

Inhabiting leftovers — Architectural incursions in negative space

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ABSTRACT

The question of the cultural and physical articulation of interior and exterior is far from recent. If modern Western philosophy had identified time with interiority and the spirit, leaving space in a secondary position as the realm of mutability and imperfection, almost two hundred years later this dichotomy continues to evolve. Still, as Sloterdijk recalls, we are immersed in the 'World Interior of Capital', which emerges as a hypertrophic system of immunity against the erratic and unreliable exterior.

With regard to architecture, this division between interior and exterior has run parallel to the relation between public and private, city and home, façade and interior architecture. However during and after the so-called spatial turn, architecture as a discipline has experienced how one of its main and almost exclusive instruments has become a transversal element shared and studied from diverse fields and perspectives. Thus, a worth exploring theoretical gap is open within the critical relation between space and architecture, and more specifically within the cultural and spatial readings of the inside and the outside.

This research paper aims at exploring the contemporary understanding of the leftover, which forms the counterpart to hegemonic spatiality, in order to suggest a transfer from the formal dichotomy interior/exterior to a multidimensional comprehension of space, following the philosophical notion of negativity. This contemporary fascination with leftovers is manifest in the work of several authors and artists, such as Slavoj Žižek's interest in Gould and Lewontin's 'spandrels', the Chapuisat Brothers' Intra Muros, or Gregor Schneider's Haus u r. However, these reflections also appeared almost forty years ago when the architect Steven Peterson coined the term 'negative space' to designate the hybrid realm in between geometrical constraints and the neutral transparency of modern space. This unmapped, but suggestive lineage suggest a transfer from the formal dichotomy interior/exterior to a multidimensional comprehension of space.

INTRODUCTION

'Noli foras ire, in te ipsum redi, in interiore homine habitat veritas.' ['Do not go outwards, return into yourself. Truth lives in the inner man.'] (Augustine of Hippo, *De Vera Religione*, §39, 37)

During a lecture at the UIC School of Architecture in Chicago in 2014,¹ the architect and writer Emmanuel Petit explored the transition between different spatial (political) models throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Petit argues that the expansive, scientific, revolutionary space of the grid that characterized the first part of the twentieth century was succeeded by the post-modern, evolutionary space of the labyrinth, with no interior or exterior, embodying values of democracy and freedom. However, he notices that, today, the dominant spatial metaphor is oriented towards the interior by means of centripetal spaces and atmospheres such as loops, orbits or spirals, as a reversal of the former models. To illustrate such an argument, the lecturer connected a series of images of contemporary constructions (museums, headquarters, public buildings, art installations...) that follow these formal involute patterns in which space gravitates attracted by an internal core. Since Petit suggests that this shift in the spatial paradigm is related to the influence and proliferation of global media environments, it seems that we are returning to the idea of a privileged interior (condensed in this kind of 'spatial terminals') that resists against the extensive and mutable exterior realm of the city.

The way space is conceived and thought today has significantly evolved throughout history, influenced by socio-political and cultural factors, among others. However, the question of the cultural and physical articulation of interior and exterior is far from recent. The Cartesian division between *res extensa* and *res cogitans* already established the differentiation of two independent realms. The first is abstract, exterior and separated from sensible reality. The second is subjective and belongs to the inner dimension of mind, through which knowledge and thought are possible, according to Descartes. The philosopher José Luis Pardo ² notes how these dimensions would be later

associated to space and time respectively, and how the privileged realm of the subjective interior—related to the subject who thinks—would gradually be identified as 'time,' following a line of thought from Kant to Heidegger going through Hegel, Husserl, Dilthey and Bergson. Augustine had already advanced the idea of the rational Self, who can only grasp the truth from within. As a consequence, the outside would remain as the realm of mutability and imperfection for centuries. For a substantial part of Western thought, space has been broadly identified with this exterior, that is measurable and graspable only through inner reason, which would be the only certainty the modern subject could trust. This division became even more radical with Hegel and his *Philosophy of Nature*,³ in which space is presented as the primitive, least developed appearance of nature that eventually becomes time through motion and thus is liberated from its 'paralysis' and indifference.⁴

In this regard, the beginning of what Pardo would call a 'prosecution against space'⁵ on behalf of metaphysical philosophy could be situated at this point. This is because of metaphysics' ascetic ideals—against which Nietzsche would famously rebel—that privilege spirit as pure interiority, so space could only remain in a secondary position.⁶ Thus, it is not surprising that the approximation of Hegel to space is mainly geometrical (space, unlike time, has its own science, geometry), recovering some aspects already observed in ancient Greece, and of course by Descartes and Kant. Space is conceived as pure extension that finds its negation in the point, concrete and determinate.⁷ In fact, as Emmánuel Lizcano notes,⁸ certain schools of thought—Greeks, Romans, Arabs, and others—had already posited geometry as a system 'against space,' that is, to control and measure it with delimited surfaces that could avoid a complete dissolution.

Almost two hundred years later, and after several major transformations of the architectural discipline, this dichotomy continues to evolve, parallel to the notion of space, but also to the relation between public and private, city and home, façade and interior architecture. However, at a moment when binary, dialectical oppositions have lost their strength in favor of relationality and complexity, there are still connections that

remain unexplored, 'residues' of these dualities that, although questioned, are present in our daily life and, specifically, in architectural practice. This paper is an attempt to explore the spatial dichotomy between interior and exterior, as well as its contradictions, in order to open a theoretical gap that may be fruitful for architectural thought in a time of crisis.

Responding to these arguments, the text is articulated in different sections. The first one addresses space itself and its evolution in modern and contemporary dominant Western thought. The second section explores its counterpart, anti-space, as a byproduct of this all-pervasive, neutral conception of space. The third one proposes the notion of negative space as a kind of third term in between space and anti-space in order to expand and qualify the gap opened by dichotomic spatial perception. Finally, the last section goes through a series of examples from the artistic and architectural realms. By means of spatial interpretation, the contemporary understanding of the spatial leftover is explored as the negative counterpart to hegemonic spatiality. These readings suggest a transfer from the formal dichotomy interior/exterior to a multidimensional comprehension of space.

SPACE

The aforementioned oppositional conception of space would have a remarkable influence in the theory and practice of architecture, understood as the discipline of control, limitation and framing of spaces graphically represented by sequences of fills and voids. In *Architecture*, the specific section within Hegel's lectures on Fine Art, the philosopher presents the evolution of a discipline that he considers to be at the origin of art because it 'has not found for the presentation of its spiritual content either the adequate material or the corresponding forms.'⁹ This situates architecture as the most imperfect art, contrary to speech and poetry that emanate from the spirit (from the inside) without material or external constraints. Nevertheless, Hegel recognizes an architecture that has evolved throughout history from elementary forms—or symbolic architecture, present in ancient Eastern civilizations—to more sophisticated stages, that is, classical and romantic architecture, from Greece and Rome to European Christendom.¹⁰ Thus, according to him, architectural elements evolved progressively into more advanced and rational forms, harmonizing both purpose and beauty. Hegel posits the Christian gothic temple as the best example of this elevated form of architecture—romantic architecture—where utilitarian limitations are exceeded by a fixed and eternal character that transcends any kind of purpose. Contrary to the open Greek temples, the inwardness of the gothic church responds to the interiority of the Christian spirit, that turns itself towards the interior of the human soul away from external and mundane circumstances.¹¹ Once again, interiority and enclosure prevail over exteriority, which does not possess an absolute truth or ultimate value.¹²

While the notion of space had largely been limited to the realm of geometry, the extraordinary advance in sciences, especially from the sixteenth century onwards, heavily influenced the

perspectives of spatial knowledge; the impulse of natural sciences and the process of spatial 'desacralization' started by Galileo¹³ initiated an extensive, open conception of space that would progressively become prevalent in all fields, although still subsumed to time. The European colonization of unknown territories in America also contributed to expand the image of the Earth and, consequently, a transformation of the conception of it as a spatial entity. Besides, once architecture enters the modern political discourse—roughly at the end of the eighteenth century, in the wake of the French Revolution, as suggested by authors like Tafuri,¹⁴ Wallenstein¹⁵ or Lahiji,¹⁶—space is no longer regarded as a passive, indifferent milieu. Rather, it starts to be conceived as an active element that can be—intentionally or subconsciously—transformed, arranged and manipulated, not only to produce sensations and meanings, but also to embody the socio-political project of modernist architecture during the first decades of the twentieth century towards an egalitarian, progressive society.

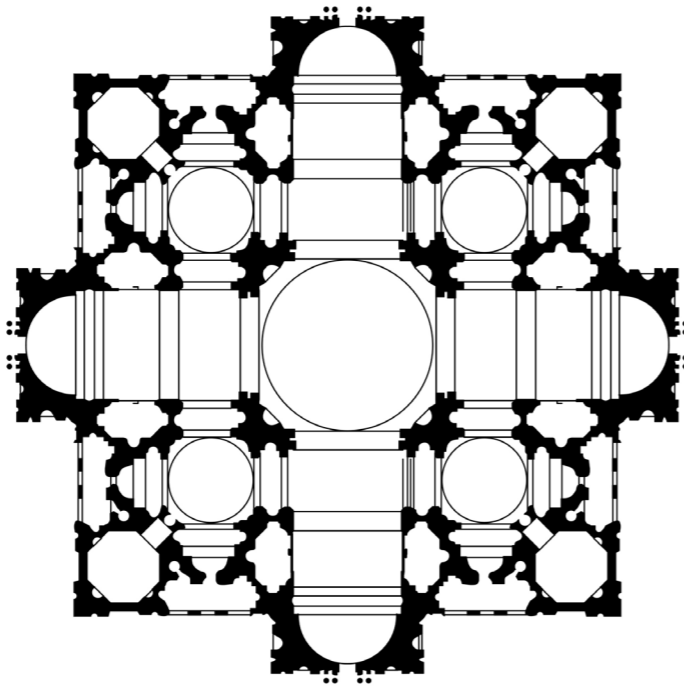
Modernity could be understood through the process of subordination of space to time under a dominant narrative of progress. However, the modern project started to show severe symptoms of exhaustion during the second half of the past century, and thus the linear and progressive conception of time was called into question. The somehow interrupted 'desacralization' of space was taken up from diverse perspectives under the more or less diffuse sign of postmodernism. On the one hand, from the field of political geography and inspired by a neo-Marxist approach, authors such as Henri Lefebvre (one of the central figures of this period), Edward Soja, David Harvey, or Doreen Massey, took space as an articulating element to explain the world and social processes. On the other, the strong influence of Jacques Derrida or Michel Foucault in the following generations of philosophers and thinkers contributed to the return of space as a principal subject of study, which largely exceeds the constraints of construction and geometry.

During and after this spatial turn, architecture as a discipline has experienced how one of its main and almost exclusive instruments has become a transversal, recurrent element in contemporary thought shared and studied from diverse fields and perspectives. This fact seems to imply a progressive 'loss' of primacy of architecture over it and, in this regard, architecture remains decentered, apparently having lost one of its constitutive elements. The question is whether it is still worth going back to the notion of space, once architects have lost their privilege over it.¹⁷ In fact, there is a wide diversity of positions concerning this issue. For instance, Rem Koolhaas¹⁸ coined the term *junkspace* in 2002 to qualify the excessive, all-pervasive remnant of modern space that spreads across the cities, *mallifying* them by means of fake experiences and simulacra in a time of consumption and homogeneity. Six years later, Alejandro Zaera-Polo¹⁹ explored the potential of the envelope and its capacity for separating and regulating spaces as means for political expression, always embedded within the physical dimension of building; a membrane-like architecture inspired by Sloterdijk's *Sphären*. Like Petit's loops, all these impressions of contemporary space and architecture offer a general prospect of a field dominated by spectacular, performing thresholds that encapsulate immersive interiors, isolated from what remains outside.

ANTI-SPACE

It has already been proposed that the contemporary, global notion of space is broadly influenced by the neutral, abstract and omnipresent space that science and colonization processes generalized before and during the Enlightenment. This notion was largely embraced by modern architects during the first decades of the twentieth century. Precisely, this extensive space, whose byproducts and excesses concern some architectural theoreticians and practitioners today, was already noticed during the years of decadence of the modern project and the rise of postmodernism as a new paradigm. This is what Steven Kent Peterson argues in 'Space and Anti-space,'²⁰ a seminal contribution to the issue of spatiality, written at the beginning of the eighties, in the wake of the so-called 'spatial turn.'

Influenced by Colin Rowe and his contextualist critique of Modernism, Peterson addresses the qualification of space in architecture and urbanism before and during the period of the Modern Movement. The modern project, following values of fluidity, openness and democracy, would liberate space from geometrical constraints to give way to what Peterson calls 'anti-space.' This reversed space is continuous, dynamic, flowing, uniform, and unformed, and according to the author, may have 'disastrous' effects, as it would lead to pure fragmentation and relativism under a promise of freedom and a new order. As matter and anti-matter—the scientific analogy from which Peterson's argument stems—space and anti-space are antithetical. While both are possible, they cannot coexist: 'Any coincident meeting of the two worlds will cause their mutual obliteration.'²¹ Indeed, scientific knowledge was, and still is, an essential source of our perception of space.²² Quantum mechanics, relativity, non-Euclidean geometry and many other branches of science enhance the dominance of anti-space as a continuum—an extensive, infinite realm that pervades everything. This influence was very evident during the inter-war period and the rise of the artistic avant-gardes. However, this generalized vision would change during the last decades of the twentieth century, when the spatial turn in social sciences and the crisis of modern urbanism transformed the conception of space and the ways of exploring it.



Since Peterson presents the connections and gaps between a formal or volumetric sense of space and the neutral, open fluidity of anti-space, he advocates the creation of intentionally formed geometric space as the essential medium for any architectural and urban form. Thus, he proposes a way in which space and anti-space can be articulated by recovering the concept of 'habitable *poché*,'—which he names 'negative space,' the 'void in-between' spaces,²³ in an almost dialectical manner.²⁴ The author detects the use of this space in architecture in several sixteenth and seventeenth century Roman buildings, such as Bramante's plan for St. Peter, St. Agnese on the Piazza Navona, or the Palazzo Barberini, but especially in the works of John Soane, in which 'volumetric space can exist next to anti-space, separated by the thickness and independent surfaces of negative space.'²⁵ It is remarkable that most of the illustrations that appear in Peterson's 'Space and Anti-space' are building plans drawn with the black

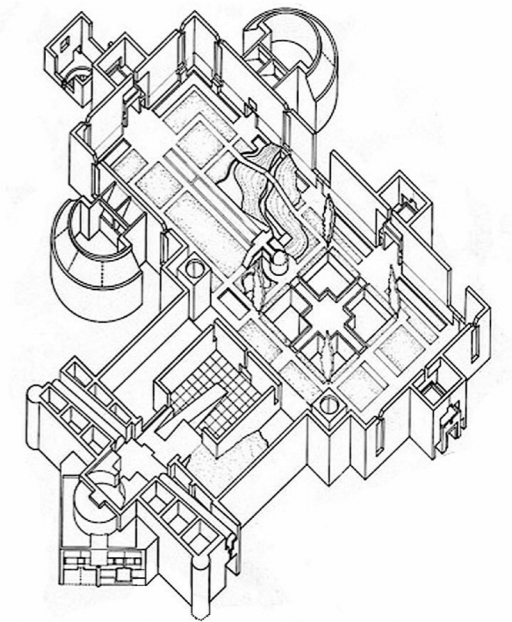
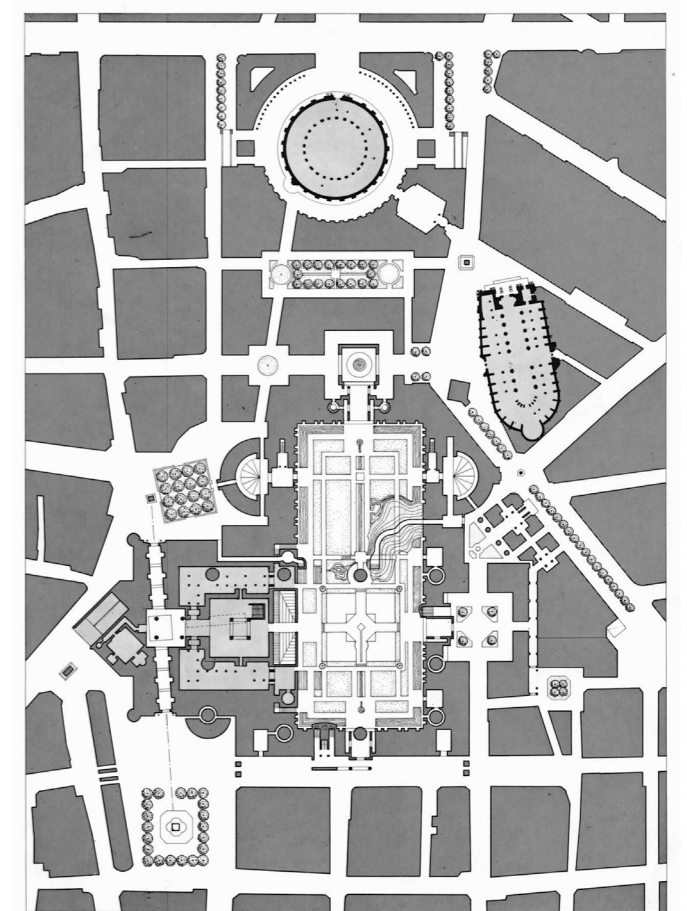
and white 'fills-and-voids' method. Drawing techniques have been essential for architectural activity, and in this regard, the use of *pochés* used to be determinant in architectural compositions, in which 'full' and 'empty' spaces were separated. Obliterated during the first decades of the twentieth century, interest in this technique was recovered by scholars such as Colin Rowe, Alan Colquhoun,²⁶ or Robert Venturi, who would use the term, distinguishing between open and closed *pochés*, giving it a more 'spatial' meaning.²⁷

Even before writing his article, it seems that Peterson had already explored these notions in his own projects, since similar issues and concerns appear on them. The clearest example is the proposal he presented together with Barbara Littenberg and David Cohn for the international competition for the transformation of Les Halles in Paris that took place in 1979. The reversal of the traditional walled town situates the most active elements outside, embedded in a 'public wall'²⁸ that works as a precinct of the inner free, green space. The complex, articulated by a series of gates—not buildings or façades—reinforces the idea of partition and conscious division between interior and exterior; working on the urban *poché* and, at the same time, materializing a critique of modernist undifferentiated space.

EXPLORING THE NEGATIVE

The contemporary notion of space seems to be far from radical dualities and either/ors, as it is more a hybrid concept which does not respond to such antagonisms: we are inhabiting a relational, hyper-connected space where the encapsulated interior and the entropic exterior are relative, to the point that Koolhaas' junkspace—a sort of anti-spatial space—has become our ordinary milieu. Thus, an architecture that aims at recovering its sense of space is confronting a new, much more complex scenario than that after the failure of the modern project.

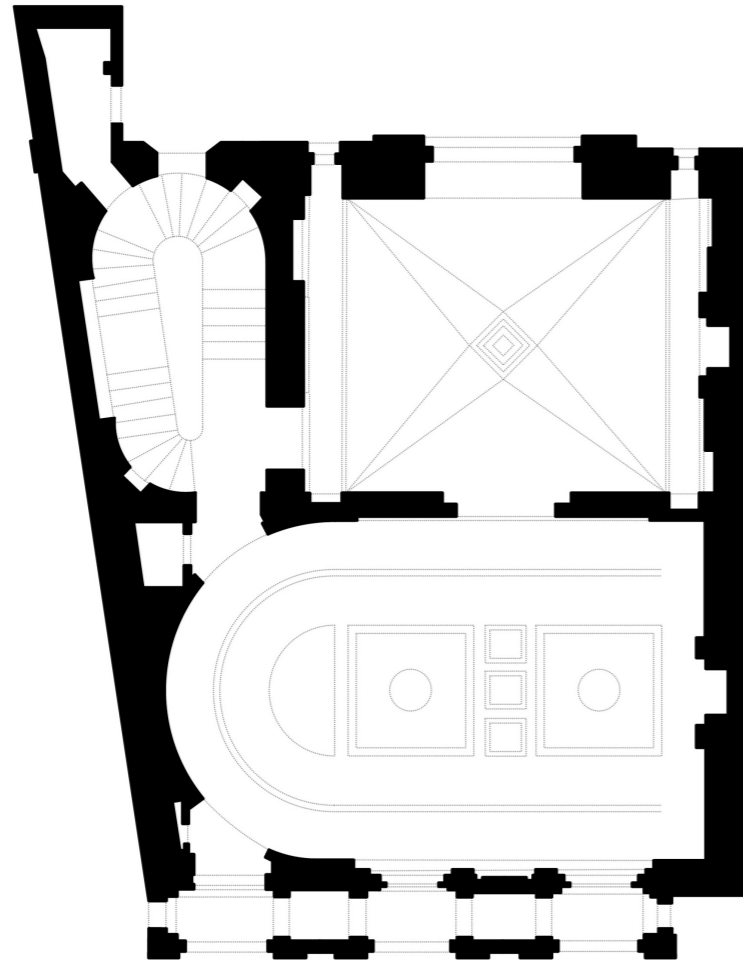
Nonetheless, Peterson's text still offers evocative images that certainly open new paths to rethinking the relation between architecture and space. It is again in the work of Soane where he detects a specific kind of space that acts as the counterpart



Opposite
Figure 1: St. Peter's Basilica plan (project). Donato Bramante, 1506, Rome. Source: Wikimedia Commons. Drawing by the user Malyszcz from an illustration of Léon Palustre, L'Architecture de la Renaissance, 1892.

Above top
Figure 2: Proposed site plan for Les Halles competition in Paris. Steven Kent Peterson, Barbara Littenberg and David Cohn, 1979. Courtesy of the authors.

Above bottom
Figure 3: Proposed site plan for Les Halles competition in Paris. Steven Kent Peterson, Barbara Littenberg and David Cohn, 1979. Courtesy of the authors.



of the geometrical, contoured space of architecture. This negative space (or derivative space, as he called it recently)²⁹ is 'the specific design of a physical solid to solely serve the formation of space, both inside and outside itself. It is a condition of multiple appearances, looking solid and being empty.'³⁰ In such manner, John Soane's appropriation of the space within the wall of the drawing room of his house represents a clear example of this tactic. This 'condition of appearance' renders negative space extraordinarily contemporary, since it brings together the real and the possible.

However, when we explore beyond the formal dimension, it is difficult, not to say impossible, to grasp a singular, unequivocal definition of the negative, since we immediately enter the philosophical domain. Many authors and thinkers have used the term in very particular contexts and fields, without necessarily taking into account the contributions of others. In fact, negativity has been broadly considered a vague, indeterminate issue. As Diana Coole asserts,³¹ some understand that it would be impossible to name it without destroying it; that is, rendering it positive. Moreover, there is no univocal meaning of negativity, since it has been given multiple connotations, such as

'dialectics, non-identity, difference, *différance*, the invisible, the semiotic, the virtual, the unconscious, will to power, the feminine.'³² How to operate spatially within such a heterogeneous realm, which is moreover associated with the irrational, with the unexpected, with that which is not? And, besides, how may a concept derived from metaphysics be of interest for contemporary architecture and spatial practice?

Thus, it is necessary to briefly outline the philosophical origins of negativity, its relation to space and how it is transferred to the realm of (social) relations, in which urban and architectural space plays a specific role. The works of Diana Coole, Benjamin Noys,³³ Gail Day,³⁴ or Artemy Magun,³⁵ among other authors, offer powerful insights into the question of the negative from different perspectives. Once we have surpassed the Hegelian, purely dialectical conception of negativity, it may be more accurate to talk of a force that opens a wider space to alternative possibilities of being, not only focusing on 'gaps and disjunctures,' but also on 'the negative magnitudes of imagination,'³⁶ which unveil the possible hidden behind a hegemonic reality. In any case, a dichotomic understanding of the negative seems reductionist, and would not allow an accurate comprehension of its potential. The negative is a working force which organizes and unsettles at the same time; it is a foundation as well as a revulsive, as the anthropologist Manuel Delgado reflects in his 'non-city,'³⁷ or as John Keats proposes in his concept of negative capability: 'when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.'³⁸ Thus, the negative is understood as a strong transformative power. This is particularly appealing in a world where ways of life are hyper-positivized and transparent, in the sense described by Byung-Chul Han: a transparent society in which nothing remains hidden, everything glows and manifests itself flattened and equal under the influence of the seductive forces of power.³⁹ In this context, it seems difficult, but necessary, to claim the negative (the dark, the hidden, the imaginary...) as a critical space for difference and creation.

The notion of an *other* space, a space or spaces facing and reversing canonical spatiality, is always latent beneath the layers of Western cultures and societies: from Dante's *Inferno*—which Peter Sloterdijk sees as the ultimate anti-sphere—⁴⁰ to Tafuri's reading of Mies's architecture as a negative utopia; from Schmitt's spaceless universalism to the occupations of urban spaces in 2011, or from counterspatial projective geometry to counterfactual logic. These projects, images and narratives raise an awareness of the meaning of 'going (or spacing) against something.' Architecture has not escaped this subject either, especially after the construction of a political (modern) project within the discipline. In more recent times, the use of negative terms has become more or less frequent in the architectural discourse, in order to give space to what is not real and to counter the forces of the status quo.⁴¹ In this regard, it is symptomatic of this trend that in 2012, in the 5th International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam, a series of 'countersites' were selected in order to show alternative ways of thinking urban politics, planning and design with relation to the public agenda. At the same time, Paola Viganò studies 'the Reverse City'⁴² as a proposal for the contemporary European urban project, that emerges by inverting and breaking traditional codes within the context of urban fragmentation, in order to go beyond this logic. Always talking

Opposite

Figure 4: Plan of Sir John Soane's House in 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields (detail of the 1st floor, drawing and sitting rooms). Drawing by the author.

from the perspective of the city-territory, Viganò proposes an experimental scenario,

a sphere in which to investigate new spaces such as under-utilized industrial areas which can become equipped platforms crossed by concentrations of nature to serve the creation of new businesses; streets which become narrative itineraries, dense spatial stories not only of the past but of present relations.⁴³

The redefinition of urban 'solids' and 'voids' in the Reverse City responds to the necessity of thinking new models of city and territory for Europe, where diversity and mixture are possible, leaving behind hyper-specialized, mono-functional structures gathering along highways—the model exported from the United States to the rest of the world. Viganò acknowledges that Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* has played an essential role in defining capitalist spatial logic, which tends to segregation and the elimination of difference. This is the main reason why we shall return to the work of the French sociologist and philosopher, who coined the expression 'counterspace' to name the spaces opposing the abstract space of capitalism. Facing a privileged social-spatial reality, counterspaces remain as possible—even impossible—alternatives, even though they may just be a pulsion, an improbable world generated by discontent or the will to transform an abstract space generated through violence and war, imposed by the states, and mainly geometric and visual. Although Lefebvre would not define counterspace explicitly, the term appears several times in his work, either related to everyday life or to the extraordinary. It is, above all, a different space: it can certainly be a 'utopian alternative,'⁴⁴ but it is also related to specific spaces of contestation.⁴⁵

On the one hand, the critical dimension of the counterspace is clear. On the other, however, a counterspace cannot be separated from its reverse: space and counterspace are doomed to coexistence. This explains the fact that, on many occasions, counterspatial strategies require a (homeopathic) dose of the space they are countering. At this point, it would seem that Lefebvre's utopian

discourse reaches a wall which it cannot surpass: the force of abstract space. Moreover, he acknowledges how difficult it is for counterspaces to evolve and remain more or less durable, as they are often relentlessly swallowed by dominant tactics, such as leisure spaces, holiday resorts or theme parks.

In any case, the concept of counterspace opens new possibilities for architecture, even though they cannot be projected (contrary to Aldo van Eyck's 'counterform'),⁴⁶ as they emerge through social practice. However, this does not mean that architecture cannot provide means for the constitution of counterspaces, despite the critiques that Lefebvre raised against architecture and the figure of the architect on several occasions. The task of architects, urbanists and planners has been, according to Lefebvre, the representation and (re)production of abstract space, opposed to a particular kind of counterspace: differential space. Comparable to McLuhan's acoustic space or Foucault's heterotopic space, differential (counter)space hosts and materializes hidden, marginal practices that run counter to the logic of capitalism. It is frequently associated with the practices of everyday life—that the Jesuit philosopher Michel de Certeau would later analyse—but also with countercultures and resistance,⁴⁷ counterlaboratories,⁴⁸ or countermapping.⁴⁹ While it is easy to find common elements between these categories, it is not so simple to situate architecture or determine its possible role within a counterspace. Is it a mere scene or background where action takes place? Does it manipulate and affect the space of practice? Is an architecture against abstract space possible? And finally, how to translate this urban/territorial scale of the negative to interior space?

INHABITING LEFTOVER SPACE

Going back to the initial idea and the controversial spatial model of our times, where interior appears again as a privileged realm, it is possible to revisit these notions in the light of negativity and the possibility of a counterspace. With regard to the existence of alternative, interstitial spaces which remain open to innovative actions, it seems that acknowledging and embracing the excessive, residual condition of contemporary space could be a first step to redefine the relation between architecture and space.



In 2010, Slavoj Žižek reinterpreted a revealing space for architecture through the 'byproducts' of the architectural or urban project. He noted how spatial 'excess' materializes in what the biologists Stephen Jay Gould and Richard Lewontin,⁵⁰ borrowing an architectural term inspired by the pendentives of St. Mark's basilica in Venice, and applying it to the field of biology, call the 'spandrels' or spaces resulting from an intentional operation. The term, which is returned to the architectural domain with new connotations, opens a field of reflection around those spaces between the interior and exterior, between formal configuration and social potential. Since they have to exist, the original constraint forces an adaptation. Thus, the Slovene qualifies these spaces as conflictual:

The struggle is up for grabs here—the struggle over who will appropriate them. These 'interstitial spaces' are thus the proper place for utopian dreaming—they remind us of architecture's great politico-ethical responsibility: much more is at stake in architectural design than may at first appear.⁵¹

Although the utopian aspirations of Žižek may be more or less invalidated, especially in the case of the architectural field, what is suggestive here is the uncertainty, the potential offered by these spandrels that are somehow connected with the interstitial, dark space that Peterson claimed: spaces that resist form and imposition, and yet they are not possible without them. Could the adaptation of these spaces represent a new task for architectural practice?



The urban fabric of certain cities represents a paradigmatic example of these adapted, interstitial spaces, such as the triangular parks and plots which emerge after the imposition of an orthogonal grid. However, in a smaller scale, new possibilities for these 'spandrels' are not so clear from an architectural perspective, unless we focus our attention on those spaces which Soane and others have already explored. It is interesting to cite here, albeit in a tangential way, the comments of Adolf Loos towards this duality when it comes to shaping the space:

Above left

Figure 5: St. Mark's Basilica. Pentecost Vault and pendentives, Venice. Source: Wikimedia Commons. Image by Dennis Jarvis.

Above right

Figure 6: Nine triangle parks and squares in New York. Composite image by the author from Google Maps.

There are architects who do things differently. Their imaginations create not spaces but sections of walls. That which is left over around the walls then forms the rooms. And for these rooms some kind of cladding is subsequently chosen (...) But the artist, the architect, first senses the effect that he intends to realize and sees the rooms he wants to create in his mind's eye.⁵²

Nonetheless, the space of the room cannot be reduced to a monolithic volume, but as we have seen, there are multiple possibilities when it comes to articulating interior and exterior space.

Several contemporary interventions halfway between art and architecture explore the possibilities of these 'interiors of interiors,' the dark space that hides behind flashy and hypertrophic architectural scenery. A particular example of this strategy can be found in the project *Haus U R* of the artist Gregor Schneider, which received the Golden Lion in the Biennale of Venice in 2001. Schneider had been working within a house on Unterheydener Straße in Rheydt (Mönchengladbach, Germany) since 1985, reconstructing replicas of the rooms within the rooms, generating a sort of double house. As a consequence of the construction method, a residual space remains between the original room and the double one inside it. This space, almost inaccessible but real, is used for different purposes; among them, to install devices to move the ceilings and walls of the interior rooms, or to fix lamps in order to simulate different daylight conditions. Some of this original rooms were transported to Venice in 2001 for the Biennale exhibition of the *Totes (Dead) Haus u r*.⁵³ For Schneider, this invisible space is as important as the visible one, and as such is treated and filmed, provoking a disturbing sensation of estrangement in the interior of the room. This subversive way of working raises the reflection on the possible 'life' of the leftover and its presence as a determinant space of the building. At the same time, disorder, accumulation and visible plumbing and construction materials are used to reinforce the architectural dimension of this leftover space.

Following a similar logic, the Swiss Chapuisat Brothers have worked several times within the hidden space between visible rooms. First with *Hyperespace* at St. Gallen (2005), later with *Intra-Muros* in Basel, Vancouver and Zurich (2006-2008), the artists build hidden, dark labyrinths within walls that the visitor can enter with difficulty, because of the intricate physical disposition of the interior. However, the uncomfortable, darkened space can be explored and even inhabited thanks to the house-like distribution of elements within the wall that, in *Intra-Muros #1*, includes a hypothetical dining room, seats, closets and ventilation shafts. These hollow but labyrinthine interiors are absolutely inconceivable from the exterior appearance of the installations—*Hyperespace*, a huge cardboard and wood installation, and *Intra-Muros*, a white wall around 50-60 centimetres thick. As in *Haus u r*, the relation between a hyper-enclosed, dark, articulated interior and a silent exterior is exposed in its full contradiction, questioning contemporary assumptions about architecture as envelope.

Although the artistic realm apparently offers a less constrained field of possibilities to explore the idea of an immersive interior from a negative perspective, there are also several examples



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Figure 7: *Haus u r* 2000. Gregor Schneider, Rheydt 1985-today. © Gregor Schneider / VG Bild-Kunst Bonn. Courtesy of the artist.

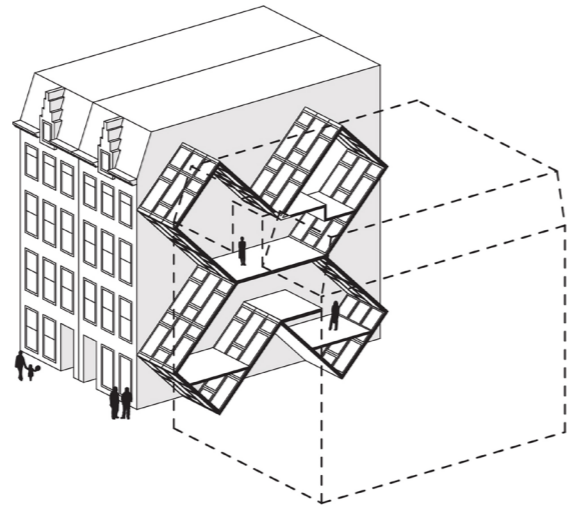
Above top right
Figure 8: *Haus u r* 2000. Gregor Schneider, Rheydt 1985-today. © Gregor Schneider / VG Bild-Kunst Bonn. Courtesy of the artist.

Above bottom left
Figure 9: *Intra-Muros #1*. Entrance. The Chapuisat Brothers, Swiss Art Awards, Art Basel 2006. Courtesy of the artists.

Above bottom right
Figure 10: *Hyperespace*. Construction of the interior. The Chapuisat Brothers, Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen 2005. Photo: Stefan Rohner. Courtesy of the artists.

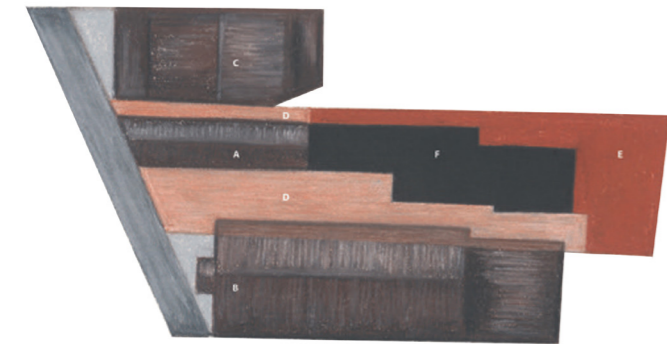
from normative architecture that follow a similar logic within an inhabitable scale, that is, within spaces that can, or could, be inhabited during a sustained period of time. In this regard, Atelier Bow-Wow's 'pet architecture,' as a means 'to recycle unused urban openings,' offers new perspectives in this direction, although we could envision more complex and functions and dimensions beyond the playful and communicative character that Tsukamoto describes.⁵⁴ Such is the case of the self-built residence of Rebekah and Casey Vallance (CultivAR) in Brisbane, which stands over a narrow, former discarded parcel situated in between existing buildings. Leftover spaces are given their own structure and function by means of a linear articulation, squeezing into the parcel without altering preexistent elements and boundaries, although transforming the relations among them. Besides, the project considered environmental issues in order to allow adequate space, such as the elimination of polluting components (mainly asbestos cladding) and a slow process of construction based on local techniques and materials.

2009 and Matthew Barry in 2016 for the President's Medals prizes awarded by the Royal Institute of British Architects. Bovis proposes a flexible modular structural system which expands and contracts to fill the existing gap between buildings, creating new space for indeterminate uses, while Barry projects a *Spatial Enigma*, a series of explorative platforms among built elements, inviting people to enter and discover an unknown, dark, residual space that offers new possibilities of use, or non-use.



CONCLUSION

This paper has argued that the Western notion of space, evolving from a subordinate position with respect to time to an extensive, neutral, abstract realm is already exhausted, and insufficient to sustain contemporary proposals from a spatial, multiple perspective. The selected projects, either architectural or artistic, form an apparently unconnected constellation of examples that could be analysed and expanded with many more situations, thus generating an unmapped but suggestive lineage, spatializing the desire of situating oneself between the hypersensuous comfort of the surrounding environment, and the distressing conscience of exteriority, thus breaking with traditional and dichotomic visions of space.



In a more radical approach, other architectures explore the possibilities of these spatial in-betweens by means of re-densification of urban space and new interiors. In 2013, the Danish architects Mateusz Mastalski and Ole Robin Storjohann presented a project named 'Live Between Buildings,' in which they proposed to build micro-pieces of apartments in the gaps between existing buildings in dense cities such as New York, London, Amsterdam, Wrocław or Tokyo. A similar tactic has been followed in other paper architecture, such as in the entries of Charlotte Bovis in

In a time when architecture as envelope has acquired a certain strength (both as a representative façade and as a membrane to regulate thermo-hygrometric conditions), it seems that, once again, the interior appears as a privileged realm on a global scale, coinciding with what Sloterdijk calls 'the World Interior of Capital.'⁵⁵ As a consequence, the exterior space, the space of the city, of social relations, and so on, loses strength and interest for sectors of the discipline. Against this situation, some practitioners and authors from diverse fields propose to rethink the links between architecture and space from a relational perspective, and not as a radical limit between involute enclaves and chaotic margins. Rather, authors like Peterson in the eighties—when the relevance of space as key to understanding the world is recovered with the spatial turn—as well as the contemporary artists whose work has been analysed in the paper, invite us to recover a certain spatial 'thickness' that qualifies the gap between inside and outside, offering new relational possibilities within the architectural/spatial construction.

Finally, in order to broaden the scope of these reflections for future contributions, it is worth regarding the works analyzed from the perspective of social sustainability. From a contemporary viewpoint, today we are facing a dominant model architecture that recalls what Georges Bataille defined in his *Dictionnaire Critique*.⁵⁶ Despite his drastic argumentation, his definition still has sense in our days when one tries to understand the logic hidden behind certain architectural constructions and arrangements in the city. Iconic buildings and urban spaces are often the physical demonstration of a certain order, of a way of structuring and managing the world. Corporate headquarters, gated communities, shopping malls and privately owned public spaces are examples of these 'dominant forms,' which embody 'the expression of the very being of societies.'⁵⁷ Against this hypertrophic spatiality exceeded by overproduction, transparency and positivity (expanding the influence of the all-pervasive junkspace), leftover spaces represent an opportunity for resistance and difference in the city. It is not about destroying the existing, but requalifying it, perforating what is already there, instead of producing a neutral space without limits. Paying attention to these minority, ephemeral practices and interventions may be interesting not

only in purely constructive terms, but also in proposing alternative modes of doing and thinking. In an increasingly urbanized world in which territory is extensively being bought, built and occupied, it is refreshing and encouraging to find other possible ideas that revert this logic of consumption, advocating for a reuse and requalification of the built environment, making us think of a more sustainable, responsible society in the future.

NOTES

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLLwQtr4N38>
2. José Luis Pardo Torío, *Las Formas de la Exterioridad* (Valencia: Pre-Textos, 1992), 22.
3. Like time, space is a 'pure form of sense or intuition' (2004, §258, 34), but both differ in their condition and relation to being, since space is 'abstract objectivity' and time 'abstract subjectivity'. The fact that space is considered to be prior to time—also in the structure of Hegel's work—is quite significant, since it implies that the philosopher perceives space as an inferior category compared to time, which is motor, transformative power: '[t]he truth of space is time, and thus space becomes time.' Georg W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature (Part Two of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, 1830)* (Oxford: Routledge, 2004), §257 Remark, 34.
4. 'Conversely, space would be the distorted and external expression of time. (...) time itself is the becoming, this coming-to-be and passing away, the actually existent abstraction. Chronos, from whom everything is born and by whom its offspring is destroyed. The real is certainly distinct from time, but is also essentially identical with it.' Ibid., §258 Remark, 35.
5. Eva Brann, *What, then, is Time?* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999), 26.
6. Pardo Torío, *Las Formas de la Exterioridad*, 23.
7. Ibid., 33.
8. Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, §256, 31.
9. Emmánuel Lizcano, 'El sueño de la razón a-locada o los no-lugares de la globalización,' in *El Territorio como "demo": demo(a)grafías, demo(a)cracias y epidemias*, (Seville: Universidad Internacional de Andalucía, 2011), 31.
10. Georg W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics. Lectures on Fine Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 624.
11. Needless to say, the association of different stages of architecture with specific cultures is far from being innocent, since the whole philosophical system constructed by Hegel pointed to the superiority of Western civilization over the rest of the world and, this time, differences in architectural systems served as a means to justify and demonstrate this supremacy.
12. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 686.
13. Kenneth Kierans, "'Absolute Negativity': Community and Freedom in Hegel's Philosophy of Right," *Animus: The Canadian Journal of Philosophy and Humanities* 12 (2007): 76.

Opposite left

Figure 11: Site Restrictions Diagram of the Left Over Space House. CultivAR <http://www.cultivar.net.au/>, Brisbane 2013. Courtesy of the authors.

Opposite right

Figure 12: Live between Buildings. Mateusz Mastalski and Ole Robin Storjohann, 2013. Courtesy of the authors.

13. Michel Foucault, 'Different Spaces,' in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology. Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984. Volume Two* (New York: The New Press, 1998), 177.
14. Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1976).
15. Sven-Olov Wallenstein, *Biopolitics and the Emergence of Modern Architecture* (New York: Buell Center, FORUM Project, Princeton Architectural Press, 2009).
16. Nadir Lahiji (ed.), *The Missed Encounter of Radical Philosophy with Architecture* (London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).
17. '(...) some of the most innovative contributions to architecture discourse and practice over the last 40 years were developed explicitly against the definition of "architecture as space" (...) would it not be better to abandon the discourse on "space" and restrict architectural discourse to "buildings," "streets," "squares," "neighborhoods," "parks" and "landscapes"?' Lukasz Stanek, 'Architecture as Space, Again? Notes on the "Spatial Turn,"' *SpecialeZ* 4 (2012): 49-52.
18. Rem Koolhaas, 'Junkspace,' *October* 100 (2002): 175-190.
19. Alejandro Zaera-Polo, 'The Politics of the Envelope: A Political Critique of Materialism,' *Volume 17* (2008): 76-105.
20. Steven K. Peterson, 'Space and anti-space,' *Harvard Architecture Review* (1980): 88-113.
21. Ibid., 91.
22. Ákos Moravánszky and Ole W. Fischer (eds.), *Precisions. Architektur zwischen Wissenschaft und Kunst/Architecture between sciences and the arts* (Berlin: Jovis, 2008).
23. Peterson, 'Space and anti-space,' 101.
24. Similar terminology, although with different meanings is used in: Christopher Alexander, *A Pattern Language*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 518-523. Alexander understands negative space as a sort of anti-space, but from a more reductionist approach than that of Peterson.
25. Ibid., 102.
26. Raúl Castellanos Gómez, 'Poché o la Representación del Residuo,' *EGA. Revista de expresión gráfica arquitectónica* 15 (2010): 170-181.
27. Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1977).
28. Steven K. Peterson, 'Steven Peterson, Littenberg, Cohn. New York City. Project no: 874,' *A.D. Profile 30: Les Halles: Consultation Internationale sur l'Amenagement du quartier des Halles. Architectural Design* September-October (1980): 70-73.
29. Marta López-Marcos, 'Revisiting anti-space. Interview with Steven K. Peterson,' *Risco: Revista de Pesquisa em Arquitetura e Urbanismo* 1 (2017): 141-150.
30. Peterson, 'Space and anti-space', 101.
31. Diana Coole, *Negativity and Politics: Dionysus and Dialectics from Kant to Poststructuralism* (London, New York: Routledge, 2000), 1.
32. Ibid., 2.
33. Benjamin Noys, *The Persistence of the Negative: A Critique of Contemporary Continental Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).
34. Gail Day, *Dialectical Passions: Negation in Postwar Art Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).
35. Artemy Magun, *Negative Revolution. Modern Political Subject and its Fate after the Cold War* (New York, London: Bloomsbury, 2013).
36. Ibid., 117.
37. Manuel Delgado Ruiz, 'La No-Ciudad como ciudad absoluta,' *Sileno: Variaciones sobre arte y pensamiento*, 14-15 (2003): 123-131.
38. John Keats, 'XXIV. To George and Thomas Keats. Hampstead, December 22, 1817,' *Letters of John Keats to his Family and Friends* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1891), 48.
39. Byung-Chul Han, *The Transparency Society* (Stanford: Stanford Briefs, 2015).
40. Peter Sloterdijk, *Esferas II: Globos* (Madrid: Siruela, 2004), 526.
41. For instance, during the seventies, in a period of strong political activity and commitment in universities and educational institutions, architecture students at the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture et des Arts Visuels de La Cambre in Brussels developed a series of contre-projets (counter-projects) under the Belgian architect and urbanist Maurice Culot, in charge of the Atelier de Recherche et d'Action Urbaines. Through these exercises, students proposed alternative spaces to criticize existing urban situations, in a provocative but productive way, led by the spirit of the movements that worked for the reconstruction of the European city. See Isabelle Doucet, 'Aesthetics between Provocation and Production: Counter-projects,' *OASE* 97 (2016): 91-98.
42. Paola Viganò, 'The contemporary European Urban Project: Archipelago City, Diffuse City and Reverse City,' *The SAGE Handbook of Architectural Theory* (London: SAGE, 2012), 657-670.
43. Ibid., 669.
44. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 349.
45. Ibid., 381.
46. During one of the meetings organized by the Team 10, Aldo van Eyck asked: 'If society has no form—how can architects build the counterform?' Alison Smithson (ed.), 'Team 10 Primer (1953-62),' *Architectural Design*, December (1962): 564.
47. Daniel Hiernaux-Nicolas, 'Henri Lefebvre: del espacio absoluto al espacio diferencial,' *Veredas. Revista del pensamiento sociológico* 8 (2004): 20.
48. Zygmunt Bauman and Giorgio Agamben, *Archipiélago de Excepciones* (Buenos Aires, Barcelona: Katz; Centro de Cultura Contemporánea de Barcelona, 2008).
49. Nancy Lee Peluso, 'Whose woods are these? Counter-mapping Forest Territories in Kalimantan, Indonesia,' *Antipode* 4 (1995): 383-406.
50. Stephen Jay Gould and Richard C. Lewontin, 'The Spandrels of San Marco and the Panglossian Paradigm: a Critique of the Adaptationist Programme,' *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London, series B* 1161 (1979): 581-598. See also: Stephen Jay Gould, 'The exaptive excellence of spandrels as a term and prototype,' *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 94, September (1997): 10750-10755.
51. Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End Times* (New York, London: Verso Books,

2010), 278.

52. Adolf Loos, 'The Principle of Cladding,' in *Raumplan Versus Plan Libre: Adolf Loos, Le Corbusier*, ed. Max Risselada (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2008), 170.
53. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHL_dt518_0
54. Yoshiharu Tsukamoto, 'Pet Architecture and how to use it,' *Sarai Reader: Shaping Technologies* 3, February (2003): 249-254.
55. Peter Sloterdijk, *In the World Interior of Capital: for a Philosophical Theory of Globalization*. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013).
56. '(...) whenever we find architectural construction elsewhere than in monuments, whether it be in physiognomy, dress, music, or painting, we can infer a prevailing taste for human or divine authority. (...) It is clear, in any case, that mathematical order imposed upon stone is really the culmination of the evolution of earthly forms, whose direction is indicated within the biological order by the passage from the simian to the human form, the latter already displaying all the elements of architecture. Man would seem to represent merely an intermediary stage within the morphological development between monkey and building. Forms have become increasingly static, increasingly dominant. (...) an attack on architecture, whose monumental productions now truly dominate the whole earth, grouping the servile multitudes under their shadow, imposing admiration and wonder, order and constraint, is necessarily, as it were, an attack on man.' Georges Bataille, *Le Dictionnaire Critique* (Orléans: L'Écarlate, 1993), 15-17. Translation by Dominic Faccini in: Dominic Faccini et al., 'Critical Dictionary,' *October* Spring (1992): 25-26.
57. Ibid., 17.

BIOGRAPHY

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