology of pragmatism at the service of property investors to be immediately exploited through a sheer act of Architecture, weakening Planning as a discipline and dooming it to play an edge role for the time being.

16
Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious*
*New York***, New York, The**
Monacelli Press, 1994, p.71.
17
Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious*
*New York***, New York, The**
Monacelli Press, 1994, p.82.
18
Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious*
*New York***, New York, The**
Monacelli Press, 1994, p.85.

CONCLUSION

In Aldo Rossi's thinking, it seems to be evident how urban transformation becomes a simple pretext to define the "form" (from the old Greek ì , eidos) as the grounding principle of the city and its architecture. The so-called "primary elements" are trans-scalar configurations, or logical principles, that preserve their inner stability independently from any "urban fact", change or programmatic substitution which have become all-encompassing universal aspects affecting human behavior. However, the evidence of "primary elements" results from 'real' traces of architectural "reprogramming", due to the falling into decay of the so-called "urban facts", being consequently doomed to abandonment. This disinterest for the subjective responsibility of the entire process is a quite contradicting aspect. Furthermore, the author neither questioned the possibility of having architecture and the city, nor doubts the intentionality underlying its process of recycling. In such a way, Rossi implicitly assumes the existence of any "form/type" as a "metaphysical entity", assimilated to something that is already given, independently from the existence of the subject. Thus, this becomes the ambiguous "environment", derived from De Saussure's definition of an all-encompassing *Langue*, into whose horizon the possibilities to act of the subject are already somehow "inscribed" and of which, even more, the "artifacts/morphologies" are simple interpretations[19]. Form, therefore, becomes independent from any transient aspect regarding the urban phenomenon, whether it is material or functional. In that perspective, it replaces the role Planning was claiming through its zoning principles and the myth of functionalism, intended as the unavoidable premise of Modernists' architectural strategy. Paradoxically, the subject, or the "agent of change" seems to be alienated from a supposedly universal set of rules which is preexisting, intended as a rational "natural equipment" to operate with, not being responsible at all of its coming into existence.

On an apparently similar horizon, Ungers focuses on the "life of form", investigating its dynamics through space and time. However, we would not give justice to his position if not considering the emphasis put on the identification between "form" and the level of representation. In that perspective, architecture intentionally becomes a rhetorical exercise, which is clearly allusive to something else, happening prior to the existence of a proper language, and the so-called themes act as its "figures of speech". This statement seems therefore a major achievement with respect to the ambiguity prompted by Aldo Rossi, where form tends to identify with nature, paying a direct homage to the culture of the Enlightenment and, even more, to Platonism. In fact, on a closer watch at the character of the selected "themes", forms play with practice, as well concepts seem to derive from a related experience, more implicitly focusing on drivers of change. If architecture is therefore intentionally intended as a "discourse" on something built, in Ungers' terms that "something" refers to the birth of the language as such, whose truth seems to be buried in the etymology of the used words/figures. In both cases, however, the prejudicial search for an enduring rationality, is inherent to form itself. It is not questioned at all, nor leaving space for any critical discussion about the valuable role of conventionality in design and its intentionality, but simply transferred from the Planning activity to the architectural one, always affected by an "object oriented" perspective. Furthermore, Ungers seems to be more interested on "what architecture should tell" then about "what architecture tells", overemphasizing its meta-narrative quality.

In Rem Koolhaas' position, paradoxically, Coney Island represents the "real" field of endless exploration of possibilities that are inhibited in the "fictional" Manhattan by the prejudicial overwhelming control of the Grid and its *zoning* principles. In that respect, the former manifests the "urban unconsciousness" which doesn't inhabit anymore the latter's abstract rationality. To let experimentation to take command again in the New York Island, it is necessary to hide the promoter's real intentions. "Lobotomy" is therefore the strategic "Troian Horse", instrumental to graft back life into the hollow body of the existing city, not being explicit about his intentions.

In such a way life is expected to progressively consume form within the fictional representation of New York, substituting its role through a deliberately "delirious" architecture, constantly exceeding its preconceived role and limitations, ultimately becoming a city in itself. Life and Form are, therefore, contradicting but complementary aspects of the same urban phenomenon. According to Rem Koolhaas, Form emerges as the temporary ideal state of the endless becoming of urban life, which is always unpredictable in its appearance, while stability is the self-reflective re-

sult of the programmatic instability of any experienced phenomenon **(Fig.5)**. *Manhattanism* becomes the way through which the disappearance of the "processual quality" of life, because of Modernity, is therefore finally avenged, resulting the grounding principle of Form itself. In that respect, we can assume that Rem Koolhaas' thinking is clearly a "process driven" perspective of investigation of the city. As such, it can still be used nowadays as a promising device to critically intervene within existing material conditions, as it had been happening before. It supports the traditional local "common rationality", socially instituted, which later has been confronted with the "universal rationality", "naturally instituted" by the modern criticism on the bourgeoisie society and embodied by the Plan.

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Aldo Rossi, by stressing the importance of the autonomy of architecture in the definition of the city's form, tended to underestimate the role played by the drivers of change, somehow leaving it apparently implicit. We do consider that, by emphasizing the latter aspect, it would improve the consistency of Rossi's approach, casting on it a new light.
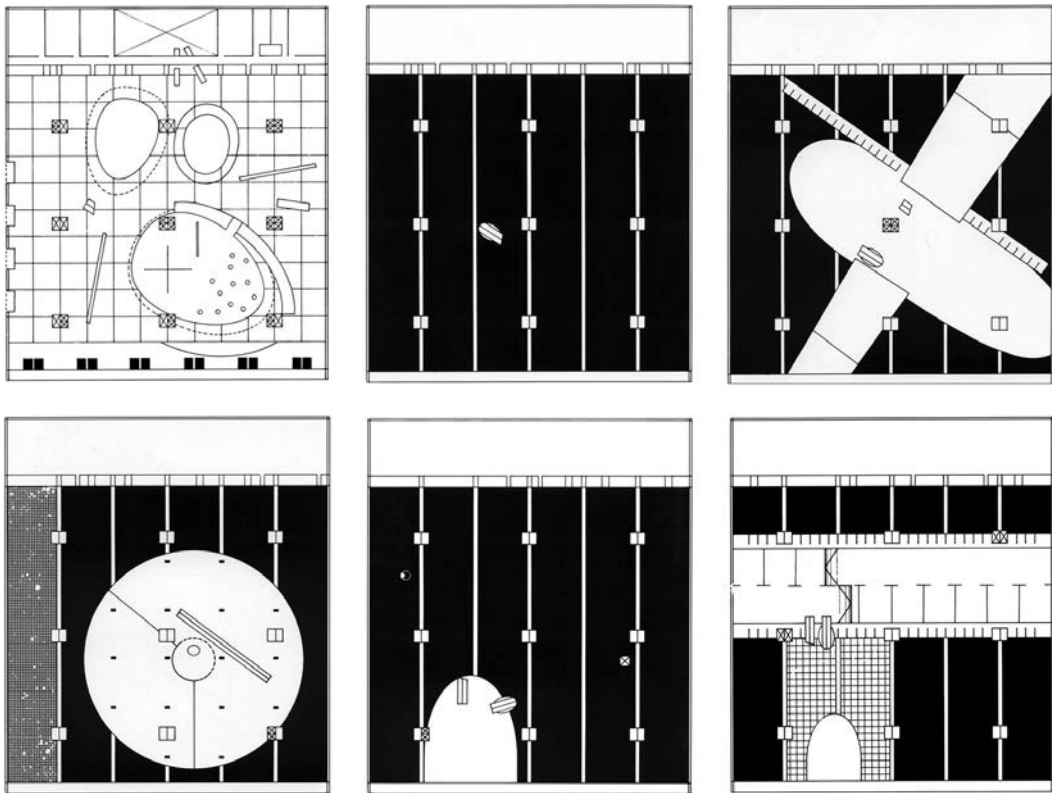
Fig. 5.
OMA/ Rem Koolhaas, competition for the Très Grande Bibliothèque, Paris, 1989. Sequence of plans. Through *Bigness* all scales, or relational level of complexity, blur into an intentional state of indeterminacy, where fragments of an ideal "bubble diagram", operational metaphor of a Functionalism reduced to a "landscape of ruins", are glued together through the sheer repetition of floors and walls. The reference to the Córdoba's Mosque is evident, but turned inside out. In fact there, the Islamic space for worship is polarized and re-oriented by the construction of a Christian Cathedral, and then transformed into its sheltered "sacratum" or churchyard. Christian supremacy is established by subverting the existing and not by removing it. Here, the intentionally isolated parts are framed into an ever-changing tridimensional isotropic system, with respect to which they potentially tend to become floating islands.

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