

# Paranoiac Critical Interiorisations: Odysseus in Mies van der Rohe's Seagram Building and Buckminster Fuller's domes

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## ABSTRACT

*Salvador Dalí's surrealist process, which he named the paranoiac critical method, is a method of generating irrational knowledge through the associative mechanisms of delirious phenomena. Drawing together the story of Odysseus and the Sirens in Homer's Odyssey and K. Michael Hay's essay on the modernist dematerialisations of Mies van der Rohe's Seagram Building (1958) in New York, the paranoiac critical method is employed in an exegesis of Buckminster Fuller's giant geodesic domes as a continuation of the transformative power of Odysseus's legendary journey of interiorisation.*

## PRECONSCIOUS IDIOSYNCRASIES

Salvador Dalí developed the paranoiac critical method in the 1930s as a means of legitimising some conscious control over necessarily unconscious and automatic Surrealist practices. Earlier theoretical formulations of surrealist practice described by André Breton were explicit in the absence of 'all control exercised by reason and outside aesthetic or moral preoccupations,' in order to reveal 'the pure process of thought.'<sup>1</sup> The illegitimacy of this surrealist purity afforded by this absence of conscious control has been articulated by Laurent Jenny and Thomas Tresize in their article, 'From Breton to Dalí: The Adventures of Automatism.'<sup>2</sup> The key problem of legitimising automatism, as they assert, is external and internal unverifiability, yet colloquially many creative experiences are well described by recourse to terms like 'automatic'.

The precise boundaries that separate automatic, directed automatic and conscious control are notoriously difficult to differentiate, and the difficulty likely resides in the terms employed for the purpose. The language of Freudian analysis used by surrealists is now outmoded in psychotherapy, but remains useful in the less precise arena of design theory. The Freudian terms 'preconscious', where things become temporarily unconscious but are capable of returning to consciousness, and 'sublimation', where sexual desires are suppressed and released in socially acceptable forms, are directly relevant here because of the necessary erasures implied. For example, one needs to learn

to read firstly as a means of gaining the social approval that is a precondition of sexual fulfilment. Further, when learning to read one must learn to move one's eyes in particular sequences and apply particular associative and interpretive structures to thereby understand the sentences, but once it is learned, the process of reading becomes invisible, necessarily invisible to knowledge; and the initial impetus to learn is also forgotten and reading appears as an end in itself, or as a means to an intermediate goal, rather than a means to reproduction. This epistemological foreclosure is part of what Dalí meant with his frequently repeated aphorism, 'I know what I'm eating, I don't know what I'm doing.'<sup>3</sup>

The complex processes of our actions, including the associative mechanisms accompanying them, are sublimated, made preconscious, but they constitute the foundation upon which conscious thought and action occur. As with the example of reading, it is possible, indeed likely, to be ignorant of what one has previously made preconscious, of what presumptions one brings to a situation and consequently what guides apparently automatic actions. These presumptions, however, may be readily apparent to people with different perspectives, who possess a kind of exterior perspective to our interiorised amnesias, and it is here that automatic actions can be revelatory of the pure processes of one's mind, just as Breton had asserted, if we accept that what is invisible to one may be visible to another, and what is preconscious is what is pure. Whether pure or not, what will be revealed is likely to be what is strange or idiosyncratic with respect to a locally common form, what is outside our intentional or unintentional personal style. So it is from here, at the limiting surface of the personal and the common, but firmly grounded in the preconscious idiosyncratic, that surrealist practice emerges and is made visible as a style of production as much as a style of perception.

For Dalí, the surrealist method was 'a spontaneous method of irrational knowledge based on the interpretive critical associations of delirious phenomena.'<sup>4</sup> What is telling here is that Dalí defines his surrealist practice as the generation of knowledge, not the creation of surreal objects or images. This corresponds with Dalí's repeated assertion that his personality, his lucidity, was more

important than his artefacts.<sup>5</sup> This emphasis on perception, from which new knowledge emerges, is resonant with classical ideas about the nature of artistry, as Aristotle wrote about the value of poets, 'the greatest thing by far is to be master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learned from others, and it is also a sign of genius since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars.'<sup>6</sup> The approximate equivalence between the creation of metaphors, the creation of knowledge and the creation of artefacts is the supple and subtle territory of this interpretation of surrealist practice.

## PARANOIAC CRITICAL METHODS

Breton wrote that Dalí's paranoiac critical method could be successfully applied to all manner of exegesis,<sup>7</sup> and although there have been several publications on architecture and surrealism in general, the only sustained example is Rem Koolhaas' renown *Delirious New York* (1978) and some asides in *S,M,L,XL* (1995).<sup>8</sup> Other than these, the paranoiac-critical method has rarely, if ever, been explicitly applied to architectural theory.<sup>9</sup> In 2005 Koolhaas spoke about using the method for *Delirious New York*, and hinted at its ongoing practical validity, '[the paranoiac critical method] seemed to me to be the best way of making coherent and heroic what was not necessarily either... Dalí's strategic formula offers in practice the best model for understanding architectural procedures: making the world accept visions that it does not want, and building them in the city.'<sup>10</sup> The focus of this paper is a hybrid of Koolhaas' ambitious architectural insertions and Dalí's generation of irrational knowledge, but is inevitably also a revelation of the author's interpretive preoccupations, the first of which is the description of the process itself, the second is the interiorisation of the world as enacted by the character of Odysseus.

In the application of the paranoiac critical method as a means of generating metaphors, knowledge and artefacts, seemingly unrelated objects and ideas are combined and forced into the form of an obsessional object or 'idea-object', in this case representing or enacting interiorisation.

In both Koolhaas' work and in this paper, idea-objects are tempered with the critical architectural concerns of structure and programme, and with a representational concern for the accuracy and complexity of the obsession. The soft and formless play of metaphors and relative interpretations are rendered critical by concretisation and objectification. Forcing the materialisation of ephemeral considerations deliberately, or perhaps opportunistically, blurs the distinction between real and imagined objects, so that real objects can be considered as metaphors, bound to their objective form with a soft and catalysing gaze. The obsessive transforming vision produces the illusion of objective autonomy in the idea-objects because of the apparent semantic elasticity inferred by the varying interpretations.

This objectification is essential because metaphors have no assessable value except via the coherent meanings given by the objects employed in their representations. Dalí's writing on his process reveals the objective clarity he sought in producing such metaphors:

Things have no meaning whatever beyond their strictest objectivity; herein resides, in my opinion, their miraculous poetry... more than what a horse can suggest to a painter or a poet, I am interested in the horse or kind of horse the painter and poet can invent, or better yet, encounter. Let us strive to attain the maximum comprehension of reality by means of our senses and our intelligence and, instead of imitating or explaining our impressions of reality, our emotions (that is to say, its repercussions or resonances within us), let us create things that are its equivalent; and let the pathos of reality be derived not from our souls, but from the things themselves, just as it occurs in reality.<sup>11</sup>

During the process, idea-objects are transformed by interpretation. Slippery interpretations of changing forms are moments of interpretive delirium. The method engages an object of paranoid obsession in a systematic concretisation. The object hardens upon reflection, accumulating and revealing complexity, just as objects do in reality.

This method deliberately differs from what we might call logical intuition in that it strategically injects non-logical elements.<sup>12</sup> Arbitrary, partial, and unintentional interpretations, and the hyperactive materialisation of metaphors soften the idea-objects, loosening the connection between the object and its meaning, attenuating the sense of direct authorship and self representation. Each objectification is critically interpreted for both pragmatics and poetics. If the resultant form is too poetic (extremely impractical or structurally impossible) or too pragmatic (lacking complexity or ambivalence) alternatives are sought. Since multiple interpretations are frequently encountered, the obsessional drive selects for confirmation of at least the premise of the obsession. Each iteration of the critical process is necessarily incomplete; critical completion occurs only at the final iteration. It is essential to allow an incompleteness, to accept errors, to begin to flow and develop a sequence of idea-objects. It may be assumed, though not enforced, that partly failing idea-objects will have their inadequate elements replaced or reformed at a later iteration, but this is itself only an associated self-confirming interpretation. The final iteration, however, may be permanently deferred, allowing the idea-objects to retain softness, and thus the process may produce an abundance of pseudo-random, proto-logical forms based around the soft assembly of critical criteria.

The subject of this paper's example, the point of departure, comes from a desire to objectify the journey of Odysseus, known later as Ulysses, who travelled the ancient Mediterranean world as the avant-garde of Hellenic culture, taking the Hellenic ethos into the uncivilised wilderness and through military ability and exceptional intelligence made the lands he visited more hospitable for subsequent generations. The subject of the obsession is not the person nor his artefacts, but the process that he enacted and exemplified. This is therefore a fairly soft subject, and one that may be seen operating at many scales simultaneously, allowing materialisations of the myth to occur from the level of the architectural detail, to the architectural form, to the urban layout, to conceptions of a transnational polis.



#### ODYSSEUS AND THE SIRENS

Homer sang of Odysseus sailing a passage between small islands, anticipating the appearance of the Sirens.<sup>13</sup> Circe, a nymph, had warned Odysseus that the Sirens are the doom of all who attempt to pass, luring sailors with seductive songs and destroying them. Circe advised Odysseus how to pass safely; Odysseus obeyed precisely, and gave the crew their orders. The crew plugged their ears with wax, wrapped fabric about their ears, and tied Odysseus to the mast. As they passed, the Sirens sent their voices through the air and entreated the men to stay, to benefit from their knowledge of both past and future. When Odysseus, overwhelmed by temptation, commanded to be released from the mast, the crew responded by following his earlier instruction and tied more ropes; Odysseus was made captive by his own command.

Homer does not describe the Sirens' appearance, though that they have an appearance is clearly implied. Most representations of the Sirens follow the bird-women appearance, known as a harpy, from an illustration on an antique vase now in the British Museum (Figure 1).

Ovid, in his early first century poem, *Metamorphosis*, wrote that the Sirens Odysseus encountered were children of Acheloüs, god of a river in Northern Greece, renowned for their prowess in singing. They were with Proserpina while she was picking her springtime flowers. Presumably, this was when Proserpina was abducted by Pluto and taken as his bride to Hades. 'The gods were kind,' and turned the grieving maidens into golden-plumed birds with human faces so they could endlessly prolong the songs of their bereavement, and gain the wisdom of extra-ordinary longevity.<sup>14</sup> Their songs were so enthralling, as early Greek poet Lycophron wrote, that sailors would starve to death listening.<sup>15</sup> Their tale in Classical literature concludes with a note in Apollodorus' second century compendium of mythological episodes, the *Bibliotheca*, here the Sirens are recorded as being so distressed by their first and only failure to capture passing sailors that they threw themselves into the sea and drowned.<sup>16</sup>

From Homer, there is little cause to presume that the process of bondage to his duty allowed Odysseus to enjoy or even hear much wisdom from the Sirens. From the later depictions, it would seem that Odysseus hears only hungry cries. The sinister aspect of Sirens was a common feature of later representations like the Pompeii wall painting (Figure 2) painted around 50 years after Ovid, but this may also be read both as sado-masochistic, a moralising indictment against temptation, and as an enforced economic pragmatism justifying the punishment of unproductive desire.

But these warnings are for the oarsmen. The Pompeian Sirens are lizard-like creatures with long legs, very different to the lightness of the bird figures of the representations introduced by the Athenians. However, the rotten bodies of the sailors lie beside the Sirens here, as described by Circe – the absence of

Above  
Figure 1: The Siren Vase, painted by the Siren Painter, from Athens, 480BC-470BC.  
© The Trustees of the British Museum.



this macabre and telling detail from the Athenian image invites a more sympathetic reading of the Sirens; but is it sympathy through omission? We cannot be sure that Circe was being honest when she warned Odysseus of the Sirens. There is enough left unsaid in Homer for varied interpretation.

#### THE SIRENS' MODERNIST INTERPRETATIONS

At a 1996 colloquium, 'Autonomy and Ideology - Positioning an Avant-Garde in America', K. Michael Hays spoke of Mies van der Rohe's Seagram Building (1958) in New York as a key example of avant-garde modernism. In his analysis, Hays recalled a section of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* (1947), connecting this episode of Odysseus and the Sirens with the philosophical and socio-political transformation of the Enlightenment. Considering Odysseus' experience tied to his mast listening to the Sirens' songs, Hays reflected:

What is produced here for Odysseus alone is nothing less than art itself. Yet, impotent in his bonds, he can only contemplate its contours of pure sound; his experience is utterly hollowed out... While the oarsmen, like Mies, like the rest of us, whatever closeness to materials and production might be salvaged, can neither hear art's song nor delight in its labour but can only sense that we are missing out on something... the genuine experience that can never be brought back from prehistory... in modernity, a unified and substantial center of experience can never be restored but only given as an illusion... through modernism's abstraction.<sup>17</sup>

Although Hays wrote that Mies, like the rest of us, no longer has access to the ancient world from which deep inspiration came, it nonetheless lives on through its representation. Hays' final statement, 'in modernity, a unified substantial center of experience can never be restored but only given as an illusion through modernism's abstraction' may, for our modern purposes, be rephrased: the unified centre is the insubstantial void, which cannot be represented except by the pressures it exchanges with substance. This gesture in art, to capture empty space by an elaboration of its threshold, to invest a void with intended meaning, is a gesture linking the material and immaterial worlds.

What is produced for Odysseus is art, yet no artefact exists, it is thus immaterial art. This is likely the case for Homer too; improvised speeches are immaterial in that no material artefact is left. The process of transcription was presumably done later by others. The key difference here can be explained by two kinds of muse: the unified material muse (material muse → immaterial art) and the dispersed immaterial muse (immaterial muse → material art). In this sense, the classic modernist transcendent impulse entertains the material muse of engineering for the immaterialisation of the arts, whereas the pre-Odysseus world valued material muses and the immaterial arts of music, dance and oratory. The voyage of Odysseus brought the victorious immaterial muse to many locations, but only in preparation for this encounter did Odysseus request bondage.

*Opposite*  
Figure 2: Wall painting of Ulysses and the Sirens, Roman, mid 1st century AD From Pompeii, Italy.  
© Trustees of the British Museum.

The form of Odysseus' boat includes an ornate arching prow. This curve defines a space across to the mast and Odysseus. This space is not over-defined; it is a man facing his property. This is, after all, a boat built by Odysseus himself - a reflective space, a small monument. Within this intimately contained space, the Sirens intrude. Yet the stillness and power relations of the image - a man tied to a boat's mast by a deafened crew - conjure suspicion and punishment; Odysseus and his boat and crew now seem at odds with each other; as if their material presence threatens Odysseus. The Sirens offer rescue from this vulnerable position.

For the oarsmen, their deafness ensures they only perceive the Sirens as material muses without immaterial attributes, and the Siren's liminal quality between materiality and immateriality (since they know the Sirens are singing) does not disturb the ideological distinction. For Odysseus, in effect, the ropes guarantee the Sirens retain an immateriality that their visibility would normally refuse, keeping Odysseus fixed in material artifice so that if he saw anything it was as a vision.

The temptation wrought by the Sirens is to volunteer for eternity and hence dissolution and immateriality; succumbing blissfully to the natural force like prey seeking to be devoured. The ropes disempower this decision. The ropes create a virtual space where activity can occur, but the capacity to realise is limited: power contains. Are the ropes as material fact important to this reading? Would any form of containment suit the story? Odysseus locked in a glass box, glued to the deck, Odysseus in a padded cell seeing the Sirens as an image on a wall; watching it on television with his family. Containment within the communal can occur at many scales.

## INTERIORISING THE SURFACE

The interiorisation that is represented in the story of Odysseus' encounter with the Sirens operates in two ways: through the reconditioning of the centre, and through an elaboration of the perimeter. The centre is disempowered, and as Hays suggests, replaced only with an abstraction. This abstraction does not

exactly replace or refill the centre, but instead draws the eye toward a perimeter that reduces the extent and complexity of the exterior to an image on an inner surface. The avant-garde operate to reveal the effect of the absent centre, revealing its mobility by questioning the limits of the perimeter, revising its image. Here, as Hays wrote, 'abstraction - the pure sound of the Sirens, the organising absent presence - is the maximal limit of the avant-garde.'<sup>18</sup>

Following Hays' presentation at the avant-garde colloquium, Rem Koolhaas spoke; 'the city will always be the screen on which the avant-garde projects its ambitions, against which the avant-garde prepares its (usually futile) stratagems of substitution... The city inspires but it does not respond. In its obliviousness, it casually resists consummation of any of the passions, inspirations, breakthroughs, transports that it provokes.'<sup>19</sup>

The Sirenic materiality of the city inspires and the avant-garde wish to intervene and transform, a cannibalistic circuit of the avant-garde eating the city and, in turn, wanting to be eaten (or rather wanting to be wanted to be eaten, hoping for the existence of predators). The Sirens are dispersed into the forms of the city - materially present everywhere but never identifiable as any particular material object. The Seagram Building can thus be understood as a reproduction of Odysseus and his boat, the crew metamorphosed into the flanking roadways delivering the power and infrastructure of the collective's will, and the Seagram experiencing abstraction. This condition inverts the previous reading of the scene as an economic pragmatism justifying the punishment of unproductive desire, but as supporting both unproductive and productive desires, perhaps even eliminating the distinction. Infrastructure is morally indifferent to 'content'. But perhaps the crew, the infrastructure, are also embodied within the building, rather than adjacent to it - moreover that city buildings are components of infrastructure. The Sirens are transformed into the extraordinary and inspiring generic buildings and generic infrastructures of the city. These dangerous muses are dispersed into a small part of nearly everything - the horror of the banal, and the overwhelming, if unconscious, desire to be

part of it - as dispersed omnipresent immateriality. To hear the Siren's inspirations is to desire to transform the city and thus be rejected and made impotent.

Unlike Koolhaas' supposed futility of the modern avant-garde (architects as oarsmen), within the Homeric narrative, the finality of many of Odysseus' experiences lead to the inevitable reading of the Odyssey as the end of prehistory and the beginning of the existence of artefacts - the dematerialisation of muses. In his journey, Odysseus delivers the seeds of colonisation and leaves many previously inhospitable places as part of civilised territory. Most mystical, mythical or otherwise unusually dangerous creatures that Odysseus meets, including the Sirens, are either killed or made ineffective by him or by the gods soon after:

But for all the renown of his extraordinary experiences, Odysseus' everyday skills, shared in some measure by all warriors of his age, express a material self-sufficiency unknown to most today. Lost on a Greek island, they could find enough food to live well, and with a nymph's provision of some simple tools, build boats and sail away - talents which today we might call primitive. The loss of the ability to survive without cities is perhaps the complete severance from primitive living. Much of the brutality of life is kept far away, and we dwell in an interior where the existence of an exterior appears, erroneously, as increasingly remote and perhaps even mythical. This sensed absence, this disconnection, has resonance as architecture, as the structural transference of weight - buildings, like people, freed luxuriously from the labour of supporting themselves.

Mies' Seagram Building takes aim at this erasure of weight by producing a maximal limit of perception, reducing the perception of volumes into surfaces in at least two ways. Firstly the ponds in the plaza are positioned to prevent visual access to smaller volumes behind the tower and encourage a more orthogonal approach path; from this angle the four large banks of elevator shafts and stairs are perceptually flattened to read as a single facing interior wall, and the silhouette of the tower is mostly surrounded by distant fragments. The appearance of flatness and depthlessness in photographs is refused by the inclusion of a scaling object such as a car, person or signpost. It is only when street and plaza are empty

that the image of the screen attains maximum effect. Mies wanted the emptiness of this space emptier than is it today, without people lingering and cluttering the area; Manfredo Tafuri wrote, 'Mies said that the two basins should be filled to their brims to prevent the public from sitting on their edges.'<sup>20</sup>

Secondly, as Hays writes, the curtain wall's celebrated mullions, bronzed I-sections:

can be construed as the final stage in a set of transformations from a purely technical, instrumental fragment to a new form that organises the visual exchange between the work and its reader... [the I-section] stands as a synecdoche for the steel construction now pushed behind... But as we move back to view the curtain wall at a distance, the facture of the primal elements is taken over by their visual effect... as tectonically thick as they are, cannot be read "deeply"<sup>21</sup>

This illusory erasure of weight and the abstract diminution of volume into surface, of object into image, that characterised for Hays architectural modernism's avant-garde, reflects the experience of Odysseus and the oarsmen in their encounter with the Sirens and the hollowing out of experience. In all these cases, there is an implied focus, a privileged unified perception, that is presented but systematically refused, a fullness of experience that is made unavailable.

## EXPANDING THE INTERIOR

This interpretation of the Seagram as a kind of Odysseus, presenting itself as threshold and bearing restrained witness to the Sirens of the city, diminishes them in their mystery and strangeness; Odysseus and the Sirens are more distinct from each other than Seagram is from its neighbours. Odysseus is more accurately represented as a whole city; with an eccentric hall and plaza occupying the notional centre and a complex exterior wall, militarily fortified, always being rebuilt, slowly progressing outward. The exterior; the Sirens' calls, are not represented abstractions but the real materials of the natural world being consumed.



A materialisation of Odysseus at the scale of a fortified city was proposed by Buckminster Fuller only a few years after Seagram was constructed: a 3 kilometre wide geodesic dome to cover midtown Manhattan, the Seagram beneath. (Figure 3) With the operative principle of the material muse inspiring the creation of immaterially, Fuller's approximately hemispheric form and skeletal geodesic construction maximises the emptiness materially created. As an architectural representation of Odysseus, which should afford the possibility of luxurious weightlessness, Fuller's dome realises this in a way that is at first unexpected; although it is massive, it is, in effect, almost weightless. The thermal uplift from the heat of the city lifts the dome into the cool air above it, keeping the dome in a state of almost-floating.<sup>22</sup> The weight that the dome presses onto its ringed footings depends on two factors, the surrounding air temperature, and the amount of thermal activity generated beneath. The more the Manhattanites work, the more they do, the more they consume, the more people fit under the dome, the more heat they radiate into the air caught under the dome; then the more it floats, and rises away. In fact, with a dome like this, we find something totally contrary to our usual experience of construction: the bigger it is, the lighter it is. The extraordinarily dynamic relationship between the dome and its inhabitants places it within the domain of the surrealist object with an automatic origin, as defined by Dalí, since the realisation of the object's counter-intuitive operation is 'provoked by the realisation of unconscious acts.'<sup>23</sup>

The logical extension of the grand geodesic is a dome large enough - and with attendant lightness - that it would extend to envelope the earth. Such a dome is relatively easy to imagine constructing - the slow accumulation of broken and inoperative satellites today is like a pointillist sketch of the final form - but the transformative effect is less easily anticipated.

The status of the dome as architecture or as infrastructure is ambiguous, but it clearly proceeds toward the progressive interiorisation of the world. As a transformative operation this large-scale geodesic is a step toward a larger, perhaps even total process, in the same way that Odysseus' journey transformed the conditions of subsequent human life.

Two interpretations arising from the problematising of the interior to exterior relationship follow. First, the Earth-dome can be understood as the complete and final interiorisation of the Earth. The dome extends, the interior expands until the nominated exterior has been pushed onto locations beyond our native planet. The proposition of off-Earth mining or resource harvesting is well known to science fiction and remains a real possibility; but while it is not yet economically nor technically feasible, the possibility seems likely, and this would be an ultimate fulfilment of the Odyssey.

The second interpretation is a little more difficult to conceptualise: the exteriorisation of the interior, and the transference of the privileged interior into the depth of the dome's skin. While the progressive increase in the dome's size leads to the progressive interiorisation of the Earth, once the orbital dome's interior is populated in preference to the Earth, this would constitute the exteriorisation of the Earth as interior.

*Opposite*  
Figure 3: Buckminster Fuller's projected dome over midtown Manhattan, 1960.  
Courtesy: The Estate of R. Buckminster Fuller.

The apparent groundlessness of the double inversion of the interior-exterior dichotomy is perhaps misleading; further analysis of the Manhattan dome and the structural conditions of its uplift suggest a clearer reading of the relational issues of the orbital dome. If the thermal pressure inside the Manhattan cupola becomes too great, it will lift off its supports, the warm air will leak out of the lower perimeter deflating the buoyancy asymmetrically and the dome will crash sideways into the ground.

The force that makes the dome's apparently weightless presence so marvellous must at times be forcibly resisted. The expanse of a dome floating in the Earth's orbit would carry the potential for even greater catastrophe and thus it is even more essential that the orbital dome retain a carefully calibrated position. In this case, a similarity between the orbital dome, the Manhattan dome and Odysseus' encounter with the Sirens is clear; they must be tied down.

## ESCAPES

No matter how tempting independence and liberation may be, the umbilical bond to the commonality of the Earth can never be cut, but it can be resisted, forgotten and made preconscious. In Fuller's globalising perspective, the song of the Sirens, the maximal limit of his avant-garde, is the guiding instinct of the preconscious earth. The orbital Earth dome realises this architecturally by exteriorising the Earth while remaining tied to it.

Two questions remain; firstly whether the unified substantial centre of experience that Hays claims is lost in modernity can be filled by a simultaneously interiorised and exteriorised Earth; and if so, what values do we thread through those physical and metaphysical ropes of interiorisation? The metaphoric transformation of the Sirens breeds a related question. If the Sirens are mythic embodiments of dangerous instincts, the substitution of the Earth into this position is radically different from the Sirens as immaterial abstractions. The environment of the colonialist Odysseus is a dangerous Earth, worthy of suspicion and precaution. The final interiorisation of the Earth with the ubiquitous dual surfaces of ground and ceiling completes the expansionist project not with conquest and unification but with absolute stratification.

Odysseus resists the Sirens yet harvests from them what he can with the tool of restraint. Resisting union with the other; insisting on their exteriorisation, what does Odysseus gain? Whenever the visionary exception in momentary excitement calls for union with the other, with the eternal, the duty that has been affirmed in advance, in the preconscious, must be carried out solemnly. What are they doing? Tying more ropes.

## NOTES

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19. Rem Koolhaas, "Enabling Architecture," in *Autonomy and Ideology - Positioning an Avant-Garde in America*, ed. R. E. Somol (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997), 294.
20. Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co, *Modern Architecture*. (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1979), 340.
21. Hays "Abstraction's Appearance – Seagram Building," 283.
22. See: Michael Gorman, *Buckminster Fuller - Designing for Mobility*. (Milan: Skira, 2005), 184.
23. Salvador Dalí, "Objets surréalistes." *Le Surréalisme au service de la Révolution* (3) (1931): 16.